

Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 184

July/August 2000

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A Pearl of Great Price

This was Paul’s mission - to invite men to change masters - to open men’s eyes, to turn them from darkness (of mind) to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that “they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among the sanctified by faith (which leads) into Christ.” (Acts 26:18). He invited Sin’s servants to become Jehovah’s servants upon the principle of purchase; so that in addressing those who had abandoned the synagogue and temple for the house of Christ, he says to them, “Ye are bought with a price.” They were “not their own,” being bought bodily and spiritually; “therefore,” said he, “glorify God with your body and with your spirit, which are God’s.” When a man’s body and spirit become another’s property, all property in himself is surrendered to the purchaser. All that he used to call his before he was sold is transferred to his owner; and, if allowed to retain it, he must use it as the steward of his Lord.

John Thomas - “Eureka” - Volume 1, page 20

Editorial

Dear Brothers and Sisters and Friends, Loving Greetings.

Armageddon is more commonly known as the Hill of Megiddo; it is 70 feet high and about as big as a large field. Here and there it is contained by the remains of 3000 year-old walls and across it is etched a maze of paths, old gateways, temples and palaces, all that is left of the struggles and ambitions of the past five millennia or more. The Jezreel Valley lies below it. Megiddo was already ancient when Christ was born. The first recorded chariot battle took place there between the Pharaoh Thutmose III (he built the temple at Karnack) and the Hyksos; Deborah sang of her victory over the Canaanites by the waters of Megiddo. The great gate is attributed to Solomon, and Ahab kept his chariots there. The Jezreel plain must be one of the most strongly contested pieces of ground in history, for the Romans, crusades, Mongols and just about everybody who was anyone fought there is their time.

Archaeologists have revealed that Megiddo is cities piled upon cities. Originally the city well was evidently outside the fortifications, which isn't the best idea if you happen to be under siege. So in about 900 BC some sensible person decided to sink a 200 foot shaft on the top, tunnel through the rock for 400 feet to the spring and then conceal the original external entrance with rocks. In this way water for the city was assured. The 183 steps into this tunnel are still there and visitors can clamber down them and walk to the original spring.

Another brilliant idea dreamt up to confound an enemy was to build the northern gates in a zigzag shape. Any eager invader bursting through them would go smack into the wall.

There has been conflict in the Jezreel Valley in very recent times. In 1917 General Allenby earned himself the title of Lord Allenby of Megiddo by wresting the pass from the Turks. In 1948 Yosef Stern, an Auschwitz survivor, veteran kibbutznik and freedom-fighter who was there at the time, says, "When the British Mandate ended in 1948 the only thing preventing Arab forces from streaming along the pass from Jenin to capture Haifa was the kibbutz Mishmar Haemek (Guardians of the Valley) close to Har (Hill of) Megiddo. The Arabs attacked it and during bitter fighting, razed it to the ground; but the cavalry arrived in the form of the Haganah, the underground Jewish defence force and the Arabs were forced to retreat."

We can only wait and watch events to see how many more battles take place in the area until the end comes and the final battle is fought and won. Then there will be peace at last and not just in the Jezreel Valley and Megiddo but everywhere in this troubled and dangerous world.

Love to all, Helen Brady.

True Christian Baptism of The Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 10:1-4. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

Israel baptized unto Moses. They ate and they drank of that supplied to them of the Spirit. "That spiritual Rock which followed them and that Rock was Christ" - not Jesus Christ, but the Anointed, the Angel in whom was God's Name. "My Name is in him," said God.

Jesus Christ also said this of Himself, "I am come in my Father's Name." God said, "This is my beloved Son, Hear ye him."

1 Corinthians 12:12,13. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

Baptized into one Body by one Spirit, and made to drink into one Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:27-31. "Now are ye the body of Christ, and members in particular, and God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, the gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostle? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."

Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular.

Ephesians 1:11-14. "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

Sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance until the deliverance of the purchased possession. See Epistle of James 1:18 and 3:17.

John the Baptist said, "I baptize you with water," but of Jesus he said, "He shall baptize you with Holy Spirit." John's was a baptism in water unto repentance, to Jews only who were amenable to law. Gentiles were not under the Jewish covenant, hence the words of Peter in Acts 2:37-39: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." This repentance was for personal sins committed while under the Law of Moses. The Sin of the world was Federal from Eden, upon Jew and Gentile, to be taken away by the Lamb of God, as declared by John the Baptist. See Acts 20:21 - for Jews, repentance toward God; for Gentiles, faith toward Jesus Christ.

We know that John had disciples, probably as a result of believing his message and being baptized of him, but baptism with Holy Spirit was not for them until later, this being a baptism of repentance and not into the Name and the death of Jesus Christ, which they would no doubt have accepted in faith. But there were in fact, some who had been baptized unto John's baptism of repentance and had not grasped the whole message of John concerning Jesus when he said "I baptize with water, but he shall baptize with Holy Spirit."

See Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-8, "...He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost... And when Paul laid hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came unto them..." This does not mean that the Holy Spirit was given through or by Paul or any of the Apostles, this can be proved by a reference to Acts 6:3-6. Those seven men had already received the Holy Spirit before any hands were laid upon them. The laying on of hands was a sign of God's approval and authority in the Apostles, it was God who gave the Holy Spirit. (We read that God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul - Acts 19:11,12. See Mark 16:20.)

The act of laying on of hands had nothing of magic in it, though Simon the Sorcerer thought it had, (Acts 8:14-17), but although the Apostles laid hands on them they did not receive the Holy Spirit by this means, but through the Apostles praying to God for them to receive it. Peter informed Simon that the Holy Spirit was the gift of God that the laying on of hands could not impart it to others but was a sign that prayer for it was answered in confirmation of belief and faith of those who had been baptized in the Name of Jesus as a result of their acceptance of the Gospel of Salvation. 1 John 3:24: "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Also 4:13-16: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit..."

There can be no doubt about what Jesus meant by His words to Nicodemus when we read Peter's words in 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever..." also confirmed in John 1:12-14: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God..." The Word of God was Spirit and Life and was transferred to Jesus who became full of Grace and Truth.

"Except a man be born again (from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." That which is born of the flesh remains flesh, literal and figurative, until born again of the Spirit. Paul said to the Corinthians "But ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in you." "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit."

Christadelphians call Jesus Lord by habit more or less, yet most deny they have the Holy Spirit in that it was no longer available through the laying on of hands by the Apostles, this administration having ceased with their deaths. This is a myth, but they believe it and must accept the implications involved. My late brother-in-law, a Christadelphian, held the view that the Holy Spirit ceased for believers with the death of the Apostles on account of the theory that it was given by the laying on of their hands, also he was of the opinion that to be born of water and of the Spirit were two separate stages of entry into the Kingdom of God. The first stage was to believe the promises to Abraham and the things concerning the Kingdom of God and be baptized in water to become Abraham's seed and heir to those things promised. The second stage was to be made immortal in order to inherit the land for ever, as promised to Abraham and his seed. But this is not what Jesus meant in His words to Nicodemus surely, if it were, then there would have been no need for what Paul said to those who knew only the baptism of John who said, "I indeed baptize with water." Surely believers see by faith the Kingdom of God as Jesus said to Nicodemus they must. Peter describes it in 1 Peter 1:3-9.

Has the blessing of Abraham that came upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that they might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, been withdrawn since the decease of the Apostles? How could it if the words of Jesus in John 14:12-17 are true? – "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it. If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Also His words to the Samaritan woman in John 4:10 - "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and whom it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Did Jesus mean that in giving her living water, her nature would become incorruptible there and then? Of course not. Compare also John 7:37-39: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given because that Jesus was not yet glorified)."

Revelation 21:6 is a promise from Jesus to those who thirst for the Holy Spirit, for this is the water of Life - it is the Comforter - it is Jesus Himself manifest, as He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This means, those who have been baptized into One Spirit - 1 Corinthians 12:12,13: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit."

If we profess to be members of the Body of Christ how can we gainsay or resist what Jesus has said and what Paul has said?

Much more could be said on the subject but I think this sufficient for the time being.

Yours in Hope of Life in The Presence of our Lord, Brother Phil Parry.

Exhortation

Based on Philippians 2

In perusing the first verse I am struck with the method of instruction pursued by the Apostle. I like the way Paul gives his advice, the way he treats his subject and seeks to stir up those whom he addresses to a sense of duty.

He seldom resorts to open rebuke, but approaches his brethren indirectly, rendering his admonition more forcible because, presented in this mode it runs little or no risk of giving offence; it escapes the sharp edges of human feelings.

His appeals thus combine the two-fold advantage of being less liable to wound the sensitive, while they are more effective in reaching the conscience. They did not fail to produce the convictions he intended them to produce.

See how he proceeds in the chapter we have just read. He places several matters before the Philippian saints hypothetically - "If such and such a thing be, then I shall require of you in accordance thus and so." He did not adopt this form of speech because he imagined they had any doubt about what he advanced, but by a shrewdness of tactics (if I may use the term) he endeavoured to impress their minds more deeply with the form of his reasoning.

"If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies" - there are four things enumerated by the Apostle. Now, who among the believers at Philippi doubted the existence of these four things?

"If there be any consolation in Christ." The brethren knew there was consolation in Christ in a manner we cannot realize; that was the only consolation they had in the midst of the persecutions they were called to endure. Their faith and hope were sharpened by the sword, tested by the rack and the faggot.

What did they fall back upon as their great sustaining power? Immediately upon the enthusiasm which a knowledge and love of the truth inspired, they thought of Him who bled and died for the same cause. They would resolve the matter in their minds something like this: - "If these great riches in the distance be real then we can understand all these persecutions and sufferings; there is a meaning in them."

Those who were in the habit of thinking more than others would find their meditations running in this direction: - "Take courage, brethren, these afflictions are of short duration, they are light and trifling; there is a certain weight of glory awaiting us. That is our consolation; consolation in Christ - in Him who passed through the same tribulation and who has since ascended to heaven."

Abundance of testimony, furnished by credible witnesses, attests these facts; it is only a question of waiting for the Lord's return.

"If there be any comfort of love." There is much comfort in love, as we all know from experience, whatever may be the object of it, none are so cold and selfish as to be entire strangers to it, though some are more susceptible of it than others.

The love now adverted to was attracted towards Christ. And why? Because each could declare He died for me; each one who had believed the Gospel could apply this to himself. He died not only for my neighbour, or my friend, but for me. That was the comfort of love.

"If there be any fellowship of the Spirit." What does fellowship mean? It means union, oneness, unity. The Spirit is here referred to. What is the signification arising out of this? It is that through our relation to Christ, our connection with Him, we are lifted up unto fellowship with Him who is the God of the universe.

Ponder the high vocation wherewith we are called. What could tend to exalt man more or to inspire him with nobler ideas? What more calculated to strengthen him for the conflict of life?

The Philippians could say, 'God cannot deny Himself, the Creator of all things, the Eternal, the Supreme, His Word, like a rock, is immovable and changes not.'

"If any bowels and mercies." This implies tenderness, sympathy, goodwill, brotherly kindness, and to cover all, the mantle of charity. Are these graces manifest? Paul was not speaking with any uncertainty so far as he himself was concerned. At the time he wrote this he was a prisoner at Rome; he had a chain on one hand with which he was kept bound to a Roman soldier, for thus were Roman prisoners held in custody. It

was in that condition, and from the city, he addressed this epistle. Had he showed no “bowels of mercies”? Let memory dwell upon his shipwrecks, his stripes, his imminent assassination, his being stoned and taken up for dead; and then this chain with which he is bound.

What a proof of his spirit of self-sacrifice do these things offer! Now, these sufferings were indisputable and, alluding to the “conflict” which he had, he exhorts the saints at Philippi in these touching words: - “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.” “Of one mind” - how strong the advice appears when we consider the close sympathy, the oneness of purpose and feeling, existing between the Apostle and Christ. Paul says, ‘He died for me. I bear in my body the dying of the Lord Jesus. I know that bonds and afflictions await me everywhere, but I am ready for the worst extremity, prepared to follow in His steps who suffered so much for me.’

Oh’ how far removed were this disciple and the Master from anything producing a jar, anything approaching discord, however slight. How perfect their unity; how warm and mutual their sympathies and how self-sacrificing they were.

The entreaty of the Apostle is “fulfil ye my joy.” Brethren, let us try to cherish and display this disposition for a week. I venture to affirm that in a remarkable degree we shall discover that it will save us from many disagreeable things. Petty annoyances, malice, wrath; pride will wear a very ugly aspect indeed. Our duty is to be “like minded, having the same love.”

“Let nothing be done through strife and vain glory.” There is nothing about which there has been more strife than about religion; not only strife of words, but clashing of swords. To destroy heretics, “holy men” (so called) have not scrupled to resort to poison and the dagger - in fact, no atrocities have been too shocking for religious partisans to practise; no means of torture too cruel for their mistaken zeal. Happily, people have learned somewhat better; neither is there the same opportunity, for persecution.

We may descend to a lower scale and examine next this matter of “vain glory.”

When we come to the home circle, to our own vicinity, whether among common people or people of a different class, we find much that tends to embitter and mar all that is sweet and good. Our neighbour, our brother, or sister, possesses something which another has not and cannot lawfully obtain; thus a cause of envy; there is a little rancour, a little uneasiness about it. To what does all this amount? Surely to this: that such persons would never be satisfied except on the ruin of society itself; their emotions betray the very essence of selfishness and the more they had the more they would want.

Now, according to the teaching of the Apostle, just the opposite should prevail among us. The prosperity of others should be a source of delight to ourselves. “Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.” What happiness this generous disposition would create - to be glad that other people were enriched and to rejoice in their welfare.

“In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.” This admonition is quite out of harmony with what we too often see manifested. Some walk as though they deemed themselves superior to others. Women are particularly open to the charge of vanity; many evince an amount of affectation which does not at all comport with the Christian character, but is totally opposed to the simplicity, sincerity and humility enjoined by the precepts of the New Testament.

“Let each esteem others better than himself.” How blessed would be the result were this counsel heeded. It is easy to perceive what great mutual benefits would accrue from the exhibition of such a spirit. Paul illustrates his exhortation by reference to the example of the Lord. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ.” He was the Son of God; in certain respects equal with God and far above all men. How does the Apostle enforce this lesson? We should note his words for our practical use. He says, though Jesus “was” in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God. (yet he) made himself of no reputation.”

It would read more intelligibly if the last clause was rendered “did not meditate any usurpation.”

A workman knows what it is for another to try to take his place. Look at the greatness of Christ. God tells us to look on Him as on Himself; and yet, the Saviour did not stalk about Jerusalem boasting I am the Christ; the Sanhedrin is a mere figment' No: He seldom uttered an expression to call attention to Himself, but ever sought to magnify His Father.

We can readily apply these things to ourselves. In our great Exemplar there was no feeling of jealousy, no kind of usurpation; that is not the mind of Christ - He did not parade His own powers and merits; on the contrary, He "made himself of no reputation;" though a Master He behaved as a servant - not an idle servant, but as one who had a mind to work, a zeal to execute His mission. His highest enjoyment seems to have consisted in going about doing good, and alleviating human misery.

"He was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It is very pleasant to look forward to when He shall be seated on the throne of His father David and to picture ourselves placed on His right and on His left, earthly potentates bending down before us; but there is something to be done before then. We must be better than they, for Christ said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven." We must not forget the preparatory stage; this would be acting as did the Jews of old who expected their Messiah to come and reign in great glory, but overlooked His previous humiliation, suffering and death.

The appointment of the Deity is present discipline and humiliation, that we may be meet for future exaltation.

It is true that the prospects of the promised inheritance and of assimilation to the divine nature may make us think highly of ourselves; still, we must also "think soberly."

Let the grace of humility temper all our aspirations, even in view of the glory that awaits us.

Brother Edward Turney.

We are grateful to Brother John Stevenson for sending us the following article entitled, "The Tales Jesus Told" and by way of introduction he writes:

Dear Readers, in submitting this meditation to the C.L. I feel the need to introduce it because some of you would be as hesitant and sceptical as I was when I picked up the book "The Tales Jesus Told" by April Armstrong, who is an American, a Roman Catholic, and a woman.

Two thousand years ago a cynical theologian said "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" But you and I know that the very best thing ever in world history did come out of Nazareth. Given the atrocious violent history, the idolatry, the deceit and the delusive doctrines of "The" church, we might well ask "Can anything good come out of Rome?" But Jesus taught us not to be judgmental, but "by their fruits shall ye know them." So let us taste and see.

Many nominal Christians are strongly opposed to women having a leadership or preaching role. I do not intend to address this question here, except to note that I have heard women give superb testimony. (I have also heard some men similarly). We know that women flocked to hear Jesus; they sat at His feet, they fed Him and ministered to Him, cried at His trial, wept at His tomb. I perceive that those women instantly recognized intuitively that Jesus carried the divine authority He claimed. And today, I suspect that every church and ecclesia in Christendom would disintegrate if women withdrew their attendance, dedication, labour, patronage and devoted ministrations. So let us grant a hearing to this Romans Catholic lady of

Massachusetts who so ably vouches for the spotless Lamb of God. How I would love to be so talented as to witness as admirably as she does.

This first presentation - "The Children who would not Play" - is her second chapter out of forty.

John Stevenson.

* * *

The Tales Jesus Told

INTRODUCTION

A strange man-made wall stands today around the Bible. Our Scriptures are printed on elegantly thin paper, gold-leafed, fragile. An air of sombre remoteness envelops every word. And many have the unconscious impression that Christ's words somehow float in mid-air, held aloft by angels. They forget that Jesus Christ, Son of God, was also Son of Man. He was of earth as well as of heaven.

When He preached in the countryside of Palestine nearly two thousand year ago He was speaking to men and women of all time - to Peter and James, to Mary and Martha, but also to you and to me. And we must learn how best to hear Him. He spoke most often in the story form we call the parable. He would take things of everyday life - yeast in the bread dough, lost money, a runaway son - and use them to spell out eternal truth.

A parable is, really, as the original Greek word says, a comparison. It is not a fable. It is not an allegory, in which words are used figuratively. A parable places two things together so that we may see the likeness - and, incidentally, overlook the difference.

Jesus did not invent the parable. There are parables in the Old Testament and some in the rabbinic literature of the Jews. But Jesus used them as no one else has, with the authority of one who is Master of both the earthly and the divine.

Why did He use parables? Partly to make truth plain, partly to cloak it in mystery. He used parables to make truth plain because His listeners were mostly plain folk, then and now. Few of us feel at home juggling the giant abstractions of life and death, salvation, predestination, grace and free will. We do feel at ease with things we can see and touch, with the divine patterns we see at work here on earth. And when Jesus captures the vast heavens in the pocket mirror of human earthly life we can understand.

But He also used parables to obscure the truth. He would at times interpret the parables only to His disciples and leave the rest of His audience to make what they could of them.

Why was this? Certainly the explanations of the parables were not to be kept secret forever. The explanations He gave to His disciples are in the Bible now for everyone to read. It was for His immediate audience, then and there in Palestine, that obscurity was needed. For one thing, the Jews of the time had many wrong notions of what the Messiah would be and do, often expecting the Christ to be a rebel leader, a political figure rather than a spiritual Saviour. And Christ, when He spoke of His Kingdom, was most careful to speak in parables, feeding the faith of those who sought the spiritual, discouraging those who looked for an earthly kingdom.

We were meant to understand the parables, we who belong to His Kingdom. The trouble today is that, though the obscurity of those times is gone, new obscurities have risen to rob us of the parables' soul impact. There is a veil of language and of changed customs, so that we no longer understand the meaning of a guest's wedding garment, of foot washing, of a shepherd's place in religion. And there is, too, the sad fact that many of us live cut off from the earth, encased in brick and concrete and iron fencing. We do not know the ways

of seed and seedlings, or of sheep, the struggle against drought and weed and wolf and storm. And so we lose the intimate meaning of His teaching.

Our parables today would be of busses and pickpockets, perhaps, of evening newspapers and cups of coffee, of window boxes instead of fields. But such parables would not last. They would have to be remade for our children in terms of rockets and jet engines, of interplanetary space and house keeping problems on a satellite.

Christ told His parables in terms of the things that never change, in the barest fundamentals of living. And we can claim them for our own if we will make the effort to pierce the years with a little study, to breathe the clean air of the countryside and lift our eyes to the stars.

It is good for us to take the evergreen branches of the parables in our hands and look on them with new eyes, till the memory of the heft and odour of them clings to us and perfumes the air we breathe.

For these are truly His tales of life - of life on earth, and of life eternal.

The Children who would not Play

Under other circumstances they might even have liked Jesus.

Some of the older Pharisees felt a stirring in their hearts when they heard Him, but they mistrusted their hearts. He was too young, unsound, and scandalously flighty for a man of God. They saw the joy and freedom of Him, and yearned to follow Him, and they did not dare.

The younger Pharisees were of two minds. Some, the lean earnest ones with youth's hunger for challenge, wrote Him off as too easygoing for their blood. A rabbi who went to dinner parties and spiced sermons with tales was not their idea of a proper spiritual guide.

On the other hand, some of the young ones actually thought Him stodgy. They wanted someone to turn the world upside down. He seemed content to take the world as it was and remake it slowly.

He did not please them. They folded their arms and watched, waiting for Him to woo them to His side.

And Jesus walked and worked among them as if He did not care what they thought of Him. At times He looked at them with the patient, almost quizzle smile of a man who has prepared a surprise that has not yet been discovered.

One thing especially baffled the Pharisees, and that was the connection between this Jesus and John the Baptist. They were the two most notorious religious phenomena of the time, and two more drastically different holy men could not be imagined. They were, oddly enough, cousins. John was only a few months older than Jesus. They were born only a few miles apart. Yet, to qualified outside observers such as the Pharisees, they appeared violently alien, hardly born to breathe the same air or serve the same God.

And still, between them stretched an undeniable bond, as if they were halves of one whole, the dark and light of the same truth. They did not walk together, yet it seemed that if you accepted one you must meet and accept the other.

The people sensed that truth without bothering to explain it. The common folk of the streets and fields, who were not gifted with the lofty wisdom and judgment of the Pharisees, slid easily from John to Jesus. The same ones who had let the Baptist wash them in the river now accepted Jesus as their Master, as if it were the most logical move in the world.

The Pharisees put it down to the fanatic tenor of the times. The people, they said, were hungry for religion of any kind. They would follow anyone who talked of God, though how the same men could be disciples of both John and Jesus was more than they could see.

John set himself up as a prophet in the old tradition. He loomed in the desert with all the fire of a new Elijah. He was a whirlwind, hurling himself against sloth and evil, pounding at men's hearts to open up and repent. His food was winged locusts, wild honey, and tree gum, his clothes of rough camel's hair. Self-discipline, silence, and fasting honed the blade of his zeal. And he burst on the world with the taut call of a heart aching for redemption, like a crescendo of all the echoes of the past: "Repent! The Kingdom of God is at hand."

He was even born, so men said, the way prophets should be born - the prayers of an old childless couple had been answered. And, like other prophets before him, John feared no one. So now John was in prison, in the foul cellars of Herod's palace east of the Dead Sea. Like Jezebel before her, Queen Herodias did not like holy men who called her names she deserved.

The people had thought John might be the Christ. But John made it clear he was not.

He had come to prepare the way for Him, to be His messenger crying in the wilderness. He had baptized men with water as a sign of repentance, and begged them to make ready for the Christ. And John had stretched a bony finger through the dank Jordan air to point to the One. The One He pointed to was Jesus of Nazareth - a man in ordinary clothes, eating ordinary food, a carpenter whom no one in the world could confuse with an ancient prophet.

John had said the Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He had said the Christ would gather the wheat into barns and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The axe was to be laid to the root of the trees...

And here in the market place stood Jesus of Nazareth without fire or axe.

It seemed, to the Pharisees, ridiculous. Compared to John, Jesus was like a spring morning after a night of storm, mild, joyous, a complete anticlimax.

Even the Pharisees had in a way been proud of John's eccentricities. They felt, quite rightly, that only in Israel could such a man be found. It was just that his zeal was excessive. But Jesus of Nazareth did not belong in the picturesque tradition of prophets. For a would-be Messiah, His behaviour was scandalous.

Yet the people who had followed John's austerity now clustered happily around Jesus, and they did not seem to find the contrast ridiculous at all. Two or three of His twelve disciples had been sent to Him by John in the first place. And His miracles had convinced thousands of others. Only last week Jesus had raised a thoroughly dead young man out of his coffin in the middle of his own funeral procession!

It had happened at Nairn, not eight miles from Jesus' home town of Nazareth. With one word Jesus had brought a widow's only son back to life. John the Baptist had never done such a thing. Who had ever raised someone from the dead? Elijah had, at Sunam, which was, come to think of it, quite near Nairn. But Elijah had sweated and prayed and groaned and worked for hours. Jesus of Nazareth had simply spoken, and life and death obeyed. That was enough for the people. To the Pharisees it was only another riddle to ponder.

Far to the south in his dungeon John heard of that miracle and exulted. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus that they might hear from His own lips the truth, the admission that He was the Messiah.

They came to Him, gaunt men of the desert, in the town market. They found Him in the centre of a crowd of people, while the Pharisees stood carefully apart.

"Are you the One who is to come? Or do we look for another?"

The crowd stretched grizzled necks to look at the fire-eyed strangers. The ambassadors of the Baptist faced the Son of Man, and it was like a muted collision of worlds.

Jesus bowed gravely to them. And then He did a strange thing. Without a word He began to walk through the thick throng of the bazaar, stopping first at one unknown and then another.

It was an hour such as the world had never known, one hour of wonder poured upon wonder. He touched an old woman, and her blind eyes saw. A lame boy leaped to his feet. Festering wounds healed to new skin while men blinked an eye. Deaf ears opened. Tumours and growths vanished as He bent over them.

He said nothing. But the crowd, wheeling and turning and pressing after Him, whispered and chattered and gabbled, breaking into hoarse shouts of acclaim, wrenched apart with gladness and astonishment, overcome with the glory of that hour.

At last He came again to the centre of the square. And He said to the two strangers: "Go and tell John what you have heard and seen. The blind see. The lame walk. The lepers are made clean. The deaf hear. The dead rise again. And to the poor the gospel is preached."

Then suddenly He smiled and said: "And blessed is he whoever shall not be scandalized in Me?"

John's messengers understood. The gospel, the good news, was here. The Light of the World had come. The world might not comprehend the Light, but He had come. It was for this that John lay in the darkness, for this that all the prophets had walked the earth.

The messengers of John were not scandalized. The people were not scandalized. They who had trudged to the Jordan to hear John and repented were not surprised by joy. Though they could not have put it in words, they understood that they walked now a bridge between the old and the new - that it was as if from the pain of the past the future was even now being born.

But the Pharisees did not understand. And they were scandalized.

When Jesus spoke again it was of them.

Around Him rustled the smiles and tears of men and women still locked in the impact of miracles. Here and there mothers clung to their children, husbands and wives locked hands, trembling with the sudden gift of health. And beyond that circle, perched in neat caution, aloof from emotions, sat the Pharisees, pale and expressionless, watching in silence.

"To what shall I compare the men of this generation? What are they like? That sad patient smile leaped like a challenge over the heads of the crowd.

"They are like children sitting in the market place, and speaking to one another, and saying: 'We have piped to you and you have not danced! We have mourned, and you have not wept!'"

The throng near Jesus cocked their heads, half puzzled, half amused. Everyone knew the exasperating stubbornness of children who refuse to play - the ones who want to be coaxed, and then delight in sitting back and passing judgement on their friends. They will not be merry. They will not be sad. They sit hugging their loneliness to them like a cloak filched from their parents wardrobe, looking for ways to convince the world that they are not children at all!

A man, not far from Jesus, said under his breath, that when his children acted like that he shook them till they forgot there were such things as moods and tantrums.

A woman, mother of nine snorted. The only thing to do with such children, she said, was to ignore them.

But what did spoiled children have to do with this generation of Pharisees, what kind of parable was this? The Pharisees raised polite eyebrows. The people waited. And then Jesus made His meaning clear beyond all question. He fixed His eyes on the Pharisees and He said: “John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say: ‘He has a devil.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say: ‘Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine!’”

For that instant His voice, usually so firm and clear, was twisted with all the petulance and disdain of His enemies, a mimicry devastatingly accurate.

And from the crowd laughter rose like a sudden cloud to surround the Pharisees. He had used the parable deftly as a dagger, pinning them to the wall with truth.

What would please them? Not the prophets, not the Christ - not repentance or joy, not expectation or fulfilment. They were like children sulking in a corner, unchildlike, proud, half dead to the call of life.

There is a time for weeping and a time for laughter - and both are parts of life. They walk hand in hand, and if you follow one you cannot help but meet the other. Yet there are those who will not yield to any call, those too sullen to be stirred - the Pharisees of then and now.

Only a childlike heart is wise enough to weep and to dance in season, young enough to feel both winter and spring, to quicken to the rhythm of dark and dawn. The children who will not play, the children who wear the mask of judgment, will be left sitting in the market place alone.

“Wisdom,” He said, “will be justified by all her children.”

Jesus smiled. Through the crowd the two disciples of John made their way, carrying with them the treasure and the light of joy they had found. And the Pharisees, arms folded, sucked their cheeks, as if testing the bitter taste of scandal.

He turned and left them there in the market place to find their own way home.

A Few Interesting References Rejecting the Belief & Teaching of Natural Decay & Death being the Penalty Imposed of God for the Sin of the World in Eden

(A few thoughts ‘inspired’ by a reading through Ecclesiastes)

Logical reasoning and discrimination (unbiased) is necessary in reading.

Ecclesiastes 2:24-26:- “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw that it was from the hand of God. For who can eat, or who else can hasten hereunto more than I? For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God.

Ecclesiastes 3:12.13:- “I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour; it is the gift of God.”

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3:- “So I returned and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors

there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.”

Ecclesiastes 5:12 & 18-20:- “The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep... that which I have seen; it is good and comely for one to eat and to drink and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him: for it is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion and to rejoice in his labour: this is the gift of God.”

Ecclesiastes 7:1 & 15-17:- “A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth... All things have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is a just man that perisheth in his righteousness, and there is a wicked man that prolongeth his life in his wickedness. Be not righteous overmuch; neither make thyself overwise: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?”

Ecclesiastes 8:8 & 12-15:- “There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit, neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it... Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.”

Ecclesiastes 9:1 & 12:- “For all this I considered in my heart even to declare all this, that the righteous and the wise, and their works are in the hand of God... For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”

Let it be understood that after sin entered the world and death by sin; by contrast, the Love and Mercy of God was revealed through the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus the way of Salvation from the power of Sin. Colossians 1:26,27.

Genesis 3:16 - 24. Cherubims to keep the way of the Tree of Life. This speaks of Life, not natural death as the penalty.

Genesis 3:20, this speaks of Eve, the mother of all living, not dying.

Genesis 3:21. Sins covered through the blood of the lamb provisionally

Genesis 3:22. Adam renewed in knowledge. A new man, not in physical flesh but in mind, knowing good as well as evil.

See Colossians 3:9,10 Also Genesis 5:1-3.

No change of nature here but Redemption from the penalty for sin, i.e. inflicted death, as a sentence in the day of disobedience.

If the sentence of judicial death had not been remitted through God’s providence and will, of what use would the knowledge of good and evil be to Adam? Yet he must have made good use of it in the fact that Abel offered sacrifice, even a more excellent sacrifice than that of Cain, as Paul informs us: “and by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” Would anyone dare to say there was no injustice in the death of Righteous Abel? Yet of one greater than Abel it has been said of His crucifixion on Calvary that there was no injustice in His death. Why then did God raise Him from the tomb? If Abel’s offering was distinctly in contrast with that of Cain, from whom, white outside the Garden of Eden, did Abel receive instruction in the Way of the Lord unto righteousness?

And why should Adam instruct him, and for that matter, the Lord God Himself, if the penalty was natural decay, death and return to dust? Why would Adam or any of his posterity have any regard for such matters? They could think in a similar way as did Paul on such a hopeless position and declare, “If in this

life only we have hope in God, we are of all men most miserable” - “Let us eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.”

Was there any evidence that they would rise from the dust? If natural death and return to dust were the penalty upon Adam, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, the Patriarchs, Moses and the Prophets and all of like faith, then in no way was that penalty removed, they receive in that context of things, the wages of Master Sin, having not changed to a New Master by being made free.

But let us consider seriously what is written of the above named and others of like faith - “they obtained a good report through faith.” These all died in faith awaiting the time when, with those who are Christ’s at His coming, they will be made perfect, that is, incorruptible like Him, their former characters renewed in them by the power of the Spirit. As was the case with Jesus when raised.

Again I stress upon you, if natural death and return to dust be the penalty passed upon all men, why did God show such longsuffering in the days of Noah and why did He bother to save Noah and his family? Would not the answer be that Noah was already in a redeemed and reconciled relationship to God in contrast with those who had by their wicked works, corrupted God’s way? Another question arises here; how could they have corrupted His way if they had not known it? And being outside the Garden of Eden, who would have taught them? This same question involves all Adam’s posterity to the time of Noah. There was God’s way in the following of Abel, and man’s way in the following of Cain, who was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth.

Natural death as a result of our created corruptible nature has been described by the author of Eureka as the law of sin and death, but seeing that he recognized Adam was created in a nature destined to decay and death without a change to incorruption by the power of the Creator to prevent it, he was therefore incorrect, for Paul needed no change to incorruption to be made free from the law of sin and death, he was still in corruptible nature when he made the statement in Romans 8:2, “For the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” It is impossible then, that this should be a physical law of our nature.

Why then do we find such declarations of opposition to Paul’s statement in Clause VI of the Christadelphian Statement of their Faith, “That God conceived a plan of restoration without setting aside His just and necessary law of sin and death to rescue the race from destruction through a condemned Christ? Did not Jesus set it aside when He gave His life willingly on the tree, a sinless life for the sinner, the just for the unjust, that all might die in symbol the death by sin which had passed upon all men?”

Robert Roberts fell into his own trap on the subject of Enoch in his book “The Visible Hand of God.” He both asked and answered his own question on the basis of his own false understanding that natural death was the penalty for sin - “Enoch being translated that he should not see death how did he escape that penalty?” He then goes on to explain that Enoch experienced symbolic death in associating himself with the death of the lamb in Eden, in God supplying the provisional covering for the sin of Adam and all in his loins, if they chose it by belief and faith.

Is not this the position in a clearer sense for those worthy saints at the coming of Christ? Changed in the twinkling of an eye to incorruptibility? If the law of sin and death be not set aside through the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ, I.e. by faith, not change of nature, then Clause VI consigns you to oblivion. What think ye?

Brother Phil Parry.

Last year we circulated a booklet entitled “Eric Cave’s Review of ‘Death and Life - The Consequences of Adam’s Sin and Their Removal In Christ’” by Brother Chris Maddocks. This booklet contained correspondence between Brother Eric Cave and Brother Tony Benson, Editor of “The Testimony” magazine in which Chris Maddocks’ articles appeared.

In that correspondence Tony Benson wrote: “At the end of the series I may decide to review some aspects of it in an article, taking into account the points you (Eric Cave) made and others received.”

The following, which was published in the June issue of “The Testimony,” would appear to be the article referred to by Tony Benson, though he makes no particular mention of Chris Maddocks articles:

The Nature of man and the work of Christ **- Some passages considered**

In the past year or so the question of the correct interpretation of various passages of Scripture has cropped up in various items of correspondence received. These are all generally to do with sin, the nature of man and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with sin. Having been caused to think or rethink the meaning of these passages, I decided to write up my conclusions in the form of this article. The passages are dealt with in the order of their occurrence in Scripture and not in relation to any particular piece of correspondence received. I have tried to deal with each one without any preconceived ideas as to what they mean, considering carefully each verse in its context.

Psalm 58:3. “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.” Is this speaking in general terms of mankind and therefore establishing the general principle of the innate wickedness of human nature? It appears not, for, “the wicked” here contrasts with “the righteous” later on in the Psalm (vv.10,11), and consists of David’s enemies. Moreover, verse 3 is not literally true, for newborn babes cannot speak either truth or lies. It surely refers to the fact that children brought up in a wicked environment themselves grow up to be wicked; wickedness comes out in their characters from the earliest age. Nevertheless, although David is not here making a general point about human nature, his words do support the idea that there is nothing good about human nature, otherwise sin would not come out so readily in those brought up in an evil environment-

Ezekiel 18:4,20 “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” Is this making a general statement about the human race? It does not appear so, for the following verses speak of one who does right, concluding with the words, “he is just, he shall surely live” (v.9). Likewise verse 21 says that if the wicked turns from his evil ways “he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Amongst the Jews there were those who were wicked in their ways, who would die eternally, and those who sought in faith to do God’s will who would live eternally. These verses are not parallel to Romans 6:23 (see below).

John 15:22 “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.” This verse is quoted to show that only those who have knowledge of God’s law are sinners. However, it is clearly not talking about this; the Jews to whom Christ referred certainly would have known the Law of Moses and would have broken it at some stage. The passage goes on to say: “If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin” (v.24).

If the passage is establishing a general principle, then the principle would be that only those who actually heard Christ speak and saw his miracles are sinners - a conclusion which would mean, for example, that those who broke the Law in Old Testament times were not sinners. This is clearly wrong. The passage must be referring to the particular culpability of those who rejected Christ after hearing his preaching, backed up by miracles.

Romans 4:15 “For the law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (RV). Again this passage is quoted to show that only those under God’s law are sinners. However, this verse is not talking about sinning but transgressing, the breaking of the law. The two are not synonymous; to transgress means to break a commandment which you have knowledge of, and that is what the Greek word *parabasis* always means in the New Testament. Clearly people cannot break a law if there is no law to break.

Romans 5:13 “For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” The second half of this verse is quoted for the same purpose as the two previous quotations, yet the whole verse proves the opposite, for the first part of the verse shows that sin was in the world prior to the giving of the Law of Moses.

People sin when their conduct is not in accordance with God’s standards of righteousness, whether they are aware of these standards or not. However, those who were not under God’s law did not sin “after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” (v.14); they were not guilty of breaking laws that they knew about, in contrast to Adam, who did. The word translated “imputed” in verse 13 means ‘to lay to one’s charge,’ and must refer here to responsibility before God at the judgment seat- Those who live in ignorance of God’s laws are sinners but not transgressors, and are not accountable to God at the judgment seat.

Romans 5:19 “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man shall many be made righteous.” The question here is, What is the significance of the word ‘made’?

The Greek word translated ‘made’ here is not one of the common words for ‘made.’ People are not literally made sinners by Adam’s disobedience, nor are they literally made righteous by Christ’s obedience. Those in Christ will ultimately become truly righteous beings, but this is not what the verse is talking about.

The word is *kathistemi*, and it literally means ‘to place, or set down, permanently.’ What the use of this word seems to indicate is that men and women are set down in a constitution or order of things in which sin is inevitable. This is primarily because all mankind has a weak, sin-prone nature inherited from Adam. Also, all have to grow up in an environment that is inherently sinful, in a world of sin where sin reigns supreme. Jesus, by his perfect obedience unto death, brought into being a new order of things in which righteousness is possible, because through him there is forgiveness of sins and the counting of people as righteous through faith.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The question here is, Can the words, “the wages of sin is death” be applied to all mankind in general, or do they apply only to those who continue in sin after baptism? Are the wages of sin awarded specifically at the judgment seat to the unworthy, or does the phrase refer to the death that comes upon all mankind?

There is no doubt that the passage of which this is the conclusion is addressed to believers, who are being warned that if they continue in their old sinful ways after baptism they will die eternally. However, the sin of this passage is not solely sin which is committed after coming to a knowledge of the Truth, for the first verse of the chapter says: “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” ‘Sin’ therefore exists prior to baptism; people sin when they do that which is not right before God, whether they are aware of it or not.

The phrase, “wages of sin,” is of course linked to the idea of being a servant of sin, which occurs right through Romans 6. Does the idea of being a servant to sin apply only to those who, having been baptized, live a sinful way of life, or are people the servants of sin before they are baptized? The latter is the case, for Paul says in verse 6 that at baptism “our old man was crucified with (Christ), that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin” (RV). Believers were servants of sin before baptism, are released from this at baptism, but if they continue in a sinful life go back to that bondage. Paul says the same thing in verse 17: “God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” Believers were the servants of sin before their baptism.

The conclusion is that, since all sinners are the servants of sin, not just those who live sinful lives after baptism, the phrase “wages of sin” refers to the death that comes upon all men and women, and not to the additional condemnation placed upon those liable to judgment.

Romans 8:3 “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” What does the phrase “likeness of sinful flesh” indicate here? Is the word “likeness” included to draw a distinction between Jesus and ourselves, that he was like us but not the same as us, or is it there to indicate similarity between Jesus

and ourselves? If it is the former then “likeness” indicates that Jesus, unlike us, did not sin. If the latter then “likeness” indicates that Jesus inherited the same tendency to sin that we have (though of course he always resisted it).

Both from the context and Scripture elsewhere, I believe the latter to be the case. In sending His Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” God “condemned sin in the flesh.” Sin had to be condemned in the place where it takes place, where it is committed, that is, in human flesh. “Sinful flesh,” or “flesh of sin” as the Greek literally means, therefore refers to human nature in which there is a natural pull towards sin. This was fully possessed by Jesus, but the pull towards sin was always resisted by him and so was condemned.

The same word is used of Jesus in Philippians 2:7, where it says that he was “made in the likeness of men.” Was Jesus actually man? Certainly he was. Was Jesus “sinful flesh”? Yes, but not in the sense of being a sinner, only in the sense of having a nature with a natural tendency towards sin which had to be overcome, and was overcome. Hebrews 2:17 says that Jesus was “in all things... made like unto his brethren,” and this includes having the nature which we bear, with its pull towards sin.

Romans 8:19-22 “For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.” The question here is, is “the creature” in this passage referring to the whole of the natural creation or just to the new creation in Christ?

The first point to note is that, though the AV has ‘creature’ in verses 19-21 and ‘creation’ in verse 22, the Greek word *ktisis* is used in all cases. The word is used in the New Testament both of the natural creation in general (Mk- 10:6; 2 Pet. 3:4) and of the new creation of men and women in Christ, both collectively (Rev. 3:14) and of individuals (2 Cor.5:17;Gal.6:15). Which meaning applies in this passage? Both the context and the wording of the passage indicates that Paul is talking here about the new creation.

The verses preceding the passage are talking about the children of God and in particular their sufferings (vv. 16-18). The passage we are looking at begins with the word “For,” and surely therefore continues in that theme of the sufferings of the children of God in this present life. The “creature” or “creation” of these verses is therefore the new creation in Christ.

The wording of these verses is consistent with this. Verse 19 says that the creation “waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” This is not true of the creation in general or even of mankind in general. In verse 20 the creation is said to be “subjected” to “vanity” but “in hope.” It is believers in Christ who live in hope for the future (vv.24,25), not creation as a whole. Verse 21 speaks of the creation being “delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.” It is only believers in Christ who will be delivered from corruption to glorious liberty, freedom for ever from the bondage of sin and death.

When we consider verses 22 and 23 together, however, it looks at first sight as though the apostle is contrasting creation in general, “the whole creation,” with believers in particular. However, to whom does the phrase “ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit” relate? Surely not to believers as a whole but to the Spirit-guided eldership of the ecclesias in the first century, of which Paul was part. The phrase “firstfruits of the Spirit” is the equivalent of “the earnest of the Spirit” in 2 Corinthians 1:22:5:5; that is, the foretaste of “powers of the world to come” (Heb.6:5). Paul is saying that those who possessed these miraculous powers in the first century, which will be possessed by all the saints in the Kingdom, still suffered the travail that comes as a result of Adam’s sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “For He (God) made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” In what sense was Jesus “made... sin”? Does it refer to the fact that he had our sin-prone nature, or is there some other explanation?

To say that Jesus was made sin in the sense that he had our sin-prone nature does not seem to make much sense here. To say that Jesus was “made... sin... who knew no sin” indicates that he “knew no sin”

before being “made... sin.” This would only be true if Jesus existed before his birth by Mary, which of course he did not. He was firstborn of our sin-prone nature, then overcame that nature, knowing no sin. We have to find an explanation of the verse that involves Jesus first knowing no sin and then being made sin.

One explanation sometimes given is that the word translated ‘sin’ here (*hamartia*) can mean ‘sin offering;’ Jesus, who committed no sin, was made the offering for our sins. *Hamartia* is the word used in the Septuagint for ‘sin offering,’ and probably carries this meaning in Romans 8:3, where the phrase “for sin” should probably be rendered “for a sin offering.”

Another explanation is that Jesus was made sin in the sense that he suffered death as though he were a sinner, whereas he was in fact sinless and did not deserve to die. This balances well with the rest of the verse, and overcomes the difficulty stated above regarding “sin” meaning “sin-prone human nature.” First he lived a sinless life, he did not know sin, then he suffered as though he was a sinner, in order that we, who are sinners might be made (counted or reckoned, as in Romans 4) righteous. In this interpretation, the verse balances out nicely, though it may seem to be stretching the meaning of “made... sin.”

Hebrews 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) 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.” Does “the devil” here represent sin or the Jewish authorities who were responsible for killing Jesus? The word translated “destroy” here is *katargeo*, which means literally ‘to reduce to inactivity,’ or, less literally, ‘to make of none effect.’ It can be argued that Jesus made the role of the Jewish leaders of no effect by his death; but, on the other hand, did the Jewish authorities have the power of death? The fact that they had to get the Romans to put Jesus to death shows that they did not.

There has to be a connection between that fact that Jesus was a partaker of our nature, as the first part of the verse states, and the destroying, or making of none effect, of the devil. If the devil here represents the Jewish authorities then it is difficult to see what the connection is. (The same point applies to the orthodox Christian view of the devil as a supernatural evil being), If the devil stands here for sin, then there is such a connection. Jesus had our nature that he might be “in all points tempted like as we are,” and that for the first time sin might be defeated in human flesh, and its power to bring death made of none effect for those who are the “many sons,” Christ’s “brethren” and “children” of the preceding 17 verses.

Also, if the devil destroyed or brought to nought in verse 14 was the Jewish authorities, how did this “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage,” as the following verse says? If, however, the devil of verse 14 was sin in general we can see that bringing to nought sin does indeed deliver people from bondage and the fear of death.

Hebrews 7:26,27 “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.” Is there a comparison here between the high priest under the Law, with Jesus in some sense offering for himself, or is there a contrast here, with Jesus as the sinless one not needing to offer for himself, only for the people?

The question revolves round what the word “this” in verse 27 refers to; is it the whole of “first for his own sins, and then for the people’s,” or just “the people’s”? There would seem to be little point in referring to the high priest offering “first for his own sins” as well as “for the people’s” if this was not part of the type fulfilled by Jesus. There is clearly a contrast here, but the contrast is between the high priests under the law offering “daily” and Jesus offering “once,” and between the fact of the high priest having to offer separately for himself and for the people whilst Jesus made one offering, himself.

This view of the verse is consistent with the overall teaching of the epistle, which culminates in Jesus being “brought again from the dead... through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (13:20). Chapter 5 begins: “For every high priest taken from among men... is compassed with infirmity;” and the point being made is that this is so that he can “have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way.”

The chapter goes on to say that such a priest “ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.” Again we ask, Is the writer making a comparison between Jesus and the high priests under the Law, or

a contrast? The context shows it is the former, for in the previous chapter Jesus is presented as being “not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (4:15).

Later in chapter 5 Jesus is spoken of as having prayed earnestly for salvation “out of death” 9 v.7, RV mg.). The conclusion is, again, that Jesus in some sense fulfilled the type by making an offering for his “sin.” This “sin” was not, of course, sins which he committed, for there were none, so it must refer to the infirmity of human nature which he bore, mortality and a capacity for sin. Scripture presents Jesus as one who bore our nature and needed to be saved from it. He not only had our mortality but he had also our capacity to respond to temptation by sinning, though he never actually sinned. Through his life of perfect obedience, culminating in his willing offering of himself upon the cross, he secured both his own salvation from our nature and also the salvation of his followers, which Scripture presents as one work. I do not believe that we diminish him by speaking of him in such terms; rather, we exalt him, for what a wonderful thing it was that one who suffered all the temptations that we have should triumph over them all under such difficulties, and all so that we might be saved from the consequences of our sins!

Tony Benson.

In response to the above article. Brother Eric Cave wrote to Brother Tony Benson as follows:

Dear Brother Tony, I have been asked to comment on your article in the June Testimony under the heading “The nature of Man and the Work of Christ - Some passages considered.”

May I first say how pleased I am to see that you distance yourself from the objectionable, and in my view blasphemous views on the nature of Christ, so intimately connected with His work, as expressed in the series by C.Maddocks last year. Yet at the same time I am bound to say that I believe your considerations to be more notable for what is omitted than for what you have written.

There are no secrets about the nature of man as God created him. He was “very good;” nor is there any proof that his progeny are born different from Adam in any way, but as John Thomas declared, that ‘goodness’ was of an animal and physical nature, for God created him as a terrestrial and not a celestial creature. There are no other categories of ‘life.’ We can choose evil or we can choose good, we can reject our Creator, or we can obey His laws. If we reject Him and choose evil we perish. If we obey Him (Biblically expressed as ‘walking in spirit’) then we are promised a change of nature from terrestrial to celestial in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when our Lord returns. These are the simple scriptural facts about human nature. Sadly Christadelphian eyes have been shut and ears closed by a Statement of Faith which requires them to understand that their Redeemer whilst sinless and undefiled must at the same time be a physically condemned and defiled sacrifice, aided and abetted by editorial policies which suppress all expression of doubt and refuse to publish any criticism of their faulty Statement of Faith. You may believe that you have considered the selected passages of your article ‘in their context’ but in this writers opinion you have omitted many other relevant other Scriptures which testify that our present sinful characters (not our corruptible nature) acquired rather than genetically inherited as the Statement of Faith requires. What is the point of divinely granted freedom of choice, if that freedom is overruled by a genetically implanted ‘physical law in our members,’ which causes us to do evil?

You have chosen to begin with Psalm 58:3, “The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” and whilst your facts are correct it is not true that David’s words support the idea that there is nothing good about human nature. Are the righteous evil? Sin is matter of choice; it is not inherent within man, although continual yielding to Sin might make it appear so. But surely the words “as soon as they be born” should suggest what Jesus said about ‘little children’ namely “suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven” yet according to the BASF little children are ‘born sinners.’ So who is right? The Scripture or the BASF? Why not admit that the truth that the work of Jesus was to redeem mankind from that “vain conversation received by tradition from our father’s” as expressed in 1 Peter 1:18.

Ezekiel 18:4 “The soul that sinneth it shall die” and verse 20, “The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son.” How many times have we all heard verse 4 bracketed with “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God” from Christadelphian platforms? Despite the ambiguity of your comments on these passages in Ezekiel I am pleased to note that the soul that sins, it shall die, is not a general statement about the human race. But I have never heard a Christadelphian speaker ask, “Which death does the prophet refer to?” Never have I heard anyone suggest that it could be the ‘second’ death rather than the common death of all men clearly defined by Moses in Numbers 16:29.

John 15:22 “If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin... If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.” You correctly conclude that the passage is referring to the particular culpability of those who rejected Christ after hearing his preaching backed up by miracles. But that is only half the story, the complete picture is outlined for example in Romans 2; the whole of that chapter is relevant and none more so than the verse which says “For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.” Add to that Galatians 3:22, “The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe or Romans 11:32, “God hath concluded them all in unbelief that He might have mercy on all,” then the inevitable conclusion must be that our destiny is in our own hands and we are not constrained by some implanted ‘bias to sin’ as required by the BASF. God knows those who are His and He is engaged in taking out of the Gentiles a people for His Name. The Scriptures are provided for that purpose and those who don’t want to know will be laid like sheep in the grave. These comments apply also to Romans 4:15 and 5:13.

Romans 5:19 “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of 19 one many be made righteous.” This passage raises the obvious question in relation to Christadelphian teaching that God implanted a ‘bias to sin’ within the flesh of mankind subsequent to Adam’s sin to make us all sinners. So why does not the obedience of one make us all righteous? You query the significance of the word ‘made’ and claim that kathistemi literally means ‘to place, or set down permanently’ and that what the word seems to indicate is that men and women are set down in a constitution or order of things in which sin is inevitable, which cannot be true otherwise Christ could never have been sinless. Nor is it true that this occurs because mankind has a weak sin-prone nature inherited from Adam, and has to grow up in an environment inherently sinful. Scripture says, “Reject the devil and he will flee from you.” Vine says that the word ‘made’ is used in the same way as in Acts 2:36 to mean “appoint.” When Adam sinned he yielded himself servant (bond-slave) to Sin. He appointed himself and all his subsequent progeny to that condition, a legal technical situation in which his only wages were ‘death’ and from which there was no escape unless a near kinsman purchased his freedom by suffering that same judicially inflicted death. The divine plan involved God concluding all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to THEM THAT BELIEVE.” John tells us that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of Sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The mistake you made here is in printing the word ‘Sin’ with a lower case ‘s’ as if it were a verb instead of a name personifying the diabolos. Compare; - Verse 16, “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey his servants ye are to whom ye obey.”

Verse 20, “For when ye were the servants of Sin ye were free from righteousness.”

Verse 22, “But now being made free from Sin (having been purchased [redeemed] by the blood of Christ) and become servants to God.”

Romans 8:3 Really Tony you know quite well that the phrase “sinful flesh” in this verse is incorrect. It should be Sin’s flesh, or flesh of Sin, as Brother and Sister Walker were so careful to point out In “Romans In The Light Of John’s Gospel” and as John Thomas recognized subsequent to publishing “Elpis Israel,” and both corrected and contradicted in “Eureka.” Nowhere in Scripture are we told that Jesus inherited a bias to sin, any more than we do. Sin is acquired as we grow up. Every human child is born as Adam was created “very good” as 1 Peter 1:18 proves, and especially of believers Paul says “the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now are they holy” and Peter says “God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” Why complicate Scripture by assumptions without

proof. Of Jesus it was prophesied “butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Romans 8:18-22 If you look more critically at this passage and also at Mark 10:6 and 2 Peter 3:4 you will find that *ktisis* does not necessarily refer to the whole natural creation. Vine asserts that “it is a significant confirmation of Romans 1:21 that in all none Christian literature the word is never used by the Greeks to convey the idea of a creator or of a creative act by any of their gods - the word is confined by them to the acts of human beings.

2 Corinthians 5:21 Please consider - the only written Scriptures possessed by the recipients of this letter would be the LXX where the word *harmartia* is rendered over 120 times as ‘sin-offering’ as well as ‘sin.’ They would therefore understand that Paul was saying “For he hath made him to be a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

Hebrews 2:14 “Forasmuch then as the children (His brethren, see v 11-13) 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, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (until Christ purchased them with His own blood).” Paul says in 9:26 “but now once in the end of the *aonion* hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” He also says “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death.” John confirms with, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from ALL SIN” which should surely be sufficient to dispense with the speculations about Jewish authorities or defeating sin in human flesh you have introduced.

Hebrews 7:26,27. O dear! O dear! Having gone so far in admitting the significant points in my reviews of Chris Maddocks’s work you now revert to tradition and ignore what I wrote about Jesus having to offer for Himself. The contrast is between the two offerings of the Levitical priesthood and the one offering of our Saviour, who in any case would not even have been eligible for the office of Levitical priesthood as He sprang from Judah. It is not between the daily offerings of the Mosaic priests and the once for all offering of His own body to redeem those who choose to grasp that salvation. How could Jesus have to offer for Himself when Daniel testifies that His ‘cutting off was “not for himself”? There is no verse in Scripture to even suggest that Jesus had to offer for His own sins. You are illogical in suggesting that because Jesus could be touched with the feelings of OUR infirmities then He must also have shared our sinful characters. For your suppositions to be admissible you would need to demonstrate an equation between a Levitical priest and a Melchizedec priest, which you cannot do.

With love in the Master’s service, Eric (Cave).

We continue with the fourth portion of Brother F.J.Pearce’s

“A Review of The Slain Lamb”

Page 14, paragraph 3: “If Christ had refused to do that which was commanded, would not that have been sin?” etc. We can easily put in our ifs and buts, but in this case it does not support R.Roberts’ argument at all. The request of God to Jesus was not compulsion. Jesus knew that it was for this cause that He came into the world and to this end was He born. (John 18:37). We will now take R.Roberts upon his own ground. Has he not already agreed that the law was ordained to eternal life? Has he not agreed that if one kept it he would obtain eternal life. Yes. Well, did Jesus keep it both in letter and in Spirit? He did. Did He not then earn eternal life? Certainly He did. What did Jesus mean when He said “Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remaineth alone” (John 12:24)? Do we require any more plain teaching than this? Jesus was entitled to eternal life apart from His one great act of obedience which was for us. Were it not for His supreme act in dying there would have been no bringing forth much fruit, as we would be still in need of redemption. **But R.Roberts is emphasizing the fact that it was a commandment and to break a commandment was to sin.** We ask here, does God command every man to lay down his life as an extra command to obeying Him in a manner which He is pleased with? Was this command an element of the law which He kept perfectly? Don’t be dazzled by R.Roberts’ fine flourish of words. It was for us that He was

obedient unto the death of the cross, wherein was God's love manifested towards us in giving Him. When Jesus said, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me" He knew that it was the Father's will for it not to pass and also the reason why, but, what made Him utter the words "If it be possible" at all? Had He not wholly honoured His Father's name in the earth? The apostle says, "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "But if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Surely, it is not a carnal mind that speaks thus. Why command Jesus to lay down His life if it was for Himself as much as any other man? Only Jesus could possibly receive that command because He was the only one produced for that very purpose. The law did not claim the life of Jesus because it cursed Him. Sin claimed the life of Adam for breach of law, and God, by being just in not making the law death being the wages of sin of none effect, raised up Jesus who willingly paid sin's claim so that release from it may be made by just means. One sin, of Adam; one act, of Jesus, not a multitude of obedient acts of a lifetime for one sin, but the shedding of His blood, though His obedient life was necessary before He could have been fit to accomplish this one act. God forgives a hundred and one worse sins than that of Adam. The one sin of Adam was the means of the institution of God's plan of salvation upon a Just principle, which is solely of His own love and grace. Yes, Christ has made us free. If He was not free Himself, then the following Scripture would equally apply to Him - "While they promise them liberty (or freedom) they themselves are servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage" (2 Peter 2:19). Thank God He was the Son of the free and could therefore, offer freedom to the captives of sin. **R.Roberts says, "The law obtained the utmost triumph it could claim."** We have previously pointed out that the death of Christ was sin's claim, not the law's. Throughout the paragraph R.Roberts fails to discriminate between the righteousness which is of the law and the righteousness which is of God through faith. What righteousness was Christ the end of the law for? Why the righteousness which was of the law, because He was the substance of what the law prefigured and, **as R.Roberts quotes lower down, "ye are become dead to the law (ordinances of) by the body of Christ (the substance).**

Page 15, paragraph 2. We have been dealing with one curse that R.Roberts laid to Jesus; now, in this paragraph we have another one laid upon Him - the hereditary curse of Adam - physical. This is another invented phrase which is not found nor supported in the Scriptures. This physical condemnation is the root of all the controversy that has split the Christadelphian household and shaken it to its very foundations. We need not repeat again what sin is, as scripturally defined. **R.Roberts has said in several of his writings, "How could sin be condemned in the body of Jesus if it wasn't there?"** Impossible, we say. You cannot condemn a rat in a barrel if it isn't there, but if it is there you can at least make it stoop and come out leaving its body intact. If corruption was the price of sin, Jesus did not pay that. He saw no corruption. R.Roberts' quotation of Hebrews 2:14 here proves what we contend for, not what he contends for. Jesus destroyed him (sin personified - the devil), not that physical body. He destroyed sin that had the power of death, which would be eternal. That sin was the sin all are concluded under and He did not destroy it in His own flesh, but He had to be flesh to do it. The life of His flesh was what He laid down as the ransom price, not a body already physically condemned to remove that physical condemnation as Christadelphian logic would have it. Oh, the fallacy!

Page 15, paragraph 3. We have already dealt with the seed of Abraham and David and have scripturally proved how Jesus came in the female line. R.Roberts seems to see nothing in the seed of Abraham but the natural descent. **Regarding his statement "What ground is there for the contradictory proposition that Jesus wore the nature of David, which was mortal (we say, corruptible) and was not Himself mortal?"** We say emphatically that this is a gross misrepresentation of E.Turney's contention. E.Turney suggests that the term mortal was a legal term (E.Turney's, lecture, page 22). His usage of the term never contradicted the fact that Jesus was of the same nature as Abraham, David, or any other son of Adam. His death is proof of that. He was made of a woman for the suffering of death, but not of the will of the flesh. He received His life direct from God (Luke 1) though that life was not a different kind of life than ours. The only difference was that He received it direct from God and not via the will of the flesh. The only difference between Jesus and ourselves was legal. He had to be legally free to remove a legal condemnation. Made, physically, in all points like unto His brethren, yet without sin. Without sin in not being under the sin that all were included under, and also in that He did not sin. If the condemnation was physical, why a miraculous begetting of the same nature to remove it? The very fact of Jesus being of our nature and born of the spirit of God would be all sufficient to show that the condemnation was legal and to scatter the physical condemnation theory of a just God physically shackling every individual, including Jesus, for a sin they did not themselves commit, to the four winds of Heaven. We have considered Christ being free and have

produced the evidence. If He was not free in the manner we contend, not as R.Roberts misrepresents E.Turney as contending, then you make Him an impostor. Read Matthew 11:28; 17:26; John 1:14; 8:23,36; 10:10; Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:1.

Page 16, paragraph 2. “Free life is a myth - a mere invention. Its advocates do not prove the starting point.” That is exactly what E.Turney did do, viz., prove the starting point. We have also done the same throughout this review, viz., shown how it was necessary for Jesus to be legally free, to ransom those who were in legal bondage. If we contended for free life in the manner that R.Roberts tells his brethren, we agree that we could not prove the starting point. The whole book is a complete misrepresentation of what E.Turney taught, in order to bolster up the theory of a physically condemned Jesus. As we stated in our opening remarks, it was an easy matter for him to misrepresent E.Turney in writing a book, which he would not have had the opportunity to do in debate without making a very bad impression upon the audience. **R.Roberts often asks, “Where is the proof?”** We claim the same privilege and ask, where is the proof that Jesus was under the double curse - Adamic and Mosaic?

Page 16, paragraph 3. “This heresy represents God as doing wrong, for it says of Christ, the Lamb of God, Here is free life. If so, why should a free life die?” We have explained this enough to show that R.Roberts is continually beating the air in opposing a theory that the other side does not contend for. Have we not explained, as E.Turney explained in R.Roberts’ presence, that the life Jesus had in the days of His flesh was the same kind of life that anyone else has? Was it not the same life which He laid down on Calvary? Was not the life of His flesh that He laid down on Calvary the same life that God caused to come into existence by His Holy Spirit operating upon Mary? **The statement regarding “this heresy represents God as doing wrong”** is applicable to Christadelphianism who represents God as doing wrong by contending that He has poured out His wrath upon all Adam’s descendants and Jesus in physically condemning them before they are born, when God plainly tells us that His wrath is only against transgressors. Condemned nature - where is it in the Bible? Prove that it is there and your arguments will harmonize; otherwise yours is the rope of sand, not ours.

Page 17, paragraph 1. This paragraph proves our point that God has done what no son of Adam (Psalm 49) or any law could do. We have shown that the law was not weak through the flesh being physically condemned and also that those of flesh did keep it. The divine impress developed in the child Jesus who was separate (holy) from birth (Luke 1) but was not physically different from any other child. The fact that the power of the Highest caused the germination and formation of a child in nine months according to the ordinary gestatory period does not prove that He was the seed of David according to the flesh via the will of the flesh. It proves the exact opposite by the fact that the Holy Spirit was the cause. Just one question here, can you give one instance in animal life where the female supplies the life germ? No, you cannot. Hence God was His Father. He was born of Mary for the very purpose that we have pointed out, viz., that He could lay down the life of His flesh which was in the blood as the equivalent ransom price of what sin claimed. It has been argued thus: you cannot have blood without life; therefore the blood of Mary during the gestatory period supplied the life of Jesus. Ask yourself this question here’, was not Adam created a natural man with all the natural organism including blood before God breathed into His nostrils the breath of life? There is no use in dividing things up with regard to the conception and birth of Jesus. It was all of God, so that He could be legally free and the only one legally free.

Page 17, paragraph 2- R.Roberts says, “I have not altered on this question.” That is only his statement, yet he has made many others that flatly contradict what he is now contending for; yes, statements that are the very pith and marrow of our belief. But he has ever had to change his garb in order to uphold his condemned nature theory. **He continues: “I cannot say as the leading champion of this heresy said, ‘I have taught it for fifteen years from the platform without understanding it (Christadelphianism).’”** E.Turney, like Paul, had the courage of his own convictions. Paul was as zealous as any for a thing that was not true, but when he found that what he had believed and done, thinking he was doing God service, was untrue, he was not ashamed to change - yea, he was willing to stand alone if necessary. There is more honour in E.Turney’s admission than in R.Roberts’ boast that he has passed the investigation state and that it needed a long spiritual education to understand this question, which question is the first principle. Eden teaching the necessity of Calvary. Where is the simplicity that is in Christ? We feel very thankful that the free life theory has given us the freedom and liberty that is denied those who are bound by man-made constitutions which contradict Scripture and even the teachings in many respects of the leaders who have

made them. **R.Roberts in his opening remarks says, “This is a difficult question.”** It is a difficult question, we agree, if we have preconceived ideas that make it so. If we have no preconceived ideas (which have to conjure up something unscriptural when a difficulty presents itself) we can go to the Scriptures as babies with a child-like disposition, having that disposition we can attain to the knowledge of the truth, as Jesus said he that willeth to know the doctrine shall know (John 7:17). We ourselves have fought against this supposed heresy tooth and nail, but upon what understanding of it? Why, upon the interpretation given it by R.Roberts in the very book we are reviewing. We were ignorant of the truth of what this supposed heresy taught until we had the opportunity of reading E.Turney’s lecture. We were then able to discern with little difficulty that R.Roberts in “Slain Lamb” was grossly misrepresenting him.

Page 17, paragraph 3. R.Roberts says, “You have had the doctrine propounded to you that flesh is a good thing,” etc. If you read E.Turney’s lecture you will find that he contends in harmony with Scripture, viz., that flesh is not spoken of in the Bible as being clean nor unclean. The apostle says, “There is nothing unclean of itself” and “nothing” cannot be restricted to meats. *R.Roberts and Dr. Thomas have said the same, but contradicted themselves to uphold their hyphenated “sin-in-the-flesh.”* We agree that flesh thinks and also add that it thinks good as well as evil. We can be spiritually minded, but that spiritual mindedness is the Chinking of the same flesh brain. The ultimate difference between the two kinds of thought will be that the spiritual mind will manifest the things of the spirit and the carnal or fleshly mind the things (or works) of the flesh (Galatians 5). We read in the Scripture. “The good man out of the treasures of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and the evil man out of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Luke 6-45). As a man thinks so is he (Proverbs 23:7; and as James says. “When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death.” (On Christadelphian reasoning we are sentenced to natural death before we are capable of sinning). We know the natural man can and does do worse than the beast, but this does not make of none effect the good that is found in those that do not manifest the works of the flesh through the imbibing of the spirit word. Both classes are the same flesh nevertheless and what is more, it is the flesh as God created it. The characters of the worthies is proof of this, and their names (some of them) are given in Hebrews 11.

Though the Scriptures themselves are sufficient to convince us that sin is an act of disobedience against divine law, and not sin as “a fixation in the flesh” apart from this, we supplement the Scriptures with the writings of those who contend for the very opposite when it suits them to uphold a certain theory. The impulses that lead to sin existed in Adam before transgression as much as they did afterwards; else disobedience could not have occurred. These impulses in their own place are legitimate enough... **“There is no propensity but serves a good purpose in its own place” (R.Roberts, “Ambassador” 1869).** *“The flesh that inhabited paradise, like all the beasts, was very good of its sort... our flesh is the same flesh as Adam’s before transgression, only the worse for wear” (Dr. Thomas).* We will deal with another when considering page 19 regarding R.Roberts saying, **“It is not a physical quality.”** We say that it is not the flesh that God created in Eden that He is displeased with (which was the same flesh that Jesus had). It is man’s obedience and character that God is pleased with and each individual character will settle the destiny of each individual. Paul says, “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” *Listen to Dr. Thomas on this, “In the animal man there dwelleth no good thing. The apostle affirms this of himself, considered as an unenlightened son of the flesh” (Elpis Israel, page 92).* Those who believe that Adam, after he sinned was changed from a very good nature to a vile or very bad one, are very fond of quoting these words of Paul, Paul is contrasting himself with himself as an unenlightened person under the law, as the opening verses of the chapter show in the figure of marriage. Paul was speaking of the time when he knew nothing aright; but after his conversion, surely, his brain was capable of showing some goodness and did do so. For example, his speeches and epistles to the ecclesiasts, all emanations of his sanctified brain, when he was a purified temple of God; also the fact of Christ dwelling in his heart or affections by faith, are evidence of having some good things within him, and if they did not exist in his cerebrum, the seat of his mind and affections, where then did they have their existence? Compare 1 Corinthians 11:1; 9:26,27; Philippians 3:8,9.

We ask you now to consider Paul’s other words, “Ye are not in the flesh” (Romans 8:9). Did Paul mean that they were not literal flesh? Think on these things and judge for yourselves as to the subtlety of R.Roberts’ application of the Scriptures he quotes in this paragraph. He gives a mental application when it suits him, and vice versa. **R.Roberts concludes this paragraph “Paul’s definitions are more philosophical than Edward Turney’s: for Paul goes to the root of the matter and says that in the flesh**

dwelleth no good thing.” We agree, quite, when understood as Paul meant it to be. It is the mental sphere entirely.

Page 18, paragraph 2. We have here a confirmation of what we have already said. It is the mental sphere every time that is the true understanding. He uses the illustration of a child brought up with wolves and, by so doing he only confirms Paul’s words, “Where there is no law (of God) there is no transgression” (Romans 4:15). In other words, sin is not imputed where there is no law (Romans 2:12). Just a question - have the animals sinful flesh? (man was made very good, like the animals, after its kind). Have they transgressed? Is their nature the result of Adam’s sin?

Page 18, paragraph 3. We endorse most of this.

Page 18, paragraph 4. This is qualified in previous paragraph. God made man upright and he was free to choose as to whether he would obey or disobey, or why put him under law? Still a matter of mind.

Page 19, paragraph 2. Agreed, but remember he was created a man, not a child.

Page 19, paragraph 3. **“Adam was driven out of Eden because of disobedience.”** Quite true, but he did not find out that his literal flesh was an evil thing. He found out what an evil thing the desires and impulses were if not controlled. His reference to Adam’s first son being a murderer only confirms this. Adam had impulses which he failed to control before his first son had them. R.Roberts is applying this only one way, viz. the way of Cain. We remind you that his second son was the same flesh with the same impulses, but he controlled them. Both were the same flesh as their father. The difference between them being as scripturally defined, Abel was a son of faith, his works were righteous, and his brother’s evil (Hebrews 11:1; 1 John 3:12).

We now come to the consideration of R.Roberts’ quotation, “Sinful flesh.” We desire you to give this your earnest, prayerful consideration. Romans 8:3 is the basis of this false teaching of sin as a physical quality. We will produce the evidence of R.Roberts in which he repudiates it as a physical quality, though, as we stated, he is ever ready to change and even admits in this paragraph that it is a figure and metonymy. It is the word “flesh” that is employed metonymically in the same sense in which Jesus said, “This is my flesh...” it being requisite to prove that the sacrifice of Christ’s life was the life in the blood thereof, thus refuting the teaching of those who advocate His LIFE TIME of works as the Ransom Price. Sin could not be condemned in the literal flesh, for “sin” is only a person by personification: neither could sin be condemned by the crucifixion of Jesus. Sin was condemned by the sacrifice of the Just for the unjust by the sight of the innocent where the guilty should have been. Hence, by one offering for sin, sin was condemned as a wrong thing to have done or committed.

“It is not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading the physical organization. Literally, sin is disobedience, the act of rebellion. The impulses that lead to this reside in the flesh and therefore came to be called by the name of the act to which they gave birth. In determining first principles we must be accurate in our conceptions” (R. Roberts in “The Ambassador” for March 1869). Certain brethren took exception to R.Roberts saying here that sin was not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading the physical organization, because the Christadelphian basis was that it was. In reply to a certain brother’s exception, **R.Roberts replied (pages 241 to 243), “This deranged condition of nature is in us, the cause of sin, and therefore metonymically, may be expressed as sin, but literally, and in itself it is not sin. I would therefore take exception to your proposition that nothing but uncleanness was inherited in the babe of Bethlehem. Legally He was unclean.”** Examine this reply and see if you can ascertain as to whether R.Roberts considered Jesus to be physically unclean, physically clean, or legally unclean. *Then Dr. Thomas in the same volume that the foregoing statements have been taken from (page 215), says, “He must, therefore, necessarily have been born corporeally unclean.”* **R. Roberts says in this paragraph that it is Paul’s figure - metonym for those impulses. As he also says in his preface of his debate with J.J.Andrew upon the Responsibility Question.**

You have already read that sin is not a literal element and also the reverse, from the leaders of the same body. Keep this in mind in your earnest and unbiased endeavour to ascertain whether there is any difference between the terms “sinful flesh” and “flesh of sin.” The Greek for this is “sin’s flesh,” predicating property

or possession and not the quality of the flesh. There is no adjective here in the Greek. Flesh can, and does belong to God (Dr. Thomas witness, "Phanerosis" page 43). **Also R. Roberts and Dr. Thomas say that the change was a moral one to which agree the Scriptures;** one kind of flesh of men (1 Corinthians 15:39). When Adam sinned he sold himself to sin; he changed masters. He was son of God who became a bondman of sin. Note the following if you should think that the term "master" is too commercial; "His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness (God's servants)" (Romans 6:16). We cannot serve God and mammon (Matthew 6:24). We cannot be related to both at the same time. We were sinners on the federal principle and we become adopted sons and daughters upon the same Just principle upon acknowledgement of God's ransom in Christ by faith in His shed blood. Jesus had the same flesh as other men but whereas they belonged to sin Jesus was never in Adam's loins. He was Son of God by birth and retained His freedom. Jesus came in the likeness of sin's bondmen but His flesh never belonged to sin, nor sin's dominion, being begotten of God for the purpose of doing what the law could not, viz. pay sin's claim for us because He was free to do it, not being in bondage to sin Himself. We cannot do better than quote Paul, "Being then made free from sin ye became servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:18). Sin is by law. Sin is dead without law (Romans 3:20). By law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 7:8). This is proof that the flesh is not sin of itself. **We agree with R. Roberts "that not forbidden is not sin and that when God (not man) says 'Don't do it,' a breach of that command is sin."** This is the true understanding of the whole Scripture regarding sin. We can resist the devil (sin) and he will flee, but that would be impossible if sin was a fixation in the flesh. In that case everywhere we went sin would be sure to go.

Page 20, paragraph 2. "It is God's purpose to make us realize our native tendency to disobedience, and our native inability to conform." It is monstrous that one should utter such a statement, who believes that God is Just. For God to make man with an inability to conform to His law and then punish man for not keeping that which God has made him that he cannot keep it is to make God a monster of the deepest dye. Try it on in business, then ask yourself where your justice lies in so doing. Yet God is charged with doing such a thing. What depths one will go to to uphold a theory of man being physically shackled. We are thankful that through Paul and others God has told us that we will not be tried above what we are able to bear. Jesus Himself said "Unto whom much is given, much is expected," and for Jesus to say it it is evident that God only expects as much. Did Paul teach that God made him unable to keep His law. No. He said, "I can do all things through Him that strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). Did God make Paul do all things by giving him His Holy Spirit to do away with the necessity of individual faith? No. Or he could have used the Holy Spirit to cure his own infirmity. He could do all things through the faith of Christ, and if we have not the faith of Christ we cannot do all things (that God requires of us). It is not our inability. Our ability lies in our loving reciprocation of the love wherewith God loved us in giving Jesus. **Yes, God made men upright, as R. Roberts says.** But why such a foolish illustration as forgetfulness in sleep when considering sin? His opening quotations of Paul in this paragraph is another mixing up of the mental with the physical. **He says, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I (that is the natural Paul) am carnal, sold under sin."** (Of course his brackets fit in with his theory). When a thing is condemned it means that it is due for destruction. But Paul does not say that "I, the natural Paul, am by constitution condemned, being sinful flesh." He speaks of being carnal, sold under sin. Carnal has to do with the mind which is at enmity with God. When one is sold under sin one can be redeemed, bought back.

Continuing his quotation of Paul: "For that which I do, I allow not," etc. Did Paul speak here of the time when he was a regenerated son of God? If he did, then he contradicts himself, because he testifies that he kept his body in subjection (1 Corinthians 9:27). Paul is speaking of the time when he was zealous for the law in its letter. Even when he thought that he could do good, he could not, owing to his zealousness for the letter. Had he realized that love was the fulfilling of the spirit of the law he would not have consented to Stephen's death. He refers to all things that he did in opposition to Christ, in regarding himself as the least of the apostles having persecuted the church without mercy. Again, if Paul is speaking of himself in Romans 7 as a regenerated person, then Paul contradicts himself viz. where is one sin of Paul recorded that God commanded, if so be that God made man unable to conform to His law? As Dr. Adam dark says speaking upon the manner these words of Paul have been misconstrued: "This opinion has, most pitifully, and most shamefully, not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character." Paul realized that as a natural Jew, though blameless in the letter of the law, he was sold under sin and that he was not justified by the works of the law but by faith in the shed blood of Jesus which was the means, by God's grace, of buying us back from sin's bondage. He realized that nothing else could have done

this and most assuredly we can say with him “I thank God (for His unspeakable gift) through Christ our Lord.”

Page 20, paragraph 3. “Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Is not this what we have all along contended for? The list of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5 are not applicable to a child of God; he does not fulfil them. If he did he would not be a child of God and therefore he would not enter the kingdom (Galatians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11). We remind you that **R.Roberts has said that these lusts and propensities are legitimate in itself and we have the opposite lusting which is every bit as legitimate - the spirit lusting against the flesh.** What does the spirit lust against - the literal flesh or the desires of the flesh? We have the answer by referring to Scripture. David hated every false way (Psalm 119:104). Jude 23 hated the very garment spotted by the flesh. Did he mean that the literal flesh was so polluting that it defiled the literal garment? No. He, like David, hated every false way. The ones he was referring to professed to be clothed with righteousness, but walked after the flesh, hence his hating of any profession of righteousness which is not accompanied by a worthy walk. Spots and blemishes, clouds without water. A child of God is bound to hate the garment spotted by the flesh because it refers to the Adamic sin, and because it sows not to the spirit; but according to “Slain Lamb” none can do it because God has made them that they cannot.

Page 20, paragraph 4. “What the law could not do,” etc. Yes, we agree that mere law or flesh could not do for itself what God has done in Christ. We have explained why it couldn’t. He sent His Son, His property (not sin’s) in likeness (same flesh as the flesh that belongs to sin) but instead of being in bondage to sin He was God’s Son and never belonged to sin’s dominion (“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”). Flesh is not the deciding factor here; it is “to whom ye belong.” The word likeness does not necessarily mean the same in every respect. Adam was made in the likeness of God, yet he did not have incorruptibility. Thus, the term likeness in Romans 8:3 means that Jesus was like the bondmen of sin in physical constitution. He was not sin’s flesh nor did He follow sin’s bondmen. The difference is, as we have endeavoured to point out, not in His physical constitution but in the ownership - God’s Son - His own Son. It is the Greek genitive case denoting possession, which no Greek scholar will deny. This is the only place in the Scriptures where the words “sinful flesh” occurs and even here it is a faulty translation. How often have we, as Christadelphians, when the orthodox believer has said that the Bible clearly teaches that the soul goes to Heaven at death, told them to search the Scriptures to see if it is there? Yet Christadelphians make a doctrine out of a term that is only found once and which is not a correct translation. Why, the Trinitarian and the heaven-going-at-death theorists have every whit as much support from the Scriptures as the sinful-flesh theorist. Yes, there is indeed a vast difference between sinful flesh and flesh of sin-

Page 21, paragraph 2. “And now we have to consider in what sense did Jesus come in sinful flesh.” R.Roberts here supports what the R.V. says on this phrase, “The flesh of sin.” It is the genitive case. as also in the following, “The kingdom of God” is the kingdom belonging to God. Ownership. **He agrees that “flesh of sin” is a more literal translation of the Greek words and then has the audacity to suggest that the English idiom accommodated to the phrase should be given preference to the true Greek meaning of the genitive case.** Which no Greek scholar will deny. **He says, “The translators of the English version have shown themselves fitted for the work.”** God forbid that we should depreciate their efforts- The English version gave him a handle to catch hold of in Romans 8:3 and if the R.V. was extant at the time he wrote “Slain Lamb” he would still have relied upon the authorised version because that supplied him with the only handle he could find in the Scriptures. He was not so ready to say that the translators were fitted for their work when he wrote of errors in translation and transcription (which we agree he was correct that there were errors) but he is not prepared to admit this one. We agree that there must be an accommodation to the idiom, but the accommodation must be in harmony with scriptural teaching. The trouble is that R.Roberts has done far too much accommodation of idioms. Take for example his accommodation of the Hebrew idioms YOM B’YOM and MUTH TEMUTH in Genesis 2- YOM (day) B’YOM (in the day) - MUTH TEMUTH (surely die). He agrees that B’YOM in Genesis 1, speaking of creation, is the literal day, but in Genesis 2 where the same idiom is used and qualified by MUTH TEMUTH distinguishing violent death from natural death, he makes the Hebrew idiom to mean over 900 years from the day of Adam’s transgression. When it happens that the same Hebrew words appear in 1 Kings regarding Solomon’s words to Shimei, he is quite agreeable that it means violent death on the literal day, because it would be ridiculous to say otherwise. We leave it to the reader to study for himself the accommodations that Christadelphian writers have resorted to to uphold a theory that cannot be supported by Scripture. We do not

disagree with R.Roberts that the earthy and the image of the earthy are the same physically. E.Turney, as we have constantly repeated, never contended that Christ was of different nature to us. What was the distinction that Jesus drew between Himself and us when He said, "I am from above, ye are from beneath"? Lay hold upon the glorious truth and you will be free from the bondage of man-made constitutions.

Page 21, paragraph 4. R.Roberts says, "If you ask me how the Father could be manifest in a man with an independent volition you ask a question not truly founded on reason." We feel deeply grieved that Christadelphians have been so gulled as to what E. Turney taught. The above statement would be of striking force if E.Turney contended for independent volition in the manner that R.Roberts has persuaded his brethren. E.Turney never taught that the life of Jesus was any different to the life of any son of Adam considered as a life. It was the life of his flesh that was in the blood, the same as the life of our flesh which is in the blood. Where does the independent volition come in when He was made, tempted and tried in all points like unto His brethren? E.Turney never contended otherwise. R.Roberts is simply using the term independent volition to gull his brethren into believing that E.Turney taught that Jesus had an independent and different kind of life. Unfortunately, "Slain Lamb" has accomplished this right up till now, because the general body of Christadelphians are ignorant of its misrepresentation of Edward Turney. We have had correspondence with them and in every instance the reply has been, How can you say that Jesus was of a different nature to ourselves when the Scriptures declare that He died? This in 1934. Truly "Slain Lamb" has done its work well!

Page 22, paragraph 2. We agree with the Scripture that the flesh profiteth nothing and that it is the spirit that matters, but we certainly disagree with R.Roberts' mode of application, viz. that the flesh profiteth nothing - being a physically condemned thing. Jesus did not say Eat my condemned unclean flesh. Flesh profiteth nothing, yet Jesus said, and the bread that I will give you is my flesh, for the life of the world (John 8:51). What body did Jesus rise with? Was it not flesh and bones? Let us be honest in our application of "the flesh profiteth nothing." This refers to natural descent - having Abraham as our forefather and by such of the seed of Abraham. If you apply it to Christ you nullify the teaching of Christ that the eating of His flesh in the Memorial Bread profits us nothing. In the passage where it occurs (John 6:63) Jesus is teaching that the spirit words are life. The literal flesh will profit nothing in itself, as it will go to the grave via the natural laws and remain there, but if the spirit word be imbibed, there is profit withal. Jesus teaches here that His words are not the words of fleshly thought but the spirit word of the Father. If He merely spoke as the son of Joseph (which they understood Him to be - verse 42) it would have been impossible for Him to be the bread that came down from Heaven to give life unto the world. Flesh could profit nothing if it lacked the redeemed life. It is only the spirit that could give life eternal and that only by the literal person of flesh imbibing the spirit word. It could not give eternal life of itself, as Jesus taught, but that does not mean that it profiteth nothing being a worthless thing owing to being physically condemned. There is another sense, and a scripturally true sense, in which flesh profiteth nothing - that is, by the Jews being the natural descendants of Abraham, which we have already given consideration to. **R.Roberts continues, "Others who think to make a great mystery simple and plain speak of the flesh of Christ as a mixture of human with divine substance."** We do not make the flesh of Christ a mixture. There is no mystery and nothing baffling. It is simplicity itself. The life of the flesh of Jesus was in the blood, like ourselves, and God gave Him this life (Luke 1:35), which life Jesus voluntarily laid down (sacrifice) for the sin of the world, thereby purchasing us with His own blood. We are not redeemed with corruptible things... gold and silver... but by the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (Peter), is there anything mysterious about this? Why was the blood of Jesus precious? Was it because it was of a different quality than the blood of others? No. It was because He was begotten of God and not of man, and being begotten of God He was legally free to lay down His life which was in that blood as the redemption price that could only be paid once. The redemption of their souls (life) is precious, and it ceaseth for ever. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins (Hebrews 10:26). One sacrifice. We pray that we will all realize that that blood was so precious that none of us will trample it under foot. Surely, He came out from God, as the Scripture says, and He was not a mere man, but the only begotten Son of God.

Page 22, paragraph 3. "As for the question asked that if God gave Jesus greater power than we, has he not dealt unjustly with us? It is not the question of a child of God. What was done by Christ was God's work out of love for us that we, subject to His will and recognising His supremacy, should become heirs of His Kingdom." Why does not R.Roberts recognize the supremacy of Jesus over ourselves

prior to His possessing the nature He now possesses in the legal sense, seeing that He was of our nature? The only way that he recognizes the supremacy of Jesus in the days of His flesh is that He always did His Father's will. If He had extra power to do this, where is the glory of His supremacy? He was tempted, tried, etc. like ourselves. R.Roberts is rather subtle in his wording here. E.Turney did not restrict His words as R.Roberts does here; he did not stop at the word power. E.Turney said "extra power to overcome His temptations." Did not Jesus have a free will to do or not do? He did. For Him to subject Himself to His Father's will does not rule out His willing subjection. If God made Jesus a machine where would His obedience come in? Up pops the absurdity again of voluntary compulsion, thereby making His overcoming, testing, and obedience a farce. **Regarding his closure of this paragraph, "Such a question as the one referred to is enough to secure for the questioner the grave of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram,"** we leave this to the reader's judgment and most of all to God's.

Jesus was made strong for us in that He was begotten of God. We were weak, being concluded under sin; therefore as it is explained by Paul, when we were yet without strength - Romans 5:6 (needing life via redemption) it was necessary for someone with strength to redeem us. The strength required was someone not bound, therefore free, free in the legal sense we have contended for. In this respect Jesus was rich, not being in debt, not being sold under sin and for our sakes became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). He gave His all: all that He then possessed, the life of His flesh. Had He not given His all, His brethren would not have been redeemed. This quibbling over power. Jesus honoured His Father's name in the earth by His obedience to His Father's commands, and to say that Jesus had extra power to do this is to rob Him of His honour and to charge God with giving honour where it was not due. It is "faith that overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4) and not the extra power of the Holy Spirit, as can be seen from Hebrews 6:4,5, that those who tasted the good word and the power of the age to come, if they shall fall away to renew them (R.V.- it is impossible) again unto repentance, seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame. This is proof that the power to overcome did not rest in the Holy Spirit. The grave of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram is not our fear as we verily believe that we have passed from death into life. Death sentence in Adam removed and now in the glorious liberty that is in Christ in accordance with Romans 8:1.

Page 23, paragraph 1, R.Roberts says, "It is the flesh, not the life, that is condemned." This of course to involve Jesus in physical condemnation. He must cling to this like a leach to uphold his theory. We can only repeat that the flesh cannot be condemned - it is the person. R.Roberts cannot apply both to Jesus but he must continually resort to vivisection. The condemnation passed upon men brings death as the wages of sin, which is only on the federal principle as proven by Romans 8:1. If you make the condemnation physical you introduce absurdity and more obstacles than can be overcome, hence the splitting up of the Christadelphian body. Life and flesh comprehend the entire man in Scripture, in "Christendom Astray" he charges the metaphysicians with trying to expound a mystery by creating a bigger one. He is here trying to do the same thing himself. Life and flesh comprehend the entire man, of which we have a good illustration in Genesis 6:12 and Psalm 56:4,11. There is also a good illustration in the Christadelphian hymn book, No 92, "eyes, ears, hands, feet - man."

The praise is to God in providing His Lamb (Genesis 22:8), but this does not take any honour away from Jesus because He was flesh. If flesh was condemned we have been redeemed with a polluted sacrifice. This could not possibly be, because condemned flesh can never be the ransom price for forfeited life. **R.Roberts continues, "What He did was for us, not instead of us, but on our account."** Well, what is the difference? **He says, "The notion that it was instead of us is the old orthodox superstition being foisted upon the brethren."** It is nothing of the sort. True substitution is not the old orthodox superstition. A life for a life is the equivalent price for ransom. Jesus gave His life for the sin of the world. That one sin Adam brought forth and the penalty of that sin was death by slaying. Adam was spared from paying it by God's love and mercy, and was typically redeemed in the figure of the animal slain. Had Adam paid it himself there would be no quibble as to whether Jesus was a representative or a substitute, as we would not have existence. Being as Adam did not pay it himself it follows that Jesus did, because He was the Lamb slain (in type) from the foundation (Eden). God spared Adam and the animal was slain instead (as in the case of Isaac - in the stead of his son, Genesis 22:13). Jesus gave His life instead of Adam and all in his loins. Thus we can see on the federal principle that the foundation was laid in Eden in type and completed on Calvary by the antitype - Jesus. When this just principle of God is perceived there is no difficulty in understanding how we were concluded under Adam's sin, and how the ransom for Adam and us as in him was also paid before we were born. Jesus tasted death for every man (Hebrews 32:9). Upon what principle?

Did He taste literal death instead of every man? No, or in that case we shouldn't die. (We leave that foolish reasoning to orthodoxy). Jesus tasted literal death as the equivalent that Adam incurred as the wages of sin. We were not individually responsible for that sin, but were concluded under it as in Adam on the federal principle. This is God's just method of concluding all under sin without in any way shackling men physically. We know that "for us" does not always mean "instead of us," but this does not prove that the death of Jesus as the wages of sin was not instead of Adam. The opposers of substitution admit that the word "for" means instead of (or, as the Greek and English dictionary renders it, "in place of"). Matthew 20:28.

To be continued...

Brother John Stevenson writes concerning the article "The Policy of Christadelphians Regarding Allegiance to the State" which appeared in our last Circular Letter:

Dear Brethren and Sisters, On reading the article by an anonymous Christadelphian entitled "The Policy of Christadelphians Regarding Allegiance to the State," I ended up with mixed feelings. While I can't fault his arguments, I could not avoid the feeling that the writer was a little supercilious and parsimonious in the sense of "holier than thou." He says "What we (Christadelphians) as a body have lost is the sound and scriptural appreciation of the sanctification enjoined upon us by the High Calling unto which we have been called in Christ... We no longer belong to this present order... That which we must do is to rightly determine our responsibility to our God... Our Master puts this position in a nutshell... Render to Caesar, He said, the things that are Caesar's (our property, our money, and our material possessions), but ourselves, render unto God the things that are God's... Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit... Ye are not your own for ye are bought with a price... If any man be in Christ he is a new creature... We have risen to a newness of life with new and different responsibilities... We become strangers to the land of our birth."

While ideally this is all very well if we are perfect Christians, but in the real world we are plagued by weaknesses of the flesh. I well remember the intimidating decrees of high authority when I was confronted with the problem in 1940, before I was baptized, I was granted conditional exemption, but the government never got around to enforcing any conditions before the war ended. I did not have the help of the Christadelphian body because I was never part of it.

I think what worries me about this article is the writer's statement, "Therefore Christadelphians, having changed their nationality and citizenship, do not register as citizens of a gentile commonwealth, nor voice their will in gentile politics. They are come to the ecclesia of the first enrolled (or registered) in heaven, and their citizenship or commonwealth is in heaven, out of which they also wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." And also he gives another similar quote from Robert Roberts. He obviously does not see Robert Roberts as a fallible sinner, nor that many of his Christadelphian brethren are in the same situation. He does make a very pertinent statement, "We trusted to our own thinking which, for the best of us, is unreliable," and refers to Proverbs 14:12. The important thing is that we must be prayerfully careful that our own thinking is not unreliable.

Many sincere Christians might have difficulty in not taking too literally "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls... Servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters... Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for any honest work... Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the Emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong... Honour the King."

I would like to quote from George McHaffie's booklet "Christadelphia Redivivus" first published about 1959 and recently republished by the Endeavour Group. It should be remembered that in opposing substitution, George McHaffie was undoubtedly opposing the fairly popular idea that God was punishing Jesus Instead of us and probably was unaware of the correct understanding of substitution, that God gave His beloved Son to redeem us by voluntarily paying the ransom for sin. Here are the quotations:

“The environment in which he (Dr John Thomas) worked was noted for its excitement and interest in prophesy, which he shared fully. He showed a strong reaction against traditional theology, particularly in relation to hell-fire, substitution, and devils. A seeking for a satisfying intellectual faith was abroad,-. The community to which Dr Thomas addressed most of his remarks was the Cambellite church. This church was in many ways similar to modern evangelicals, and certainly not a soil likely to receive the word of mortalism, no hellfire, etc. To speak such a message in a modern evangelical Brethren or Baptist church would provoke the same stinging reaction as Dr. Thomas received... These points would easily account for the feeling one gets of a lone wolf, much against all Christendom, while reading Dr. Thomas.”

George McHaffie then makes a very important point:

“While we may expect all the harsh adjectives in our vocabulary to come into play with reference to the perpetrators of Belsen and Buchenwald, it appears to have been the custom of Dr. Thomas’ day to exhaust them against those with whose religious opinions one differed. Dr Thomas later saw some fault of this theological gladiatorship, described by Brother Robert Roberts as “high-horse and swashbuckler flourish.” The fault with such swashbuckling is that it causes its exponents to see things largely in black or white, to exaggerate differences and to make erroneous judgments through over-simplification. It also attracts to its banner a type of person who glories in debate for its own sake (and to some extent enjoys strife) and therefore desires to have a good case to argue about. Such people hold the fundamentals of Christian love loosely and show only the minimum of concern for the salvation of opponents.”

After further discussion he says:

“Happily the corner has been turned; there is a growing awareness of the danger, and reappraisal desired.”

Unhappily, in retrospect we can see that no such corner has been turned. As an old saying goes, human nature has been the same since Adam was a boy.

I do not oppose the anonymous Christadelphian’s thesis. I agree with him that we should insist on total exemption from military service. But everyday issues in life are not nearly so clear-cut. Our nature makes us often react hastily and illogically and selfishly to unexpected predicaments.

I well remember a lay preachers sermon on Matthew I4:24ff. When Peter saw Jesus walking on the sea. he said “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water,” and He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the ship and walked on the water. But when he looked down and saw the turbulent waves, his faith failed and he began to sink. The moral is “Keep your eyes on Jesus.”

Which of us has a positive faith; secure enough to venture a walk over the sea? I hope my ramblings have not been too pointless. Love to you all.

Brother John Stevenson. Australia.