

# The Nazarene Circular Letter No. 215

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## Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends, Greetings in Jesus' Name.

In our last Circular Letter we printed a portion from a Berean website which supposedly gave some of our beliefs but was, in fact, full of inaccuracies. It is also hoped that now we have our own website it will put an end to such false stories about the Nazarene Fellowship that have been circulating throughout Christadelphia for well over one hundred years. It has always been the case that whenever a Christadelphian has wanted to know what the Nazarene Fellowship believe they have always asked another Christadelphian – and so the false stories are perpetuated from one generation to the next when the obvious course of action should have been to ask someone of the Nazarene Fellowship. Hopefully, from now on, when any Christadelphian wants to know what we believe they will look to our website for their answers. And should any Christadelphian or someone of another denomination should wish for more information, or to discuss any matters of interest we have given our e-mail address on the site. Our website can be found at [www.nazarenefellowship.co.uk](http://www.nazarenefellowship.co.uk)

We know we are all taught of God and by His grace we have come to our present understanding; we know He will lead others also to see these things, but it is surely our loving duty to present these truths to as many as possible and modern technology is one way we are able to do this.

Whilst looking through various sites under 'Nazarene,' I came across the following:-

“THE NAZARENES are a Christian group; most of its members are southern European Slavs. Their creed commits them to the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ In Hungary before World War 1 they were allowed to serve in the Medical Corps, though during the war many were imprisoned for their pacifist beliefs. It was understood of the Nazarenes that even if they carried a weapon they would not use it. One of the results of the Treaty of Versailles was that some 40,000 Nazarenes, mostly of Serb nationality and living in the province of Vojvodina, now found themselves in the newly created Yugoslavia. The new regime mistook the Nazarenes' opposition to war as opposition to the government, and persecuted them with vigour, imprisoning

them in hundreds for refusing compulsory military service. Their willingness to perform non-combatant duties was ignored. Nazarenes in Romania received similar treatment, which they endured with characteristic stoicism.”

This called to mind a story my mother told me of a case during the First World War when some Christadelphians offered their services by joining the medical corps. Apparently when things got too bad on the war front everyone including those in the medical corps were given rifles and told to use them or else they themselves would be shot by their Commanding Officer. On hearing of this happening one Christadelphian who had joined the medical corps deserted and went into hiding. For two years he lived in the attic of a house my mother used to visit quite frequently when she was in her early twenties. There were children living in the house but not one of the children knew and neither did any visitor to the house. This was a well kept secret and not even other members of the family knew. The ‘invisible’ guest only came out of the attic during the early hours before dawn.

While we long for and await our Lord’s return may we remain strong in our faith. We know the world is entering upon a time of trouble such as never was and we are reminded of the words of Habakkuk in his third chapter: -

“O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and I was afraid: O Lord, revive thy works in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy.”

With Love to all in Jesus, Russell.

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## **For if the Trumpet Give an Uncertain Sound, Who shall Prepare Himself to Meet The Lord?**

### **1 Corinthians 14:7-8.**

On July 19<sup>th</sup> 2005 I received the Shofar Magazine, a publication of Christadelphia, based in Poncha Springs, Co 81242. U.S.A.

It is quite a while ago when first I received this magazine which heartened me into thinking its motive was to correct the doctrinal errors handed down from the time of John Thomas and Robert Roberts; the latter named having forced upon the resulting followers of Dr Thomas a view the Dr. never held himself in regard to the consequences of Adam’s sin, but of course without any support from inspired scripture Roberts forcibly consigned his weak brethren to the false belief that God changed Adam’s nature instead of his relationship as a sinner by transgression of law.

Edward Turney’s opposition to Roberts’ view, on a scriptural basis of enlightenment moved Roberts to a course of action which brought about a documentation of Clauses and statements to be accepted as a basis of fellowship under the banner and name “Christadelphian.” What exactly this contained I would like to know, on account of the fact that this Shofar magazine refers to an Unamended document or Statement of Faith which must be different from the one known as the B.A.S.F. This being the case what are the statements or doctrines that needed amending and on what authority, seeing that I read in letters to Shofar editors so much disunity causing strife and false accusations in a personal sense and perhaps unjustified?

The original inspired Scriptures needed no amendments though admittedly the translators have caused some difficulty to many who allow themselves to be taught by the precepts of uninspired men. Clause V of the B.A.S.F. being the example which, from 1873, plunged the members of Christadelphia into the confusion of believing that the common natural death by gradual decay was the sentence or penalty for Adam’s sin and was literally and physically passed upon his posterity. It is evident from this that Thomasites and Robertsites

everywhere needed to be all taught of God the reasons for His sending His Son to give His life a ransom for the many; a subject which I found as a Christadelphian in 1939 to have been neglected, mainly through lack of the true meaning of the Atonement, type and antitype. When my wife and I joined the Christadelphians no B.A.S.F. was handed to us, neither were the many divisions made known as is prevalent now and proves that in Christadelphia the rule is not, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism and One God, the Father of the One Body undivided – His Son Yahshua.

The Nazarenes have corresponded with Shofar Editors with helpful advice, especially the meaning of why Christ died, not why He had to die as falsely stated in Christadelphian literature, “for Himself on account of His nature.” The problem with the magazine is that by the time it reaches the readers it is a long time before reaction if any, of the readers is received and made known; their full addresses are never printed so that people outside the Christadelphian circle can write to them personally on subjects they do not seem to grasp or understand.

The example mentioned by J.T.Truman of Dr. Thomas contradicting in Eureka Volume 3 what he had written in Eureka Volume 1 – the man who pointed this out to Dr Thomas was told that he was correct and to get a thick pen and draw a line across what was incorrect. But how can this be of any help when perhaps hundreds of these Eureka volumes had been circulated? The same applies to Elpis Israel and other publications by Dr Thomas, R.Roberts and others which I have marked when reading; these books cannot be recalled for correction because these pioneers of Christadelphia were never challenged because errors were not possible with such men of renown. Will the efforts of the Shofar editors convince their readers of the fact that Jesus sacrificial death was in the place of the death Adam incurred, in order that Adam might be spared from it?

Is substitution to be shunned through ignorance and lack of perception of what took place under Moses to bring the people out of Egypt? Was not the blood of the unblemished lamb sprinkled on the lintel and door posts a sign to the angel to spare the occupants from inflicted death? It is obvious that those who sprinkled it would still be in a position of experiencing natural death by process of decay. The same applies to those who, on belief of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, will still experience natural death if He has not returned to change them to incorruptible nature.

This is not Thomasite and Robertsite doctrine of doubtful mixture under the name Christadelphia; it is the true and Apostolic Faith founded on the inspired Word of God and His Son, and if any readers, Shofar or otherwise, cannot accept it they will still be grasping at straws under the named banner and flag “Christadelphia,” ignorant of The Atonement.

Shofar Editors – Be of good courage, sow the good seed you have received, on good ground and may God give the increase according to His will.

P. Parry (Nazarene Fellowship)

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## **DID THE DISCIPLES MEET ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK TO BREAK BREAD?**

Christadelphians, in common with several other denominations, break bread and drink wine in memory of our Lord’s death on Sunday, the first day of the week. Does this practice have, in fact, any foundation in the scriptures?

The average Christadelphians, if asked why he does this every Sunday, will probably reply that it is recorded the disciples met together on the first day of the week for the remembrance of Jesus, and if it is enquired further “why on the first day?” the reply will be that upon that day Jesus rose from the dead. The apostles, being Jews, had, up to that time, kept the Sabbath (the seventh day) but subsequently they kept the

first day. This day became known in time as the “Christian Sabbath” and was finally made official by Constantine about the year A.D.328.

The scripture upon which the Sunday observance view is based is Acts 20 verse 7 which reads:-

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...”

It comes as a shock to find that this translation is quite wrong and was obviously adopted to support the Sunday observance view. But the Greek original is quite plain. It reads:-

“Now on one of the Sabbaths, at our being assembled to break bread, Paul argued with them, being about to be off on the morrow.”

The disciples, therefore, did not come together on Sunday, but on Saturday. They did, in fact, still retain their observance of the Sabbath.

The second shock comes when it is realised that the expression “break bread” does not mean the remembrance of Jesus but simply an ordinary meal. “Break bread” is a typically Jewish term for a meal. Bread was never cut but broken and the broken piece used as spoons to convey other food to the mouth.

Another scripture sometimes referred to is 1 Corinthians 16 verse 2:-

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store...”

Again, “first day of the week” is quite wrong. The Greek reads “on one of the Sabbaths.” This confirms that the early disciples met upon the seventh day, not upon the first.

There is thus no scripture to support the idea of Sunday observance. The disciples met upon and continued to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day.

All this leads to an investigation as to whether the Lord did, in fact, rise from the dead upon the first day of the week.

The usual “Christian” view is that Jesus was crucified on Friday, laid in the tomb just before 6.0 p.m. and was raised from the dead very early on Sunday morning before it was light.

There are other ideas. One is that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday and was raised again at the end of the Sabbath (about 6.0 p.m. on Saturday). This, it is contended, makes the “three days and three nights” in the tomb which it is supposed that scripture requires. Another idea is that Jesus was crucified on Thursday and rose very early on Sunday morning.

But these ideas are quite wrong and do not fit the scripture records. The usual idea of a Sunday resurrection depends upon the verses which tells us that Mary Magdalene visited the tomb very early on the “first day of the week.”

It is quite shocking to find that the translators have, in every case of the resurrection narratives, substituted “first day of the week” for the original Greek “on one of the Sabbaths.” Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, Luke 24:1, John 20:1 all read in the Greek “on one of the Sabbaths.” There is no doubt about it. Every reference, where the Greek reads as above, the translators have altered it to “first day of the week.” Practically all versions have followed the reading of the Authorised Version.

The events of the crucifixion week have been the occasion of much dispute, but the truth seems to be that Jesus was crucified on Thursday, he was laid in the tomb just before 6,0 p.m. and was raised very early on the Sabbath, Saturday. Much of the confusion is caused by failing to realise that there were two Sabbaths in that week. Another difficulty which clouds a proper understanding is that created by the expression that the women, after preparing spices and ointments “rested on the Sabbath day.” If this “Sabbath” was indeed

Saturday then the resurrection must have been the next day, Sunday. But the “Sabbath” mentioned was not the normal weekly Sabbath but the special one peculiar to that week.

The usual “Christian” view does not provide for this special Sabbath. The other view, that three days and three nights must be allowed for, does acknowledge the special Sabbath and this, it is alleged, was on Thursday. This makes Friday a “free” day on which the women could have visited the tomb to perform the embalming. That they did not do so but delayed until Sunday rules out this view. The further view that Jesus was crucified on Thursday and rose on Sunday also acknowledges the two Sabbaths – and these occurred together, Friday and Saturday - but fails to see that the proper reading from the Greek requires a Sabbath resurrection.

Further confusion is caused by the various readings for the length of time Jesus was in the tomb. There are some fourteen references which declare that Jesus would or did rise “on the third day.” There are three or four which say “after three days” and only one which says “three days and three nights.” It would appear that the expression that occurs most times, namely, “on the third day” we ought to take as being literally correct. The other expressions must be taken as idiomatic. “After three days” is used when speaking to Romans. A striking instance of what is meant by this expression occurs in Matthew 27:62-64 which reads:-

“Now, on the morrow which is after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees were assembled with Pilate, saying, Lord, we are reminded that that deceiver said while still living, after three days I am being roused! Then order the sepulchre to be secured till the third day...”

Here we have “after three days” equated with “till the third day.” The priests and Pharisees were talking to Pilate who was a Roman and they used the Roman idiom.

Similarly, the expression “three days and three nights” is a Hebrew idiom and is, of course, taken from the record of Jonah. Hebrew chronology always counts the smallest part of a year or a day as a whole. Three days, or parts of days, were involved and so the expression “three days and three nights” was used.

However, the length of time Jesus was in the tomb is limited literally by the expression used so many times that he would rise “on the third day.” He was crucified on the “first” day; he was in the tomb the whole of the “second” day and he rose on the “third” day.

Now, if as we have found, the Greek demands a resurrection on the Sabbath or seventh day, then Jesus must have been crucified on the fifth day, which was Thursday. Friday was the special sabbath during which the women rested and Saturday the ordinary Sabbath. There was manifestly only one day between the crucifixion and the resurrection and this day was such a Sabbath (a “high day”) that the women could not perform the work they desired to do. They visited the sepulchre as soon as they could “while it was yet dark” on the ordinary Sabbath morning. Doubtless they felt that the work of embalming, which had to be done within a day or two of death in that hot climate, was not prohibited on a normal Sabbath under the circumstances. They would also perhaps remember the teaching of the Lord himself that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath day,

## **THE WAVE SHEAF**

At this stage it would be profitable to take a look at the Law of Moses to see the basis for the Passover and feast of Unleavened Bread; to see what was involved and what was required. For it is often said, and rightly so, that Jesus was the “anti-typical wave sheaf; and this, it is argued, was a ceremony on the “day after the Sabbath.” Thus, an argument in favour of the resurrection on the first day of the week is thought to be found in this ceremony.

The same mistake is made however. It is assumed that the reference to the day after the Sabbath points to the first day of the week. It is not realised that the normal weekly Sabbath is not the one referred to but the special Sabbath peculiar to the Passover week. It is perhaps made more clear in the Septuagint:-

“In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the evening times is the Lord’s Passover. And on the fifteenth day of this month is the feast of unleavened bread to the Lord; seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread. And the first day shall be a holy convocation to you, ye shall do no servile work (i.e. it was a “Sabbath”)... And he shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow of the first day the priest shall lift it up... And ye shall lift up the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you. On the morrow of the first day the priest shall lift it up... And ye shall number to yourselves from the day after the Sabbath (i.e. that “first day” of unleavened bread which was a “Sabbath”) from the day on which ye shall offer the sheaf of the wave offering, seven full weeks.” - Leviticus 23:5-15.

In our application of these instructions we must remember that the Hebrew day began at 6.0 p.m. Thus the normal weekly Sabbath began at 6.0 p.m. Friday and ended at 6.0 p.m. Saturday.

The Passover lamb was to be chosen on the 10th of the first month and slain on the 14th. It was to be eaten that night. Since the day commenced at 6.0 p.m. this would mean that the eating would take place on the 15<sup>th</sup> - during the night preceding the day of the 15th. The 15th was the first day of unleavened bread and was reckoned as a Sabbath. Indeed, it was one of the most important Sabbaths of the year; it was the “high day” as it is called in John’s gospel. The “preparation” for this day was the 14th when the lamb was killed and all leaven removed from the house. The “wave sheaf” was offered the day after the special Sabbath, namely on the 16th day of the month. The Jews were then to count seven Sabbaths or full weeks to the next feast which was Pentecost.

This is the background to the events of the week of the crucifixion. The 14th of Abib was on Thursday and was the day when Jesus was crucified. It was the day of “preparation” for the Sabbath (the special one) when the Passover lambs were slain.

The 15th of Abib (Friday) was the “high day,” the special Sabbath, the first day of unleavened bread, during which the women had to rest. The 16th of Abib (Saturday) was the normal weekly sabbath and also happened to be the day when the wave sheaf was offered. It was the day of the Lord’s resurrection and was the first of the seven Sabbaths which had to be counted to Pentecost.

Now for a few proofs: Firstly that the day of the crucifixion was the day of “preparation.”

“And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath (the special one), Joseph of Arimathea... craved the body of Jesus.” - Mark 15:42-43.

“Joseph of Arimathea... went unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus... And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.” (the special Sabbath). - Luke 23, 50-54

“The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day)” - John 19, 31.

This “high day” was kept by the women, as Luke records -

“And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day (the special Sabbath) according to the commandment.” - Luke 23:55-56.

The resurrection of Jesus is stated in each of the gospel records to have taken place, according to the literal Greek, “on one of the Sabbaths.” This phrase, we are told, always means one of those Sabbaths which the Jews were to count between Passover and Pentecost. There were seven of these but the particular one is defined clearly in Mark 16:9 -

“Now, rising in the morning, in the first Sabbath, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene.”  
- (Concordant Version, literal Greek)

All the events of this resurrection day are stated in the gospels to have occurred on “one of the Sabbaths” which is defined by Mark as the “first Sabbath.” Thus the appearances, first to Mary, then to the other women, then to Peter, then to the two disciples as they walked to Emmaus, all took place on this Saturday. The events of the day closed with the appearance of Jesus to the assembled disciples, as recorded by John –

“Then, being evening of that day, one of the Sabbaths, and the doors where the disciples were gathered together having been locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst.”

The translators of the Authorised Version have again misled everyone by rendering “one of the Sabbaths” as “on the first day of the week.” This rendering is absolutely devoid of scriptural evidence.

There is thus no scriptural ground for meeting together on Sunday to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread. If any day is to be set apart for this purpose it should be Saturday. But even so there is no evidence that the disciples did this even on Saturday; they simply met together for a meal and used the occasion for exhorting one another as seemed meet. Christadelphians, in common with many other denominations are simply following man-made customs and tradition. They are, in short, following Constantine, not Christ.

Brother H.C. Gates.

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## **“What Think Ye Of Christ? Whose Son Is He?” God’s Or Adam’s?**

“If there had been a Jew who had kept the law in all things, having done the will of God from the very beginning of life to the end of it, he would have been in the very position of the Lord Jesus himself. It would have been in his power by dying to cleanse himself from Adamic condemnation, and his righteousness would have caused his resurrection from the dead.” - Robert Roberts in “The Slain Lamb.”

“Passing through the grave cleanses no one.” Dr Thomas in “Eureka.”

So in completing a righteous character ending in an assumed natural death penalty under Adamic condemnation, this Jew of Robert Roberts conception would cause his own resurrection from a death by decay and if Robert Roberts was even correct, would benefit only himself. How then could he be in the position of the Lord Jesus of whom it is stated “he gave his life a ransom for all.” 1 Timothy 2:6. “In whom we have received the redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.” Ephesians 1:7. “Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself according to the good pleasure of his will.” Ephesians 1:4,5.

St. Paul said, “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us (Jews) unto Christ.” And again, “But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Galatians 4:4,5. “Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid, for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin (Adamic) that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” Galatians 3:21,22.

Hearken unto the Apostle again, addressing Robert Roberts' imaginary Jew unredeemed and concluded by the scriptures to be under sin, striving to keep the law in all things, ignorant of the types and shadows of the One who was foreordained of God to take away the sin of the world (Adam's and all concluded), thinking to attain his own righteousness to cause his resurrection from the penalty of death by decay - which is not the death which passed upon all men for indeed Jesus suffered that death willingly by the grace of God. See Hebrews 2:9.

Jesus tasted death for every man by the shedding of his blood not by natural decay; it was termed the grace of God for all men, as Paul had come to realise when demonstrating the weakness of the law to those Galatians who wanted to return to it. Galatians 2:20, 21. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." (Or 'died in vain').

When face to face with him in the Temperance Hall in Birmingham, Edward Turney told Robert Roberts that he did not understand the subject of his lecture "The Sacrifice of Christ" which involved the doctrine of "The Atonement," so to those who have now read my comments on the Robert Roberts Jew who could have been in the very position of the Son of God born free of the condemnation in Adam, will understand Edward Turney's reason for chastising the man who bequeathed to his now divided legion of followers the very false views which have caused such divisions world-wide. And what of the fact that he praised the sound doctrine of the Apostle Paul, and on this very subject ignored it?

I feel great sadness and despair for the deceived, but not for those who will not be warned or be willing to read and discuss the important matters relating to their salvation. I conclude by referring to Revelation 22:10-12.

"And he saith unto me, Seal not the saying of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

Brother Phil Parry.

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## **An Exposition of The Sacrifice of Christ**

**The following article is the result of being asked to give our understanding of the subject of "Substitution" on a Christadelphian Internet Forum.**

However I have set out far more than just that single topic. I have done this because it has been my experience since I was kindly invited to join this forum that whenever I have put forward a small portion of a larger 'jigsaw,' that small portion was seen as having little bearing on the whole picture; it was generally considered to be wrongly applied, it was vigorously opposed without good reason and laid aside by some readers while others were too intimidated to put forward their own views or even ask questions for fear of the same treatment. Therefore I put forward a larger picture this time.

I was also aware that I may cause offence to some but I have no wish to cause offence; my sole aim is to teach what I see as a better understanding and in doing this I have felt it necessary to show where some accepted teachings are very far from the truth. As Paul said, "Let all things be done to edifying." I hope what I have put forward may be taken in that good spirit for it is presented in all sincerity.

I take no credit for this work as the exposition is that provided by Edward Turney in “The Sacrifice of Christ.” All I have done is condense the parts necessary for answering a request while including very little of my own.

Brother Russell Gregory

## **An Exposition of The Sacrifice of Christ** **Based on the writings of Edward Turney**

I believe this is a subject which is only partly understood by many and not understood at all by some so I shall try to use uncomplicated language that we all may understand this subject a little better. Also I feel it is really a matter about which we ought rather to pray than argue and condemn one another.

In time I hope and pray that a few more will feel as I do upon this matter and I trust when they do that they will have the courage to face up to the dissenters and by the grace of God, give expression to their minds.

First of all it may be helpful to read through Romans chapter 5.

The first point I want to draw attention to is in the 6th verse: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” “When we were yet without strength.” What do we understand by this phrase?

I believe we lost all our strength by the Adamic transgression - “In whom all sinned” and “By one man’s disobedience sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men in whom (Adam) all sinned.” I am sure the Greek means “in whom.” This is our position in Adam – we are dead in trespasses and sins. Now, if Christ came into the world in this position, He could not help us.

It may be said that it was the Father who provided the help which is true because He provided that help in Jesus as we can see from Psalm 89:- “Then Thou speakest in vision to Thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help on one that is mighty. I have exalted one chosen out of the people.” Now to have brought Christ into the world under Adamic condemnation would have been to deprive Him of “all help” instead of to have ‘laid help upon Him.’

Our being brought into the world ‘in Adam’ deprived us of all help, and if Jesus had been brought into the world ‘in Adam’ He would likewise have been utterly helpless, or as Paul says:- “Without strength.” The very fact that Jesus death helps or saves us is proof that He did not come into the world like us, - “without strength.” But there is something more. This help was laid on Jesus in two ways; firstly that Jesus was brought into the world free from Adamic condemnation - free as Adam was before transgression. Jesus, having a life as free as Adam’s was when he was first formed a living soul, could lay down His life as the price or ransom that had to be paid for those who had lost theirs by Adam’s transgression.

Secondly, God raised Jesus from the grave and gave Him eternal life with the power to give eternal life to as many as God gave Him. Briefly then, that is what I mean by the two ‘helps’ laid upon the One mighty to save.

Next I want to consider the physical body of Adam and of Jesus and of all mankind.

Adam, we know, was made a living soul and we understand this to be “a natural body” a man of living flesh and blood. 1 Corinthians 15:45. Was Adam in any sense a sinner when he was made - was there any sin at all in him? No; at his creation Adam was not then a sinner, neither by nature nor by action, but who had desires, and to whom the Almighty gave a law. Having been given a law Adam was now on probation for immortality. Now desires are not sin, the desire to sin is one thing and sin is another. One is cause, the other effect. James says, that when lust, or desire hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished brings forth death. James 1:14,15.

Now I maintain that there is nothing in man with which the Almighty has endowed him, that is sinful of itself; but when he oversteps the divine boundary line, makes a bad choice then, and only then, do we have transgression. If desires were sin then God would be the author of sin, for man can only be what his Creator made him.

However, let me qualify that position. There is a sense in which desire or lust is sin when nothing actually is done. Christ said “whoso looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matthew 5:28. He is guilty because lust is sin when a man purposes to commit a forbidden act, but by some circumstance beyond his control he cannot accomplish it.

From the time Adam was made of the dust of the earth until the time he broke the law, he was not a sinner, but as soon as he broke the law, then “Sin entered into the world.”

Now, having transgressed the law, Adam was under sentence of death. Was there anything which Adam might have done in the way of righteousness, in the way of perfect godliness, after the passing of this sentence of death, to revoke the sentence pronounced? I do not believe there was. And as a proof of his utter helplessness and dependence upon the mercy of God, there was at once set forth a scheme of redemption or means of paying the debt incurred by sin.

Adam’s probation, then, consisted of two phases, first he was on probation for eternal life which he could have attained by perfect obedience and without the need for redemption; second, after transgression, he was on probation by grace and through faith under redemption. But the final outcome of this second probation is totally dependant upon Jesus Christ, the ‘Second Adam.’

The probation of Jesus Christ was like Adam’s first probation but whereas the first Adam failed to yield perfect obedience to God, Jesus succeeded. There was no breach of law committed, therefore Jesus required no redemption.

But suppose this Second Adam had come into the world in the condition the first Adam was in after transgression, that is to say, under the penalty of death, where would have been His life? If it be true that by one man’s offence death hath passed upon all men, Jesus included as some would have it, then death would have passed upon Him also, and His life would have been lost.

But I maintain that by God endowing Jesus with a life direct from Himself, free of condemnation, He began by that means to lay help upon Jesus, the one mighty to save, and further completed that help by the addition of eternal life and the power to bestow it upon others.

So there were two things required of Jesus; one was that He should run His probation after a perfect manner; the other that He should lay down His life for us.

I do not see how Jesus could lay down a life He did not possess. If His life was lost or forfeited as ours is at birth then He did not really possess it as His own, and therefore it could not be used to purchase His friends to Himself. But if His life was not sold to Sin, then when He comes to the end of His preaching He is in a position to lay it down of His own free choice, which is what His Father asked of Him. Jesus said: “Therefore doth My Father love me; because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” John 10:17,18.

So why did Jesus lay down His life? He laid it down as “a ransom for all.” Matthew 20:28. No man whose life is in pledge can redeem or buy back another. I therefore say that it was imperative that Jesus’ life was not in pledge. It was His own possession and it was free.

Having got to the end of His probation, Jesus is brought to the foot of the Cross. He was determined to do His Father’s will because He loved righteousness and hated iniquity, Hebrews 1:9, so we find Him then nailed to the Cross and there He dies. After three days He rises again to eternal life.

Now redemption as I understand it is the old debt incurred by Adam paid for by Jesus Christ. Redemption took place at Calvary. It is worth noting also that it is our present natural life (Greek – *psuche*) which is our redeemed life and this gives us the opportunity of seeking life eternal through Jesus.

So we in turn, now enter upon our probation and we are required to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. We are required to run so as to obtain. 2 Peter 1:10. This I hope we shall all be able to do.

It is now necessary to deal with parts of our subject in more detail.

### **Sin-in-the-flesh**

In “Elpis Israel” Dr.Thomas said that sin-in-the-flesh is the fixation of sin in the flesh, and that Christ came in flesh full of sin; for what can sinful flesh mean, but flesh full of sin?

I am convinced that there is no such thing as flesh full of sin, and never was, nor can be. I am perfectly aware of Romans 8:3 but that does not disprove the fact, as we shall see.

The adjective “sinful” occurs only some seven or eight times in the whole of the Scriptures. We find it used in this way - “Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity.” Numbers 22:4; Isaiah 1:4; Amos 9:8. Ask yourself, does this mean that every particle of flesh of these people is full of sin? Of course not.

And what of “O righteous nation” as in Genesis 20:4; Isaiah 26:2. Are these people full of righteousness as an element in their flesh? Is the flesh of a righteous nation different from the flesh of a sinful nation? We see how ludicrous it is say sinful applies to the flesh. Sinful applies to character not to flesh.

Again, let us imagine we have two sheep and one of those sheep belongs to “Sin.” I am now required to produce a likeness of that sheep which belongs to “Sin.” Well, the other sheep doesn’t belong to “Sin” so I point to the second sheep and say that it looks like the other. That is how I understand the matter of “likeness” in Roman’s 8:3. Paul says God sent His own Son in the likeness of flesh of sin, or “Sin’s flesh.” This flesh of Jesus was precisely the same as ours. Adam’s children belonged to sin. Jesus did not. Adam’s children are under sentence of death. Jesus was not.

### **No Changed Nature**

Robert Roberts, writing in the “Ambassador” for March 1869, Page 58, said:

“The phrase sin in the flesh is metonymical; it is not the expression of a literal element or principle pervading physical organization. Literally, sin is disobedience or an act of rebellion... There is no such thing as essential evil or sin.”

Again, regarding an applicant for baptism, he wrote:

“Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he transgressed. There is no evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker; but not in the nature of his organization. What are the facts? He was formed from the dust a living soul, or natural body. His mental constitution gave him moral relation to God. He was given a law to observe, that law he disobeyed, and sentence was passed that he, the disobedient living soul should return to mother earth. What was the difference between his position before disobedience and his position after? Simply this. In the one case he was a living soul or natural body on probation for immortality, and in the other case he was a living soul under sentence of death. He was a living soul or natural body in both cases.”

I agree.

## **The Sin-Bearer.**

1 Peter 2:24, - “who His own self bore our sins in His own body to the tree.”

It was in the purpose of God to condemn sin by one who, though tempted in all points as we are, committed no sin. Jesus condemned sin by remaining sinless. By this means He proved that we too could be sinless; any sin we commit is our own fault entirely and has nothing to do with the way we are made. We ought not to sin and we need not sin – ever. If there is anything in us that makes sin inevitable then God is unjust in condemning us when we fail. If God gave Jesus extra strength to overcome sin then not only was Jesus NOT tempted in all points as we are, but there would be little credit due to Him for overcoming.

In type, in the Mosaic system the sinless victim, the animal for sacrifice, is regarded and treated as the sinner, in the sense of being the “sin bearer.” First, the animal had to be legally acceptable for sacrifice; secondly, it had to be perfect of its type, an animal without spot or blemish.

In the great Antitype, Jesus Christ, it was the same. Legally, Jesus was undefiled by Adamic condemnation, therefore legally acceptable; and personally, He was Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, therefore without spot or blemish.

Under the Mosaic Law, the animals were slain to cover over sin, but, by contrast, Jesus Christ came, not to cover over sin, but to take away the sin of the world.

## **Ownership**

“Sinful” is not a proper adjective to qualify the noun “flesh,” but it qualifies the noun “character.” A sinful man is a man of bad character, not of bad flesh. Sin is an act, 1 John 3:4, not a fixed principle in the flesh. 1 Corinthians 6:18.

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.”

That is the only place in which “sinful flesh” occurs and it is not a true translation at all. The Greek words are *“en homoiomati sarkos hamartias”* which in English is “in the likeness of flesh of sin.” But in good English we don’t say “the hat of John” but John’s hat,” and so for *sarkos hamartias*, we must say “Sins flesh. This is a scriptural phrase, and it sets forth a scriptural doctrine. It is a matter of possession or ownership.

We all know what is meant by the possessive case, it means possession or ownership, as in John’s book, that is the book that belongs to John. Change the name then, and put in the word “sin,” - “sin’s” book. The book that belongs to sin.

Let us take another figure, a figure of flesh, the horse for instance, “sin’s horse.” The horse which belongs to sin, which is his property. Do you think now that sin’s horse is necessarily a horse that is made of “sinful flesh”? I think you will all see the absurdity of this conclusion. Well, let us again change the figure, “sin’s man,” that is a man belonging to sin. Is the man’s flesh necessarily full of sin because he belongs to sin? Certainly not.

Again take the figure of the two sheep, they both belong to one shepherd, one strays away, the other remains in the care of the shepherd. The stray sheep wanders over a boundary line and becomes the property of a person whom we will call “sin;” for sin is personified in the Scriptures as a “king reigning,” etc.

Now here is the other sheep still where they both were at first. Do you think the wool, do you think the skin, do you think the flesh of the stray sheep are at all changed? Do you believe that its wool, skin and flesh have become in any way different from the sheep which remained with their Master?

Jesus came in the likeness of ‘Sin’s’ flesh but He was not ‘Sin’s’ flesh. In other words, Jesus came in the likeness of those who belong to Sin as their master, but He did not have Sin as His master, God sending

him in the likeness of sin's flesh. And while in that flesh Jesus condemned sin by perfect obedience. Romans 8:3

## Substitution

Let me illustrate. Here are two people each in possession of a dog. The bye-laws of this town say that whoever lets his dog run loose will be fined £5000. Now suppose 'A' lets his dog run loose, he thereby breaks the law and the just penalty comes upon him. 'B' keeps his dog under control at all times and thereby keeps the law. Now just suppose 'B' says to 'A' "I am sorry for you my friend, you have broken the law, and I know you are a very poor man." "Yes" replies 'A,' "and I have not the wherewithal to pay the fine." "Never mind," says the other, "I will pay it for you. I will place myself under the penalty and you shall go free." Now in this case is 'B' a breaker of the law? No, he is a fulfiller of the law; he takes the penalty upon himself. It was precisely so with Jesus; He bore the penalty of the law for those who had broken it. He fulfilled it and made it honourable. Isaiah 42:21.

It has been said that when we read that Jesus died for us it does not mean that he died instead of us, and as an example it has been put in this way: "I have bought this cake for your tea" does not mean that the cake was bought instead of your tea. We agree that in this case it does not, but this doesn't in any way contradict the fact that the three Greek words translated 'for' (which are *gar*, *huper* and *anti*) can mean otherwise. If you like we will suppose that you, like Adam, have lost everything - your creditor demands the sale of all your possessions. Well, along comes a wealthy friend with the answer to your problem and says to you "Cheer up, my friend, I have plenty and to spare, more than I shall ever require. I will square the bill for (*gar*) you, on behalf of (*huper*) you, in place of (*anti*) you."

Would any law force you to pay the bill again? This is exactly what Jesus did for (*gar*), on behalf of (*huper*), in place of (*anti*) Adam. If you blot out this meaning you blot out ransom. But remember Jesus "restored that which he took not away." Psalm 69:4.

In His death Jesus bore the sins of those who were justly under the penalty of death and they went free. 1 Peter 2:24 - "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."

Paul taught 'substitution' when writing to the Corinthians: - "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again." 2 Corinthians 5:14,15. And in Romans 5:7 we read "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." How can one die for another unless he takes his place?

It has been said that if indeed Jesus died in our stead then He ought to have stayed dead and we ought never to die. But Jesus lost His *psuche* or natural life when He died on the Cross and this life was never given back to Him, so in this sense His *psuche* stayed dead. "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life (*psuche*) for the sheep." John 10:17. And Jesus died on the Cross so that we could have our natural life, our *psuche*, which was never meant to last for ever. At the resurrection the faithful will have *zoe* life and their *psuche* life is no longer required so I see no reason why their present life shouldn't end. When Jesus rose from the dead He rose with *zoe* life. "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive/*zao*." Revelation 2:8. Also Revelation 1:18, "I am he that liveth (*zao*), and was dead; and behold, I am alive (*zao*) for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

I am sorry to have to say this but it really is perverse nonsense to say that if a debt is paid then it is not forgiven. The opposite is true. Jesus forgives us because He has paid the debt we owed so that we no longer owe it. If Jesus had not paid our debt then He could not forgive us.

Jesus had His natural life (*psuche*) free from God because God was His Father; He received this life direct from the source of all life and not via the condemned line of Adam. And Jesus also had *zoe* life - "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." 1 Corinthians 15:45 and having died for us He then held eternal life (Greek - *zoe*), earned by obedience, and holds it now having the keys of Hades and of death; Revelation

1:13. At His coming He will share this *zoe* with those who are accounted worthy. Such a Christ is a Redeemer indeed, and such a Christ I can understand.

The logical part of our minds must surely revolt from the picture of God giving Jesus sinful flesh and then commanding that He, Jesus must lay down His life by crucifixion in order to destroy that flesh. It is no comfort to common sense trying to pacify oneself by saying “It is in the hands of God; it is alright.” It is not alright. Such a view would turn God into a monster of injustice.

### **King Sin.**

“Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies” for if we do then “Sin” reigns as “King.”

Desire leads to sin, but desire is not sin. We have plenty of wrong desires in our thoughts, but these desires are things we can put away if we will, for we have many exhortations to this end in the Scriptures. Romans 6:12, 1 Corinthians 9:27. We are expected not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies.

If one King is stronger in war than another, he deposes his enemy. That is what we have to do in this case. We can depose sin, put him out of “office” and bring in another King, Jesus, who must dwell in our hearts by faith. Ephesians 3:16 & 17.

### **The Meaning of Mortal**

The nature or flesh in Eden had no sin in it. It was corruptible and relatively ‘imperfect’ as compared with Angelic nature and there was no sin in the “nature/flesh” after it had transgressed. So what was there then? There was mortality, which is an abstract concept.

The animals have all the same breath and all were created corruptible. Some may call them “mortal” in a general or loose sense; but it is more strictly correct to style them “corruptible” because “mortal” means destined to die through breach of law. “Corruptible” does not.

### **Made Sin for Us**

It is testified that Jesus was made sin for us. How does Mr. Roberts explain this verse?

“As Jesus was not of sinful character, this could only apply to His physical nature, which drawn from the veins of Mary, was made sin.”

Now Robert Roberts has told us elsewhere there is no such thing as sin pervading our physical organization; that there is no such thing as essential evil or sin; that sin is an act of disobedience; and that the physical nature of Adam was not changed by transgression. Now he tells us that sin ran in the blood of Mary, and from her, in this way was Jesus made sin. There could not be a more palpable contradiction than this.

So how was Jesus, who knew no sin made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him?

### **Sin and Sin-Offering**

Let me explain. The Greek word *hamartia* means both ‘sin’ and ‘sin-offering.’ We need to know which meaning should be used in 2 Corinthians 5:21 where we read “he who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” If *hamartia* here means ‘sin’ then we should be able to produce proof from other parts of Scripture that Jesus was indeed “made sin.” But there is no proof. Paul teaches that Jesus was undefiled and separate from sinners and John says “in him is no sin.”

It certainly seems to make better sense if this verse should read that Jesus was made a “sin-offering for us” that something might follow for our eternal benefit, viz: that we might be made the righteousness of God “in Him.” And ask yourselves whether we could have been “in Him” unless He had been made a sin-

offering for us? Ask yourselves whether we could have been made the righteousness of God “in Him” unless we had been baptized into “His death”? And how could we have been baptized into His death unless He first had been made a sin-offering for us?

Let us next look at Genesis 4:7 - “If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.” This verse is usually understood to mean that when Cain sinned, sin lay at his door as a kind of debt, a kind of witness or evidence of his iniquity, and this Scripture is often cited in this sense. But when we look below the surface we find that is not at all the sense of the original. The word is “*chattath*” and that means sin-offering.

The phrase is “*lappethach chattath rabets*” meaning a sin-offering lieth at the door, i.e. “There is an animal suitable for a sin-offering crouching at the door of the fold. If thou doest not well, take and offer it.” That is the explanation and shows that God has provided a means for covering sin. As A. Clarke says, “It is not that the Almighty has not provided a lamb; that the Almighty is not reconciled; it is not that there is no sin offering lying at the door.” No, there was one outside the gate. That was the proper place.

In Hebrew, instead of saying “the bullock for the sin-offering” we read “the bullock the sin, or the ram the sin, or the lamb the sin,” and so forth. The word ‘offering’ has been put in to make sense of the statement. Now, this “*chattath*” or sin-offering was translated into the Greek some 200 years B.C. in the Septuagint by the word “*hamartia*,” which is the word we find in 2 Corinthians 5:21.

The Emphatic Diaglott reads: - “For him who knew no sin, he made a sin-offering on our behalf, that we might become God’s righteousness in him.”

## **Finally**

Some have said that to see forgiveness as a commercial transaction is unacceptable; that forgiveness is not purchased with a price; that would be finance; the full payment of our debt seems to some to have something about it not to be tolerated.

But Jesus used commercial terms and expressions. “Buying” and “selling” are scriptural language used by Christ Himself to teach better things:-

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field which, when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” Matthew 13:44. “Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls; who, when he hath found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Matthew 13:45,46.

Then see how Christ teaches the forgiveness of sins;

“Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants, and when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But inasmuch as he had not to pay, his Lord commanded him to be sold, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the Lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants that owed him an hundred pence, and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying. Pay me what thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. But he would not and went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him. O thou wicked servant, I forgave all that debt because thou desirest me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” Matthew 18:23-35.

The sublimest of all the doctrines of the Bible, namely, “Forgiveness of sins” is taught by Christ as a “business figure.” And we can see how fit and proper this figure is. We are “sold” under sin: Romans 7:14, we are now “bought” with a “price.” 1 Corinthians 6:20. “Redemption” and “Pardon” are of the highest concern.

To scorn this phraseology is to scorn Christ and His Apostles. To say that these are merely metaphors is to say that Jesus was crucified for a metaphor. Surely not!

The reason why the death of God’s saints is precious in His sight (Psalm 116:15) is because they have been redeemed with the precious blood of His Son who died in their stead.

With Love in Jesus to all. Russell Gregory

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## Further Comment on

# The Berean Website

**Question:** Who were the Bereans?

**Answer:** They were dwellers in a place called Berea in Macedonia to whom Paul and Silas preached the Gospel of Salvation centred on the Name of Jesus Christ the Messiah, the Son of God. They searched the Scriptures, that is, the Old Testament upon which that Gospel preaching was based, to prove whether that teaching was true or not. In our time reference has been made to them as an example to prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

**Question:** Who are the people of our day who have assumed the title ‘Berean Fellowship’?

**Answer:** They are a sect or division of the Christadelphian community who have assumed the name ‘Berean’ but not by virtue of searching the Holy Scriptures to confirm whether their pioneers Thomas and Roberts had done so effectively, to arrive at The Truth taught by the inspired Holy Apostles and Prophets with Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone to fitly frame together the spiritual Temple of God. Instead, they have followed the confused contradictory conceptions of the two aforementioned and rejected the better reasoning of Edward Turney, without perhaps having read his works and consequently accepted Roberts’ false reports and misrepresentations of Turney’s teaching without question. A very poor example for assuming the ‘Berean’ title. ‘Cretians’ would be a more fitting title though I like not to call them liars, but lacking in wisdom and understanding and void of judgment. See Titus 1:9,12-14.

And now, because they cannot reason for themselves that Romans 8:3 is a faulty translation and should read “Sin’s flesh” in the possessive case of being under bondage, they accept the faulty reasoning of Dr Thomas that sin was a fixation of evil dwelling in the physical flesh of which God was responsible in that he, Dr Thomas falsely states of Jesus, “He was made sinful flesh for us at his birth.” Dr Thomas in Elpis Israel’ page 120 under the heading “constitution of Sin”.

The Dr. reasons thus: “How could God condemn sin in the body of Jesus if it did not exist there?” but should have reasoned “How could God condemn sin in the body of Jesus, His own Son, if He, God Himself, was the one who put it there?”

Where could be the love and justice of One who claims those attributes? It is well known that Dr Thomas in one part of his writings used the correct term “Sin’s flesh” to denote belonging to sin personified as a bondmaster and in need of redemption from such a position of slavery. The reasoning is that Jesus was not “Sin’s flesh” or “Sin’s possession,” but His Father’s possession, yet flesh and blood as was Adam’s at creation.

Why is Christadelphia made up of so many sects and various views all claiming to have the Truth, when there is no unity among them neither of doctrine, faith or practice? It is because their views and teaching is based upon the contradictory theories and misconceptions of men who failed to read effectively

the Word of the Spirit and rightly divide it. And now, of their many off-shoots, we have their Berean section down-loading on the Internet inaccuracies and false accusations they cannot substantiate if faced with members of the Nazarene Fellowship. I say 'if' because all I have written to and spoken to who hold this false doctrine of condemned sinful flesh will not discuss it in person or they reject any further correspondence, preferring to remain in the pit they have dug for themselves. Nazarenes were not baptised for the removal and freedom from condemned flesh full of sin which Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts believed was the Law of Sin and Death Paul said Christ had made him free from. By their immersions modern day Bereans, with their addiction to sinful flesh, do not crucify sinful flesh; they believe they still possess it when they rise from the water and therefore cannot be serving God in newness of life in Christ. The legal aspect is lost to them

They do not comprehend the doctrine of the Atonement as did Edward Turney when he informed Robert Roberts face to face that he, R. Roberts, did not understand the subject.

All these differences have been explained since 1873 by Nazarenes who could have hidden their God-given talent of Truth and salvation and allowed Christadelphians and their man-made creeds to go their own way. However, the Macedonian Bereans of St Paul's time will rise up in judgment of these modern Bereans and condemn them if they repent not of their ignorance and false accusations of the people trying to help them. A thought I have not mentioned: - the reason escapes Christadelphians why the Law was weak and making it necessary for God to send forth His Son in the same flesh, that by Jesus being tempted in all things as those in like nature, yet He did no sin. God was manifested in Jesus, and in His flesh Jesus condemned sin. It was the only way, for no man could see God and live.

“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them”

Brother Phil Parry.

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## EDITORIAL - AUGUST 1971

Dear brethren and sisters, Loving greetings in Jesus' Name. During the several months since I sent out the last Circular Letter there has not been much of special interest to report concerning our work and welfare but as I know how much they are appreciated I try to get one out as often as possible since it is for many of us the only contact we get with those of like precious faith. This one will consist mainly of a letter from Bro. Allen to whom we are all indebted for a helpful contribution from time to time, and a short article by Bro. Parry.

For myself, I have a few comments to make upon a short article recently received from A.R.D.Moye of N.S.W. Some of you will have had a copy from him and as always he has some good and scriptural ideas to express and though we are not always in agreement we can usually find something worth thinking about in his articles. The one I refer to is a criticism of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith generally referred to as the B.A.S.F. (Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith - the amendment was the addition of a clause requiring acceptance of the Bible as the wholly inspired and infallible Word of God) and Bro. Moye deplors both much of its contents and the way it is used as a weapon in order to disfellowship those who cannot unreservedly accept its definitions.

Bro. Moye is himself cut off by most Christadelphians in Australia on account of his beliefs and it is evident from his writings that he feels it very keenly that he is regarded as a heretic and unfit to associate with those who were formerly his brethren. In spite of this, however, he still regards himself as one of them but suffering under unjust and Pharisaical judgment.

We of the Nazarene Fellowship suffer under a similar state of excommunication and while we regret that it should be so the fact does not seriously distress us, rather the contrary - it is what we are led to expect will be the lot of those who put Christ first. We recognise that our beliefs are so divergent that it would be impossible to meet in fellowship with them without compromising what we are convinced is the truth. So

that, unlike Bro. Moyer, if they were to turn around and say to us “Welcome into our fellowship; you can believe what you please about the nature of man and the true meaning of the Cross but let us have unity and work together on the things we can agree on” - we should be obliged to refuse. This is not because we glory in strife - we infinitely prefer peace, nor because we desire to be in isolation - we would rather have brethren, but it is because we are satisfied that vital parts of the things they believe are hopelessly wrong and can only be honestly and clearly rejected by both separation and positive opposition.

Time after time it has been clearly proved that Christadelphianism is too strongly entrenched in its history, literature, organisation, finance, numbers and influence for there to be any real hope of changing it, either from the inside or the outside. The only one who will change it will be our Lord Himself when He appears. Anyone who joins it with that hope or who remains in it with reservations on points of doctrine will almost inevitably lose his spiritual integrity, injure his conscience and probably even his hope of eternal life. Truth and faithfulness to Christ is everything - isolation, persecution, reproaches count for nothing in contrast. Bro. Moyer does not see the situation exactly like this - although he rejects much of Christadelphian doctrine laid down in the B.A.S.F. he still feels he is a Christadelphian and wishes he were recognised by them. All honour to him that he plugs away at the things he sees wrong and makes no secret of his opposition, but in our view he is mistaken to appear to be a suppliant for fellowship instead of an adversary and an accuser. The question we ought to ask ourselves is how do we think Christ must regard them? If we believe He would condemn their beliefs and behaviour then so should we. Only if we feel sincerely convinced that He is not offended by their teaching that He died for Himself primarily, could we tolerate it for the sake of peace and communion. But who, knowing what it really means can possibly think it does not matter?

I have been in correspondence with Bro. Moyer for quite a few years and it has always been something of a mystery to me - and a matter for regret - that in spite of the fact that he rejects the Christadelphian view of the Atonement he has never been able to accept the teaching first advanced by Edward Turney that the death of Christ was a true substitutionary sacrifice, because I cannot for the life of me see any other alternative than this. Lots of brethren have tried to show it was simply an example of self-sacrifice, or a martyrdom “faithful unto death,” or a propitiatory free-will offering of Himself to God. I have dealt in former letters with the efforts of Pryde and Rasmussen on these lines but as we know they are hopeless failures to supply a cogent reason for God having chosen to make the death of His own Son the means of our salvation and this brings me to a couple of points in Bro. Moyer’s leaflet which help to explain why he has so far failed to recognise that there is no middle position for anyone between the truth and what Christadelphians think is the truth.

The first is concerned with the nature of our physical being and the second concerns the effect of Adam’s sin.

In criticising the B.A.S.F. Bro. Moyer quotes Dr. Thomas where in Elpis Israel he makes the declaration “by nature man is an animal” and addressing his own brethren Bro. Moyer comments:-

“Well then, man, including the man Christ Jesus, is no different in nature from the dogs of the street or the pigs in the sty. Ugh! And this the B.A.S.F. requires you to submit to as a basic first principle of your faith, as a true definition without reservation. Do you? We turn (he says) to the Scriptures. Oh what a difference. Despite Adam’s sin and Eve’s, James still writes, we are “after the similitude of God.” Paul also tells us that man’s nature or flesh is different from all animal flesh. How lovely brethren and sisters to be assured of these truths about ourselves from the Holy Scriptures. Don’t you believe what James and Paul and Moses are telling you here? Or do you hang on to the animal cultism of the Unity Book a la Dr. Thomas and the B.A.S.F. that your flesh and mine and that of Jesus Christ is “the nature of the lower animals” and worse, being also “sinful flesh” or flesh full of sin? Surely not.”

Now there are many and grievous things wrong with Christadelphian doctrine and notably the idea that animal flesh is full of sin, but their view that man is an animal by nature is not one of them. The distinction which Paul makes in 1 Corinthians 15 about different kinds of flesh of man, animals, birds and fishes is a distinction of kind, not of nature and the fact that we are by nature a part of the animal creation does not in

any way conflict with James's statement that we are a similitude of God. This similitude or resemblance to God lies in our mental capacities but these capacities are manifested in and by an animal organisation and by brains and processes which are the same in quality (though of course in an infinitely higher degree) as the brain of a dog or pig. It is no disparagement of man as a creation to recognise that he is no more than the highest form of animal life of which we know. There is nothing so far as I know in the Scriptures which justifies a view that man is anything more than a creature of the dust like any other species. Certainly he is endowed with the largest brain and is capable of reasoning and intellectual activities which distinguish him from and place him far above any other form of life but they do not make him other than he is by nature - an animal. The distinction is in the mental and moral spheres; he is capable of reasoning about himself and his origin and aspiring to his Creator - this is how he is made in the image of God - but so far as his nature goes "man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." It may be thought lovely for brethren and sisters to feel assured that they are completely different from the lower animals (and, of course, as I have said, mentally and morally they may be - in fact when they have spiritual understanding they become as gods) but as a strict matter of fact it is not true and it is a fond fallacy which tends ultimately towards immortal soulism.

The best known text on the question (leaving aside the factual evidence of the record of the Creation) is Ecclesiastes 3:18, "I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts." This may not seem very flattering to man's pride but it is the plain truth of both Scripture and science. To talk about pigs in the sty is emotive but it should be recognised that there are worse examples of bestiality to be found amongst human beings than in any pigsty. It would be just as easy to choose an example of animal life beside which a human being looks a very poor production. If I choose my example it would be a thoroughbred horse - a naturally gentle and harmless creature yet with tremendous endurance, speed and courage - a magnificent beauty of movement and form yet graceful and tractable - an example of the perfection of animal creation which is rarely paralleled in human beings. One may talk about a dog in the street but no-one who has enjoyed the companionship of a dog, while recognising the limitations of the species could fail to discover that there is some quality there, in spite of its faults, which speaks of a common creator. There is a lot in the famous remark of one man: "The more I see of people the more I love my dog." I think it is a mistake to underestimate the quality and nobility of the lower forms of life and imagine that the human species is so different and far removed from us when in fact in so many ways and directions there is not only a kinship between man and "his lesser brethren" as they have been called, but we see in other species qualities and abilities which reflect and often surpass those on human beings. "The ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in summer. The conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king yet they go forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings palaces."

I therefore see no reason to object to the view that man is an animal creation - where Dr. Thomas went wrong was in making the stupid statement that the natural corruptibility which we share with all other forms of life is the penalty of sin. He said "the nature of the lower animals is as full of this physical evil principle as the nature of man, though it cannot be styled "sin" with the same expressiveness because it does not possess them as a result of their own transgression." Why on earth it never occurred to him that the fact that the lower animals have a corruptible nature which is not the result of sin is the best of reasons for thinking that neither is man's natural corruptibility the result of sin. This is what is really wrong with Christadelphianism - the theory that nature, both of man and animal alike, is sinful flesh - there is nothing the matter with the view that man is by nature an animal. It is his brain and its capacity for the abstract thought which makes him different.

The second point I wish to comment on is something Bro. Moye says in the course of combating the view that it is our inheritance of sinful flesh which is the obstacle to any future life and that salvation - both in the case of Jesus and ourselves - is dependent upon the destruction of sinful flesh in death and then resurrection to life. He writes; "There is nothing which stands in the way of one's eternal salvation but one's personal transgressions."

If in making this statement he is referring to a person who is - in Scripture's phrase - in Christ, this is true. But if - as I think he intends - he is referring to those who are yet in darkness, then it is not true. His article is quite brief and I may be misrepresenting his view but as it is a widely held error I will deal with it on the basis, since it involves what we term the Federal Principle, a doctrine which it is vital to understand

since the Gospel is based upon it. Federation is the concept in which a number of separate parties, be they people or states or things are grouped together as one unity. The United State of America is an example, where 52 individual states are grouped together into a union of one nation. In the purpose of God the natural federal head of the human family is Adam; all his descendants are regarded as comprised in him and when he sinned and lost his right to life he lost it for every one of us who share his physical life. The reason for this is so that when a new federal head appeared, the Son of God, and by the sacrifice of Himself redeemed Adam, He redeemed all who were federally in him. Christadelphians find no difficulty in understanding how a multitude of people can form one body when it is the church, the body of Christ, but they seem incapable of recognising that the same principle applies when it is the body of Adam which is involved. When they think of our relationship to Adam all they can see is an inheritance of physical sinful flesh, instead of a federal relationship of condemnation. Yet they find no difficulty in understanding that when we put on the name of Christ and become part of a new federal head there is no physical change. There is no doubt that in the early days of Christadelphianism they understood this up to a point and in their literature there is a widespread recognition of the fact that by baptism one passed out of Adam into Christ, from condemnation to freedom, from alienation to reconciliation, but it was mixed up at the same time with the idea that by his sin Adam caused a change in human nature from very good to sinful flesh and this was the bad currency which has finally driven out the good. By their stupid obstinacy in refusing to listen to the reasoning of thoughtful people that the idea that one transgression wrought such a change in the nature God created that sin became physically implanted in flesh and was the cause of all subsequent disease, sin and death is utterly unfounded and incredible, they have reduced themselves to what they are today. They see the significance of baptism as solely for the remission of personal sins, yet unless the subject of baptism sees its larger significance and relates it in his own mind to his former state of alienation in Adam, his own symbolic death and re-birth into his new federal head he might as well be sprinkled by the vicar!

Anyone who takes the view that only our personal transgressions stand in the way of our salvation must explain what the Apostle Paul means by the statement "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." The Christadelphian explanation is that it means that they were made sinners by inheriting sinful flesh and therefore they inevitably committed sins themselves and were thus made sinners. Many of them can see how this reflects upon the wisdom, the justice and the love of God, for how can anyone who is born full of sin blame anyone else but God for the fact that he commits sin? But they have to swallow their revulsion and silence their doubts because that is what the B.A.S.F. teaches and their leaders will cast them out if they question it. Bro. Moyer very rightly rejects the whole absurd and God-dishonouring doctrine of changed flesh, but he does not appear to have an answer to the problem of what the Apostle Paul teaches in 5th Romans, where again he says, "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation."

This is something quite different from and beyond the question of personal transgressions. Either there is the injustice of condemning all men for a sin which they did not commit, or there must be an explanation which is consistent with the character of a wise and just Father whose declared principle is that the children shall not be punished for the sins of their fathers but every man shall be responsible for his own actions.

So what does it mean, "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners"! It means, that on the Federal Principle all Adam's offspring are constituted sinners; made sinners not by their nature but by their legal status, just as children born to parents of a certain nationality have that nationality by law. The reason for this is in order that the one sacrifice of the free unforfeited life of Christ could substitute the one life lost by Adam but incorporated in it the multitude of those whose lives derive from him. What a wonderful thing. It is not our invention but the hidden wisdom of God - the mystery which angels desired to look into and understand - that in order that a great multitude of sinners might be saved from perishing by the merciful intervention of God Himself - He ordained that (Romans 5:18) "by the offence of one judgment came on all to condemnation (not to make them personally sinful or even to ensure that they should be properly punished for their own sins - No) but so that by the righteousness of one the free gift of justification unto life."

If instead of the Federal Principle every man was arraigned and held accountable before supreme Justice either he would have to be executed or else an equivalent sacrifice found to deliver him. In Hebrews, chapter 9 it contrasts the many yearly offerings of blood made by the High Priest with one offering of Jesus and the writer shows that the effect of the Divine arrangement is that He did not have to offer Himself often - every year - "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world."

The concept of a multitude of Saviours is unthinkable - yet - a life for a life – the wages of sin is death - the soul that sinneth it shall die - every firstling thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it thou shalt break his neck - show how one sacrifice, until the Federal Principle was established, could only redeem one life.

Sins can be forgiven, but they are only forgiven on the basis of faith and repentance and this is why the Federal Principle is vital. The faith it demands is exemplified in Abraham, who believed God and it (his belief) was counted to him for righteousness. It is clinched in the statement “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” To summarise - under the Federal Principle, all Adam’s descendants are cut off from God and in a legally dead condition. Unless they are brought to life, by a spirit birth (John 3:3-10) they will remain in that dead state until natural corruptibility removes them from the scene and they perish like the beasts. This is not a punishment; they are not suffering because of a sin they did not commit, any more than any other animal which dies naturally. But if they are fortunate enough to hear the word of life - and this is a matter which is in the hands of God - and receive the seed of the Kingdom into good ground, they think upon their ways and turn to God and in one way or another they learn that there is a new Federal Head under whom they may enrol and in the symbol of baptism suffer the death incurred by sin and rise in a new relationship. They pass thereby from a legal death-state into a legal life-state and when Christ who is their life shall appear then they will appear with Him in glory.

In this process it is not the sinlessness of the individual which matters - if it was it could not work; - at this stage the act of faith is the only righteousness which is acceptable - personal guilt is washed away at the same time but it is the deliverance from the bondage of sin as an alien power which is in reality salvation. The indispensable act of faith is the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God who gave Himself in His sacrifice as the redemptive price paid by God Himself to save the human race from perishing from the earth because of sin.

I hope this outline of our belief will be seen as only a constructive criticism of the article mentioned and will enable some of us to see more clearly the difference between the logic and the simplicity of the Divine Plan, and the contradictions and unreasonableness of what has been made of it by creeds compiled by fallible men.

I send thanks and best wishes to all who have sent help and encouragement. If you have not written for a year or two and would like me to continue to send you this Circular Letter from time to time please drop me a line to let me know you are still alive and interested. You are very welcome to it, at no cost, but if I do not revise my mailing list from time to time I can be sending uselessly to people who may be dead or have changed their address.

Yours in the hope of life at Christ’s return. E.Brady.

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## Thoughts on The Good Samaritan

**I was asked recently for some thoughts on The Good Samaritan by someone who had decided to give a talk on the subject. Realising he knew as much about the Good Samaritan as I did I suggested the following random thoughts as they occurred to me just in case they may be helpful to him:-**

I wonder if Jesus made up this story as a parable or was He relating an actual incident? Either way, it was a very touching and wonderful teaching of Christian law.

The first question Jesus was asked was - “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus didn’t answer the questioner as we might have done. We would probably have said something like, ‘You can’t *do* anything; that would be earning eternal life. You can’t earn a gift of inheritance from God.’

But here was a lawyer who knew the law. He was responsible for answering other peoples questions with regard to what the law said. And ultimately what was the law for but to show how life should be lived in order to obtain eternal life? What more was required than was in the law? Jesus responded gently with the question - "How readest thou?" to which the lawyer gave the right answer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

Was the lawyer looking for a loophole in the law so that he didn't really have to love his neighbour as he was supposed to love God? Maybe he had some neighbours he didn't feel were very lovable. Perhaps many of us do. Could he avoid his lawful duty, for it was a lawful duty? So he asked "Who is my neighbour?"

Then we have the story showing us who is our neighbour and how we should treat him. We could discuss all the different characters involved in Jesus' story and see how each should have behaved; we could consider the circumstances surrounding the need for the victim to travel this isolated and rough road knowing of the dangers of travelling alone, but the end result is that we can see Jesus in this Good Samaritan. He found us half dead; fallen victim to robbers; unable to help ourselves. And what did He do but bind up our wounds and carry us to safety; pay the innkeeper for our lodging in a place where we can stay until He comes again.

"Go and do thou likewise." - "Love ye one another as I have loved you."

Love to all in His Great Name, Russell.