

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 223

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Editorial

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends, Loving greetings.

I hope any readers in other countries will excuse me if I concentrate on what it is to be English. The reasons for this will become clear. Firstly Britain is a Christian country and almost every area of public life is rooted in Christian teachings and that this history of ours cannot simply be swept away as some would seem to hope. Secondly British even-handedness towards competing religions is quintessentially Christian and crucially, English Protestant. Protestant Christianity is the very essence of what it is to be British: it gave us our language, our national identity and, with both of these things, a template for how we think and reason. Protestant means any Western Christian not an adherent of the Roman Catholic Church and to any Bible student many of the doctrines and practices to which Catholics adhere are unacceptable and false.

The influence of Protestant Christianity upon our language and literature is impossible to overstate. When the Gloucestershire scholar William Tyndale went up to Magdalen Hall, Oxford in 1510 the English language was held in such contempt that it was banned from the college altogether excepting feast days. As a result of Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament in 1534, it became a national language, complete and concise, with a sense of cadence and rhythm, and of a direct purpose which has endured to this day.

In 1510 England was an authoritarian outpost of the Catholic Church - a country where, uniquely, it was illegal to read the Bible in the national language. Instead commoners were dependent on the Church for their religious succour - which naturally invested the Church with enormous power. Hence therefore the Church’s disinclination to allow the Bible into the grubby paws of ploughmen and “lowly women.” Control the language and you control the people. Tyndale of course, rejected all that; the people must be able to read the Bible for themselves, otherwise they could not be saved. How right he was. For Tyndale it was a purely theological opposition but it had immediate social and political repercussions. His translation of the Bible - the King James Bible is regarded as being 90 per cent the work of Tyndale - although you would never know it from the introduction printed as a preface to the Bible - the translation passed power down-wards from the priests and bishops to the people, both by the mere fact of its existence, but above all because of the language it used.

Tyndale returned to the scripture through Erasmus’s 1516 translation of a Greek Bible (with Latin translation). His facility with English was so acute and attuned to the common man that it became almost immediately respectable and later ubiquitous. Tyndale had a simple knack of coining the memorable phrase

which was remarkable: he gave the English language among a ream of phrases, “daily bread,” “you cannot serve God and Mammon,” “Let there be light,” “There were shepherds abiding in their fields.” It was the simplicity and directness of the language, the eschewing of Latin or French-derived terminology that made and makes it so memorable. Tyndale’s Bible is written in words of usually one and at most two syllables; the template for what we know as “good plain English.” Nor was Tyndale a bigot when it came to women and their place in God’s scheme of things. Sometime in the 1530s he wrote:

“If a woman were driven to some island, where Christ was never preached, might she not preach him, if she had the gifts thereto? Might she not also baptize? And why might she not by the same reason minister the sacraments of the body and the blood of Christ and teach him how to choose officers and ministers? O, poor women, how despise ye them.”

Tyndale loathed and distrusted heavy-handed centralized authority, he felt that God’s word was the property of the people rather than the Church. This has meant that the scriptures are open to a multitude of divergent interpretations. So we could say that the strange British blend of obstinacy and a lack of deference to authority, the enormous tolerance of different points of view, of different creeds and faiths is traceable directly to Tyndale - sitting at his desk in exile in Antwerp, about to be betrayed by agents, shortly to be strangled and then burned to death at the stake.

When we pick up our Bibles to read and when we contemplate our redemption and salvation and the joy that is to come, we should remember Tyndale and his tireless work and his steadfastness in the face of adversity. I don’t think there can be much doubt that he will find a place in the Kingdom when it comes.

O taste and see that the Lord is good: Blessed is the man that trusteth in him.

With love to all. Helen Brady.

“There will be a Resurrection of the Dead Both of the Just and of the Unjust”

We read much in the Scriptures of the fact of resurrection from a state of death, but only the one class in a state of relationship to Christ are considered to be asleep in Him and are alive unto God.

Therefore Paul addresses the Thessalonian believers with words of hope and consolation, speaking on behalf of his fellow companions, “For what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.” (1 Thessalonians 2:19 & 4:13-18).

To the Colossians Paul says “When Christ who is our life shall appear then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (1 Colossians 3:4). Yes, Paul did express the words to the Corinthians “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive in our body for what we have done whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10). Seeing there was laid up for Paul a crown of righteousness which the Lord would give him, there can only be one reason for Paul to stand before the judgment seat of Christ and furthermore the unjust are to appear before the Great White Throne of God, not the judgment seat of Christ.

In the book of Acts we read of Paul in defending his faith, he declares that there would be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust. In other words two resurrections; one of the just at the appearing of Christ as the resurrection and the life, and at the end of the reign of one thousand years a resurrection of the unjust.

We must note Paul’s use of the word ‘receive.’ Paul receives a crown of life from the righteous Judge and the others also receive rewards in like manner for Paul says “And not to me only but to all them who

love his appearing.” How can any read the 11th chapter of Hebrews and still believe in a simultaneous resurrection of just and unjust?

Whether the writer was St Paul or St John, his conclusion is that they will all be made perfect, having obtained a good report through faith prior to a standing before Christ at His appearing. It is obvious that perfection of character is not meant, but physical perfection of nature or incorruptibility which was the better thing provided for all of like faith. The Christadelphian teaching in their Statement of Faith Clause 25 of simultaneous resurrection of faithful and unfaithful, that after judgment the rejected are consigned to shame and the second death is out of harmony with the teaching of Jesus, the Prophets and Apostles and the Scriptures of Truth. This Clause 25 means that the unfaithful rejected will live another thousand years to experience the second death, whereas Revelations states “Blessed and Holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power.”

The community which accepts this Clause 25 are expected to believe that the blessed and holy are the unfaithful of the first resurrection. When confused teaching of this unscriptural nonsense is put into print for acceptance, what of the rest of the Clauses? They are in many cases subject to close scrutiny which I can prove. Some years ago when I was a member of this community I expressed a view to a lecturing brother that I thought Jesus emerged from the tomb incorruptible. Oh no, was his answer, Jesus had to be judged first to be worthy of it. I pondered many things in my desire for truth from then on and found that to destroy the B.A.S.F. was not the answer, but to rid myself of the bondage it laid upon those who never understood it then, and do not at the present time. In fact if any hint of truth or opposing views are expressed they are told not to rock the boat and cause discord among brethren. They do not see that the discord is already present in the doctrine received by people whom they have thought to be inspired of God yet found to be grossly in error on many important subjects related to salvation. Some have expressed the view that they can do more good by staying in the boat and showing up some of the errors of doctrine revealed to them, but the result is merely toleration and a social and peaceful life in the community.

According to the signs of the times warned by Jesus it is now more than ever necessary to asses the doctrinal and moral position before it is too late. It is no use saying as some have “it will all be made plain when Jesus returns” it is plain enough now to me by the Grace of God and what I believe has been broadcast for a 133 years by very sincere people despite opposition and other hindrances including sickness and poor health like many of the Apostles since the death of Christ on Calvary.

Consider what I say and please note – it will be joyfully plain when the dead in Christ only shall rise incorruptible and then those alive changed to the same spirit nature to meet Him in the heavenlies and so ever be with him in His Kingdom. Lo, He cometh with clouds, even so, Come Lord Jesus.

Our united love to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in truth, understanding and sincerity. Grace and Peace be multiplied unto you and special thanks to Brother Gregory and Sister Brady.

Phil and Rene Parry.

Exhortation.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters, Love in the Master’s Name.

Of late storms have arisen very rapidly in the political heavens, and as lookers for those things to come upon the earth which will make a way for the King’s rising, we lift up our heads hoping the same will hasten the time for our deliverance.

Will the Ruler of all at this time stir up his power in Israel? For they are the nation that will do exploits the later days. Things have not developed exactly upon the lines laid down by those modern prophets on whose forecasts we used to rely - much detail of the picture has already been filled in.

“God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps on the sea and rides upon the storm.”

The best of us are poor prophets, but those who have studied the times and number of years to the time of the end have felt assured that this year will be the decisive year for the Kingdom to be set up on earth. Perhaps it is not for us to know the time and season which the Lord has reserved in His own power, but the present political crisis will make us lift up our heads and cause us to search our hearts, for one day not far hence, we trust, we shall see Him whom we love as He is.

The Scriptures are our only source of comfort at all times, and we find it meets all our needs and assuages all doubts and fears. Perhaps there is much in our lives, as in the past, which weighs heavily on the adverse side of the balance, and to us there is confusion of face, but to God belong mercies and forgiveness, that we may have been rebellious. Daniel felt this way when, with many princes of Israel, he was carried away into Babylon for their good.

In Christ our Lord we have a sure and certain hope for the future, because the apostle affirms that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him against that day.

In 2 Sam. 23, we see David returning after much strife and family trouble to experience the peace and tranquillity and assurance in the God of Israel who never forsook David, because His promises are “yea” and “Amen,” in Christ also who was his hope as He is ours.

He will erect again the tabernacle of David, and build again the ruins thereof and raise it up, ordered in all things and sure. We must not lose sight of the fact that the Fig Tree has already budded and is putting forth leaves. Through many long and sometimes weary years this has been our hope and faith. By the grace of God we find our anchor secure, fixed in the Rock of Christ Jesus, whom David, called his Lord. Then how could He be his son?

With Fraternal Love. F. Skinner. (1957)

The United Bible Society has published a handbook which contains help for translators in different languages. It tries to explain the literal meaning of the Greek, with some of the problems when trying to render this in other languages.

The United Bible Society and 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.”

A number of modern translators understand “Law” here as a specific reference to the Jewish Law (so Jerusalem Bible, Goodspeed, Moffatt); others take the word in a more general sense (so New English Bible, New American Bible).

Human nature is literally “flesh.” See the discussion on this in the previous chapter.

The first sentence in verse 3 may require alteration in the order of clauses - for example, “God accomplished what the Law could not accomplish because human nature was weak.” Weakness must refer to moral weakness, not lack of physical strength.

In rendering ‘he condemned sin in human nature,’ it is important to avoid the idea of “condemning sinful human nature.” It is rather “his condemnation of sin that operates in human nature” or “sin that uses human nature.”

‘Who came with a nature like man’s sinful nature’ is literally “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” There are at least two exegetical problems involved in the translation of this verse:

First, does Paul use the word “flesh” in the sense of Christ’s physical body or of his human nature? In light of the manner in which Paul uses “flesh” in the earlier part of this verse, it seems better to understand his meaning here to be human nature (so NEB). However, a number of translators take this as a reference to our Lord’s physical body (so Goodspeed and JB).

The second exegetical problem involves Paul’s use of the word “likeness” (Greek *homoioōma*). Here it is important to realize that the emphasis is on the identity that Christ shared with “sinful flesh” and not on his difference from it. That is to say, Paul is either declaring that Christ has a physical body exactly like the physical bodies of other men, or that Christ had a human nature exactly like the human nature of other men. As indicated before, the Today’s English Version accepts the latter of these two interpretations. Does this interpretation then imply that Christ was sinful like all other men? The answer is “no.” Paul is only affirming that even though Christ possessed a human nature like that of all other men, he himself remained sinless because he never yielded to the impulses of this nature. This may seem a difficult point to comprehend, but it is easier to understand if one realizes Paul’s intention in this passage. He insists that Christ must fully identify with fallen man if he is to conquer sin in the arena where all other men have been conquered by sin. And this would require that Christ assume not only a physical body like the body of all other men, but that He assumes the same nature that all other men possess. Thus Paul declares that as Christ possessed the full nature of God (His own Son), so He possessed the full nature of man.

The expression of means in the phrase by ‘sending His own Son’ may be rendered in some languages as “in order to do this (that is, to condemn sin) He sent his own Son.” The clause ‘who came with a nature like man’s sinful nature’ is rendered in some languages as “who came to earth with a heart like the hearts of men who sin” or “he came having a body just like men’s bodies which tend to sin.”

‘To do away with sin’ translates a phrase which is sometimes used in the Old Testament with the meaning “sin offering.” Some translators see in this phrase an emphasis on the aspect of sacrifice (NEB “as a sacrifice for sin”; Goodspeed “a sin-offering”), while other translators emphasize the result of this action (JB “God dealt with sin”; Moffatt “to deal with sin”; NEB alternative rendering “to deal with sin”).

If it is necessary to restructure the phrase ‘with a nature like man’s sinful nature’ so that the resulting form involves a clause, it may then also be necessary to separate the final phrase ‘to do away with sin’ and make it a complete sentence. Otherwise, this purpose may become confused with some aspect of man’s sinning. An adequate translation in some languages may be “he came in order to do away with sin” or “he came in order to be a sacrifice for sin.” However, such a translation could imply that he was a sacrifice for his own sins, and therefore it may be necessary to say “he came in order to be a sacrifice for the sins which others had committed.”

The United Bible Society

Editor’s Note: The writer says “There are at least two exegetical problems involved in the translation of this verse.” I can’t help feeling they have brought these problems on themselves by overlooking the fact that “sinful flesh” is in the possessive case and should have been translated “sin’s flesh” then there would be no question as to whether it referred to the Lord’s physical body or His human nature when, in fact, it refers to the legal position of those who are not “in Christ.” This appears to show they have no recognition of how Paul was using the term “flesh” when he says “Ye are no longer in the flesh.” Where there is a good understanding of the Federal Principle which Paul teaches in his letter to the Romans, there is little need for more to be said on this verse.

Russell

Some Comments and Observations on the last Circular Letter

In our last Circular Letter there was so much information some of which brought into focus matters leading up to the time which led Edward Turney to make his views known on the meaning of why Jesus sacrificed His life and the importance of the virgin birth to make effectual for redemption and salvation.

David Handley of Malden had already written a letter to R. Roberts containing his own views on why it was necessary for Jesus to be free of the Adamic condemnation which passed upon all men (not of their flesh but by imputation) a scriptural fact lost to Christendom and the majority of Christadelphians including perhaps at the time of his letter to Robert Roberts, even David Handley.

Robert Roberts had six weeks in which to consider Handley's letter and publish it in the Christadelphian magazine if he chose, but this was not done. I have never favoured the term "mere man" used by David Handley that he did not consider Jesus to be a mere man for if He was not then what was He? Was He not the same flesh and blood nature that Adam was when created? Has not our late Brother Ernest Brady stressed to his critics who considered Jesus to be a hybrid (part divine) that He could not be a man if He was not tempted in all points as we are?

Adam was a Son of God but transgressed; Jesus was a Son of God and did not transgress. The difference then was plain; Adam was a sinner, Jesus was Adamic nature but sinless, legally and morally related to God from birth nevertheless a man.

David Handley's letter is published at the beginning of the booklet "The Sacrifice of Christ" by Edward Turney and is scripturally correct apart from his non-classification of his meaning of the term 'mere man,' whether these views being expressed by Turney may have rancoured in the mind of Robert Roberts when he thought he had suppressed Handley's letter by omitting it from the Christadelphian magazine and this could have influenced him against Turney.

After reading the false doctrine Edward Turney believed as a Christadelphian but renounced it in 1873 for the sound doctrine Nazarenes are accused of by ignorant people I am amazed to be informed through Wikipedia that David Handley rejoined the Christadelphian community and was re-baptised but whether he was ever previously baptized other than by Christadelphians I am unaware. It is well known that both Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts refused him baptism on account of his beliefs in the doctrine of changed nature, condemned flesh and sin in the flesh – being told by both men that there was no evidence for such a view in the Scriptures, but to the contrary.

All this information has been circulated for years in Nazarene literature but withheld and suppressed by leading members of "Christadelphia" and I wish to make a correction where it said in Wikipedia that our late brother Brady was kicked out, the reason being his lack of attendance at the meeting which was grossly untrue. It was a way to prevent him speaking and explaining his understanding and the true meaning of why Christ died on Calvary. A similar thing happened to me when my views made me a target for disfellowship and desired to make my views known to the whole ecclesia who were ignorant of what was going on. I was accused of having read so-called clean flesh literature which I had never received or even heard of, so what could be the answer? It must have been a revelation and my desire to know the Truth which was and has been the case with all Nazarenes as I found out later. "Too True To Be New" by E. Brady is a great eye-opener to all who choose to read it.

The younger generation of Christadelphians may say "O well we were not around when all the controversy took place and therefore not involved." But you are involved for you profess to be Christadelphians whose false doctrines have never been publicly changed where necessary in the National Press or Encyclopaedia, so when you, a professing Christadelphian address me, the false theories of that world-wide community come immediately to mind and it is evident you have accepted the lies and misrepresentations expressed by people who have never searched to prove whether they themselves have been deceived. Therefore be warned of what you are told in personal contact or on these latter-day internet forums and encyclopaedias.

Nazarenes are not really a sect but from what I was told this label was put on them by Robert Roberts because they were regarded in Apostolic times as a sect which was everywhere spoken against as followers of Christ's teaching but Robert Roberts spoke against on account of opposition to much of his views.

Nazarenes profess to be members of the Body of Christ working in harmony with His teaching by proving all things and holding fast to that which is true, "And he is head of the body the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Colossians 1:17-18. Please read the remainder of this chapter and realise that a body of condemned flesh is not even mentioned or taught by the Apostle and his letter to the Romans has been grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. Brother E.Brady wrote an article on the mystery of the Christian religion which I have no doubt was revealed to him as it was revealed to Nazarenes before and after his time which proves they are not off-shoots of the Christadelphians but of the True Vine, John 15:1, and nourished by the true spiritual sap of teaching of Jesus and His Apostles and Prophets who in their time brought forth much fruit. No more mystery with them, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians in Chapter 3, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; whereby when ye read ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ."

Of the resurrection both of the just and the unjust Paul was quite clear; there was no mystery or secret. 1 Corinthians 15 does not speak of the unjust being raised incorruptible nor the unjust changed to incorruptibility. "Behold I show you a mystery, we shall not all (who are Christ's) sleep (or die naturally) we that remain unto the sounding of the trumpet will be changed" to spirit-nature and with the risen dead in Christ will be gathered unto Him. Dr.Thomas' 'Anastasis' is a myth and also a contradiction of what he has stated elsewhere.

Think for yourselves on the basis of the inspired Word of God through His Apostles and Prophets as we compliment Linda for doing and explaining in our Circular Letter though persecuted by some who are taught by the precepts of men. Then and only then will God and His Son bless your understanding.

Our sincere Love to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

Phil and Rene Parry.

A Week In Palestinian Politics

The Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas has been busy trying desperately to build a stable government at home with international support. But President Abbas does not have the full backing of Hamas and may not hold on to his Presidency for more than a few months.

Israel will not talk to Hamas but has met with President Abbas. On 23rd December 2006 the Israeli Prime Minister and President Abbas met at what is hoped was the first of a series of meetings to build a framework of meaningful negotiations between the two countries in order to agree to two independent states living alongside each other in peace and harmony. To this end they agreed on the need for prompt implementation of commitments made at that meeting.

"The ultimate goal should be an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the creation of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state, living side-by-side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security."

On the 20th to 22nd of January, President Abbas met with his Syrian counterpart to discuss their mutual ties and how to achieve a consequential process towards ending the Israeli occupation of lands occupied since 1967.

They also discussed the situation of the Palestinian people and the efforts being made to establish a government of national unity with a view to stopping internal violence, "because the only challenge facing

our people is the Israeli occupation.” So stressing the rejection of the use of violence amongst Palestinians, while emphasising the ‘sanctity of the Palestinian blood.’

President Abbas was accompanied by Dr Seab Eirikat, Head of the PLO Negotiations Affairs as he intends re-activating the P.L.O. and has met with various faction leaders to discuss ways of its reconstruction.

President Abbas also met with the Norwegian Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process with whom he discussed the escalation of the Israeli military attacks against the Palestinian people and the withholding by Israel of millions of dollars of their money which is desperately needed for humanitarian aid since the Israeli/Palestinian war last year.

The Saudi and Pakistani leaders are also involved and declared the necessity of forceful initiatives to resolve the Palestinian dispute and bring harmony to the Muslim world. “There was total consensus on all issues with Saudi Arabia including the Palestinian issue and the threats of extremism and terrorism” said the Pakistani President Musharraf.

Both leaders were concerned over the situation in Iraq and its effects on all neighbouring countries.

On the 23rd January, President Abbas met with Iraqi President’s special envoy in Amman, Jordan, to discuss the plight of Palestinian refugees who have fled to Iraq only to be persecuted and killed by Iraqi militia. He stressed the necessity for the Iraqis to offer Palestinian refugees the necessary protection.

On the 24th January U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice talked with King Abdullah of Jordan in Amman, briefing him with regards to her visits to the Palestinian territory, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia with particular attention to the peace process between Israel and Palestine to establish the two-state solution. Condoleezza Rice stressed the U.S. commitment to push forward this solution.

Following this consultation, King Abdullah said that if the Palestinian cause was not solved this year, the entire region would ‘pay the price,’ adding that Israel should realize that a just solution guarantying legitimate rights to the Palestinian people would lead to stability in the region. He also gave his support for the two state solution.

On the 25th January, President Abbas met King Abdullah in Davos, Switzerland. The discussion centred on the economic crisis which the Palestinian people are facing as a result of the international as well as the Israeli siege during his efforts to form a new government of national unity.

President Abbas met with the Chairman of the World Economic Forum, who was also in Davos for the WEF meeting which was opened on the 24th

Later the President met with the former President of Iran, Mohammed Khaminai. They too discussed Israeli violations of human rights against Palestinian people.

About the same time, in New York, Ambassador Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer to the United Nations, called the Security Council to bring Israeli perpetrators to justice for their war crimes and human rights violations.

“For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human right violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.”

While in Switzerland, President Abbas met with Israeli Foreign Minister, Tzipi Livni. They restated their commitment to resuming negotiations to finding a two-state solution. “The Middle East is in dire need of peace and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the most serious conflicts that requires a solution...”

26th January the Under-Secretary-General for political Affairs, Ibrahim Gambarim called for a “resumed political process” between Israel and the Palestinians, warning that the world cannot afford another year like 2006 in the Middle East with its heightened levels of instability and suffering although he agreed there was a

renewed sense of urgency in the region as shown by the planned “Quartet” meeting of the UN, European Union, Russian Federation and United States making the Middle east their “clear priority.” Mr Gambari also included Lebanon “as its people will know all too well, can ill afford any further deterioration. For many Lebanese, ugly spectres of the past have again begun to emerge.”

Israel recently released a total of 100 million dollars, a portion of more than 500 million dollars of custom duties due to the Palestinian Authority. It is expected this will strengthen the position of President Abbas and partially ease the financial crisis in Palestine.

Compiled from Internet sources

An exposition of Romans Chapter 7

Introduction: Regarding Paul’s letter to the Romans, we read in the Scofield Reference Bible that when Paul was writing from Corinth “he would desire the Christians in Rome to have his own statement of the great doctrines of grace so bitterly assailed everywhere by legalistic teachers.” And the Rev. C. I. Scofield goes on to explain “the theme of Romans is ‘the Gospel of God’ (1:1); the very widest possible designation of the whole body of redemption truth, for it is He with whom is ‘no respect of persons’; and who is not ‘the God of the Jews only’ but of the Gentiles also (2:11, 3:29). Accordingly ‘all the world’ is found guilty (3:19) and a redemption is revealed as wide as the need, upon the alone condition of faith. Not only does Romans embody in the fullest way the doctrine of grace in relation to salvation, but in three remarkable chapters (9-11) the great promises to Israel are reconciled with the promises concerning the Gentiles, and the fulfilment of the former shown to await the completion of the Church and coming Deliverer out of Zion (11:25-27). The Key phrase is ‘the righteousness of God’ (1:17, 3:21,22).”

While Paul, in this remarkable letter, explains as nowhere else in scripture, the federal principle in salvation by which we are either ‘in Adam’ or ‘in Christ, he nevertheless writes, especially in the seventh chapter, “some things hard to be understood” (2 Peter 3:16) which, Peter says, “they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.” Therefore in putting forward the following essay I invite discussion and comment. - Russell.

The problem:

In verse 15 Paul wrote: “For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.”

Can this be true of Paul as a Christian? Did Paul really do what he hated? Could it really be said that there was no good thing in him, that is, in his flesh? Did Paul really “allow not” that which he did? Could he not find how to perform that which was good?

How can expositors make these sayings of Paul agree with his teaching in chapter 6 where he said (verses 12-15): “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” and how was it he could say to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 11:1): “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”?

Original Sin

Those who would use this chapter to support their teaching of Original Sin, or sin in the flesh, should consider that no writer is known to have held such a view for centuries after the chapter was written and it is believed that St Augustine, who introduced the doctrine of Original Sin into the Church, was the first writer to use Paul's writings in this way in his controversy with Pelagius and so added to the growing confusion of the day.

There have been some who have understood that Paul is here writing about the time previous to his conversion on the Road to Damascus contrasting it with his life in Jesus. For example, Dr Adam Clarke writes of this chapter:-

“It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there, that the Apostle speaks here of his regenerate state; and that what was, in such a state, true to himself, must be true of all others in the same state. This opinion has, most pitifully and most shamefully not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character, *it requires but little knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel, and of the scope of this Epistle, to see that the Apostle is here either personating a Jew, under the Law and without the Gospel, or showing what his own state was when he was deeply convinced that by the deeds of the law no man could be justified; and had not as yet heard those blessed words, Brother Saul, the Lord that appeared unto thee in the way, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.*”

In Adam or In Christ

The first thing we wish to note is the Federal Principle in which Paul distinguishes between those “in Adam” and those “in Christ.” This is not a physical condition or position but a legal position by imputation of God. Adam's sin was imputed to all in his loins as the “sin of the world.” (John 1:29). Hence those “in Adam” are variously described as being “concluded under sin” “sold under sin,” “in the flesh,” those who are “carnal,” and those in whom “sin dwelleth.” In this state, all, both Jew and Gentile, are under “the law of sin and death,” “bring forth fruit unto death” and are without hope. Yet it was while in this state that Paul claims he was, regarding “the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” (Philippians 3:6).

Then there are those “in Christ” and they are said to be “spiritually minded” to “walk in the spirit” “dead to the law by the body of Christ” “delivered from the law” “serve in newness of spirit” “those who have been delivered by the body of Christ” “Christ Jesus has made them free from the law of sin and death” “by the law of the Spirit of Life.” “Alive unto God in Christ Jesus,” “not under law but under grace.” And it was while in this state that Paul wrote his letter to the Romans having learnt that salvation through the Law was ended now that Christ had come and fulfilled the Law. Paul, or Saul as he was earlier, was certainly one of the most zealous Jews of his day, upholding the Law blamelessly, resisting all opposition; one of the greatest leaders in his country, a Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin and in a position to obtain letters from the highest authorities to persecute the Christians.

His conversion to become a follower of Christ must have enraged those authorities but it also left the Jews without excuse to follow him. Paul now teaches: “But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless and I counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:7,8).

In Parenthesis

It can be seen also that this seventh chapter is in parenthesis, and one can read through chapter six and on to chapter eight, missing out chapter seven without noticing a break in continuity. And so in the first verse of chapter seven, where Paul expands on chapter six, we find that he, while writing to both Jews and Gentiles is explaining to all how the Jewish Law had now been done away; it was useless for salvation for Christ is the end of the Law (Romans 10:4). Those whom Paul is addressing, then, would see how, in this chapter, he is changing position from being under the law of sin and death to being under grace, a follower of Christ. In the first three verses Paul explains how this change of position came about using the illustration of marriage. While the husband is alive the wife is bound to him by law but if the husband dies she is free to

marry another. This then is what Jesus did in freeing the faithful from the law of sin and death by His own death on the Cross in which He destroyed the power of sin to which we were bound; verse 4, “That we should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.”

The Law of Sin and Death

This illustration of marriage then, shows how all people are bound, as in marriage, to the law of sin and death having been sold to sin by Adam and without hope of life eternal; all, Jew and Gentile, are concluded under sin; sold under sin and bound by the law till death.

Paul then explains how there is yet hope, for if, as in his illustration the husband be dead then the wife is no longer bound to him but is free to bind herself to another, even so those sold under sin, that is all in Adam, can be freed from the bondage of the law of sin and death through faith in the crucifixion of Jesus; which death releases all who are baptised into the death of Jesus; they rise to serve in newness of spirit, no longer in Adam but now in Christ. And as Jesus rose from the dead those in Christ live with Him for ever, no longer under the law of sin and death; for there is now no condemnation to them for they walk after the spirit, “knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans 6:6).

In the next few verses Paul shows how what he thought was good for obtaining approval with God was due to his misunderstanding for while the law was good and spiritual it could not save, being weak through the flesh (8:3). When he understood the purpose of the Law he found that he was indeed dead because it condemned him in Adam; salvation under the Law now being finished. It was ended when, at Jesus’ death, “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Matthew 27:51).

Well he says that the “Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Galatians 3:24,25). This then is the background to this chapter, contrasting Paul’s time as a follower of the Law of Moses to becoming a follower of Jesus Christ.

Aorist tense

If we go next to verse fourteen, we read what is perhaps the key verse to this chapter where Paul writes: **“For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.”**

Never in scripture is it said that a child of God is sold under sin, for that is the state from which every child of God has been saved by faith and baptism into Christ.

And Paul was a child of God at the time of writing so why was this written in the present tense – a time when Paul was not ‘carnal’? We are told that this chapter is written in the aorist tense, a tense peculiar to ancient Greek (and a few other languages) and reference to a dictionary tells us that “aorist tense” refers to “past action but does not indicate if it is continued or completed.” So past action may continue to be present action without changing the tense as we do in English and it is the context which must ever decide how it should be understood.

We see in this verse Paul is describing his carnal state in distinction to his spiritual state by saying “I am carnal...” As this state of being carnal refers to the state of enmity against God it is evident Paul is writing about the time before his experience on the road to Damascus for now, at the time of writing this letter, Paul walked in the light of life, walking in the Spirit as an Apostle of Jesus and an inspired “chosen vessel.” The spiritual man lives in a state of friendship with Jesus, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” The spirit of God dwells in him and he is governed by reason and minds the things of the Spirit (Romans 8:5). As “I am carnal” was written in the aorist tense I feel we are at liberty to say this should have been translated as “I was carnal” as being the meaning Paul wished to convey to his readers.

If this is acceptable then we can apply the same rule to make better sense of the next eight verses.

Verses 16-24. “If then I do that which I allow not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me: but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that which I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Before we attempt to explain these verses we must note the last sentence where Paul asks “Who shall deliver me...” While we are very reluctant and hesitant to criticise translators we are, in this case, left with little choice for had Paul been talking of his present and ongoing experience as a follower of Christ he could not have asked how he was to be delivered for he had already been delivered from the “body of this death!” when he responded to Ananias to “Arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” And because he had been delivered he could end this section by saying “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” (Romans 8:1).

So then, this is not an attempt at a translation of the eight verses quoted above but of putting forward what I believe Paul meant us to understand in our language of today:

‘I was held captive to the law of sin and death. I thought there was a way for me by keeping the Law of Moses but this has been taken away since Christ was crucified for us and He provided a better way. I did what I thought was right in keeping the Law perfectly but I found that by being concluded under sin (that is, the law of sin and death) it was to no avail. This is when I walked after the flesh for in such a state I could do no good thing to save myself even though I was willing. So even while I delighted to keep the Law of God, there was this other law in me – the law of sin and death. So whatever I did this law could not save me. For while I have been serving God’s Law (of Moses), Sin’s law (of sin and death) held me captive.

So who was there to deliver me from this bondage to the law of sin and death which kept me so helpless and hopeless?

I thank God that by grace I am delivered through Jesus Christ, whom I now serve. For there is now no adverse judgment against those who serve Jesus walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh.’

Christ came to deliver the captives – “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” (John 8:36).

Brother Russell Gregory.

Exhortation

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

The task of all loving servants of the Lord Jesus is to fight the good fight of faith; “To be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

This warfare of God requires strength for it is a struggle between principles and ideals; a struggle of light against darkness, truth against error, righteousness against evil. The warfare is dual, we have foes

within and foes without, and it is also constant for it lasts for the rest of our lives. This fight demands strength, a strength which is not built in a day, it is a product of development. We have to pull down strongholds and cast out imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of our Lord Jesus.

This strength can only come by our association with The Word of God, and our desire to do His Will, and fervent prayer to our God, from Whom we obtain all things. If we have not the Spirit of Christ, we are none of His. The Spirit itself bearest witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Now we all know we are not robots, each one is different physically and mentally, therefore Salvation is a matter between God, and the individual person, and the responsibility rests with that person alone, and he must believe on his final interpretation of “all things” concerning the “Truth.” Let every man be satisfied in his own mind.

To his own Master he standeth, or falleth. “Work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you, to win and to do His good pleasure.” Then we read in Romans 14:13 “Let us not therefore judge one another any more. But judge rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brothers’ way.” All the works of our Lord, and His Apostles, emphasise the fact, that in our dealings with other honest searchers for the Truth, much patience is needed.

In this world of advanced education especially, much care is needed, for it seems to me that the essential humility has been crushed out by worldly wisdom. Again we have to remember that it is the will of God that all men should be saved, and to some unto the knowledge of the Truth. I think that if we put together Romans 14:13 and 15:2 and 3, we sum up the whole matter:- “Let us not therefore judge one another and more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” “Let everyone of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.” Although this chapter 14 deals mostly with meat and drink, it applies also to almost everything else, and I think there is much to learn from it concerning our dealings with others.

Let me conclude with Ephesians 4:32. “Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ’ sake hath forgiven you.”

Your brother in Christ, A.Hodges.
August 1957.

A COVERING FOR SIN

(This article was written more than one hundred years ago. By request it was republished in “The Christadelphian” in November 1952 at which time the editor, J. Carter, said that it had been written “to deal with the speculations that agitated the minds of brethren after J. J. Andrew had put forward his theories on Adamic condemnation.” J. Carter continues – “The article strikes the right balance; it recognizes our inheritance of death as a divine punishment for sin, and also, getting behind the ritual to that represented by the ritual, the moral basis established by the offering of Jesus upon which God forgives our sins and gives us life, and indeed upon which the Lord himself was glorified”).

The word which, in the Old Testament is translated atonement is *kaphar* and means primarily to cover or to conceal. “The day of atonement” occurring frequently in our version is literally “the day of the coverings.” Coverings were effected by sprinkling the blood of the offerings upon the altar and other articles of tabernacle furniture, but the divine testimony assures us that those coverings were ineffectual to bring about that which is correctly understood by the word atonement.

“It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” and Scriptural oneness cannot exist between God and an unpardoned sinner. Where we read “He shall make an atonement” or “to

make an atonement,” we ought to read, “He shall make a covering” or “to make a covering.” The propriety of substituting “covering” for atonement is seen in connection with the mercy seat. The word rendered “mercy seat” is the feminine substantive of kaphar, and means a covering, which it actually was, being placed as a lid upon the ark of the testimony (Exodus 25:21).

It is highly significant, in connection with the present inquiry, that this covering was itself “covered” with blood.

Aaron was commanded to “take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times” (Leviticus 16:25-26). Of course the anti-typical mercy seat was “covered” when Christ shed his blood upon the cross. The significance is manifest in the fact that Christ was the Antitype of the mercy seat as well as of the other articles of the tabernacle service. Paul declared that Christ has been “set forth a mercy seat (propitiation, A.V.) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Romans 3:25).

The meaning is that as the mercy seat within the veil was “covered” with blood, so also Christ, the antitypical mercy seat, was “covered” with his own blood - an intimation that Christ’s redemptive work affected himself. It is self-evident that only that which is unclean requires a covering, God being the Judge of what is clean or unclean. The clean and pure are pleasant in His eyes, and need not to be put out of sight. The Mosaic Law regarded as ceremonially unclean the furniture of the tabernacle, and this, as in the case of the mercy seat, shadowed forth an uncleanness in the one whom the furniture represented; in addition to this there was also the uncleanness of the children of Israel “because of their transgressions in all their sins.” For both forms of uncleanness a “covering” was provided in the blood of the animals slain, and in the application of this to the antitype the matter resolves itself into an inquiry as to what is “covered” by the covering provided in Christ,

Dealing with the matter first in its reference to Christ, it is clear from what is testified concerning the mercy seat that Christ was affected by his own offering. It is further intimated in what is written about the offering of the High Priest, who made a “covering” for himself and his house first, and afterward for the people. In Hebrews this is directly connected with Christ “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” (7:27). Without pressing the analogy too closely, or attempting to change the “shadow” into “the very image,” it must be evident that in the antitype Christ must in some sense accomplish for himself what he accomplished for others.

Of course, if under the law the high priest were morally affected by his offering, and because of his faith manifested, by his obedience to the works of the law, received the remission of sins, it is certain that in this respect at least an important difference existed between type and Antitype, for Christ’s moral character needed no covering, being “altogether lovely.” With it Jehovah was well pleased.

The import of the type is seen in a consideration of Christ’s nature or substance, which was such as to require a covering. Being made of the same physical substance as all Adam’s descendants, his nature was unclean in the sense of being corruptible, and furthermore it subjected Christ to those inclinations sinward that have been associated with human nature since Adam fell.

The covering Christ required was one that would cover the defiled nature. There ought to be no question as to when this was accomplished, and it must be evident that it did not take place until he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by a resurrection from the dead. It was not even accomplished when he emerged from the tomb, because at that time the corruptible had not put on incorruption, nor the mortal immortality. He was justified in (or by) the spirit some time between his emergence from the grave and his meeting of the same day with his disciples. He thereby became the forerunner of those who groan in this tabernacle, not for that they might be unclothed but clothed upon that mortality might be swallowed up of life. This is the covering to which the blood-sprinkled mercy seat pointed forward. The blood being shed in the crowning act of his obedience it is used as a symbol of the perfect righteousness developed, and it was because of that righteousness that his mortal nature was

“covered” in the putting on of immortality. This fact is referred to in the Scriptures in both simple and figurative language, of which the following are instances:

“The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through, the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect” (Hebrews 13:20). “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:9). He “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9).

Applying ourselves to an inquiry concerning the “covering” Christ’s blood has provided for us, the Scriptural answer is that when we became acquainted with the way of salvation we were defiled in both nature and conscience. The conscience was defiled by our own wicked works. Nothing else could defile it. The “covering” in its first operation purges us “from our old sins” (2 Peter 1:9). Our hearts have been “sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:13). The old man as to mind and practices is accounted dead and buried, while in his stead has arisen a new man created in the righteousness and holiness of the truth. The nature is of course unchanged, and therefore “uncovered.” It is still a nature from which the curse is unremoved. Its native impulses towards sin while still existent are restrained, and every thought is being brought into captivity to Christ. Because of our obedient faith God deals with us not “after our sins, nor rewards us according to our iniquities,” but “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103). We are in that happy state described by the Psalmist: “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (32:1-2). Since the redemption that is in Christ is first moral and afterward corporeal, the forgiven saint is spoken of as being redeemed.

If then Christ’s offering was his perfect obedience, in what way did he by reason of that obedience become a sin covering for such as should believe on him? The answer is that he became a sin-coverer by reason of his obedience constituting the basis upon which God should cover or remit our sins. The underlying principle operative is disclosed in a scriptural consideration of the obstacle in the way of our admission to God’s favour. This obstacle was due to the necessity (if moral harmony would prevail) of upholding God’s supremacy in His requirements upon us, to which requirements we, considered by ourselves as sinners, were unable to conform. The solution is found in the work of God through Christ, by which sin was condemned in the flesh, and God’s righteousness proclaimed for our acknowledgment, in order that we might submit to Him as just and the justifier of those believing in Jesus; or as it has been comprehensively stated by bro. Roberts, the way which has been adopted in reconciliation has been “to enforce the law against sin, and the same time leave the door open for repentant and obedient sinners.” Our belief in Jesus, which is our acknowledgment of God’s declared righteousness, as well as of our confidence in His promises, is counted to us for the remission of sins. That is to say, being possessed of a childlike disposition in respect to God’s works, and acknowledging His righteousness in the terms upon which His favour is obtained, as well as rejoicing in the mercy that has made our acceptance possible, we are permitted to enter into His grace.

A profound yet simple subject has been twisted and obscured by grotesque expressions, absurd inferences and unscriptural assumptions. We find ourselves the creatures of vanity, out of harmony with God by reason of unrighteousness, but having in the gospel of our salvation a promise that repentance due to acceptance of God’s truth, and manifested in obedience, secures the remission of sins, and that a continuance in well doing will bring glory, honour and incorruptibility at the return of Christ.

J. C. BRUCE.

A Review Of “A Covering For Sin”

A). “Scriptural oneness cannot exist between God and an unpardoned sinner.” True. According to Jesus’ own words in John 10:30, He was already “Atonement” with the Father prior to His death on the cross.

B). **Christ** was the antitype of a cleansed mercy-seat; otherwise why bother about covering the mercy-seat with blood at all? According to J.C.Bruce, Jesus Christ was only a type Himself; that from birth to His death He was only typically “Atonement” with God; only typically “related to God,” that in fact Jesus being born of Mary by the Will of God was unpardonable except by death. That this body of flesh and blood of which God was the “Responsible Begetter” must by got rid of as “unclean” being cleansed by unclean blood!

J.C.Bruce states, “Of course the antitypical mercy-seat was ‘covered’ when Christ shed His blood upon the cross.”

Let us analyse this statement and see how ridiculous it really is.

Jesus (Flesh, blood and bone), was the Mercy-seat. The mercy-seat of the Tabernacle was sprinkled with blood from an outside or external agency. Where then is the Type? It seems absurd that the Antitypical Mercy-seat should have to be pierced to obtain blood for a covering. But we see that it was a blood-sprinkled (cleansed) Mercy-seat which typified Christ, not an un-sprinkled one. God would not speak from between the Cherubim above the Mercy-seat unless it was cleansed from all contact with those who handled it by removal and by whom it had been surrounded for a year at a time. When the great Day of Atonement came, human footsteps entered the Holy Place (Hebrews 9:7-8), when the sacred tent – too polluted by the past years’ sins of the camp, in the midst of which it stood, to be any longer the abode of the “Holy Lord God of Hosts” without undergoing purification, was cleansed by the blood of Atonement, and the people also were cleansed in an unusually solemn manner (Leviticus 16:16). Thus it became a fit place in which God could dwell and commune with His people. Thus “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself...”

Thus we are permitted to see through the Mosaic economy that God’s means of reconciliation was through the medium of one who was a fit person in whom He could dwell, not a condemned, unclean Christ, but one who was Holy, Harmless and undefiled, sinless, the Lamb of God, not the High Priest offering for his own sins, for Jesus had none, for had He even claimed to be a priest then, He would have been guilty of death, for the priesthood appertained to the Levites (Exodus 40:12-15, Leviticus 8:6-9 – compare Numbers 3:10, 38 and 16:1-35 and compare Hebrews 8:4-5).

C). If this is not beating a hasty retreat from that which splits his former arguments to atoms I would like to know what is. J.C.Bruce like many other Christadelphians, recognises that Hebrews 8:27 speaks of sins, that is, committed sins, and in order to make it fit his ideas of Christ he proceeds to “wrest” it and to declare that to possess a nature which is corruptible is equal to committing sins.

J.C.Bruce does not hesitate to press analogies and types to the very limit where it suits his case but when he comes to Hebrews 7:27, a passage too difficult for his limited knowledge, he has to resort to the manufacture of a doctrine which does not exist in Scripture – that is ‘fixation of sin in the flesh.

D). Where J.C.Bruce gets his evidence for saying that “anything corruptible is unclean” I do not know, but I know he does not get it from the Bible.

Paul states emphatically in 1 Corinthians 15 “that was not first which was spiritual but that which was natural, the first man Adam is of the earth earthy, and no man can define this as being anything else but corruptible.

Corruptibility does not necessarily mean ‘condemned nature’ as a result of sin. It was the sin committed in the corruptible nature which was condemned; the nature itself was declared “very good,” it was the relationship to God which was changed and not the nature.

J.C.Bruce now proceeds upon another of his speculative tours and in so doing contradicts a previous statement. He says,

“The covering Christ required was one that would cover the defiled nature (flesh and blood of which He was already the possessor). There ought to be no question as to when this was accomplished and it must be evident that it did not take place until He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by a resurrection from the dead. It was not even accomplished when He emerged from the tomb, because at that time the corruptible had not put on incorruption nor the mortal immortality. He was justified in, or by, the Spirit some time between His emergence from the grave and His meeting of the same day with His disciples.”

Now then, J.C.Bruce has already stated that “Christ as the Anti-typical mercy-seat was covered with His own blood” - a statement I have already proved to be ridiculous; but now he as good as says that Christ’s blood was “immortality” because he was not covered until He put on the covering of immortality. Furthermore he says that Christ rose from the dead in condemned nature so that the efficacy of His blood was nil; the covering required was immortality, so God immortalised a body of condemned nature irrespective of the shed blood, because this blood must have been given back to Christ, otherwise he could not be a mortal body.

I must also add to this that J.C.Bruce defines a mortal resurrection of Christ without any scriptural proof whatsoever. Salvation and Fellowship should never be based on dogmatic assumptions – “Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.”

J.C.Bruce goes on, “The blood being shed in the crowning act of His obedience it is used as a symbol of the perfect righteousness developed, and it was because of that righteousness that His mortal nature was ‘covered’ in the putting on of immortality.” Yet Mr Bruce, He was not justified even in the crowning act of obedience; He must needs be brought back to life in a body of, as you term it, Sinful Flesh? Should Jesus not have suffered death again for being the possessor of a body “as unclean as those for which He died”?

No, Christadelphians, do not try to explain that Jesus was a body of flesh and bone, kept alive by the Power of God for that is a spiritual body. “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body” - and there is a “?” body. No, the scriptures do not speak of any other body relative to man but Christadelphians invent one and yet condemn those who invent the immortal soul theory.

Nowhere in God’s law does it state that a man shall be put to death for obedience, but it does say that a man who knowingly commits sin is worthy of the “death by sin.” Now Jesus was obedient in all things even unto the moment He was lifted on the cross; His faith therefore was never in question, therefore, apart from His dying as a substitute for Adam God would not have been just in putting Him to death Jesus knew this and allowed Himself in His love for men to be the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

Corruptible nature has nothing at all to do with the subject; it is sin committed by enlightened persons that is punishable and the sooner we realise this the better.

As I said, “The law demands obedience but it does not demand an inflicted death to every person associated with it.

Abraham’s faith was tried to the limit of raising the knife to slay Isaac and “it was accounted to him for righteousness,” Isaac being dead in figure. But J.C.Bruce’s idea on the righteousness of Christ is that God demanded the last gasp of breath out of His Son before He could be sure, and even then Christ was not justified.

Surely, this should not be our conception of God? Jesus fulfilled all the law in one word, “Love” and His crowning act was not for Himself but was an addition to the law; it was something extra which God requested Him to do. Only one who had not incurred the “death by sin” could suffer it instead of another and Jesus knew that to this end was He born “free of condemnation” and having maintained this relationship to

God, He was the only one who could reconcile by “the death” those who were alienated from God through Adam’s sin.

Having therefore been reconciled or legally justified, they came under the law of Grace upon obedience of which they are morally justified, and if it be maintained, worthy to receive God’s gift of life Eternal.

E). J.C.Bruce says “If Christ’s offering was his perfect obedience...”

Nowhere do we read in Scripture that Christ’s offering was His perfect obedience, but the wise man informs us in Ecclesiastes that “this is the whole duty of man” to “fear Him and keep His commandments.” A duty is not a sacrifice.

There was more than perfect obedience involved in Christ’s suffering. He offered Himself “without spot” to God to be a sacrifice for us; to suffer the death which was due to Adam and all in Adam as a penalty for Adam’s sin. It was necessary that Jesus should be free of this condemnation otherwise He would have needed one to reconcile Him to God. How could He render perfect obedience to God without first being reconciled? The answer is quite simple, He was never alienated from God but was a “Son of God” as Adam before he sinned. Adam’s sons, if obedient to God’s commands would have profited nothing by that obedience without Christ. Paul says “If there had been a law given which could have given life verily righteousness would have been by the law.”

Now R.Roberts knows better than Paul for he says in “The Slain Lamb” that if an ordinary Jew had kept the Law of Moses perfectly he would have earned eternal life. “By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified” says Paul. We must first be reconciled to God by the death of His Son before we can come under the Law of Grace. We must first be legally justified and then morally justified by works of faith.

J.C.Bruce seems to think that even reconciled persons are unable to conform to God’s requirements; that alienation from God through Adam’s sin was not the obstacle in the way of our admission to God’s favour, but the impossibility to conform to His requirements was this obstacle, so that where men have failed to obey, Jesus Christ with extra strength from God, succeeded and thereby condemned sin in the flesh. So according to J.C.Bruce we must uphold the supremacy of God in condemning sin in a nature which is incapable of conforming to His requirements and thereby account Him as just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; or as it has been comprehensively stated by Bro. Roberts, “the way which has been adopted in reconciliation has been to enforce the law against sin and the same time leave the door open for repentant and obedient sinner.”

What does R.Roberts mean by this statement “enforce the law against sin”? If it be inflicted death by blood-shedding, in the case of Christ instead of Adam all in him, well and good, but if he means anything else, then he is astray from the subject. Furthermore I have heard of repentant sinners, but never have I heard of obedient sinners. In God’s arrangement of love and mercy a person is either imputed a sinner or righteous.

Yes, J.C.Bruce is correct when he says “A profound yet simple subject has been twisted...” And John Carter is right also when he says ‘the article strikes the right balance,’ but only in so far as Christadelphian contradictions are concerned. A right balance as far as Scripture is concerned is lacking. We still have maintained by J.C.Bruce and J.Carter the Christadelphian viewpoint of an abstract Christ being offered upon the cross for His own condemned nature and for our sins.

Brother Phil Parry.

About the middle of December last I posted “Jesus My Substitute” by A.L.Wilson, on Julian’s Forum. The first comment came from ‘Mike’:-

“A slave is bought with a price, this is a common phrase. But this never indicated that the “price” relieved the slave from total service. Quite the opposite really. I Corinthians 6:18-20 - “Shun immorality.

Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” and I Corinthians 7:22, 23 – “For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.” - Mike.

Dear Mike, It’s good to be in agreement. The Nazarene Fellowship has always stipulated the need for continued obedience for acceptance. As Jesus said, “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” What better Master could we slaves have? Absolutely none!

With Love in His Name. Russell.

Russell, You wrote: “The Nazarene Fellowship has always stipulated the need for continued obedience for acceptance.” This is good, since that eliminates any possibility of substitution. *Substitute: to put in place of.* So, for another to “take our place,” if we deserve eternal death, one would have to remain eternally dead. Either Jesus took our place or he did not, and there is no way I can consider my Elder Brother, dead. He was not my substitute, but my leader or forerunner (like one that clears the path ahead), we still have to walk the path, but he did not take the journey through life “instead of us;” we too, unlike the Israelites at Sinai, must climb the mountain when invited. This is life. This is the true shalom v’ahava. - Mike.

Dear Mike, You write:- Jesus “did not take the journey through life ‘instead of us.’” It appals me to think that anyone should suppose He did! Jesus died so that His friends should have eternal life “Therefore doth my Father love me.” “Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends.” “Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.” It is obvious that if Jesus commanded His friends to do whatsoever he says, then He is not taking the journey through life instead of them. They have duties to perform throughout their lives as I said in my post – that there is the need for continued obedience for acceptance as His friends. But it is also clear to me that you fail to understand our position and just what Scripture teaches with regard to substitution. Jesus is our Master and no one can be His servant unless they acknowledge that He died for them; that He has bought them; that He ransomed them; that He purchased them with the price of His own blood and then, in symbol, They die with Him by being baptised into His death to rise again to newness of life.

You say that “for another to take our place, if we deserve eternal death one would have to remain eternally dead.” True. And this is the old argument put forward by Robert Roberts against Edward Turney but it begs the question, What life did Jesus lay down?

We are told in Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your sins; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.” We read in Isaiah 53:6-12, “the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all... for the transgression of my people was he stricken... Thou shall make his soul an offering for sin... he shall bear their iniquities... he hath poured out his soul unto death... and bare the sin of many.”

All this shows us that Jesus was the great Anti-type of all the offerings for sin under the Mosaic covenant, and in keeping with this we see the need for Jesus to shed His blood in which was His life. Jesus confirms this of Himself when He said (Matthew 26:28), “For this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Just before the crucifixion Jesus had told His disciple (John 10:11, 15) “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep...I lay down my life for the sheep.”

Mike, you said, "Either Jesus took our place or He did not, and there is no way I can consider my Elder Brother, dead." Why not? The life Jesus laid down when crucified, he did not receive again. That life was His natural life, His *psuche*/life which He never received back. It was dead and gone for ever. Nowhere can we find that Jesus had any life but *zoe* life – spirit life after His resurrection.

John 10 again – "the Good Shepherd giveth His *psuche* for the sheep" – "I lay down my *psuche* for the sheep." Etc., etc. Now look at John 6:27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting *zoe*." 33, "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth *zoe* to the world." 35, "I am the bread of *zoe*:" 40, And this is the will of him that sent me, that everyone which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting *zoe*." 47, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting *zoe*. I am that bread of *zoe*." 51, I am the *zao* bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall *zoe* for ever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the *zoe* of the world." 53, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no *zoe* in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal *zoe*; and I will raise him up at the last day." 57, "As the father hath sent me, and I *zao* by the father: so he that eateth me, even he shall *zoe* by me." Etc., etc. It is abundantly shown that Jesus had two lives. He laid down His natural life (*psuche*) and this life stayed dead. He rose in Spirit life, that is eternal *zoe* as He confirmed in Revelation 2:8, "These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is *zao*."

When the disciples first met Jesus after the resurrection, Jesus said to them, "Why are ye troubled... behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have..." There is no mention of blood because this was poured out on Calvary - the blood in which was His natural *psuche*. If we do not confuse natural life with Spirit life, we can see that Jesus was our Substitute, that He did indeed give His (*psuche*) life in place of Adam's (*psuche*) life so that the human race could have the opportunity of eternal life. Leviticus 17:11: - "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

And we thank God and Jesus for their great, unbounded Love in this. Russell.

Russell, you quote where I say Jesus "did not take the journey through life 'instead of us'" to which you replied – "It appals me to think that anyone should suppose He did!"

If the "for" oft-quoted, means "instead of" or substitutionary in any way, that is exactly what is being taught. But, if the "for" means rather "for you as in for your example," we have an entirely different picture.

Then you wrote:- "It is obvious that if Jesus commanded His friends to do whatsoever He says..." As it is also as evident that Jesus did what His Father said, and He is only passing along that word (which was available for all from the beginning; for those that would seek it out). But He lived what He spoke, unlike the prophets who did not do this. But if He is in anyway a replacement for, that is, substitutionary in any way, He replaces our responsibility with his.

Next you wrote:- "It is abundantly shown that Jesus had two lives. He laid down His natural life (*psuche*) and this life stayed dead. He rose in Spirit life...handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have..." It is interesting that you choose to quote these two verses while claiming Jesus was "spirit only," as He Himself showed us He was still "flesh and bone." But I want to clear up what appears to me a very slight misconception: Jesus didn't have two lives, but rather he had the mortal life, and now exists in the spiritual; but the second one is not "past tense."

Again you wrote:- "If we do not confuse natural life with Spirit life, we can see that Jesus was our Substitute, that He did indeed give His life in place of Adam's life so that the human race could have the opportunity of eternal life." This is a totally unnecessary addition to the basic understanding of whom Mashiach was to be, and what He set out to accomplish.

To borrow and paraphrase: He came, he saw, he conquered having only one advantage, the same one we all

have, that he could look back on Adam's mistake and correct it within himself. But again, if He "did" anything to substitute for what we must do, we that "take up our crosses and follow him" are indeed men most miserable. And to borrow a phrase from Revelation this is "He who was alive, died, and is alive again..." Jesus himself even tells us that the very throne He sat on (which was his Father's throne), we are to sit on "if we conquer." It is the same throne. - Mike.

Dear Mike, What Jesus did "instead of us" was to redeem us. This He did when He allowed Himself to be crucified. Our redemption was necessary if we are to have any hope of eternal life with Him as His friends. It was for this reason that Jesus was begotten of God - in order for Him to be in the legal position necessary for our redemption as we could not redeem ourselves. Jesus achieved our redemption by allowing Himself to be put to death instead of Adam being put to death (it is obvious that if Adam had been put to death in the day he transgressed, we would not have been born). It is in this way that Jesus, in His love for mankind, was our Substitute; when He laid down His life for His friends.

With Love in His Name. Russell.

Russell, you wrote:- "What Jesus did instead of us was to redeem us." Which can only be effectual if we do our best. Otherwise, he did nothing for us. So it is not "in the place of," but for our sakes. The mercy is given to those that "fight the good fight;" for we are not redeemed otherwise, but are lost. - Mike.

Dear Mike, I think you are confusing redemption with salvation. Jesus redeemed us when He allowed Himself to be crucified, but we have to work out our own salvation. Philippians 2:12, "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Redemption took place on the cross at Calvary. Here Jesus gave His natural life in place of Adam's natural life. Jesus rose with Spirit life. This Spirit life did not have to be insubstantial as you suppose. It was a body energised by Spirit life instead of natural life.

With Love in Jesus. Russell.