

A Christadelphian Lifts The Curse

THE CURSE CAUSELESS

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.” Galatians 3:13.

Kind friends have recently sent me copies of two magazines representing small groups of Christadelphians, which contain articles bearing on our interpretation of the text which forms the title above and as both are nominally members of the same community it is instructive to study the differences between them.

The Logos for October 1956 contains an article by Albert Collins dealing with Galatians 3:13, which he says is one of the most difficult verses in all the Epistles: he advances an exposition which will appeal to many people as very reasonable, but it brings him into conflict with H.P.Mansfield, the Editor.

The difficulty which Christadelphians have always found with this passage is fully appreciated, but as it is due entirely to what we believe to be their mistaken views upon the sacrifice of Christ, we find it difficult to be very sympathetic. We have heard nothing to suggest that our friend Albert had in any way modified his view, but as the verse bears very directly on the subject we were more than a little interested to see what he has to say.

It becomes evident that he has felt some deep misgivings about the explanations put forward by various Christadelphians and this alone we regard as a move in the right direction; it is something to be thankful for if people will only use their own brains, instead of contentedly repeating what this or that brother has said. We hope, by pointing out the implications of his article and his editor's reactions, to prod him along a little further on the same path, in the hope that eventually he may see the wisdom of renouncing not only his belief in a cursed Christ, but also his belief in an unclean Christ.

He refers to us as a sect of ex-Christadelphians called The Nazarene Fellowship and says that we, like orthodox commentators, put forward the substitutionary theory to explain the verse in question. If he is honest in making that statement, he is still singularly ignorant of our teaching. It is true that many of us were formerly Christadelphians and we very willingly acknowledge that we owe much to what we learned as members of that body; so much in fact that we are not, nor are we likely to find ourselves in agreement with orthodoxy either on the interpretation of this verse or practically any other major doctrine. For their own peace of mind it would be better for our critics to get to know what we really say and then deal with it, rather than to continually foist upon us what they would like to think we believe because they happen to be able to controvert it.

It is also true that we believe that Jesus died as a substitute for sinners, but we most emphatically do not believe that theory of substitutionary punishment which he defines, as held by orthodoxy; and as we have repeatedly said so in writings with which Albert Collins professes to be familiar, we consider it not only somewhat unkind of him to make the statement, but also an evidence of his own reluctance to face the truth. However, we shall have the satisfaction of showing, in the course of this reply, how he argues himself, apparently quite unconsciously, into stating with commendable precision as his own view, exactly what we believe.

First, we should point out that we have no need to put forward a substitutionary theory to explain Galatians 3:13, since the verse does that for itself. It tells us that Christ has redeemed us (Jews) from the curse of the law. How has He done it? It tells us, by Him being made a curse for us. It is not therefore for us to introduce the idea of substitution into Paul's words - it is rather for those who deny

a substitutionary theory to get the idea out of it - if they can! It was just this in Robert Roberts - his blind determination to transform the words "*Made a curse for us*" into "*made a curse for himself*" which forced him into the pitiable errors which Albert Collins is now seeking to correct. And this seems an appropriate moment to acquaint him with the fact that, whatever the intention of his article, his achievement is to have proved precisely that which he blames us for believing. He not only demonstrates that there is a true substitutionary principle in the death of Christ; he actually says so in so many words.

He refers to expositions by Robert Roberts and others, where it is alleged that before Jesus could remove the curse of the law he had to come under it Himself. It was affirmed that in the manner of His death, He "*innocently*" became a transgressor of the law. He is said to have been "*guilty*" of a "passive act" of disobedience in being hanged upon a tree or wooden cross. Edward Turney was criticized for poking a little fun at such "reasoning" but so far as we are aware it has never been acknowledged by any Christadelphian for the arrant nonsense it really is, until this article by Albert Collins in "The Logos."

There is a saying that when thieves fall out, honest men come by their own, and we may paraphrase this by saying that when expositors disagree, the truth may come into its own.

"THE SLAIN LAMB" OVERTHROWN

Robert Roberts develops the argument in "The Slain Lamb" and affirms that God required Jesus to submit to the death of the cross in order that He might come under the curse of the law, and he states that had He not been put to death in that way He would have been a sinner. There is no need for us to go over it in detail, since Albert is prepared to admit that "*this view is open to objections so serious as to overthrow it*" ("The Logos," p.56). Grave words, these, to describe an exposition given by the Christadelphian champion in the famous renunciationist controversy in The Temperance Hall in 1873, especially when uttered by one of that "straightest sect of the Pharisees," the Willie-Logos Group. We ourselves have been bitterly assailed for saying no more, and we certainly never expected to have our warfare reinforced by recruits from that camp! Nevertheless, he outlines three very telling arguments in support of his criticism and we are pleased to be able to say that we are in the fullest and completest agreement. There is no need for us to recapitulate them, but we may just point out that although the editor of "The Logos" prints a dissenting commentary and expresses complete disapproval, his attempt to deal with them is a miserable failure.

As we followed Albert Collins' article we could not help recalling discussions with him when first our eyes were opened to the truth about so-called "clean flesh" and "free life." At that time "The Slain Lamb" had for him the authority of The Bible itself and we cannot but feel curious to know what his position is now.

We must remind him that one of the basic arguments with which Robert Roberts sought to refute Edward Turney's lecture expounding the sacrifice of Christ, was founded upon this very verse. He argued as follows: God required Jesus to submit to the death of the cross in order that He might come under the curse of the law without breaking it. He attempted to show that being impaled on the cross was a kind of technical infringement of the law, a crime for which His death was the penalty. He also wanted to have it the other way as well, and maintained that if He had not submitted to such a death He would have been a sinner.

This supreme foolishness is still believed and was advanced by W.F.Barling in an article in "The Christadelphian" as recently as December 1946. We reproduce the following extract from our reply to that gentleman, as it will serve to show Albert that he is up against some big guns!

“In section (b) ‘The curse for hanging,’ Mr Barling makes the assertion: ‘*To remove the curse He had first to come under it;’ and goes on to argue that in suffering Himself to be crucified Jesus ‘innocently’ broke the Law and was therefore cursed by it and put to death in execution of the curse.*”

It is beyond understanding how anyone could break a Law by keeping it, or how death could be at the same time both the suffering of the penalty of the Law and the breach of the Law by which that penalty was incurred. We have learned, however, not to expect much in the way of logic or consistency from this writer. His initial fallacy is the assertion that Jesus could only remove the curse by coming under it. Neither scripture nor any other evidence supports it; on the contrary, sense and reason rebel against the suggestion that only one who was himself cursed by the Law could redeem others who were also cursed by the Law. The reverse is what we should naturally expect and this is, in fact, what scripture states. ‘Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world’ (John 10:36) that he was cursed by the Law which the Father instituted? Jesus was Himself free from the curse of the Law because He kept it both in spirit and letter, but He bore the curse in the stead and for the sake of His nation who had incurred it by disobedience and unbelief.

In “The Logos” for April 1956, the editor referred to Robert Roberts’ controversy with Edward Turney as a single-handed battle which resulted in a serious breakdown in health and confinement to a sanatorium. Using such arguments it is scarcely remarkable that he had to fight single-handed; the marvel is that men of apparently normal intelligence like the Logos Committee can still be found to defend them. When in his quieter moments, Robert Roberts contemplated the dilemma of injustice in which upon his reasoning, God is supposed to have placed His Son, it is little wonder that he found himself confined to a sanatorium.

The crux of his argument will be found on page 15, in the following words:-

“Now if it was necessary that Jesus should come personally under the curse of the law in His own person, in order that He might bear it away in His resurrection... what about this other curse? Was not Jesus to bear away all curse? If it was necessary He should have the curse of Moses on Him to bear it away, was it not necessary He should have that other curse, the hereditary curse of Adam on him also?”

We will leave Albert Collins to supply the answers to the questions Robert Roberts asks. He has proved in his article, quite soundly, that it was, in fact, not necessary for Jesus to have the curse of the law upon him personally in order to bear it away. What then are we to do with the deduction, based on a manifestly false premise, that He had to have the curse of Adam (whatever that may be) on Him also? Albert Collins has chopped away one leg of the argument - does it now collapse like the ruin it is, or if not, what prop or crutch is he proposing to apply to keep it upright?

We would recommend him to have a good look at the chart in “The Slain Lamb” and note the two thick black lines imprisoning Christ which Robert Roberts calls The Curse Mosaic and The Curse Adamic. If he was wrong about the curse under Moses was he not equally wrong about the analogous curse under Adam? If one realises that it was not necessary for Jesus to have been under the curse of the law in order to deliver those who were, what remains of the argument that He also had to be under the Edenic curse to redeem those who were under that?

Albert Collins has developed a lengthy argument in order to overthrow Robert Roberts’ cursing of Christ. It can be done quite as effectively in a very few words.

When a Jew had transgressed the law and thus come under its curse, he could bring a sacrifice and make an atonement and be free. No one would say that the lamb that he offered was itself under the curse. It bore the curse by its being put to death in the stead of the one who had offered it. Similarly Jesus; He was the antitype of the sacrificial lamb and in His death He, too, suffered under the curse of the law, not because he was under it, but because He bore it for those who were.

We give Albert Collins full credit for his courage, and his correctness as far as it goes, in rejecting the theory advanced in "The Slain Lamb," but we must point out to him at the same time that one cannot jump over a gate and stop halfway. Robert Roberts' reasoning, though completely fallacious, was consistent; he argued that if Christ had to be under the one curse he had also to be under the other. Albert Collins has now established, to his own and to our satisfaction, that Jesus could not possibly have been cursed by a just law, because He was guiltless; but he thereby proves what Edward Turney always maintained, that Robert Roberts' reasoning was defective - as Albert says, "he was simply deceiving himself with words." This again is a very noteworthy admission, and though, as we have said, his point could have been established in a very much shorter space, his article seems to have served the very useful purpose of opening his own eyes to facts about which he has hitherto appeared blind. If we now point out some of the weaknesses in his own reasoning, it is with no ill-feeling, nor for the sake of scoring off him, but for the purpose of showing him that his present position is untenable. The alternatives before him are to retreat, in which case he must eat his words and deny his convictions; or he can send the physical curse on Christ to join the moral curse, and share the peace of mind of those who truly believe that Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and who accept that the sacrifice He made was a true act of self-sacrificing love, that He gave Himself for us, the just for the unjust. The one thing he cannot do is remain poised in mid-air.

SUBSTITUTION, TRUE AND FALSE

Quoting Edward Turney's statement that "*Jesus bore the penalty of the law for those who had broken it,*" Albert Collins says "*this view may seem simple to grasp, but it is not satisfactory and certainly not what Paul taught.*" It is something to find that he recognises at least that our view is simple and easy to grasp, and one must admit that it has the appearance of being what Jesus and the apostles actually taught. However, he says it is not satisfactory, so we look for him to produce some plausible reasons for rejecting it. The first he gives is as follows:-

"The Mosaic Law does not say that the penalty for those who break it is to be crucified, or hung on a tree."

It certainly does not say that any and every breach of the law was to be punished with death, but whoever supposed that it did? But how surprising to read a little further on where he actually quotes from Deuteronomy 21, where the law prescribes for the disposal of one who had been put to death and hung upon a tree! Yet he says that the law does not say that the penalty for those who break the law was to be put to death! He says "*The Nazarene Fellowship view of the matter has to assume that it does.*"! Here are his actual words:-

"First consider the actual wording of the law (which he says does not say what he is just about to quote!), 'And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shall in any wise bury him that day.'"

So that he himself cites the text which proves it to be not an assumption of ours, but a fact. So much for his first lesson.

His second is that such a form of death was inflicted only upon one who had committed a sin worthy of death. Whoever doubted it? Whoever suggested otherwise - except perhaps Robert Roberts. He continues,

"the body of such a one was declared by God to be an accursed thing - not because of the hanging but because the transgressor had committed a sin worthy of death."

Again, no one but Robert Roberts - and perhaps J.J.Andrew - have ever thought otherwise. He concludes,

“Quite obviously none of these things applied to Christ.”

Quite obviously they did not. As he rightly says, *“He knew no sin;”* He was *“approved of God.”* But we may perhaps suggest to him here that there is one man to whom they do apply. There is one man who did commit a sin - we will not say “worthy” of death - but a sin whereby he incurred death; a man, in fact, who transgressed law and came under the curse of God! Moreover, the man we have in mind did not suffer the death he incurred! That man was Adam; and as he is aware, The Nazarene Fellowship holds the view that it was the loss of the life of the race by Adam which the sacrifice of Christ made good.

If we have a set of circumstances in which a man who was guilty of no crime is found to have suffered a certain penalty, and we find another man who had broken a law and incurred exactly the penalty which the other had suffered - to use Albert Collins’ own expression – *“quite obviously”* there should be some connection between those two. Could there have been a miscarriage of Justice? Could it be that by some mischance the two men got mixed up and the penalty due to the criminal was inflicted by mistake on the innocent man? Or perhaps the innocent man purposely got himself into the condemned cell in order to give the other his freedom and save his life? We can consider some such possible explanation after we have examined what he has to say on the subject of substitution and his suggested explanation of how Jesus was made a curse.

He tells us that in quoting from Deuteronomy 21, Paul made a slight modification in the wording and suggests that his purpose was to make it clear that it was by the people of Israel, His unjust accusers and murderers that Jesus was cursed, and not by God. There is an element of truth in this, of course, for he was undoubtedly cursed by those who falsely accused and condemned Him, but this by no means satisfies all the facts. It puts Albert Collins in exactly the same position as he puts Robert Roberts when he says, *“To say that the law cursed him but God did not, is simply to deceive oneself with words.”* In the same way, to suggest that his enemies cursed Him but God did not, is also to deceive oneself, for He was delivered into their hands *“by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.”* It would have been impossible for men, however vindictive and murderous, to have had any power to curse Christ with death, unless God had allowed it. So we have to reject Albert’s explanation as he and we have rejected Robert Roberts’. There is no escape from the fact that the curse of the law was literally executed upon the innocent Christ and that it was in the purpose and plan of God that it should be so. We have only to recall the Saviour’s last agonising cry from the cross to realise that there was, in fact, some deep and awful reality in the curse that came upon Christ in His final hours. Whatever the full import of those mysterious words, *“Eloi Eloi lama sabachthani,”* they completely dispose of the contention that the curse under which Jesus died was a simple matter of the hatred of His tormentors. If it was not needful for Him in dying to come in some sense under the curse of God, how are we to account for the fact that before He died it was necessary for Him to suffer the terrible experience of realising that the presence of His Father was withdrawn - of feeling that the communion which had been the pivot of His life and His only support through the tribulation He had endured right up to that last hour, was severed? Dr. Dale suggested that it was this final unbearable anguish of mind, when the darkness was closing over that gentle spirit so that there was wrung from Him the desolate cry, *“My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me,”* which broke His heart, literally rupturing the aorta and bringing about His death. There is but one adequate explanation, and that is that He had to bear the extreme penalty and experience literally and to the utmost, the curse and death incurred by sin - that He had, in fact, to be treated by God as if He had been an accursed sinner.

So that we are obliged to regard Albert Collins’ explanation, while infinitely to be preferred to Robert Roberts’, as an evasion of the real problem, inadequate to the facts and to that extent little better than his, and face up to the need to discover how a vicarious sacrifice can be harmonised with divine justice, wisdom and love.

Let us summarize the position:

We are told that Jesus was made a curse for us.

Albert Collins rejects the theory that He could have been cursed by the law, because He was sinless.

He therefore deduces that He was made a curse in the sense that Israel rejected Him and put Him to death.

Now disregarding for the moment his failure to take account of all the facts, notice his conclusion :-

“Christ has allowed himself to be put in the position of the vilest criminal - for our sakes.”

Exactly! When he penned this, Albert should have shouted Eureka! I have found it! But what becomes of the Christadelphian interpretation of the death of Christ in the face of such an admission? We think it unlikely that Albert yet appreciates the value of the pearl he has discovered; and the editor of The Logos may still succeed in convincing him that it is in fact a stick of dynamite. Notice the admissions: *“Christ has allowed Himself”* – the voluntary offering for which we have always contended, *“allowed Himself to be put in the position of”* – so that He was not in that position until He allowed Himself to be put there – *“the position of the vilest criminal”* – Jesus the perfect sinless man. Why? Why? And Albert gives the answer, *“for our sakes.”* Could anyone demonstrate a principle of substitution more clearly than this?

We may not yet claim Albert Collins as a convert to the simple scriptural faith of The Nazarene Fellowship, though we do not see how he will ever again be able to make the Christadelphian affirmation that Christ died for Himself, but we have seen how his own defective reasoning has brought him, quite unsuspectingly it would appear, to the conclusion that at least in that phase of the sacrifice of Christ which has to do with the curse of the law, it was substitutionary, in that there was a voluntary submission to a condemnation which was wholly undeserved, for the sake of others.

We may now proceed to explain again the distinction between his idea of what substitution implies and our own.

He gives his definition on page 55:-

“Substitution is wrong in principle; it would not be right for an innocent man to be punished instead of a guilty one.”

With this again we are in the completest agreement. We have said before and we repeat, if that had been the teaching of Edward Turney or The Nazarene Fellowship, we should not be found defending it. It would certainly not be right for an innocent person to be punished instead of a guilty one, and although this view of the Atonement was, and perhaps still is, widely held, we do not see how it is possible to reconcile it with any proper conception of a just and loving God. This view, that the wrath which God entertained against sinners was expended on His sinless Son, we may term the penal substitutionary theory and we categorically reject it. But the fact that such a view is untenable does not prove that substitution in all circumstances would be inconsistent with supreme justice and love. For example, a man who lost his life rescuing another from death would have given his life to save others. A hero, who perished in a fire while helping others to escape, would have sacrificed himself to save them. Such deaths would be in a certain sense substitutionary and yet no one would complain of injustice, but would in fact honour the heroism exhibited. They are not, and indeed there cannot be a perfect analogy with the atonement, for that is unique in every sense, but they suggest the key, which is the voluntary aspect of the death of Christ. The difficulty comes from the fact that it was foreordained in the purpose of God; this is where the scriptural concept of ransom comes to our aid.

God established a law prescribing death as the wages of sin, in order that He might be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. The law thus demanded the life of the sinner and we can appreciate the love of God in providing the price of deliverance; we see mercy and grace rejoicing against judgment - both aspects are manifested in Jesus's sacrifice.

God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked - He is not particularly concerned about inflicting punishment on sinners - His purpose is to turn them from their evil ways in order that they may live, and this is why He has chosen to regard them as debtors. They owe that which they cannot pay without perishing, and indeed if God dealt with us as the sinners we are, He might justly blot us out of existence. But in His forbearance, choosing not to mark iniquity but to exercise mercy, we are required to recognise that our life is something to which we are not properly entitled, and that it is only because God Himself has provided One who had in His own possession the wherewithal, and because that One determined of His own freewill to use His wealth to pay the debt we owe, that we can be delivered from the bondage into which we are born. This is, of course, an abstract concept, and its purpose is to develop in the minds of those to whom it is made known, that faith which can appreciate that while God is pleased to show mercy, He chooses at the same time to uphold the supreme principles of justice and law. This is what the offer of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ is able to accomplish. Undiscriminating rejection of the true principle underlying all sacrifice as "substitution" destroys the very basis of the Christian faith.

In the course of his article, Albert Collins mentions Young's analysis of the word "*redeem*" where he shows that the true meaning is "*to acquire out of the forum*" - to purchase as slaves were purchased in the public market place. It is strange he should introduce this, since so far as we can see it has no bearing on his argument as to how or by whom Jesus was made a curse, while on the other hand it establishes conclusively the principle of substitution, which he denounces. Can anything be clearer than that the price which is paid for a thing or person is handed over in exchange for that thing or person? What could be simpler than the statement of the Apostle Peter that we were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? His blood, in other words His life which was in His blood, was the price paid to purchase us out of captivity - his life for ours.

If the effect of Christ being made a curse, i.e., coming under the condemnation of a law He had not broken and suffering the extreme penalty which He in no way deserved, irrespective of who was responsible, was to release, ransom, redeem or buy back those who were justly under such a curse, does not this prove that the death of Christ was a vicarious atonement? That He made Himself a substitutionary sacrifice? That is to say, the curse under which, as Albert Collins admits, Christ has allowed Himself to be put, is the equivalent of the debt incurred by those who were transgressors of the law; His cursing was the means of their redemption; He suffered, they were saved. Could self-sacrificing substitution be more clearly demonstrated?

"God so loved the world that He gave"
"Jesus laid down His life for the sheep"
"Greater love hath no man than this"

Consider these words seriously and note the contrast to which they point:-

True substitution = God gave
False substitution = God demanded.

"THE LOGOS" FALLS OVER ITS FEET

In view of the admissions made, it is hardly surprising that H.P.Mansfield, the editor of "The Logos," is rather severe with his contributor and scuttles hurriedly under cover of "sinful flesh." In the course of his reply he tells us, among other foolish and unfounded things, that the curse of the law

“rested upon the flesh of Jesus.” According to him the law cursed His flesh but not His character. He says men will never be saved unless they see flesh in its true light, as evil and to be subdued; he cannot see that he is mixing up living according to the lusts of the flesh with the physical flesh itself. He tells us that the flesh of the perfect sinless Saviour had to be publicly exhibited in its true light - he means as something evil and disgusting.

We are pleased to see that Albert Collins, in his rejoinder, is able to call Mr Mansfield to order and point out to him that *“the law did not pronounce a curse upon the flesh as such - it punished sinful actions.”* Good for Albert. We think his appreciation of the point indicates that our literature has not been wholly lost on him. If he had gone a step further and recognised that the law which is holy, just and good, is not superior to the God who gave it, and that neither does God, anywhere pronounce a curse upon flesh as such; He too, denounces sinful actions and bad characters, not the flesh which He made in the beginning and which remains to this day capable of obedience or disobedience. If he had also told him this he would have passed with honours!

He also points out his editor's foolishness in saying that the flesh of Jesus was cursed but not Himself; as he rightly says, *“It was Christ - the Anointed, the whole person, who was made a curse.”* This shot found the mark, for in the January issue, H.P.Mansfield explains that *“he had never meant to imply that Jesus can be considered apart from the nature He possessed.”* But this was precisely what he had said and to make this distinction was the whole point of his rejoinder, as can be seen from his words quoted above. He concludes by saying, *“We have no further comment to make, other than to direct the reader to that which was stated in our last issue.”* This is truly stupendous! He has given a muddled exposition, criticising Albert Collins, who replies by respectfully pointing out the fallacy in his argument. He rejoins that he never meant to imply what he specifically stated, and wisely decides to shut up; but he has the shocking effrontery then to direct his readers to what he has already said - and did not intend to imply! What a man! He revealed his calibre by the unworthy criticism he made in April issue of the work of brethren less well-blessed materially than himself, but none that we have seen have published such contemptible nonsense as this. If he was typical of our brethren down under, we could appreciate the mistake of the lady visiting the zoo, who, seeing a kangaroo labelled “Native of Australia,” exclaimed: “Fancy - and our Phoebe married one!”

The only subject upon which they appear to be in agreement is that substitution is wrong in principle. It is perfectly true that justice could not sanction the heathen practice of punishing the innocent instead of the guilty, and Deuteronomy 24:16 refers to this and forbids it; but this is not an argument against self-sacrifice, which inevitably involves substitution. No one person can do anything for another without being in some sense a substitute. As for the principle being dishonourable to God - was it not instituted in Eden? Is there any alternative explanation to the coverings of skins than that they were a covering for sin sacrificially provided? Is not the sole principle behind the law of sacrifice that of substitution? Can any person read the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement and deny such a principle? Apart from the exhibition of faith and obedience, what but a principle of substitution is prophetically demonstrated by the offering of Isaac by his father, Abraham? It is a remarkable evidence of the change which Christadelphianism has undergone, that although they make so much of Dr Thomas, whereas he recognised a principle of substitution, both in the law and the types and in the death of Christ, they now deny one.

We had occasion recently, in a letter to F.J.Pearce, to mention the passage in “Elpis Israel” where Dr Thomas refers to *“the death of the substitutionary testator,”* and he replied saying he had never noticed it. It occurs on page 213 of the original edition in my possession, but we found that in later reprints the text has been tampered with the words *“substitutionary testator”* have been deleted and replaced by the word *“mediator.”* It seems likely that this alteration is of comparatively recent date: it was certainly not made in the Doctor's lifetime or with his consent, and surely, to remove words having a clear and precise meaning and replace them with another having a different meaning is nothing short of forgery. Our comment would be to quote the footnote in “The Declaration” referring to the notorious Trinitarian fabrication in 1 John 5, *“It is evidently spurious... but by whom forged is of no great moment, as its design must be obvious to all.”*

The engraving on the cover of "The Logos" depicts a row of books, of which "Elpis Israel" is the first, and regarding it we should like to ask H.P.Mansfield a question which we trust he will answer in one of his issues for the benefit of present-day readers of Elpis Israel. Is the book shown there intended to represent the one written by Dr Thomas, wherein he speaks of Jesus as "*the substitutionary testator*," or is it a mutilated version revised by an unknown hand to make it agree with the theories which happen to be current in the Logos circles? If it is the latter, we should wish to suggest to him the propriety of also modifying the challenge quoted from Dr Thomas, which he prints just below the row of books saying, "*We dare our opponents to hear us*" and make it read, "*We dare NOT let our opponents hear us.*"

We have before shown how other original Christadelphian works have been tampered with in a similar way. There are very significant differences in "The Slain Lamb" as originally published and as it stands at present. It was stated in the original Declaration that at baptism "*there is a passing out of Adam and into Christ.*" There is no doubt that this is a true and scriptural statement, but it is no longer acceptable Christadelphian teaching so it has been expunged. Other examples of the same practice are given in "Apples of Gold;" indeed, in the preface to one reprint, C.C.Walker states with complete naivety regarding such manipulations, "*we know that the author would wish them to be made.*" It is one thing for the Christadelphian office to claim copyright in the writings on "The Truth;" it is quite another to show so little respect for literary principle. The significant thing is that almost every example we have come across of this process of trimming has a bearing in one way or another upon the subject with which we are dealing and shows how the fundamental confusion in the minds of the authors persisted in manifesting itself in their writing, so that down to this very day the constantly recurring need to patch and conceal gives evidence of the defective foundation of their doctrine of the Fall and Redemption of Man. It seem highly improbable that the time will ever come when someone will think it worthwhile to try to make sense of the writings of the editor of "The Logos," but from the look of the attempt he has made himself in that direction, if it should ever happen they will have quite a problem on their hands.

"THE REMNANT" IN THE RAG BAG

We conclude this article with a reference to another periodical representing, like "The Logos," a fragmentary group of Christadelphians. Those who publish "The Remnant" appear to have abandoned the use of the name, however, and regard themselves as the last defenders of The Truth. They are bitterly critical of the recent reunion between Suffolk Street and Temperance Hall, though they appear not to have any doctrinal difference with either, their principle line being opposition to what they regard as laxity in doctrine and practice of most Christadelphians. We therefore regard them as a good example of what that community stands for and their statement of what is to be understood by The Truth as carrying some weight; this, in its relation to the death of Christ, is what we propose to examine, for it is of vital importance to present-day Christadelphians.

They have been publishing a series of articles called "The History of The Truth in the Latter Days," and the January issue covered the period of the controversy concerning the sacrifice of Christ. We have little fault to find with the account so far as the facts go, and although, as one might expect, it is rather heavily "loaded" in favour of Robert Roberts, we do not blame the anonymous writer unduly, since one would expect him to make the best of his own point of view. Sufficient is quoted - and quoted correctly - to enable any discerning reader to see on which side the truth lay. We ask no more than this from anyone, and other editors would do themselves more credit if they were as fair. Despite the intention of the writer, I can say for myself that if as a Christadelphian or a member of The Remnant I was reading what is reproduced of the debate between Roberts and Turney, I would certainly want to know more of the matter. It appears to me that a man cannot be such a great villain who can preface an address by saying:-

"From my understanding of it, it seemed a matter about which we ought rather to pray and to weep than to quarrel and denounce, and I feel like that tonight."

The writer takes up the same question as Albert Collins and says, *“The argument was elaborated in so-called proof by saying that Jesus came as a ransom for all; and how could He pay a ransom if He Himself were under bondage.”* This was Edward Turney’s case and it has always appeared to us to be eminently well-founded. What the writer in “The Remnant” describes as so-called proof will be recognised by the reader as the actual statement by Jesus about Himself, and what could be better proof? The issue is whether His words mean what they say or not, and this we must leave to the individual to decide.

Like The Logos, The Remnant is terrified at the thought of Jesus as a substitute, because it cannot get away from the idea that that would imply that it was God who required a satisfaction of His wrath, whereas, in fact, it was God who was Himself providing the One who voluntarily made the sacrifice to meet the law.

“The Remnant” says:-

*“Here was heresy of the first magnitude; a denial of the very basis of redemption, and a charging of God with the condemnation of Jesus in the manner of His death - for ‘cursed (condemned) is everyone that hangeth on a tree’ **when he ought never to have been condemned.** To argue that it was ‘for us’ does not alter this. **God will never condemn a man who does not in some way deserve it.**”*

We should like all Christadelphians to study this extract carefully and decide for themselves whether it truly represents their own personal conviction. As has been said, its author claims brotherhood with The Christadelphians and that his doctrine is The Truth as taught by Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts, and The Remnant, which is distributed or edited by a Mr Butterfield, professes to be issued by those calling themselves “Christ’s Ecclesias,” yet such a statement surely brands its author as utterly ignorant and blind. Let us take it to pieces and examine it.

It will be noticed first that he produces Galatians 3:13 as proof - the only proof - that Jesus was justly condemned by God. Those who have read the earlier part of this work will agree that we have no need to set about showing his mistake here; Albert Collins has done that to our complete satisfaction, and as they each revere the works of the two leaders just named and regard themselves equally as “in The Truth,” we are content to leave them to fight it out together. The point we must draw attention to is the deduction which The Remnant writer makes; if this is indeed Christadelphianism then Christadelphians have forfeited all right to be regarded as intelligent Bible readers. He says:-

“God will never condemn a man who does not in some way deserve it.”

This is truly a most shocking thing to write, and we just wonder if those whose views it is supposed to represent are aware of the position to which it commits them. His reasoning runs;-

*“God condemned Jesus - therefore either
(a) God was unjust; or
(b) Jesus in some way deserved it.”*

We should have thought that every Christian would have agreed that Jesus was Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners - that He was a *“man approved of God,”* but to prove this from scripture would, to The Remnant, prove that God was unjust. So they are willing to blind themselves to plainly stated scriptural facts rather than admit that their premise is wrong. We have never seen this phase of the dilemma of Christadelphianism more baldly stated, and we hope that those who read this will be able to decide on which horn they prefer to be impaled.

Whenever we read in productions like “The Logos” and “The Remnant” examples of the abhorrent declarations that we have been dealing with, we cannot help wondering if their words mean the same thing to those who write them as they do to us, or whether it may be that they are simply incapable of expressing their intended meaning. But if “The Remnant” writer had in mind some thought other than that Jesus was in some way a criminal, surely he could have made it clear. It is not possible to say that a man deserves punishment without implying some kind of guilt or delinquency. If Jesus deserved punishment we want to know what He deserved punishment for. We have declared our faith; it is that Jesus was unjustly condemned by the sin-power, but He made no resistance and voluntarily permitted its agents to inflict upon him the penalty due to sinners, thus becoming their substitute, The Remnant says of this view:-

“By it, the justice of God is insulted in condemning One who it is alleged, was not worthy of condemnation.”

Is it then, only an allegation of the Nazarene Fellowship that our Lord and Saviour was not worthy of condemnation? If so we are very happy to be in the minority who dare to make that allegation, since we regard it as one of the cardinal points of truth. But we dare swear there are not a few rags and remnants of the Christadelphian world who would also make it, despite Messrs Butterfield and DeFries, of The Remnant. We challenge then to produce from scripture either one word or one fact which justifies anyone in concluding either (a) that God condemned Jesus, or (b) that Jesus deserved to be condemned.

The only semblance of a reason produced by The Remnant is supposedly contained in the following sentence:-

“Further, the appeals of Jesus for deliverance from the wretchedness of His nature, shared intensely (sic) by every devout son of God, are made of none effect, for was it not this nature with all its sinful tendencies which was so justly condemned?”

This again is a statement for which we cannot recall one word of scriptural evidence. Where are they - all these appeals by Jesus for deliverance from “*the wretchedness of His nature*”? It is a pity the writer did not think to quote an example so that we might know what he had in mind. If he is referring to the fact that Jesus had the same physical limitations as ourselves and experienced fatigue and hunger, we cannot recall where He ever appealed to be delivered from these - all He wished for was rest and peace. If He is referring to the fact that Jesus experienced temptation, we may remind him that Jesus met His temptations not by appealing to be delivered from His nature but by subduing His natural desires to what He knew to be good. Or if He has in mind His anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, these were not appeals for deliverance from His nature - indeed, they were the very reverse - they were appeals for deliverance from the death which was going to end His natural life. His natural desire was to remain alive, and who dare say that is an evil desire? There was in fact, no “wretchedness of nature” which impelled Him to choose death rather than life.

When we contemplate the life that Jesus lived and recall His kindness, His humanity, His piety and patience, and His obedience to the very last, and then read the statement in “The Remnant,”

“it was this nature with all its sinful tendencies which was so justly condemned,”

we wonder just what he means by talking about “the justice of God.” If God had condemned a man who exhibited such utter and complete goodness in His every thought and deed, because of the kind or quality of His nature or His natural tendencies, God would have been thoroughly unjust and no one can deny it. It would have been indeed the most monstrous example of vicious injustice, and swamp the matter with words or muffle it how you will, you will not alter the fact. That is the inescapable conclusion from Christadelphian argument. Talk about the principle of substitution being unjust and dishonouring to God indeed! Try rather to show how His justice and honour is upheld by a theory which affirms that Jesus in some way deserved condemnation yet cannot show one point in

which He failed! Try to make sense of a theory which teaches that God has created man incapable of obedience, punishes him with death for the failure which he cannot help, created his own Son in the like manner and when He alone succeeded in living a life free from all failure, condemned Him to the most cruel death because His nature might have led Him to sin!

In "The Truth About Clean Flesh" examples of the kind of teaching we have been dealing with from The Logos and The Remnant have been described as doctrines of devils, and we see no reason to modify our words. We believe it to be a fact that many Christadelphians secretly hate the views of the writers concerned and find their publication most distasteful. There was a time when members of Suffolk Street were in a position to disclaim responsibility, but as we have shown in the pamphlet "Recognition - By Whom?" Cyril Cooper's success in negotiating re-union on the basis of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith makes this no longer possible. The great majority of Christadelphians now march behind a single banner and all must bear a share of the guilt for the many "strange devices" which it bears. We conclude by putting on record a selection of these, all statements of representative members, which have appeared in print and which therefore must be said to represent the position of the whole community:

"Sin ran in the blood which Jesus inherited from His mother." (R.Roberts)

"Human flesh is wholly evil.... serpent-nature. Diabolos was in the flesh of Jesus." (W.F.Barling).

"Man is a diseased abnormality because of Sin." (P.O. Barnard).

"The defects of (Jesus) flesh... its essential ugliness... its fundamental corruptness." (A.D.Norris).

"There was no violation of justice in His death; it was not wrong for Him to die." (W.F.Barling).

"Jesus did not suffer the penalty of sin; He merely suffered death." (John Carter).

"Jesus was sin." (A.D.Norris).

"Adam's offence rendered his posterity inevitable sinners." (W.F.Barling).

"Jesus did not suffer the penalty of sin; his death was not the payment of a debt and it was not on behalf of others." (Islip Collyer).

"As for a full penalty of sin, this happens in the unbroken sleep of an unenlightened unforgiven sinner." (John Carter).

"If we are in Christ (and do wrong) it is not we that have sinned but Adamic nature obtruding itself... as long as... our transgressions are committed despite ourselves, we remain... righteous." (P.Watkins).

"When Jesus hung on the cross... the devil hung there dead." (A.D.Norris).

Individually, these statements are horrid perversions of Scripture, utterly divorced from the sublime teaching of Jesus and the Apostles. Collectively they constitute a tradition which reduces man to a corrupt and irresponsible moron, and makes the sacrifice of Christ nothing but the mutilation of a helpless marionette. If their authors had set out deliberately to write the most vicious misrepresentation of truth imaginable they could hardly have done better. We cannot conceive of any series of propositions purporting to represent the Christian faith with which we more gladly dissociate ourselves.

We cannot help but feel that we should be doing some of our former brethren an injustice if we did not recognise that they must feel sickened when they read these definitions of what they are supposed to believe. (The source and context of them all is given in literature, which is available free on request). Formerly their attitude towards them could perhaps be summed up in the words of one of them, who when asked if he knew what his belief in sinful flesh really implied answered, "I don't know - and I don't want to know."

When they maintained a separate fellowship, even though nominally Christadelphians, here may have been a measure of exculpation in their attitude, but now that reunion has taken place, the men who write and speak such things are the leaders and representatives of the whole community, and these are matters for which individuals will have to give answer to Him whose honour they concern.

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