

Jesus At The Bar

PREFACE

While the Author owns his direct indebtedness, in the primary stage of his religious career, to the writings of the late Dr Thomas and others, his settled conviction of “The freedom of Christ from all condemnation” is due to the writings of the late Bro Edward Turney; and while he claims to have proved Jesus “Clear at the Bar,” and man’s utter helplessness to redeem himself, he has also endeavoured to show that the theory of God’s endowing Jesus with extra power to overcome His supposed “Sinful Flesh” is no part of God’s scheme of redemption.

In the matter of obedience, if God be just. He cannot, consistently with that character, condemn man for what he has not power to avoid; but God is absolutely just, therefore He tries no man “above” what he is able to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). God is therefore just in punishing disobedience. Holiness in God demonstrates that He requires no obedience “impossible” to yield. If, therefore. God be Holy, He has granted man the power to obey Him; but if it were true that “no mere man is able to obey,” God would be manifestly unjust to charge man with crime. But as God is absolutely just. He does no such thing. Inability to obey annihilates crime. If, therefore, it were true, as advocated, that Jesus, on account of His supposed “Sinful Flesh” required extra power to overcome wherein all other men fail on account of that power being denied them, this so-called testing of Jesus would be reduced to a mock trial, a sham fight, which outrages, yea, destroys, all parallel betwixt Him and us in the matter.

A.L.Wilson.

Jesus At The Bar

Before we approach the subject of our title, the writer deems it necessary to reply to some criticisms he has received of his pamphlet “Jesus my Substitute.” It is argued that, as Jesus was but “one individual,” He could not be a substitute for more than one person; and as sinners are legion, it is considered out of the scope of reason.

This difficulty vanishes when we recognize the fact that in God’s computation, we were not reckoned as so many “individuals,” but as so many individual “parts” or “elements” composing “the Adam.” Hence the exhortation: “Put off the old man and put on the new.” It is then, the analysis of the body of Adam and the synthesis of the Body of Christ.” “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). In Romans 5:15-21 the Apostle gives a sevenfold reiteration of the fact that, as one sinner closed the door of life against himself and all in him, so God has provided a ransom in value equal to the greatness of the occasion; and how compatible with the rectitude of the government of God that, as “one” sinner involved “all,” the Devil, or law of sin, can demand no more than the death of an absolutely righteous One in order to open the door unto life. God has provided for us in Christ this painful exactitude, whereby Jesus becomes the Door through whom alone we must approach the Father. As well might Romans 5 never have been penned as deny the fact that, as “one” involved all, so Jesus is a ransom in value equal to the greatness of the occasion. The writer boasts no skill in rhetoric parsing, but Romans 5 contains, seven times told, “a balanced antithesis” the most sublime his soul has ever pondered, the secret of which is the “equilibrium” of the adorable God. Surely the Christadelphian sun has gone down blood red, in a dark and angry sky, leaving nothing behind save a mass of inky clouds, unlit by a solitary star.

But our critic, determined to refute Substitution, and safeguard his theory of a Condemned Christ, though baffled to deny that λυτρον is “ransom,” resorts to the Lexicon to assure us that άντι originally meant “before;” and that as redemption has been placed in Jesus, through Whom we must approach the Father, “άντιλυτρον” is said to be somewhat like “an anti-room.”

That άντι originally meant “before,” we have no dispute, and that Jesus may, by a figure, appropriately be compared to an anti-room, as indeed He is termed “the Door” into the sheepfold, we do not call in question; but that the words, as used by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:6 and by our Lord in Matthew 20:28, can be twisted to convey the idea of an anti-room, we make bold to give an unqualified denial.

άντι is derived from an obsolete noun άνς, άντα aura is the accusative. The adjectives άντιος and ευαντιος and the adverb άντιγρυς show that the radical sense was “in front of,” but this acceptance came to be more commonly expressed by the preposition προ (Pro). While άντι denoted an object fronting, “face turned towards the other,” προ signified a body in front, but in any position. From the primary application of άντι to an object “fronting” another, arose other significations deduced from the nature of the bodies so placed relatively to each other thus; άντι sometimes denoted (1) “opposition” or hostility; (2) “comparison;” (3) “preference,” the act consequent upon comparison; (4) “substitution.” This last is the most general use, derived from the practice of exchanging commodities by way of barter. When the exchange was agreed upon, the one was substituted for the other; and this preposition is frequently understood after verbs of buying and selling, or a person taking the place of another -

Who, then, will deny that άντι is the recognized Greek equivalent of our English “in place of”? And as it is irrefutable that λυτρον is “ransom,” are they breathing that will dispute that the very words used by Paul and our Lord are equal to our English “corresponding price, equivalent, or substitute”? Why, then, does our critic distort the term beyond all possible recognition when found in connection with the sacrifice of Christ? Simply because there lurks behind the term a vested interest, to safeguard which he scruples not to condescend to a compound distortion of the terms. If our critic would abandon his pet delusion of a Condemned Christ, the term άντι would mind its own business, and exhibit, in meridian splendour, the glorious Substitute God has provided; but to condescend to twist “corresponding price” into the imaginary shape of “anti-room” is a piece of craft that requires but one example in order to dismantle it of all its subtilty, viz., “Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of (άντι) his father Herod.” If our critic’s exposition of άντι be correct, then we must conclude that Archelaus, the son, reigned over Judea “before” his father, which is the exact opposite of what this Scripture predicates, and, therefore, conclusive proof that, as expositors of Greek, our critic is the most dangerous to be trusted.

There seems no scarcity of Lexicons, as another critic, objecting to the pamphlet as having for its assumption no word found in the Bible, favours us with a definition of “substitute” by the lexicographer, and assures us we will find it “as accurate as it is concise.”

- 1) To Substitute = to put in the place of another.
- 2) A Substitute = one put in place of another.
- 3) Substitution = the act of placing a person, or thing, etc.

We replied, thanking the friend for his accurate and concise definition, and assured him we rejoiced to be agreed, and trusted therefore, that he would be able to see that our only duty, in order to test the validity of his objection, was to apply “his own definition.”

Thus; An eye in place of (άντι) an eye.

Jesus gave His life a ransom in place of (άντι) many. We trusted that he would be able to see that this also was as accurate as It was concise; and that if he would study “Jesus my Substitute” and the application of his own definition, he would find our pamphlet to be based on a word out of the

mouth of the Lord Jesus. And that, therefore, his objection, when put in the balance, was found wanting.

Then quite a host object to “Jesus my Substitute” because the word is not found in the Bible. Then the “Representative” idea must go on the same grounds- Everybody should know that words are merely the ‘garments’ of thought. What, then, is the definition? “Sub,” a Latin preposition meaning “under,” “Statuts,” “placed.” If, then, we can find this idea of “placing under” in connection with the Sacrifice of Christ, whether arrayed in Hebrew, Greek, Latin or English, will it leave anything in the objection to commend itself? Now the prophet declares that “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” Here, then, is a most conspicuous “placing under,” - exactly the place father Adam merited. “And with His stripes we are healed.” The fear of man brings a snare.

Others seem to have it on the brain that “God demanded” the utmost penalty, and therefore, cannot be substitution. It is this inverted, delusive aspect which obscures the truth, and which originated with the Jews of old and survives to-day. The Jews by their sacrifices hoped to win the favour of God, as the Gentiles by their prayers and the sacrifice of Jesus hope to shun a flaming, endless hell. Their motive being to appease Him whose taste for blood and vengeance was thought larger than His mercy, and who could be propitiated only when this appetite was satiated by devouring His own offspring. Thus the Jews heaped sacrifices until they became a stink in Jehovah’s nostrils. They failed to recognize that sacrifice told a bad tale - a remembrance of sins every year- That therefore, God had no delight in them. “Go and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” They knew not that sacrifice was intended as an outward expression of their faith that God “Himself would provide a Lamb for a burnt offering” (Genesis 22:8-13). Hence the just was said to live by faith. It is God who pays man’s debt to the law of sin and death. Behold, then, the Lamb “of God.”

Lastly, our Christadelphian friends deny substitution as they declare that Christ was under condemnation to death on His own account. In order to prosecute this case we shall require once more to bring Jesus to the Bar and select an equal number of witnesses for and against.

WHY, THEN, DID JESUS DIE?

Paul: “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.”

Isaiah: “He was wounded for our transgressions.”

Peter: “Christ suffered for sin, the Just for the unjust.”

John: “Jesus, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,

Jesus: “No man taketh my life from me, I lay it down of myself.”

John Thomas: “Sin is that in the flesh which has the power of death, because the development or fixation of this evil in the flesh was the result of transgression.” – Elpis Israel, page 113.

“Jesus offered for His own sins” (“The Christadelphian Mag.” August 1873, page 364).

R.Roberts: “The sentence of death ran in the blood which He inherited from Adam through Mary. He was therefore in the days of His flesh as much under its power as those He came to save” (Ambassador Mag. March 1869, page 83).

“He was a man made of a woman...and therefore under the curse of the law.” (page 84).

C.Smith: “There is no “if” in it, you know. He was made Sin by being made of a woman, and thereby cursed by the law.” (Letter to present writer).

J.J.Andrews: “Christ was by birth made of fallen, sinful nature, and that His death as a sacrifice was necessary to cleanse Himself as well as others.” (Preface, “Blood of the Covenant.”)

“What was necessary to deliver Him from the sin-nature of which He was made? To be slain,” page 7. “As soon as He was hung upon a tree He was cursed by the law, and from that curse He could only be cleansed by the shedding of His blood,” page 23.

“Having lost through the curse of the law the covering for Sin provided by circumcision and baptism, He was now *in re* to the Edenic and Mosaic laws, in an unjustified condition. He was physically as unclean as He was between birth and circumcision,” page 26.

“It was not possible, according to the law of sin and death for Christ to be freed from Adamic condemnation without shedding His blood,” page 28.

“This doctrine of a free life, or uncondemned Christ is synonymous with Anti-Christ, and those who teach or receive it are false teachers who bring in damnable heresies... and they shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” (“The Christadelphian Mag.” April 1875, page 171).

This then was the atonement according to our friends, and their attitude towards those who rejected it; but silent time works wonders for to-day we find less unanimity amongst them on that question than in any other body under the sun. Some even pronounce the theory to be “a theological error;” but have they, like Pilate, washed their hands from that “innocent blood”? If not, let us transcribe a piece we find in one of their pamphlets on Baptism, page 11, where it is asked; “Where does baptism come in?” and the answer is; “It comes in after belief. Baptism is of no value without belief. There might be a ceremony, but without belief it would merely be a ceremony - a needless ceremony.” A condemned Christ, then, not being the Christ of God; let those to whom this applies, “Repent, and do the first works.” Let truth prevail.

Let us now examine the evidence and endeavour to show that the condemnation brought against Christ is the deduction of a false premise, viz., “Sinful flesh,” for which our present witnesses are not guilty, having been handed down to them by her who intoxicated all nations. She, logically baffled as to how redemption could be obtained through a “physically sinful” Redeemer, invented the “immaculate conception;” our witnesses, deceived by that premise, allow it its logical course and falsely condemn Christ while the truth of God, like a placid stream, winds its silver streak between these two bleak mountains of delusion.

The only place in Scripture which lends countenance to physical sin is Romans 8:3, viz., “Sinful flesh.” We submit that there is not a more mischievous mistranslation in Scripture, and the delusion has gained as wide a currency as the immortality of the soul. In the Greek there is no adjective; it is the noun in the genitive case, signifying “possession” and therefore, as silent as death regarding the quality of the flesh, σαρκος ἁμαρτίας “Flesh of sin,” or “Sin’s flesh.” How simple then; God sent “His own Son, His own possession, His own flesh, in the likeness of Sin’s sons, same kind of flesh, but different “property” who surrendered His life as the price of their redemption. Let us illustrate the distinction between quality and possession; A farmer for example, whom we will name Thomas Righteousness, possesses twin lambs, one of which is sold to a butcher who we will call John Sin. Do you think the skin, flesh, blood and bones of this lamb have become “Sinful” by the mere circumstance of its having been sold to John Sin? Yet this is the Logic by which, from this Scripture, we are asked to believe in a physically sinful Redeemer. “Sinful” qualifies character; but if applied to flesh, stupidity. Now Adam, like a sheep, sold himself under Sin; cast himself out of the fold, the door of which was guarded by the Cherubim and Flaming Sword. Could he now approach God? Nay, verily. What then happened? Did his flesh become sinful? No more than the flesh of the Lamb sold to the butcher. There was defilement; but it was legal: he defiled his character, by which his relation to God was altered, the penalty for which was forfeiture of life. To expect deliverance then, from one who derives his life from this “criminal source” is an outrage both of reason and God’s scheme of redemption. God alone can and must provide the ransom. This He has done in His Son (John 3:16; Revelation 13:8). Did this Son of God then, require to shed His blood before He could approach His own Father? Pitiable delusion! “I was cast upon Thee from the womb.” “Thou art my

God from my mother's belly." When He therefore, by the grace of His Father, undertook on behalf of the sheep, to reopen the door of this fold, did He flee at the approach of the wolf? Did He escape the Flaming Sword? The veil of the temple was rent in twain. The Lord hath laid on Him, His Lamb, the iniquity of us all. Thus He has become the Door, through whom alone we can go in and out and find pasture.

But we are told that the body of sin had to be destroyed (Romans 6:6), and that this was Jesus' sinful body. The rendering here could not be improved, (σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας) "body of sin." Here, again, quality is confounded with possession. It is not therefore, a sinful body, neither Jesus' body, nor even Paul's physical body, but there is in Paul's style, a body here (καταργηθη) rendered powerless; i.e. "sin's possession" of Paul is rendered powerless by his faith in the operation of the working of God in Paul's symbolic crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection (ἀναστασις) with Christ. It is this peculiar metonymic style of Paul that stumbles many.

Even Paul's vehement solicitation, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" fails lamentably to prove that either Christ or Paul was physically sinful. Ponder the Idea of Paul's desiring to dissolve physical partnership with himself! This savours somewhat of the old Lady's disembodied theory. Clarke is of opinion that Paul's allusion here is to an ancient custom of certain tyrants who bound a dead body to a living man, and obliged him to carry it about till the contagion from the putrid mass took away his life. Was there anything bound to Paul having this inevitable result? "The law was added that the offence might abound; a remembrance of sins every year; the ministration of death." The association fits the idea; hence Paul, in his metonymic style exclaims, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Was he then delivered, and how? Christ purchased his freedom from the curse of the law by taking the curse upon Himself.

Then we are asked "How was sin condemned in the flesh of Jesus, if it was not there?" This is perhaps one of Paul's statements to which Peter refers as being "hard to be understood," which those who are learned beyond what is written (1 Corinthians 4:6), wrest to their own destruction (2 Peter 3:6). Paul also addressed his brethren; "Ye are not in the flesh." Did he mean they were not flesh and blood? He also says; The "foolishness of God is wiser than men." But we must abandon all idea of sport, He says; "the weakness of God is stronger than men;" but we must not entertain any idea of invalidity. He also says; "Christ hath abolished in His flesh, "the enmity." Does this mean that enmity was an element in the flesh of Jesus? Then Paul's next phrase deepens the confusion; "even the law of commandments." Was the law which was holy, just and good enmity? Cannot our friends see that it was the cause of enmity, and that Jesus by honouring the law and enduring the execution due to the transgressor, removed the enmity and thereby united Jew and Gentile in one body? Literally, what is sin? John says, "the transgression of law." What is the process of its existence? James says, "Every man when he is tempted is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Did Jesus then, ever allow Himself to be drawn away of His own lust and enticed? "And when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin." Did Jesus then, ever allow lust to conceive and bring forth sin? God completely condemned sin then when, as Isaiah says, "The chastisement of our peace was borne by Him." How did He bear it? Just as Peter says, "In His own body to the tree." Study Paul's metonymy.

Then we are told that Jesus was "made sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21) by being "made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4) and thereby "cursed by the law." Paul says, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed." There is here a blank contradiction, a violation of the fundamental laws of thought. If the law cursed Jesus, either as a malefactor or for physical sin, He would be cursed, but this witness is deceived as Paul declares, "He speaks not by the Spirit of God." neither must we condemn Jesus by detaching a passage from its connection and compounding it with another isolated passage after the process of this witness. If logic granted this licence, we might place this witness in a critical situation, e.g. Judas went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). Go thou, and do likewise (Luke 10:37).

We must therefore, in justice to Jesus, analyse the evidence and examine it separately. "God hath made Him sin for us." Then follows an adjectival clause to "Him" viz. "who knew no sin." The meanest grammarian will observe that the verb of this clause goes a tense further back than that of the principle, indicating that Jesus prior to His being made sin had victoriously conquered every trial. Then follows as adverbial of purpose, viz. "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." This evidence shows then that Jesus was no more made sin by His birth of a woman than that we are made the righteousness of God by our birth of a woman; but that God made Jesus who knew no sin, a sin-offering for us, when Jesus was thirty-three years of age, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him "when we are baptised into that sacrificial death." Let us now examine that other Scripture.

"God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under law." Did this Son of God ever violate the law? Where then does condemnation come in? Then follows an infinitive of purpose; "To redeem them that were under law." A condemned one would have proved lamentably deficient for this purpose. But there is yet an adverbial of purpose, "That we might receive the sonship." This is a most glorious consummation! If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed! How shall words express the gratitude we owe to this "One among ten thousand and altogether lovely"? He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley. My Beloved said unto me, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him."

Where shall we turn to find that The Prince of Life was under condemnation to death? Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Shall we outrage language by attempting to reconcile "lay down his life" with "condemnation to death"? Is a condemned foundation the sign by which we shall identify the House of God? Never while words retain their meaning and reason her seat. "Behold, I lay in Zion a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; Judgment also is laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding place, and your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand." "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no Physician there?"

Then Hebrews 2:14 is said to condemn Jesus. Let us see. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He, likewise partook of the same." Were the children condemned merely because they were flesh? Contemptible logic, since this is exactly what God made them. It is therefore false to condemn Jesus because He was flesh. Why then did Jesus partake of flesh? Let the following adverbial of purpose be noted here, viz. "That through death He might render powerless him that had the power of death." If then, He had not been made flesh He could not have died and therefore redemption had failed; but we are asked to believe that the flesh of which the children and Jesus partook was sinful. We defy them to prove that sinful flesh has yet been created and this Scripture is certainly as silent as death regarding such. But there is another adverbial, viz. "And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime in bondage." A condemned one had been lamentably deficient for this purpose. How then were the children in bondage, and Jesus free? Simplicity itself. They were under Sin, not because they were flesh but because they were transgressors as also their father Adam; therefore justly in bondage, but Jesus never sinned, neither did His Father, therefore Jesus stands before the world justly "Clear at the Bar."

"How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" Here the witnesses are jubilant in a polluted Christ, but though they apply the X-rays, they shall fail to find physical sin even in Judas to say nothing of Jesus. This is not even a categorical proposition but an interrogation, and admits of a solution beyond all cavil and that out of the mouth of the Lord Jesus;

"Now are ye clean through the word I have spoken unto you." Thus the word is the cleansing power and Jesus was "the word made flesh." Will you then say that the very word of God was unclean? Though we resolve Job's question into the categorical form and subject it to the syllogistic test, it will prove bad logic. When a universal proposition is claimed the utmost peril of the inductive

hazard is incurred. Such will admit of no exception. Can we find an exception? We shall show by two examples that Jesus is the Grand exception. All men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Jesus was a man. Therefore Jesus sinned and came short of the glory of God.

How does this sound? It is a valid conclusion yet there is something blasphemously false. Where does it lie? Well, from, other evidence we find that Jesus did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. We must therefore exclude Him from the major premise.

Take a negative example then: None is clean who is born of a woman. Jesus was born of a woman. Therefore Jesus was not clean.

This is also valid and the witnesses are jubilant, but this like its neighbour is false by the following witness: "Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

"O yes", reply the witnesses, "but that applies to His character."

Precisely so, and it is character all through. The Lord persuaded Paul that physically nothing was unclean of itself. The Lord has also persuaded the writer. The Lord reprimanded Peter for calling any man unclean. So did He the writer. (Romans 14:14; Acts 10:28; 11:9). Every creation of God is good (1 Timothy 4:4). To the pure all things are pure; but to them who are (legally and mentally) defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure: not even the Lord Jesus (Titus 1:15). Ye fools, did not He who made that without, make that within also? When therefore ye do His will, behold "all things are clean unto you."

Then Zechariah 3 is said to be conclusive, that as Joshua was clothed with "filthy garments" this is said to represent Christ's sinful flesh. But in this Scripture we see a change of the Priesthood and not a condemned Christ, and in the raiment we see righteousness. All our righteousness is as filthy rags and the white linen is the righteousness of saints.

In verse 8 then, we find God, the first person, addressing Joshua, the second person, regarding a third person whom He styles "My Servant The Branch," who would remove, not the supposed sinful flesh but the iniquity of that land in one day. It is not then a question of flesh, polluted or otherwise, but if they persist then let us examine this "garment" argument more minutely. Remarkable phenomena have been known in nature. The writer has seen a lamb with two heads, and has heard of children being born with teeth, but never in creation was it known of a child being born with garments. So, whatever the garments may mean they must refer to something put on Jesus, sometime at least subsequent to His birth, and we think this agrees with the prophet who declares, "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Is Ephraim joined to his idols? Shall we let him alone? Who will go up with me to Ramoth Gilead and thunder that every creation of God is good? That though we can defile the flesh that defilement is not the sin, but the result. When shall they discern between cause and effect? When shall they learn that it is not a question of flesh but character? That it is a question of bought or sold; life or death; enemies or reconciled; legally clean or unclean; the property of sin or of God; naked or clothed. "Who are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they who came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." It should be patent to the dullest that condemned blood is outrageously deficient to accomplish this. Wherefore we counsel thee to buy of Him white raiment that thou mayest be clothed that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.

Why had Mary to comply with the law of purification and Jesus to be circumcised and baptised? The Master's own reply is, "To fulfil all righteousness." How simple! To have failed this then would simply have been a second calamity. But one of the opposing witnesses writes and tells us that "as He was made sin, and thereby cursed by the law, He had to show by the sign of baptism His own condemnation! Just imagine the Lord to have said, "Suffer it to be so now for thus it becometh me to be baptised for the remission of my sinful condemned flesh"! If they will not quit this delusion we wash our hands from their blood and utter a threefold "Thank God" for the morning we awoke to be

associated with the so-called Renunciationist Heresy. And in passionate apostrophe to the dauntless defender, the late Brother Edward Turney, we say R.I.P., till the day dawn and the shadows flee away. Then the disputed Hebrews 13:20. The most of exponents we have consulted contend that it was through the blood of the covenant that Jesus earned the title "Great Shepherd." The witnesses for the condemnation of Jesus contend that it was through that blood He was brought from the dead. We discard both theories because first, God declared through the prophet; "I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered." On the authority of God, therefore, we say Jesus was the Shepherd before the smiting. Jesus says "I am the good shepherd. The hireling fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming, he fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I lay down my life for the sheep." On the authority of Jesus we also say He was the Good Shepherd before He laid down His life. Second, we have not yet found in Scripture where blood had anything to do with the resuscitation of Jesus; but we do find that it was because Jesus loved righteousness and hated iniquity (Hebrews 1:9), that God could not suffer His Holy One to see corruption (Acts 2:27). Third, the blunder consists in the theorists applying the adverbial phrase "in the blood of the everlasting covenant" to the verb of an adjectival clause, instead of the verb of the principle sentence. This will be seen if we strike out the subordinate clauses, viz. "Now the God of peace make you perfect,..." If we ask how or by what means God accomplishes this then the adverbial phrase "in the blood of the everlasting covenant" at once settles the question. Fourth, if Paul had wished us to understand either that Jesus earned the title Great Shepherd or that He was brought again from the dead through that blood, he would have employed the preposition "διὰ", through, but he did not. Why then do all the expounders employ the term "through"? The term Paul used was "ev" in. How consistent then to read; "Now the God of peace in the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect..." To present our convictions of this Scripture in another form, we submit a general analysis which shows at a glance the absurdity of its favouring the condemnation of Jesus.

Adjectival	Principal	Adverbial
<p>Of peace, who brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus</p> <p>That Great Shepherd of the sheep</p>	<p>GOD</p> <p>MAKE</p> <p>YOU</p> <p>PERFECT</p> <p>etc</p>	<p>In the blood of the everlasting covenant</p>

Then as the Mosaic altar required ceremonial cleansing before it could be used in the service of Jehovah, it is argued that Jesus required the same on account of His sinful flesh. This is immediate inference, forced by a subtle influence as the needle is by the magnet; the wish is father to the thought. Were the witnesses to glance out at the court window and observe the street wet, they might infer that it had rained, but if on placing their heads a little out at the window they observe the street beyond the legal buildings dry, then they must forego their former conclusion for the fact that a water-cart only had passed. Were we then to infer that the Mosaic altar required cleansing before it could typify the Christian altar, our inference for the moment would be as good as theirs. For an eternal settlement of this question then let us place our heads a little out at the "Divine window" and observe minutely the Divine facts. Lo and behold, the Mosaic altar was made out of the earth which was cursed (Genesis 4:2), hence the necessity for cleansing, but regarding the Christian altar Paul declares, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed" (1 Corinthians 12:3). We must therefore abandon this idea of cleansing Christ. Besides if a tool were raised on the Mosaic altar, God's design was thwarted (Exodus 20:25). Now what was written before was for our learning. What then is the lesson here? That the Christian altar was cut out of the mountain without hands (Daniel 2:45). "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, serve Him; but if Baal, then serve him."

Then we are asked to believe that, as the Levitical priests, before they could offer for the people, must first offer for themselves, that Jesus on account of His condemned nature must do likewise, and Hebrews 7:27 is cited as proof. Language is incapable of expressing a stronger opposition to Scripture. Paul says; “If He were on earth, οὐδὲ οὐ ἱερεὺς (He could not even be a priest). What then becomes of the theory of His requiring to offer for His supposed condemned nature? And if He like the Levitical priests must do this first for Himself then the sacrifice for the people has not yet taken place, for the records declare that He died only once. What have we then? Simply this, that both the Levitical priest and altar required cleansing before they could typify Christ. But if they still insist that Jesus must shed His blood to cleanse Himself let us see how the idea would adorn the doctrine of Christ. Imagine the Master at the memorial supper taking the bread and breaking it, saying “This is My condemned body which is given for Myself. This do in remembrance of Me”! Likewise also the cup saying, This is the new testament in My sinful blood which is shed for My own condemnation.” Is not this revolting in the extreme? We ask the advocates of this theory to clear themselves. Besides where in God’s arrangement can we find where the Priest was ever offered in sacrifice for the people? The delusion deepens as we proceed. Shall we make Christ an unclean priest, offering to cleanse Himself? Miserable alternative! Either that the denounced displeasure of Jehovah in a defiled sacrifice is a mere trifle, or that the denunciations themselves are swelling words of vanity. Are the denunciations of the prophet to be ignored? viz.; “But ye have profaned it, in that ye say the table of the Lord is polluted.” Is it possible to conceive of a more contemptible and polluted idea at the Lord’s table than to be partaking of the emblems of a condemned priest? “Will the Lord accept at your hands the torn, the lame, and the sick? But cursed be the deceiver who hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing” (Malachi 1:12-14). “Consider the vengeance for those who count the blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctified, an unholy thing and do despite to the spirit of grace. For we know Him who hath said. Vengeance belongeth unto Me” (Hebrews 10:29,30). A more heart-touching testimony could not be given that Jesus was “Clear at the Bar.”

“Purge out, therefore, the old leaven that ye may be a new mass, for Christ, our Passover, is slain for us. Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” There is a thought in this Scripture to which we would draw the reader’s attention. Paul says; “Christ our Passover (εἰρηθῆ) “was slain for us.” Observe this verb is in the passive voice, indicating that Jesus did not slay Himself, neither did He offer Himself on the cross. Paul says He was not at this time a priest (Hebrews 8:4), and therefore the idea of His offering for His own condemnation is the strongest of all delusions. It will not do to confound the high offices of Messiah after this fashion; we shall furnish abundant testimony regarding Messiah’ Priesthood; but we must follow the Divine order and speak of Him first as The Victim. John invites us to “Behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29-36). Peter says this Lamb was without spot. Isaiah says “He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter.” John says this Lamb was slain (typically) from the foundation of the world. Abraham declared that God would provide Himself with a Lamb for a burnt offering and he slew the type “in the stead of his son.” (Genesis 22:7,8). Enough has been given to prove that at this time Jesus was the Victim. We therefore defy the witnesses to prove that He was at this same time a Priest. And before they pervert the mind of another soul we advise them to re-examine the record God has given of His Son, because for the time they ought to have been teachers, they have need that one teach them the first principles of the doctrine of Christ (Hebrews 5:12).

Who then was the officiating Priest in this greatest of all sacrifices? John says; “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” “Behold the Lamb of God.” Isaiah says; “the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” What did the Levitical priest do? Paul says; “God made Him a sin-offering for us.” That “God did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” “I will smite the shepherd...” Thus the Great Jehovah arranged His scheme of redemption on His fore-knowledge that the Jews would murder His Son (Acts 2:23; 2:18). Thus the murderers of God’s Lamb little knew that they “were gathered together to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined to be done” (Acts 4:27,28). If on the strength of the foregoing God be not the Sacrificer of His own Lamb, the writer must close the book in hopeless scepticism; but

he rests implicit faith on “The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and that the Lamb shall yet stand upon His own Mount Zion, encircled by His blood-washed myriads!

Let us hear then what the records declare regarding Messiah’s Priesthood. “Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec” (Psalm 110:4).

Let us now hear the Apostle’s exposition of this; “For the law maketh men high- priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore.” Is it possible for language to present a stronger contrast? Does this favour the idea of the Lord Jesus requiring to sacrifice first to cleanse Himself? Pitiab!e delusion! But Dr Thomas, J.J.Andrew, and R.Roberts declared so; and though an angel from heaven preach any other doctrine Christadelphians will render to him the civility of a bull-dog. But let us hear Paul regarding the Levitical order. He says; “And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.” This explicit testimony establishes the fact beyond criticism that Jesus was consecrated an “Immortal Priest.” Cannot our friends now see why the Levitical priests required to offer “first for themselves”? There was not more than one divinely recognized priesthood in the days of Jesus, and Jesus was not of this line. “For He,” says Paul, “of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which, no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” “And,” continues Paul, “it is yet far more evident; for that after the similitude of Melchizedec there ariseth another Priest who is consecrated, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.” What further testimony is necessary to prove that the idea of the Lord Jesus offering for the remission of His own condemnation is the most pitiable doctrine ever propounded?

But does sinful flesh end here? Our friends rob Jesus of all merit inasmuch as they declare that; “Poor Adamic flesh in which dwelleth no good thing, never could have yielded such a perfect character as that of Jesus, unless the Father had taken hold of it and wrought it for us into such a pattern.” We shall transcribe the comment of Brother Hawkins; “Here was utter helplessness, no power, no individuality, a flaccid, listless human shell, a mere automaton, moved by the Deity as an engine is by steam; the Deity Himself doing the work which passes for the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. If this was the true Christ, why did He come at all?” Well might he ask, because this mock trial, this sham fight, would destroy all parallel betwixt Him and us in the matter?

Does sinful flesh end here? By no means. This theory says; “No mere man is able to keep the commandments of God.” We have found that God imposes no law impossible to obey, and requires no obedience impossible to yield. Paul says; “God trieth no man above what he is able to bear, and will, with the trial, make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it.” But the theory says “No mere man is able.” The last words of the blessed Master were, “Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Do we not sin? Yea, verily, and therefore are to blame, but if no mere man is able, blame is a mockery and a libel on the justice of Almighty God. To confess sins beyond our power to avoid is a corruption of the Divine word. What are the facts? If the reader will take his concordance and underline all the exhortations to obey, observe, do and be obedient, and insert his theory “no mere man is able” we say he is a stout-hearted soul who will not feel ashamed of himself. “Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” Asa’s heart was “perfect with the Lord all his days” (1 Kings 15:14). Enoch, (Genesis 5:22-24), Noah (Genesis 7:1), Caleb (Numbers 14: 24), Daniel (9:13), Levi (Malachi 2:6). What then does Peter mean, “A yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear”? The interpretation of the Pharisees had this effect (Matthew 23:4), but there is a more rational explanation. The law was added “that the offence might abound” (Romans 5:20). It was the ministration of death; a remembering of sins every year; the ministration of condemnation. Could they bear it then? I trow not. Another had to bear it for them (Galatians 3:13).

“This supposed sinful flesh germinating in all actions of man is the most convenient excuse for his shortcomings- But though the tongue may charge them all to that account, the conscience smites and stings with the conviction that they might, if we would, have been avoided. Pious, canting

hypocrisy finds in sinful flesh a grateful refuge, but while the natural sense of right condemns this doctrine, the contemptibleness of it becomes more and more manifest by analytical examination. What is it we are compelled to do which is so bad and what is it we cannot perform which is good? Cannot a man refuse to swear, drink, commit adultery, speak evil, backbite, be extravagant, a glutton, a brawler? In all matters of which our laws take cognizance, nobody is ridiculous enough to contend that what is right cannot be adhered to. It is only when we enter the domain of piety that this inborn helplessness is thought to be discovered- Well, what is it man can and cannot do? Can he not read his Bible, understand and obey its first principles? Does anything hinder the practice of devotion? Is it impossible to increase in knowledge, refrain from being hasty and practice patience? Does anything hinder prayer; is there one single command of God that this poor poisoned creature cannot do? Reader, to discover such thy search will be in vain. This idea of helpless sinful flesh cannot be too vigorously opposed and emphatically denounced. It produces as nearly as possible what we may imagine the reality would be; it cripples all energy, paralyses all effort; it blasphemes the goodness of God, impugns His wisdom and turns His mercy into gall; it changes the creature of His hand to a prone puppet, who is lashed for his inevitable movements. The impression magnetizes the man into the very obliquity he deplors and invokes the tears and lamentations of a hypocrite and is the strongest of all delusions.” (Late Brother Edward Turney’s view).

We consider the above well told in view of the Master’s words, “So likewise ye, when ye have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have only done that which was our duty to do.” The root of the error is traceable to the garden of Eden by their supposing Adam to be a semi-angel (physically), a theory on a par with the old Lady’s Immaculate Conception. Paul says; “Adam was made *χοϊκος*, earthy, *ψυχικον*, animal, natural and therefore as capable of dying before transgression as he was after. On the hypothesis of Adam’s obedience, then, would Jehovah there and then have immortalised Adam or addressed him in some other such terms as those to the beloved Daniel? viz; “Go thou thy way till the end be; thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” The probability is the latter, and we find nothing in the records adverse to this thought. Adam’s unfaithfulness however, ends all speculation and the problem for solution is “What death did he incur?” The records are emphatic that death by execution is the penalty for the violation of Jehovah’s laws. Otherwise it was monstrously unjust that Jesus should have endured the cross for their redemption. The records are explicit; “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4). “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). “He that despised Moses law died without mercy; how much sorer punishment... (Hebrews 10:29). “On the day thou passest over the brook Kidron thou shalt surely die, thy blood shall be upon thine own head” (1 Kings 2:17). “When I say to the wicked; Thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him no warning, I will require his blood at thy hand” (Ezekiel 3:18-21). On the authority of the above we say that the penalty of Adam incurred was death by execution, and that his redemption was imperative to the continuation of the human race. Had sin been pardoned and its guilt cancelled by the exercise of Sovereign will or by an act of mere power, it might have been doubted whether the Almighty were indeed infinite in moral rectitude, or whether He would not at some future time re-impose the doom, but no such injurious apprehensions can be entertained. “His ways are ways of pleasantness and all His paths are peace.” The first man, having sinned, could have had no posterity had not the penalty of violated law been arrested by the Divine promise (Genesis 3:14). God requires no extraneous motive to induce Him to pity; it is a question of law, and God’s infinite, eternal and unchangeable love in the sinner’s redemption. Thus the love of Almighty God began in the very garden of Eden. He did not allow the execution of the law to overtake Adam and consequently blot out the human race, but He provided a substitute for Adam (Job 33:24; Revelation 13:8). Hence the slaying of animals at once becomes significant. Thus the Sacrifice of Christ, though central in human history, had its effects, though obscure, as really upon preceding ages as it has its manifest effect upon succeeding ages. While therefore we find such terms as Jealous, Furious, Wrath, Vengeance, Indignation, and Consuming Fire applied to God, we are not warranted to understand such as indicative of any actual change in God, any more than we should of the terms Hope, Fear, Wishes, Disappointment, or Regret; this is His condescension to human infirmity and to the state of mental culture in the infancy of the human race. The change by which a guilty sinner becomes free is not in God but in the relation under which the sinner stands before God.

Whoso reads this and concludes that our object has been to hew Agag to pieces reads in vain, while we have shown no sympathy for the Dagon, our object has been to convert the sinner from the error of his way and save a soul from death; and we conclude by stating briefly:-

That we do not say, had Jesus perished in the massacre of the innocents, that He had been a sufficient sacrifice for sin. An heir differeth nothing from a servant though he be Lord of all, "till the appointed time of the Father." Even the flesh as flesh profits nothing; a higher relation must be generated and developed to result in a Higher Sonship which shall reflect the glory throughout the length and breadth of the earth (Numbers 14:21). Nevertheless, the basis of the Great Master Builder's Scheme of Redemption was laid in the Blessed Infant Jesus. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Does this mean merely that a child had been born of kingly descent? Pitiable deduction! The records are emphatic that His relation and destiny are diverse from those of any other human soul. "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son." This was to be Jehovah's sign. Do not the Josephites laugh the sign to scorn? "That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God." How pronounced! Has this fact isolated in the history of the world, no significance? Well, what is that significance? This fact is vital to us. God was the Father of Jesus, therefore His life, the price of ransom, was not derived from the criminal source. Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." "The Son abideth ever." "Then are the children free." Could any other human soul venture the audacity of appropriating these terms to himself? Ponder the language regarding this Gift to the world. "Thou art He who took Me out of the womb: Thou didst make me to hope when I was upon my mother's breast." Again, "I was cast upon Thee from the womb:

Thou art My God from my mother's belly." How consoling to watch the development of this "Plant of renown," upon which we "wild olives" have been engrafted! The Spirit of the Lord makes Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, while He grows in wisdom and in stature and in favour of God and man. Thus at the age of twelve we behold Him about His Father's business. Touched with the feelings of our infirmities He surrenders His own will to the will of Him who sent Him and is tried in all points like as we are. He learns obedience by the things which He suffers and, if He endure unto perfection, He justifies the title commanded to be given Him, "Jesus, He shall save." All depends on this - shall He fail or shall He conquer? Thanks be to God and thanks be to Jesus also, the fact that "The lion of the tribe of Juda hath prevailed" is attested by no less authority than that of the God of Heaven; "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him."

Let us then by all means hear Him. At this point He declares, "The hour has come that the Son of man should be glorified." But what of the redemption of man? Hear Him again, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Thus, for the redemption of man He must yet, by the grace of His Father, taste death for every man. Wherefore God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish. God is the Redeemer! It is all of God! God is Love!

Did the innocent One consider Himself wronged? By no means, "No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down of myself." "If it may not pass except I drink it, Thy will be done." Thus, innocent from the great transgression (Psalm 19:13), He became obedient unto death, even the death of a cross, by which He restored that which He took not away." Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a Name which is above every name. Jesus my Substitute, separate art Thou and undefiled and therefore "Clear at the Bar."

To speak therefore of a condemned One undergoing His own execution as being obedient unto death is a paradox - a delusion. Shall we blot the record of Heaven - shall we allow Him to learn obedience by the things which He suffered and then mock Him with the bars of death? May all be spared this awful reflection on the justice of Almighty God.

Andrew Wilson.
1908