

**Correspondence between George Armonis and Russell Gregory
with further comments from Phil Parry**

Hebrews Chapter 9 verse 12

During August 2008 I received an e-mail from one of our regular readers asking: -

“Could you please comment on Hebrews 9 verse 12 where it says that Jesus obtained eternal redemption, with the words ‘for us’ in italics?

The verb ‘obtained’ is apparently in the ‘middle voice’ meaning something He did for Himself. I think you would say that Jesus obtained redemption by sheer obedience, but in what sense can it legitimately be said that Jesus needed redemption?

Are we talking about redemption from mortality if not a sin-prone nature?”

Hebrews Chapter 9 verse 12 reads –

***“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once
Into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (for us).”***

In answer to this let us first look at the Christadelphian viewpoint regarding Hebrews 9:12 and for this we have chosen an article by George Armonis which we think is fairly typical of their understanding:-

George Armonis Article is entitled:-

Obtaining Redemption

“There is probably no passage of the New Testament that has been so much misused, misinterpreted and misunderstood as that in Hebrews 9:12. It lies at the very foundation of the divine work manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ, and establishes the reason and purpose for which he sought redemption from the corruption that is common to man. This article looks at the interesting structure of the verse.

In Hebrews 9:12, Paul shows that the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ could not be fully realized until he was physically made appropriate for the work: by being clothed upon with the garments of immortality. The verse states: “Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption (for us).” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

To properly understand the principle of divine redemption seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is helpful to examine the Greek tenses used in this quotation.

Firstly, it should be noted that the final words “for us” are not in the original text, and should be eliminated. They do not conform to the structure of the verse, and have obviously been introduced by the translators who could not understand the principle that the sacrifice of Christ was firstly for his own benefit, so that he could become the Redeemer of his people.

The first section of the quotation identifies the subject of the whole exposition. It concerns the appointment of Christ as a “high priest of good things to come.” Thus, Christ first “enters the holy

place.” Why? In order to “obtain eternal redemption.” Why so? Because he did not beforehand possess it, having been born into the “constitution of sin” in common with his brethren (Hebrews 2:14-16).

We now wish to carefully examine the last four words: “having obtained eternal redemption.”

“Having obtained” is one word in the Greek: *euramenos*. According to Greek grammar, the word is in the masculine gender - which agrees with the subject: Christ. Further, it is in the Middle Voice, and is a participle.

We should explain that a unique feature of the Greek language is its division of words into three “voices:” Active, Passive and Middle.

1) The Active Voice denotes an action has taken place, or is taking place (e.g. “the boy plays with the ball” - the active part is the boy).

2) The Passive Voice denotes an action performed by another on behalf of the person (e.g., “The child is having a bath, bathed by his mother.” The action part relates to his mother for the child - not to being in the child. The phrase “is having a bath” is one word in Greek, recognized by its ending.

3) The Middle Voice denotes an action that a person does for himself and for his own benefit. The action of the subject returns back to himself - i.e. “The boy is dressing himself.” He does it himself and for his own benefit. Again the phrase “is dressing himself” is one word in the Greek, recognized by its ending.

Let us now find in the Scriptures this very same word in the Three Voices-

The root word for *euramenos* is *eurisko*. It occurs many times in the Active and Passive Voices, but remarkably only once in the Middle Voice - in Hebrews 9:12.

Notice the word occurs in the Active Voice in 2 John 4, “I rejoiced greatly that I found (eureka) of thy children walking in truth.” The active part is the children. What were they doing? They were “walking in truth.”

The Passive Voice occurs in Galatians 2:17, “While we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found (*eurathemen*) sinners.” Who does the action here? God does. For whom? For us; thus it is in the Passive Voice.

The word in the Middle Voice is only found in Hebrews 9:12, “having obtained (*euramenos*) eternal redemption.” It is not “in himself,” as some translate it, but “for himself.” For his own benefit exclusively.

The translation “in himself” does not give true justice to the Middle Voice of the word *euramenos*. This is not only because it appears in the Middle Voice (and Paul could have used either of the other two voices), but the word *euramenos* is also found in the participle form. Now, as the Middle Voice demands that the action of the subject returns back upon himself, so the participle demands that the subject (Christ) takes part himself of that action.

There are no exceptions whatsoever in these rules of the Greek language.

The word *eurisko* means “to be found.” So Christ has found eternal redemption for himself.

How do we come to this conclusion? Because of the use of the Middle Voice and the Verbal Adjective Form (which qualifies the noun). This agrees with other words of Paul:

“The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits” (2 Timothy 2:6) and with the words of the Lord: “I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: others (not other men) laboured, and ye have entered into their labours” (John 4:38).

Putting these two quotations together reveals that Christ, who laboured together with his Father, first found eternal redemption for himself, and opened the way for others. Brother H.P.Mansfield stated: “The Lord obtained for himself redemption (Hebrews 9:12 R.V.), and having saved himself, is able to extend salvation unto others (Romans 8:34).” (“Story of the Bible” vol.10, p. 180).

Obviously, if the “redemption” obtained by his sacrificial death (Hebrews 9:12) were for us and not for himself, we would already be redeemed; why then the need for us to “make our calling and election sure”? It is, in fact, not until Hebrews 9:14 that our own redemption is brought into view, and then it is firstly a moral cleansing. The Statement of Faith clearly teaches that “by dying (Jesus Christ was to) abrogate the law of condemnation for himself, and all who should believe and obey him” (Clause 8). Clearly the “dying” referred to is the “death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8), being a sacrificial death. Thus, when we understand that the redemption mentioned in Hebrews 9:12 is expressed in the Greek Middle Voice, which form of grammar demands that it was for himself, and for his benefit, and that the Participle relates it to the subject: Christ, therefore he must, of necessity, be a participant in that redemption. In his offering he provided not only for his own need but also for that of his family, inasmuch as both “he” and “his children” (Hebrews 2:13) are thereby saved.”

George Armonis

Here is my assessment of George Amonis’ article : -

Early on George Armonis writes,

“The first section of the quotation identifies the subject of the whole exposition. It concerns the appointment of Christ as a “high priest of good things to come.” Thus, Christ first “enters the holy place.” Why? In order to “obtain eternal redemption.” Why so? Because he did not beforehand possess it, having been born into the “constitution of sin” in common with his brethren (Hebrews 2:14-16).”

The claim here is that Jesus entered heaven itself before He received eternal redemption. But can this be right? If it can be shown that Jesus had eternal life before He ascended into heaven can it be true that He was still in need of eternal redemption?

We know that Jesus sacrifice is the Great Antitype of all the sacrifices for sin under the Law of Moses and most notably those on the annual Day of Atonement, but where do we find the type of Jesus entering into the Holy Place to receive redemption? Such a thing is not to be found in the Scriptures! Certainly the Mosaic high priest entered the sanctuary in order to seek forgiveness. This was, in the first instance, to seek forgiveness for himself so that he was ceremonially cleansed in order to represent Almighty God who was yet to offered up His Son as His Lamb. Having been ceremonially cleansed the Mosaic High Priest was himself considered clean and fit to seek forgiveness for the people. However, Jesus entered into heaven to become our High Priest so that we could be forgiven – not to receive redemption for Himself.

God has ordained that sacrifice must precede forgiveness. Jesus sacrifice provided redemption. Those who accept the redemption offered seek forgiveness.

Atonement is for those who are alienated from God - having been “sold under sin” (Romans 7:14), “concluded under sin” (Galatians 3:22), “Jews and Gentiles all under sin” (Romans 3:9), i.e.

they are “concluded in unbelief” (Romans 11:32). But never in scripture is it said that a child of God is sold under sin, concluded under sin nor are in any way under the condemnation of sin, and neither are they concluded in unbelief.

Some claim that because “God sent forth His Son... made under the law” (Galatians 4:4) then He needed redemption from the law, but this is claiming too much. Of course Jesus was under law otherwise He could not have been tempted in all points as we are. We are all under the law of the country in which we live, and so long as we do not break the law we are not condemned by it. That was the position Jesus was in. Never having broken the law, i.e. never having sinned, Jesus was never condemned by the law and also being free of the condemnation that came upon Adam when he transgressed, He could lay down His own life – His own possession, i.e. ‘unsold to sin’ – in place of the life Adam forfeited which was ‘sold to sin.’ Jesus was free-born. Only those ‘in Adam’ are in need of redemption. Jesus replaced, as it were, Adam and all in Jesus are free of condemnation having come out of the first Adam and entered into the ‘second Adam’ by accepting the redemption Jesus offered through His sacrifice. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24).

Let us now ask at the question, Did Adam need Redemption before he sinned? We answer, No, he did not. Adam needed a change of nature to live for ever but he did not need redemption.

Jesus also needed a change of nature to live for ever, but He never needed Redemption from sin any more than Adam before he sinned. Jesus shed blood was for us; it was the Precious Redemption Price. (1 Peter 1:19). He gave His life as a Ransom for many (Matthew 20:28), for all (1 Timothy 2:6), but not for Himself, as Daniel 9:26 tells us, “And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.”

“Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own Blood.” (Acts 20:28).

“For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes, He became poor, that ye through His Poverty might be made rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; but if we walk in light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (I John 1:6 and 7).

Again it is important to realise that one cannot be redeemed by an **unclean** sacrifice for such was Jesus if, as has been claimed, He had sin in His flesh.

So when did Jesus receive eternal life? Let Jesus answer: “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John 5:26). We ask, what life did the Father have in Himself? Jesus used the word “zoe” which is spirit life as distinct from “psuche” which is natural life. This being so then we can be certain Jesus didn’t have to wait until after His resurrection and ascension into heaven to obtain spirit life as He already had it. Jesus lost His natural life (psuche) but He never lost His spirit life (zoe). The natural life of Jesus was in the blood which He shed on Calvary. When Jesus died on the cross, His spirit life remained with His Father until His the resurrection when He received it back again. “I am he that liveth (zao), and was dead; and, behold, I am alive (zao) for evermore.” (Revelation 1:18).

Our conclusions then are that 1) Jesus did not receive His natural life back but was raised with eternal life before ascending to heaven and, 2) Jesus never had any need for redemption.

This next piece is from a booklet entitled “Sacrifice” written by a Christadelphian who wished to withhold his name:

“The Apostle Paul tells us that, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief” (1 Timothy 1:15). How clear and concise is the reason for Christ’s death thus set out for us. If the mission of His death was for the redemption of so-called sinners, how could the Apostle style himself the chief? There is surely no gradations to sinners. But our transgressions can be multiplied. Our offences are many. “Yet there is deliverance from them, because Christ was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Romans 4:25). And “when He had by Himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High” (Hebrews 1:3). Again we read that after “He had offered one Sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12). God being in heaven, this is the place that the Apostle Paul styles the most holy place, where Christ hath entered “to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24).

There is no gainsaying the fact that the redemption here mentioned, through His shed blood was for us. Were it for Himself, we are still in need of redemption, and would also be a flat contradiction of the truthful axiom that any that is already forfeited cannot purchase redemption for another that is likewise forfeited. What saith the great apostle; “In whom (Christ) we have redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:14).

This statement to the Colossians covers the whole groundwork of redemption in as condensed a manner as possible. He tells us who hath received the redemption, what it consists of and also the price paid for it. Let us acknowledge His death to be sacrificial death on our account, and then only can we measure the great love of Christ. “For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him which died for them” (2 Corinthians 5:14,15).”

We turn now to consider whether or not Jesus had sin in the flesh through His descent from Mary. Those who maintain the blood of Jesus ran in the veins of Mary should think again. Nature has provided that not a single drop of a mother’s blood should enter the veins of her off-spring.

Before birth the child’s needs are obtained through the umbilical cord, which connects the child to the placenta. The placenta allows all the essentials for growth, such oxygen, glucose, calcium, iron, fatty acids, salt, and hormones, etc. to pass by osmosis from the mother’s blood stream into that of the embryo, and which at the same time prevents the mixing of the blood of the mother and foetus. These processes are initiated at conception by the germ of life, the living cell supplied by the father. There is no mixing of the mother’s blood with that of her offspring.

Supposing sin ran in the veins of Mary as some believe, it was not passed on to Jesus. The life of Jesus was passed on to Him from His Father as a new creation independent of Adam even though through one of Adam’s offspring. Jesus offered His own life-blood as the sacrifice for us and there was not a single particle of His mother’s blood in it.

To help consolidate some of these points I quote next from a booklet by Andrew Wilson entitled “The Atonement” X-Rayed”:-

“Now, please permit an analysis of your implicated triune assumption. First, Hebrews 5:7 contains not the ghost of a hint that “the blood of Jesus required to be shed on His own account,” but it is a glorious confirmation of the ransom in place of (*anti lutron*) man. He had previously merited His title to immortality. Had you been expert on the Greek middle

voice, and our English nominative absolute, you ought to have known that our Lord, before He voluntarily laid down His life's blood a ransom in place of (*anti lutron*) man, the hour had come when He should have been glorified, but had this taken place before laying down His life a ransom for man, He says He had remained alone (John 12:24). Could the Beloved One have made it plainer? The Greek middle voice, and our English nominative absolute, establish this Divine truth beyond refutation, e.g. "Having obtained a rifle, James shot the lion." Now, an infant in grammar knows that the obtaining of the rifle preceded the shooting of the lion. So Jesus also having obtained eternal deliverance (*aionian lutrosin*) entered once for all into the Holy Place" (Hebrews 9:12. See also verse 15, *eis apolutrosin*).

Now, what was God's specific purpose with His Grain of Wheat? I reply, to raise a crop. What was God's next requisite in the process? I reply, before a crop can be raised, God's own Grain must first die. But if God had sown not His Grain, what had the result been? I, with Jesus, reply, it had remained eternally with God (John 12:24). Is there a soul under heaven so dense, so grossly blind to the Divine deduction that the sacrifice of the life blood of Christ was not by any means for Himself, but for the crop of wheat? Does not God's wheat field become interesting the more so when the devil came on the scene with his tares - his condemned representative association?! Thus, the present tense, both of the Greek middle voice and that of our English nominative absolute, runs parallel with the past tense of the principal sentence.

Our next question is, Did Jesus need to die, or could He have entered eternal life alone? For our answer we turn again Brother Andrew Wilson - to his booklet "From Eden to Gethsemane." He is here answering a matter raised by the Editor of "The Fraternal Visitor."

"The Editor declares that -

"There was no stage before His death concerning which the Scripture warrants us in saying at this point He had established His title to eternal life."

We would contrast that utterance with the words of the Lord Jesus, viz., "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified" (John 12:24). But the Master shows that if this had taken place without His dying He would have remained alone.

"Verily I say unto thee, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

Glorious metaphor of Jesus! God is the Farmer. Jesus is His Grain of Wheat which He sowed in the earth before a crop could be raised. But that other lord is still sowing tares. Let us desist therefore from handing him out the seed by declaring Jesus to be under the curse and sin's possession. Let us discriminate between the wheat and the tares; between the Seed of God and the serpent's seed.

But we would point out to the editor that Hebrews 9:12 also declares that Jesus prior to His death had earned His title to immortality. The Editor shows that the Greek verb here is in the middle voice and is equal to "having got Him" eternal deliverance. This is accurate, but it is not enough. The English grammarian also terms this "a nominative absolute," which proves beyond dispute that Jesus, prior to His death, had earned His title. It does not say that He entered the Holiest by His own blood and obtained, etc., but that He entered the Holiest by His own blood having obtained eternal deliverance. The tense of this nominative absolute shows that the obtaining preceded the entering - e.g. James, having obtained a revolver, shot the lion. The obtaining of the revolver precedes the shooting of the lion. So Jesus entered the Holiest previously having obtained His title to Glorification, directly on account of which God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows (Hebrews 1:9).

Adam, before he could live eternally, needed deliverance (not redemption) from the natural condition, but he failed to establish his title: the second, by obedience, established His title (John 12:24; Hebrews 1:9). The latter, before accepting His merited prize, in Divine Love voluntarily went through the jaws of all-devouring death for doomed man (John 10:18). Breathes not the man who will prove Jesus under the curse.”

Let us read again Hebrews 9:12: “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

While it is true that Jesus entered into heaven for us as verse 24 confirms, we see this is not what the writer is saying in this verse 12.

The word “redemption” can also mean “deliverance.” The word “deliverance” is used in Hebrews 11:35 - “Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting *deliverance*; that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Hebrews 9:12 uses the Greek word “lutrosis” and Hebrews 11:35 “apolutrosis.”

The word “obtained” can also mean “found” as for example, Matthew 10:39, He that *findeth* his life shall lose it: he that loseth his life for my sake shall *find* it.”

We know that Jesus never needed redemption. We know Jesus had eternal life before He entered into heaven. We know that Jesus did not need to die having earned a title to eternal life by perfect obedience. We know that Jesus voluntarily went to the cross to be the sacrifice for the sin of the world because of His amazing love for us.

Now let us see what the writer to the Hebrews is saying in this verse 12 and for this I will therefore paraphrase the verse in these terms: ‘It was not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood that Jesus entered the holy place as our High Priest, having already obtained eternal deliverance from His earlier nature.’

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1, 2).

Brother Russell Gregory

My response to our enquirer was duly published and Phil Parry responded to it as follows next :

Referring to George Armonis, I think he is hooked on the R.Roberts doctrine and this is typical of the Christadelphian understanding that Christ needed redemption for Himself from under the so-called condemned flesh. But it is not typical of the teaching of Dr Thomas in Eureka – i.e. ‘Redemption is the release for a ransom from a former lord’ (‘Sin’ personified as a Master). Note, it is not a physical law as Clause V of the B.A.S.F. states but a legal position. Condemned flesh is a myth not in the scriptures; God could not condemn His own creation that was able to be obedient. How can condemned flesh purchase those in the same category?

Jesus was the Prince of Life before He died on Calvary; His uncondemned life in the blood obtained eternal the redemption required for those who wanted to be made free as was the case with Paul before he died. If Jesus needed redemption through the blood it would be a counterfeit purchase

or as the late Andrew Wilson said, ‘A paying of the Devil with his own coinage.’ Jesus was indeed the Prince of Life when they slew Him and thus He obtained life for us. As God’s Son He was heir to eternity and retained that right.

After reading John chapters 5 and 6, how can it be declared that Jesus needed redemption? Or how could His death be necessary for the redemption of the sacrifices offered under the first covenant by those who offered in faith? I came not to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfil, said Jesus.

It is necessary for George Armonis to get the foundation right before he can rightly divide the word of Truth.

Acts 21:37, The chief Captain was very surprised to know that Paul could speak Greek and surprisingly to me that some members of the Christadelphian community being Greeks and English cannot understand much of Paul’s letters to Romans and Greeks, especially Romans chapter 7. ‘Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you’ – by prayer and faith and the desire to know.

Phil Parry. October 2008

My response was also sent to George Armonis by the Editor of the “Logos” magazine to which he replied as follows: -

Dear Russell

My name is George Armonis, and I am writing to you because the Logos Editor has given me your Magazine wherein are your comments against myself and Logos teachings. Sadly, you have misrepresented me, and have ignored the clear teachings of the Scriptures on the matters you criticize. You have made some strong accusations against me, and have presented some unscriptural statements in regard to the Christadelphian beliefs. But your answer is both unscriptural and illogical. And it will lead astray from the saving truths of the Scriptures, ignoring the true exposition of the Apostle Paul.

You claim that I believe that “Jesus entered Heaven itself before he had obtained Eternal Redemption.” I say no such thing, and the article which you criticize was designed to show that the Lord Jesus received Eternal Redemption through his atoning Sacrifice. As far as believers are concerned, they “minister in the heavenlies” in Christ Jesus, as a position of status, elevated from the Gentile spirit of ignorance and wickedness, and covered by the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. We are physically on Earth, but our spiritual status is in the “heavenlies,” being “in Christ” who has thus entered into the symbolic Most Holy on behalf of his people. Yet “flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God”, and the purpose for the ascension of Christ to the Heaven of heavens was to sit on the right hand of the Almighty, as our great High Priest, and this he did after his glorification by the Angel of Yahweh’s Presence here on Earth.

In Hebrews 9:12, the Apostle Paul said that the Lord “entered into the Most Holy Place,” according to the original Greek. I pointed out that the Greek verb is in the middle voice, in the participle form, and in the continuing sense. The middle voice emphasizes that the Lord found eternal redemption for himself, the participle indicates that the Lord becomes a partaker by necessity of this action (redemption), and the continuing tense means that the Lord “finds” that redemption for others, but that redemption has not yet been received by

them, although it has for himself, being redeemed from the nature that came about by Edenic transgression.

You refer to 1 John 1:6-7, and we note that verse 7 speaks of "...the blood of Christ His Son cleanseth us from all [plural] sin [singular]. A Christadelphian writer has explained: "The word sin is used in two principle acceptations in the Scriptures..." These two "acceptations," being two forms of sin, are to be clearly seen in verses 8 and 9 of this chapter. Verse 8 explains: "If we say that we have no sin..." Notice that the Apostle does NOT say, "if we do not commit sin, and there is an obvious difference between "having not sin and "not committing sin". So, what is the "sin" that we have in our possession, according to the Apostle John? Is it not the sin nature inherited from our first parents? Is it not the cause of all our failings and transgressions, as admitted by the Apostle Paul in Romans 7:7, as the sin that dwelleth in him? Transgressions are actions performed; they are not the sin "dwelling in us." It would be completely foolish for Paul to speaking of "transgressions dwelling in me". The sin mentioned by Paul in Romans 7 is the physical principle within us called "the law of sin and death". Thus we are dying because of this law of sin that came about by the transgression of Adam and Eve, the wages of which was "death" as {Romans 6:23} clearly explains. This condition included the Lord Jesus in his mortality. He "died unto the sin once" {Romans 6:10}. He could not die unless he was mortal, and that mortality was the wages of transgression.

The other aspect is in verse 9 of John 1: "If we confess our sins [the transgressions we have committed] He is faithful... The sin nature we possess, and the transgressions we commit, are clearly the "two principle acceptations" of the use of the word "sin" in the Scriptures. There are other examples in the New Testament to illustrate the two aspects, forms or categories of sin.

Since the Lord Jesus Christ never transgressed the law of his God - for which he could never require forgiveness - it follows that it was from his sin's flesh that he had to find "eternal redemption," and for which he diligently sought. He did NOT find it by accident, no mere change. But Scripture certainly requires that he did "find eternal redemption."

As I have read your article, I have come against three wrong teachings from your pen: [1] That Christ died as a substitute; [2] That human salvation, not God manifestation, was the purpose of the Eternal Spirit; and [3] There is no sin in the flesh whatever. Please consider the following statements and think carefully:

[1] "Only those in Adam are in need of redemption" You seem to leave out all together the Lord Jesus from his association with all "in Adam", for he clearly came in the line of humanity. Paul says "For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same..." Does this not teach that Christ was in the family of Adam and thus in need of redemption? You obviously overlook the emphasis in the words of the apostle: "he - also - himself- likewise..."

[2] "Jesus never needed redemption." IF this was the case, why then did the Master in the days of his flesh, consistently went to his Father in prayer with "strong tears and supplications unto Him Who was able to save him out of [Gr. *ek*] the death" [Hebrews 5:7]? If, as you have suggested, that the Lord "earned (?) the title of immortality" before he went upon the stake, did he not plead in the garden that the Father might "take away the cup of

suffering,” declaring “not my will but Thine be done”? These are not the words of a man who needed no redemption.

We now come to your statement that “He gave his life [atonement/*lutron*] for many - for all - for us” and such like. You seem to forget that the Lord has done those things on our behalf, for the Greek “*hyper emon*” literally means “on behalf of us.” In order to participate in God’s redemption, we must not seek doctrines of fig leaves, but apply the principles enumerated in Romans 6:1-13, a complete identification with the redemption found not obtained by the Lord Jesus. There is no redemption apart from that possible in the Lord Jesus, for such redemption commences in him. Incidentally, the statement of Daniel 9:26, that “not for himself” is not in the original Septuagint translation of the Seventy who set themselves to translate the Hebrew into Greek.

I now answer point [3], in which you imply that “there is no sin in the flesh.” Yet, in Romans 8:3 we are told that “God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” Some say that the word “likeness” means similar to. But what is similar to sinful flesh, but sinful flesh itself. In fact, the contrast it being made by the apostle Paul to the divine nature. Though Father of the Lord Jesus, God’s nature was not possible for a man untested, and who came as the Son of the Virgin Mary, to have a different nature from that of his mother. Thus whatever is describe by Paul as “sinful flesh” [Greek “flesh full of sin”_was the nature of Jesus through birth. Let me use your analogy: “James having obtained a revolver, shot the lion [in the street]...” Now please explain how could James shoot the lion, if there was no lion? or, {let me put it in this way} How could the Almighty condemn sin in the flesh, if there was no such thing in the flesh”? Do you not see the connection in that verse between “sinful flesh” and “sin in the flesh”?

Finally, if Christ did not need redemption how is it that Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, place before us the following order: Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming, then the end [the end of the 1000 year millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ]? Could we change that order? Absolutely not.

And just to express a few thoughts on your “conclusions” {page 20}. You speak of a “natural life.” This is quite confusing. Life is life. It can be life without condemnation {as was Adam’s without transgression}, or life bearing the law of “sin and death” {such as ALL mankind, since transgression}, or eternal life {such as is held by the Father, the Lord Jesus at his resurrection to life, and the angels}- But the term “natural life” says nothing. When you say that Jesus needed no redemption, you clearly ignore Romans 6:12, which is the whole point of my article which you have wrongly criticized. And since we do not presently possess “eternal redemption,” we find it only in the Lord Jesus whose blood achieved it for himself and all in him {Heb 9:12 as I have according to Greek Grammar explained previously, and in this letter}.

Sincerely, George Armonis.

In reply I wrote:

Dear George, Thank you for your letter of the 26th November 2008.

You say I misrepresent you; I can only apologise for my error. I assure you I have no wish to misrepresent what you wrote and I published your article in good faith believing it was what you meant, so when you said:- *“Thus, Christ first enters the holy place. Why? In order to obtain eternal redemption. Why so? Because he did not beforehand possess it...”* I thought you meant that Jesus entered Heaven itself in order to obtain Eternal Redemption. But now you write “I say no such thing”! I am pleased to hear this; but I confess I am at a loss to know how that I wrote misrepresents what you said.

And I strongly disagree with you when you say I ignore the clear teachings of Scripture.

Yes, I know your “article was designed to show that the Lord Jesus received Eternal Redemption through His atoning sacrifice.” And my article shows that Jesus did not receive Eternal Redemption through His atoning sacrifice – Eternal Life was already His before He was crucified. I feel you haven’t given due consideration to the Scriptures I presented. Also I agree with and hold to every quotation of scripture you have referenced but I do not agree with some of your interpretations of them and here is why:

The Christadelphian argument starts on the assumption that natural death is the wages of sin. This is in common with almost every Christian denomination but it is an assumption and not an established fact.

May I present an example of what I mean? When a convicted criminal is sentenced to death he is duly executed in accordance with the law of the land in which he lives. The death he would have died in old age is quite another matter and it takes but little thought to know which death the convicted criminal would prefer. The choice is between natural death and judicial death. But Christadelphians say there is no difference between the two –they say natural death is the judicial death for sin. I do not believe it is. There is a much more sensible way of reasoning without having to depend on an assumption to start with and I will ask you if you will to please consider this as a possibility as we proceed. It is not wise to build on sand when there is ample rock nearby. If at the end you decide against the points I put forward, so be it, but please first hear me out.

The next assumption is the view that there was implanted in Adam’s flesh a sin-nature, a physical principle of decay, which thus brought about the ultimate penalty. The Bible does not say so and we do not believe there is any such sin-nature. I agree with Dr Thomas when he wrote in answer to a correspondent,

“The life and death of Adam and Eve were predicated, not upon any peculiarity of their animal constitution, but upon the relation they might come to sustain to the two trees in Paradise. From this we learn that they pleased themselves under the law which sentenced them to death. From these premises it will be seen that we dissent from our correspondent’s notion that all creation became corrupt, by which we understand him to mean, constitutionally impregnated with corruptibility at the fall. We believe that the change was moral, not physical” (“Herald of The Kingdom,” volume 5, page 159).

Dr Thomas here says “the change was moral not physical” and we agree, but would add that it was not only moral but emphasise that this was Adam’s legal position in relation to the law of sin and death.

What God said was “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” and this refers to a judicial death - the death for sin. When Adam sinned he incurred the death penalty. Scripturally Adam forfeited his life and became a servant of Sin as a Master. His life was in pledge to Sin and all his offspring to whom he transmitted his life (Adamic life) were therefore born into that same legal position – all in bondage to Sin, or “concluded under sin” as Paul expresses it. This life was not transmitted to Jesus.

Yes, Jesus had the same flesh nature as the rest of the human race but He had a new life direct from the source of all life - as did Adam in the beginning. This is the reason for the Virgin Birth.

When Adam was given the law of sin and death he understood what God meant - “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” God gave Adam the law and told him what would be the consequence of breaking it. God didn’t deceive Adam into supposing He meant a thousand years when He said “in the day”. Deceiving is lying. God meant what He said. After breaking the command, Adam was no longer considered a son of God but a bond-servant of Sin.

As Dr Thomas stated and as we believe, there is no evidence in scripture of a change in Adam’s nature. This is the myth of the Apostate Churches, and by way of example I quote from Article Nine of the Church of England - “The Thirty-nine Articles”:-

“Original sin... is the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world, it deserveth God’s wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh... is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized; yet the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.”

Christadelphian teaching is merely a variation of this.

This teaching, whether it be Article Nine, or Clause 5 of the B.A.S.F., or simply that “that which was imposed on our first parents was the law of death, the ‘dying thou shalt die’ sentence which defiled and became a physical law of their being” (Graeham Mansfield), – this change of flesh nature is also an assumption never having been proven from Scripture. Adam and Eve sinned while in the very good flesh with which God created them - and so do we.

So we find two assumptions as the foundation of Christadelphian beliefs (along with nearly every denomination):

- 1) that natural death (the death that is common to all men) is the wages of sin, and
- 2) that there was a change in the nature of Adam’s flesh due to his transgression.

But the facts are these:

the punishment for transgression of God’s law is judicial death, i.e. a putting to death, and

there is no such thing as sinful flesh, flesh full of sin, or sin in the flesh.

Let us further consider the fact that the punishment for sin is judicial death. Genesis 2:17, “dying thou shalt die” is a Hebrew idiom used to emphasise the certainty of a thing. There are at least ten occasions in the Old Testament where the expression “dying thou shalt die” is found. Just two examples should suffice for now; Genesis 20:7, Abimelech is warned that he would die if he did not return Sarah to Abraham. It is quite obvious God was referring to judicial death - death for disobedience. Abimelech obeyed and lived. But in 1 Kings 2:37, King Solomon told Shimei, “For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.” Shimei disobeyed and was put to death. In light of such scriptures we can safely say that Adam was warned of judicial death to be carried out the very day he transgressed God’s commandment.

But Adam was not put to death the day he sinned because God showed him mercy and loving kindness. However, instead, there was the death of the animal (lamb?) that day which provided Adam with a covering for his sin; a covering which was only temporary until Jesus came as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” as stated by John the Baptist. Also consider Hebrews 9:22 “Without the shedding of blood is no remission.”

Next, we agree that “the word sin is used in two principle acceptations in the Scriptures” but you write: “The sin nature we possess, and the transgressions we commit, are clearly the ‘two principle acceptations’ of the use of the word ‘sin’ in the Scriptures.” Not so. Sin nature is not one of the two ways in which sin is considered.

We accept, of course, that sin is transgression of law (1 John 3:4). It is a simple concept that law gives choice. Indeed, it is law alone which can give choice, and sin is transgression of law. We do wrong whenever we choose to break God’s law and we do right when we choose to keep His law. It is a matter of law and it is a matter of free choice, therefore belongs to what is legal and what is illegal.

However, the second principle has nothing to do with “sin nature” but with the fact that we are “concluded under sin” for the purpose of our salvation as Paul tells us in Galatians 3:22 - “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” We are born of Adam’s forfeited life and so we can have no hope of eternal life unless we are born again, born of water and of the Spirit. When we are baptised into the death of Jesus we rise to newness of life in Jesus, and He tells us “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” - John 5:24, and again we read in 1 John 5:13, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” Paul confirms this in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...”

True Baptism through faith in Jesus atoning sacrifice reverses our standing from being alienated from God because we were ‘in Adam’, to being children of God by adoption because we are now ‘in Christ’ and so have passed from death into life. There is now no condemnation for those in Christ.

The “sin nature” of which you talk is not, and cannot be reversed at baptism. 1 John 1:7-9, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to

forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”, is explained in the most satisfactory way for the blood of Jesus in the first instance cleanses, or frees, the faithful from being concluded under the sin of Adam, and secondly the faithful are forgiven their sins for Jesus’ sake. Again, Hebrews 9:22, for without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins and as it is not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats to take away sins (Hebrews 10:4) but Jesus did, and this proves then that natural death cannot be the wages of sin.

I am surprised at your use of Romans 8:3. I am sure you know Paul did not say “sinful flesh” and nowhere in scripture is the literal flesh described as sinful. People are sinners by their actions and these actions do not make their flesh sinful, but their characters. Paul said that Jesus came in flesh similar to or in the likeness of the flesh owned by Sin as a Master. Jesus belonged to God; He was God’s possession and came to do God’s will as His servant. He never sinned and so never belonged to ‘Sin’ although He came in the likeness of Sin’s flesh, i.e. like the flesh owned by Sin. You know “sinful flesh” is in the possessive case and means “sin’s flesh”, i.e. flesh belonging to sin.

But I will conclude by quoting the words of another:-

“Romans 8:3 - “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

“Why so much determined blindness surrounds this one verse is beyond comprehension. It is nothing short of an obstinate refusal to face facts and an unreasonable desire to believe the superstition of sin-in-the-flesh. This one verse is the mainstay of all Christadelphian argument and there are many leaders determined to keep it that way knowing full well it cannot be upheld. Briefly, what the law could not do was save people who kept it because of itself it was insufficient to give immortality. It needed the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to fulfil its purpose. It was the “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” That is, the Law showed the way to Christ who alone made possible the way of salvation through His sacrifice. The weakness of the flesh lay in the fact that no other man could by any means save himself or others the reason being is because his life is already forfeit and is of no value as a sacrifice - it belonged to Sin and so it was necessary for God to send His own Son in flesh like sin’s flesh. Not in the likeness of sinful flesh - that is not what Paul wrote, he wrote “in the likeness of sin’s flesh” and he knew what he meant - flesh owned by Sin which includes every human being whose life is derived from Adam - i.e. “Scripture hath concluded all under sin” (Galatians 3:22). Jesus Christ had His life anew from His Father and being born of a woman He had flesh like the rest of us but it was not “concluded under sin.” Not sinful flesh, for such a concept is not taught in the Bible - Jesus Christ was in the flesh like anyone else’s flesh - like sin’s flesh, but not belonging to King Sin - and by His perfect life He condemned sin by showing that people are able to overcome temptation if they are determined to and seek God’s help in doing so (Moses taught this lesson to the Israelites in Exodus 20:20 “And Moses said unto the people, Fear not; for God is come to prove you and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not”), so that Jesus condemned sin while He was in the flesh. When else could He have done it? Having condemned sin while in flesh like our flesh He then offered His life as the perfect sacrifice to redeem Adam.”

I sincerely hope you will give due consideration to these matters and so worship God in Spirit and in truth as He so desires.

With Love in Jesus. Russell

In response to the letter from George Armonis, Phil Parry writes:

Adam lived 930 years and he died. Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment”, is the reference to the reason why Adam died and here the apostle to Hebrews does not say it was the penalty for Adam’s sin but that corruptible nature ending in ultimate death was the ordained purpose of the Creator with the provision of a judgment which involved a responsibility to a law for the development of character. Hence the two trees, one being the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, the other the Tree of Life, Adam given the option of all the trees in the garden for food apart from the one he was commanded not to eat on pain of inflicted death. I say ‘inflicted death’ because the scripture supports what was written by Dr John Thomas, that left to himself as God made him Adam would have died on reaching the appointed and limited span of his species like all other animals and other species of God’s creatures.

But Adam was not to be left to himself without some demonstration of obedience and faith in respect for his Maker; he was not a robot but free to choose good or evil, this was to come by experience, not by breaking God’s law to obtain it directly. The continuance of his natural life was contingent on obedience up to the time God decided a due time to change Adam’s corruptible nature to incorruptible, the fruitful, multiplying and replenishing of the earth being completed.

So George Armonis – please note the above and then consider where you get the idea that Jesus needed redemption from the nature that came about through Adamic transgression. I have always understood Jesus received the same nature Adam received when created and that God does not condemn a nature He says is ‘very good’.

George, it is time you left ‘Logos land’ and studied your Bible afresh and also consider our views on that basis. You appear to believe Clause V of the BASF which charges God with defiling Adam’s nature after he sinned when in fact Adam’s character was defiled by his transgression. His relationship to his Creator was changed not his nature. He was a sinner and needed redemption from that position of guilt.

I challenge you George, to find evidence of a change of nature in Adam by transgression. It is not in the Genesis record neither does St Paul teach it in his epistles. Hoping these few comments will be of some help if you desire Truth.

It is passing strange that in 1869 neither Dr Thomas or Robert Roberts believed Adam’s nature was defiled or condemned by his Creator but his transgression of Law which also affected his relationship which required redemption or Ransom from the ‘death by sin’ – not the death by creation common to all .

Brother John Thomas and Robert Roberts found no evidence in the scriptures for the theory of R. Roberts which was produced in 1873 rejecting what they had believed in 1869 causing confusion and divisions of doctrine and disunity of faith.

The false error of R.Roberts was corrected by Edward Turney in his lecture “The Sacrifice of Christ” and he offered to help R.Roberts to get a clear understanding of what he believed but was scorned, ridiculed and misrepresented by stating that Turney did not believe Jesus came in the flesh as other men. Of course Roberts meant flesh defiled and condemned which Edward Turney had said was not evident in Scripture, so it appears R. Roberts had lost his memory from the year 1869. Thus his Clause V and Clause VII for example here brought into confusion the whole Christadelphian community worldwide.

These are the facts and God has even shown a sincere truth seeking man in distant Peru, the Truth Nazarenes are teaching and preaching by email, website and other means. The writing is on the wall and you know the interpretation applicable to R.Roberts followers.

Marvel not that I said Ye must be born again. Unto what then were ye baptised? (See John 1:9-14).

“As it is appointed unto men once to die (the common death of all men), but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered (in sacrifice) to bear the sins of many (the faithful); and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (which He took away) unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:27-28).

Sincerely yours in the patient waiting for Christ Jesus, Phil Parry