

Correspondence between T. Williment and Ernest Brady

Letter from T. Williment and Reply Brother Ernest Brady. **May 4th 1957**

Dear Ernest Brady, Greetings.

So many varied views are expressed from time to time upon Biblical matters that the results are fairly bewildering; some insist that Adam was made immortal - others mortal, both parties emphasise their own view is right and salvation dependent upon one's accepting it.

Out of this conflicting welter my own faith New Testament Judaism was, in God's great mercy, born. This position enables one to form opinions between contestants and yet expend time and labour on other spheres of service.

With some of the Nazarene views I can agree, the Federal position of the two Adams in their respective relations to our race gives no difficulty (Romans 5:17-19); 1 Corinthians 15:22). That Christ was in the exclusive moral position to act as a ransom sacrifice for His fellows (Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:26) is, if I understand you correctly, another.

We are told, however, by the Spirit in Hebrews 4:15, that Jesus was tempted in all points apart from sin, though James says the reverse. God cannot be tempted of evil.

Where, then, did Jesus obtain a nature that was capable of temptation? Was it a constituent of the life you say He received from God, or did He derive this faculty for suffering (Hebrews 2:18) from the imperfect Jewish mother? If God cannot be tempted, and Jesus could, and was, the exaltation from fleshly to spirit nature (Philippians 2:9) of the latter, provides evidence that Jesus benefited from His own death, which, I gather, is a fact you deny.

The fact that He, the only one of Adam's race who could say "I overcame" (Revelation 5:21), indicates, I submit, in what way the ransom was provided. Jesus laid His spotless character in the scales.

Your varied images of death, too, in the Magazine puzzles me at times; death is the cessation of being (Psalm 146:4, 89:48). Does it matter as to its cause? You say Adam's death, 930 years after his crime, was "natural" death, the real sufferers being the animals slain to provide coverings.

Is there anything to show he was under sentence to die before his transgression?

The appalling position of the nations, Adam's children, lusting for wholesale annihilation, makes your apologies for the ravages of sin-conceived lust (James 1:15) difficult to follow.

Perhaps at your convenience you would be kind enough to write to me.

With kind regards, Frank Williment. New Testament Jew.

Dear Brother Frank Williment

, 11th June, 1957.

Thank you for your letter of May 4th and other letters you have written me;

I cannot recall if I have replied to you before but if not I would like to say that I appreciate your letters, but as you have usually been content to outline your own beliefs without much reference to the doctrines we put forward, I deemed it unnecessary to open an argument with you by correspondence as our literature is familiar to you.

However, you ask me to write to you, and therefore I am sending you a few comments on what you say.

It is perfectly true, as you say, that there are many conflicting views expressed on various points, but I do not think we should despair of deciding where the truth lies, for is it not the purpose of God to reveal it to those who seek?

I have much sympathy with your faith which you describe as New Testament Judaism which is a true aspect of the Gospel, but I gather that while you (correctly) emphasize this point, you are in other respects fairly orthodox Christadelphian in your views.

If my impression is correct you will know where and why I must disagree with you and I need not recapitulate.

At least I am pleased to learn that you understand the Federal Principle, and our relationship to the two Adams; in this you are far in front of present-day Christadelphians.

You say that if you understand us correctly we teach that Christ was in an exclusive moral position to act as a ransom for His fellows.

I should disagree with your use of the word "moral" here and substitute the word "legal".

He was in an exclusive moral position certainly, being the only one without sin, and this enabled Him to be our saviour, but it was not His moral position which He sacrificed - it was not (as you say later) His spotless character which Jesus laid in the scales - it was His life; not the life He lived but the life which was in the blood.

He could not sacrifice His character - that was His, and neither He nor anyone else could separate Him from it.

His perfect character made His life of value - or I should say, preserved the value it had when it was begotten - but it was His *psuche* that He laid down as a ransom.

No other, however good he had been, could have done so, because of his legal relationship to Adam, whereas Jesus' legal relationship was to God.

I cannot see any difficulty in your point that God cannot be tempted of evil, whereas Jesus was tempted.

You ask where, then, did Jesus obtain a nature capable of temptation – was it a constituent of the life He received from God, or did He derive it from His imperfect Jewish mother?

I would reply: Tell me where Adam obtained a nature capable of suffering temptation?

Adam had no imperfect Jewish mother, yet he was capable of feeling temptation.

Is it not evident that a capacity for experiencing temptation is the consequence of mankind having been created with free will and reason and placed under law?

It is true that we deny that Jesus benefited from His own death, in the sense laid down by Christadelphians in their Statement of Faith, that He needed redemption in the same way as we do.

If you argue that Jesus' exaltation from fleshly nature to spirit resulted from His death I could agree, but this is quite a different matter, and if, as I suspect you are seeking to find a justification for some measure of adherence to the Christadelphian position. I hope you will be honest enough to admit that this does not provide it.

Is there any reasoning to prove that there is no way in which flesh can be transformed to spirit except by dying and being raised?

Does not 1 Corinthians 15:51 prove that there is another way? And does not reason tell us that having proved Himself perfect, had He not chosen for our sakes to take the path to Calvary He could have taken the other?

I think John 12:23 proves it.

Our varied use of "death" - it is Scripture that has this varied use, not us. We seek to apply and harmonise, and I think we have succeeded. There are 4 or 5 different usages, and while you ask: Does it matter as to its cause? Surely, as a "New Testament Jew," I do not need to remind you of, for example, Hebrews 10:26-31.

There is nothing to show Adam was under sentence to die before he transgressed but this does not mean to say he was not corruptible - capable of dying.

I recognise fully the "appalling position of the nations" but I do not attribute this to Adam's sin but to their own greed, intolerance foolishness.

I do not apologise for the ravages of sin – I just say I do not believe that anything that God has put into man or allowed to develop in him as an inheritance from his ancestors, makes him incapable of ordering his life and his neighbours, in accordance with the commandments of Christ.

I see no reason to charge the wickedness of the world on man's nature, on God who made it as it is, or on Adam who disobeyed a simple command, and brought in the reign of sin and death: I believe that the words of the prophet are sufficient today to put the world right, if they were applied, without any change of nature.

“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.”

I am sorry you disapprove of Bro. Pearce filling up our circular letter with odd quotations from people like Fosdick; true, some of them hold very erroneous views, but this should not prevent us picking out some of the wheat amongst the chaff - after all, we are not children, and can be expected to use a little discrimination.

With Very Sincere Regards and Good Wishes in Jesus' Name. Ernest Brady.