

# Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 175

## January/February 1999

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## Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends at home and abroad, Loving Greetings.

We stand on the threshold of another New Year, a year we all hope and pray will be the one that sees the fulfilment of the promises upon which our hearts and minds are fixed.

At this time also, as we look to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, we ask a special blessing on those known to us who have been bereaved, who are unwell or in any special difficulty. May God bless and strengthen them and give them peace and a quiet mind.

Some forty years ago a census form was delivered to our house. It was the first census to contain questions about people's ethnic origins. My father thought the questions dangerously intrusive and decided he would not fill it in. He was later taken to court and fined £50 for his refusal. At the time a Christadelphian relative of my father's said to him, "I don't know why you can't fill it in, we did, we've got nothing to hide." Not for the first time or incidentally the last, I was amazed at an attitude of such naivety and ignorance. How can we ever know what governments are looking for about the people they govern and why? The answers given to similar ethnic questions on census forms in Holland in the 1920's and 30's enabled the Nazis to trace Jewish citizens in order to murder them. Just because we live under a comparatively benign government at present does not mean we always shall, and we owe it to those who come after us to be on our guard at all times about what government does in the name of its people.

At the same time when I was thinking about this and the matter of the census, I happened to see an interview on television with a British lawyer called Peter Berenson, who had just started an organization devoted to the defence of individuals imprisoned by governments worldwide for reasons of conscience. The organization became know as Amnesty International and I decided to join it. Members of Amnesty International, amongst other things, write to heads of governments and prison officials, on a prisoner's behalf begging for clemency from the death sentence, cessation of torture, to protest at detentions without charge or trial, to plead for medical attention for a prisoner and also for a prisoner to have access to legal counsel and to be allowed visits from their families, and above all for the prisoner's immediate and unconditional release

from detention. To be adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International the person must be innocent of acts of violence.

One of the people for whom Amnesty members wrote many letters in the past pleading for release was the Czech playwright Vaclav Haval. His weapon against a totalitarian state was his pen. He wrote plays depicting and ridiculing the crazy and wicked bureaucracy that oppressed the Czech nation. For his pains he endured four years of hard labour in prison which crippled his health and further years of house arrest. Eventually nine years ago Vaclav Haval led the Czechs to freedom and democracy, but for Mr Haval, at least, it seems to have become a hollow victory and has led him to speak with unremitting gloom of late.

In 1997 Mr Haval gave a speech centred on a theme that seems gradually to have become his central one now that the battle against totalitarianism is won and democracy has been at last established for the Czech people. He asked, "Could not the whole nature of the current civilization - with its short-sightedness, with its proud emphasis on the human individual as the crown of all creation and its master - could it not all be but the natural manifestation of a phenomenon which, in simple terms, amounts to the loss of God?" The late 20th century, he answers himself, "is to date the first atheistic civilization in the history of humankind. Simultaneously, it is the first civilization that embraces the whole planet. Tyranny has been overthrown, it turns out, at great cost. Freedom has its own costs." The dramatist who ruined his health and risked his life in the defence of the individual against the all-powerful state has, as victor, now turned his fire on unbridled individualism itself.

More specifically, Mr Haval has found in his own country that the upheaval he led has given birth to children he now disowns. The Czech Republic has flourished economically, but a soulless and corrupt oligarchy has risen in its place. Power is again in the hands of untrustworthy figures whose primary concern is their personal advancement instead of the interests of the people. Mr Haval says, "the prevalent opinion is that it pays in this country to lie and steal."

We can see just the same situation in our own country. Rampant individualism is god here too. It is clear that however governments rule and whatever their complexion, without respect for God and His commandments all states are doomed to failure. The crooked and degenerate, like scum, rise to the top eventually in every country. We see the sad evidence of this worldwide in our newspapers and television. Freedom brings great responsibilities and for all to enjoy its privileges it requires individual self control and constant respect for others; this is the only way to maintain its benefits.

This most desirable and longed for state of affairs will come about when Jesus Christ returns: "...and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

With Love to all, Helen Brady.

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## **TRIBUTES**

### **Sister May Lockett**

In her Editorial Sister Helen mentioned those who have been bereaved and it is with sadness we received news of three bereavements since our last Circular Letter. Sister May Lockett fell asleep in the Lord on 4th December 1998 at the age of 109. For many years she used to say with a smile that perhaps she would continue until the Lord's return, but alas it was not so. She had a sad life, marrying quite young, going off to South America with her husband and child, only to find the job he had been promised did not exist. He struggled on in South America but sent his wife and child back home to England while he got more established. Eventually he sent for May but then her father would not let her travel alone and said he

must come and fetch her. He never did. Shortly afterwards her child died and ever since she has lived alone. I haven't been able to establish when she saw the fallacies of Christadelphian teachings but once she did and saw the truth that Jesus died in our stead she was a staunch upholder of our understanding of the Atonement and was very outspoken against the false Christadelphian doctrines. In her latter years she was almost totally blind, extremely deaf and very frail. Her going must have been a relief for her. The Brethren and Sisters of the Christadelphian Ecclesia at Leamington Spa were very kind to her and used to visit her in the Nursing Home twice weekly for many years, and at the age of 107 she was persuaded to rejoin the Ecclesia, but to our certain knowledge she never changed her faith. She was interred at Leamington Cemetery after a short service at the Christadelphian Meeting Room and then at the graveside. Our Brother Stanley Jelphs was able to attend the service.

## **Brother Harvey Linggood**

On Christmas Eve Brother Harvey Linggood fell asleep. He had been poorly for some years with Sister Evelyn looking after him at home, eventually it became necessary for her to let him go into hospital where he died after only a few days. Sister Evelyn and their two sons were at his bedside when he fell asleep. He was aged 85.

Sister Evelyn met Brother Harvey at the Hitchin Christadelphian Ecclesia and were married within six months. After about a year they moved to Mount Sorrel but were eventually disfellowshipped in 1952 and were then baptized by Brother Gettliffe of the Nazarene Fellowship. During his working life Brother Harvey was in the Industrial Cleaning Business eventually going into partnership with his brother. Before retirement they sold the business but Brother Harvey stayed on as an employee.

Brother Phil and Sister Rene Parry relate:- "We first met Harvey and Evelyn with their two boys at a meeting of some of our members which was arranged at The New Inn, Westgate Street, Gloucester, by either Brother Brady or Brother Fred Pearce. There were present Ernest and Jessie Brady and Helen, also Fred Pearce, Ben Jones, Dan Jones, Joe Jones, Ruby Beardsmore, Tom Gettliffe and wife and children as far as I can remember. We had a meal and this was followed by members giving their experiences of how they grasped the Truth through the labours of Brother Pearce and Brother Brady. Brother Pearce was in tears when he saw some of the fruits of his and Brother Brady's labours present.

Some time after the Gloucester meeting they paid us a visit with some people, Hallam by name who had accepted our teaching and were formally Roman Catholic but they did not continue with Harvey and Evelyn for long as is the case with many who put their hand to the plough and look back.

Our most creditable memories of Brother Harvey were his typing of the correspondence sent to them for inclusion in the Circular Letter after Brother Brady had to give it up for a while. Both Brother Harvey and Sister Evelyn put much work into it, besides what Brother Eric Moore did between times. It got a bit too much for Harvey's failing health and sight. We are confident that Brother Harvey's work will receive a just recompense of reward at our Lord's return."

We are very grateful for their work for the Truth and whilst Harvey did all the typing it was Evelyn who did most of the writing. However Harvey did write a few articles and we have reproduced one of them elsewhere in this Circular Letter.

## **Brother Jeff Hadley**

We also have news of Brother Jeff Hadley who fell asleep on 2nd. January 1999. He was 78. He had been enduring heart trouble for several years and had been hoping for a heart by-pass operation but became too ill for it. He leaves a wife, Joan, two children, four grand-children and one great grandchild.

From time to time he submitted articles for publication in the Circular Letter and we have more to come which show his understanding and appreciation of our Lord's Sacrifice. Jeff was the Grandson of J.J. Hadley known to Christadelphians for his two books in one of which he wrote of Jesus Christ, "As regards His moral relation to the Father, He was under no curse whatever. He was not in the position of guilty man, who is outside Eden... His relation to the Father was not that of one alienated from Him as was Adam and all

his descendants.” This shows an understanding of Scripture contrary to Christadelphian teaching. Like most of us who were Christadelphians, Jeff heard from their platform over a period of 70 years, the occasional truth in clear scriptural language and we were aware of it not being what Christadelphians usually meant - polished gems of truth which greatly helped us to appreciate the love of God revealed in the Sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

One small anecdote Brother Ray Gregory has given me for inclusion:- “Dear Russell, when you were disfellowshipped by the Erdington Ecclesia and subsequently took over the editorship of the Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter Jeff announced, after a Sunday morning meeting at Erdington to all within hearing that “Russell’s dismissal from Erdington was Providential. He now has a broader vocation.”

Humbly, I cannot but agree ,

Brother Russell Gregory.

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## Letter from Brother Leo Dreifuss

Dear Russell, Loving Greetings in the Redeemer’s Name. It is on a sad occasion that I have to write this letter, just after the death of our beloved brother Harvey. Although Christmas is not a biblical holiday, we all take it easy. It is a sort of family festival and a get-together, and memories are coming back. It must be a sad day for Evelyn. Tragedies and misfortunes seem to hit one worse during this season.

It just shows how unwise it is to make plans. One of our care staff experienced this. Just two days before Christmas they woke up to find their house ransacked, all Christmas presents, cash and car stolen. And the man needs the car for his work. They must have been professional thieves. The couple did not hear a sound. They have two dogs, and neither of them barked. Although they are not in the faith I cannot help but feel very sorry for them. She is a born carer, like a mother to us when on duty, and they are a lovely, most friendly couple... I feel moved to tears when I think about it. How wise the advice in James 4:13-15, “Go to now, ye that say, Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow.” But we are blessed with this great hope of a future in the Kingdom. Let us hold fast. But nevertheless it is hard to find what to say to people at such times.

And now to Bible Essay No. 4. We are certainly not short of views. Now the whole problem started with somebody, I’m not sure who, voicing the opinion that some of its contents were not in accordance with Nazarene Fellowship teaching. But we have no Statement of Faith, and as has emerged, there is no concord about the numbers of birth, so one cannot be out of step with Nazarene Fellowship teaching... But the more I think about it, and I gave it quite a lot of thought, the more I come to the conclusion that this is going to degenerate into an unprofitable play on words. For example, the resurrection: does it matter whether we call it a new birth or a regeneration? The important point surely is that we rise from the dead, if worthy. On baptism, the essentials are, 1. Learning of our position in Adam and becoming responsible. 2. Being immersed, the scriptural mode of baptism.

Whether to call it one or two births is immaterial. I feel inclined to leave the essay just as it is and let the reader number the births as he will. Bear in mind that these essays are primarily intended for people who are not ex-Christadelphian. I am sure that anyone reading these essays and just beginning to learn about the Word of God (for these are the people for whom these essays are largely intended) never bothers about the exact number of births, and/or their nomenclature. Nor should he, but should concentrate on the steps from natural birth to resurrection, if worthy. Here they are, and I would not put any number to them, so as to avoid distraction from the essentials.

Natural birth. Being taught by somebody and/or some literature that happened to come to hand and guided by the Holy Spirit of his position in Adam and the need to change to being in Christ if he wishes to obey God. Realization of his responsibility. Obedience by submitting to scriptural baptism. Living a new life, now serving Christ as his Master and pleasing God to the best of his ability. Death. If worthy, resurrection to eternal life.

These are the phases of natural and spiritual life, never mind how we number or name them.

A comparison: The life (or lives?) of a butterfly. Birth. Life as a caterpillar. Then a deep sleep (in biological terms, metamorphosis). Life as a butterfly. Death. Now when the larva emerges as a butterfly, is this a second birth, or a change or a regeneration, or what? Play on words. What matters is that the caterpillar has become a butterfly. Or another example: Most of us who drive a car will at some time have bought a reconditioned car, for example my own present car. Now the garage I bought it from made a superb job of it. It is hardly distinguishable from a new one. Was this a new birth of the car, or a reconditioning of the old? The point of importance: an old car has become a nearly new car.

So you see how trivial such arguing about words can become. So my conclusion is - leave the essay as it is and let the reader concentrate on the essentials as outlined above in the unencumbered steps.

We conclude with our united Best Wishes for a Happy New Year.

Love from Ruth and myself, Leo.

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### **“BORN AGAIN” - Further comment on Bible Essay No 4.**

In our comments in a previous issue of our C/Letter it is possible we have missed an important point on this subject, yet we have been teaching its importance for years in our literature in contending for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, in opposition to that error contended for in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith.

Consider the words of Jesus again to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” Nicodemus, a puzzled questioner, brought forth a further statement from Jesus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:3-7).

Did Jesus apply any of this to Himself? Definitely not, and the reason and answer is stated by the Apostle John as a result of what had taken place through his own teaching and that of his fellow Apostles and is recorded in John 1:12,13, concerning those who did not receive Jesus as the Messiah and promised seed of the woman (the Son of God - the new man replacing Adam), and those who did receive Him.

Those who did receive Him were not sons of God at the time, but Jesus was; He did not need to be born again as they did, so as John says, “To them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name (Yahshua) (which means “Saviour” and all which is involved in that mission), that is, to be “Born Again” not of blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Was Jesus born of the will of man? No, He was not. Therefore, not born of the will of the flesh. Was He born of blood? This calls for an explanation.

All descendants of Adam were in his loins when he was created, not after he sinned. The reproductive life in the blood could only be through the reproductive system of fertilization through the male line as appointed by the Creator, therefore Jesus was not in the loins of Adam. Any who contend that He was must accept that Joseph was His father. This is to deny that Jesus is the Son of God, and is Anti-Christ.

It is not Anti-Christ to believe that Jesus came in the flesh, but to believe He was born of the will of the flesh (of blood) through Adamic fertilization, and also that condemnation transmitted in this way is indeed Anti-Christ. The condemnation of Adam’s sin was legal and was passed upon all as a legal sentence when all were in the loins of Adam and their right to life was lost by his transgression, for if Adam had been put to death judicially as the law required all in his loins would have perished; hence the necessity for the new man in the same position Adam was in before his transgression - flesh and blood nature, very good and without sin. This was the position Adam lost by transgression of law, and under which God has concluded all who

were in his loins, not because of their personal sins but the sin by one man their federal head whereby, in His foreknowledge and wisdom God could ordain that by the unforfeited life of One Man - the New Adam, many could be made or constituted righteous. (Romans 5:17 & Galatians 3:22).

Suffice it to say then that Jesus was of the same nature Adam was in when created and both held the position of Son of God, one by creation and the other by begetting from the same substance, dust and ashes, the former losing his status by transgression, but owing his continuance of natural life through the righteousness and sacrificial death of the latter, the New Man, who condemned sin in the very nature which Adam was in when created (sinless and very good in character and flesh). God's Son, God's flesh. God's possession. By transgression Adam's flesh became Sin's flesh, his life being under the claim of the law he transgressed and that claim being also upon those in his loins. Hence it is styled "The Law of Sin and Death" and has nothing to do with the physical law of natural death under which all creation is subject.

As long as we remain under the Law of Sin and Death we remain in Adamic bondage - slaves, or servants of Sin as a Master, and the way of release is by symbolic death; "For he that is dead is freed from Sin." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Obviously in this latter description Jesus could not have meant incorruptible or Angelic nature, for He himself was born of the Spirit yet corruptible - just as Adam was caused to exist by the operation of the Power of The highest and was corruptible.

Had Adam remained obedient he had no need to be re-created, a change to spirit-nature was all that was required for everlasting life. In like manner Jesus having maintained His status as Son of God and obedient in all things, needed only a change of nature, not a re-birth of the same Spirit. One thing only was firstly in His mind and that was the mission for which He had been born of the Spirit - to willingly lay down His life in the blood as the Ransom or Redemptive price of Adam's Redemption and all in his loins who by enlightenment and faith accepted God's gracious Gift.

Jesus did not say "Except a man be born again and again," He addressed a man already born once, that except a man be born again he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Thus "born again" is clarified as a present status and description declared of Jesus in John 3:5-8 and can only mean a Second Birth to become sons of God which Jesus already was when He spoke to Nicodemus.

The Apostle John said to the true believers begotten by the Spirit Word and baptized into His sacrificial death, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him and we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2). This also was King David's belief and faith in the resurrection of the just (Psalm 17:15)), at the appearing of Him who is the resurrection and the life.

In effect "Born Again" is a second birth, not of the will of the flesh, but, of the will of God- And this commences growth in the Spirit, nurtured by the Bread of Life, the Word of God; growing in Grace and unto the fullness and stature of the man Christ Jesus.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Corinthians 5:17). For those who believe in natural death as sin's penalty, old things have not passed away and nothing has become new. Ye are yet in your sins.

Brother Phil Parry

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## **YE ARE MY WITNESSES SAITH THE LORD**

These thoughts are the result of an article entitled "The Miracle of Israel" which appeared in the Judah Magazine published by the Mount Zion Reporter during 1988. The author of the article is a Jew who accepts Jesus Christ as his Messiah and belongs to a congregation in Israel who are broadly termed Christian Jews by most but are not accepted by the Orthodox or Reformed Rabbi.

The article commences: "The cause of the rise and fall of nations is the subject for historians to analyse and explain." One feels this is not the case if we accept the Scriptures, for in Deuteronomy 31:8 we are given to understand that God divided the nations their inheritance, and in Daniel 4:17 we are told the Most High giveth them to whomsoever He wills.

Now let us look to modern Israel and their relation to being witnesses to God. Many and varied are the views held regarding the return of the Jews to the land of their forefathers, in the past known as Palestine. The 7th Day Adventists, from talks with one of their ministers, feel the Jews have no future in the land; they had their opportunity when Christ first came to earth but they rejected their Messiah leaving them with no future prospects.

Look again at Deuteronomy, this time at the well known chapter 28. Here we have the blessings and curses in great detail. It was because of Israel's failure to keep God's laws and statutes that they were cast out of the land and dispersed among the nations where they have remained for so many centuries without finding any permanent resting place. How often have we heard the phrase "The wandering Jew"? Here we again have the witness brought before us in verse 65, "among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest..." This causes us to see why Israel is so determined to keep Israel today as their own country.

No doubt God has allowed their present regathering, but this is not the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham for we know today they are only there for their own material ends; they are there by their might and not in the least have they returned for the glory of God.

A witness must be a living and active person who has had knowledge or experience of the matter being considered, or has taken part in it. At any enquiry or court hearing there has to be brought forward evidence. This can be of various types, such as circumstantial, an exhibit, or a witness. In this latter a witness has to be alive, which gives us reason why the Jew as known today survives despite all attempts to reduce them in numbers, or even annihilate them. If we go to the early chapters of Exodus we find Pharaoh was very worried, saying, "The children of Israel are now mightier than we," Yet the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied. Coming to more recent days, during the 1920's and 30's in this country Oswald Mosley was on the scene with his followers known as the Black Shirts. They were very anti-Semitic as, still more recently was Hitler, who would like to have seen the Jews annihilated; and today, across the Atlantic, we have the Ku-Klux-Klan. Until recent weeks it was the constant cry of the leaders of the P.L.O. to drive modern Israel out of the land and into the sea and take back the city of Jerusalem from Israel. The P.L.O. leaders would on no account recognize the State of Israel. But suddenly there has been a change; we are speaking of Yassar Arafat who is now prepared to allow recognition. Why, we may ask. They are still God's witnesses, not only are we told that Israel of old, or the Jews, are God's witnesses, but in Zechariah we are informed "he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye. For behold I will shake mine hand upon them and they shall be a spoil to their servants..."

Modern Israeli leaders remind us very much of the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. We hear them speak as though they had a right to much of the land now under their occupation because in the Old Testament times most of the land was then part of Judah and Israel, even until the Roman occupation. When the Jews came to John to be baptized he said to the Scribes and Pharisees, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within yourselves We have Abraham to our fathers; for I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matthew 3:8). The same claim could be made of the Palestinians and maybe some other Arab nations of today, for were not both Ishmael and Isaac in Abraham's loins?

Genesis 25:23, "...two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger... the elder shall serve the younger." Here we have the ancestors of Jew and Arab.

Romans 9:7 & 8, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Many individuals come to mind who witnessed for God. Of the twelve Apostles, all were Jews. Only one is mentioned with anything to indicate anything different; Simon the Canaanite, who in all probability may have been a proselyte.

Now just a few thoughts concerning one, perhaps the greatest, witness in the New Testament for God - The Apostle Paul: Acts 22:3 & 4, "I am verily a man which am a Jew... brought up... at the feet of Gamaliel... according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers and was zealous toward God as ye all are this day."

It was while exercising this zeal that on the way to Damascus, Saul was halted by none other than Jesus Christ, and the record in Acts gives us the details of his appointment as a special witness. He was told to make contact with Ananias, who in turn was told by the Lord, "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel.

Paul faithfully witnessed as we see from 2 Corinthians 11:22-27 and as recorded in 2 Timothy 4:7 & 8. He had fought a good fight, or faithfully witnessed, and henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness; and not for him only.

Galatians 3:27-29, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ... and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Let us in our day witness to God and His Son, Christ Jesus, according to our gifts. (1 Corinthians 12).

Brother Harvey Linggood

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## **THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM**

**or**

### **The "Good News" in the Old Testament**

Psalm 23 is undoubtedly the best known; it has been used throughout Christendom in many of its services of celebration, funerals, weddings, feast-days, coronations, confirmations, and baptisms. For nearly three thousand years it has been enjoyed by people for its prose and poetry, that raises the aspirations of the heart. It brings before us hope, peace, consolation and a yearning for better things to come and its universal appeal brings to many the opportunity of seeing the blessings God is offering to those who see Him as their Shepherd.

There is nothing in this Psalm to indicate for what occasion it may have been written. There is no historical reference; no suggestion of a time or circumstance in the life of David and such hope as it expresses could be made by a pious heart in any circumstance.

The Psalm in six verses contains at least ten symbols or pictures; first shepherd, green pastures; still waters; paths of righteousness; a shadowy valley; rod and staff; a laden table; a cup; an anointed head; and a house. And one commentator says that it reveals seven aspects of God, or as he put it, seven names of Jehovah. These show God as a Provider, Protector, Guide, Saviour and a Rewarder of the faithful. Some commentators suggest it was written in David's later years looking back and seeing the care God had shown him during his very varied life. The overriding theme of this Psalm is God's watchful care and provision. The phrase "I shall not want" embraces all that follows; the Shepherd providing for all his needs, both materially and spiritually. David wrote in Psalm 34, "O fear the Lord, ye his saints, for there is no want to them that fear him- And they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Through the Gospel message we are enabled to take this Psalm to ourselves, for we have God's Son for our Shepherd, and in His prayer, in John 17, Jesus said, "I pray for them which thou hast given me for they are thine. All mine are thine, and thine are mine." So now that all things are in Him and through Him we have become His sheep for He redeemed us; we belong to Him because He bought us - He purchased us with His blood. Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd," "for the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep."

And He promised, "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Again, "Ask and it shall be given you, for everyone that asketh receiveth." Then if "the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

With the promise that all our temporal needs will be met, Jesus turns our attention to our greater need, when He said, "Seek not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, neither be of doubtful mind. Your heavenly Father knoweth ye have need of these things, but rather seek ye the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." This is promised to those who feed upon the Word; this is the pasture in which He makes us to lie down - in green pastures of tender grass. The sheep don't only feed here, they rest and are refreshed here; they are at peace and they enjoy the recreation of meditation in repose. Their food is pleasant, sweet and satisfying.

In many of his Psalms David refers to his pleasure of meditating upon the Word of God. In Psalm 104 he writes, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet. And I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways, I will delight myself in thy statutes I will meditate on all thy works. I will muse on the works of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee." 119 Psalm, "The godly delight in the law of God and in his Lord doth he meditate day and night, and he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters." These passages only hint at the wealth of food provided for the sheep; the Word of God has pleasures beyond our imagination, and far beyond our expectations.

The importance and necessity of the knowledge of the Word was given to Moses and quoted by Jesus in His hour of temptation, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Jesus of course had other needs which were unique to Him. He said, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." God's work began in Eden and Jesus finished this work when God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and He said "It is finished." This was God's work and now that He (Jesus) had become the Shepherd He could continue to lead the faithful. We read, "He leadeth me beside still waters," and water, as we all know is essential to all natural life. But it is also used to express the dependence we have on God's provision on things of the Spirit. Sometimes referred to as "living waters" or "waters of life." Only available from God through Jesus. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "If thou newest the gift of God and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest ask of him, and he would have given thee living waters. Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The other water in Scripture is the water of baptism referred to in verse 3, "He restoreth my soul," literally he causes my life to return. This may suggest a revival or renewal after being downcast by cares and troubles but surely in the context of this Psalm it refers to the true renewal of life, of being born again unto newness of life. It was in the waters of baptism, where the paths of righteousness began.

We read, "For he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his names sake." That is the right paths, the right ways. The paths that lead to God Himself. He doesn't suffer us to wander into the path which leads to shame; He leads by the way of righteousness, in the way of life. These paths are opportunities to show whose we are and whom we serve. This promise of opportunities is made for His Name's sake, that His name may be honoured by all that we do. It is for the sake of Him who died for us, that His work should not be in vain, and ultimately that the whole earth may be filled with God's glory. He leads the willing; in Psalm 25:9, "the meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his ways. All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant, and his testimonies." Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

In John chapter 10 we read how Jesus saw His sheep, "When he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him for they know his voice," and later, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish. My Father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." These

promises of guidance follow the restoring of life, follow, baptism; it is now for the sheep to listen to the voice, or words of Jesus and to follow where He leads, even to the free gift of righteousness.

Verse 4 of Psalm 23, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” The thought follows on from the previous verse that the paths may prove dark and gloomy, in fact may be dismal or threatening, but have no fear, for God is with him and will guide him through. But if applicable to death itself this for His sheep it is only the shadow of death, not the substance. Jesus showed His disciples what death was when He allowed Lazarus to die; He also allowed His disciples to misunderstand His words, when He said “Lazarus sleepeth.” They thought he was getting well and there was no need to concern themselves, but Jesus had to tell them plainly, “Lazarus is dead.”

Jesus took this opportunity to show them His and His Father’s view of the death of those to be raised. They slept, they did not die. In the sight of God they were remembered for resurrection, they are the faithful. In Malachi we read, “They that feared the Lord spake oft one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” On many occasions Jesus said plainly that those who believed on Him should never die and He also said they should not taste death. In Jesus our life may only be interrupted by sleep in Him. Paul tells us that some will not even sleep; they will be changed in the twinkling of an eye at Christ’s return.

Some of the sayings of Jesus prove difficult for some to accept at their face value, for instance, “Verily, verily I say unto you, if a man keep my sayings he shall never see death.” And because He said this the Jews said, “Now we know thou hast a devil.” This may be a heard saying for some. On another occasion some of His disciples left Him because of hard sayings. In John chapter 6 we read, “The Jews strove among themselves saying How can this man give us His flesh to eat.” and many of His disciples murmured at it. “And from that time many of his disciples went back and left him and walked no more with him.” These hard sayings of Jesus troubled many that heard Him and they lost patience because they were not seeking or looking for the Truth, otherwise they would have waited for Jesus to enlighten them in due time, as did the faithful twelve, though they did not understand were nevertheless eager to stay with Him to hear more, and when Jesus asked them if they would leave Him, Peter replied, “Lord to whom shall we go. Thou hast the words of eternal life.” Though they didn’t know or understand how Jesus was to accomplish this, they knew from the Scriptures that all that God had promised would be revealed by His Son.

If any of the sayings of Jesus are hard to reconcile with some of our understanding of other Scripture we must be patient. We must not be tempted to avoid His plain statements nor qualify them to the detriment of their meaning. We must wait patiently for deeper Truth to appear as we grow in understanding and appreciation. As Peter tells us, we must “grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” We must be patient and wait for deeper truths to appear as we grow in knowledge, faith and understanding. We must not only hope to grow in grace and understanding, we must seek it diligently, not to reconcile different aspects of truth by qualifying them, saying, yes it is true because it was said by Jesus and then to remove the plain statement with a complicated explanation of what we think He meant. We have, all through the years, heard attempts to explain apparent difficult statements by those who feel it necessary to bring forward an explanation at any cost, often removing most of the obvious plain truth in an effort to make their understanding appear complete and comprehensive, and we are left with little of value. Dr Thomas wrote, “Must a man never progress. If he discover an error in his premises must he for ever hold to it for the sake of consistency? May never such a calamity ever befall me. Rather let me change every day till I get it right, at last.” It can be noted his last writings revealed different premises from his earlier works.

The object of our pursuit of truth is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He sent. The growth and development of our knowledge and understanding is essential to our appreciation, and our appreciation is the basis of our ability to find in ourselves a capacity to love God. This, the first commandment, can only be attempted if it is our principle aim and ambition. So let the words of Jesus stand true whether we understand them or not. In this way we may keep the door open to deeper understanding, deeper faith, a deeper love for God and Jesus Christ our Saviour, and a deeper love for our brethren. They are the only people we can share with in these matters, the only ones who can help us, and the only ones we can help in our walk before God.

The end of verse 4 reads. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me" and some see correction and chastisement in these symbols and we know that the Lord chasteneth every son whom he receiveth. Let us read a few verse from Hebrew 12,5-14, "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children. My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom, he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? and if ye be without chastening whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which have corrected us and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of Spirits and live? for they verily for a few days chastened us after there own pleasure, but He for our profit that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be good but grievous but nevertheless, afterwards it bringeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord."

Some commentators see the rod as a defence against attacks on the sheep. David when defending his sheep slew wild animals among which we are told was a bear and a lion, but the staff would serve an entirely different purpose. Its principle use was in preventing the sheep from going their own way, particularly when being brought to the door of the sheepfold for their own protection for the night. There is a story that the shepherds of Israel, in the heat of the day, would rest in the shade of a rock or tree, but leave their cloak draped over their staff which had been stuck in the ground so that the sheep would see it there and keep it in sight as they grazed or rested - the shepherd leaving his garment as a witness to his presence, thou he was unseen. Our Shepherd has left us a witness to His presence in the bread which we partake of in memory of Him. The bread which represents His body which He gave us for a covering that our sin might be hid or covered in the sight of God, and part of the price He paid to release us from sin, paid by Him who knew no sin. Jesus said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you." "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me."

Jesus comforted His disciples on several occasions- "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me" and "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Just before His crucifixion, when He knew He would do what He had resolved to do, He said, "These things I have spoken unto you that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer (sometimes rendered, of good comfort), I have overcome the world." By overcoming the world, He had through over three years kept His resolve to fulfil His role as the Lamb of God that at the end of these years of trial and suffering He knew that He had but a short time to go before He would accomplish all that God had asked of Him, and that He would remain steadfast to the end. This is what He was promising them, but at that time they didn't understand all that He had to do, but He told all He could, to comfort them because He knew they would be in great distress when He went to the Cross, to Calvary.

Verse 5 - "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." All the good things that God has provided do not diminish because of adversity.

However besieged we may be by circumstances or the actions of others not seeking our good or perhaps seeking our ill, God's provision is more likely to increase. In deed, adversity itself may help us to be directed back to God and seek His ever present help. Jesus said. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven." Seeing God's provision and bounty makes light of adversity, his enemies fade into the background as he count blessing in times of trouble.

The latter part of the verse - "Thou anointest mine head with oil and my cup runneth over," - these two phrases show the extravagance, if we can use such a word, of God's blessings. The pouring of oil over his head unto fatness, as it says in the margin, the over- filling of his cup shows God's abundant favour or grace, blessings, prosperity and joy. A stage further from the previous verse - now to an ecstasy of joy and if understood from a spiritual point of view, David could see all that his greater Son would do, and all that it

would mean to him. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." (Psalm 17:15).

Peter wrote of Jesus, "Jesus, whom having not seen, ye love; in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, full of glory, receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." David wrote, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." In Psalm 16 he also wrote. "In thy presence is fullness of joy. In thy right hand are pleasures for ever more."

The last sentence of Psalm 23, "And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." In several Psalms he wrote of the house of the Lord - in Psalm 65 he wrote, "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causeth to approach unto thee that he may dwell in thy courts, and blessed are they that dwell in thy house. They will be still, praising thee." Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." This ultimate expectation of David includes this picture of the blessings of God to be given to the faithful.

This Psalm is for the sheep. It is their statement of faith. It does not begin with a proposition or a qualifying statement. It states plainly, The Lord is my Shepherd. Only the sheep therefore can make it their own. And of course only the Shepherd can provide all its blessings, and only the man born to be King could become, by the Grace and provision of God, the Shepherd of the sheep. When Jesus was born He was born heir to all things. Born to be King. When He was baptized by John, God anointed Him to be the Lamb to take away the sin of the world, and just over three years later, years of preparation, He laid down His life for His sheep and became the Great Shepherd of the sheep. Now having all power to put into effect all the promises of God.

Among many of His parables showing the work He had to do for His Father, are two which show the principles of Redemption. Matthew chapter 13, we read, "The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hid in a field the which when a man findeth he hideth and for Joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field." The field is the world. The treasure is those that fear God. The man is Jesus Christ and His going away is to the grave where He gave all that He had - the price He paid was His life. In the next verse Jesus is the Merchant who discovered a pearl of great price, and he again went away to sell all that he had to buy it, clearly giving of His wealth, His life, to make the purchase of His hearts desire, for we read, "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

Looking back over this Psalm we see no mention of judgment or condemnation. The wicked and evil doers are not in this picture at all, and there is a very good reason for it. These sheep with their Shepherd are the redeemed therefore there is now no condemnation for they are in Him. Jesus said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my words, (my sheep hear my voice), and he that believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation." The Greek word is judgment. It is used condemnation several times and Judgment over forty times - the same word in the Greek. Shall not come into judgment or condemnation, but is passed from death into life. This unspeakable gift is the Love of God in giving us the free gift of righteousness brought to us by the blood and sacrifice of Jesus our Redeemer, who has redeemed us from all unrighteousness.

Many Scriptures like the 23rd Psalm should draw us irresistibly towards God's care and provision. For we need a large share of hope and faith and a knowledge of His Word and an appreciation of His Love to find in ourselves the wonder and love so essential to our walk before Him. Only by understanding the true nature of His love can we offer perfect praise. In a Christadelphian writing some years ago a brother wrote "Redemption is a 50 50 affair." Not so! If Jesus gave His life for the sheep and all that that entails, what would be our share? on a 50 50 basis? For all we have belongs to God and our lives are already forfeit, what is left for us to offer? What can we give? A loving and contrite heart, bent on serving Him and bringing before Him our gratitude and our sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. Luke 17:10, "When ye shall have done all those which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

A thought from the letter to the Colossians, Paul wrote, “to fulfil the word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God will make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

We will conclude with a few verse from Hebrews 13, “ Now the God of peace that brought again, from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, that through Jesus Christ to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Brother Ray Gregory.

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## **Letter from Brother Phil Parry:**

Our literature has been circulating for well over a hundred years as well as that of those people not associated with us directly, such as for example, Pelagius who was silenced for the wrong reasons. It is remarkable then that C.E.Cave states that he had never read any Nazarene literature nor met or corresponded with any member of that body and yet after being a member of the Christadelphians for sixty years he has found they, and himself, to be in error on certain Clauses of the B.A.S.F. but I suspect there had been suppression in his case, of our literature, but those Christadelphians who possessed it kept it so until he became a marked man. He then received from them and through the C.L. you, Russell, had sent out confirmation of the contradiction and errors in the Christadelphian teaching and the B.A.S.F.

What is the answer to this? I can only say as in my own case, some Divine prompting of the mind was at work to commence the logical reasoning from the inspired Word of God to find the Truth, if that was the true motive, despite the consequences. If the latter be not the case with Mr Cave it will come to nought in his case, nevertheless it can only make others think and consider, as should also our replies to Michael Ashton.

I am led to believe that Ray and Eileen are under pressure for their beliefs, which is understandable and is a witness to the policy of the B.A.S.F. addicts that they will not admit to error and seek fellowship of those who have been cast out for their belief and faith in the true Christ of God who gave Himself as a substitute for Adam and all in him on the federal principle of reconciliation by one man; and operative by faith in Him and His shed blood wherein was the life by which God purchased us to Himself.

Many, like Mr Cave have thought they could do better by staying in the community and bring about mass conversion and by so doing bring about the survival of the name and title Christadelphian, but this would only be a survival of the erroneous doctrines involved in that name and not the relationship it claims, “Brethren in Christ.”

Admitted, under Dr Thomas there was room for diversification of opinion based on the Holy Word, for even he himself was in error unawares at times when he expounded his views in writing but no one appeared to want to correct him until Edward Turney came on the scene as a result of others stating certain things. The tide had then turned in favour of Truth against Error, not to engender strife but unity of doctrine which did not exist.

We are aware that Robert Roberts would not entertain correction in the cause of Truth but made things worse by binding his members to a documentation of his own views of contradiction and error. So as our late Brother Brady once wrote, “If they had listened more to Edward Turney’s views and built upon them continually, the Christadelphian Body could have been a great power for good and social happiness with all of like faith but it allowed itself to be led astray, and the doctrine has eaten into it as a canker and is no longer of any consequence as a community of religious faith and witness for Jesus Christ.”

All that is left is for one here and one there to rise from its earthy darkness by the power of the Spirit of God and His Light. We now await results. Meantime may the Lord Bless us in our efforts for this purpose and not for our own personal glory.

Glory and Praise be unto our God and His Son for His Great Love wherewith He loved us.

Our Kind Regards to all, Phil and Rene Parry.

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## **The following Three Letters were written to Brother Eric Cave in response to his article entitled “The Divine Plan - A Reappraisal of Some Christadelphian Traditions:”**

### **1st Letter:-**

Dear Eric Cave, I am writing to thank you very much for sending me your piece entitled “The Divine Plan: A Reappraisal Of Some Christadelphian Traditions.” I read it with great interest and pleasure, for it is always pleasurable to know there is someone else whose eyes have been opened to the truth about human nature and the fact that there is no such thing as “sin-in-the-flesh” or “original sin.” It is a great step forward for anyone and changes one’s entire outlook completely. To realize that Adam’s sin made no difference to the quality of his flesh and that he and Jesus and indeed the rest of us are all Just the same as on the day of creation for as Edward Turney put it, “The constitution of man is precisely the same now as then (at creation) he has no desires now which he had not then, that is to say he has not lost any of his old or first faculties, neither has he acquired any new ones.” This is a truth that makes you free.

Last week a friend passed to me the editorial by Michael Ashton in the October 1998 Christadelphian Magazine. In it he is stating how important it is that the Statement of Faith should be adhered to in all its particulars. It occurred to me that perhaps the circulation of your piece has brought forth this reiteration of Christadelphian first principles. Most of Christendom believes in the doctrine of “the fall” and its physical implications. But I think Christadelphians are unique, and to their shame, in believing that Jesus too was defiled in the same way. I prefer the churches way out of the dilemma in clinging to original sin as a concept. They make the Saviour divine and part of God. It is wrong of course but at least it does not cast wicked aspersions on a man who was holy, harmless and undefiled. I prefer to go to a church if I feel the need rather than set foot in a Christadelphian meeting place.

This is where I must correct a false statement in your piece under the heading Nazarene Fellowship. We are certainly not a minority Christadelphian fellowship. Some of our members have been Christadelphians. I never have been although I went to a Christadelphian Sunday School when I was young.

The Christadelphians do not teach or know the truth about the nature of man or Jesus Christ nor do they understand the Atonement. These matters are to my mind first principles and without a true understanding of them and with a blind acceptance of “sin-in-the-flesh” Christadelphians are as far from the true Gospel as the Roman Catholics and the Church of England. In fact they are in a worse case because they profess to be Bible students yet refuse to be taught or to learn. Christadelphians believe in the Second Coming and preach it very well, but so do many other denominations, but they are alone in believing in a defiled Saviour. We are regarded by Christadelphians as heretics and outcasts most certainly not one of their minority groups!

I shall be surprised if you do not suffer for what you have written and circulated. Anyone who questions the Christadelphian status quo is eventually ostracized and pushed out. I saw it happen to my parents and others. It is no different today for I have friends suffering at the moment for the same beliefs.

With Kind Regards and Good Wishes, Helen Brady. 16th November 1998.

## Second Letter :-

Dear Eric, Greetings in The Name of Jesus. I have read with great interest your Re-Appraisal of Christadelphian Tradition and I am surprised that you have never read any Nazarene literature in all the 60 years of your association with the Christadelphians, yet I find in your quoting from "The Ambassador" of 1869 the words of Robert Roberts regarding the belief in changed nature as a result of sin that you have either read that magazine or the information has come to you from a source or person who has read the Nazarene Booklet entitled "To The Law and To The Testimony" where the words of R. Roberts are quoted in reference to a D. Handley who was seeking Baptism but believing that Adam's nature was changed after he sinned. On account of this error he was corrected by both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts and rightly so, and was refused Baptism, but today the opposite is the case.

If you have received and read the Nazarene Circular Letter for Nov/Dec 1998 you will have read my reply and that of Brother R. Gregory to Michael Ashton as a result of his words in the October Christadelphian Magazine, so I need not take up space by repetition of what our replies contained and which have been in circulation from 1873 when Edward Turney was faced with similar opposition from R. Roberts and yet he (Turney) had not then come to the conclusion that natural death was not the penalty for Adam's sin but Judicial Death in the day of eating as was signified by the shedding of blood to provide a covering for the time then present until the true substance and anti-type came on the scene to take away the Sin of the world, that is, the Federal sin of Adam under which all in his loins were concluded but not personally responsible. That responsibility would come individually through being enlightened, then must follow the way out of the legal position by belief and faith in the Lamb of God, the substitute for Adam and all who accept Him.

I will not go into any further doctrinal matters at this stage all I want to say is that your position as a Christadelphian after 60 years is very similar to that of mine after about 17 years in that community. I had never received what was termed "Clean Flesh" literature and all I knew about it was through people saying they were outcasts who believed Jesus had a superior nature to us and therefore did not come in the same flesh - quoting John's Epistle.

I did not give it another thought but accepted such people were "quacks" like so many more sects and that my informants knew what they were taking about. How wrong that turned out to be!

There was one member of our Ellwood Ecclesia who accepted all that Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts wrote in their various books, especially on the supposed condemnation of the flesh and consequently the nature of Christ being unclean. But when I got to the stage of disputing with him in Bible Class and other times of conversation he became more persistent in upholding the views of Thomas and Roberts on unclean flesh and "sin-in-the-flesh", he would not accept the words of the Angel Gabriel I put to him "That holy thing," he continually quoted Job's three friends which he should have considered more, seeing he had the Nazarene literature at hand on the subject which I had not; it was suppressed, only those named in the A.L.S. Diary on the lecturing list received literature and they kept it from their rank and file members.

The aged and respected Recording Brother at that time had already advised me not to accept all as Truth in the books of Thomas, Roberts, and others of their denomination but to read and rightly divide the Word of Truth. This advice I followed and from what I was saying at Bible Class and other times, I was becoming unpopular. It struck me almost like a bolt from the blue, - how could sin be transgression of law and at the same time be an element in the flesh as described by Christadelphian writers, - I thought to myself can it be like an hypodermic needle injecting sin into the flesh? How foolish when sin is either transgression of Divine Law or it is personified as a Slave Master by Paul in Romans-

My views were becoming known to some and I was warned from one source that if I persisted, I was in danger of disfellowship; my reply to this was that I cared nothing for that if I was right and that it was Truth. I had no one to look to for support, my wife had been a Christadelphian for 18 years and was a bit upset by the prospect of my being disfellowshipped, five of our family being members of Ellwood Ecclesia excluding relatives through marriage.

However, it happened one day I was handed the booklet "The Sacrifice of Christ" by E. Turney, this was through the Recording Brother knowing my views, the book being only a loan but I read it and was amazed and thrilled to realize these were the views I had come to without reading any literature and not knowing of the history of Turney and Roberts in 1873 or of members of the so-called "Clean Flesh" heresy. There was a name and address in the booklet where to send for literature, F.J.Pearce of Newbridge. South Wales, he had resigned from his Ecclesia due to his opposing views of the B.A.S.F. After returning the booklet and telling the Recording Brother that they were the very views I had been stating, I wrote to Mr Pearce and consequently we met him at his home in Newbridge. In consequence of this we got in touch also with Ernest Brady and after our resignation were re-baptized by Brother Fred Pearce and another Brother in South Wales. To be brief, our association with the Nazarenes continued and our knowledge and understanding increased obviously, because it was of God and the working of His Spirit

I have not told you all that happened as a result of my wife seeing the truth in the same light and the mental suffering we endured in our stand for The Truth - losing friends that could not accept or understand our teaching or perhaps preferred the social company of the meetings rather than the isolation; they were afraid even to discuss these things with us, fearing the consequences. Even people who have joined them since regard us as enemies and will not respect our letters to them or our literature in the Spirit in which we send it - for their good.

You mention in your article the special issue of The Testimony Magazine of 1984 on the subject of the Atonement. This was answered by myself and by our late Brother Brady, but I doubt if our replies were printed in the Testimony seeing that our Sister Helen Brady wrote asking the editor, Tony Benson if he would produce her father's views on the Atonement in their magazine seeing his beliefs were being ridiculed by such writers as Richard Mellows and Reg Carr under the heading "The Clean Flesh Again!"

Our Brother Russell Gregory may have copies of our replies if you require them, but what we found so extremely nauseating was Tony Ben's reply to Helen, that he did not use the Testimony Magazine to print views that were opposed to those of the B.A.S.F. and that the national and local presses were available for that purpose without resorting to the use of theirs and that He had received literature from her father and did not believe, nor understand his views nor wanted to. So it seems to me that people are given licence to air their views in three magazines (at least) but they must not violate the B.A.S.F. The Editor gets the last word. I am reminded here of the words of Jesus in Luke 11:52, "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge; ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

You will find, as I have, by the Grace of God, that the key to the understanding of the Atonement is to understand the death as a result of God's creation from the dust Adam the first man, and the Death by Sin incurred by Adam are completely separate - the first is through physical decay, the second is by infliction - the shedding of blood- In conclusion I believe Adam had right to eat of the Tree of Life while sinless in the Garden of Eden but had no desire to eat of it, being content with life as it was, but by disobedience lost that right though having come under a second probation through his typical redemption from judicial death in the day of eating. He was provisionally covered for the period of life in his corruptible nature outside the Garden of Eden, but the way to the Tree of Life was through acceptance of the typical offerings brought to the east end of the Garden where acknowledgement of sin and its typical covering was approved by the Cherubim who kept the Way to the Tree of Life but did not open it until that Right had been accomplished through the sacrificial death of the anti-typical Lamb, Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29).

Much more could be said but I will not weary you with having to read my poor hand-writing through deteriorating sight and being over 80 years and diabetic though not as bad as some people who have to inject themselves.

In conclusion I hope what blessing of understanding you have received through the promptings of the Holy Spirit (I believe), that this will not be wasted and lie dormant, on account of other people's feelings and opposing views. It is your eternal welfare that counts and you alone can strive to make your calling and election (if this be the case) sure, through Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

Remember, if the Body and Blood of Christ prior to His death was unclean, then that was what His disciples ate of in symbol. And Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."

How is it possible to comprehend people of intelligence eating of the Bread and drinking of the wine in celebration of a condemned, unclean and blemished sacrifice for sin which under no circumstances would be pleasing to God?

My wife and I compliment you on your article in which there is some room for further comment, but we hope you will respond with a reply knowing we have been in the same position 47 years ago-

We are Yours in Sincerity, Phil and Rene Parry. 15th December 1998

P.S. Have you thought of Matthew 12 in the context of the Words of Gabriel, "That Holy Thing that shall be born of thee," was spoken by the power of God's Holy Spirit? Therefore to teach the opposite is not so much as demeaning the Saviour through ignorance, but knowing what was said of Him as the Holy Begotten Son of God and in effect denying it, is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This indeed is serious.

### **Third Letter:-**

Dear Brother Cave, Greetings in Jesus Great Name. I have at last read through your article "The Divine Plan" several times now and many thoughts come to mind but I will not go to any great length as Brother Phil Parry has sent me a copy of his letter to you and I see it is quite comprehensive.

I was most impressed with the Polish Brother, Andrzej Wiszowaty (1608-1678). His observation regarding the three ways in which people generally settle what constitutes true faith is so right. I greatly appreciate his summing up that "there remains ONLY the 3rd possibility, that the truth of the Bible can and should be determined by every man through sound reason with which God has endowed us." To this I know that God-fearing men and women would add the necessity of prayer. We are invited to "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord" and the subject on which we are invited to reason is the Atonement - "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18).

I don't see how it is possible for anyone to understand why Jesus Christ died by crucifixion unless they first understand why Adam did not die in the day of his transgression.

On page 7 you show from the writings of Dr. Thomas that Redemption is a release for a ransom. It is a purchase by which we are bought back to God, having been sold to sin. Dr. Thomas saw this as substitution in the same way as is any purchase - the exchange of something for the price paid. Indeed he wrote of Jesus Christ as being "the Substitutionary Mediator."

Also on page 7 you quote Dr. Thomas - "Adam was created neither mortal nor immortal" and you add in brackets, "a logical impossibility." However, I think you would agree that Adam when created was corruptible, but not corrupt, and neither was he incorruptible. In an attempt to clarify my explanation let us coin a new word - 'mortable.' I agree with Dr. Thomas, that Adam was not immortal, neither was he mortal, but he was 'mortable.' I feel sure this is what Dr. Thomas saw - that Adam became mortal when he transgressed God's Law. It will be seen that Dr. Thomas used it as a legal term. Adam had broken the law and the legal sentence was hanging over him; he was condemned; he was 'on death row;' he had been found guilty and - he had become mortal. Prior to this Adam was free from sin and was uncondemned - he was not mortal but he was, I believe, 'mortable,' i.e. he could be made mortal.

It is only in recent years that I have agreed with Dr. Thomas in using "mortal" as a legal term and, like yourself, I constantly find myself in admiration of his knowledge and understanding. But he was not inspired and he made mistakes as he himself admitted and it is for us to examine his arguments, but here I feel sure his reasoning was sound.

The first paragraph of your section on page 9, under the heading “Clean and Un-clean” is excellent. Here Dr. Thomas’s reasoning let him down and he contradicted his earlier understanding, for back in 1855 a certain Lancelot Burrus wrote to him reflecting the current thinking of the day that - “My notion is that all creation became corrupt at the fall, even to the elements; and that all created things below man, both animal and vegetable, partook of the nature of the curse; therefore became corrupt, and propagate.” To this Dr. Thomas, after developing his argument, replies, “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 consequent upon that calamity was moral, not physical. The natural system was the same the day before the Fall as the day after...” It is fairly lengthy correspondence and too long to quote in full so I am sending you our C.L. No. 166 in which it is published.

Where Dr. Thomas uses the expression “moral change” I would prefer to say “legal change” but as it was a moral law that Adam transgressed the meaning is really the same; Adam had sold himself to “Sin” and become Sin’s possession. Previously, he had been God’s possession but now in order to become God’s possession again he had to be bought back, and this was the work of God in Christ.

I will not comment upon the days of creation, except to say that I see the expression “day” is used in three ways. The six days of creation is one; then we have the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, also, “He called the light day and he called the darkness night,” etc., and here the “day” is approximately 12 hours, or half a day; then we have the expression in Genesis 2:4. “In the day that the Lord God made the heavens and the earth” which was not one day but six, and is therefore used in the sense of an extended period of time. In any case the first thing we are told God created was light, which would have been necessary for natural life to exist. I am sure a day does not represent a thousand years and that Adam and Eve were certain to have been made to understand what God meant when He told them that in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Please also find enclosed the booklet “The Usage and Meaning of Muth Temuth and B’Yom” which I trust you will find helpful in this respect.

May I ask a favour of you? Our next Circular Letter is due to be published at the end of January and I wondered if I may publish parts of your booklet in it. If you are willing I can let you know just which parts. I would like to print it all but it is a little too long to include in the C.L. though I could copy it in full and distribute it with the next C.L. However, I will be guided by you and hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely your brother in Jesus Christ, Russell Gregory. 8th January 1999

### **In reply to this third letter Brother Eric Cave replies: -**

Dear Brother Russell, Greetings in Yahshua Anointed. Thank you for your letter of the 8th, and particularly for the copy of C.L. 166 with the full text of Dr Thomas’s thoughts on “The Terrestrial System Before The Fall,” which I propose to dispatch with my Addendum to all recipients of “The Divine Plan.”

By now you will have known from Brother Parry that I claim no copyright and you may use it as you wish. I was surprised how closely the Doctor’s views on Creation coincided with what I had deduced, and within five years of the publication of “Elpis Israel” (you said earlier, but it was later); together with his clear rejection of any possibility of a change in human nature after the Fall. What a pity that Robert Diotrephes Roberts changed his views after the death of the doctor whose views he had confirmed in 1869.

May I question your invention of ‘mortable’ which I feel introduces an unnecessary complication into a simple subject. Perhaps I have an instinctive aversion to the use of non biblical words when discussing biblical subjects which I feel puts people off. Most Christian people I believe understand that ‘mortal’ means liable to corruption and death; and ‘immortal’ means incorruptible and ever living, and that words such as Federal, legal, and physical tend to arouse suspicion.

One of my reasons for writing was to relate proven facts of nature to Scripture hence my insistence on ‘eco cycle’ and when I realized that Adam had been ‘fabricated’ outside of Paradise, Genesis 2:8,15, then

Brother Hurns article seemed the appropriate introduction. When Paul says “We had the sentence of death within ourselves,” then I believe he had in mind ‘from creation’ and was referring to that common or natural death, or death within the eco cycle, and then recognizing that judicial or second death from which baptism can now save the faithful he like his Master, put aside that fear of natural death for the joy that was set before Him and places his trust entirely in God the Father, knowing that all things work together for good...

When you say that you cannot see how it is possible to understand why Christ died by crucifixion unless they first understand why Adam did not die in the day of his transgression; do you not think it possible that Adam would understand his personal position in creation as its head, and that he needed to be made perfect through suffering before his nature could be changed to that of the angels who said “the man is become as one of us to know good and evil” though they themselves can never have experienced ‘evil’? Did Adam, like Solomon, “give his heart to know madness and folly” that he might experience evil and thereby sold himself to King Sin? There are no limits to the evil to which man can descend in those circumstances, or the suffering they can inflict upon their fellows.

With fraternal love in Jesus our Lord, Eric Cave. 22nd January 1999

### **The following letter was written in response to receiving the “Addendum to The Divine Plan”:-**

Dear Brother Cave, Greetings in the exalted Name of Jesus. Thank you for the “Addendum to The Divine Plan” I am in agreement with what you say in your third paragraph, that it is the common death of all men that relates to Adam’s corruptible nature at his creation, and that Adam’s sin did not, and could not make this a penalty for himself and his posterity. In fact God’s statement to Adam was that disobedience in the day of his partaking of the forbidden tree, he would “surely die,” that means he would be put to death as a sinner. Why should people alter the language of Genesis and that used in Ezekiel firstly in reference to Adam in the Garden before his sin and then to Abimelech, and then under the law of Moses to which Israel were personally responsible. - See Genesis 20:3, also verse 7;

Ezekiel 18:9; Ezekiel 18:13-17 Read the whole chapter and you will see how God had set before Israel ‘The Blessing’ and ‘The Curse,’ ‘Life’ or ‘Death.’ You will also notice in the statements to the obedient, “He shall surely live, he shall not die,” yet the obedient died the common death which Adam and all redeemed persons have experienced. Personal sins are involved in Ezekiel because of Covenant responsibility to God. Adam was responsible for the first death. This was by the shedding of blood of the lamb to secure a provisional covering for committed sin which John the Baptist described as “The sin of the world” because it affected the World that God so loved at the time, not the World the Apostle instructs believers to “love not.” (1 John 2:15-17). Therefore, as Paul states, “By one man sin entered the world and the death by (or on account of) sin.” Nothing to do with the physical nature but a legal sentence, Adam being the Federal head of all in his loins born under and legally concluded under that One Sin, so that by that one righteous act of His Son, all by faith might be constituted righteous in Jesus, the second Federal Head.

Through his provisional covering Adam was spared inflicted death legally passed upon him, not in him, it also passed upon all men who become enlightened to it and therefore responsible if they refused to accept the freedom from the law of Sin and Death offered to them through the sacrifice of Christ after belief and baptism, in the Gentile case, and sacrificial acknowledgement by bloodshedding in the era from Eden to Calvary. (See Hebrews 10:26-30). This is the second death, but those like Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham etc., etc., having with others of like faith associated themselves with the symbolic death in the animals slain, or in our own case, by baptism into the death of Christ (which was the death that came by Adam and which Jesus died willingly in his stead), are and were responsible for personal sins and if guilty are subject to the power of the Second Death. The first death and the second death come under the category of personal sin, and involves judicial inflicted death by law, not the common death that all species of the animal creation come under.

I am surprised that in your first paragraph you say “Strangely no correspondent has yet put forward the obvious question, ‘Which death is the Apostle referring to?’” Well, in my letter and in a booklet I sent to you I did not put the question, but stated what death the Apostle was referring to. In regard to Revelation 20:6, being a contradiction of the B.A.S.F. Clause 25, in this clause it is affirmed that in the first resurrection at

Christ's return all the responsible dead, faithful and unfaithful will be raised to judgment and the unfaithful will be consigned to shame and the Second Death. How then can the unfaithful be a part of the first resurrection if on them the Second Death has power, and how could they be addressed as "Blessed and Holy"? It is a gross contradiction and also a violation of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15:42 - 44 & 51-57, this is the resurrection of the just; the unjust cannot boast any victory through Christ and His Father. Those whose names are in the Book of Life can, for they have already been judged. Are we to assume from Clause 25 that the unfaithful live a thousand years to the Great White Throne and Second Death?

Kind Regards, Brother Phil.

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## **Upholding, or Denying the Faith Once Delivered to The Saints ?**

A part of a letter I have just come across dated by myself as received from a Christadelphian 24.3.77, might be of interest to any who may be accused of denying the Faith once delivered to the saints. In fact this letter shows the accusers to be the people at fault and should examine themselves whether they be in the Faith. I invited the man responsible for this letter to come to our house and have a friendly discussion on the important matters of Salvation and he promised to come, which was only a matter of two miles in his car but he failed to keep his promise. Together with my letter I enclosed the pamphlet by Brother Brady "The Great Mystery of the Christian Religion" from which he said he was quoting "our view," and I quote "Adam's sin did not result in a 'decline toward dissolution'. Such a brief quotation does not explain the truth of Brother Brady's reasoning which was in fact in support of Clause IV of the B.A.S.F. for in fact Adam's natural physical decay and death was a result of prevention from eating of the Tree of Life, and his provisional redemption from the 'Death by Sin' in the day he sinned, his created nature, Clause IV remained intact and his experiences whether enjoyable or otherwise were a result, but not a description of the Death by Sin appointed by God.

The writer said that all we believe must be based on Scripture, that the context determines the meaning of a verse and that our faith is grounded on the broad canvas of all the Scriptures and not on an obscure verse. I take it then that the contents of Clause IV B.A.S.F. quoted to a believer in the immortality of the soul, is not sufficient to convict of error of such belief, yet this obscure verse is boldly quoted by members of the Christadelphian community to combat such a belief and then, like this writer also does, they accept Clause V and destroy their case.

Where then does the Apostle Paul's doctrine fit in with the writer's idea of the broad canvas of Scripture? Example: 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 - here we have confirmation of Clause IV - the first man Adam natural, of the earth, the last Adam a quickening Spirit; howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual, - both the first man and the second man were of like corruptible nature capable of dying, but the second, Jesus, was of greater intelligence and purpose \*[see footnote] than the first man seeing that Adam in Eden had become, by sin, dependant on the second man for Redemption through His unique and essential Sacrifice on Calvary's tree. And knowing that God has ordained Him for that purpose, and also to restore Paradise. Example: Paul; again, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." (Romans 5:8,9).

The writer gives his own view in support of Clause V as follows - "Through Adam breaking God's Law, he was sentenced to return to the ground, a sentence which became a physical law of his being and to all posterity."

It appears the writer has no place here for the Lamb of God and the redemption of Adam by the giving of a life through the shedding of blood. He is too concerned with establishing Clause V which completely contradicts Clause IV where it is stated that Adam's being was governed by a physical law which demanded that he breathed and continued to eat in order to survive. I have heard members of his community confirm

this when speaking of the flood, “All in whose nostrils was the breath of life died,” as being descriptive of “living souls” drowned by water. Not immortal souls.

He goes on to say, “A careful look at Genesis 3 establishes beyond doubt that Adam’s sin affected his nature” - verse 19, he and as the margin of chapter 2:17 indicates, “by disobedience Adam would progressively degenerated.” He then makes a reference to Psalm 90:3 saying, “This whole Psalm which has a Genesis/Israel journey connotation...” I have lost the rest of his letter but I think he uses the word ‘faulty’ to describe human nature, and links Psalm 90 with what he thinks was God’s sentence upon Adam for disobedience.

The only way I see any involvement of Psalm 90 with Israel and Genesis is the fact that Israel was under a covenant confirmed by blood and demanded obedience morally and spiritually unto heirship of the promises made to Abraham, physical nature being the same as that of Adam when created, and who himself being spared by the shedding of blood in Eden, was the progenitor of mankind as a result.

Our view is that Adam was granted through a life given, a new probation ending in natural death by reason of his corruptible nature as a living soul or natural body of life, very good in kind and condition at creation and after removal from the Garden of Eden; for no change of nature had taken place by his disobedience only his relationship and status as an obedient son of God. Clause V is a myth. How can the writer say that Genesis 3:19 establishes beyond doubt that Adam’s sin affected his nature when in that very verse God addresses Adam with the words, “For dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return”? Can he not see together with the majority of his community that from Eden to Gethsemane, without the shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins either by imputation (constituted) or personal transgression under law?

When he speaks of the context determining the meaning of a verse he should take into account his communities favourite quotation from Jeremiah 17:9 bearing in mind at the same time that Jesus for example, was a man yet proved His heart was not deceitful nor desperately wicked; verse 10 should also be read, not this obscure verse to support sin-in” the-flesh mongers. Read Psalm 26:1-3 in the context of Jeremiah 17:9. Also Romans 6:17, “But ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine...” Can a deceitful and wicked heart obey the gospel of Christ?

Beware therefore ye that compare the truth in others, on the basis of error held by yourselves for over 128 years!

Jesus did not die to prevent us from dying the death Adam experienced, but the death Adam did not experience, that is, inflicted death by law which he had violated. Those who support Clause V are astray from the Truth and consequently are yet in their sins, for Jesus rose from a death experienced by the shedding of His blood, not a death resulting from a progressive degenerate nature returning Him to dust as the writer of the letter implied. By so doing he ridicules his own statement that the context determines the sense in all reading of Scripture. But, like his own community, he believes he has the right to play fast and loose with the Scriptures of God and manipulate them to fit in with a man-made creed which demands fellowship and membership on a faulty foundation of sand.

Read Matthew 12:33 to 37 whosoever of you believe in condemned and sinful flesh and be warned by Him who Judges righteously.

Brother Phil Parry.

P.S. I recall a letter to me by the same writer who moved away from my area soon after- wards, in which he said, “Adam and Eve needed an outward tempter - the serpent, to test their belief and faith, but we do not - we have serpent-nature.” I had no opportunity to question him on what he really meant as he had moved away. The expression “nature” is often used to describe our physical body and also the disposition and thoughts that develop character, good or evil; this latter is used often without any discrimination and thus physical human flesh is wrongly described as a “nature” when it should be described as “a disposition.” For example, “To covet what is forbidden.” The physical nature is not to blame but the disposition of the person who knows right from wrong and violates it. It is implied then that Jesus having our serpent nature was not

tempted outwardly of the Devil and that A.D.Norris was right in saying of Jesus on the Cross “There hung the Devil dead.”!

Footnote: “Intelligence” = God’s Word manifest in flesh. “Purpose” = to obtain Redemption for Adam and all in him, and forgiveness of sins unto everlasting life through faith in His shed blood.

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## **A Final Thought.**

Recently while reading through some Circular Letters in which we discussed the parables of Matthew 13, one or two points came to mind which impinge upon the matter of Creeds and Statements of Faith to which we have been giving particular attention in the last two or three Circular Letters.

While all eight parables in this 13th chapter concern the Kingdom of Heaven in the days since the Crucifixion to His second coming, Jesus Christ gave the first four in public to the crowds who came to hear Him, and these concern the Kingdom in a wide and general sense and show not only success but also failure. Failure to keep the commandments, failure to keep the truth, loss of faith, and the introduction of the doctrines of men. This Kingdom is no more successful than the Kingdom of old under the Law of Moses, which Kingdom was taken from the Israelites in the days of Zedekiah.

The second set of four parables Jesus told in private to the disciples - these were men of faith and the parables served a different purpose, giving a different view of the work of God in Christ and how success would be achieved in God’s good time.

But for the moment I want to consider the first four parables, and in particular the parable of the leaven. Each of these four illustrations show some success but also some failure, and this success and failure Jesus revealed when explaining the parable of the Sower. Some grain fell on good ground and brought forth fruit but much was wasted and failed to yield a harvest.

Likewise the parable of the Wheat and Tares. The wheat brought forth a harvest, though during growth it was indistinguishable from the useless tares.

The parable of the Mustard seed is not so clear but this “greatest of all herbs” became “a tree” which is most unnatural, and besides which the fowls nested or lodged in its branches taking advantage of the abnormal growth for their own comfort and gain.

The parable of the leaven is the most argued about of all parables, but to be consistent with the other three it cannot show success only and no failure; therefore I believe that the three measures of meal represent the Gospel message to which a woman added leaven and the whole became leavened. While this may seem to indicate total failure, it must allow for some success - before leaven has finished its work. Jesus said, “When the Son of man cometh will He find faith on the earth?” which question indicates that there is likely to be very little indeed at the end of this age. So it is important for each of us, while we wait for Him to come, not to loose the faith we now hold but rather grow to be more like our Master, whose we are and whom we serve. The leaven has almost finished its work but let us make sure it does not harm us.

My view of this parable is that the woman who added the leaven was Rome and the leaven is false doctrine, which we see epitomized in the teachings of the Trinity, the Immortality of the Soul, a personal supernatural Devil, Hell Torment, Original Sin, the Immaculate Conception, Heaven Going, Infant Baptism, etc., etc.

Over the centuries the Roman Catholic Church has borne many “harlot daughters” each of whom have in some measure adopted false doctrines introduced by “The Mother Church,” and these make up the Christendom we see and know today. Every denomination is a Harlot Daughter. This is bound to seem a sweeping statement but I am sure it is the case because every denomination in Christendom has formulated a man-made creed or statement of faith in which is included one or more of these false doctrines of Rome, and

to which is has become necessary for its members to accept in order to belong. Consequently every Christian is asked to believe some teaching which originated in Rome.

When a Christadelphian I thought they were the exception but when I understood the doctrine of sin-in-the-flesh taught in Clause V of the B.A.S.F. it became clear they were just another denomination, little better than the rest, but nonetheless a daughter of Rome. It is Clause V that must be removed by a right understanding of events in the Garden of Eden. Then reasoning from Scripture will reveal the true love of Jesus Christ in giving His life for us in sacrifice and not considering His death to be a martyrdom demanded by God to demonstrate what sinful flesh, so called, deserves. This latter view destroys the altruism of the Sacrifice of Jesus wherewith He loved us and gave Himself for us.

In the last C.L. when discussing Brother Michael Ashton's Editorial in the October edition of The Christadelphian, I said regarding creeds that "those dangers are so serious as to put every creed-follower under the sun outside any hope of salvation for the simple reason that once a creed or statement of faith is formulated it becomes more important to uphold it than the Bible." The seriousness is seen when it is realized that whenever a Statement of Faith is found to be at fault it is not Scripture that is questioned but a doctrine of Rome. Therefore anyone who upholds their Statement of Faith is in fact concerned with upholding a Roman Catholic doctrine, not Scripture.

A few weeks ago I had occasion to talk with some Christadelphians and one of them thanked me for sending him our booklet "Why The Cross?" by Brother Ernest Brady, but when I mentioned the B.A.S.F. he dismissed it by saying it was many years since he had looked at it and no longer remembers what is in it, at which point he seemed unduly anxious to find someone else to talk to and walked away. I think there are many thousands of Christadelphians like that though we know of some who are more straightforward and say they do not believe in the doctrine of sin-in-the-flesh. To such people the B.A.S.F. seems to mean nothing and so long as they keep their beliefs to themselves they are welcome to socialize with Christadelphians and share the Table of the Lord. But is this good enough? They are condoning what is in the B.A.S.F. by allowing themselves to be known as Christadelphians and as it is most unlikely that Christadelphians will ever destroy their Statement of Faith then their position is hard to defend. It is because of our love for these people that we send out our booklets to bring these matters to their attention. It is to these very people whom Jesus Christ is calling to "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." - Revelation 18:4.

After reading these notes, Brother Ray Gregory reminded me that by 1855 Dr. Thomas had dealt with every false doctrine of the Apostate Churches, but from that time on it can be seen from Christadelphian publications that more than one error was re-adopted.

Brother Russell Gregory.

"Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord."

Jeremiah 29:12,13.