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Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Friends,

A recent radio programme made an interesting examination of the doctrine of Original Sin and where it springs from.

A Jew, a Christian and a Muslim took part. It was a concept rejected by the Jew and the Muslim and as also later emerged in the programme, by the Greek Orthodox Church.

The Muslim thought that the account of what happened in the Garden of Eden and to our first parents shewed how man became responsible for his own actions, and that it gives the basis for the origin of evil or error. The events make clear that humans are good as long as they obey God.

The Jew thought it shewed the emancipation of human beings, tossed out as they were, into reality and given responsibility for governing themselves. It was not a "fall" as seen by Christianity but an expulsion into adulthood and into maturity.

In the Hebrew Bible "naked" in the Genesis context means vulnerable, it is not necessarily an account of sexual awakening although one man thought it was and it is his view that has had so much to do with the Christian obsession with the doctrine of the "fall" or Original Sin as defined in the Church's 39 Articles and the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, to name but two documents.

This man was Augustine, born in 354 in a North African town under Roman rule. He was educated in Italy and became a public orator in Milan. Eventually he converted to Catholic Christianity and became a bishop. Augustine was a prolific writer and he was the last and most important of the figures who are now called the Fathers of the Church. They are a small group of scholar theologians of the early centuries after the death of Christ who have shaped what Christians are supposed to believe.

Nobody has had more influence on the subsequent history of the church than Augustine. He was the leading theologian in the Middle Ages. He was the great influence on Martin Luther and therefore the Protestant reformation. Calvin, too, owes a lot to Augustine.

Augustine is the most quoted author in the 39 Articles of the Church of England and the most quoted in the Vatican Council of 1965. What an influence!

Before he converted to Catholicism Augustine was enamoured of a sect, with Persian origins, called the Manicheans. Mani, who was its prime mover, tussling with the problem of evil in a world created by a good God, decided that evil was to be found in matter. Our souls are good, he reasoned, for we are splinters of the divine, but we are trapped in evil matter by a body and in particular by its sexual lusts. Augustine was greatly influenced by this explanation. He had been promiscuous much of his youth and into his midlife and was ashamed of it. He was the person who introduced celibacy into the picture as a necessity for followers of Christ.

Some of the early fathers of the Church speak of women as intrinsically dangerous. This is not a particularly Christian view, it is one found in ancient Greek sources. At the time of the early church the whole culture was Greek, the language, social style, history, stories and education. This accounts for the dubious attitude to women that lingers still in many churches to the present day. The early fathers of the church reasoned that if they were attracted by women, it was the women's fault and not theirs. Certainly it could not be the fault of men, who are rational beings. This is the story that is read into Adam and Eve's activities and its logic does not entirely recommend it!

So Original Sin was launched into Western Christendom as a genetic condition, inherited at birth, which makes us incapable of doing the right thing no matter how hard we try. Augustine's view mystifies other faiths also inspired by the Garden of Eden account. The Rabbi in the programme said; "It is totally alien if you look at the Biblical account. The ground is cursed because of Adam for as long as he lives, that curse stops when Adam dies. Because the first person born after Adam's death is Noah, whose name is given to him because he is comforted, because the curse is finished. So any attempts to make Adam and Eve the perpetual scapegoats and humanity the perpetual sufferers for what they did, goes against Biblical reckoning and Jewish reckoning.

The Muslim expressed the opinion that "The concept of original sin is quite alien to Islam. Islam believes in the individual responsibility; you are born sinless. Islam recognizes human weakness, everyone is capable of sinning but as an individual not as having inherited a sin.

At this time Christianity had superseded Judaism and Islam had not yet arrived and Augustine became more bitter and entrenched in his views. He was judgmental of others as he got older. He became more polemical and less tolerant of other views. He was quite unforgiving to those he felt held wrong views for he thought they would undermine the faith, in this case the Catholic faith.

In 410 Rome was sacked and refugees flooded into North Africa. One of these refugees was Pelagius, a Welsh monk and his band of followers. Like Augustine as a young man, they believed free will was all and that we can do bad things as well as good. Pelagius didn't believe Adam's sin had corrupted human nature, it was more that Adam was a bad example. What arrogance! said Augustine, what lack of humility to suppose that people could and indeed should perfect themselves, without God's grace.

Pelagius fled to Palestine and there he produced a pamphlet stating his views and by-passing Augustine, circulated it widely. Augustine hit back by convening a Church Council of 80 powerful people who found in his favour. So Augustine sent a message to Rome to the Emperor asking for a statement of policy for support. The matter was clearly now political. The Pope who liked the idea of deciding what was or was not correct opinion, this was not yet the norm for Popes, decided that the accusations against Pelagius weren't justified, that original sin was not an issue of faith and so Pelagius was let off the hook. But then the Emperor intervened and said "no, we are the people who in collaboration with the African church know what orthodoxy is. The Pelagians minimize death. Who can deny that Adam must have "fallen" because death is such a terrible sadness to the human race." It is this argument that makes the Pope reverse his decision and declare Pelagius heretical, so he sent letters to all the bishops in the West describing Pelagius's view, which had previously been one opinion among many, as an opinion which should not be held. This is one of the first times in the West that we have a definition of what a heresy is.

Augustine had triumphed. But then another vigorous Pelagian took up the cudgels of the ideology, Julian of Eclanum. He was a fiery and energetic young man, whereas Augustine was by this time ageing and tired and not very well.

Julian did not believe in original sin which he said was “improbable, untrue, and unjust.” Augustine replied that man’s idea of justice was not God’s.

Julian countered with,

“...lumbering new born infants with sin at the moment of their birth was offensive,”

and he continued

“...tiny babies are not weighed down by their own sins but are being burdened with the sin of another. Tell me then, who is the person who inflicts punishment on innocent creatures? You answer God. God you say, God who commended His love to us, who has loved us, who has not spared his own Son for us. He it is you say who judges in this way. He is the persecutor of new born children. It would be right and proper to treat you as beneath argument. You have come so far from religious feeling, from civilized thinking, so far indeed from mere common sense in that you think your God is capable of committing a crime against justice that is hardly conceivable even amongst barbarians.”

Julian went on tearing into Augustine with more pungent words,

“...your evidence for this absurdity is laughable, for you imagine so great a power in such a sin that not only can it blot out the new born innocence of nature, but forever afterwards it will force man throughout his life into every form of viciousness, and what is as disgusting as it is blasphemous, is that this view of yours fastens as its most conclusive proof on the common decency by which we cover our genitals.”

Eventually Julian moved East to make his life with the Greek Orthodox Church who do not embrace the doctrine of Original Sin.

These words and controversies echo down the centuries to our own times. The arguments about the validity or not of the notion of original sin still rages on simply because people will not return to the Bible and to first principles and examine them with open minds, preferring instead to stick with doctrines that have been promulgated by fallible human beings. Human beings with political and power motivated agendas. The false doctrine of original sin and its following irrationality, that natural death is the wages of sin, are as misguided and unscriptural today and as insulting to God and to reason as they were in Augustine’s time. It has been well said that people who do not learn from history remain forever childish.

With love to all, Helen Brady.

Conventional and Bible Views on Human Nature

“Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity... You have made me like day.”
(Psalm 119:73 & Job 10:9).

It is contended here that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” and not because of sin in our physical body or nature. Sin is out of the heart or mind of man as a creature answerable to God. He intends, not to destroy human nature but to raise it to incorruption. Concerning the body as a seed cast into the ground, He says through Paul;

“It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body... However the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual” - 1 Corinthians 15:44,46.

There is a purpose in it all - including human nature. Man was created with the potential to succeed or fail. Now it may have been that the odds were against him but we cannot say, only God knows. Of His foreknowledge, how can we judge? However, there was a balance between human frailty and high intelligence but without inner spiritual light in their nature. He failed his simple test, no doubt taken by surprise - how often this has happened - yet we are without excuse' You find on looking at Genesis 3 that the actors in this play each were found guilty and took the blame and their personal punishments. But what about their “sinful” flesh? Because human frailty was a necessary part of the test (and anyway, they had not created it), nothing is said about it. God had made it in His all-wise way and He did not condemn it - why should He? (Job 10:9). No doubt, it contributed to failure and yet it could have been overcome to man's credit. God had arranged it this way; He had set the stage. Was He going to condemn the ‘props’ on the stage? Man had sinned and was guilty - not his nature. Yet Christ is held by some as innocent, yet condemned to die for Himself because of His nature; what injustice! Job seeks to remind God that:

“Your hands have made me and fashioned me, an intricate unity; yet you would destroy me. Remember, I pray, that you have made me like clay and will you turn me into dust again?” - Job 10:8,9.

Though man had sinned in the beginning, his nature had remained the same, on this evidence, as the neutral basis of his very existence. ‘Neutral’ here is understood as not a moral issue in itself - it does not mean without influence. We see this question of neutrality more clearly if we look at the use of the word “nature.” In biblical terms it means “natural body” - 1 Corinthians 15:42-46 - and its natural characteristics. The following phrases are interesting:

“the natural use for that which is against nature” (unnatural) - Romans 1:26.

“Gentiles who “by nature do the things in the law” - Romans 2:14.

“Does not even nature itself teach you?” - 1 Corinthians 11:14.

These verses do not disparage human nature or flesh in any way.

There is “natural affection” - Romans 1:31, 2 Timothy 3:3 - which is legitimate and the lack of it, which is not. The two minds of man are spoken of in 1 Corinthians 2:14,15 - the ideal being the mind of Christ. It is hard to see why God would judge or condemn the nature He gave to man for his trial and development, or deny Himself by so doing. “The natural man” is a term meaning a man of fleshly leanings or carnal mind - i.e. everyone who has not received spiritual light - verses 6-13. The doctrine of flesh has been consistent at all times and the “doctrine of Christ” - 2 John 9:10 - coming in the flesh is the same. Robert Roberts could hardly have put it better than in a letter to one who thought there was a change in Adam's nature when he transgressed. He wrote:

“The Phrase sin in the flesh is metonymical, it is not an expression of a literal element or principle pervading physical organization. Literally, sin is disobedience or an act of rebellion... The impulses that lead to sin existed in Adam before transgression as much as they did afterwards; else disobedience would not have occurred... There is no such thing as essential evil or sin.” (“Ambassador,” March 1869).

Could God deny His own workmanship as “condemned and evil nature” (Roberts' question in a later 1896 series of propositions)? Do we have the right to do so?

ADAM AND THE ORIGINAL SIN

Did his sin change him physically? It is hard to find evidence of this. Flesh has always been subject to influences and mood swings, just as it was in Eden. What did change was man's relationship to God; the sentence of death was the sign of this, as was the covering made for man's body and the expulsion from the pleasant order of the Garden.

In all that transpired there was no mention of the part played by man's nature, his physical body of flesh. Questions are addressed: "Have you eaten from the tree... Because you have done this, you are cursed... What is this you have done?"

"And to Adam He said, Because you have heeded the voice of your wife and have eaten from the tree which I commanded you saying, You shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake... Until you return to the ground."

The responsibility belonged to the creature as a whole and not to his nature separately as the "condemned nature" doctrine teaches. Death is rather an interim matter of convenience although associated with sin. We know this is so because as Hebrews 9:27 informs us;

"And as it is appointed for man to die once, but after this the judgement" - "at His appearing and His kingdom" - 2 Timothy 4:1 - "so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many." - Hebrews 9:28 - in their life before dying.

Because the second death is an unnatural one and is the real judgment upon sin, so Christ suffered and died unnaturally to bear the sins of those who, deserving of this death, are forgiven and reconciled.

The different federal and legal relationships of "The Children of Adam and the Son of God" were dealt with in the article of that title.

They, the solitary couple in the Garden, had sold the human race to Sin and God now had a free hand in dealing with the problem of sin. He chose to show mercy on the basis of a selective process and He chose the method and ritual of sacrifice in order to satisfy the need to see justice done in accord with Romans 3:25,26 and 5:6-8:

"that he might be just and the Justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." "For when we were still without strength (bodily and federally) in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

This was through the vicarious suffering of the pains due to the guilty by One who was innocent of all guilt, symbolized and foreshadowed in the blood sacrifices of the Law. It might appear unjust but was undertaken willingly by Jesus in the Father's Name: "I have come in my Father's name and you do not receive me..." "As the Father loved me, I also have loved you; abide in my love..." "Greater love has no one than this..." "I have glorified you on the earth, I have finished the work which you have given me to do..." pending the great sacrifice which would end with the words "It is finished."

Man has chosen; God was to make His own choices. He chose Abel not Cain; Isaac not Ishmael; Jacob not Esau; Israel in place of Pharaoh, saying through Moses:

"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

For the Potter has power over the clay: the whole of Romans 9, where we find the principles of testing and selection is still there, though human 'clay' remains the same as it has always been:

"Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and whoever believes on him shall not be put to shame."

JESUS AND "SINFUL FLESH"

Things are not always what they appear. God never calls the actual flesh sinful, even though man himself collectively and individually is sinful. We should not judge according to the appearance - John 7:24. Jesus did say of His own flesh, in view of His person and work, "Except you eat my flesh you have no life in you." The Jews were horrified at this and answered "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" His reply was to the effect that the spiritual meaning would give life, not the literal flesh - "the flesh profiteth nothing"

- “the words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.” His flesh was life because it was unleavened by sin and when He broke the Passover bread it was unleavened which, incidentally, makes it appropriate that we should do the same. At this point the whole of John 6 should be read. Among His words are:

“I am the bread of life...”

“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.”

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven... and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world...”

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:48-54)

Would bread from heaven have sin in it? Would He ask us to eat “sinful” flesh?

WHERE DO THE CHURCHES STAND ?

The churches have their own view which they call “original sin” corresponding to “sinful flesh.” On the other hand, perceiving where this would leave the Saviour, they accept that He was without “original sin.” This led to a belief in two different kinds of flesh. Christadelphians do not make this distinction; they condemn Christ instead. However, there is a middle way - what I believe to be the more biblical way.

In the 39 Articles of religion, Article 9 is headed “Of Original or Birth-Sin.” It speaks of human nature as corrupt and infected, when in reality, it only responds or reacts to the heavy burden placed upon it and is not incapable of answering to the light of truth. Article 15: “Of Christ alone without Sin” has this:

“Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which He was clearly void, both in his flesh, and in his spirit.”

The light of truth has its own psychology, its own effect on our nature and mind, which in the case of Christ was perfect. It fulfilled His own dictum that if your eye is perfectly single your whole body shall be full of light (not sin).

WHAT THE BODY IS FOR

There was an original sin when original integrity was lost, but this was moral not physical. There is a sense in which every sin is outside the body, being governed by the mental attitude of the person concerned (see 1 Corinthians 6:18). The body belongs to the person and experiences weal or woe, joy or sorrow, depending on what that individual decides to do. God did not produce robots but gave us the ability to choose between Himself or Sin as possible masters. That was what flesh, or human nature, was for in the beginning. It was “very good” for this purpose. It still is, for His purposes. We bear federal guilt and also individual guilt. Sin is an individual matter. This is why Christ bore no sin in His flesh, or in His Spirit.

THE BODY AS A TEMPLE

Jesus taught that His body was a temple - a dwelling place of God. It would die and in three days would rise again – John 2:19. Paul taught the same about the body: “Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” – 1 Corinthians 6:19, “citizens... a holy temple in the Lord... a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” - Ephesians 2:19-22.

“The body is... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... your bodies are the members of Christ” -1 Corinthians 6:13-15.

The body is not therefore likely to be contaminated with a parasite, physical sin-principle. Let us say rather that this idea is a myth, even a figment of the imagination.

THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 8:3

In 1873 God gave an insight into this verse of Scripture that has stood the test of time. It removed the idea of sin and guilt from flesh, the physical body, and placed it where it ought to be:

“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life” - Galatians 6:8.

This effectively separates the person who shall be judged from his nature which will not. For “to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” - Romans 8:6. This ought to make us suspicious of the usual interpretation of “sinful flesh” that it means “condemned nature” and that impulses and temptation are actual sin. For by no stretch of the imagination can the Greek “flesh of sin” mean “sinFULL.” The reference clearly is to the context - notably chapter 6, dominion or reign of sin [verses 9-23), “under sin” (Romans 3:9 and 7:14. In 7:12 Sin is personified as an “exceeding Sinner” to whom man was sold). Yet the traditional translation impugns God whose works are perfect and His Son who was, as we read in Hebrews 4:15, “tempted in all points... yet without sin,” proving that temptation, therefore flesh, is not sin. This enables us to see Him as He really was and is - clean according the law-requirement, the perfect Lamb of God. The clean unblemished condition made the sin offering “most holy.” Only thus was it fit to bear sin that was not its own; this we learn in Leviticus 10:17:

“Why have you not eaten the sin-offering in a holy place, since it is most holy, and God has given it to you to bear the guilt of the congregation?”

This was a foreshadowing of Christ, for animal blood could never take away sins but the precious blood of Christ, who was “most holy” could. His own offering was effective to bear the sins of all who came to Him, even though they are not most holy.

ROMANS CHAPTERS FIVE TO EIGHT

These chapters move forward, from judgment and condemnation in chapter 5 to the cleansing waters of baptism in the “likeness” (homoioima) of Christ’s death, to deliverance from the “old man, the body of sin” and the “reign” of sin in chapter 6. Here sin appears as a master slave-owner holding dominion or sovereignty over man. This is different from the idea of flesh that is full of physical sin and defilement without forgetting its innate weakness and poor response to law. In Romans 3:9 the phrase “all under sin” occurs, meaning federal relationship to the primary sin of Adam. This is a “spirit of bondage” and corruption in Romans 8:15,21.

In Romans 6:14,17 “death reigned.” In 6:21 “sin reigned.”

In Romans 6:6 the “body of sin” (the “old man” condition) has been “done away with” (rendered powerless - Diaglott) i.e. the former state of bondage, “that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

The theme of servitude continues:

6:7 “For he who has died has been freed from sin.”

6:9 “Death no longer has dominion.”

6:12 “Do not let sin reign.”

6:14 “Sin shall not have dominion.”

6:16,17 “slaves of sin” (AV. servants) Also 6:20.

6:18 “set free from sin.” Also 6:22.

6:23 sin pays the wages of death to his slaves.

In chapter 7, verse 12, Sin, the figurative slave owner becomes, in the Greek, an “inordinate sinner” (Concordant) and in the Diaglott rendering is personified as “an exceeding great sinner.” Therefore, while not denying that flesh is weak (being of the dust it cannot be otherwise), the finger points at Sin.

In chapter 7 those who sin under the law, and are without Christ, are said to be “in the flesh” (verse 5). This is a past event for Paul and others in that he says “When we were in the flesh,” though obviously still flesh.

In Romans 7:7 he no longer writes of “we;” he now writes “I” - would not have known sin. He continues in this mode to the end of the chapter. In 7:18 he reflects back to verse 5 and speaks of his former days as being “in my flesh” - the previous state under sin when sin dwelt in him and “nothing good” as regards relationship with God. Not literally true as applying to flesh objectively though. Not Sin but Christ was in him now.

Stanley Jelfs
April 2000

Reader’s comments are invited please.

WISDOM AND ADVICE FROM PAUL

“All scripture given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.- Apt to teach, patient...” 2 Timothy 3:16,17 and 2 Timothy 2:24.

About two months ago it was suggested to me from a letter, “That Nazarenes would profit much by studying all the pages of their Bibles instead of the pages of the Brady’s and the Pearce’s of their system.”

The same source also stated, “Of course we gladly endorse Nazarene ‘doctrine’ but this does not separate us from the superb scripture expositions of such brethren as John Allfree, Geoff and Ray Walker or those of South London Meeting.”

Seeing then that as a Christadelphian for seventeen years and having been warned not to believe all that was taught in the well published and popular books of their pioneer’s views and teaching on Bible subjects, it is strange that when I took this advice and studied the Scriptures with less regard to the interpretations and views of these particular men set up as an example of the wisdom and understanding of Truth to be received, and being at the time ignorant of E.Turney, F.J.Pearce, E.Brady and other Nazarenes or as they were termed “Clean Flesh” by Robert Roberts, it is strange to realize now, but not surprising, that I came to the same understanding that these same men so-called heretics had come to through prayerful reading and study of their Bibles. Yet I am told in effect that I have not profited by studying the pages of books or writings of these men though based on the Scriptures.

It has never been or is now Nazarene policy to separate anyone from superb Scripture expositions, in fact it is most welcome, that is, if they are superb expositions. So in view of John Alfree’s subject matter sent to me, I decided to deal with at least a part of it.

In John Alfree’s view, and others of course, we are expected to accept that we are not possessed by nor in possession of the Holy Spirit in the sense of performing miracles of healing, raising the dead etc., etc., but that this ceased with the deaths of the Apostles of Jesus, and what is left for our admonition and learning is the “Spirit Word” contained in the Bible - - for which we must search for light and understanding for salvation from the dominion of Sin and its consequential penalty, Death (in the day of disobedience and not by virtue of Adam’s dying nature). (The last two and half lines being my own comment - P.Parry).

While I accept John Alfree’s explanation showing the difference between Spirit as the universal Power of God over all creation, and the Holy Spirit as set apart for a special purpose, I find a grave error in his description of the begettal and conception of Jesus, for it must be understood that the Spirit or Power of the Highest is not a different Spirit, as Paul explains in I Corinthians 12:11-14. (Verses 27 - 29, Question - are all Apostles? The answer must be “No” but they were all members of the Body of Christ having been baptized into one Spirit - Verses 4 and 5).

Can we say that with the Apostle there was a union of flesh and Spirit when they received it, and therefore its power could not be withdrawn from them at any time through it being abused but only by physical death?

Yet John Allfree misrepresents the Apostle John by saying:-

“John tells us then that when Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary that it became flesh.”

This is pathetic yet sad, coming from a man said by my correspondent to be superb in Scripture exposition, for he quotes first the account in Matthew 1:18 and 20 which deals with the conception and birth of a Holy Child, the Son of God and the statement by the Angel. Dr. Thomas and John Allfree are implying that John chapter 1 refers to Jesus as a product at birth when in fact He became a recipient of God’s Word in order to manifest it in character, conduct and teaching. Therefore Matthew chapter 1 and John chapter 1 are not identical descriptions concerning Jesus.

Let me now recall the words of John Allfree as follows;-

“John’s account of the birth of Jesus is quite different.”

Of course John’s account is different. It is not an account of the birth of Jesus nor of His conception. It is an account of His becoming the Word of God by its manifestation in His person or flesh and His being sent forth to preach Grace and Truth in His Father’s Name. How then could the John say of Jesus as an infant of the breast “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth”? John was speaking of Jesus as a grown intellectual man who had received a revelation and mission from God declaring Him to be the central figure in His Will and Plan from the beginning, all condensed in what John describes as the Logos or Word.

The Apostle John is therefore speaking of his association and that of other disciples, and their experiences with Jesus and hearing the authority of His spoken words as the words of His Father.

John Allfree seems to be following the teaching of Dr. Thomas, an ex-Calvanist who left that association but retained the view of Christ being Spirit incarnation, hence John Allfree’s reference to “Eureka” Volume 1 page 101 and referring to it as an aspect of the Truth. Far from being an aspect of Truth it is the very opposite. Thus John Allfree has been led off the track also in referring to Matthew 1:18-20 and to John 1:14 as identical events when in fact they are separated from the time of Christ’s conception to the time when He was introduced to John the Baptist as the Messiah of Israel by the sign of the Holy Spirit lighting upon Him in the form of a dove and the voice from Heaven declaring “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Jesus no doubt having obtained this acclamation by His sinless character at least from the age of responsibility, and also His statement to John Baptist “Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Not only this, for Jesus must have at some period of His life in reference to the purpose of His birth and sacrificial death, expressed to His Father the words quoted in Hebrews 10:3 to 14, “In the volume of the book it is written of me...” Yes, and Jesus on the road to Emmaus, beginning at Moses and all the prophets expounded what was written of Him, and all would do well to study Moses and all the Prophets and would find that the will of God was not that Jesus should die on account of His nature as some teach falsely, but to take away the Sin of the world, originated by Adam and passed federally upon all in his loins - with the exception of Jesus who was not in that relative position.

In consequence of this lack of perception of Dr. Thomas in thinking Matthew] and John 1 as referring to one and the same description of the Spirit of God in operation, we have John Allfree following the same confusion as Dr. Thomas in “Eureka” Volume 1 page 101. Here the Dr. quotes from John 1 which says nothing about the birth of Jesus but about the Word which was full of Grace and Truth, the attributes of the Father and of His Will, being manifested by word and deed in His Son, not the passive nature of physical flesh which would convey nothing. Therefore leaving out Matthew 1:18 and explaining John 1 as being the fulness of the time for God to convey His Word by Holy Spirit in its full purpose, that is, The Word being manifested in active flesh of character or the motions of righteousness by the Spirit’s teaching and exposition in wondrous ways and parabolic form, this was the time for God to send forth His Son as the Light of the world, as the Dr. has intimated in “Eureka.” But then reverts to the account in Matthew 1:18 inferring in his

definitions that John's record of events in John 1:14 had already become a reality, in fact, more than what is stated in that record and therefore confusing the issue by adding his misconceived and inherited theory of the nature of Jesus being a mixture of Spirit and flesh resulting in "the fellow" and the "equal" of Deity. This cannot be true of the Creator. He is not a mixture of Spirit and flesh for as Jesus said "God is Spirit..."

How can John Allfree say in his correspondence "the Holy Spirit became flesh according to the record of John"? I will quote his words from top of page 17:

"John tells us then that when Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary that it became flesh. We are thus introduced to the unique nature of the conception of Jesus. God was his Father in a very real sense ("God sent forth His Son, made of a woman..."); there was a union of flesh and Spirit in which the Spirit was not annihilated. The result was indeed a member of Adam's race and a sharer of the nature which we bare, but nevertheless a man made strong (see Psalm 80:17) by his Divine inheritance."

By the way, why then the necessity of Holy Spirit upon Him at the Jordan? If the case presented by John Allfree was right then we also are a mixture or unity of Spirit and flesh being sharers of His nature, which John Allfree says was in the case of Jesus, a "Divine inheritance." Yet being made strong was not a matter of nature but relationship, for as through our alienated position and conclusion under Adamic Sin, Jesus by His birth of Mary through Divine begettal was a free-born Son of God not under Sin as Paul says in Romans 5:6-8, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly... But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

It is obvious that the strength of Jesus did not lie in His nature but in His being in the unique uncondemned position of being able to purchase us with His, or by His death. And so the Apostle explains to the believers at Corinth, "Though he were rich yet for your sakes he became poor that we through his poverty might be rich." In other words, Christ as a Son and heir of God refused to take advantage of His position but took upon Himself the form or position of a servant and that in dying for the sinner He did not die as a sinner under penalty of death, but He paid the debt of natural life Adam owed to his violation of the law, which only a sinless man of the same nature as Adam at Creation could do. Therefore if Jesus had been under condemnation for His nature (the false anchor of Christadelphian doctrine) then God could not have justly raised Him from the dead. Jesus gave up His right to natural life when it was cut short in death, but He did not give up His right to eternal life as Son of God and Heir of all things, having retained it by sinless conduct to perform the Will of God, though tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.

"How then can anyone say Jesus was not a mere man?" This is the false accusation made against Edward Turney and is now reversed by John Allfree, whereas Turney believed Jesus was flesh and blood like all other human beings. Apparently Dr. Thomas did not, and neither does John Allfree, both stating that in the conception of Jesus by the Power of the Highest, there was a union of flesh and Spirit in which the Spirit was not annihilated. See "Eureka" Volume 1, page 101.

Then speaking of John Baptist's statement regarding Jesus his six months junior by birth of Mary, "he was before me," John Allfree continues:

"What did exist before John was not the flesh which was born of the virgin but the Logos or Spirit of which Jesus was an incarnation."

There is utter confusion here both with Dr. Thomas and John Allfree. Dr. Thomas says:

"the Logos was Deity and Deity was the Word; and this Word became flesh in the manner testified. Was the product therefore not Deity? Did the union of Spirit with flesh annihilate that Spirit and leave only flesh? Was the holy thing born a mere son of Adam? Or "the fellow" and "equal" of the Deity? The latter unquestionably."

Here we have Jesus being described as a product of the Spirit and yet remaining before birth and after, a body of flesh and Spirit - not a mere man. He also asks, "Was the holy thing born a mere son of Adam?" I can answer that plainly from Scripture basis, Jesus was not a son of Adam but Son of God in the same flesh

and blood nature in which Adam was created after inhaling the God-given breath of life and becoming a living soul - not an undying soul which the Dr. implies, for if "the Power of the Highest" remained in the flesh and blood nature of Christ and ours as sharers of the same, then death would be impossible.

Referring to this in "Eureka" some time ago our late Brother Ernest Brady formed the impression that it bordered on Trinitarianism which to present day Christadelphians is anathema and promptly received a protest from one of their members after having read Brother Brady's comments. At that time and at present I still have that impression, and not only so, apart from some of the correct teaching of Dr. Thomas in "Eureka" and "Elpis Israel," I can expose quite an amount of error and contradiction - Mr Lister of Guilford, take note. I corrected you for substituting "Eureka" and "Elpis Israel" for the Bible.

Though John Allfree has written some acceptable comments I am fed up of reading the old false theories of Christadelphianism handed down as truth from uninspired men who had the ability to read the Scriptures but failed in some respects to extract the Light which is in its pages through Jesus, the Prophets and the Apostles.

There seems also to be more of a leaning toward an Israel by fleshly derived name than the true Israel of God in Christ under a new covenant of which Jews after the flesh have no claim whether in Palestine or elsewhere in the world, indeed they lost that claim as "The Israel of God" when they rejected their Messiah, the Son of God. The Apostle Paul, a very zealous Jewish Pharisee gives proof of this in Romans 9:6-8, 22-33 and Romans 10:12; 11:5-7, 18-23. What do we learn from Paul? We learn that natural descendants of Abraham cannot be grafted into the Mosaic covenant because it was done away in Christ's death and a new covenant instituted. Gentile and Jewish believers are in a new covenant styled by Paul "The Israel of God" - Galatians 6:15,16 - and it is only through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant shed by that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, the Lord Jesus, that believers in Him can be made perfect by the God of Peace, in every good work to do His will. (Hebrews 13:20,21). The same writer in chapter 12, verse 18 declares of those under the New Covenant: "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched... but ye are come unto the Mount Zion, to the great assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (or who have attained to the perfection whereunto they were called, even a good report of faith). - Hebrews 11:39,40. See also Philippians 3:9-14.

If then we should be pressing toward the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus, then like Paul and Peter we should forget those things that are behind such as the Old Covenant and reach forth unto those things that are before us, for we, according to his purpose look for new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Peter 3:13). Why then do some people make the future Spiritual Temple of God now being built quietly upon the foundation of the Holy Apostles and Prophets with Jesus Christ as the Chief Cornerstone, the identical Temple Ezekiel saw in his vision whereas it was the Old Covenant of ritual sacrifices and offerings appertaining to a priesthood under the Mosaic Law?

If any dispute this they can read for themselves where Ezekiel was told to address the Jews of the Babylonian captivity and also to describe the law and ordinances of the house. There are also officiating the sons of Zadoc who went not astray when some Levites went astray at the time of Jeremiah who forecast their captivity, these Levites who went astray would be servants in this Temple to do manual work but not as priests, the sons of Zadoc would perform the office of priests and are not to wear a garment which causes sweat. It can be ruled out therefore that they are incorruptible saints of the first resurrection for in this resurrection Jesus said they are as the Angels of God and cannot die anymore. Furthermore neither do they marry or are given in marriage, yet Ezekiel speaks of these priests not only marrying but the marriage limited in certain cases. See Ezekiel 44:22, also verse 17.

After reading Ezekiel's account from chapters 44 to 48 it is obvious that it refers to the rebuilding of the Temple under Nehemiah and his companions having returned from the captivity, the measurements were for their use to ensure they were not forgotten or lost through such a time of captivity.

I cannot accept this as a description of a future Temple for, as Paul declares, "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands," also the Lord through Nathan the prophet, told David "He will make thee an house." 2 Samuel 7:11-17.

Paul also declares to the Corinthian believers (1 Corinthians 3:9-11) "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereupon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." See also Matthew 16:16. "Peter said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God..." And Jesus said that upon Peter's revealed statement - the Rock foundation - He would build His church, indeed He is the Chief Cornerstone by which every part must be lined up as explained by Paul in Ephesians 2:16 to 22.

What Ezekiel saw was a plan of the Temple to be built by the Jews of the captivity at their return from Babylon and he was told to shew it to them that they might be ashamed for having, by their idol worship, caused the former one to be destroyed. They were now to be presented in writing in their sight, that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof and do them. Ezekiel 43:10,11.

As a nation and up to the time of the Antitype' showing to them through John the Baptist's preaching of Jesus as the true Pattern of the Tabernacle and the Temple that followed it, if they had failed to keep the whole form of this rebuilt Temple and all the ordinances thereof to do them, yet there were people like Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, Nathaniel and many others who were zealous for the commandments of God with humble and willing mind who could not be compared with the nation who had refused the messages and rebukes of the Prophets sent to them and whom Jesus addressed through His parable of the Vineyard, "Therefore the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The Kingdom of God was not taken away from the individuals I have named; they were part of it by faith in Jesus who had been made known to them as the Messiah of Israel. They were the kind who in their faith and conduct were bringing forth the fruits of the Kingdom of God, even the fruits of the Spirit that should pervade such a Kingdom and founded on the attributes of God which He described to Moses in the Mount and also mentioned by Paul to the Galatians in contrast with the impregnated mind of the flesh void of respect for God's Law. (Galatians 5:19-26).

God's promises and covenants are sure of fulfilment but with whom is conditional, therefore we have His ultimate plan and purpose shown in the types and shadows, all focused on the substance and antitype, first the natural, then the spiritual. We shall therefore consider this in respect of Temples made with hands according to His declared pattern and Temples not of mans building which latter is a habitation of God by His Spirit.

This latter Paul ascribes to the bodies of Corinthian believers who had been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19,20, also see 2 Corinthians 6:16 and 1 Corinthians 3:16,17). Thus when I consider the tabernacle under Moses in the wilderness, the Temple built by Solomon and its replacement described by Ezekiel and performed by the people named in the 5th chapter of Ezra, and also recorded by Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, I look upon the rituals, types and shadows as pointing to the perfection which is to come, or as Paul put it, "A schoolmaster to bring us to Christ" in regard to those under the old covenant, showing that the approach to God was according to His precepts, not man's. Thus all that God says and shows in His word is conditional upon the faith of the believer. For example, Exodus 19:5,6, this being fulfilled in Peter's epistle chapter 2:9,10 and 1 Peter 2:5-8. Also that which is affirmed by the Prophet Zechariah and Haggai chapters 1 and 3. It is noticeable that Zechariah 6:15 confirms what I have said in the course of this article and the marginal reference quoting Ephesians 2:13. Zechariah 6:15 reads "And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to pass, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." We know from Ezra chapters 3 and 4 that the building was completed resulting in great rejoicing, for many had come with willing minds to build, yet in later years it proved to be but a temporary material type of the spiritual which Paul refers to in Ephesians 2:13, so why expect another to be built upon the foundation of the-law of Moses with all the sin offerings and rituals of animal blood shedding which could never take away sin? It pertains to the Levitical priesthood and not after the order of Melchizedec which pertains to Christ when, through the emblems of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine they remember His death.

Nazarenes are isolated and therefore restricted to discussion with other Bible students who are restricted themselves by an appointed creed of observance causing fear. I hope this will provoke some to consider whether we are lacking in anything positive and constructive, for we maintain that our fellowship is

with the Father and His Son and therefore our own position has proved that we have been made ready to go forth with Jesus without the camp (of those who falsely profess Him) bearing His reproach and suffering wrongfully.

If John Allfree's understanding of Scripture has advanced no further than the doctrine of changed flesh or as he states, "Sin tending nature which as with us, Jesus possessed also, and was specially strengthened by the Divine legacy of his birth," Then he has a lot more to learn than he and others of his community may think. He is yet in Apostasy.

I close with Paul's advice - 2 Timothy 2:15, also Jude 20 to 25:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life- And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty and power, both now and ever. Amen."

Brother Phil Parry.

From your correspondence:

Brother Douglas McKinlay writes:-

I have read "Adam's Children and The Son of God" and note that the writer, Brother Jelfs, ask for comments. I have just one to offer:

When Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life" He wasn't just saying that in Him was Life or that He was the Spiritual Reality, or the manna their fathers ate in the wilderness and are dead, Jesus was saying that He was the "Bread of God" that came down from heaven (John 6:33). The Bread of God was the sacrifice upon the altar. (See Numbers 28:2; Leviticus 22:25; Leviticus 21:6,8,21). Jesus was saying that He was the God Appointed Sacrifice - The Lamb of God's providing, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Jesus could and would do for man that which the law was unable to do. Why? Because (Hebrews 10:4) the law could and did offer provisional forgiveness for personal sin, but it couldn't give life (Galatians 3:21,22). The law was only an interim measure to convict man of sin and shew him his need of God's provision. Therefore it was unable to clean the conscience. (Hebrews 9:9 and 10:10). (Also Hebrews 9:14, Acts 13:39, Hebrews 10:19 to 22).

Jesus was the altar we have whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle (1 Peter 3:21).

John 6:53 - How do we eat His flesh (the Bread of Life and the sacrifice upon the altar) and drink His blood (the sacrificed Life)? (Leviticus 17:11, Matthew 26:28).

Partaking of the emblems is the ritual but Paul gives us the meaning, Romans 12:1,2, "I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (See also Psalm 50:1 to 5. 2 Samuel 24:24).

Your fellow pilgrim in the liberty wherewith Christ, has made us free.

Douglas McKinlay.

Brother John Stevenson writes:-

Brother Phil Parry's article "Words Spoken By Jesus" seems correct to me and I would like to support his contentions. I remember in one of our N.F. booklets "Even if the circumstances of Jesus' birth (Matthew 1 & 2, Luke 1,2 &3) had not been included in scripture, it would be possible to deduce them from other scriptures." Possible, certainly, because in retrospect we can recognize other scriptures which point to the virgin birth in Bethlehem, but perhaps not very probable when the popular church had, in their absence, devised unlikely guesses, without the fact which we have in black and white.

There are three ways in which the words of Jesus referred to can be understood. The first is the pre-existence and trinity doctrine which is the sort of folly we would expect from the "expert" theologians of the popular church in the second and third centuries, as it went downhill toward rock bottom. The second is to treat it as figurative or metaphorical, which is evidently how Dr. John Thomas understood them. The third way is that proposed by Bro. Parry in C.L. 186, which I feel is the correct and reasonable understanding. It is very likely that Jesus did ascend into heaven to receive instruction from His Father concerning His mission of redemption, as well as His future authority in the Kingdom at the end of the age.

The apostle John was evidently the youngest of the apostles and it is reasonable to suppose that he was deeply impressed and remembered better than the others of his conversations with Jesus, and of the tatter's teaching and preaching. Possibly his keen and studious and attentive mind endeared him to Jesus so that he became "the disciple whom Jesus loved." It would have been helpful and interesting if John had given us details about Jesus' ascent into heaven and His being sent back to earth, but there are probably good reasons why this has been kept from us. We will know in due time.

In the Bible the word Heaven is used in an indefinite way. Sometimes it means the whole universe, or God's abode, or often it refers to the upper part of the atmosphere, below which flying creatures may wander, and which appears blue in the daytime. There is a big difference in these two senses, which could not have been understood in Bible times. When I first read Bro. Phil's article, I first wondered whether ascending into heaven might have meant ascending into a high mountain to meet God, as Moses did. On further reflection I think it is more likely that He ascended far away from earth to meet His Father, God, and to be shown the nature of the universe, and to be instructed in the future course of history. Anyone who argues that Jesus while in His corruptible state could not survive beyond the atmosphere is implying that the Creator does not know and cannot provide the bodily needs of His creatures. One might also wonder why Jesus could not have been visited by angels as were Zechariah and Mary, but He certainly was in Gethsemane and likely was on other occasions also. But it was probably important that Jesus should meet His Father so as to be fully aware of whose Son He was. We have no intimation of when it might have occurred, but can surmise early adulthood, some time before the commencement of His ministry.

I thank Bro. Phil for his enlightening teaching on this important question.

John Stevenson, Australia.

Brother Eric Cave writes:-

Dear Russell, Further to your correspondence with Brother Grant Pearce, my attention was caught by the following paragraph in his letter wherein he makes certain claims:

"Furthermore nowhere in Scripture can we find that sin, either symbolically, representatively, or in type, is put on or in the offering, such a tenet would have defiled it. What is more, sin offerings were detested by God."

On the contrary, 1, Sin is symbolically put upon a sacrifice, 2, It does not defile the sacrifice, and 3, The sacrifice is not detested by God,

To support his claims brother Grant offers the following passages:-

(a) Proverbs 21:3, “To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to YHWH than sacrifice.”

(b) Isaiah 1:16,17, “Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before your eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

(c) Jeremiah 7:23, “But this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk in all the ways that I have commanded you that it may be well unto you.”

(d) 1 Samuel 15:22, “Samuel said. Hath YHWH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of YHWH? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”

Only two of the above quotations even mention the word sacrifice, and neither of those mention sacrifices for sin. None of them mention the word defile, or anything to do with God’s detestation. Brother Grant says that he will hold on to his views until defeated by Scripture. Let us see what Scripture says.

The specific chapter which appertains to sin offerings is Leviticus 4 which describes the occasions when a sin has been committed by 1), an anointed priest (verse 3); 2), the whole congregation (verse 13); 3), one of the rulers (verse 22); and 4), one of the common people (verse 27). In every case the sinner, the priest, or the elder of the people on their behalf, or the ruler, or the individual sinner among the common people was required to lay his or their hands upon the head of the animal presented for sacrifice before it was slain.

The same necessity to lay hands on the animal of the herd or the flock for a burnt offering, Leviticus 1:4, or a peace offering, Leviticus 3:2, applied and any Jew will confirm that the symbolism transferred the guilt of the offerer to the animal which was slain instead of the sinner. The burnt offerings and peace offerings whether by individuals or daily in Temple worship memorialised that divine mercy extended to Adam when he yielded himself servant to Sin together with all in his loins, but was spared the penalty of death that day and permitted to live out his natural span when He slew that lamb or lambs whose skins were fashioned by the angel into flesh covering ‘*kathonahs*.’ The flesh of the sin offerings was specifically required to be eaten by the priests, Leviticus 6:25, “Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed shall the sin offering be killed before YHWH. It is most holy. The priest that offereth it for sin shall eat it: in the holy place shall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

Does YHWH instruct his anointed priests to eat defiled and detested flesh brother Grant?

And there is more. When John the Baptist began to preach, we read, “Then went out to him all Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matthew 3:5,6). They went to John burdened with sin, desirous of having those burdens washed away into Jordan. They arose from the water cleansed from sin. Verse 8, even Pharisees and Sadducees amongst them but who failed to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. But what a difference when Jesus came to John without any burden of sin, without any inherited alienation by reason of having been in Adam’s loins when Adam sinned, His life came direct from God, not by the will of the flesh. John Baptist saw and protested “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest thou to me?” So why did Jesus say, “Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.”?

There is only one possible explanation. Jesus went down into Jordan and took to Himself those burdens that the people had cast off. He arose clothed upon with the iniquities of the people which He carried to Calvary 3½ years later. “YHWH hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” “He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” “But now once in the end of the world (Greek *aion* = age. the Jewish dispensation) hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” “And he is the propitiation (mercy seat) for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” “And

ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”

“Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Before the ministry began, before one single miracle had been performed to confirm the truth of the gospel message we have this remarkable parable, this sign of the divine purpose In providing an only begotten Son to take away the sin of the world, a work which began when He took our sins upon Himself by baptism and completed at Calvary.

Brother Grant Is correct when he says that sin cannot be put into an offering but wrong when he says that It cannot be put on an offering, It can and was. Alleluia, Praise be to YHWH.

Brother Eric Cave.

* * *

Brother Phil Parry also writes in response to Brother Grant Pearce:-

Dear Russell, Warmest Greetings in Jesus’ Name. I found Bro. Grant Pearce’s comments on Adam’s sin very surprising and a little confusing. He writes:

“As to Adam’s sin, I say, So what? He was on trial for the development of character and testing. It was no more heinous or wicked than those of king David and yet an our loving and merciful Father forgave them both beyond measure. The death sentence in both cases and in God’s infinite mercy as a loving Father was remitted absolutely. When God forgives, He does just that. End of story.”

I have to disagree with Grant’s statement “remitted absolutely,” for in fact a life was taken by the shedding of blood of a lamb, not for the provision of meat for sustenance (the trees of the garden were for this purpose), but for a covering of the sin or figurative nakedness before God of Adam and Eve and foreshadowing one who would give His life to cover their debt (forfeiture of life) to the violated law. God is seen therefore to be just and the Justifier of those who believe in the antitype Jesus. God provided the lambs and the coverings, it was for Adam and Eve to put them on and receive atonement. This lesson of faith in the Grace of God continued even to Moses.

Grant should first consider therefore the beginning of the story and the central figure of God’s plan and purpose, and not rule out what he appears to be doing, that is redemption and atonement first, through the blood of Christ, from personal sin in Adam’s case and Federal sin in our case. Personal forgiveness is when related to God by faith under whichever dispensation we live. And yes, in this relationship when God forgives, He does just that, as Brother Grant says. I ask him then to consider Leviticus 17:11, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”

It did this typically for Adam and Eve, any digression later from God’s way depended on forgiveness in the Love and Mercy of God.

It is impossible to ignore the words of Jesus in Matthew 20:28 “Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. This refers to past, present and future.

We are told by the Apostle, “It was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin,” also that though sins were confessed under the rituals of the Law, a remembrance of sins was made every year, this signifying that sins had not been taken away absolutely, but must be ratified by human blood. Hence the Apostle’s words to the Hebrews chapter 9 and especially verse 15, “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption (or purchase) of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” 1 Timothy 2:6 and 2 Timothy 1:9,10.

Brother Phil Parry.

Further to the article published in our last C.L. Brother Grant Pearce wrote the following letter; however, I would point out that at the time of writing he had not seen the above letters: -

At the conclusion of my note (See C.L.186, page 11) I asked the question, “Did the Lord Jesus’ murderous death on a Roman torture stake arise as a sweet smell savour” to His heavenly Father? The Great God of Israel with significant attributes of Himself of infinite mercy and extending forgiveness to thousands. A loving Father of His Beloved Son, who was holy, harmless and undefiled, whom He led by the hand and with whom He was well pleased... was this abominable incident what a loving Father wanted, to be ‘satisfied’ before He would extend mercy and condescend to mortal man? An incident our religious teachers termed a ‘sacrificial death,’ or ‘in sacrificial death,’ an ‘expiatory sacrifice’? Was this what a loving merciful God of the wonderful attributes listed above wanted in contradiction, when He previously expressly forbid any form of human sacrifice and abhorred such as abomination, not once asking for, nor requiring and warning Israel against it... EVER? That our loving heavenly Father actually required this grotesque spectacle of His dearly beloved only Son, a mangled tortured body hanging on a Roman torture stake?

Such an idea is preposterous, insane, defames and slanders the name of God and tears Psalm 103 completely out of the Bible! It is paganism of the worst kind.

Does not Scripture say “YOU, you Jews killed the Prince of Life? “...and there was darkness over the whole land”? There has to be a better answer.

Yet this grotesque tenet is the basis of the Christian world today. The emphasis being on the death of a man hanging on a Roman torture stake. Was this what a loving merciful God wanted before He would be satisfied? No, No, No, a thousand times No!

The point is a foreordained plan was in operation, stage by stage, set by set, proven by the fact that John 1:1-3 precedes Genesis 1 and verified by Ephesians 1:5-9, “we were chosen before the foundation of the world” God simply allowed the wickedness of man in it’s enormity to prevail as a further stage in the progression of the Divine Plan.

Jesus died because He would not deny His faith, turning the other cheek, suffering the evil until it killed Him, setting His face like flint towards Jerusalem, Isaiah 50:5-9, knowing full well a terrible end awaited there; for the purpose of bringing many sons to glory. Was Jesus a sacrificial offering “instead of us” as a representative or even a substitute or was He the PATTERN man, that we should walk in His steps?

It was His life of sacrifice which Paul said He presented to God as OLAH; the continually ascending burnt offering in figure on our behalf. Why was it needful on our behalf? Because God said He would give Him for a Covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles. That is saying that a LIFE of sacrifice - yielding to God His most prized possession which is life, heart, mind, body and soul, was completely dedicated, devoted to God.

In Leviticus 27:29 we read, “None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; but shall, surely be put to death.” Jesus voluntarily devoted His LIFE in sacrifice to God; it was a freewill offering, but being devoted for a cause it could not be terminated at the wish of the offerer. It must be put to death. Not sacrificially slain as set out at the beginning of the burnt sacrifice, but put to death. Thus we have the words of Jesus confirmed when He said, “Unless a grain of wheat should die and go into the ground, it remains alone, but if it die it brings forth much fruit.” That is saying plainly the achievement of the presentation of the OLAH, which needful in itself benefitted no-one until the offerer died.

I John 3:16, Ephesians 5:2 and Romans 12:1 precisely refer to Jesus’ life of sacrifice; presenting an example for us to follow. 1 John 3:36 relates specifically to laying down His LIFE in service on our behalf, even as a soldier lays down his life for King and country - die if need be, but that is beside the point being discussed.

Both Ephesians 5:2 and Romans 12:1 are examples to follow in offering ourselves to God as a burnt sacrifice, the OLAH the continually ascending offering, the sweet smell savour. John 10:17,18 applies to everyone of us, we can please ourselves what we do with our lives, offer it to God or use it for our own self;

the reward will be for service rendered, either to self or to God. Each of us is required to lay down our lives for our brethren, not to gain something for ourselves which is erroneously claimed in some quarters Jesus did (“He did it for Himself that it might be for us”). God will reward us for our labour in His vineyard.

Dedicated LIFE, devoted LIFE of the sacrifices under the law, the animals, for the poor, the turtle doves, or as little as the half *ephar* of fine flour, Jesus life, our lives... YES! Expiatory sacrificial death...NO! The emphasis that is placed upon the death of the offering is wrong and leads us into terrible danger; it is church doctrine and we must get rid of it out of our thinking. What is the atoning factor in the offerings? The dead lamb or the contrite, repentant heart, soul and mind of the offerer? The answer is obvious

kindest Regards, Russell, and sorry to be so argy bargy, I must speak my mind now.

Brother Grant.

* * *

In response to the above letter I wrote to Brother Grant on the 7th January as follows:-

Dear Brother Grant, Greetings in Jesus’ Great Name. We all feel that the murder of Jesus Christ on Calvary was an abhorrent evil and we wish there had been some other way, however, Jesus Himself knew there was no other way to save God-fearing sons of Adam when He said “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.” While the killing was unwarranted, Jesus’ willingness to save His dying kinsmen reveals His great love towards us reflecting perfectly that of His Father’s.

When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden with the possibility of eternal life as the reward for keeping God’s Law, it seems evident that even the smallest misdemeanour would disqualify them. God is perfect in all His ways and if they were to aspire to share eternity with Him then perfect obedience was the necessary part of their probation. So it was that when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree it disqualified them from any reward. They had not been told they would be offered forgiveness; they had been told the penalty - “in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” However, in the event of disobedience the penalty of dying that day was not imposed on them but an animal was slain which provided them with a covering. I believe this has two aspects. Not only a covering for their sin but also a covering for their bodies as a constant reminder of their sin and need of God’s mercy and loving kindness as day by day they wore those garments. Yet even though their sin was covered over and they were forgiven, the sin was not taken away.

We read in the letter to the Hebrews (9:22) that there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood. All the sacrifices for sin from the time of Adam up to the time of Jesus were only a covering over of sins, a temporary arrangement, for we are again told that the blood of animals can never take away sin. (Hebrews 10:4). However, Jesus came to take away the sin of the world. That is the difference - in Jesus Christ, sin is not covered over but taken away. Hence because Jesus took away sin it is through Him alone that forgiveness is given. “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

Going on to the book of Revelation we are told that Jesus was “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8). In what way was He the lamb slain from the foundation of the world? The answer I believe is that Jesus died because Adam didn’t.

To explain further - it was in the Father’s plan from the beginning that Jesus should take away Adam’s sin, and with this in mind God allowed Adam to live out his days, in which time Adam also passed on life to his posterity. In effect, ever since the events in the Garden of Eden sin has been forgiven through Jesus Christ, for by the grace of God we are all concluded under the sin of Adam, and thereby we can have forgiveness through the one offering of Jesus Christ. However much we wish there was some other way than for Jesus to suffer, I very reluctantly cannot see how there could have been.

A further comment regarding your point about human sacrifice being abhorrent to God, this was and is indeed the case but the main reason is that no one else could redeem his brother, no one else could purchase us to God, no one else could give his life a ransom for others. No one else could take away our sins and offer us forgiveness. Only Jesus was free to do this for us and this was due to His Sonship. Any other human sacrifice was a useless murder and waste of human life. At the very best, the deaths of martyrs such as Stephen's - Acts 7:59,60, "And they stoned Stephen, calling on the name of the Lord saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this he fell asleep," were not pleasing to God, though they are a witness to God's love and grace. All such as these will receive greater reward as Hebrews 11 tells us.

You also say that sin offerings were detested by God, but this was not always so. The ones that were detested were those made without any change of heart, performed merely as a ritual ceremony. There was no reason why God should want or accept these offerings which were not performed in the right spirit. It was the response in people's hearts and minds to a loving Father that He longed to see and which, in these cases, was not forthcoming. Little wonder that God detested them.

You say you "will hold on to my present views until defeated by Scripture." I wonder, do you feel any of the Scriptures used above go any way to defeating your views? I look forward to your response.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17). May we be such friends in the Lord Jesus,

Russell.

Continuing my correspondence with Brother Graeham Mansfield, Editor of the "Logos" magazine, here is my latest letter to him, dated 14th December 2000:-

Dear Graeham, Thank you for your letter of the 21st November in reply to my enquiry concerning the Lord being tempted in all points as we are. I am aware that no two people have the same temptations nor the same level of temptation, yet we are all tempted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, including Jesus.

I agree with much of your letter, especially with your fourth paragraph in which you say "Inasmuch as the Deity was the Father of the Lord Jesus, through the medium of the Holy Spirit, His Son was made strong (Psalm 80:17)," and that He was provided with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, (Isaiah 11:2), also that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:19." I have no problem at all with these quotations.

However, in my view your reply raises more problems than it solves.

You say in the third paragraph that apart from the Lord "all others" are "born of sinful parents and inheriting the bias towards inevitable evil." While I agree that our parents were sinful in their time, from what Scriptures do you deduce that there is in "the physical condition of our nature the bias towards evil"?

Is it not a simple concept that law gives choice? Indeed, that it is law alone which can give choice, and that sin is transgression of law. We do wrong whenever we break God's law and we do right when we keep His law. It is a matter of law and is therefore confined to what is legal and what is illegal.

I believe Genesis 2:17 means what it says: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The fact that Adam ate of the tree and did not die that day, shows the mercy of God. Do you have any difficulty with this view?

I would be most grateful for a clear answer. With sincere regards, Russell.

MISCELLANEA

I have recently started reading a “Logos” publication entitled “The Atonement - Salvation Through The Blood of Christ.” This book contains “The Atonement” by C.C. Walker; “The Slain Lamb” by R.Roberts; “32 Questions and Answers,” a “Renunciatorist Theory” set out as a proposition followed by 84 questions; the “Declaration of Fellowship” letter; the “Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility;” “The Blood of Christ” by R.Roberts, and 39 Logos Expositions.

“The Atonement” by C.C.Walker has been dealt with in various of our publications such as “Jesus My Substitute” by A.L.Wilson and to some extent in “Present Forgiveness and Immortal Resurrection of the Righteous” by William Richmond and “To The Law and The Testimony” which is a compilation of work by several authors. Coincidentally, we are now re-publishing a review of “The Atonement,” in four parts, (see page 24).

“The Slain Lamb” by R.Roberts which people imagine is the answer to “The Sacrifice of Christ” by Edward Turney and in reality is not. This article has been extensively and critically discussed in our publications. Most recently in “Aspects of the Atonement - 1873”

“32 Questions and Answers” - the questions were suggested by David Handley and answered by Edward Turney and published 5th June 1873. Upon publication of these answers R.Roberts decided to answer them also, and published them in The Christadelphian for July 1873. This publication by “Logos” contains only R.Roberts answers. Our publication “Aspects of the Atonement - 1873” gives both sets of answer – Roberts’ and Turney’s, set side by side for comparison.

“The Renunciatorist Theory” is set out as a proposition drawn up by Robert Roberts and is followed by 84 questions, published in The Christadelphian for October 1873. The proposition reads thus:-

That the body of Jesus did not inherit the curse of Adam, though derived from him through Mary; and was therefore mortal; that his natural life was “free;” that in this “free” natural life, he “earned eternal life,” and might, if he had so chosen, have avoided death, or even refused to die upon the cross, and entered into eternal life alone; his death being the act of his own free will, and not in any sense necessary for his own salvation; that his sacrifice consisted in the offering up of an unforfeited life, in payment of the penalty incurred by Adam and his posterity, which was eternal death; that his unforfeited life was slain in the room and stead of the forfeited lives of all believers of the races of Adam.

The wording of the proposition is perhaps quite good coming from a Christadelphian, but it is far from accurate and certainly not what one would expect from a “Renunciatorist.” Many years ago Islip Collyer wrote (in “The Meaning of Sacrifice”) “If I ask them (his Christadelphian brethren) what is meant by Clean Flesh Heresy, I am given an explanation that is promptly repudiated by those who are supposed to believe it.” The main reason for this I am sure is due to R.Roberts misrepresentation of Edward Turney in his book “The Slain Lamb.” The whole of Christadelphia seems to accept what he wrote about the Clean Flesh Heresy as accurate, sadly, it was not.

The proposition needs some alterations, such as:-

That the body of Jesus was not “concluded under sin” as Jesus life was not passed down from Adam. Jesus was not one of Adam’s progeny, having received a fresh life as the only begotten of the Father; He was therefore free of mortality (as understood by Robert Roberts) and in that fresh and free life He held on to His inheritance of eternal life by perfect obedience to the Law of God and need not have gone to the cross as this was no part of the Law; but of His own free will He chose the way of crucifixion in order to save all who love God and seek forgiveness; that His sacrifice consisted in the offering of His natural life in place of Adam’s natural life which Adam lost the right to by transgression; that the extension of Adam’s life enabled mortal life to pass from father to child to this

day and all who will can receive forgiveness and eternal life through baptism into Jesus thereby coming out of Adam and into Jesus, that this is reconciliation with God.

Had Robert Roberts proposition accurately reflected Renunciationist beliefs then most of the 84 questions would have been irrelevant while the remainder are easily answered with little explanation and understanding.

Several of the questions asked have to do with what would have happened to all the promises if Jesus had not gone to the cross, but before asking those sort of questions Christadelphians have to answer for themselves what would have happened to the promises if Jesus had sinned, which they admit was possible.

If it is of interest to readers all 84 questions will be set out and answered but for now we will leave the matter here.

The "Declaration Letter" dated 14th Oct. 1873, contained an agreement form which it was necessary for Christadelphians in Birmingham (Temperance Hall) to sign before being allowed to continue fellowship. In the last paragraph of this letter Bro. Roberts wrote

"Those who do not join in this act (of signing) will remain in fellowship with those who deny the truth, and will disconnect themselves from those who may unite in stepping aside from a connection which has become a fountain of every evil work."

The "Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility" took place in 1894 and was between R.Roberts and J.J.Andrew. The proposition debated was "That resurrection to the judgment-seat of Christ will comprise some who have not been justified by the blood of Christ." Robert Roberts affirmed the proposition while Brother Andrew denied it.

The final part of the book contains 39 Logos Expositions mainly from the writings of H.P.Mansfield. However the 17th of these expositions written by Brother A. Jannaway caught my attention with the title "How Sin Affected Human Nature," this article is now reproduced on pages 21 to 24 below.

* * *

In response to the editorial in the last C.L. Brother Eric Cave wrote to say that he was surprised to read that "In 1960 under the Negev desert a virtual fossil ocean was discovered with brackish salt water millions of years old." How could this be when the earth was only six thousand years old? Have we never heard the evidence for a "young earth"?

On learning we knew nothing of a "young earth" theory, Brother Eric Cave sent a book for Helen Brady and I to consider, written by Brother Brian Hurn entitled "The Genesis Creation." I have to admit to finding Brian Hum's style difficult to read mainly because of many assumptions stated as facts and the numerous asides, which while interesting, broke into the flow of reading; there were also occasions of non sequitur arguments which undermined the validity he would have us place on his work. Sorry to be so critical of his efforts, especially as the writing of a book is beyond my own capabilities, but all in all I felt I was being manipulated into accepting the author's views without sufficient justification and his efforts did not have the power to convince me. It was not until I came to the last section of the book where he quotes anecdotes from scientific sources that I felt there was something in what he was saying. This section held me spell-bound but sadly, it was all too short.

The main idea put forward based on the literal reading of Exodus 20:11, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is..." is that at a time when there was nothing in the universe, God created a mass of light as the substance from which to make all things, and from this He first took a tiny portion with which to make the earth. This earth had to be placed far enough away from the great mass of light so that it would not be too hot and it also had to rotate so that the temperature stayed even all over.

So from day one we have night and day by these rotations. Next day God separated the waters under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament, thus forming a cloud layer above an earth

covered with water. The earth was even all over without canyons and mountains and it has been estimated that there could have been a layer of water covering the globe to a depth of about one and a half miles.

On the third day God gathered the waters together, by forcing up mountain ranges, thus making dry land appear. "God called the dry land earth and the gathering together of water called he seas." The same day God brought forth grass, herb and fruit trees all after their own kind.

On the fourth day God said "Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night..." Thus God made the sun and moon; the sun to replace the great mass of light with which God was about to make all the stars of the universe (which He did this day also), the sun had necessarily to be that much closer to the earth because it was merely a tiny fraction of the original mass.

On day five God created all living creatures in the seas "and flying fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

On day six God created all animals, cattle and creeping things; then finally He made man in His own image.

In considering this, perhaps scientists are not so far out on their "Big Bang" theory. The problem with that theory is seen when one asks what went bang? Perhaps we know the answer - the mass of light which God created. We have a far more stupendous "bang" by a six-day creation than scientists ever imagined in their evolutionary theories.

I am not against belief in a six-day creation; there is no doubt God is Almighty. A quick creation answers questions such as, how were trees pollinated to bring forth fruit before insects were created? But why the haste? And is believing in a literal six-day creation a necessary tenet of our faith? I don't see that it is. However I have an open mind on these matters.

No doubt we shall have views expressed by others on this subject and all are welcome, but at present I feel that the Bible record is insufficient to make a firm stand for a literal six-day creation. Regarding scientific information, I know too little about it at present.

Russell.

The article which follows is taken from "The Atonement - Salvation Through The Blood of Christ" published by "Logos," written by Brother A. Jannaway and it is meant to teach against "The Clean Flesh Heresy" by showing what physical changes took place when Adam sinned, how and why they came about.

HOW SIN AFFECTED HUMAN NATURE

Adam Before and After Transgression. Adam was made "a living soul." He was formed from "the dust of the ground" and animated by "the breath of life," and pronounced "very good." These are truths which the Scriptures reveal, simply and plainly (Genesis 2:7; 1:31; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

When created, Adam was placed under a law, and warned that, in the event of disobedience, death would follow: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Adam was a probationer - neither subject to death nor incapable of dying. His destiny was to be determined by his behaviour towards the Divine commandment. Brother Thomas well expresses the facts of the case: "When the dust of the ground was formed into a body of life, or living soul, or as Paul terms it, a physical or natural body, it was a very good animal creation. It was not a pneumatic, or spirit body, indeed, for it would then have been immortal and incorruptible, and could neither have sinned nor have been subject to death; but for an animal or natural body, it was 'very good,' and capable of an existence free from evil, as long as its probationary 'aion,' or period, might continue." (Eureka, volume 1 pages 247,248).

Adam yielded to temptation and disobeyed; and death, the threatened penalty, followed, “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” (Romans 5:12).

The Gravity of Adam’s Offence. Before going further let us endeavour to realize the gravity of Adam’s offence. It is needful to do this, otherwise we shall not see the reason for the consequences which ensued, nor the wisdom of God in subjecting the descendants of Adam to the curse of death. Nor shall we appreciate the solemn and impressive measures adopted by God for the removal, in harmony with His majesty and holiness, of the effects of the crime.

God had been insulted, His word disbelieved, His will ignored, His authority flouted. We need to pause at this stage of our consideration and reflect. Who was God, Who had been so slighted? And who was man, who had been guilty of so gross and daring an act? The Scriptures have been written to give us the necessary information on these fundamental and vital questions. No one will attain unto everlasting life, we may be quite sure, who has not well learned the lessons raised by these questions.

God is described as a God of love (1 John 4:8) - a glorious fact! But the Scriptures do not stop here. They reveal that, in certain circumstances, God is also a “devouring” or “consuming” fire (Deuteronomy 9:3; Hebrews 12:29). It is written that He is very “jealous” and incomparably “holy,” “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Habakkuk 1:13). “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Hebrews 10:31).

From God we turn to Adam: the sinner. Who was Adam? A creature of the dust, brought into being to glorify and give pleasure to his Maker, blessed with the most delightful and beautiful surroundings. He had free communion with the angels of heaven. There was then no breach between God and man. But Adam abused his privileges, and fell grievously and ignominiously. Although given all things requisite to enable him to pass successfully his term of educational training and testing, he behaved unworthily and wickedly. He set his Creator at naught, despised His goodness, and performed the part of an ungrateful rebel. Such is the record of our first parent, the federal head of the Adamic family. Hence the curse.

New Conditions Introduced by Sin. Many have asked, Why did not God summarily annihilate Adam, and start afresh by creating a new man? Far wiser is it to note, humbly and reverently, what God did, than to exercise the mind vainly over such an enquiry. The wonderful and beneficent scheme of God for human salvation more than eclipses any little bewildering problems which finite man may raise, but cannot solve. “O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

Adam’s fall originated an entirely new situation. He was now, through his transgression, a mortal or dying man, related to toil, sorrow and death: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:19). He was “made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope” (Romans 8:20). For man’s sake the very earth was marred and blighted: “Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.” (Genesis 3:17).

This condition of the earth is illustrative of the state of flesh after transgression. As the earth naturally brings forth thorns and thistles so also does human nature, as Paul reminds us (see Hebrews 6:8) as the earth must be cultivated to destroy that which it naturally produces, so also must we.

The scope of the curse is amplified in the words spoken to Eve: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.” (Genesis 3:16). The sentence passed on the serpent likewise evidences the extent and the terrible nature of the changes that had taken place in both the body and the mind of man. The words addressed to the serpent indicate the birth at this time of a sin-principle, entailing conflict between good and evil, which was to continue until the “serpent” (and all that is signified by it) should be completely destroyed: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15).

The clear evidence of Genesis 3 is that sin had a physical reaction on creation: the serpent crawled upon its belly; all other animal creation was cursed (verse 4 - “above all cattle”); the woman found her sorrow and

conception multiplied; the earth brought forth thorns and thistles; man was made subject to death. How inconsistent is the theory that rejects the concept of any physical deterioration in human nature; that claims that man is physically in the “very good” state of original creation! It fails utterly to take heed to facts.

The manner in which Adam became mortal, and a victim of bodily and mental suffering, also how thorns and thistles made their appearance, are matters that should not distress us, or prove a source of contention. Our wisdom lies in accepting facts, taking care not to obscure or nullify them by indulging in speculation or metaphysical reasoning.

Who can explain the material change which occurred in Miriam and Gehazi to transform them into lepers? Or to cause the sudden and startling death of Ananias and Sapphira? Or a host of other happenings, equally baffling - to wit: the devouring of King Herod by worms, and the smiting of Elymas with blindness?

So Adam, by decree of the Almighty, became mortal. Through his disobedience the law of sin and death became part and parcel of his very being. His nature was now defiled and defiling. These are palpable, glaring facts, borne out by numerous passages, as a further examination of the Scriptures will abundantly show.

The Error of The Clean Flesh Theory. Why do we lay such stress on these truths? Because it is just here where the differences between the Truth and the “clean flesh” theory begin.

Adam’s sin and the resultant curse, say they, in no way altered or physically defiled his nature - the principle of mortality, or corruption, was as much an element of his constitution before as after his sin. The following statements have been made:

“To demand change of physical nature for the man is biblically unwarranted, as it is superfluous.”

“The physical phase of Brother Thomas’ view is unwarranted by fact or Scripture.”

“Flesh, defiled or unclean, because of moral transgression, is to us incomprehensible.”

“All this... nonsense you preach about ‘unclean flesh,’ ‘sin nature’ and a Saviour ‘with a body as unclean as the bodies of those for whom He died’ (Brother Thomas) is a false gospel and a false Christ, and I want no part of the blasphemy involved in preaching it.”

Let clean flesh theorists advance one Scripture that claims that man is now physically in a “very good” state! On the contrary, since Adam sinned and was condemned, human nature is nowhere styled “very good,” but instead it is called “sinful flesh” or “the flesh of sin” (Romans 8:3 - R.V.).

Paul taught that “in the flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:17,18). He referred to “sin that dwelleth in me” (Romans 7:17,20), and to the “law of sin which is in my members” (Romans 7:23). This sinfulness is referred to by Peter as “the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

The Depraved Condition of Human Nature. That the term “lust” is applied to lawful as well as unlawful desire is quite true, but it is manifest that the Apostle’s use of it, in the passage quoted, is in the latter sense. He, evidently, alluded to an inherent sinful tendency, which prompts its possessors to transgression and leads to death. James also employed the word in the same way (James 1:14,15). Paul repeatedly used the term in this manner: “The lusts of the flesh” (Ephesians 2:3). “The lusts of their own hearts” (Romans 1:24). “The flesh with the passions and lusts thereof” (Galatians 5:24).

Many are the Scriptures which speak of the depraved and debasing character of human nature, for example: “The mind of the flesh is death” (Romans 8:6 - R.V.). “The flesh lusteth against the spirit” (Galatians 5:17-21). The familiar words of Christ reveal the same truth: “Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,” etc. (Matthew 15:19). Also those of Jeremiah: “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jeremiah 17:9). God also, at the time of the flood made reference to the same fact: “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Genesis 8:21); 6:5).

All these passages are explained away to suit the exegeses of the “clean flesh” theory, but their fair and obvious meaning is that our nature is sinful, and the root and stronghold of every wickedness.

How striking and confirmatory, too, of the truth on this question, are the Spirit's numerous warnings and exhortations. For example: "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (Romans 8:13). "Make not provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8). "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Timothy 2:22).

Paul's endeavour, expressed in his letter to the Corinthians, conveys the same thought respecting the corrupting character of human nature: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Corinthians 9:27). The Apostle, in view of his evil and condemned nature, exclaimed (what Adam might have said after his condemnation): "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (Romans 7:24).

Brother Thomas did not exaggerate when he said that there was nothing more "devilish" under the sun than sin-contaminated human nature. This must be the verdict, surely, of every right-minded Christadelphian. Through our native sinfulness how often we fail to attain to the Divine standard. Has not this been the lament of all Bible worthies? For man, then, to tell us, in spite of the Spirit's teaching and our own experience, that the flesh is not inherently depraved, defiled, sinful, is to mock us. Why do they do it? It is the root of error, controversy, division.

Brother A. Jannaway.

"The Atonement" by C.C.Walker "X-Rayed" by A.L.Wilson

We are grateful to Brother John Stevenson for sending a photocopy of the original article which follows and was distributed by the author, Brother A.L.Wilson, perhaps in the 1930's. So far as we are aware, this article has not been circulated again since that time and is therefore unknown to most of us. We now propose to publish it in four parts in this and subsequent Circular Letters.

The author, Andrew Wilson was well up in the Greek language. He knew enough of the importance of Bible reading to see the need for a correct understanding of the Atonement from the Scriptures to confound the teaching and views of Robert Roberts and those who followed his expositions on that subject, such as C.C.Walker.

In his preface to "Jesus at the Bar" Andrew Wilson wrote;

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

We commend the following article as the most comprehensive in dealing with Romans 8:3 and related texts:

"THE ATONEMENT" X-RAYED

THE X-RAYS. While we grant there is much" valuable instruction, definitions and figures of speech in friend Walker's pamphlet on "The Atonement," it utterly fails to convinced us that he has demonstrated The Divine Principle or Redemption. Regarding language it is declared that every language under the sun is traceable to one Mother Tongue and the farther back through the ages we go, the language becomes the more metaphorical. There is however, one figure which has pleased God to reserve to Himself alone, viz. prolapsis :- pro- "before"; lepsis - "I take." God can, therefore, in safety say, "He chose us in Him – pro

katabolees kosbou.” God alone can employ a past tense for a future accomplishment; “Before I formed thee in the womb, I knew thee.” Did anyone know himself then?

This figure confounds for all time the pagan delusion of pre-existence and three co- equal, co-eternal gods. If we take Philippians 2:5-8 as it stands in the A.V., no soul could deny pre-existence; Christ is there represented by King James’ translators as “having left heaven, and humbled himself even to be made a Man, but the English rules of proximity and priority demand that the last clause of that Scripture ought to be the first. E.g., “Having been made in the likeness of man, and being in condition as a man...” The Apostle here forces the irrevocable necessity of Jesus first being made, or created, before He could possibly undertake the subordinate “serving” here referred to. His “being made” was the first requisite and, please note particularly, Jesus, not the Actor in His own creation. Active transitive verbs govern nouns in the objective case and demonstrate that Jesus required first to be made. Hence the translation is a crafty Trinitarian trick!

PROXIMITY AND PRIORITY. To an English reader, Greek is an inverted and extremely dislocated language, hence the necessity for strict adherence to the above rules. Proximity demands that “no word, phrase, nor clause should come between antecedent and its relative,” to avoid which, authorities advise “priority” when possible.

Example of dislocation: “Handsome cottage for sale, by old lady covered with ivy.” Every translation I have examined of Hebrews 9:15 presents an absurd paradox, viz., “The redemption of transgressions.”

The Greek thought is “so that a death having taken place for the deliverance (apo lactrosin) of those (ton) under the first covenant transgressions...”

Here the Greek term ton, as in many other instances, takes the function of a plural relative pronoun; e.g. “Of those (ton) prisoners;” of those [ton] being ill-treated; of those (ton) leading” (Hebrews 33:3; 7:20). “For those (tov) (sins) of the people” (9:7); “By those (tov) having heard” (2:3, etc., etc.).

METAPHOR. Metaphor is a change of form. The very term explains itself, when we say, “He was a lion in the fight.” It is more forcible than the simile, which is a mere likeness. We also have, “The lion of the Tribe of Judah.” This very metaphor spells “conquering and to conquer.” Was He not also “The Lamb of God” (1 Peter 3:19). Our ransom (anti-lutron) price”? This is the most comprehensive metaphor on earth, because He willingly laid down his life’s blood, a ransom (anti-lutron) in place of man. I challenge the world to refute this Divine Greek truth.

SYNONYM. There are fewer of these than the majority imagine. Parable and allegory are similar, only the latter is taller than the former.

METONYM. Metonym is a change of name, an ellipsis, or an abridgement of speech; e.g. “The foolishness of God is wiser than men,” or “the kettle boils.” I pronounce painful to behold you pouring out the water and attempting to drink the kettle. Paul stands ever dux* [see Endnote 1] on this figure. This fact called forth Peter’s warning, not to misconstrue Paul’s words to our own destruction (2 Peter 3:16). We are, therefore, grateful for your reminder of these “Divine rules,” by which all of us can be guided. Being in possession of these Divine rules, then, let us get to business straightaway.

REDEEM AND DELIVER. Are these terms synonymous? If not, are they antagonistic? If not, does deliverance nullify the fact that in the sacrifice of Christ there was a ransom paid for man? Could the sinner possibly have been delivered apart from a ransom? Spit out and speak plainly. Shall I actually require to define these terms and point out the shades of difference? God alone gives the unmistakable and concise distinction between these terms:

“Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom” (Job 33:24). Will you say this deliverance could possibly have taken place apart from this ransom? Then in Paul’s words, “Christ died in vain” Galatians 2:21). Pagan hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh has dazzled your eyes from perceiving that the term redeem is pregnant with the thought that the article previously belonged to God. Did Adam belong to God? Did not God desire to buy Adam back? Now we are getting to business. Can a human soul refute this Divine truth?

Ordinary purchase contains no thought of previous possession and redemption. whereas deliverance is positively destitute of the two distinctions. We can deliver by any means apart from a ransom, but can you redeem apart from a ransom? Hence the context must ever decide whether deliverance is the result of previous ransom.

RANSOM. On page 4 you say: “Thus, as to ransom, Jesus says, The Son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).” “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for many” (1 Timothy 2:6, Mark 10:45).

I reply, the above selection of glorious Divine truth from the pen of a man who is spending his strength to refute ransom is inconceivable! You commenced your pamphlet as a Past Master and Exponent of Figures, Terms and Definitions- I ask, what prevented your definition and exposition of the Greek thought in these very terms you quote? viz., “He gave his life a ransom in place of (*anti-lutron*) many”? The accurate definition of this term alone annihilates root and branch, the cause which forces you to reject the ransom, viz., your assumption that Jesus required to go through the jaws of execution to extricate Himself from your double curse against Him. It is not the Word of God you quote which we regret, but your subtle, fallacious construction you put on it; also your “perfectly good rendering of Romans 8:3.”

Thank God alone there is no room for quibble regarding the Greek term “*anti-lutron*” - A ransom in place of. No Greek scholar on earth, even atheist, would expose his stupidity even to attempt to deny it. Will you, please, risk a professional test on this point, for insertion in your Magazine?

The thought, yea, the only thought contained in it is, as the Master declared, “The Son of man came, not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom - *anti-lutron* - in place of many.” The one Federal Head involved all, even those not yet born. The second Federal Head can extricate whosoever will (John 3:16).

The same thought is irrefutably expressed in the terms Redeem, Redeemed, Redeemer and Redemption,” but we crave special attention to the term Ransom, because it expresses the thought in the purest, unmistakable form. To a Christadelphian the Highest Authority on earth is Dr. Thomas. Let us then by all means hear him. He says:

“Redemption means to buy back, hence it is release for a ransom. All who become God’s servants are, therefore, released from a former lord by purchase. The Purchaser is God, and the price, or ransom paid, is the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, even without spot.”

I pronounce the above the best and the most accurate pronouncement of Divine truth in latter day theology *[see Endnote 2]. Dare you, therefore, uproot that Divine thought in the very texts you quote, even the oath of God containing the identical terms the Dr. demonstrates in the above? Could you read into these Divine terms your pagan assumption of the beloved of God requiring to go through the jaws of execution before He could extricate Himself from your double curse against Him? God in heaven! Wrench from off your eyes the veil of her who has intoxicated all nations and permit all to extend to each other that Holy Kiss before the fatal bell shall toll.

Why spend your literary powers to blot out God’s just ransom? While these terms ever convey the thought of a price having been paid, they also convey the thought of release, or the liberation of those who accept the gracious gift. If therefore, you involve Jesus in any curse whatever, then explain how a man on earth, or an angel from heaven, could sacrifice his own debt? Could you possibly exhibit two more antagonistic terms? Does not the very term debt blaspheme sacrifice? With such an assumption, where, O tell me where. the glory of Christ on Calvary comes in?

How long will you read the Scriptures for the other fellow? You might find it beneficial to reserve a brief season to “pull the beam out of your own eye.” The time is brief when there will be no more sacrifice for sin, neither fraudulent deliverance, when the lawful captive shall not be delivered (Isaiah 49:24).

I pray you will find the Divinely appointed Passover Lamb, Substitute, Ransom and Surety of the better covenant before then, lest you be forced against your will to go through all that Jesus went through. Your pretence of going through all that Jesus went through, by your crafty ambiguous middle term may yet laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh. (See your booklet, page 32, and “Christendom Astray,” page 114).

SUBSTITUTION. It is a remarkable fact that neither that term nor Representative can be found in The Book, while the synonym of both permeates The Book from alpha to omega. Every animal slain for the sin of man was a representative, which was effective for the time present alone.

Paul is most specific on this distinction; he expounds the merits of Type and Antitype, Representative and Substitute, and the intrinsic value the latter had over the former. The type, or representative, perfected nothing (Hebrews 7:11-19). The Antitype, or Surety, accomplished and exhibited the Glory of God in the eternal welfare of man (Hebrews 10). Will you then, point out one instance in the many occurrences of the term anti (priority and antagonism excepted) where it does not mean “in place of” and oblige?

To your booklet denouncing substitution, which you put out many years ago, wherein you declared:

“The command of the Father was that Jesus should lay down His life by crucifixion as an exhibition for all time of what was due from God to man for sin.”

I then replied, “This is substitution to the hilt, and the wrath of a pagan god with a vengeance. God is not the party who nurses wrath to keep it warm.”

No. The part due man, as Dr Thomas declared, is that Lord on the other side. Paul confirms the Dr. - “Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are (Possessive Case) to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”

Observe particularly it is ever the Possessive Case, as in Romans 8:3. God’s fundamental Law of private ownership, which you, by your “perfectly good rendering” blotted out by sliding in your adjective “sinful,” in order to involve Jesus under your double curse for His supposed hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh.

Well, then, if Jesus in your own terms, “endured what was due to man for sin,” will you please define the principle involved? Your attempted escape you then offered was your inclusion of Jesus under the same condemnation on His own account- T replied, if Jesus was under the same condemnation, this would have no balance by which your debt could possibly be wiped out. What is the deduction? A pure dilemma’ First, you are either a false witness regarding Christ’s debt, or a defrauder of the Law by stealing in without payment! (John 3:16, 10:1). Awake to your confusion here. Well, you attempted to escape the second horn of your dilemma by resorting to an ambiguous middle term. If you did this on purpose, it is the meanest subtlety. You truly said:

“When the substitute dies; the survivor escapes the penalty, and lives; but it was not so with Jesus.”

I ask, when God slew His own Lamb in Eden, did not Adam live? Do not facts pronounce your deduction contemptible? (Genesis 3:21, 22:8, Revelation 13:8. John 3:16, Ephesians 1:4).

Then to support your denial of ransom with the semblance of a “thus saith the Lord,” you declared:

“We have yet to do with the death of Jesus inasmuch as an Apostle hath said, I am crucified with Christ, and buried with him in baptism.”

Now one little question here exposed your fallacy. I asked, does every believer in Christ require to undergo literal crucifixion? Did you not perceive your trick had failed? You used two totally distinct things as if they were identical, and of equal legal value, viz., the literal crucifixion of Jesus with Paul’s mere symbol in baptism, thus confounding the literal with the symbolic, by which Robert Roberts and you dazzled

the mental eyes of your innocent, unskilled thinkers. Could you exhibit a more destructive argument to deny the literal ransom, by your attempt to make it appear we must go through all that Christ went through, when, on examination, the symbol is all that is required at our hands? Had Jesus turned to your booklet, page 32, and to "Christendom Astray," page 114, He had discovered a tricky escape from literal crucifixion by choosing the mere symbol in baptism.

REMISSION. Do we yet require to define that term and point out that there are two Divine methods and two distinct stages by which this is obtainable? When sins are remitted the sinner is released from Sin's claim. This is accomplished, first by redemption, as in the case of Adam (Genesis 3:21; Revelation 13:8); second, by forgiveness alone, as in the case of those under Grace, where no further ransom is necessary. If obtained by the former, then Jesus paid the price for their release. If by the latter, then release is obtained by forgiveness alone, but the person must previously have been the subject of the former because "without the shedding of blood there is no remission," nor release to effect the Edenic federal redemption. There was one sin and one sinner for whom alone the one ransom sacrifice was imperative and divinely provided, there being no provision for remission by forgiveness alone, neither in the Edenic nor under the Mosaic Laws.

The federal principle alone explains why we, upon enlightenment, must individually participate in symbol, in this federal redemption (Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 15). Out of the Adamic relation into Christ, who declares, "This is the ground of condemnation that light is come into the world, but men (even Editors) love darkness rather than light."

On page 4, paragraph 2, you say:

"So also with redemption, of which the word ransom is a much shrunken form, believers are justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). Of Him, God, "are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

So again with regard to

"Propitiation and propitiatory, always understanding that no idea of substitution, or satisfaction in the sense of commercial transaction, as it has been profanely expressed, underlies the Divine usage of the terms."

In regard to your libel of profanity, I feel disposed to employ a dilemma. If you are ignorant of what you are talking about, your case demands pity; if you are qualified to define these terms employed and purposely decline to do so as a safeguard against the Divine ransom, then Satan is exhibited as an angel of light.

Now, it is a deplorable fact against you that the term "redemption" is positively absent in the Greek of that text you employ. Will you refute this painful fact? The term Paul employs is *apolutrosis* - deliverance, not redemption. The Apostle is therefore, comforting the brethren by what has been accomplished by, even the glorious result of the ransom, viz., their deliverance. That term, of itself contains no thought of a price having been paid, since deliverance can be effected by any means apart from a ransom; but not so with redemption. Dr. Thomas stands ever dux on the definition of redemption, who, in strict conformity with the Greek language, settled that point for all time. Hear him:

"Redemption means to buy back. Hence it is release for a ransom. All who became God's servants are therefore, released from a former lord by purchase; the Purchaser is God, and the price, or ransom paid, is the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish, even without spot." ("Eureka," Volume 1, pages 20-21).

Regarding deliverance, the context alone must ever decide whether such deliverance is dependent upon, or is the result of, a price having been paid. The point for solution is therefore, could a son of Adam have been delivered apart from this Divinely appointed ransom in place of, anti lutron, man, even the unclaimed life blood of Christ alone? (John 3:16, 12:24, Revelation 13:8).

COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION. You pronounce the idea of a just ransom, re “the redemption of man,” profanity! Permit, on the spot, a test of the two ideas.

You charge Christ under the double curse (Edenic and Mosaic) and of His having contracted hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh which you declare, “render His very nature obnoxious to the curse,” and you also pretend “to go through all that Christ went through.” (“Christendom Astray” page 114 and your booklet page 32).

If your premises are accurate your deduction makes ransom absurdly impossible, such an one would be hopelessly powerless to redeem himself, to say nothing of another human soul. Such transaction would involve the very God of Heaven in your stratagem of handing over to the Devil, One you declare, who was already under your double curse - a tricky, fraudulent deliverance.

Permit me now to point out that instead of commercial transaction being profane, there are two systems which permeate the Word of God, from Alpha to Omega. One is Divine, the other Diabolical.

DIVINE COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION. This system permeates God’s Book from alpha to omega and does not even close there, but becomes the very Song of the Redeemed. Just listen how they take up the strain- “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed (*egorasos*, bought us back) us to God by Thy blood.” Revelation 5:9).

Now please note particularly that no soul could learn that song who profane God’s just ransom (Revelation 14:3, Hebrews 10:26, Malachi 1:12-14). Then the Master discovered treasure (the human race) in a field, and for joy went and sold (*peprake*) all that He had and bought (*agorazai*) that field. He even terms Himself a Merchant (*emporos*). I ask, does not commercial transaction become interesting? Again, our first century brethren “sold their possessions and had all things common.” No axe to grind here. Finally, “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might become rich.” Dear Lord!

THE DIABOLICAL COMMERCE. Esau sold his birthright for a mess of sinful flesh pottage. Similarly, you blotted out the possessive case in order to secure Jesus under your curse, and out of Romans 8:3 served to your infants anything but a wholesome dish. Then, Judas sold the Master for thirty pieces of silver; and Ananias and Sapphira sold their possessions but kept back part of the price, as you did by your “perfectly good rendering of Romans 8:3.” They lied against the Holy Spirit; you by your fatal adjective, kept back the hidden manna from famishing thousands. Instead of choosing the Good Shepherd who was on the eve of laying down His life for the sheep, a glorious Ransom in place of (*anti lutron*) the sheep, you cobbled up Romans 8:3 to mean “This is the heir in hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh, come, let us kill Him and the inheritance will be ours.”

How long will you persist in squaring your debt by handing over to your Creditor a condemned (coin) Representative? Is not your association of a condemned Representative the *Diabolos* section of the disputed commercial transaction? Listen to

DR. THOMAS AND MOSES:-

“Having arrived at the place, built an altar, and laid the wood in order, Abraham bound Isaac, his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood... A ram, caught in the thicket... The angel of the Lord called to him out of heaven, and commanded him to do the lad no harm. The ram was appointed as a substitute for Isaac, which was, therefore, substitutionally slain for Isaac.” (“Elpis Israel”, page 257).

Hear now the glorious harmony of Moses:

“And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.” - Genesis 22:8-13.

Even the name of the place was afterwards called “The Lord will provide.” Thank God.

The Dr. further declares, “No one can walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith who does not believe these things.”

Will you please do me the favour of pointing out in God’s Book one sacrifice for sin, type or anti-type, that was not substitutionary? Until you succeed in this your “libel of profanity” spells blasphemy. When a sinner brought a lamb to the priest, was it the sinner or the lamb that was put to death? Cannot you, therefore, “behold the Lamb of God”? I do not write in venom: your pitiable absurdity forcibly recalls to my mind an incident which occurred between a clergyman and a boy returning home from school. Of course, all know that “His Rev.” must ever hold a fuss, especially with boys whose parents are members of his denomination:

Rev. Well, Tom, getting home from school?
Boy. Yes, your Reverence.
Rev. Do you like school?
Boy. O yes! I like it all right
Rev. Where do you stand in your class?
Boy. Oh! I stand dux
Rev. Smart boy. Do you get catechism?
Boy. You bet. We must not skip it.
Rev. What length are you through it?
Boy Oh, I am past “Redemption” and into “The pains of hell forever.”
Rev. Amen.

I sometimes wonder whether you are the man of whom Dr. Thomas prophesied: “A skimmer of the surface of things, having obtained a smattering of same, swells out like a frog in the fable, until it burst, when all your wisdom turns out to be gas, and nothing more. This same declaration (Romans 8:3) is blazoned as if you were its special guardian and that no one knew it but yourself.” (“Anastasis,” page 34).

RAIMENT. On page 7 you narrate the change of clothing from leaves to skins and you certify “the first clothing, therefore, was not a climatic requirement, but was a moral not a physical necessity.”

I pronounce this the Truth of God, if you would but allow it to remain at that, because “there is nothing unclean of itself” (Romans 14:14, Acts 10:28, 11:8). But you scarcely move an inch to your next paragraph, where, in the same self-confidence of your independent proficiency you assure us that, “Hence forward, in the Divine economy, clothing appointed by God represented God’s covering for sin, and consequent forgiveness, while nakedness represented sinful flesh.”

Is not this painful in the extreme? Here you instantly cut asunder the figure from the literal and clutch at flesh as you cast aside the possessive case in Romans 8:3 and made sandwich of it, and, like the carnivorous Israelites, you still keep on yelling “Give us flesh to eat” - Numbers 11:4. Remarkable phenomena have been known in nature. I have seen a lamb with two heads, children born with teeth, a calf with eight legs; but never, in the Lord’s creation, was it known of children being born with garments! Why confound garments with flesh? The flesh of those whom God covered remained the same as that of those uncovered, but the former now stand in a different relation toward God. Your sinful flesh assumption forces you ever to confound the physical with the legal, which would irrevocably involve Christ, if such a freak was true- Christ was under no curse on account of His flesh!

Ever on the prowl for flesh you next escort us over the hills to Zechariah 3 where you also entangle yourself over your choice slice, viz., “Joshua was clothed in filthy garments,” ~ requiring a change of raiment, not flesh. You are therefore wide of the mark to confound Joshua’s filthy garments with your libel that they represented our Lord’s supposed hyphenated sin-in-the-flesh! In this interview we are assured of a change of the Priesthood that perfected nothing (Hebrews 7:19, 9:9), not a Lamb of God under your double curse for supposed sinful flesh. And in the raiment we behold righteousness. In Adam all our righteousness was as filthy rags; but here we behold one willing, yea, eager to clothe us with white linen, the righteousness of His saints.

In verse 8 then, we behold God, the first Person, addressing Joshua, the second person, regarding a third person whom He styles, My Servant, The Branch, who would remove, not supposed sinful flesh but the iniquity of the land in one day. Thus, even here you have utterly failed to find your choice flesh (HAM-artia) where Jesus stands clear at the Bar. Still you persist in the commerce of the most fatal flesh that ever was introduced into the Theological market, which has kept commercial transactions brisk for ages. The scrutiny will be, not the quality of flesh, but that of character and ownership (Romans 8:3). God created the flesh, we the character.

to be continued...

* Endnotes:- 1) dux = the top pupil in a class or school.

2) If God were the Purchaser of His servants then it could he said that God killed His own Son to make that purchase. I believe Jesus Christ was the Purchaser - Acts 20:28, "...he hath purchased (the church) with his own blood." For further comment see "Who Killed Jesus Christ" on page 18 of C.L.186. - Russell.

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PEARL OF GREAT PRICE

If Christ did not die the death I was due, then my baptism into that sacrificial death is a pure absurdity. But seeing that it is imperative I should be baptized into that death, then Christ is my substitute.

Indeed, it is on this principle alone that animal sacrifice can be explained. From Eden to Gethsemane the sinner died symbolically in the death of the animal slain. Hence baptism into the sacrificial death of Christ has been indispensable from Gethsemane to the Kingdom of God.

From "Jesus My Substitute" by A.L.Wilson