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Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends, Loving Greetings.

The other day I dropped my Bible on the floor and all the papers, cuttings and notes I keep in it fell out. When picking everything up again I came across a cutting from a newspaper which I hadn't looked at for a very long time.

Usually I put a note on a cutting to say where it came from and the date but I failed to do that with this particular piece which is a letter from someone in Bristol. It is headed "CREATION ACCOUNT PASSES TEST" and as I read it I can see why I kept it; so I reproduce here in full.

SIR -- Your correspondent finds it depressing that so many believe in the Creation account recorded in Genesis instead of the latest scientific "big bang" theory, which he views as a failure of scientists to communicate. The Gallup poll also presented the two as contrary options.

But why should science and the Bible be regarded as incompatible? And if there is a conflict, why should the shifting sands of scientific theories be always preferred? Past experience has shown this to be unwise. Three thousand years before Pasteur and Lister, sound principles of hygiene and quarantine were laid down at Numbers 19 and Leviticus 13-14 contrary to common practice. At around the same time it was recorded in Job 26:7 that the Earth is supported on nothing; but it was centuries before astronomers refuted the then prevalent idea that the Earth had physical support. Also against the current flat-earth views of the time, at Isaiah 40:22 the Earth is described as a sphere according to the original Hebrew.

Regarding Creation, when the "steady state" theory was believed, the Bible was considered unscientific in saying that the Universe had a beginning. Now the "big bang" theory is popular, that particular criticism has died. According to Einstein's mass/energy relationship theory, a stupendous amount of energy was required to produce the matter that appeared at the big bang to form the Universe; scientists have not offered an explanation for where this came from. The simple statement: "In the beginning God created...." cannot therefore be refuted; if not from God, from where?

The Genesis Creation account deals mostly with the preparation of the Earth from a condition "without form and void". The 10 major events that followed and their order are broadly in line with scientific thinking, and the odds of getting these right by guesswork are 3 million to one against. If the matter was produced by a big bang, and if that matter existed for billions of years before the Earth solidified, so be it; Genesis says nothing to contradict.

The creative “days” are often a stumbling block, but need not be. The Hebrew word translated “day” can mean an unspecified period or age. In Genesis 2:4, the whole period encompassing all six days is spoken of as a single “day”, so periods rather than 24-hour days were obviously meant. If these were vast periods of time as scientists tell us, again Genesis says nothing to the contrary. Accurate scientific discovery is not incompatible with the Bible, but in most cases confirms it. In view of its great age this is remarkable and indicates inspiration by a superhuman author. VI VAN CAPEL.

Job 38vs.4-7. **THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Where were you when I planned the earth?
Tell me, if you are so wise.
Do you know who took its dimensions
measuring its length with a cord?
What were its pillars built on?
Who laid down its cornerstone, while the
morning stars burst out singing and the
angels shouted for joy?

Love to you all. Helen Brady.

Declaring God’s righteousness

(A follow up to H. C. Gates article in the last issue)

Paul says in Romans 3:26 that one of the purposes of the redemptive work of Christ “was to show his (God’s) righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus”. The traditional Christadelphian view at the time the article was written was - as HC Gates shows from his quotations - that God’s justice was demonstrated in the death of Christ because although Christ was personally sinless he was made of sinful flesh, under Adamic condemnation, and therefore justifiably under sentence of death. God therefore, in foreseeing that Christ would be ‘taken by the hands of wicked men and slain’ (to use Peter’s phrase in Acts 2:23) was in reality demonstrating his own righteous judgement on sinful flesh.

Apart from the distinctly odd idea that ‘sinful men’ in crucifying Christ were instrumental in demonstrating God’s righteous judgement, Peter in this speech (Acts 2:23-4) is surely contrasting the (unjust) death of Christ at the hands of sinners with the (just) act of God in raising him from the dead. The justice of God in raising Christ from the dead also seems to be the import of Philippians 2:9. The issue that this raises in relation to the traditional Christadelphian view of Romans 3:26 is: if the justice of God raised the sinless Christ from the dead how could the same justice condemn him to death three days earlier?

Anders Nygren in his commentary on Romans says of this verse: “Paul is not trying to give a rational demonstration of the necessity of Christ’s death. He speaks of what God has done - not what he had to do. He does not talk about something that God did to justify himself, but of what God has done to justify us. The text does not say that God wanted to show that he really is righteous, but rather to make his righteousness openly appear”. Strong in commenting on the Grotian theory of the atonement says of the idea that the death of Christ was a demonstration of God’s legal justice in relation to Christ: “It makes that to be an exhibition of justice which is not an exercise of justice; not an execution of law, but an exhibition of regard for law”.

The exegetical difficulty has to do with the meaning of the Greek word ‘dikaoO’ and its derivatives - translated rather indiscriminately in our English translations as either as righteous, righteousness etc. or as just, justice, etc. The words ‘righteousness’ and ‘justice’ in English carry distinctly different meanings. ‘Righteousness’ tends to be thought of (if it’s thought of at all) as an abstract moral quality - an ethical

standard to be aimed for, whereas the English word 'justice' (derived from the Latin) is usually thought of as a hard legal term - often with pejorative overtones, 'getting ones just deserts'. Dunn (in The Theology of Paul the Apostle) argues that Paul was using the word 'dikaiosune' (righteousness) not in the English (or the Greek) sense but in an Old Testament sense. There, righteousness is a relationship term - a righteous person is one who has been brought into a right relationship with a judge and acquitted of the charges against him. This is illustrated by a number of OT passages in which the terms 'righteousness' and 'salvation' are parallels in the Hebrew poetry (Ps 98:2, 119:123; Is 51:6, 51:8, 56:1, 57:17, 62:1). It's not that 'righteousness' in the absolute moral sense of the word is not a key characteristic of God, but that the God who is righteous is also the God who saves by forgiving sins and bringing men and women back into a right relationship with himself.

It seems quite likely that when Paul wrote of God that he was "just and a justifier" he was thinking of passages like Isaiah 45:21 where God is described as a "righteous God and a Saviour". The two terms 'just' and 'justifier' are not therefore to be thought of as making a distinction between, on the one hand, God as a God of justice who condemns the sinner, and on the other, God who is willing to justify men and women. Rather is it a reflection of the Old Testament concept of God as one who out of his righteousness will under specific sacrificial conditions make them right with himself. C H Dodd says of Romans 3:26: "There is no suggestion that a device has been found by which the justice of God can be satisfied (e.g. by the vicarious punishment of sin) while at the same time his mercy is extended to save the sinner. No such antithesis between justice and mercy was in Paul's mind."

So H C Gates is certainly correct to argue that in Romans 3:26 Paul is telling us that in the death of Christ God was revealing a righteousness which originated with him and which in his grace he was revealing to men. The stark contrast Paul makes in the early chapters of Romans is between the wrath of God which has been revealed against the unrighteous (Romans 1:18) - that was the punitive 'justice' of God against sinners - and the grace of God revealed in Christ. In the times in which he wrote, Paul tells us that something quite new had been revealed: "Now the righteousness of God has been revealed ..." (Romans 3:21) - revealed specifically in the gospel: "the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith" (Romans 1:16-17). The point is that this is not a righteousness that can be achieved by the works of men, nor is it a righteousness that condemns (as the law rigidly applied would), it is a righteousness that redeems, something that God has done in Christ for the salvation of mankind. In writing to the Philippians, Paul makes this point clear: "that I may be found in Christ, not having a righteousness of my own based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness *from* God (*ek theou*) that depends on faith".

So I think we can safely conclude that in Romans 3:26 Paul is not telling us that the death of Christ was a demonstration of God's punitive justice inflicted on a sinless man. Rather it was a demonstration of the fact that through faith in the sacrificial death of that sinless man, men and women though themselves sinners, can be restored to a right(eous) relationship with God by grace.

Brother Geoff Maycock.

Ernest Brady writes...

Recently Brother Pearce sent me a letter he had received from a Christadelphian who is studying our teaching concerning the Sacrifice of Christ, and he raised a question which bears on the subject and which will interest you.

He quotes Jesus' question to the scribes: "Whether is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'thy sins he forgiven thee' or to say, 'Arise and take up thy bed and walk'." And he comments: "I have always previously thought that this passage meant that sickness and disease was the direct result of sin at the beginning. What do you think?"

I don't know what Brother Pearce answered, but when I wrote I said I thought these words of Jesus were intended, like many others of His questions, both to reveal and conceal, to make things plain to those who were willing to see, and to make them difficult for those who were wilfully blind. The power of healing

which Jesus used was not an end in itself, otherwise he would have made it his main purpose to find and heal the sick wherever they were. It was a sign, evidence of his authority and origin, and he used it for that purpose. His power to heal was proof of his authority to forgive sins. Thus, when he was faced by hostile scribes it was immaterial whether he said, "Thy sins be forgiven," or "Arise and Walk." The words and the result of the one were no more difficult than of the other - but the effect of the healing was evident, whereas no one can see when a man's sins are forgiven. On another occasion they asked Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" They also thought that sin was always the cause of disease. Jesus replied, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

I think that the chapter from which this passage comes (John 9) contains some of the very few instances in Scripture where there is an element of humour - the encounter between the man whose sight had been restored and the Pharisees. They knew that Jesus had healed the man, but they dare not face the meaning of it. They tried to find a loophole by questioning his parents, but they were wary - "He is of age - ask him." Then they tried to overawe the man himself, "Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner." (Does this attitude of the Pharisees remind you of anyone?). But the little man had a stout heart, and was not to be terrified by their pomposity, and used his commonsense. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." After some further questioning and illogical reasoning they got sick of the whole thing and concluded, "As for this fellow we know not whence he is." But the little man had not yet finished - another dash of cold commonsense. "Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes." Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings... With these and a few other biting cracks, which make as entertaining a bit of reading as there can be anywhere in literature, he showed that his mental eyes were as wide open as his literal eyes, and utterly exposed the foolish self-importance and arrogance of the Pharisees. Their last word put the finishing touch to their own defeat. "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" And they cast him out.

Their descendants are with us today. In spite of what Jesus says they still tell us that we are altogether born in sins. And when they cannot stand up to logical reasoning and the evidence of commonsense, they follow the example of the Pharisees - and cast us out. Here is one of the gems of that chapter which is worth recalling again; "now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." This is good enough proof for the poor blind, man that Jesus was not a sinner, and I vote Brothers and Sisters, that is good enough for us.

With Sincere and Affectionate Greetings,

Your Brother, Ernest Brady.

SARAH

We know little of the early life of Sarah, but piecing together various hints from Genesis we picture the family of Terah in happy surroundings, living in Ur of the Chaldees, a city which the monuments tell us had reached a high level of civilization.

Terah had three sons who would be educated according to the custom of the period. The various guesses as to their relative ages need not concern us now. Trouble came into the home with the loss of his first wife, mother of the three boys, but we have no hint of the date. We know Terah married again, and when Abram was ten years old his little half-sister was born, and we know that between these two there sprang up a loving devotion which was to last well over a century, that is - throughout Sarah's lifetime.

On Sarah's side, as seen from the first time we meet her until the end, her genuine devotion to her husband was a shining example to all who knew her, and for generations still to come.

When Sarah was growing up another tragedy came into the family, Terah's son Haran, was taken from them, leaving a son (Lot) and two daughters, to mourn the loss of a father. Lot was taken into Terah's household, and we picture Sarah doing her best for the lad, so much so that later on, when one of life's great

decisions had to be faced, he went out into a strange land with Abram and Sarah, rather than remain in the family home with Nahor.

One of Lot's sisters - Iscah - has been confused with Sarah, some commentators regarding it merely as two forms of spelling, but we remember Abram said distinctly "She is my sister, she is the daughter of my Father but not the daughter of my mother."

The other sister, Milcah, married her uncle Nahor, and from this union eventually sprang Rebekah.

Sarah was about 65 and Abram 75 years old when they left Haran for the journey to Canaan. It was the second time the home camp had been uprooted and Sarah, who was no longer young, might have been excused had she raised objections to travelling to an unknown country. But Abram had heard a Voice calling and Sarah would not oppose him, she would remain by his side whatever the future might have in store for them.

The place of these two in the Divine Plan was one of great privilege and responsibility. The first man, Adam, made in the image of God, had failed to maintain that image, his elder son was a murderer, but the younger son, Seth, began a line of God-fearing men lasting with more or less fidelity until Abram. Human nature did not attain the Divine ideal, therefore God intervened, selected a suitable couple and by a miracle founded a nation to be trained for His Service and to show forth His Glory. The strong faith and willing obedience of Abram were characteristics required in this nation. Sarah, the helpmeet, and later, the mother, had an important task to perform.

In Genesis 12:5 we find Abram and Sarah with Lot "and the souls they had gotten in Haran...". Does this suggest that many were found willing to believe and worship Abram's God, therefore preferring to travel with the party rather than remain among the idols in Haran? If this is so, Sarah would no doubt have a great deal to do with winning the loyalty of these nameless folk. The first lady in the camp, even if not herself a teacher, would set the example of giving a friendly reception to those who learned from Abram.

Eventually they came to Shechem and here was the promise renewed; no longer "A land that I will show thee" but "Unto thy seed will I give this land." As an act of worship an altar was built, and in after days, when tents had been removed, this later remained a witness to the fact that here was a place which had been used for worship.

The next halt was near Bethel, and here again an altar was built, and this one served as a landmark to be visited later.

It would be a severe test of faith when food supplies in Canaan ran short and it became necessary to take refuge in Egypt. Why had God promised them a land which could not supply their needs? Their faith did not fail, rather was it strengthened to meet more severe tests which were to follow.

We learn here that Sarah, though growing old, was still beautiful, for Abram feared that Pharaoh would desire her and might even murder her husband in order to gratify his wish. It was therefore agreed that she should be known as Abram's sister. It must have been alarming for Sarah to be separated from her husband and taken into Pharaoh's palace among strangers. She who had been living a life of freedom in the open country, sheltered only by a tent, would find life with-in four walls rather restricted and uncomfortable. The Lord who had called these two for a special purpose was watching over them and allowed Pharaoh to do them no harm. He blessed them, and Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver and gold.

Returning from Egypt, Abram first visited Bethel, with its altar and its memories of earlier communion with God; here, following a further act of worship, he was able to deal generously with Lot whose servants had disputed with Abram's servants over the pastures and wells. Abram generously offered Lot a choice of land, promising to lead his own flocks in another direction.

The two families parted and the Divine promise was renewed, with additions. He was bidden to "walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it." Did he take Sarah and the whole encampment for this journey? We are not told, but it would be quite likely, rather than divide his household.

Three times had Abram received a Divine promise:-

Genesis 12:7 "Unto thy seed will I give this land."

Genesis 13:16 "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth."

Genesis 15:5 "Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be."

There were approximately eight years between the first and the last of these promises, yet nothing more had happened. Sarah, growing impatient, suggested Hagar as a substitute, in accordance with a custom of the times. Later, in a fit of jealousy, she treated her maid so unkindly that Hagar left home.

We must not judge Sarah too harshly for this, she was only human, and must have longed for a child of her own. Her faith was very sorely tried by the long delay, and a very natural reaction was envy of the more fortunate handmaid. The words of the Angel to Hagar show an understanding kindness, she was promised a numerous seed, and was bidden "Return to thy mistress and submit thyself under her hands." Hagar obeyed the Divine Messenger and stayed with Sarah until the time came when God bade Abraham send her away permanently.

In Genesis 17 we read the Lord made a solemn covenant; and Abram's name was changed to Abraham, meaning Father of a Multitude. The promise was clearly given: "I will make thee exceeding fruitful. I will give unto thee and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

The name of Sarai was also changed, and a clear promise given that she should be a Mother of Nations. Abraham's natural rejoinder was a plea for Ishmael, but he was assured that the special blessings were for Sarah's son, and the boy's name was announced.

This interview seems to have been with Abraham alone. Later, the Lord appeared to him again with a special message for Sarah. Abraham's hospitality shows itself in the details he arranged for the comfort of his three visitors. He came to Sarah - "Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal - make cakes upon the hearth." Servants would be at hand if required, but Sarah took responsibility of providing a meal worthy of the guests.

Sarah overheard the mention of her son, and we can understand the laughter the idea caused in both, not necessarily of doubt, for there was a humorous side to the prospect; a little child in their home seemed so far outside possibility; there was definitely joy, for a long-standing desire was to be fulfilled. Abraham had found God faithful and could not seriously doubt His word. Sarah, somewhat nervously, denied having laughed, feeling uncertain how the Messenger would treat her. Hebrews 11 tells us that Sarah was given this child because she judged Him faithful who had promised." The boy was called by a name meaning 'laughter', thus perpetuating the joy of his parents.

Sarah guarded her son so jealously that again she sent her maid away, this time permanently for "the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." We can almost hear the note of pride with which she spoke the words "my son".

Reading through the narrative in Genesis 22 we wonder if Sarah ever knew of the call to sacrifice Isaac. It would have been much harder for Abraham if he had to win her consent; it is possible she was not told of the command which so baffled her husband. Abraham still believed the Divine promise "In Isaac thy seed shall be called," and though he could not see how this would be accomplished he told the servants "I and the lad will go yonder and worship and come again to you." Hebrews 11:19 suggests the thought that the God who had given him Isaac could as easily raise him from the dead.

A ram was substituted, but not until Isaac had suffered himself to be bound and laid on the altar, a symbol of dedication to God.

In Galatians 4 Paul speaks of Hagar as a bondwoman, and her son as "born after the flesh." This he likens to the Sinai covenant, which covenant answereth to Jerusalem which now is and is in bondage with

her children. We, who by faith and belief in Jesus have become children of promise as Isaac was, have entered into the New Covenant and are children of the Jerusalem which is above and is free.

Safety, guidance and rich reward were promised by the Sinai covenant, but the people saw very differently. Thunder, lightning, the Voice of a trumpet, the smoking mountain and the warning to keep at a safe distance, all combined to alarm them, and they cried out in fear to Moses "Speak thou with us and we will hear, let not God speak with us lest we die."

Successive generations set aside the law in favour of their own ideas, as Adam had done in Eden; blessings were forfeited until the people forgot the possibility of Divine rewards. The Rabbis added their interpretations and prohibitions till New Testament times and the law was hidden under such a mass of tradition that it became a burden.

With this in mind, the Apostle Paul contrasts Ishmael, the son of bondage, with Isaac, the son of the free woman, and shows how Christ has made His servants free. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

Hagar, the bondswoman, - and her son belong to this life, the brightest spot being shown in the meaning of the boys name "The man whom God hears." But Isaac, directly given by God, and in symbol, dedicated on the altar to God, represents those who are born from above, and whose lives are consecrated to the Lord who has redeemed them.

Sarah, the free woman and her son are used to show the liberty of the Gospel, whose adherents are no more servants, but sons. The Gospel is wider than nation or race, and all who will may come to the Saviour, with whom there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, but all are one.

Ishmael goes down to history as Father of a great nation because he is Abram's son. God was with the lad and assured Hagar that her son should dwell in the midst of his brethren, even though his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him.

Isaac goes down to history as Father of the nation to whom God said "I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" and again "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen". "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth my praise." (Isaiah 43)

To-day we see Jews and Arabs still living near each other, with deep-rooted enmity separating their thoughts and habits. We know that neither will be able to overcome the other, for none but the Prince of Peace will be able to bring them together in harmony.

Sister Mona Dawes.

IF THE BLIND LEAD THE BLIND!

A few weeks ago I came upon a Christadelphian magazine dated August 1926 and edited by C.C.Walker; it must have been sent to me at some time by our late bro. Fred Pearce of Newbridge. On page 357 I came across the heading entitled 'Questions and Questions' and I was extremely saddened by the exposition of ignorance and dishonesty expressed by both Robert Roberts and his successor C.C.Walker, and which has consequently blinded, from the year 1873, their own converts. It commences as follows:

'Over fifty years ago, namely, in 1873, certain wrong ideas concerning the nature of Christ and of his sacrifice were introduced which are briefly defined in Robert Roberts: "An Autobiography" p.p. 333-5 and in the 'Proposition' quoted below:-

Questions and Questions

For the consideration of all who believe the Renunciationist theory, as defined in the following 'proposition' as here stated:

That the body of Jesus did not inherit the curse of Adam, though derived from him through Mary; and was therefore not 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 on 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 instead of the forfeited lives of all believers of the races of Adam.

This is the display of ignorance and dishonesty to which I made reference earlier. It is a grotesque misrepresentation of certain right ideas concerning the nature and sacrifice of Christ as defined by Edward Turney to which Robert Roberts took offence because he did not have the decency to listen to one who could handle the word of God more skilfully than he, and with greater humility.

This is not a true definition of the so-called Renunciationist Theory but a distortion of what Edward Turney really said and what members of the Nazarene Fellowship have been saying ever since.

Allow me to answer some of the false charges. We believe it is true to say that the body of Jesus did not inherit any curse from Adam, neither do any of Adam's descendants; I have read nothing about any curse of Adam becoming hereditary through physical descent, neither have any Christadelphians, and I challenge them to find it in scripture. All we inherit from Adam by physical descent is natural corruptibility which was a fixed law of Adam's being at his creation from the dust of the ground. Genesis 2:7; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49. The truth therefore is that Adam was a creature capable of dying if left to himself and barred from the 'Tree of Life.'

Now the B.A.S.F. states in clauses IV and V that 'Adam was created a natural body of life very good in kind and condition and he was placed under a law, and that the continuation of this natural life was contingent on obedience; Adam broke this law and was adjudged unworthy of (and here is the contradiction; a wresting of the scriptures) immortality.' Wrong, it should read 'unworthy of continuation of natural life,' therefore guilty of 'death,' i.e. 'judicial death.' Adam's natural life therefore was forfeit and all in him on the federal principal, as defined by the inspired Apostle Paul in Romans 5:15-21; 6:1-13. The condemnation was of sin committed by Adam as a person under law, a person who was capable of keeping that law, therefore the flesh of Adam could not be condemned as inadequate in any way, it was the disobedience which was condemned - transgression of law; therefore the condemnation is not a fixed principle in the flesh, but a passing of the judgment of God upon Adam for his sin and which Paul describes as the 'Sin of the world' and which 'Sin of the world' John the Baptist declared Jesus the Lamb of God had come to take away.

No doubt Adam saw in the slain lambs in Eden what should have happened to him and his wife - the substitutes for their own judicial deaths by blood-shedding, and regarded it as God's typical redemption, until His son the antitypical Lamb of God - the substance, gave his life willingly for the life of the world and a ransom for many. John 5:25-26 - 'Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.' Surely this refers to those who by enlightenment realised they were dead in Adam and who by hearkening to the voice of the Son of God were baptised, and passed from death to life.

'For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.' Verse 28 speaks of another class altogether, 'All that are in the graves' at a future time, for Jesus speaks of this in the future tense, but in verse 25 He uses the present tense; superficial readers are quite apt to miss the point. In verse 25 He is speaking of those who by enlightenment as a result of hearing His voice, and by a symbolic death into His, pass from death to life, being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

Can we have greater confirmation than the words of Jesus in John 5:24? 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into

condemnation; but is passed from 'death' to life'? How can this be possible if the 'condemnation' is a physical fixation in the flesh? It is not possible; only by physical death, and this is what Christadelphians are expected to believe to remain in fellowship.

What therefore can baptism mean to them or what can it do for them? Absolutely nothing if they persist in the erroneous theories of their originators that the condemnation is a physical part of the flesh. Neither do the words of Paul in Romans 8 have any meaning or effect for them, because only natural death in accordance with their own admission can free them from under the Law of sin and death - so in effect, and by their own admission, they are not in Christ at the present time; for Paul declares plainly, 'For there is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; 'For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

'If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed' (John 8:36). Now to return to the proposition as distorted and defined by the Editor of the Christadelphian magazine 1926. In regard to the accusation that Christ was not mortal, it depends on what meaning is being attached to the word by the Editor. If he means 'not corruptible' for, 'not mortal,' then we must deny emphatically that the Nazarene Fellowship believe that Jesus was not corruptible. But if the word 'Mortal' means 'subject to death by law,' as we believe it does, then most certainly Christ was not mortal. Unfortunately the word is used too loosely by so many as meaning corruptible. Jesus was as much subject to corruptibility as Adam was without Divine intervention, but Jesus was not in the loins of Adam, when Adam forfeited his life by disobedience, although it is true to say His flesh was in the loins of Eve as the seed of the woman. But unless that seed is fertilised it cannot produce a man. We know therefore that the seed of Mary was not fertilised through the Adamic life, that is, by any descendant of Adam, but it was fertilised by the overshadowing power of God. Had it been otherwise, the life of Jesus would have been under forfeit and useless for the purchase of those who were in bondage to Sin as a Master, unto whom Adam sold himself and all in his loins. This is what is meant by 'free life' and it is obvious to anyone with a little of what we call common sense that you cannot purchase anything with someone else's money and class the article you have purchased as your own property. Therefore it was necessary that before God could redeem Adam He had to give the equivalent of what was forfeited, and that was a life - a natural life, and this life must needs be God's property, hence the words 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.' 'Ye have been bought with a price even the precious blood (wherein is the life) of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.' We must emphasise at all times that God is the Redeemer and Christ's natural unforfeited life is the redemptive price, not His sinless character; He could not very well sacrifice the latter. Now let me emphasise that the penalty incurred by Adam was not Eternal death, as he so falsely charges us with saying. There is no such thing as Eternal death; the experience of death is less than a matter of seconds as the person becomes inanimate or lifeless and ceases to exist. Let me add also, that the penalty was not incurred by Adam's posterity, but they were sold under sin or into the bondage of sin by Adam's act of disobedience and if not extricated from that position when enlightened to it, could only expect the wages of Sin (as a Master) which is death.

The finest exposition and discourse on this subject is found in Paul's epistle to the Romans chapters 5 and 6, and if when reading you think of Sin as a Bondmaster unto which Adam sold his posterity, you will be able to understand it, but you will not understand it if you regard it as personal sin of which he is speaking. Paul says 'But thanks be to God that ye were the servants of sin', as much as to say, you are not now in that position. Why? 'For ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness...' 'For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.'

You see now the helpless position of all Christadelphians; a position which these two former editors have tried to maintain by their dishonest and ignorant misrepresentation of the teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship and of the form of doctrine to which Paul made reference. The editor goes on to charge us with the statement that Jesus earned eternal life in this free natural life. This is entirely false, as we have always believed the words of Paul quoted earlier 'that eternal life is a gift of God' and cannot therefore be earned by anyone. However, we do say that in the purpose and foreknowledge of God, Jesus, God's Son was appointed Heir of all things, and by His obedience to the will of His father maintained His integrity and Sonship and because He laid down His life willingly, not as a command, but in order to confirm the promise

in Eden and the promises made to the fathers, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name above every name and this necessitated the gift of eternal life.

This should answer the editor's query:-

- 1). 'Could the covenants of promise have been brought into force without the death of Jesus the testator?'
- 2). If not, how could Jesus without dying have obtained his portion of the covenant? Seeing the promises (to Abraham) were 'to thee and to thy seed,' which, says Paul - Galatians 3:16), 'is Christ,' and the promise to David was 'I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.' (2 Samuel 7:13).
- 3). Jesus being included in the covenants of promise, and the covenants being of no force without his death, did he not in this sense, in dying, die for himself, as well as for all others interested therein?
- 4). Jesus tells us (John 10:18) that he had received a commandment from the Father to lay down his life, by submitting to be crucified. If Jesus had disobeyed this command would he not have committed sin? If so, could he have been saved? How was it possible, then, that he could enter eternal life alone?
- 5). And seeing his obedience unto death (Philippians 2:9) was a necessity to his own acceptance with the Father, did he not in this obedience, obey for himself as well as for the joint heirs (Romans 8:17)? And seeing that obeying in this case was dying, did He not in dying, die for himself as well as for his brethren? (Other questions will bring it closer than this.)
- 6). Jesus, in speaking of his death, says, 'For this cause came I unto this hour' (John 12:27); further, that 'the son of Man is come to give his life a ransom for many;' further, that this was the will of Him who had sent him, and whose will he had come to do. He was introduced to Israel as 'The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world' (John 1:29) 'by the sacrifice of himself' (Hebrews 9:26); and Paul testifies that He was made a little lower than the angels expressly for the suffering of death (Hebrews 2:9). Does it not appear on the evidence that the very work he was sent into the world to do was to die? Could He have 'earned eternal life' without doing the work the Father sent him to do? If not, could he 'earn eternal life' without dying? If not, is it not a violation of the wisdom of God for anyone to speak of the possibility of his claiming eternal life before his death, and entering into the enjoyment of it alone?
- 7). Peter testifies that 'Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh' (1 Peter 3:18; 4:1). What flesh was this? Was not this the flesh of his brethren? (Ephesians 5:30; Hebrews 2:16). If so, was it not 'mortal flesh?' And if 'mortal flesh' was it not as much under destination to die as the mortal flesh of all men? If not, how can it be the flesh of 'the children'?

I must stop here to comment on the phraseology used by the editor as he is not rightly dividing the word of truth but re-phrasing it to suit his own theory. He says 'Was not this the flesh of his brethren?' We say 'No, it was not the flesh of His brethren as this would imply that His Father was Joseph and as the children were 'Sin's Flesh.' Jesus was not 'Sins Flesh' but 'God's Flesh,' the quality of the flesh being the same as that of the children, but the ownership different.

This is precisely where Christadelphianism has gone wrong from its commencement and also the doctrine of Roman Catholicism and all such who embrace the doctrine of original sin. Unlike Christadelphians, Rome could see that if Christ's sacrifice were to be of any merit to man's redemption and salvation He must needs be free of condemnation and as they believed like Christadelphians do, that this was a physical principle pervading the flesh, they invented what is known as the 'Immaculate Conception.'

Edward Turney did not need to invent theories; he found that by reading and rightly dividing the word of truth, the Divine Plan of salvation was as clear as day, and therefore with his premises right he was able to discern the Lord's body, the body God prepared. But here we have an editor, a so called intellectual who has passed the investigation stage in regard to religious truth, threshing like a drowning man in desperation to prove to us by all the quotations from scripture, whether in context or out of context, rightly applied or distorted, that Jesus was a corruptible man, that He had sin in His flesh, and sin could not be condemned in this flesh if it did not exist there.

These are the futile threshings of a man who does not understand Paul's discourse to the Romans and thinks that because he does not understand, it is impossible for any one else to.

The Nazarene Fellowship believes Jesus was of the same nature as Adam when created, and this was corruptible nature like the animals, and termed by God as very-good nature. The editor says 'Sin had to be condemned in the nature which transgressed.' (He has his own view as to how?) Nevertheless, sin was committed in the very good nature, therefore if the editor persists that sin had to be condemned in the body of Jesus then the body of Jesus must of necessity be very good, which brings all Christadelphians face to face with the fact that there was no sin in the very good nature of Adam though he was a sinner and therefore there can be no sin in the nature of Adam's posterity - neither in Jesus. Sin is abstract transgression of law, and not in any way the free propensities of the person; who can use them for good at all times as did Jesus.

The editor has shown his weakness and unskilful handling of the word in this and many others of his works. C.C.Walker admits himself in the magazine to which I am answering 'Questions and Questions' - that some things Robert Roberts said should never have been said, and would be omitted from the next issue, as it was in the heat of the moment. Perhaps he thinks he has the right to interpret scripture to suit his preconceived theories; certainly he does not read the scriptures properly at times, as for example Question 4. Jesus tells us that He had received a commandment from the Father, to lay down His life, by submitting to be crucified etc. Jesus tells us? Jesus said no such thing in the way Robert Roberts phrases it. In the very discourse of Jesus in John 10 we find nowhere that He is under any command to give his life. In fact His words convey to us that He is a willing party to this act of laying down His life for the sheep, 'and therefore (for this unselfish act) doth my Father love me.'

Let me quote again the words of the editor. Question 6. "Does it not appear on the evidence that the very work he was sent into the world to do was to die?" Of course it was. No one agrees more with this than the Nazarene Fellowship. Unfortunately the editor's views on the reason, not only conflict with ours, but cannot be substantiated by the scriptures. His views are that Jesus was commanded to submit to crucifixion as a demonstration of what was due to 'sinful condemned flesh' and in this manner it was condemned. So in effect he asks us to believe that sin was condemned by sinners; wicked men who were pawns in the hands of God for carrying out this ignominious act of torture.

Then we are told by some present day Christadelphians that there is an absence of the Love of God in our current literature. How much Love of God does this clause in their statement of faith convey?

In John 10:18 Jesus is not talking of a command of God to lay down His life, he is speaking of the power to lay it down. No man taketh it from me - 'I have power' - there is no power in a life already forfeit, or in a condemned person. Jesus' life was 'free' unforfeited therefore powerful to effect redemption.

Who says so? 'This commandment (authority) have I received of my Father.' Jesus was left in no doubt that it was His Father's will that none should perish, but should all turn to Him and live, and for this purpose He caused him to be born of His handmaid Mary, not in order that He might have 'condemned nature' (a Christadelphian term), but exactly the opposite - the means by which He could be the equivalent price for man's redemption. This is the only reason that can be found in the scriptures for the virgin birth, the Christadelphian version makes Him much more than a mere man, it makes Him part man and part God in order that He might have super human power to be obedient in all things. How therefore can a 'God-man' be tempted in all points like as we are? It is you my dear editor who is the Renunciator; it is you who have denied that Jesus came in the same quality of flesh as the 'children,' the same flesh as 'his brethren.'

You have exhausted yourself with the written quotations from scripture to prove, unnecessarily to us, that Jesus was corruptible, but unfortunately you add to these quotations meanings that are not there.

And so in Question 8 you say, 'Is not our destination to die an inherited physical law in the flesh, resultant in the first instance, from the sin of Adam, and therefore called sin? If not, in what sense has death passed upon all men?'

We answer, Certainly our destination to die if Jesus remains away, is the result of an inherited physical law of corruptibility in the flesh, but it is definitely not the penalty for sin, neither is it called sin, and did not commence from the sin of Adam but at his creation. Paul says so, and I believe him. Why don't you?

I am afraid the late editor cannot now answer this question, but those who have followed his cunningly devised theories are in a position to oppose the Apostle Paul if they dare to. Even the Law of Moses does not appear to educate the editor in the true meaning of sacrifices for sin. And not even the reading of Isaiah 53:6-11 are any help to him for he interprets according to his own pre-conceived ideas which convey to us his belief that sin was implanted in Jesus by the hereditary means of His birth of a woman and by allowing Himself to be crucified; this was how our sins were taken away. But how can our sin have been taken away in the body of Christ, when we were not yet born, if sin is a physical fixation in our flesh? An absolute impossibility; but we can well understand its possibility in the legal sense as Paul explains it in Romans chapter 5.

Question 19: 'John testifies that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 11:2) and this reaches backward before Christ's time, as well as forward; as is evident from Paul's statement that Christ died 'for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament.'

On what ground is Adam to be excluded from the scope of this provision? Did not the coats of skins provided in Paradise (Genesis 3:21) convey an intimation that his sins could be covered? Is it not evident from this consideration that Adam's condemnation, as well as ours, rested on Christ? To this we answer, 'Yes, in the way that God chose to do it, namely at the time that Jesus was impaled on the cross, and in the way the High Priest, under the law of Moses, laid his hands on the head of the innocent animal and transferred the sin of the person to that animal before shedding its blood.' This does not mean that the animal was condemned, for in fact the sacrificial animal had to be, according to the law, clean, without blemish, and a male. If it had been otherwise it would have been rejected together with the person who offered it. The High Priest also would have been guilty of breaking the law if he had offered it, for he had the greater responsibility. But the editor and also present day Christadelphians do not mind at all that they have put God in this guilty position by declaring Christ to be 'unclean' 'condemned nature,' a 'Sin Body,' 'sinful flesh,' 'sin- nature,' 'as unclean as those he came to save,' etc.

I marvel that the editor should connect Adam with the coats of skins as effecting his salvation, seeing that the B.A.S.F. states that 'Adam was adjudged unworthy of immortality and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken, a sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being and was transmitted to all his posterity.' When was the sentence of unworthiness of immortality lifted? When was Adam ever redeemed if the condemnation was a fixed physical sentence in his flesh? How could the coats of skins from the slain lamb be a typical covering for sin if this sin was in the physical flesh? The scripture declares 'without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.' If Adam's sin was remitted by the shedding of blood and the putting on of the coats of skin, should he not have been released from the penalty of sin which you say is natural death? Should he not, as we believe, have been once again in the position of legal justification by the merits of Christ's sacrifice, and by a restored probation of morality be accepted of Christ at His appearing and kingdom? You seem to imply that he should, but your premises make it an impossibility; you have changed Adam's nature once; and in order to remove the condemnation which you say is in the flesh, you must of necessity change it back again, and accept our view.

The Christadelphian view point leaves God out of things in respect of accounting a man a sinner by disobedience and also accounting a man righteous in accordance with certain conditions to be met. It is Law which governs both positions, and as disobedience to God is transgression of His law and is termed 'sin,' so obedience to His Law is termed 'righteous,' but neither of these terms affect or activate the flesh but remain in the conscience of the person responsible or amenable to that Law, and are therefore abstract.

Adam was in the same position as a murderer who has been sentenced by a judge (representing the law) to death, by hanging, or guillotine or shooting, or whatever method used. This does not change the criminals' flesh; he is already corruptible and destined to die a natural death because God created man this way like the animals 'very good.' But it changes his moral and legal position as soon as he commits murder; he knows he is guilty of what the law requires, and that is 'judicial death.' Adam was also in this position when he sinned therefore what he needed to be saved from was 'judicial death,' the taking of his life; a

substitute was found in the foreknowledge and provision of God - Jesus Christ - foreshadowed in Eden and in the Law of Moses, as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. Jesus took this away but he did not take away our personal sins. We who were once in bondage to 'Sin' as a master, but who have been released by the giving of the ransom price and become God's servants, are amenable to His Laws and can sin against Him; these are sins which Jesus did not take away, but nevertheless He is our advocate and can plead on our behalf as He is a High Priest who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmity because He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; a proof that we are capable of complete obedience if we make the supreme effort as Jesus did. 'He has left us an example that we should follow his steps.'

The Christadelphian view is that Adam carried his condemnation for 930 years to the grave, this being the penalty for his sin. But how, in the words of Islip Collyer, can God forgive sin and yet exact the full penalty? The editor also asks 'Is our sin in Adam un-taken away in Christ?' The Christadelphian view and answer must be 'Yes,' because we still have 'sin-in-the-flesh' a physical fixation of condemnation which, according to them, and logically so, can only be removed by death, that is, 'physical death.'

The only proper and scriptural alternative is to accept what the Apostle Paul says in Romans 6:1:- 'What shall we say then? Shall we continue 'in Sin' (not 'to sin' but 'in sin') that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us that were baptised into Christ were baptised into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Like-wise, reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.' All present tense.

The sense of this last verse 11 has been altered in the B.A.S.F. and made to mean as follows: 'Reckon yourselves to be dead to all manner of sin.' The Apostle does not mean all manner of sin - he means that when a bondservant to sin has associated himself with the death which Jesus died, (which was by blood-shedding), sin had no more claim on that servant. (See Romans 6:16-18, 20-23).

As I pointed out earlier, we must always keep in mind that Paul is referring to Sin as a Bondmaster and to Sin's bondservants as those who, by one man's disobedience, were 'constituted' sinners, and not actual sinners, because they were not even born when God concluded them all under the one sin of Adam. And the reason God did this was so that by the one act of righteousness, by Jesus Christ in giving His life as the ransom price, His free gift could come upon all men unto justification of life, accounting them as righteous, a new creation - as saith the scripture 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.' Hence Paul in Romans 7:5 could say, 'For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.' Why? Because the law of itself could not give life, as the person had to be first redeemed and see and acknowledge Christ as the substance of the typical offerings before works could be accounted as righteous.

Therefore Paul could say 'As touching the righteousness which was in the law he was blameless.' So do not give us any more unscriptural hash that no one could keep the law, other than Jesus Christ. 'When we were in the flesh' says Paul, was he not in the flesh when he spoke these words? Of course he was. So therefore he must have been speaking of a legal status whereby he could pass from one to the other, and this is exactly the case. Paul had passed from under the 'sin constitution' as a result of knowing the law and the true reason for Christ's death, which Paul rejoiced in as being a substitutionary death that by faith and symbolic death into the same he could be made free from the 'law of sin and death.' Do we need any further proof that sin is not a physical fixation in the flesh? Did not Jesus explain to Nicodemus how a man could be born again without entering again his mother's womb? You who believe in sin as a physical fixation in the flesh are about as wise as Nicodemus before he asked Jesus the question 'How can a man be born when he is old...?' John 3:3,4.

Much has been written on Paul's epistle to the Romans by members of the Nazarene Fellowship, especially ch 7 in which Paul says some things which are difficult to understand, especially with minds biased by sin-in-the-flesh theories. Dr Adam Clarke deplored the fact that the established church, through the teaching of a certain sect, had fallen into the same erroneous teaching of sin-in-the-flesh as taught by Christadelphians from the time of R. Robert's clash with Edward Turney. A certain sect known as the Pelagians were accounted as heretics for opposing this view, nevertheless they were absolutely right in holding that view even as we of the Nazarene Fellowship are. The question for Christadelphians to answer is 'Have the beasts of the field sin in the flesh?' Have they 'condemned nature?' If they have not, then Robert Roberts was wrong when he declared in 'Visible Hand of God,' 'It required what men call a miracle to depress to the level of the beasts that perish the noble creature made in the image of the Elohim.'

The beasts were declared by the Creator to be very good at creation, so also was Adam. How then could he be depressed to something possessing the same nature? If you can believe this to be possible, it is obvious you can believe any invented theory of Robert Roberts.

Should Christadelphians not therefore examine their true position and do something to rectify it before it is too late? Have you, or have you not 'Died unto sin?' We of the Nazarene Fellowship believe like Paul 'That whether we live we live unto the Lord and whether we die (fall asleep) we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.'

Romans 14:8-9. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.' How then can the natural death of a saint be condemnatory in the sight of the Lord?

How indeed could the flesh of Jesus be classed as sinful or 'condemned nature' in view of Christ's words in John 6:33, 'For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.' 'I am the bread of life; I am that bread of life... Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. And the bread that I will give is my flesh which I will give for the life of the world. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.' Can one partake of the flesh and blood of Christ in symbol or otherwise if it be 'sin contaminated' and not be guilty of touching the unclean thing? Why be led any more by blind guides and their doctrine? Have you a desire to do God's-will irrespective of the sacrifice that entails? Jesus said 'My doctrine is not mine but his that sent me. If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.'

R. Roberts spoke too much of his own volition and contradicted his own writings and statements, and because a humble man like Edward Turney began to know of the doctrine as a result of a desire to do God's will, Robert thought the worst and regarded it as an effort to topple him from the leadership. Nothing could have been further from Edward Turney's mind. We only wish Dr Thomas had been alive at the time, for we are persuaded that he was the type of man who would have agreed with Edward Turney's views because we have the evidence that he did at one time express them himself.

'If the blind lead the blind.' At least you are wise enough to know the result of this.

Phil Parry

The Promised Land

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" - Luke 21:25-28.

The world has been crying out for peace for many years, especially in the Middle East, but peace will not come until Jesus returns to set up His Kingdom.

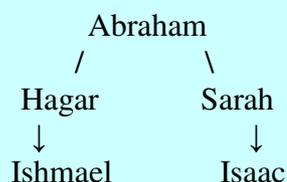
The position we are in at this time is as Jesus prophesied in the first part of the quotation above – “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth:”

The reference to the sun, moon and stars reminds us of Joseph’s dream recorded in Genesis 37:9-11, “And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying”. It seems Jacob, or Israel as he was later called, associated his family with the sun, moon and stars and so Jesus may also have been signifying the ‘family’ or nation of Israel. The distress of nations with perplexity is all too evident and the word ‘perplexity’ is variously understood to mean ‘anxiety’ or ‘with no way out’; indeed it appears that there is no way out as the nations vie with each other for the most effective weapons of mass destruction to threaten each other with and if men were left to sort out the problems of the world it would surely end in self destruction such as couldn’t have been imagined one or two generations ago; we remember Jesus said, “Except those days be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:22).

It is amazing we can link the events of today with the two sons of Abraham nearly 4,000 years ago.

Ishmael was Abraham’s son born to Hagar, Sarah’s handmaid, and Isaac his son born to Sarah, his wife. In Genesis 17:20 we read of God’s promise to Abraham regarding his two sons, - “And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac.” History had shown Ishmael to be one of the forefathers of the Arab nations while the Jews are descended from Isaac.

Another promise was made to Abraham after he had proven his obedience to the commandment of God to offer up Isaac, although Abraham was prevented from making the offering as he raised his hand to strike the fatal blow, his faith was rewarded in the making of another promise which we read in Genesis 22:15-18, “And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”

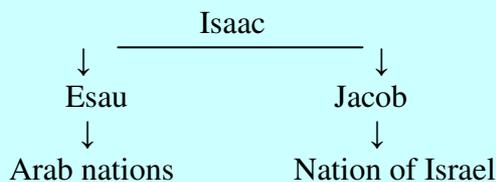


Next we go to Isaac and again we find conflict between his two sons – Jacob and Esau.

Genesis 25:21-26, “And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like

an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob.”

Two nations... two manner of people. Arab and Jew



But the promised blessing was to be through Jacob. Genesis 28:10-15, “And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

And in Genesis 35:9-12 we come to God's message to Jacob to change his name - “And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

So the land was promised to Israel but it was to be another 350 years before the nation of Israel inherited it from God when the people, after the death of Moses, were led into it by Joshua. Its extent was to be from the river of Egypt to the river Euphrates as we read in Numbers 34:1-12, but at no time did the nation extend this far. We can only assume that it will do so when Jesus sets up the Kingdom to reign over the world from Jerusalem.

The Arab nations spread widely throughout the Middle East but after the time of Mohammed, about 1400 years ago, the majority of Arabs converted to Islam and this religion has in more recent times spread world-wide and is fast becoming the most numerous of all religions.

It is with this background we can hear and read daily news of events concerning the more extremist Muslims with their threats of wiping Israel off the map, and the increasing antipathy against the Israelis who are trying to defend themselves against their Muslim neighbours.

Lord, may Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

Love in Jesus to all. Russell.

Information

We say to all who would know the truth on any question: attend to what your opponent says as well as to the opinions of your friends. You may probably know one side of a question pretty well: listen to them, and then you will be acquainted with the other. After that your conclusions will be doubly sure.

It was the spirit of suppression that kept the Bible out of circulation for centuries; it is the spirit of enquiry after truth, on the basis of the supreme authority of the Word of God that has scattered more than 100 millions of Bibles over the world, and in over 200 languages. It is the unfettered search of modern times that has brought to light the grand foundations of truths of the Scriptures: the nature of man - the promise of life - the inheritance of the earth - and the government of the world by Christ.

It is this untrammelled search that has revealed, and is still revealing, the rotten foundations of many religious beliefs; it is the spirit of Popery which says you shall read this, but you shall not read that. "O," but the inquisitors cry, "evil communications corrupt good manners." Verily that saying is a wise saying; but whoever had his good manners corrupted by an earnest examination of earnest views of the Bible? As of yore, the inquisitor is always gentle and has a tender conscience: he could gag your mouth; smash your pen; burn your writings; forbid the world to read them, or even to look thereon; then light a fire for your own special purgation and refinement, while from his chair he devoutly assured you of his mental sufferings through your "crooked ways" and that he should over "preserve for you a tender spot in his heart."

But enough! Works rather than words: deeds rather than creeds! "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Origin unknown.

The following was posted by Cliff York on the Christadelphian Worldwide Forum under the heading of The Kingdom Age.

Post 6. 17th September 2009 :-

Hi All, On the Lion/Lamb thing... did you know that the Lion and the Lamb are not mentioned as lying down together in the Bible?

It DOES say that the Wolf and the Lamb shall dwell together, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together... and a little child shall lead them.

Is this literal? Is it necessary for it to be literal? And if it is, how will a wolf be a wolf and a leopard a leopard if literally they are all going to be herbivorous?

Or is the Spirit telling us that the characteristics of certain people will change when shown the folly of their ways.

For example... if those who weep and gnash their teeth are still actually IN the Kingdom (though not part of the great feast, it seems) - could it be THEY are the human "Wolves" from today who will ultimately learn to dwell peaceably with the human "Lambs" from today... and so on?

So if it is figurative... how might we understand it? On a personal level? Or at a national level?

Here are some thoughts/questions...

Wolf = ? (Those who devour others?)

Lamb = ? (Those "Sheep" who hear His voice?)

Leopard = ? (Those swift to tear some "creatures" apart?)

Kid = ? (Those who still live under Law(s)... on the milk of the Word?)

Calf = ? (One who is stronger... walking by Faith and Grace?)

Young Lion = ? (One with King like qualities? Or perhaps one who has progressed to Grace i.e. the MEAT of the Word!)

Fatling = ? (One skilled in living by Grace? cp Mal 4:2)

Little Child = ? ("Except you become as one of these little ones... ?")

Cow = ?

Bear = ?

Lion = ?
Ox = ?
Sucking child = ?
Asp = ?
Weaned Child = ?
Cockatrice = ?

The 9th verse of Isaiah 11 is fascinating, because in the full blown kingdom, it would seem (unlike today) there will be a far greater level of acceptance and Love and tolerance than we see even among some who claim to be religious... “They shall not hurt (abuse) or destroy (relationships) in all my Holy Mountain (whole earth) ... for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord (i.e. that HE IS LOVE) as the waters cover the sea.”

Is this whole “prophecy” in Isaiah about Kingdom conditions really telling us what happens in “Kingdom Zoology” when “Kingdom Love” abounds. In other words... True Kingdom is Diversity in Unity... without having each one look like a clone of something else.

I agree with Susan (*in another post - R.*)... >>Perhaps we [need to] be sure we do not let “lions” in our world now devour the innocent, we [need to] protect them, give them sanctuary when needed, without hating the “lion” for having an appetite!<<

Lovin’ livin’ in the Sonshine

Cliff

Thank you Cliff for sharing this. Can anyone fill in the gaps? Russell

DEFIANCE and REPENTANCE.

When thinking of defiance two people who grossly defied God come to mind. Balaam and Pharaoh. Let us first look at Balaam. His fault was that the prospect of fame and monetary gain made him “bent on getting his own way, whether it was God’s will or not. He was so determined on that futile mission trying to curse the Children of Israel that God had to intervene forcibly. We know what happened. His ass saw the angel of God. But when trying to save Balaam “by turning out of the angel’s way, Balaam thought the ass was stubborn and smote her. This happened three times until Balaam eventually himself saw the angel. Now to be honest with ourselves, when we badly want something, not necessarily money or material possessions do we always ask ourselves whether our wishes are in accordance with the will of God as recorded for us in the Bible? Do we always pray to God before taking any important decisions in our lives and ask whether it is His will? And if our wishes do not materialize, being unfulfilled, do we gracefully accept it as God’s will, realizing that there is a reason for it which we may only discover years later, perhaps only after the resurrection.

Now the case of Pharaoh. He broke his promise to let the Children of Israel go free nine times. But the ninth time proved once too often. God was very patient with him, considering how he defied Moses and Aaron. And Pharaoh mistook God’s patience for slackness, assuming God did, after all, not mean what He said. He mistook God for one who just made empty threats. Now none of us openly defies God to this pattern. But we all have our weaknesses in one direction or another. We all sin in many ways, then regret it and ask God for forgiveness. And we sincerely mean it at the time. But unfortunately we often commit the same sin again. I often ask myself how we are trying God’s patience when we do the same wrong repeatedly. But let us never be guilty of Pharaoh’s mistake of misinterpreting God’s patience for weakness. It could easily be done, not intentionally like Pharaoh, but unconsciously, because the punishment does not always immediately follow the misdeed. Think of a child who does something he shouldn’t. Father threatens punishment “Don’t do this again, or else...” But some are more patient and easy going than others and allow the wrong to go through a few times, though threatening repeatedly. The child then thinks he is

getting away with it, mistaking fathers patience for sheer bluff, very much like Pharaoh's attitude towards God, though in a much smaller way and not really intending direct defiance. But if he is a caring father heeding Solomon's proverbs about a loving father chastening his son betimes, the time will come when the child will do it once too often only to discover that father meant what he said after all. He will then discover the hard and painful way the difference "between patience and slackness of keeping promises. And we when we sin and the evil consequences do not appear immediately, do not let us think we got away with it. Sin is sin. But God in His mercy and through the intercession of our High Priest forgives the repentant sinner. Let us never slacken in our efforts to do "better next time. It is easily done when we apparently and only apparently, do not experience any evil consequences. But let us be conscious of God's mercies, undeserved on our part, & beware of avoiding Pharaoh's mistake of taking unfair advantage of it.

I now want to turn to the very opposite: sincere repentance. Here again there are two examples: David and Paul. The former committed adultery and then tried to cover it up. But in doing so, he committed another sin, murder. No matter how much he tried to hide it God did not let him do so. He eventually confessed to God, and his prayer of repentance is recorded in Psalm 51. Trying to cover wrong doing by rulers and people in authority has, is, and will be until the return of the Lord, a common feature. We have an example of it in I Samuel chapter 15 when Saul failed to carry out God's command to destroy utterly the Amalekites and all their possessions. And he had to admit it. But he tried his utmost to persuade Samuel to come with him just this once so that the people should not find out. Of course it became known eventually that God had rejected Saul and appointed David in his place.

How different from the case of Paul. Paul, unlike David, did not transgress the law. He was guilty of a misguided zeal in persecuting the Christians. But one outstanding feature in his character is his open admission in public, both in front of the Jewish teachers and in front of the Roman authorities, that he was wrong. Just think of it: a teacher of some fame, an authority on the law of Jewish tradition, held in high esteem by Gamaliel, a religious leader at that time, admitting his error in public, unashamedly. Not what we find of leaders and statesmen of our day is it?

What can we learn from this? Let us for a moment not look on doctrinal matters of his epistles, but just at the repentant Paul. Of course Paul's repentance was brought about suddenly through God's intervention. Our own conversion did not come about as drastically as this. For most of us it came about through reading literature, or a friend showing us the way of truth. But like Paul we all had to admit some time in our lives that the faith we were brought up in, or the faith we embraced later in our lives was wrong. Not necessarily in public, "but nevertheless to some close friends, and it took some courage. But with all our faults, we can at least say that we let God lead us and were not defiant like Pharaoh & Balaam. We resolved at the time of our conversion to serve God to the utmost of our ability. Let us continue in this path. If we have failed, as we all do at times, let us renew our resolve. It is never too late. God is patient and merciful. Only let us not fall into Pharaoh's way and take unfair advantage of it. Then we shall find that God will never leave or forsake us.

Bro. Leo. Dreifuss.

COMMENTS RELATING TO THE SERPENT

in Genesis chapter 5

The role played by the serpent recorded in the above scripture has always been a subject for speculation, was it literal, or allegorical? There are difficulties with either of these two extremes in harmonising with other relative scriptures. If the literal view is taken we are faced with the unlikely phenomena of "a beast of the field" (verse 1) with apparent equal intelligence in conversation with the woman, but even if this were so, verse 6 intimates that the human pair were together at the time so why did it not address them both? We know that the lower animals have varying degrees of intelligence and some are able to mimic various spoken words but, they are normally dumb and devoid of the reasoning power invested in God's highest creation (man), they are not moral responsible creatures. Paul's reference in 1 Corinthians

11:5 lends no real credence to the literal view of the case because 'subtlety' is not limited to speech, it is a characteristic which can be manifested in actions and ways, which is only possible in the case of dumb creatures. Nevertheless, the presence of a literal serpent cannot be ruled out if any sense is to be made out of Eve's excuse "the serpent beguiled me" etc. Could she not have been deceived by what she saw the serpent do? It is quite common in countries where snakes abound to see them in trees where they have a vantage point in catching their prey, some also eat the vegetation.* See footnote

It is quite likely that our first parents had been tempted by the forbidden tree before that fateful day, because, to the natural mind that which is prohibited appears more attractive and arouses the curiosity more than that which is allowed. I therefore submit as a possible explanation that the serpent was in the tree 'touching it' (verse 5) and probably eating of its fruit, and the woman, noticing that no harm came to it by so doing, might she not have been emboldened to do likewise? The seeming conversation with the beast was nothing more than the reasonings of her tempted mind - it would be as though the serpent had said 'thou shall not surely die' etc., although its part in the event was entirely passive, it was only doing that which came naturally to its kind, no outside tempter was necessary to cause the first sin. The testimony of the Apostle James was as true then as now (chap. 1 verse 15-15), 'enticement' comes in various ways - by what we see, hear, feel, etc. We do not take the 'conversation' between the Devil (Satan) and Christ in the wilderness temptation to be literal so why in the case of Eve? It was evidently auto-suggestion in both cases, though some may still favour the idea of a speaking serpent on the grounds that God caused Balaam's ass to speak (Numbers 22) but that was most certainly a miracle for the sole purpose of preventing the madness of the prophet 'who had been hired to curse Israel.' The only record in the Old Testament scripture and confirmed in the New Testament (2 Peter 2:15) of a dumb creature speaking in man's voice. 1 Timothy 2:14 states that "Adam was not deceived (presumably by the serpent) but the woman, being deceived was in the transgression." A possible reason why Eve was deceived could- be her failure to take into account that the 'Tree' forbidden on pain of death applied only to them as morally responsible and not other creatures, so it follows that the subsequent curse on the serpent recorded in Genesis 5:14 must be understood in a figurative sense only, as the following verse is predictive and concerns mankind not a literal serpent and its seed, obviously. To sum up then, we may say that because the literal serpent was involved (however unwittingly) in the temptation and fall of man, God made it to be symbolic of sin and death, the 'enemy' destined to be finally destroyed.

S. E. Linggood.

Footnote: While it is common for some kinds of snakes to climb or live in trees for catching their prey, no snakes eat vegetation. – Russell.

Letter dated 25th January 1911:-

Dear Bro. Beesley, I was very glad to get your letter in reply to my note... It has been interesting in this discussion to note that every writer without exception has made the same error in misunderstanding my position. It is not that the position is so very complex or involved but simply that brethren have quite false ideas of what is termed the Renunciationist position. All start with the assumption that the Christ I believe in is a being of a different nature. This is not the case. The scriptures are perfectly clear and definite on this head. Hebrews 2:14 is quite sufficient to prove to me that the Lord Jesus Christ partook of the flesh and blood of the children. But alongside that scriptural idea you have in common with most Christadelphians two unscriptural and false assumptions which are the root cause of all the dividing we have had.

First, you assume that the Lord Jesus was as we are, a condemned man under Adamic condemnation; and secondly, you assume that the nature is physically unclean and needs atoning or cleansing. Neither of these two assumptions are scriptural or true. Both are based on the wrong idea of what the condemnation was. The usual and wrong statement is that "This mortality is our condemnation in Adam." Then you reason Christ was mortal, consequently condemned.

"The Lord God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good." This cannot be made to apply to character for man is not created with a ready made character and the lower animals never develop one.

Consequently the handiwork of the Lord God was physically very good. Yet a few thousand years after God said to the Children of Israel through Moses that certain animals should be unclean to them. These formed part of the very good creation, now pronounced unclean - so how were they unclean? Legally. Further, that the embargo is now removed with the passing of the law all were made clean. However, one feature of that uncleanness was this - no unclean animal was fit for sacrifice. Consequently if the Christ was unclean He was not fit for sacrifice, yet He was so used. Study that thought, Bro Beesley. An unclean Christ is not the Christ of God. "We are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all", shown clean every whit in type. Could we be cleansed by an unclean offering? Do not let us "do despite to the spirit of grace and count the blood of the covenant whereby we are sanctified an unholy or unclean thing."

Now let us consider the basic error, that "This mortality is our condemnation in Adam." How was Adam created? Was he condemned? No. Yet he was created mortal. Do we not turn to the account of the creation of man to prove that this is a fact? "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground." Paul comments on this in 1 Corinthians 15 and says, "The first man was made a living soul", or natural body, "he was made of the earth earthy" and in that same chapter he says, as a synonymous expression "this mortal must put on immortality." To make the scriptures square with this theory Christadelphians are driven to invent a third nature. Something neither mortal or immortal, a kind of semi-angel as representing Adam at first, and yet the scriptures conclusively prove that Adam was created a non-abiding body - not made for continuance - dependant on food for life - made as the Psalmist says "of spirit that passeth away and cometh not again." We are mortal, then, by creation and not by condemnation. Some would contend that the nature was changed but there is no support for that theory to be found anywhere in the scriptures. It is therefore unscriptural to speak of a condemned or unclean nature. It is the man or the race who were condemned because of transgressions and who became legally unclean by sinning. It is in the power of the Son of God to make mortals clean, for in the days of His flesh He said to His disciples, "Now are ye clean." It is possible for mortals to be free from condemnation and yet continue in their mortality, for Paul tells the believers that "there is now no condemnation unto those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set us free from the law of sin and death." To one holding the popular theory both these glad messages are robbed of half their comfort by being made prospective when the fact is that it is a position now to be enjoyed. A condemned sinner is alienated from God and cannot serve Him. He must change sides. He must leave the service of sin and become God's servant and son. Until that condemnation is removed no one can please God. We are not yet perfect, no certainly not. We are in this mortality for a purpose. That purpose is shown in the example of God's only begotten free born Son - to be made perfect through trial and suffering.

Christadelphians say Jesus Christ was unclean; He needed purifying, purging, cleansing, to be atoned for; He was unclean, filthy, sinful. And the scriptures never once so speak. It is a significant fact that the word "redemption" does not occur in the Birmingham Statement of Faith - it is a subject that, with the theory of a Christ that needed to be atoned for, cannot be understood. These are scriptural facts, the Lord Jesus was freeborn, not condemned, this mortality is not the condemnation, neither has the nature been changed. With these three facts in mind the scriptural way of saving mankind becomes clear.

Suppose we consider the statement that Christ had to offer for Himself or to atone for Himself. For what? The scripture atonement was for sin. Now Jesus had no personal sins therefore that is ruled out of account. So it is said it was to atone for His sin nature. Do you mean His physical body? If so did He make it? Can you make Him offer or atone for the possession of a body of flesh and blood as created by God? Offer for God's handiwork? The suggestion seems too ridiculous to consider. Was it necessary to atone for the impulses or desires because these lead to sin, are the desires reckoned sin? If so then God made man with those faculties. Is it for a natural mind? Adam had a natural mind before transgression. Christ kept His mind always in subjection. His body always under control, and there was no cause of death in Him. Consequently He needed not to die for Himself in any sense. He was in no sense a sinner. He died for us. The Just for the unjust.

He freely laid down His life to purchase us from the possession of sin and now we can "Sing praise the tomb is void where the Redeemer lay; Sing of our bonds destroyed, our darkness turned to day."

Brother Harry Warre