

The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No 268

4th Quarter 2014

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Editorial

Dear Brethren and Sisters and Fiends,

We await the coming of Jesus Christ and the Jews await the coming of their Messiah. For the Jewish nation it appears it will be a matter of survival for their country.

We read in Zechariah 14:1 to 5: -

“Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.”

And so this extraordinary chapter continues. This prophecy depicts an awful time for Israel. The Jews, or Israelites, were given the Law and the land after they escaped from Egypt; they know and believe, yet fail to fully understand their Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament scriptures), yet it was their ancestors who crucified the Son of God through their lack of faith and understanding, and for which they have been in exile ever since. It was prophesied they would one day return to their own land and so Israel became a country in its own right in 1948. Nevertheless, they have not yet accepted Jesus as their Messiah and will not do so until He comes.

One remarkable phrase in the above quote from Zechariah 14 tells us that,

“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”

And this, I believe has reference to the time of Joshua where we read in Joshua 10:12 to 14,

“Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel”.

Dr Adam Clarke, who wrote extensive commentaries on the scriptures, says regarding Zechariah chapter 14: -

“From this great Jewish tragedy the prophet immediately passes to the utter extermination of the enemies of Christianity in the latter days. God will display his power in behalf of his people in a manner so astonishing and miraculous, that even they themselves, and much more their enemies, shall be struck with terror. The national prosperity of the Jews shall then be permanent and unmixed, and these people shall be made the instruments of converting many to the faith of the Messiah. The great increase and prosperity of the Christian Church, the New Jerusalem, is then described in terms accommodated to Jewish ideas; and the most signal vengeance denounced against all her enemies. From that happy period God's name will be honoured in everything, and his worship everywhere most reverently observed.”

May Jesus come very soon and establish everlasting peace for mankind.

With love in Jesus to all our readers, Russell.

Taken from a Circular Letter probably published during the 1970's : -

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 ever “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.”

Extract from C.L, 9.

1867 to 1875

Was Jesus a Constitutional Sinner?

By “Constitutional Sinner” we mean one who is concluded under sin as we read in Romans 5:18, “by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation.” Clause 8 of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith reads, “That these promises (made to Adam, Abraham and David) had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for Himself and all who should believe and obey Him.”

One of the things I have learned from publishing the first two volumes of Brother Edward Turney’s Magazine is that Dr Thomas was opposed to Robert Roberts regarding the Nature of Jesus Christ.

In April 1867 the Ambassador magazine published an article written by Sister E. J. Lassius, the daughter of Dr John Thomas. Here it is –

ON THE NATURE OF CHRIST. BY DR. THOMAS’S DAUGHTER.

“There are, at this time, some interesting points of doctrine in process of discussion among some in different places, and we do earnestly hope that all parties engaged therein, will be enlightened in the end, and that no cause of strife may arise therefrom. I wish in this letter, to mention and enlarge a little upon one of these points. It is about the nature and constitution of Jesus Christ. Some parties affirm that He did not possess the Divine nature in any respect; that He was constitutionally a sinner like any other son of Adam; that when a child He was no more than any other child, and when arrived at years of maturity the Deity saw that His character was good and suitable for His purpose, therefore He made use of Him, and filled Him with the Holy Spirit at His baptism.

Others affirm that He was constitutionally righteous and incapable of sinning, and devoid of the propensities inherent in our nature. Now, evidently the truth of the matter is not wholly on either position according to the Scriptures.

That Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous there can be no doubt, but, that He was incapable of sinning we do not believe. If this were so, there would have been no virtue or merit in withstanding temptation; consequently, the temptation, as recorded in the New Testament, would have been a useless performance.

We learn from the testimony that Jesus was created by the Father out of the substance of His mother Mary, at the time appointed by Jehovah - according as it is written - “When the fulness of time was come, He was made of a woman,” and the angel Gabriel appeared unto the Virgin Mary and told her the manner of its fulfilment – that the “Holy Spirit should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her,” and, “That Holy Thing that should be born of her should be called the Son of God.” Now we know that, as a general thing, all children partake of the nature, constitution, and character of BOTH their parents. No child is ever wholly, and entirely, and in all

respects like one parent only, and we are not warranted in making an exception to this law in the case of the Son of God. From His mother, He derived all the faculties, propensities, and instincts which belong to the nature of the first Adam - as it is written - "He took upon Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham," that sin might be condemned in the nature which had sinned; and also, that He might be able to sympathise with our infirmities, and to "succour those who are tempted," "forasmuch, as he also was compassed with infirmity." This was the "body prepared" for a habitation of the Spirit in all fulness - as it is written - "A body hast Thou prepared for me," "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God."

Now we understand what was the nature of the medium of manifestation, but what was that which was manifested? Was it merely the natural manifestations of a natural man? By no means. It is written, "He shall be called Immanuel," that is, being interpreted, "God with us." This was God manifested in the flesh, although the Spirit of God has operated through other media, both in word and sign. He is called the "only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Some might ask, how was the Deity manifested? We answer, in the character of the Son and His mental attributes. The Apostle John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," and, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." The Word of God is the wisdom of God; the thoughts or intelligence of Deity. This word of wisdom is personified in the Proverbs of Solomon, thus, - I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions," with many other similar passages. Jesus Christ was the wisdom of God embodied in the flesh - "the express image of His person" or character, because it was ordained that in Him should dwell the fulness of the Godhead bodily, so that it became essential that he should not only receive the Spirit without measure at His baptism for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and working miracles, but, that he should also have power within Himself to become perfect in all virtue that He might be found without transgression and without fault from His infancy and childhood; that He might be the lamb without spot or blemish. So, from the Deity, His Father, he inherited wisdom, thought, intelligence, elevation, and purity of character. Being aware of His divine origin and mission at twelve years of age, and perhaps before, He was able to discuss matters pertaining to the law with men of years and education - professed doctors of divinity. Thus we see that He displayed, even in the years of childhood, wisdom and knowledge inherited from His heavenly Father. "Being the Son of God He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," as all children are, in a certain sense, equal with their parents.

The natural illustrates the spiritual. In studying human character we find that the inward thoughts, judgment, or intelligence is something different and distinct from the desires, affections, and propensities; all these are right and good in their proper sphere, when directed and circumscribed within certain limits prescribed by the law of God. If the judgment is clear and well regulated and controlled by the word of God, it will entirely subjugate the desires and affections, and only allow them a certain limited scope. This, however, is a state of mind never completely attained to by us who are born after the flesh by the will of man. Jesus being the word, thought, or intelligence of His Father, consequently the will of the flesh was far more subjugated and subdued, and He was not liable to be led away by excited impulses and perverted desires. The desires of His nature were in a natural state, such as those with which the first Adam was endowed at his creation. Some of the first Adam's descendants, however, have so nourished and cultivated those propensities (which in their simplicity are good enough), that they have become perverted and altogether unnatural. In the consideration of this or any other subject of Bible doctrine, we should seek to harmonize all the passages bearing upon any particular point; and not accept some and reject others, which (to our limited comprehension) seems to convey opposition of meaning; when in reality there is no contradiction, but a beautiful harmony when rightly put together.

Mrs E. J. Lassius." - Ambassador, April, 1867.

The above article by Dr Thomas' daughter was republished by Edward Turney in The Christian Lamp, in October 1875 with the following remarks -

COMMENT.

“We reprint the foregoing for several reasons, all of which it is not necessary to state. It is clear that Dr. Thomas’s daughter wrote this article with her father’s consent or approval, and those who are familiar with her father’s writing will recognise in it both his ideas and his language. It is also equally clear that the editor of the Christadelphian (Robert Roberts) approved of this article from what precedes it, as well as from the prominence it holds in that paper, being the leading article for the month. It was in the month of April, 1867, that this article was published. We are now in the month of August, 1875, making some comment upon it. During the last two years of this interval the Christadelphian and its editor have in many ways denounced us and anathematized us in language of unmeasured bitterness because we are not now able to believe that flesh is full of sin, and that Jesus was a constitutional sinner. We do not now intend to make more than an allusion to our answers to these charges. We wish at this time to call special notice to this article from the pen of Dr. Thomas’s daughter, which affords the strongest possible proof of one of two things, either that the editor of the Christadelphian did not understand its teaching, or that he believed it true. What then does it teach? Let us set the matter in order:

1. Some parties affirm that Jesus was a constitutional sinner, like any other son of Adam.
2. That the truth of the matter is that Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous.
3. That the desires, affections, and propensities are right and good in their proper sphere, when directed and circumscribed within certain limits prescribed by the law of God.
4. That the desires of Jesus’ nature were in a natural state, such as those with which the first Adam was endowed at his creation.

According to the first item Dr. Thomas, and his daughter, and perhaps the editor of the Christadelphian, believed it, in 1867, unscriptural to teach that Jesus was a constitutional sinner.

From the second item it is undeniable that Dr. Thomas and his daughter, and perhaps the editor of the Christadelphian, believed that Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous.

In the third item, they (the Dr. and his daughter) affirm that the propensities are good when properly guided; in the fourth that Jesus was in the same state as Adam at his creation.

Now every reader of the controversy between ourselves and the editor of the Christadelphian must be aware that we endorse the four items above set forth, and that the editor of the Christadelphian denies each and all of them. He has iterated and reiterated

- (1.) that Jesus was a constitutional sinner.
- (2.) That the desires of the flesh are sinful and corrupt.
- (3.) That because Jesus was born of Mary He was involved in the same state as all Adam’s children.

And these things he obstinately avers without a shred of proof, giving it out all the while that he stands and will stand or fall on Dr. Thomas’s platform!!! Is it possible for a sane person in face of the foregoing testimony, to say nothing of much more already adduced in the Lamp and the Lecture on the Sacrifice of Christ; is it possible we say for a sane person not to see that the editor of the Christadelphian has long since committed logical suicide. We cannot be persuaded that had any other man fallen into such flagrant contradiction that the editor of the Christadelphian would have been slow to perceive it, and we are the more confirmed from this fresh evidence of his error, that it is not argument but something else that gives him so much resemblance to the proverbial obstinacy of a very useful animal. But in the very nature of things this is but a preparation for eating the dish of “humble pie.” This dish is before him, and the longer he refuses to eat it up the more unsavoury it will become. We shall continue to remind him as opportunity offers that the “pie” is not consumed.

- Editor.” (Edward Turney)

We find more information regarding the matter and here we give some observations made by friends of Dr Thomas. First we give just the opening portion of a long and detailed letter from Brother John Coffman to Brother Edward Turney in which he writes: -

Adeline, Ogle County, Illinois, United States of America, Feb. 2nd, 1874.

“DEAR BRO. TURNEY - Great and important events having taken place in England among the brotherhood induces me to address you, and although personally unacquainted, we are nevertheless connected by that fellowship which all believers of the truth who walk worthy of their high calling have, one with another. I perceive that you are branded as a heretic. I have seen no just reason for so grave a charge if we can act on the supposition that you know and can demonstrate your own position. There is a candour and honesty in your course that is very charming to those who love the truth for its own sake. A disposition to accept what is Scriptural irrespective of what the Dr. might term “preconceived Babel speculations.” There is also an absence of that spirit now so prevalent, which is expressed in the observation made by Pilate, “What I have written, I have written.” This, in our estimation, is good evidence of that true nobility which should characterize the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. What more noble than to say I was wrong, I did not understand the subject though honest in my belief; from this time forward I know better, and thank God for it.

Of the much-discussed question on your side of the water, it appears to me that such a controversy as is now going on will, in the end, result in good. Agitation as you know, prevents stagnation. The position on the subject of the Christ held by a goodly few in this country, is at last assailed in the columns of the Christadelphian and as we have no hope that our side of the argument would be permitted to see the light through its pages, we turn to you and ask to be heard through the medium of the “Lamp,” believing that you will not shrink from the divine testimonies, knowing that truth has nothing to fear and no favours to ask of error in a fair field and on equal terms.”

This as far as we need go in this letter.

Next we go forward two months to a letter from Samuel Coffman, the father of John who wrote the above extract.

Adeline, Ogle Co., Illinois, U.S.A. 27th April, 1874.

“Dear Bro. Turney, - The April number of the Lamp has appeared, and been read with much pleasure, as in it is set forth the grand truth of eternal power manifest in flesh common to the seed of Abraham. For some time I thought we would go down to the dust ere our progressive ideas on this grand theme would be set before the brethren at large, therefore accept my thanks for the insertion of my son John’s condensed article. - - - . Owing to my feeble health, I only slightly read my son’s epistle ere it was sent, in the meantime thinking it would be hid from the light as has been the case in other quarters. Consequently I feel thankful for its insertion, and your gentle reasonable comment thereon. The article referred to is calculated to set before the brethren what we believe the word of the Almighty teaches on this grand theme. You are right. Indeed we are too easily misunderstood, but the truth has had this to contend with in all ages; we surely do not believe in the eternal sonship. But, as Bro. Ellis said, the Son is not the Father, neither the Father the Son; but the Father was the progenitor of the Son; and the Son came out from the Father, and was a physical Son, as any man who comes from his father a literal son, as with his father. Now, can we realise how we pre-existed with our fathers? You are correct in regard to the passage, Isa. xl. 3 that John was preparing the way for Elohim; this makes it a necessity that Jesus was a substantial Son of God in the same sense as all men are substantial sons of their fathers. This view was well understood by the Jews, and was what they rejected, knowing their acceptance of it would be an acknowledgment of the claims of Jesus that He was the Son of God; in fact, an equal, an Eloah, equal of the other Eloah, who came in the form of a dove. An anointed personage, let him be ever so well organised would not be the Saviour, the Christ, that preached through Noah. Bro. Ellis is correct; I hope he may succeed in demonstrating to the minds of the brethren that Jesus was substantially the Son of God, first physically, then mentally and

morally, upon the principle that Jesus was the Son of God, as all men are the sons of their fathers, and SURELY WAS NOT UNDER CONDEMNATION.

I had considerable private conversation with the Doctor previous to his death, and amongst his last words on this point he spake in this manner to me: - "You had a son who died." "Yes." "Was he a manifestation of you?" "Yes." "Well he being so, and now dead, you died in manifestation. Upon the like principle Deity died in manifestation." I said, "Doctor, is this a correct illustration?" He said "Yes, and very simple."

In conclusion, I desire that we all, the brethren of Christ - babes as it were - lay aside our prejudices and extremes, and truly grow in the knowledge of the Father and the Lord Jesus anointed; and rise above the infant state, and become men, able to bear strong meat, and talk less about re-immersion on the present occasion. I feel satisfied there is a way, if we had the will, to become united in peace and love one towards the other. We all know there is strength in unity, but by all means our unity must be based upon the truth, and to discourage progress in the truth, to effect unity, has certainly a bad effect; therefore, I pray to the Father through the Son, that we may all grow in knowledge, not looking backward, but forward, that we may make our calling and election sure.

Kind regards, SAMUEL W. COFFMAN."

In response to this letter, Bro. Edward Turney wrote, "This letter came in after our June impression was complete or it should have appeared therein. The writer of it was very familiar with the late Dr. Thomas for many years, and the impression he has of the Doctors latest views of the Christ is that he - the Doctor - did not believe Christ was under condemnation.

Bro. Coffman complains of the tyrannical and suppressive spirit on the part of the Editor of the Christadelphian; who, to make out his own case, has treated the Doctor's writings from the 1852 Herald the same as he has those of Bro. Coffman's, friends - "hid them from the light," and for what reason? Because the brethren might misunderstand them! Choice excuse certainly. And why may they not also misunderstand what this considerate guardian has reprinted?

The sentiments of our aged Bro. Coffman touching unity and peace will be cordially reciprocated by all those whose Christian principles operate on their hearts, as well as on their heads. Finally, to our venerable Bro., and to all the brethren, we say, that while ever the Lamp continues to burn, their views shall be read by its impartial light.

EDITOR."

Brother John Coffman again writes at length to Brother Edward Turney and here again, we reproduce only a part as follows: -

To the Editor of the "Christadelphian Lamp"

Adeline, Ogle County, Illinois, U.S of America, July 30th, 1874.

"Dear Bro. Turney, - Some six months since, I had the pleasure of writing you on a subject in which the Brethren at large appeared to be intensely interested. The candid, courteous, and manly way in which you met those points with which you could not agree, induces me to address you again on this topic, and believe me, Bro. Turney, it is with no idea of cavilling, or for the sake of seeking to establish a theory, that I do so. I firmly believe what I endeavour to set forth is the truth of God, taught in His word. To this authority I am ever willing to appeal, and it is my earnest desire to stand upon that foundation; hence, I shall esteem it a favor, if I am wrong, to be put right, for what advantage do I gain by an imperfect, or incorrect understanding of the glorious doctrine of the ever blessed Son of God. On this subject it appears to be impossible so to write as not to be misunderstood, and as I have no desire to cast stumbling-blocks in the path of those who desire to

understand me correctly, I will endeavour to be as lucid in my remarks as it is possible for me to be, without sacrificing the testimonies laid down for our acceptance. I do not intend to teach that the invisible God was born in the city of Bethlehem, and I do not think you so understand me, but rather that my language is calculated to produce such an impression. I say that the visible image of the invisible God, or a manifestation of this only true God, was the personage born; God's son, whose name He was by birthright fully entitled to bear, hence it will be observed that the same word precisely, is used in the 11th verse of the 2nd chap. of Luke, to designate the son, as is applied in the 9th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th verses to the invisible Deity and Father; the original of which I apprehend, is the Greek word *Kurios*, answering to the Hebrew *Adon* . . .”

(*And to conclude*) . . . “God's only begotten Son, then, ranks high above all humanity in one most important respect, which would be difficult to overestimate, and that is, His divine origin; He “proceeded forth, and came from God, who sent Him as the bread of life, to give salvation to a perishing world; herein is the love of God manifested “towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ (His Son) died for us. The extraordinary prophecies concerning Him, and the remarkable discourses He uttered concerning Himself, have puzzled past ages and generations, and have produced more intense and bitter contentions than probably any other subject yet set forth in the scriptures. We, who are waiting for Him, who are His brethren should, of all people in the world, understand and faithfully receive His savings. Let us give them our prayerful study and meditation, and our reward will be great.

Faithfully yours, JOHN D. COFFMAN.”

In commenting on this letter, Brother Edward Turney wrote: -

“This letter contains many excellent things, and leaves the writer of it much less liable, as we think, to be misunderstood than his former communication; but, as it is probable that some of our readers will ask what he means by substance of God, as applied to Jesus, perhaps he will keep that point before him in his next article. The term substance of God indicates to most peoples' minds deathless substance, but we do not apprehend brother Coffman means that. - EDITOR.”

Three months later this next letter from John Coffman is entitled : -

GOD'S SON.

Adeline, Ogle Co., III., U. S. A., October 31st, 1874.

“Dear Bro. Turney, - In reply to your short, but pointed observations on my last epistle, I now send you an article for publication, which, in connection with my last, I trust will meet the difficulty, and perhaps clear up some other points that may not have been understood. Praying for the welfare of the truth during the absence of the Master, and that we may be found faithful stewards by Him at His appearing.

Yours faithfully in the Christ, J. D. COFFMAN.

THERE is no subject in the Scriptures more calculated to excite the gratitude and admiration of the faithful saint than that love which the Creator has manifested for the creature, exhibited in the sending forth, and giving up for us, of His well-beloved, and only begotten Son, who came not “to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might he saved.” We have often imagined what Abraham's feelings must have been when on the eve of offering up his Son Isaac. What a faith in God's promises and power to perform them must he have had, to overcome the love for his child, and to willingly offer him up, through whom the seed was promised. No doubting, no questioning, simply a grand and childlike faith and obedience, which was abundantly confirmed, when a victim was provided, suitable for the occasion, as a substitute, pointing forward to the providing of another victim, (Gen. xxii. 13) even the “Lamb of God” - His well-beloved Son - “that taketh away the sin of the world. . .”

Again we leave John's letter as it is too long to insert here, but for brevity we give Brother Edward Turney's summary of it as follows: -

- “1. Jesus the Christ was the only begotten Son of God.
2. That His begetting was essentially different from the creation of Adam from the ground.
3. That this difference constituted a nearer relationship to God than was possessed by Adam or any of his descendants.
4. That this relationship, together with His missions, is the ground of the declared oneness and equality of Jesus with His Father.
5. That Jesus existed with His Father in the same sense that any other son exists with his father.
6. That He was, like all children, a partaker of His Father's substance.
7. That this substance being Deity He, Jesus, partook of Deity, and is styled Deity.
8. That Deity, thus “took upon Himself the seed of Abraham,” and “appeared in the likeness of men.”
9. That the process of this operation is not explained by Scripture, nor need be attempted by man. It is a matter of simple belief, or faith.
10. That this view of Jesus differs from both Trinitarianism and Unitarianism doctrine concerning Him.
11. That two persons, either separate or united, existing before birth of Jesus, called Christ and God are not sustained by Scripture.
12. That the “mere-man” idea is false, because it denies Divine begetting.
13. That “the Spirit-produced,” “Spirit-moulded,” and “the Spirit-guided” theory, come far short of the truth, and leave Jesus, the second Adam, on a par with the first Adam in these particulars.

We have endeavoured to present the pith of Bro. Coffman's several papers in a plain, clear manner, and as briefly as possible; and, while fully concurring in his argument for the literality of the Sonship of Jesus, we, with him, would impress upon our readers the importance of always discussing so exalted a subject in a proper spirit, lest haply we be found classed with the uproarious wranglers who persecuted “the Lord of Glory.” - Editor.”

And here we provide extracts from other writers: -

Brother W. A. Harris writes to Brother Edward Turney from Chicago, December 18th, 1874:-

“Dear Brother Turney, - Your long and interesting letter of the 2nd November to Brother S. W. Coffman, was read by me with very great pleasure. Brother Jno. D. Coffman handed it to me for perusal on his way through Chicago for Maryland, where he at present is. Allow me to congratulate you on the doctrinal position you have assumed, which seems to be identical with our own, and strictly scriptural, and which Brother Donaldson, of Detroit, has been proclaiming by word of mouth, with the assistance of a chart, for a number of years, in fact, from a period prior to the Doctor's death until now; and this he has done in the face of the most violent opposition, and sometimes personal abuse, as well as with a feeble condition of health, often relapsing into prostration and sickness; so you may judge how pleased we all feel that there is now a prospect of this subject being thoroughly and critically canvassed by yourself - whose ability to take hold and to analyse a subject we all most cordially admit - and therefore, thank God that a door is now open for the brethren to see and consider the doctrine in all its depth, grandeur, and sublimity. It appears to us now, and has for two years past, that this subject must come up among the brethren prior to the Apocalypse of our Lord and Saviour in the same manner as did the subject of the Judgment: for - as I wrote Brother Roberts - “If this doctrine be of God it will prevail, and a man will be found to publish it whether we like it or not” - and now, indeed, this appears to be coming to pass, and though you will find the agitation of the doctrine attended by much unpleasant and violent opposition, yet, this is no more than attended its publication by Jesus Himself in the first century. The servant is not above his master. If they have called the “master of the house” a blasphemer on this account, you may very well expect to be regarded as such by those who are faithless or ignorant. But is it not a duty, as well as a pleasure, to

suffer some of the ignominy which He suffered, and, especially so, when on account of upholding the identical doctrine He taught. Is there any occupation more noble than this? I know of none. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him, but if we deny Him He also will deny us, says the apostle. Therefore I wish you God-speed in your efforts to maintain the truth, for in this way it is that you may “honour the Son even as you honour the Father” - quibbles to the contrary notwithstanding - and we shall ever pray that in this work you may be undaunted by all opposition, and with an eye - single to the glory of God and His testimony - you will advocate it, if you have to do it single-handed. O what a glorious thing it is to feel with our feet the solid rock we stand upon, and this more especially when we observe those who are on the quick-sands of infidelity and doubt ever wavering; to-day occupying apparently solid ground and to-morrow washed hither and thither by speculation and a desire to harmonize “what I have written” with later and contradictory teaching. Our watchword must be now, since the Doctor’s death, more than ever, “to the law and to the testimony.” This is the rock we stand on, and therefore we can rejoice in the goodness, long suffering, mercy, and love, manifested to us by the mighty Ail, whom we are now able to address as Father, and to approach unto with confidence devoid of fear, through the manifestation of His Son, who took away the sin of the world and became our High Priest within the veil. The thunders and lightnings of Sinai veiling the stern majesty of Omnipotence, and causing those who saw and heard them to tremble, have been put away, and the beloved Son of God Himself preaching peace and glad-tidings of great joy, invites us, in loving words, to “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” That you may be successful in promoting this greatest and most noble feature of the system of God’s righteousness is the prayer of yours sincerely, W. A. HARRIS.”

Next we refer to a report on ‘the Meeting at Adeline’: -

“There was a meeting of Christadelphians held at Adeline, Ogle Co., Ill., U. S. A., June 11th and 12th, 1875, the following Ecclesias were represented, either in person or by letter, viz.:- Detroit, Mich.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Springfield, Ohio; Bristol, Wis.; Chicago, Ill.; State Centre, Iowa; Boston, Mass.; and Worcester, Mass. Letters were also received from the following Brethren and Sisters :- Bro. Vreedburgh, Jersey City, N. J.; Sister Eusebia Lassius, Hoboken, N. J.; Bro. Frank Chester, Kankakee, Ill.; Bro. Fred. Druf, Riverside, Iowa; Bro. W. A Harris, Chicago, Ill.; and Bro. C. Askew, Pewaukee, Wis.”

Brother Samuel Coffman sent the following: -

“Dear Bro. Turney, I forward the foregoing report of our meeting, hoping you will give it publicity. The doctrine on this issue held by us, we feel able to prove was identical with what Dr. Thomas believed for some time before his death. The Doctor told me that, if he lived to go over to England, and to get control of Roberts’s paper, (The Christadelphian Magazine) he would teach it, regardless of seeming self-contradictions. S. W. COFFMAN.”

In response to the report Brother Edward Turney wrote: -

“The key-note of the Adeline Meeting was the Divine Sonship of the Christ. No more worthy or important topic could have engaged the intellect and affections of the persons assembled. If Jesus were not God’s begotten, His only begotten Son, the prophets and the apostles are liars, and Jesus Himself stands convicted of falsehood by the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas was then right, “we have heard his blasphemy.” Now, from this grand fact, unique in the annals of the world, it is justly impossible to escape the conclusion – a conclusion alluded to in Bro. S. W. Coffman’s speech - that the legal condemnation resting upon all Adam’s children did not and could not rest upon Jesus, who was God’s Child. God, then, was manifested in His own Child, as Adam - and indeed every father - was manifested in his. But the Editor of the Christadelphian has condemned Christ; he has placed Him among the condemned Adamites, and one of his contributors has openly professed that Jesus was born of diabolos!!

We shall not dwell upon the fact - patent enough - that it is since the Lamp came into existence that the Divine begetting of Jesus and its great consequences have grown into such prominence among our body. Look at all the testimony of Brother Donaldson and Bro. Harper? Where can we find the like of it before? And at what meeting of the Brethren was the begetting of Jesus and its meaning ever the subject of so much attention? God forbid that we should boast, save in Christ Jesus our Lord; but this meeting is an event among the American Brotherhood whose significance cannot be hidden. And this doctrine, namely, the Divine paternity of Jesus and its practical relation to mankind, will yet move the whole body, as the trees are moved with the wind. It is gratifying to us to see present at Adeline so many of our friends - friends who evidence their friendship by supporting the Lamp, the only organ in which this question was ever held up to the light, which has given a living personality and an immortal significance to God's act in begetting a Son. Had we been present at Adeline we should not have refrained from lifting up our voice and contributing our testimony to this subject. We might not - judging from the Report - have been able to acquiesce in all that transpired. There are several texts of Scripture misapplied, some probably through following the English translation, which is incorrect. But the principal feature in this report - the key-note, as we have said before - is the Divine Sonship of Jesus and its import to us. At another time we may perhaps deal with the defects alluded to. This month there is no space.

EDITOR."

"Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." Ecclesiastes 12:13.

Brother Timothy Temilola asked the following questions of a Christadelphian.

Here are the answers he was given, each answer is followed by our own thoughts:

Question 1: Did Adam and Eve need the Tree of Life to keep them living in the Garden of Eden?

Christadelphian Answer: Nothing is recorded about the function of the Tree of Life during Adam's stay in the garden. The only tree Adam was prohibited from eating appears to have been the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2:17). Genesis 3:22 informs us that God prevented Adam and Eve from eating of the Tree of Life so that they would not live forever. This appears to confirm that he didn't eat of the tree while in the garden.

N.F. Answer: No, Adam and Eve did not need the Tree of Life to sustain them while in the Garden of Eden as they had the food from the garden to keep them alive. In Genesis 1:29-30, we read "And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." Adam and all the beasts of the earth were given this food to sustain their natural life.

That Adam and Eve were prevented from eating of the Tree of Life once they were sinners does not prove that they did not eat of it beforehand

Question 2: What was the purpose of the Tree of Life?

Christadelphian Answer: Sin was not part of the original creation and not part of Adam's experience, it was necessary therefore to create an environment in which Adam's obedience could be tested. To this end everything about the Garden of Eden was tailored to provide such an environment. The Lord Jesus tells us that the Tree of Life is for those that overcome (Revelation 2:7) and in the garden two choices were placed before Adam and Eve - life and death - determined by their obedience. We must conclude then that had Adam been faithful to God's command it would have provided life.

N.F. Answer: We feel sure the Tree of Life was a real tree and Adam and Eve had free access to it whilst in the Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve transgressed God's commandment they had to leave the Garden and no longer had access to the Tree of Life but they continued to live their natural lives remaining dependent upon the "every green herb for meat".

Apart from Genesis there are seven other references to the Tree of Life in the Bible – Proverbs 3:18, 11:30, 13:12, 15:4, Revelation 2:7, 22:14, and 22:17. Each of them refer, in some symbolic way, to more than our natural life – wisdom more precious than wealth, fruit of righteousness, hope realised, a wholesome tongue, a gift from Jesus, for healing of nations, right to eat of tree of life – such matters suggest an opportunity of eternal life for they appertain to spirit life.

In this present Christian dispensation we see Jesus as our Tree of Life because of all the things we read about Him in the New Testament. Here are a few verses from John's gospel: - John 1:4, "In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

John 4:14, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

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 unto life."

John 5:26, "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

John 5:40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

John 6:27-63: 27, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." And 32 to 35, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life... 40, And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day... 47. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life... 50. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world... 54. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. 57. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. 58. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."

This is ample evidence to show we have eternal life through Jesus and this is why we believe Jesus is our Tree of Life. We see the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden as symbolic of the offer of eternal life through obedience, that is, through the perfect obedience of Jesus who died for us and in whom we have our faith. We have the same choice as Adam and Eve, and we fail as they did; we have temptation to disobey. In fact, the whole purpose of Law is to give us opportunity to obey our Creator. It is His Law we obey or disobey and there is no commandment that it is impossible for us to keep. Jesus said, be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect, and we know Jesus was perfect and He is our pattern. So when we offend, as we do from time to time, we have, by the

loving mercy of God, Jesus to appeal to for forgiveness, and so live by God's grace. God's Law is good and by obedience we show we love Him.

Question 3: Did Adam by his transgression, bring natural death into the world?

Christadelphian Answer: Yes he did. "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin: so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12): "death reigned by one" (Romans 5:17). We suffer the consequences of Adam's sin. But, of course, we are not held accountable for what Adam did, but we are responsible for our own sins which manifest themselves as a result of our proneness to sin brought about by "the law of sin in our members" (Romans 7:23).

N.F. Answer: No, Natural death was already in the world. Adam was like other animals in respect to his physical needs requiring food for sustenance and in the natural course would die at some time as do all animals.

Natural life in all its forms, was and is transient. Birth, growth to maturity, reproduction and death is God's arrangement for all living things since He brought each of them into being. Neither the natural death of Adam nor the natural or common death of any of his descendants was or is the penalty for sin.

Adam was created a corruptible creature and was to remain so all his natural lifetime. This is the position we, as descendants of Adam, are in and the hope of the Gospel is to receive a change to Spirit nature like the angels as we read in Matthew 22:30, "For in the resurrection they... are as the angels of God in heaven.

However, we read in Romans 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" - but this does not apply to our natural death; it applies to "the law of sin and death." This death is the wages due to the sinner unless forgiven.

In many parts of the world today the death sentence is enforced for serious breach of law and such was the case too under the Law of Moses as we read in Deuteronomy 24:16. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children; neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

This statement of fact of being put to death for one's own sin is straightforward to grasp and alone should be sufficient proof that the common or natural death is not the wages of sin. A 'putting to death' suggests a violent form of death; and execution for the unrepentant sinner. Jesus was the exception to the teaching that "every man shall be put to death for his own sin"; He was put to a violent death (execution) though in His case it was totally undeserved and it was not for Himself. We are told that it was for us - to take away the sin of the world! (John 1:29). "Greater love hath no man than this, that man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"

The "sin of the world" referred to by John the Baptist is Adam's sin by which we are all in bondage as his descendants. We do not suffer for it in any way.

Question 4: Jesus said that the faithful have "passed from death unto life". What death has the faithful person passed from as he can still expect to die the common death of all men?

Christadelphian Answer: All creation suffers the effects of Adam's sin because "that which is born of flesh is flesh" (John 3:6) and "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? not one." (Job 14:4). Those who remain ignorant of God's way will perish (Psa.49:20; John 3:16; Prov. 21:16), however "he that believeth and is baptized, shall he saved" (Mark 16:16). The apostle says in Romans 5:16 that "the judgment (i. e. the sentence of death) was by one to condemnation". That condemnation is removed in Christ - "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom.8:1). In simple terms we might say that by faith acted upon in baptism there has been removed the inevitability of death because through baptism and a faithful walk we can hope in the resurrection from the dead.

N.F. Answer: The death that the faithful baptized person is saved from is not natural death. We all die at the end of our lives; Jesus' sacrifice does not save us from this.

No, there is a second death for those who have died in their sins; i.e. those who have been enlightened but chose to turn away from God's offer of redemption. This is not natural death - it is a judicial death and this is the death that Jesus' sacrifice saves us from, when we turn to Him in faith.

The Christadelphian answer above is confusing for it fail to take into account that judgment is not at death but after resurrection. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Question 5: Could Adam have lived for ever without a change of nature?

Christadelphian Answer: The answer must be no. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 15:50) and Adam was flesh and blood, Paul also says the natural must precede the spiritual and the spiritual is a change from corruption to incorruption (I Cor. 15:45-50).

N.F. Answer: The body with which Adam was created was not designed to continue for ever. This is shown in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49 we read the body "is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

It is evident from this that there will be a change of nature for the faithful.

Question 6: Was Adam's nature changed from the "very good" condition after he transgressed by eating the forbidden fruit?

Christadelphian Answer: Adam's nature didn't change, he was as much of the dust of the earth after he sinned as he was before - "dust thou art, and unto dust shall thou return" (Gen. 3:19). What changed was the state of that nature, from being "very good" to becoming "no good thing." (Rom. 7:18). Prior to sinning, Adam's life was sustained by God (how, we are not told), after his sin his nature began to deteriorate and die. God said that Adam would begin to die the day he ate the fruit of the tree. At what exact point this process began is not revealed.

N.F. Answer: There is no evidence in the Scripture for any change in Adam's nature. There was however, a change in Adam's relationship to his Creator. Whereas he was created a Son of God and remained so while obedient to Him, by transgression he sold himself to be a servant or slave of sin - "his servants ye are to whom ye obey" (Romans 6:16). All Adam's descendants are born into this bondage to sin; not made sinners nor made sinful, neither are they held guilty of Adam's sin, but they are legally held in bondage to sin for the purpose of salvation that by one sacrifice many are saved as we read in Romans 5:18, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

It isn't true to say God's creation became less than very good at any time. Neither was mankind made more sinful. We have been given free-will to choose. Whether one wishes to serve God or not is a matter of our own choice - just as it was for Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve did not have to sin and neither do we.

However, Yes, we see many evil people bringing up their children to be evil too and this wrong behaviour is due to selfishness and self-righteousness and ignorance. Paul tells us in Romans 1:28 of those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge.

Question 7: It is stated in Genesis 2:17 that “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Was this impending death fulfilled?

Christadelphian Answer: Of course it was. Genesis 3:19 says as much - “dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return”. Similarly the apostle Paul quoted above in Romans 5:12. However the question appears to have a deeper meaning and hints at the question, did Adam expect to die a violent death immediately upon eating the forbidden tree?

The English phrase “thou shalt surely die” is translated from the Hebrew “muth temuth”. The Authorized margin provides the alternative rendering, “dying thou shalt die”, which indicates a process of dying rather than an instant execution. Is the marginal rendering a reasonable alternative? The double emphasis (i.e. muth temuth) is made to stress the certainty of the sentence and not the mode of execution - Adam would surely die and the marginal rendering emphasizes the process (i. e. dying) and the end result (i.e. thou shall die). This double emphasis in the Hebrew language is not uncommon in scripture. For example in Genesis 2:16 we read, “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat”: the margin provides the alternative, “eating thou shalt eat”. Again in Deuteronomy 13:15 the phrase “surely smite” is literally “smiting thou shall smite” and Genesis 3:16 can read, “multiplying I will multiply”. It can be seen from these examples that the Hebrew idiom is used to emphasize the matter - the text and the marginal reference being in agreement and meaning - “certainly eat,” “certainly smite,” “certainly die.

N.F. Answer: No! It was not. When two words are repeated in the Hebrew language as we find here where we have ‘death’ and ‘die’, i.e. Muth TeMuth translated “surely die”, it is used to show the certainty of the matter and so it was translated “surely die” to emphasise the certainty of death. Because Adam and Eve did not die the very day they transgressed many people believe it means they started dying that day and that they would die within a ‘day’ of a thousand years. This view is supported by the marginal reference. However, was this the sentence? No! It was the biased view of the translators.

Our first two questions related to this and here we can take the matter further and say that the animal(s) sacrificed to provide Adam and Eve with coverings were slain in their stead. Adam and Eve’s punishment was commuted by God by way of atonement. This is a perfect example of what was to come later, by way of the law of Moses, and ultimately with the provision of Jesus Christ. So, the death that eventually claimed Adam and Eve was not the punishment for the sin they committed.

Idioms are frequently used to emphasize a matter but they do not suggest an extended period of time. There are about a dozen places where the expression Muth Temuth is used and in no other case can an extended period of time be read into the expression. We refer to one such occasion - 1 Kings 2:37, “For on the day that thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die.” Here the exact same words are used as in Genesis when God spoke to Adam and we do not find delay in carrying out the death sentence at the very earliest opportunity though it was not possible for Solomon to put Shimei in the very day. Another is Genesis 26:11, “Abimelech charged all the people, saying. He that touchest this man or his wife shall surely be out to death.” It is obvious that all the people Abimelech spoke to were going to die anyway one day and that a violent death was meant.

Question 8: In Genesis 3:21, it is written that “Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.” This required the slaying of at least one animal and maybe two. Adam and Eve had transgressed God’s commandment and as God says there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22) it looks like Adam and Eve were forgiven by this act and the skins were in effect the covering over of their sin. What is the connection between the animals sacrificed in Eden and the Sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God?

Christadelphian Answer: The providing of animal skin did not in itself forgive Adam and Eve, for “it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins” (Hebrews 10:4). The

important lesson in this section is that the covering provided by Adam and his wife (i.e. fig. leaves) were inadequate. No one can cover his own sins; this is God's work alone. The provision of the animal skin was to show Adam how God would provide a covering. First, a sacrifice was necessary, the flesh had to be destroyed, and secondly the blood poured out, life dedicated to God. In providing Adam and Eve this covering God pointed forward to the work of Christ, a work which required faith on Adams part if he wished forgiveness.

Jesus was the Lamb of God which would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29); his sacrifice not only benefitted those who came after him but also those that had previously died in faith (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:15).

N.F. Answer: We see the animal which was sacrificed in Eden as a type of Jesus' sacrifice. We are told that the blood of bulls and of goats which were sacrificed under the Law of Moses cannot take away sin (Hebrews 10:3). It is evident that sins were 'covered over' by the sacrifice of animals but not taken away until Jesus came - so John the Baptist hails Jesus as, "Behold! The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). This was effectively fulfilled when Jesus gave His life in sacrifice on the cross.

It may be said that we are not told that Adam and Eve repented of their transgression, which is true enough, and nothing had been said beforehand that God would accept repentance. This was an entirely new experience for Adam and Eve of course, and they were afraid of God and tried to hide from Him. They were certainly not rebellious once they had transgressed, but were downcast, dreading what God was going to do next.

We have been given a very brief outline of events in this account in Genesis and it is easy to speculate one way or another but if we look at later events recorded in Scripture we see that, while God is long-suffering He does not forgive those who persist in rebelling against Him, though He is pleased to forgive and in fact wants to forgive all who will seek Him with all their heart. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for us that we might be forgiven.

Next, one may ask how can anything take away something that you have done wrong? Some wrong thing that has been done cannot be undone, of course, but Jesus took away the consequence of our transgressions so that we can stand before God as though we had done nothing wrong. This is forgiveness without limit.

Question 9: How does Jesus' sacrifice save the sinner from the consequence of his sins?

Christadelphian Answer: The apostle Paul answers this by stating that Jesus is the "justifier of him which believeth" in him (Romans 3:26) and the Lord says "he that believeth and is baptized shall he saved" (Mark. 16:16). Jesus has become the "propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3:25). In other words the Father has established His son as the mediator (the mercy seat, as the word propitiation means) between God and man (I Tim. 2:4-6). God imputes (or attributes) righteousness to those that "believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead" (Romans 4:24).

N.F. Answer: A sinner owes that which he cannot pay without perishing; he owes his life. He was given a perfect life but he sinned and could now only offer an imperfect life which was not the equivalent. The basis of the Atonement is that if someone else could be found with the means to pay the debt, and providing the supreme authority sanctions the transaction, the sinner might be free from his debt while at the same time the justness of the law is upheld. God, in His ultimate love for His creation, brought Jesus into the world for this purpose.

When Jesus, in His supreme love for us, submitted Himself to the death of the Cross, He made Himself the sin-bearer, translating into reality the deliverance from the death foreshadowed in Eden when Adam was covered by skin of the slain animal. Jesus' death was therefore an exact substitutionary sacrifice. We have been purchased out of bondage, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a price. It is a figurative transaction, but it was completed by a literal price, the life of Jesus which he laid down for us on the Cross.

Question 9a: What implications will it portend for Jesus as the holy Lamb of God to be in need of the redemption and salvation that he came to achieve for us????

Christadelphian Answer: Sin could only be destroyed in the very arena it had dominion in, i.e. the flesh. Jesus shared our very nature, being “partaker of flesh and blood” (Heb. 2:14). Because he shared our nature he too was subject to death and therefore in need of salvation (Heb. 5:7). At his death he himself had done nothing worthy of death, therefore God raised him up (Acts 2:24). His obedience to death guaranteed his resurrection and exaltation and salvation (Phil. 2:8). Thus in saving us he also saved himself. We must always keep in mind that the Lord Jesus did not enter this world as an individual like you and me; he was brought into this world as a representative - “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” (Hebrews 2:17; Mark 1:23)

N.F. Answer: Temptation to sin is a good thing as it is from God for the purpose of testing our resolve to overcome it. This is the only way we have of building a strong character and show our love for our Creator. All God’s commandments are righteous and given us in love and He is not willing that any should fail and perish. Jesus accomplished all things well and never once yielded to temptation and so never needed redemption. By His loving kindness for us sinners, who had no way of redeeming ourselves, He allowed Himself to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 2:1 to 3 reads, “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.”

Question 10: In Acts 19:3-5 it is stated, “And he said to them, unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, unto John’s baptism. Then Paul said, John verily baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” What is the difference between these two baptisms?

Christadelphian Answer: There is no difference between the baptism of John and that of the Lord Jesus. Both baptized for the remission of sins (Luke 3:3; Matt. 4:17; Luke 1:77): John, we are told, came “in the way of righteousness” (Matt. 21:32). In Acts 19 the problem was not John’s baptism, rather it was the lacking of understanding of those that were baptized. They knew nothing of the holy spirit when they were baptized (verse 2); their knowledge was therefore deficient because John had preached baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:11). This incident is a classic example that lack of knowledge in one aspect of the gospel renders our baptism invalid.

N.F. Answer: In Romans 6:3, we read, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” John the Baptist could not have baptised anyone into the death of Jesus as He had not at that time given His life in sacrifice. But John had said, “I indeed baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” (Mark 1:8). Jesus confirmed this when He said to Nicodemus (John 3:5), “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

The Apostle Paul tells us that “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22). (That is, all those in Christ shall be made alive, not all people), and from this we see we can either be “in Adam” or we can be “in Christ”.

In our natural birth to our parents we are born as descendants of Adam and therefore we are “in Adam” by birth. We can, by a new birth, be “in Christ” by baptism into Him. We would compare this to a person who having been born in one country wishes to become a citizen of another, for example, having been born in England I am naturally a citizen of this country, but if I were to choose to be a citizen of the U.S.A. for instance I could apply to that country for citizenship and live there instead of in England. Baptism then, is our means of leaving behind our relationship to Adam and from this time on be related to Jesus.

For our salvation then, baptism is necessary. It is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21) and by it we receive the promise by faith of Jesus Christ... given to them who believe" (Galatians 3:22).

By faith we are restored to grace and favour with God and become His children and as we are now "in Christ" we are free from any future adverse judgment as we read in Romans 8:1,2, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk 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."

Once a person is baptised it can be said "ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised Christ from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:9-11).

No one can be in Adam and in Christ at the same time. We have to accept we have been bought from our old master, redeemed by Christ, and "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24).

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:15-17).

Question 11: It is the expectation of all Christians that there will be a day of judgment for all people at some future time and many Bible references are quoted for this yet there is much argument as to when the Day of Judgement will be, and also who will be brought before the Judgement Seat of Christ, where it will take place and what will be the result for various groups of people.

Christadelphian Answer: 1. The judgment is described as taking place "at the appearing of Jesus Christ and his kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1). Daniel says that when God moves to assist His people "many of them that sleep...shall arise" (Dan. 12:2). When God arises to destroy those nations that invade the land and the Lord Jesus is manifested, the saints will be with Jesus (2 Thess. 1:7-10; Joel 3:11; Zech. 14:5); this confirms that the saints will have to have been judged prior to the manifestation of Jesus to the world. The sequence may be outlined as follows: (1) Jesus returns to judge his saints, but his presence is unknown to the world; (2) the resurrection occurs and the living are gathered and the judgment takes place; (3) following the judgment the glorified saints join the Lord and they are revealed to the world.

2. Those who know the revealed will of God will be present at the judgment, whether baptized or not (John 12:48; Romans 2:5, 16; Luke 13:24-28).

3. While there is no specific reference as to the location of the Judgment Seat, Sinai has much scriptural support. This would need more space to develop. In the final analysis "where" is not really that important, rather that there will be a judgment and we must prepare for it.

4. The results of life judgment are provided by several scriptures. There will be a sorting of Good and Bad: some given life others dismissed to eternal death (Romans 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:10; John 5:28-29).

N.F. Answer: We of course acknowledge the many judgments of God through past ages and that there are judgments yet to come, but we are told that the wages of sin is death and we ask what death this refers to for in Hebrews 9:27, we read, "And as it is appointed for men once to die, but after this the judgment" it is obvious that the common death which comes to us all at the end of our lives cannot be the judgement for sin. The judgment for sin is the second death and this comes after the thousand years reign of Jesus.

Matthew 24:40 - 42 tells us there "shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." This is the judgment between the faithful who go to be with Jesus at His coming and the unfaithful who are left behind. The faithful

then appear before the Judgment seat of Christ to receive varying degrees of reward as Jesus indicated in the parable in Luke 19:12, "And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading."

Question 12: I believe the Virgin Birth is important. Surely any man who lived a good life could have done the same. What is the implication of this and the uniqueness of Jesus' birth and difference from all mankind?

Christadelphian Answer: This question echoes back to the covering provided in Eden. Human beings cannot provide a covering for sin. Man is incapable. The virgin birth was essential because there was "no man" (Isa. 59:16) capable of living a sinless life - "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The apostle also says, "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sent his son in the likeness of sinful flesh..." (Romans 8:3). It was essential that someone identified with the human race, yet able to control the influence of sin, be provided as the Lamb of God. This principle is strongly voice in the garden of Eden by the phrase "the seed of the woman". God alone can bring salvation that "no flesh can he justified in his sight (Romans 3:20). Thus God raised up a man "made strong for Himself (Psa. 80:17). It was God's work. God's love, and God's solution. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. 5:19). And even though Jesus inherited the nature of Adam via his mother, he bore all the characteristics of his Father in heaven.

N.F. Answer: Yes, the Virgin Birth was very important indeed. We know that Jesus was the Son of God, born of the Virgin Mary and we must never overlook the significance of this matter. It is a known and accepted biological fact that life is passed from father to child and having God as His Father means that Jesus' life was not passed down from Adam but direct from God. Mary was a descendant of Adam and this ensured that Jesus was "made like unto His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17) but the "life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11) and the foetus in the womb makes its own blood which never mingles with the mother's blood; there was no possibility of the life in Mary's blood being passed down to Jesus. We can say with assurance that Jesus' life did not come from Mary.

Let us next compare and contrast these two Sons of God, Adam and Jesus: -

Adam received his life from God at his creation.
Jesus received His life from God by begettal.

Adam transgressed God's commandment and served Sin as a master.
Jesus always did His Father's will and never served Sin.

Adam, by sinning was in bondage to Sin as a master.
Jesus was never in bondage to sin but ever remained loyal to His Father.

Adam, through transgression, became alienated from God.
Jesus was never alienated from His Father.

Adam's descendants are all concluded under sin.
Jesus was not at any time concluded under sin.

We see then that Adam once had the same standing as Jesus inasmuch as he too, was a Son of God, but he lost that position through transgression of God's law; he forfeited his life and became a servant of Sin - as Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters." (Matthew 6:24) and as Paul explains, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). 'Sin' is personified

as a 'master' or a 'King' reigning over his servants - and servants receive wages; and "the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23).

The important thing to notice is that Jesus was not concluded under sin as are all whose lives are descended from Adam. This is the reason for the Virgin Birth. It is also seen that the point made above that no one else could possibly avoid sinning is pointless. We agree that we know of no one who can claim to have been sinless but there may have been and Jesus asks us to be. It is not necessary to assume that we are inevitable sinners. We have never known of a temptation that it has been impossible to resist. But to say that no man is capable of living a sinless life is not true. If it were true then we are being punished for something we cannot help. God is not unfair in His judgments!

Question 13: Why was Jesus not referred to as the son of Joseph?

Christadelphian Answer: For the simple reason that Joseph was not his father, the record says, "as was supposed the son of Joseph" (Luke 3:23). It also says Jesus would he called "the Son of God" (Luke 1:32). This was according to the prophecy given to David (2 Sam. 7:14). Jesus himself recognized God as his Father (Luke 2:49), as also did God His Son (Matt. 3:17).

N.F. Answer: We agree with the above answer. Jesus often referred to Himself as the son of man for He was a human being with a physical body like us all but He never refers to Himself as the son of Joseph because He did not receive His life from Joseph.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths;' for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Isaiah 2:2 and 3

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

There is no doctrine of greater importance than the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus. It is the very key-stone of the Christian arch which spans the gulf of death. If that stone is deficient the bridge across the grave is imaginary; it has no more reality than the bridge of Mahomet over the abyss of Hell. If the stone is loose – to preserve the figure - the traveller fears to set his foot upon the structure. He is not fully assured of a safe passage. To be plain, it is desirable for firm faith and abiding peace not only to believe that Jesus rose again, but to have the certainty of the fact. A clear knowledge of the value of the evidence for the resurrection of Christ will do more than any other thing to keep the possessor of it in the path of rectitude and to stimulate him to walk worthy of the kingdom and glory whereunto he has been called by the Gospel. He will every moment remember that Jesus is alive; that his present existence means his future return; that that return means the raising of the dead and the judgment of the world, when every man will receive according to his works. Hence the balance-pole of the believers life is weighted by just fears of punishment for wrong-doing, while the mark before his eye in the straight line of duty is that bright, unfading life which Jesus has enjoyed since the reanimation of his dead body.

Let us observe the effect of the resurrection of Jesus on His immediate disciples. We gather from the various Gospel narratives that they were ignorant of its significance. "And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one

with another what the rising from the dead should mean.” Mark ix. 9-10. From this state of ignorance it follows that during the ministry of Christ his disciples had not rested their hopes for the glorious restoration of the kingdom to Israel in an epoch beyond the close of their natural lives. They had not, in fact, connected their rewards with the idea of a resurrection from the grave. There is nothing to cast a doubt upon this as the true state of their minds on the subject; on the contrary, their whole proceedings, both before and after their Master rose again, confirm it. Mark the despondency, fast verging on despair, which seized them immediately after the crucifixion. Not the remembrance of all the miracles they had seen was sufficient to arrest the sudden settling down of this mental anguish of darkness. “The chief priests and our rulers,” said they, “delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him, but we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.” Luke xxiv. 20, 21. The depth of their disappointment is revealed by the simplicity of this testimony. They had no hope; not the faintest ray relieved the midnight gloom that had enwrapped their souls. The failure of the Messianic enterprise is in their estimation only too apparent from the words “beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done.” In a few more days they would have begun to forget their lost Master; each would have repaired to his home and resumed his former avocation; the authorities would have been convinced of the justice of the execution, and the wisdom of destroying and obliterating in the blood of its chief so dangerous a political heresy. All this was the natural course of events in view of the unenlightened condition of the disciples and the rigid unbelief of their enemies. We can easily picture how matters would have gone; the wreck of the movement would have been gradually carried away by the receding tide until no vestige would have remained visible to the eye, and, perhaps, not even a report of the occurrence had been chronicled on the page of history.

What is the value of all this? Does it not demonstrate the reality of the facts? Does it not present to us a face on which no line of hypocrisy or imposture can be traced? Whether we regard the friends or the foes of Jesus, their looks and manners betray no sign of craft or deception. His friends “trusted that it had been He who should have redeemed Israel;” they knew not “what the rising of the dead should mean.” His foes discredited entirely his whole mission; ridiculed His claims; hated and despised His professed authority; and, partly through fear of Rome, anxious to rid the land of a pretender and an insurrectionist, they went through what was little better than a mock trial, and inhumanly hurried off the victim to execution. At this point there was, no doubt, in their minds, an end to the whole affair. As a precaution against the dregs of fanaticism, they guarded the tomb until the excitement should have died away. In studying the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, we repeat that these proceedings should not be lightly passed over. They shew us exactly in what aspect His death was viewed by all parties, and, as we shall shortly see, form an important element in the evidence relating to the resurrection.

Let us look at the disciples on the third day. “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared; and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed there about, behold two men stood by them in shining garments. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here; but is risen; remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words.” - Luke xxiv, 1-8. There is no sign of cunning here; no indication of plot; and as little of hallucination or delusion. The narrative discloses no attempt to surprise or startle by the mode of describing the scene; not a word is redundant, and every word bears the impress of truth. It was “very early in the morning, the first day of the week.” This is a most important piece of information. It tells us just what we should expect to find in the circumstances of the case. A Jew could not do anything on the Sabbath day: he was strictly prohibited by law. The disciples, therefore, could not go to the sepulchre on Saturday; but “when the Sabbath was past (Mark), as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week (Matthew), Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint Him” (Mark). As soon as it was practicable, the heart-broken disciples were there, and first among them the women. Here is

exactly the spontaneous flow of affection. But mark how sad it is. This mother, whose soul had been lacerated by the murder of her holy son, had come, attended in her sorrow by others, whose hopes were also stayed in the promises that son had given them – not for a glorious meeting with their resurrected beloved; not to witness His triumph over death and the grave; not to behold his immortality mock his murderers; no, they had come with eyes red and swollen from weeping and loss of sleep; with hearts overwhelmed by despair. That which they carried in their hands was a meet emblem of their condition. No funeral dirge could speak with a voice of woe like those “sweet spices which they had bought that they might come and anoint him.” That they had no knowledge, and consequently no expectation of His resurrection is, by this circumstance, put beyond the possibility of even a doubt. The great perplexity which Luke notices on their not finding Jesus in the sepulchre follows as a matter of course. The first impulse was to hasten back and inform the other disciples of what had happened; but the story did not convince them; they had no thought of the event, and the words of the women “seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” But to make sure, “Peter ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.” Peter was not satisfied whether Jesus was risen to life, or whether someone had removed the dead body; he did not know; he was confident only of one thing - that Jesus was not there, for both himself and John had entered the vault, and had seen only the linen clothes and the napkin that was about Jesus’ head wrapped together in a place by itself. Upon John this had a different effect: “he saw, and believed.” Nothing could be further from the appearance of fiction or imposture than these incidents. They concur to prove that the disciples of Jesus did not believe that He would rise from the dead; so that they cannot be justly suspected, before the resurrection is alleged to have taken place, either of hallucination or of deliberately spreading that report in order to deceive others.

Let us now change our position, and survey the matter from another point of view. The chief priests and the Pharisees who had procured sentence of death against Jesus were not altogether free from mental disquietude, even after the dead man had been taken down from the cross and laid in Joseph’s tomb. They gave expression to their apprehensions in the following manner: - “The next day, that followed the day of the preparation, they came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first.” Matthew xxvii. 62, 64. It will here be noticed that although the priests and the Pharisees had observed the declaration of Jesus that He should rise again the third day, it had made no more impression upon them as regards believing it than it had upon His disciples. The disciples had “heard and not heard.” But the Pharisees had heard and feared. They had not feared it would come true, but that the disciples would report it to be so, and endeavour to confirm the story by stealing the body and hiding it. In granting their request, “Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way; make it as sure as ye can. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch;” verses 65, 66. Everything was then done that could be done to afford security and to ensure success.

In this interval of anxious silence, let us examine the scheme of the betrayers and murderers, that is, the scheme they insinuated against the disciples when they addressed Pilate. Suppose that no watch had been set; that no great stone had been placed across the mouth of the cave; that the disciples had actually stolen the lifeless form. This will give the plan the priests and Pharisees were afraid of all the force of reality; and now let us enquire whether it would have realized their fears; whether the stealing and hiding of the dead body would have been sufficient to establish universal belief in the resurrection of Jesus; would have been sufficient to account for what has been done and suffered for his name? The impartial investigator will at once perceive the weakness of this position. If the disciples falsely affirmed Jesus to be risen, and were in possession of His body, it had been easy for the rulers to constrain them to deliver it up. There must have been witnesses of the theft; for it is impossible to imagine the guard to have been asleep long enough and fast enough to allow a competent number of persons to roll away the ponderous gate of stone and carry off the corpse. Besides all this, although the report we are now taking for correct was circulated among the Jews, we find no mention of any effort to compel the delinquents to restore the stolen property, which assuredly

would have been the case had the authorities credited the guilty charge. While the disciples disbelieved in the resurrection, they manifested nothing but disappointment at the death; and if they knew their Master to be still dead, how shall we discover a reason for the sudden change of sentiment and feeling displayed in their enthusiasm and readiness to suffer in the name of the resurrected Jesus? It is hard to persuade ourselves that one sane man could be found willing to build up so profitless and dangerous an imposition; but the difficulty is almost immeasurably increased when we consider that several hundreds of people would have to be in the same mind. Deception is always carried on for advantage; but what advantage could a few fishermen hope to gain by concealing the dead body of a man and giving it out that He was alive? It is not once hinted that the disciples essayed to make money out of their professed miraculous powers; they are never seen trying to exalt themselves either politically or socially; all they did or endeavoured to do was to travel up and down teaching and proclaiming Jesus to be risen again, to be alive, and that he was the cause of both what they preached and what they performed. If this were deceiving it bears no analogy to any other instance on record. Nothing men covet or desire could possibly be obtained by it, and the greatest risk was incurred; for to urge the claims of the Nazarene, as did the apostles, was high treason against the state, and punishable with death. If we accept the account of the resurrection as true, everything on the part of the disciples and of the Jews and "Romans is intelligible; but if we deny it, no theory can be conceived that will explain the course taken by either friends or enemies.

The angel, Matthew relates, had told the women who came to the sepulchre to direct the rest of the disciples to meet Jesus upon a certain mountain in Galilee where He "had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted." If the object of the narrator had been to palm off a forgery, he would never have written the last sentence. Instead of telling what took place like an honest man, not suspecting that the truth in any shape might militate against the credit of his statement, he would have said they all believed, not that "some doubted." This very doubting gives force to the alleged fact of the resurrection, because it implies that some person assuming to be Jesus stood before them; it further renders conspiracy and fraud impossible, because they were divided among themselves; it also goes to show that they were not, as some have suggested, labouring under an optical or nervous illusion. Their obedience to the command Jesus gave them on this occasion to "go and teach all nations" is proof that though at first some of them did not believe it was Jesus, they were fully persuaded of it before the close of the interview.

It was in the evening of the third day after the crucifixion that Jesus' uncle Cleopas and another disciple were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a village between seven and eight English miles to the north-west. As was perfectly natural their conversation turned upon the recent events in the Holy City, the trial, execution, and burial of Jesus. These men had been told early in the morning before they started that Jesus was risen. "Certain women of their company" - one was Cleopas' own wife, for he was husband to Mary's sister - brought the intelligence. It had only "made them astonished." As they walked "they communed together and reasoned; but they were far from reasoning themselves into the conclusion that Jesus was alive. Were these men in a mood at all favourable to a deception of the senses? Was there anything about their conduct that bore the slightest suspicion of giving currency to a fraudulent tale? From all we can gather of them it is manifest they neither anticipated the death nor had the least expectation of the resurrection. They needed, as much as any other hard hearted unbeliever, to be convinced of the reality of the miracle. How they were convinced Luke simply and graphically relates. "Jesus himself drew near and went with them." He said to them, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Then as they approached the village Jesus was about to go forward and leave them to reflect on the testimony of the prophets in the light of the actual death and the story of the resurrection they had heard from the women in the morning. "But they constrained Him, saying, abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to abide with them. And it came to pass, as He sat at meat with them, He took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight;" or "ceased to be seen of them." We cannot but remark the artlessness and spontaneity of their action consequent upon their enlightenment. "They rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and they that were with them saying, the Lord hath risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon. And they told what things were done in

the way, and how he was known of them in the breaking of bread.” If we receive Luke’s history of this journey as trustworthy, its candour and simplicity, as well as its anxious brevity, commend it to our judgment and secure its acceptance; but if we suppose it false, a series of problems at once comes forward demanding a reasonable elucidation. Are we prepared to satisfy this demand? Can we explain the perplexity and hopelessness of Cleopas and his fellow traveller? Can we show a good reason for their momentary change of mind; for their immediate rising up and encountering another two hours’ walk back to Jerusalem which the same afternoon they had quitted in ignorance and unbelief. Can we propound any rational theory to account for what happened soon after they entered the room where the eleven and others were assembled? The frank enquirer will not endeavour to persuade himself that these queries are irrelevant; but will ask how, denying the resurrection of Jesus, he can satisfy his intellect with answers to them.

The conduct of Jesus, as described by Luke, was just such as would be necessary to convince a number of plain unsophisticated people who were almost frightened out of their senses, not knowing whether what they saw was an apparition or a real person. “And he said unto them, why are ye troubled; And why do not thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet.” Why he particularly invited them to inspect his hands and his feet is too obvious to need comment. The nails had been driven through them, and the scars remained in the healed flesh. These marks were precisely the tokens to identify the possessor, and must ultimately bring conviction to the most obstinate and incredulous. Note the impression they made upon the company present. “They believed not for joy and wondered.” This is most touching. A great struggle was going on within; the facts before their eyes and within their grasp were suddenly overcoming their ignorance and unbelief, and the delight of irresistible persuasion of victory over death was bursting through all bounds. While filled with these mingled feelings, “Jesus said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey comb. And He took and did eat before them.” These were common articles of food and the eating of them by Jesus, in addition to His exposure of His hands and feet, could not but confirm the privileged witnesses in the assurance that it was He Himself.

There was another incident which could tend only to corroborate and ratify what had taken place in the presence of the Apostles and those that were with them. “Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.” The other disciples, therefore, said unto him “We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” John xx. 24, 25. Thomas was no visionary; he was not a man to be carried away by fervent imagination; nor was he to be quieted by the testimony of others. Thomas would have done honour to certain schools of modern scientists who are determined to believe as little as possible at second-hand, and to be satisfied only with their own personal and actual demonstrations. But truth does not suffer from the Didymites; it is rather they themselves who miss some of its benefits. Thomas was not content with the sight of his own eyes; he must “put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into His side,” else he would “not believe.” Our obdurate Apostle had a week in which to nurse his unbelief, and one may infer that as the interval afforded no proof of his error, he would not be more inclined to yield to the testimony of his brethren. But “after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.” This Jewish Didymus was an incredulous person, but his incredulity did not equal that of our French Didymus, M. Renan. This learned professor and fascinating scribe “would summon a commission to sit over a dead body; would summon the miracle-worker and witness the raising to life; having taken due precaution to secure the actual death of the subject. And if the dead were raised again in the presence of the scientific commission, what then? Would our French Didymus become a believer in the doctrine of the resurrection? By no means. He would institute a fresh commission and go through a second trial, and if this time the same result followed, would he not then be thoroughly satisfied? Oh! no; and why

not? Because these were only two cases, and all he would affirm is that resurrection had taken place in those two! Persons not profoundly versed in the art of quibbling may wonder what use these commissions could possibly be; if the first trial were not conclusive why make a second; and if both failed to settle belief in the doctrine why make any trial at all. What bars the road to truth against these men seems to be their pre-decision of the question. They lay it down that miracle does not and cannot exist. Any investigation, therefore, which should lead to the admission of miracle is stigmatised as insufficient and consequently unreliable. Enquiry and reasoning are practically futile in such a case, for it is already prejudged.

In his last chapter, John mentions other instances in which Jesus appeared to his disciples. On one occasion "there were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples." This party was out all night fishing in the Sea of Tiberias, but caught nothing. "When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." On learning that they had caught nothing Jesus persuaded them to "Cast the net on the right side of the ship. They cast, therefore, and now were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. As soon then as they were come to land they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have caught. - - - This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead." In this narrative there is a simplicity, an acknowledgment of ignorance at first sight, which has no semblance of fabrication about it. If its truthfulness be denied the consequences are of the gravest; involving nothing less than the mendacity of the Apostle whom Jesus loved.

The course pursued by the twelve after the departure of their Lord is indubitable testimony to their belief in His resurrection to life; it leaves absolutely no ground on which to frame an objection; whether they were mistaken is another point. We can only judge of this by the nature of the evidence furnished. If such evidence would now be considered decisive to establish the resurrection, its value for the same purpose was not less two thousand years ago. As far, then, as we have proceeded, the testimony amounts to this, that a large number of persons, not one of whom believed in, or even had any understanding of, the rising of Jesus from the dead, positively and repeatedly affirmed that they saw Him alive after His death and burial; that a number of them refused to accept the statement of several of their company to whom He first showed Himself; that one, viz., Thomas, averred his utter disbelief of the fact, although it was attended by many of his friends as eye-witnesses of it simultaneously; that Thomas himself was forced to yield credence to it on the evidence of his own sight and touch; that these people, who had known Jesus for some time before His death, ate and drank with Him again and again after He rose; that for forty days they were very much in His company, asking Him questions and hearing Him speak, as before His death, "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" and finally, that "while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." Now let us suppose that the events here detailed had happened in our own day, where could we find a jury of twelve "good men and true," who would agree to reject the evidence; who would decide that the testimony was false; that the resurrection of Jesus was not established by it? Further, let us assume that such evidence is not trustworthy; a question next presents itself with which we are bound to deal, whether agreeable to us or not; that is, What sort of evidence would be esteemed conclusive? The reply will be either in support of what is called circumstantial evidence, or of ocular demonstration; or of both. But does not the evidence produced answer to all this? Does it not consist of circumstances on the part of the slayers of Jesus, highly favourable to the truth of His resurrection? Why did they not deny it by producing the body? Why did they circulate a rumour which bore its own refutation on the face of it; that a few unarmed peasants had rolled away a "very great" stone, and, in the teeth of the Roman guard, had carried off the dead Jesus? And why, if they really believed that His disciples stole Him, did they not adopt measures to compel them to deliver Him up, and at once to disprove His resurrection? Thus much, in brief, for the circumstantial evidence to the fact. But what shall we say of the evidence of the senses in the case; of sight, touch, hearing; of prolonged intercourse? If this is inadequate, how in the world of humanity would it be possible to find aught worthy of the name of evidence; aught, in fact, which would command belief? What avails it to say, as Renan does, miracle is inadmissible; we do not contend that it is impossible; but we maintain that it is not proved. Very plausible, truly; a good way of evading the troublesome consequences of a plain denial of the possibility of miracle; but what is it

worth? If miracle has never been confirmed by evidence: can we trust the experiments of any scientist; can we accept the statements on oath of any witness? Is not the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus equal in clearness, variety, and solidity to any evidence ever adduced? Is it not the very kind of evidence which sets at rest all doubt in events of regular occurrence and great moment ?

There yet remains other proof. We allude to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. There was nothing about Saul which would be likely to render him an easy object of illusion in this matter. He had been well acquainted with the Christians, and was exceeding mad against them. Saul was a remarkably intelligent and zealous Pharisee. It was in the very height of his zeal for the law and determination to crush the new heresy, that the great change came; a change which has made him pre-eminent among Christian apostles, and covered him with unending fame. The honesty of Paul's conduct is so striking that no writer who has had occasion to notice him has suffered it to escape his eye. If we suppose Paul to have been for a time deceived by some trick of art; by the excitement of his mind; or by alarm at some natural phenomenon, as a thunderstorm; this would not afford satisfactory reason for his protracted and undoubting tenacity. Before the termination of such a career as his, there were abundant causes to lead to the discovery of the error. But we find his faith strengthening; his enthusiasm and certainty heightening and deepening as he nears the oft far-shadowed ignominious and horrible death. He, who for a long while had disbelieved a number of his fellow countrymen, at last saw the Lord Jesus, and heard His voice; he was also smitten and remained blind for three days. Nothing could ever after this shake the faith of Saul. He joined his own experience to that of the others; that Christ 'was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve; after that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, He was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And, last of all, He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." Paul's account of these incidents in his letter to the Galatians carries with it great weight. "Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not." To the Corinthians, who seemed to be doubting his authority, he said, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ, Our Lord?" It is not conceivable that the faintest breath of suspicion can rest on Paul's belief in the resurrection of Jesus. It is the most prominent feature in his preaching; the most powerful arm he wields against Platonism; if Jesus did not rise, his whole mission is a lie, and the end of all men is that they perish. Was Paul mad, as Festus affirmed? Was it possible that in all this he was deceived? If so, then no man is, or can be, safe in judging by means of his God-given faculties for judgment, - the sight of his eyes, and the hearing of his ears.

In conclusion, we come to existing facts; to a mountain whose base was laid in the days of Jesus, and whose summit towers aloft in our own view. This is incontestable, and demands an explanation at the mouth of every intelligent man who has no belief in the resurrection of Jesus. Let him not reply that this is no concern of his; with such an answer not even himself can be content. He knows the universally alleged cause of this mighty uprising; of this intellectual, and to a vast extent, moral revolution in the world; he knows that two thousand years backward would place us prior to its birth; and the question presses - it will press - what is the meaning of all this, if I deny that Jesus rose from the dead? Here perplexity sets in; for whether the thing is true or false, the belief of it, and that alone, was the origin and sustaining power of the whole movement. According to some it is of no moment whether Jesus in the body was raised or not; it would suffice to believe that in soul he appeared to his disciples; that in soul he still lives. The futile notion scarce merits a formal confutation. What shall we say to the surprise of His disciples at finding the tomb empty, if such were the foundation of their faith, and the energy of the mission? In this view there would have been no cause of surprise; no ground for rejoicing at victory over death; no motive for faith in a general resurrection of the dead; no sense whatever in hanging their claims upon the resurrection of the crucified body as upon a nail fastened in a sure place. On the contrary the Egyptians and Pythagoras would have been in the right; and the mockery of the Athenians deservedly provoked by Paul's preaching. It will always be difficult, or rather impossible, to satisfy certain thinkers of the utility of the resurrection of the body so long as it is maintained that the soul apart from the body is capable of thousands of years of heavenly felicity. To bliss ineffable and enduring a body could bring no advantage; the reunion must therefore be superfluous. The greatest lights of the Church observed this generation since, and remarked that the inevitable tendency and logical result of belief in the separate and blessed state of the soul is to

weaken the force and lead to the ultimate disregard of the actual resurrection of the dead from their graves.

Brother Edward Turney (1875)

SOON

I know not if He comes at eve,
Or night, or morn, or noon;
I know the breeze of twilight grey.
That fans the cheek of dying day,
Doth ever whisper – soon:

I know not why our souls should doubt
His promise to appear,
When every flower's opening eye
Looks up into the changing sky,
And seems to murmur – near!

I know not round His blessed feet
What peerless glories throng;
I only know from rending tomb
The good shall burst, in beauty's bloom;
And faith assures – not long.

I know not if His chariot wheels
Yet near or distant are;
I only know each thunder-roll
Doth wake an echo in my soul,
That saith – not very far!

I know not if we long must wait
The summer of His smile;
I only know that hope doth sweep
With thrilling touch my heart-strings deep,
And sings – a little while

I know not on this glorious theme
Why lips so oft are dumb;
I only know the saddened earth
Will flush with beauty and with mirth
At sound of – “Lo, I come”

Prophetic Times