

Stan Snow – “Nottingham Revisited”

We are grateful to our brother John Stevenson for sending us this article from Australia, taken from the September 1996 edition of the Logos magazine. John's letter to the author, Stan Snow, follows the article, together with further comments from Phil Parry and Russell Gregory.

“LOGOS” - Upholding The Faith

Nottingham Revisited

E.W.Turney and The Clean Flesh Theory

1. Whilst Christadelphians would, in the main, recognize that the Truth has been revived in the earth by the instrumentality of John Thomas, with the publication of Elpis Israel in 1849, many may not appreciate just how close we came to losing it twenty-four years later in 1873.
2. The Christadelphian for October 1873 (page 476; see also November, page 525), reported that several brethren - E.W.Turney and W.H. Farmer - renounced the Truth that had been painstakingly unearthed by Brother Thomas, and were re-immersed into a new theory, which denied that Jesus Christ was God manifest in our condemned nature, for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself. This teaching, which was foreign to the Brotherhood, was soon aptly named “The Clean Flesh Heresy.”

Turmoil and Debacle - The Renunciationist Theory

3. During the months of August and September, 1873, the brethren in Birmingham were subject to considerable turmoil. Brother Roberts was out of action due to ill health, and Edward Turney delivered a lecture and answered questions upon his newly adopted theory, which he borrowed from a “Brother Handley” at Nottingham. Brother Turney, being of such long standing in the faith, and a tireless worker for the Truth, his remarks understandably made a cogent impact upon many of those present, who, for the time being, accepted the ideas as truth. At least most of those in attendance were initially of this mind.
4. In the following week, Brother Roberts was again absent on the Truth's work in Ireland, and this is a story in itself, as we shall see. Back in Birmingham, E. Turney addressed another meeting in Temperance Hall, to further expound his new ideas. Circulars were printed, inviting brethren to be present on Thursday, 28th August, 1873. Brother Roberts arrived back in Birmingham on Monday, 25th, and the following day he was questioned by supporters of Turney, whereupon Brother Roberts agreed to put questions to him at the close of his lecture on the Thursday.
5. A large number of Christadelphians were present at the lecture, many expecting to hear Brother Roberts put questions to E.W.Turney, but it was not to be, for Turney spoke for nearly two and half hours, leaving no time for Brother Roberts, who was disallowed. Consequently, Brother Roberts challenged Turney to a debate the following week. This challenge was not taken up in the confusion. Brother Roberts responded by announcing that he would deliver a lecture the following evening, Friday, 29th August, which we have in the publication, The Slain Lamb, available in the Logos Volume, The Atonement.

The Truth Scarcely Saved

6. There was a real danger that the Truth, so dearly won in the investigations of Brother Thomas, could now be submerged again by the Gnostic fables that troubled the apostles in their day, namely the teaching of those who “confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” (1 John 4:3). E.W.Turney excluded Jesus from “Adam's posterity” by defining that phrase to mean “Every human being who has been born of two human parents” {Questions and Answers, No. 9, by Turney}. An “essential difference” was alleged to exist between “Jesus and the posterity of Adam” {Q, 11}. So much so that “Jesus was not a son of Adam” (Q.t3}. It was stated that “the body of Christ was not under condemnation” {Q. 19}. Consequently it was alleged that Christ himself was not redeemed by his own sacrifice {Q 24,27}. See The Christadelphian 1873, page 314.

7. At the beginning Brother Roberts was not confident that he could easily turn the brethren round, for he stated in regard to Turney's steps to persuade them: “Those steps were at first attended by an unexpected degree of success” (ibid, page 474). However, following his lecture The Slain Lamb, Brother Roberts could say, “Most of the brethren who had been disposed in favour of the new theory, gave way before the testimony adduced, and are now united in the maintenance of the faith” (page 475).

Standing for the Faith

8. We earlier said that Brother Roberts was, in the beginning, absent in Ireland upon the Truth's work. The circumstances are of interest, to demonstrate our brother's trials in standing for the Truth, come what may. The editor left Birmingham on Monday, August 18th, to lecture four times in BalJybay and Cootehill. This was near Dundalk, a seaport on the west coast of Ireland. When halfway through the lecture, Brother Roberts, on account of ill health, was obliged to sit down and answer questions which were arising from the audience. The meeting grew turbulent and finally broke up with “shrieks and yells in true Irish fashion.”

9. Two nights later he lectured at Cootehill, eleven kilometres away, and was greeted by a large crowd, with three constables in attendance. He sat to lecture, again because of ill health, and again after half an hour, questions began to be put from the audience, and the excitement arose as the people crowded around the speaker in a threatening manner, occasioned by shrieks and yells as before. Soon rotten eggs began to be thrown! Eventually the head constable took charge, and with difficulty in the midst of an excited crowd, escorted Brother Roberts to a vehicle, and away. The brethren considered it unwise to hold another meeting, and so Brother Roberts departed for Birmingham, arriving back at 3 am. on August 25th,

10. Having faced troubles “without” in Ireland he now encountered troubles “within” in the heresy being spread in his absence at Birmingham. Is it any wonder Brother Roberts suffered ill health! These background events may help to explain why Brother Roberts lost his composure on the occasion of Turney's lecture, when he was denied the opportunity to question Turney, and in frustration he shouted to have his point heard. To quote his own account of the affair, he wrote “Little wonder then in our own weak days under the goading presence of many evil circumstances there should be a departure from that perfect equanimity which it is desirable at all times to observe.” (opening paragraph. The Slain Lamb; see also The Christadelphian 1873 page 474).

The Division

11. In view of the danger of the Truth being again lost. Brother Roberts, notwithstanding his ill health and weakened condition, was resolved to give his life to preserve it. He wrote: "But apostasy once succeeded and may again" (ibid, page 409). Again: "Therefore if I am left alone on the top of a mountain; if all the brethren and sisters forsake me, I will stand alone... I have taken upon myself a great deal of labour, and have brought upon myself the infirmity of the flesh. But for this I care not, if the Truth be saved. I will die, if necessary, in the attempt to stem this tide of corruption which is streaming in and sweeping away the brethren" (ibid, page 451).

12. In preparation of this article, the present writer has been impressed with the fact that, whilst John Thomas has been the vehicle used by Providence to revive the Truth in the latter days, Robert Roberts has been the means to prevent its annihilation under attack from the Satan. And this was achieved at great personal cost to Brother Roberts. But he did have helpers in the task. Many brethren and sisters wrote to the magazine to strengthen his hand. Some examples will illustrate:

Brother Smith (Edinburgh):

13. "I have to thank you for your printed letter, and to express my sympathy with you in your contention for the Truth... Regarding the subject that has been leading astray so many at the present time, I have been struck by the very partial and limited view they take of the Scriptures. They almost entirely ignore the typical parts of the Word... In that typical system the High Priest offered for himself and the people. In offering for himself it was as High Priest and not merely as a man. When Israel is restored and in the Lord, the new temple built... the Prince, who is also a priest, on his throne will offer for himself and for the people..."

Brother McKillop (Leith) for the ecclesia:

14. "We are firmly persuaded that the Truth is with you, and repudiate the doctrine hatched in Maldon, and promulgated from Nottingham... We are determined to remain old Christadelphians, in the strict sense of the term... the efforts you have put forth must have entailed much labour and mental anxiety, in assailing the enemy, but what has been put on record will be beneficial to those in the Truth in the future... Moreover it will be advantageous as a test by which to try those who are yet to be gathered within the fold."

Sister Hage (Bilthorpe):

15. "We have the Review today which I have run through. I like it much; and we thank Brother Roberts for it very much, not that I did not understand it before, for I did, but this renews the understanding of a matter which is difficult at first... Depend on it, Brother E.Turney has never understood the subject, but has let it pass; perhaps now he never will; we shall see. No one can say anything in favour of his views; they are from themselves, not the Bible. I consider the good Dr, would take this as I do; first astonishment, then make up his mind to the loss, and, like you, write for others."

Brother Bairstow (Halifax):

16. "Don't suppose I am an uninterested spectator of what is going on in our midst. I am well pleased with the stand you have taken, but don't wish you to fight single-handed... The writer

of recent tracts says he has no dispute about flesh, and that the flesh of Adam, Jesus and Judas were all the same flesh. I suppose he would not object to Paul being included in the number. Well Paul says something about his flesh, hearken: "I know that in me, that is in my flesh dwells no good thing." "I am carnal, sold under sin, sin dwelleth in me 'therefore, on the writer's showing, if the apostle is to be believed, as to the inherent evil existing in the flesh, Jesus could not be in any other than the flesh full of sin... In conclusion then, we see that the assumption that Jesus was born in a nature not needing redemption, or not needing to die, is untrue, as also another assumption that Jesus redeemed himself by his obedience previous to death, and that, therefore, death was not a necessity. Death was a necessity to be realized before he could be delivered from it.'" (Christadelphian, September 1873).

The Flesh Essentially Unclean

17. Brother Thomas had expressed himself succinctly at various times on this subject. He declared: "Hence the flesh is invariably regarded as unclean. It is therefore written. 'How can he be clean who is born of a woman?'" (Job 25:4; 14:4; 15:14-16)... Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those he died for... The nature of Mary was as unclean as that of other women and therefore could give only a 'body' like her own" {Elpis Israel, Page 114; 14th ed.: pages 127-128). Again: "This heresy against the proper humanity of Christ is far more subtle than the counterpart of it, which denies his proper divinity... for the 'sinful flesh' is as much an element of the divine Jesus as 'the Spirit'," {Christadelphian 1873, page 361).

18. Turney had been full of praise for the work of Dr. Thomas. He wrote in appreciation of him: "You know I have held him as the only man commanding my full and entire admiration... he hears no more the voice of his traducers, and his work is finished. I hope he will be stronger in his death than he was in his life. I hope that those who hold the grand truths he discoursed will redouble their efforts to spread them far and wide, so that when he gets up again, he will rejoice in their works... Well we are left and we must do our best to surprise the dear old man with joy when he wakes up again."

19. Brother Roberts commented sadly: "What will 'the dear old man's' surprise be when he gets up to find that Edward Turney, one of his strongest personal admirers, two years after his death, publicly 'renounced' his teaching on a vital element of the Mystery of Godliness, and before a large audience in Birmingham?"

What Was to be Done?

20. Three months had elapsed since the public promulgation of the new doctrine. Brother Roberts knew that if the Truth were to survive, matters must be brought to a head. He therefore sent a letter through the post to all the brethren and sisters in Birmingham. The letter contained a declaration of Truth believed, and an appeal which included the following:

21. "I therefore ask you to join me in a declaration of withdrawal from all who deny that Jesus Christ was God manifest in our mortal nature... My request is that if you agree with me you will sign and return the declaration which you will find at the end of this letter... I will ask you to meet me at the Athenaeum Rooms, on Thursday night, October 30th, that our united declaration may be promulgated... It will be necessary to redraw ecclesial roll, that we may know who thereafter constitute the Birmingham ecclesia, on the basis of unadulterated truth." (Christadelphian, 1873. page 526).

The Outcome

22. The meeting was held as planned. Nearly 150 brethren and sisters responded to the invitation to sign the declaration. This meant dissolving the Birmingham Christadelphian body in a legal sense, and ordering an inventory of the funds, transferring of a proportionate share to those who wished to reform into an assembly on the basis of the new doctrine that emanated from Nottingham by E.W.Turney. The meeting resolved that “On the question of how those stand with God who have embraced the new heresy, they pronounced no opinion: they leave this with Him. Their only concern is their duty.”

23. There were those who refrained from taking part in the withdrawal, who held the Truth themselves, but who were not clear as to their course of action at that time. There were also those among the errorists, who were violent, and declared they would disregard the withdrawal, and take their places and break bread as usual. Hence in *The Christadelphian* 1873, page 566, it was reported:- “It was therefore necessary in the interest of ultimate peace, and edification, to admit by ticket, to that part of the building where bread is broken. Those unprovided with tickets were allowed to be present in the gallery. Peace and truth are now restored to the assembly.”

The Nottingham Ecclesia

24. In Nottingham, the seat of the errorists, the majority not only refused to withdraw from the renunciationists, but passed a resolution (proposed by E.W.Turney) “That in future we meet on the basis of an uncondemned Christ.” The minority, holding the Truth, and numbering about forty, withdrew and formed themselves into an ecclesia, meeting in another hall. This involved a sacrifice on their part, for Nottingham ecclesia was probably the first meeting in England to build their own ecclesial hall. But they reported;- “We feel that the severe trial through which we have passed has had a beneficial effect upon us. We recognize even in this 'our Father's hand,' and our hearts rise in thankfulness that we are still on the side of the Truth” (ibid page 477).

25. However, good comes out of all adversity and challenge, to those in Christ, and whilst Brother Henry Sulley, a member of the Nottingham Ecclesia, lost the ecclesial hall he had designed in his professional capacity as architect, he gained his wife who now, as reported in *The Christadelphian* 1873, page 528, was “Sister Jane Sulley, wife of Brother Sulley, who since the division has kept aloof from both meetings, earnestly looking into the subject in dispute, and having come to the decision that we are in the right, and our position therefore a righteous one, she has allied herself with us.”

Epilogue

26. Letters of support came from the brotherhood far and wide. Sister Frazer of Huddersfield wrote “Only those who prayed that you would take up the Thirty-two questions, can understand how thankful we are that you did so. Daily we thank our heavenly Father for you...”

27- Brother Otter of Cheltenham wrote: “I am afraid this tract is calculated to much and serious injury, especially to weak brethren and those unaccustomed to dig below the surface. Permit me, dear brother, to again thank you... I hope that you are in health, that you are not downcast by any of the multifarious vexatious and trying experiences you must necessarily (in your position) be the subject of...” (ibid, page 358),

28. A rival magazine was started in opposition, but it fizzled out after a few years. However, the echoes of the clean flesh theory are seen today in the “Nazarene” publications and kindred magazines since Edward Turney died in 1879.

29. Brother Roberts endured a severe illness following this controversy, necessitating recuperation in a rest establishment. Even from here he continued to write, dictating one very interesting article on “Twenty-One years Waiting, and Watching, and at it Still.”

30. Echoes of the first century Clean Flesh Theory, are with us today. Brother Thomas expressed it well; “But as a last resort against all this, the doctors of the apostasy fall back upon the saying of Gabriel, in Luke 1:35, that the child to be born of Mary was a 'holy thing', and consequently of an immaculate nature. But they forget that all firstborns of Israel were 'holy things.' Jesus was Yahweh 's firstborn by Mary; and therefore one of the firstborn of the nation... Hence the holiness of Mary's babe was not of nature, but of constitution by law... Christ made sin, though sinless, is the doctrine of God” (ibid, pages 361-362). Again in Eureka, volume 1: “... the character of Jesus was holy, harmless, undefiled, without spot or blemish, or any such thing; but his flesh was like our flesh in all its points - weak, emotional and unclean.”

31. It remains for us to be eternally vigilant, for the winds of false doctrine will continue to blow about us until the coming of the Master, who will again, as in the days of his ministry, say to the winds and the sea “Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39).

Stan Snow (Logos).

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In reply to this article Brother John Stevenson wrote:

Dear Brother Stan, Your article “Nottingham Revisited” considerably disquieted me because of what I perceive to be prejudices and gross inaccuracies. You said you had all the Nazarene literature; I would be most interested in what you do have and how you got it, because it is evident that you have not apprehended the facts of the dispute. Admittedly I have not seen the reports in “The Christadelphian” of 120 years ago, edited by Robert Roberts, but I hope to acquire and study them. From the other side of the fence, it seems to me that R. Roberts was arrogant and callous, like the late Percy Mansfield, and that he would go to any lengths to suppress a point of view he did not agree with. One particularly worrying aspect of your article is that “Logos” would never permit any questioning or reply to your prejudiced account, because of “the dangers of publicly airing any problems within Christadelphia” (current Ecclesial Calendar, page 6),

In the latest Exposition, page 165, middle of left column: “When reason and logic fail, many antagonists rely on distortion and misrepresentation in order to achieve their purpose.” This applies very often to “Logos,” and especially to your article. I enclose two booklets; “The Gospel That Is Never Preached,” and “Christadelphians, Their Dilemma Exposed” to give you a glimpse of some refreshing concepts that “Logos” and “The Christadelphian” would never permit their readers to see.

The date of the lectures is in doubt; I have been reliably informed that they were in July, not August. Is there any means of verifying the actual month? *see footnote

I am quite confident that it was Edward Turney who challenged Robert Roberts to a debate, and the latter refused, choosing rather to give his views in “The Slain Lamb” lecture the next night. In the 120 years since then, Christadelphians have refused to hear us or allow us to be heard. Most of Nazarene Fellowship members were excommunicated from an ecclesia for not upholding the B.A.S.F., without any semblance of a fair hearing or discussion, because Christadelphians are unable to debate or discuss our concepts, or answer our criticisms of Sinful Flesh theory or Defiled Christ precept.

Don't you think that Robert Roberts' decision to issue tickets for the Lord's Table to exclude “errorists” says a lot about his convictions and his personality? Do you think John Thomas would have approved? And would the Lord Jesus condone such high-handedness? I feel that no-one has the right to be so judgmental in these matters, as to cast out a brother on fine points of contentious doctrine. In the Christadelphian body, that custom began with Robert Roberts when he could not face Edward Turney in debate.

As you rightly said, this will all become clear at the Judgment Seat, but if one cannot tell right from wrong before then, one is indeed in trouble

I wish you well in health, and knowledge, and in service of the Lord,

John Stevenson.

* The date of Edward Turney's lecture was Thursday, 28th August, 1873. Confusion arose when the date of Friday, 29th July 1873, was mistakenly given as the date of Robert Roberts' lecture in his booklet “The Slain Lamb.” - Editor.

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Commentary by Brother Phil Parry on “Nottingham Revisited” by Stan Snow of Logos:

What bigotry that Stan Snow should presume that the “Logos element” of Christadelphians in Australia are in the true Faith which was once delivered to the Saints let alone boasting of upholding it!

This article relating what he has heard took place between Edward Turney and Robert Roberts, is based on his assumption that Dr.Thomas and Robert Roberts had complete knowledge and understanding of the Truth concerning the nature of man, Jesus Christ, the sin of Adam and its effects, and the purpose of Christ's sacrifice.

This is what Christadelphians glibly describe as “The Truth” but is not, for both these men were in error on much of the Spirit's teaching.

From what is contained in this article, and what is stated in Zechariah 8:16, “Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate saith the Lord,” I can hardly accept that any who have contributed matter in the compilation of the article about Edward Turney and his views of 1873, could have read his lecture “The Sacrifice of Christ” delivered on August 28th 1873 in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham, and produced in booklet form by A.L.Wilson of the

Nazarene Fellowship and reprinted by F.J.Pearce, for I find too many inaccuracies and misrepresentations in this Logos article of what Turney said of the events prior to the lecture, and the lecture itself.

Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," but to those who believed on Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," John 8:31,32.

Jesus at that time was the Way, the Truth and the Life. Therefore to be in the Truth we must be in Him. But we must know the Truth first so that the Truth may be in us. The expression "In the Truth" means therefore, to be "In Christ" through His word, not the part truths of Dr.Thomas and Robert Roberts, "Elpis Israel," "Slain Lamb," etc.

The first paragraph of Stan Snow's article is thus declared void in that Christadelphians lost in 1873 much of the teaching of Dr.Thomas which was scripturally true but replaced by the doctrine of "sin-in-the-flesh."

Re: the second paragraph. The Christadelphian, October 1873 reporting that E.W.Turney and W.H.Farmer had renounced the fact that Jesus Christ was God manifested in our "condemned nature," for the putting away of sin by the sacrifice of himself. Certainly and rightly so, they renounced the false doctrine of "condemned nature" not only in respect of Jesus but of all men, but they did not deny that Jesus had come in the flesh. Read again 1 John 4:1- 3 and you will see who really is anti-christ, for John says nothing about "condemned flesh," so verse 3 applies to those who accept the adding to and manipulation of the word of the Spirit. They are the spirits of anti-christ which the Logos identifies itself and its members with. God did not condemn Adam's flesh nor change it - God condemned Adam's disobedience. Changed and condemned nature was an invention of the Papacy having no evidence in Scripture when it was suggested for acceptance to both Dr. Thomas and R. Roberts; yet, with no evidence but that of the Papacy, Thomas and Roberts went over to that teaching which they allowed to contradict their words to David Handley, "There was a change in Adam's relationship to his Maker but not in the nature of his organization." Dr.Thomas and R.Roberts pre. 1873.

Edward Turney in his lecture, substantiated these latter statements of Thomas and Roberts and declared his willingness to assist Roberts in preaching the Gospel containing the truth he and Thomas had discarded for the doctrine of the Papacy. Roberts proved himself and subsequently his followers, as anti-christ by enjoining upon them his creed involving Clause V, i.e., that Jesus did not come in a likeness of the flesh of Adam when created, but in "condemned nature" with a bias and inclination to sin which was not in Adam's flesh at his creation. How then did Adam manage to sin? This was part of Turney's appeal to reason, but Roberts would none of it and was instrumental in preventing Turney from using the Athenaeum Rooms, then had the cheek to think he was in order to ask questions in the Temperance Hall paid for by W.H.Farmer.

'The Truth Scarcely Saved.' What truth so dearly won in the investigations of Dr. Thomas could be submerged by E.Turney if Turney was trying to revive what Thomas and Roberts first believed, namely, that Jesus had come in flesh which was identical with that of Adam at his creation and after he sinned?

Turney did not believe the Gnostic fables which really taught that Jesus did not come in actual material flesh but in a higher nature more in keeping with the Angelic. This is what John termed anti-christ for the simple and scriptural reason that Jesus took not on Him the nature of

Angels but was made of the seed of David (Mary) according to flesh so that in the very nature or flesh in which Adam sinned he could demonstrate that obedience to God was possible and thereby in being tempted and tried in all points as Adam was and we are, He could justify His heavenly Father in condemning Adam's sin.

If Jesus had been alienated from God by Adam's sin, and needed redemption and reconciliation, He would not have been in a position to do any more for Adam and his posterity than would a John the Baptist or a Nathaniel.

This is what E.Turney was contending for and what the Nazarenes believe and teach. If the Law of the Spirit of Life was not in Christ as Son of God, he was powerless to make anyone free from the Law of Sin and Death. Yet Paul could say Jesus had done so for him and left him still alive in flesh and blood nature. (Romans 8:1,2).

Apart from the statement about the Gnostics falsely directed at Turney, the remainder of the paragraph concerning his views are true and it was mainly the dictatorial pressurising by Roberts of his brethren that weakened the success Turney had gained for them.

If the doctrines of "The Slain Lamb" lecture were declared from Christadelphian platforms today I am sure their audiences would recoil in horror of such blasphemy, but this is obscured until after a candidate is captured by his or her acceptance of the coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God teaching.

'Standing For The Faith.' I know all the facts leading up to the Roberts and Turney affair but I am unaware of what R.Roberts said in Ireland to cause the turmoil and threatening behaviour toward him and throwing rotten eggs.

To a certain extent I can understand this happening in Ireland if it happened to be a predominantly Roman Catholic section, for like Christadelphians they are so indoctrinated with Papacy teaching and traditions of men, that opposition, if right, is out of the question. I have read somewhere that some Nazarenes met with violent opposition from Christadelphians in the Birmingham area when distributing leaflets contending for Truth. I know that some years ago R. Roberts was jeered and booed when speaking in Cinderford, Gloucestershire, a town 5 miles from my home. It may have been by reason of his dictatorial attitude in both cases, I don't know, but I do know that members of his own family regarded him as highly strung and dictatorial in temperament.

'The Division.' "In view of the danger of the Truth being again lost, Brother Roberts, notwithstanding ill health and weakened condition, was resolved to give his life to preserve it. 'But for this I care not, if the Truth be saved. I will die, if necessary, in the attempt to stem this tide of corruption which is streaming in and sweeping away the brethren.'"

What Truth is he describing in so violent fashion? It is that which he caused to be the Basis of Faith for his brethren, the doctrine of the Apostasy of Rome, "Changed and condemned flesh full of sin," as contained in Clause V and the other Clauses of the B.A.S.F. and is very much under attack from certain sections in Australia, "The Small Voice" magazine being one of the strongest.

I must remind the writer of this article that although Dr.Thomas did revive sections of Truth, he also discarded some of those for the errors Edward Turney and the present day Nazarenes are contending against. And what you are still doing is continuing the Satanic work

begun by R.Roberts in misrepresenting our teaching, not perhaps intentionally, but because you and many more have not the true spirit of discernment or are not meant to see these truths.

And it may be that God allows such controversies of lies and false accusations started by R.Roberts in 1873 to continue the zeal for His Honour, His Son and His Word by the people whom He has predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son.

I am convinced that the following so-called helpers in your defence of what you glibly call the Truth have not read the whole of “Elpis Israel,” “Herald of the Kingdom,” “Phanerosis,” or “Eureka”, nor “The Visible Hand of God” by Roberts especially on the subject of Enoch. So I fail to see from what they wrote, how R.Roberts had any help from them in defending the Truth as Jesus and His apostles taught it, they were defending his erroneous teaching and false accusations which he levelled against E.Turney without examining what Turney taught. Take the first example:

‘Brother Smith (Edinburgh):’ This man could be said to be writing against his own community on account of his own ignorance of the rituals of the Mosaic Law and the letter to the Hebrews explaining their meaning. He says, “I have been struck by the very partial and limited view they take of the Scriptures, They almost entirely ignore the typical parts of the Word . In that typical system the High Priest offered for himself and the people. In offering for himself it was as High Priest and not merely as a man.” What he goes on to say of the future is very debatable in regard to Israel in the Lord. But if he is talking from Hebrews 7:27 as typical of Christ as a Priest offering for his own sins first and then the people, he stultifies himself by his own limited view and ignoring the typical parts of the Word. Hebrews 7:27 speaks of the High Priest offering for his own sins first, and then offering for the sins of the people. Firstly, Jesus could not be a Priest while on earth - Hebrews 8:4 - and secondly Jesus had no sins, so how could He offer for them while on earth when The High Priest and rulers of the Jews could not convict Him of sin. Who then is taking the very partial and limited view of the Scriptures, yea, in preference for those of R.Roberts, rather than the Spirit inspired Apostles of Jesus who gave them for that reason?

‘Brother McKillop (Leith), for the Ecclesia:’ Representing his Ecclesia, this man states, “We are determined to remain old Christadelphians, in the strict sense of the term — and we repudiate the doctrine hatched in Maldon, and promulgated from Nottingham.” Let me say that an old Christadelphian is old only in as far as he holds the doctrines taught by the man who adopted that name, and actually that man Dr.Thomas was first responsible for the very doctrines “hatched at Maldon and promulgated from Nottingham.” Any person who has the booklet “The Sacrifice of Christ,” by Edward Turney, and circulated by the Nazarenes can read for themselves what David Handley of Maldon wrote in a letter to Robert Roberts to insert in “The Christadelphian” if he chose.

If Christadelphians have so much faith in the writings of Dr.Thomas they should read what he writes on the redeeming blood of Christ and the actual meaning of Redemption. Edward Turney praised him for this as stated in this Stan Snow article, so I need not repeat it. But I would request you read “Eureka,” Volume 1, page 278, referring to life in the blood, not character in the blood. Also “Eureka,” volume 1, page 20, and bottom paragraph giving the scriptural meaning of Redemption which Edward Turney supported and for which he was falsely accused by R.Roberts, and is still accused in our day by the “Logos” element who are in my view the counterpart of those whom Jesus addressed in John 9:31-39, for in this article they boast in the teaching of Dr. Thomas yet on the subject of Redemption they oppose him.

I myself am sorry that he taught error on other subjects and contradicted himself, nevertheless I appreciate he was not inspired.

‘Sister Hage (Bilsthorpe)’: I am not sure what she means by “The Review” for which she thanks Brother Roberts, so I cannot comment on it. I only wish it was “The Review of The Slain Lamb Lecture” by F.J.Pearce. This Review of “The Slain Lamb” shows E.Turney's complete understanding of the subject, also it is in print that Turney told Roberts to his face that Roberts did not understand the subject, and not only so but he would debate with him. If, as Sister Hage says, Turney's views were his own and not from the Bible, then those of Dr. Thomas must have been his own, since Turney was expounding the views of Dr. Thomas on this subject.

‘Brother Bairstow (Halifax)’: This man is completely out of his depth on this matter of flesh as a physical condition and a legal position. Scripture defines the difference, and Paul defines the difference in the very chapter, Romans 7 of his Epistle.

Even Dr. Thomas stated that Paul here was referring to himself in the past as an unregenerated Jew unconverted to Christ and therefore “in the flesh” the exact opposite of “in the spirit,” Romans 8:8-10. How can Mr Bairstow be so foolish to think that in Romans 7:18 Paul was speaking of himself as a converted believer in Christ having no idea of how to perform that which is good? Paul, who after his Baptism received by revelation direct from the risen Christ the messages he was chosen to take to both Jews and Gentiles!

No, my friends, the flesh is only termed unclean in a legal sense and pertains to the conscience, so that legal cleansing under Divine Law means conscience cleansing. Think of all the churches Paul established, how incredible and unbelievable of a man who knew not how to perform that which is good! Yet this is what the Logos wants us to accept as “The Truth.” Paul says, “I am crucified with Christ (Baptism) nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Was Christ “no good thing” dwelling or living in Paul?

If therefore Stan Snow has any reply in favour of what he believes to be The Truth on the subject of the nature of Adam from his creation until his death as a creature of the dust, also the reason for the sacrifice of Christ from the standpoint of the inspired word of God in the Bible record, I would like to have it through whatever channel he chooses.

Let me add in conclusion, that in some respects the Nazarene teaching has progressed from what E.Turney believed as a Christadelphian, for example, the death Adam incurred by sin which would have involved, not a waiting for natural decay to take its ordained period of 930 years, but the inflicting of death by the taking away of life when sin occurred. Turney ultimately arrived at the truth of this when writing the booklet “The Two Sons of God,” a truth that made the ritual sacrifices under the Law and the Atoning work of God in Christ simple and clear to the unbiased seeker of Truth.

I implore you therefore, to consider these things on account of Him who, loved us and suffered, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.

Brother Phil Parry.

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Commentary by Brother Russell Gregory:

I would like first of all to say that neither Brother Phil Parry nor I had seen each others commentaries but that each of us have made our observations on Stan Snow's article entirely independent of the other.

The general impression I have after reading the article by Stan Snow is one of extreme bias. Robert Roberts is portrayed as the "Hero" and Edward Turney as the "Villain." Events are presented in a way which are inaccurate to say the least and statements made which are libellous.

It is very sad indeed that this type of reporting has continued for so long by Christadelphian writers. They deceive themselves and their readers and seem interested only in upholding Dr.Thomas and Robert Roberts even when shown to be in error, than in seeking the Truth of Scripture. Robert Roberts could, in writing "The Slain Lamb" misrepresent what Edward Turney was contending for. As one small example will show; Robert Roberts stated that Edward Turney believed Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh; he knew this was not true, yet he wrote it! This untruth is still being said of the Nazarene Fellowship today. For years we have endeavoured to put the record straight but have made very little progress against the defamatory remarks made against us and fostered by so many leading Christadelphian writers. Whenever Christadelphian writers face squarely our teaching regarding the Atonement they are unable to counter it with sound reasoning from Scripture, and if they were able to show our teaching was not in accordance with Scripture, we would change it without hesitation.

If Stan Snow had read the Nazarene Fellowship literature he claims to know so much about he would know that it was Edward Turney who challenged Robert Roberts to debate before the brethren and sisters in Birmingham in 1873 and it was Robert Roberts who refused take him up. Indeed Edward Turney asked Robert Roberts to meet him in debate on several occasions but he, Robert Roberts, would never accept the challenge. Robert Roberts was an accomplished orator and could sway his audience with high sounding and pious words and as a newspaper reporter by occupation, in writing he could do the same; he knew how easy it was for the unthinking to be talked over to his point of view.

Reading through the letters to Robert Roberts written during August to October in the 1873 "Christadelphian," fills my heart with sorrow to see how he was praised for his lecture "The Slain Lamb;" how his readers were taken in by his misleading use of words; his arguments sounded plausible but were often contradictory and badly reasoned through. He had a way of writing what his readers wanted to believe - that what they had always believed was alright. But his own contradictions and those of Dr. Thomas should have warned them there was something wrong, for Scripture teaching does not contradict itself.

Turning to specific points in Stan Snow's article, regarding paragraph 3, I quote Robert Roberts own words where he wrote:-

"Our friend (David Handley) imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatever... and the presumption and evidence are entirely the opposite way. There was a change in Adam's relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his organization... The phrase "Sin-in-the-flesh" is metonymical. It is not expression of a literal element or principle pervading the physical organization. Literally sin is disobedience, or the act of rebellion."

This view of Robert Roberts echoed that held by Dr. Thomas 14 years earlier and it was this view which Edward Turney developed further in his lecture, "The Sacrifice of Christ," in 1873. By which time Dr. Thomas had died and Robert Roberts and David Handley had reversed their positions with David Handley believing what Robert Roberts had told him, while Robert Roberts himself reverted to the Church doctrine of Original Sin.

We ought to remember that at this time there were many people expressing new views regarding Bible teaching and Dr. Thomas was not alone in his searching for better understanding for he lived in an age of great activity and research into Bible truths. Consequently we find that there were many denominations springing up, ail with a measure of "Truth." Whilst it may be said that Christadelphians had more of the Truth than others it cannot be assumed that they had all the Truth; nor that their understanding of all Bible teaching was complete. We have high regard for the work of Dr. Thomas in respect of his efforts and for the keeping of his promise in devoting himself to his quest for the Truth, and in his searching he was well blessed, but the uncovering of the Truth in these last days has been progressive and we cannot make the claim that we have it all; but neither does it mean that we should settle for what Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts believed as the Truth over 100 years ago.

Regarding the 4th and 5th paragraphs; the report of events leading up to Edward Turney's lecture, I would like here to quote at length from the Introduction to Turney's book, "The Sacrifice of Christ":-

"If envy and malice had not been hard at work to misrepresent my mode of procedure, there had been no occasion for this explanation as to origin of my lecture in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham. It is the consequence of the extraordinary behaviour of Mr Roberts and his repeated mis-statements, that I feel it incumbent upon me to inform the brethren why I went to Birmingham on such an errand. Some days before the 22nd August, I received letters from brethren in Birmingham desiring me to go there and give some explanation of this "New idea" concerning Christ.

I was informed that many were anxious to hear me. Mr Roberts, it was stated, was doing his best to suppress my writings on this subject which I also knew to be true. There is a time, however, for everything. But, Mr Roberts, it would appear not being able to "discern this time," and perhaps forgetting that the Holy Office of the Inquisition is now closed, his attempted revival of literary proscription answered my purpose not amiss, urging forward that very publicity and freedom which seemed to bring on him "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The invitation to which I have referred was not of my seeking: in fact it was quite unexpected, and when it did come I had very little idea whom I should meet- After accepting the pressing request of the Birmingham brethren, Dr. Hayes and Bro. Farmer agreed to accompany me."

Edward Turney goes on to report of his first meeting at which about twenty brethren and sisters had gathered. This meeting eventually "broke up a little before midnight," He then continues:-

"In a few days afterwards I received several letters from brethren present stating that the meeting as a whole were convinced that what I had taught was true and scriptural... An urgent request was made for me to deliver a lecture to as many of the

Birmingham brethren as could be got together on the subject of “The Sacrifice Of Christ.” I was distinctly informed in writing that I must consider the meeting entirely in my hands. This being so I requested Dr.Hayes to take the chair, and he consented.

I was also informed in writing that it was chiefly that portion of the Birmingham meeting who had come to me on 22nd, that would pay for the Hall... but the reader will very likely ask, why this lecture was not delivered in the Athenaeum Rooms, seeing that the brethren alone were allowed to be present? This is the answer. Mr Roberts holds the Athenaeum Rooms in his own name, though he does not of course pay all the rent himself. A number of brethren wished him to grant them the use of the room, and were so anxious that, as before stated they preferred to pay for the use of it. What was the reply of this good and valiant man, this mighty warrior who is ever ready to let m a foe in order to display his prowess in putting him to flight? Oh, this was quite another matter! “No! never! not while I hold the place shall the wolf enter here.” “

Edward Turney then further reports:

“Up to the moment of going on the platform I was told that the meeting was mine: and that the man who courageously bolted the Athenaeum doors against me was doing his utmost to “neutralize” the effect of the lecture. He had for nights been declaiming against me, and against my doctrine. And although he knew perfectly well that he and his friends had not taken the Temperance Hall and would not have to pay for it, he had the singular audacity to request that the brethren would grant him the privilege of putting all the questions to me on Thursday night assuming that questions would be allowed. Yes, says he, there was an overwhelming majority for this. No doubt.

But did this overwhelming majority hire the Hall, and pay for it? Did this “overwhelming Majority” invite me to deliver the lecture? And was it not my would-be interrogator that had refused me a door of utterance ? Will any sensible person not see that under these circumstances it was not exactly strange that at my lecture I deliberately ignored the authority of the man who kept out the “wolf.” What else should he expect, except a severe rebuke for his incivility, if I condescended to notice him at all?

During the lecture I was occasionally compelled to administer a reproof. The whole assembly conducted itself in a most exemplary manner for the whole of the two hours and a half, but the Editor disgraced himself about a dozen times by attempted interruption. Now in conclusion of this explanation what does Mr Roberts say of the meeting of the 22nd August and the lecture on the 28th? He says that I ran away from him at Nottingham. He insinuated distinctly that I knew he would be absent from Birmingham on the 22nd, and therefore I took the opportunity of holding a hole and corner meeting, as one of his partisans styled it, and that the lecture of the 28th was an underhand affair. Is it worthwhile for me to put myself to the trouble of saying that these statements are entirely untrue? They are only put forth to make a show of courage; but it is doubtful from the evidence soon to be before the reader whether they are not after all, but the empty boasts of faint-hearted conceit.”

With this evidence before us we can see from those present in 1873 how they looked upon Robert Roberts as a “dictator” and not always moved by the spirit of love. But even today he is regarded as “infallible” by some.

Regarding paragraph 6, every point of Turney's is scriptural and a right understanding of Genesis 2:17 proves it. This has been thoroughly dealt with in our booklet, "The Usage and Meaning of 'Muth Temuth' and 'B'Yom'," and readers may wish to refer to my letter in reply to Brother E.R.Harding printed elsewhere in this Circular Letter.

Paragraph 12 is extraordinary! "Robert Roberts has been the means to prevent its (the Truth's) annihilation under attack from the Satan." How differently we see people. In the previous paragraph we have the boasting of an arrogant man, a self-styled "Saviour," come to "stem this tide of corruption which is sweeping away of the brethren." This reminds me of the self-styled "Watchman of the ecclesia" who instigated my removal from the Erdington Ecclesia; I was upset at the time but now see it as a great blessing of God and for which I cannot find how to give expression to my gratitude. How is it that those who exceed their authority are looked up to? Was Robert Roberts God's chosen Oracle to prevent the annihilation of Truth?

Paragraph 13 is a portion of a letter written by a Brother Smith of Edinburgh and it reveals his lack of understanding of Hebrews 7 and assumes that Jesus Christ was in the position of an High Priest under Mosaic Law and needed to offer for Himself though denied in Hebrews 8:4.

The next letter, paragraph 14 is from a Brother McKillop of Leith, and whereas he states in the part of the letter reproduced in Stan Snow's article, one portion left out shows that "the doctrine hatched in Maldon" had actually been around for some years! I quote from the letter as follows:- "The heretical contagion has not made any havoc in this region, and has not affected us as an ecclesia, and no doubt this is due to the controversy which took place here some years ago on the same subject, and which ended in a thorough ventilation of the whole matter."

So why do not the Christadelphians give a "thorough ventilation of the whole matter" today? For our part we would insist on keeping purely to Scripture without reference to man's doctrines and we would ask them to do the same. Can they admit to the correct understanding of Romans 8:3 regarding "sinful flesh"? Can they refute what we claim as the right understanding of Genesis 2:17 meaning the literal day and the literal slaying; and of Hebrews 7:27, that this cannot be made to contradict Hebrews 8:4 and other Scripture. We challenge all who will on these three points of Scripture, for the wrong understanding on these three points is the sand on which Christadelphia has its foundations.

Regarding Sister Hage's letter the "matter which is difficult at first..." was how could Jesus be a sinner when he did no sin?" and she accepted Dr.Thomas's answer to her that "Jesus was constitutionally a sinner." But Jesus Christ cannot be considered a constitutional sinner until Sin-in-the-flesh is proved and adherents to this doctrine are deceiving themselves.

The next letter, that of Brother Bairstow of Halifax, again shows lack of understanding, this time with regard to Romans 7 and how the Apostle Paul was speaking of himself before he came to Christ. I am not sure whether we should sympathize with brethren of over 100 years ago in their lack of understanding but today such ignorance amongst would-be teachers of Truth is shameful. Let me quote here what Dr. Adam Clarke has to say: -

"It is difficult to conceive how the opinion could have crept into the Church, or prevailed there that the Apostle speaks here of his regenerate state; and that what was, in such a state, true to himself, must be true of all others in the same state. This opinion has, most pitifully and

most shamefully not only lowered the standard of Christianity, but destroyed its influence and disgraced its character. It requires but little knowledge of the spirit of the Gospel, and of the scope of this Epistle, to see that the Apostle is here either personating a Jew under the Law and without the Gospel, or showing what his own state was...while without Christ.”

Paragraph 17 also displays a lack of understanding and Dr.Thomas is very much at fault here with the use of these quotations from Job. I quote now from our booklet, “To The Law and To The Testimony” from the section headed “The Misused Texts of Job” -

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” - Job 14:4

“What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?” - Job 15:14.

“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” - Job 25:4.

These verses are also used to bolster up the Sin-in-the-flesh theory which brings Christ under the Adamic curse and condemns Him to death on account of the nature in which He was born. Surely this amounts to “counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing.” It is argued that when Adam was created, his nature was very good, or clean, but that when he sinned his nature was changed, becoming physically defiled and unclean, and that as Jesus partook of the same flesh as Adam therefore His death was necessary to cleanse Himself from the nature in which God made Him. It has been proved conclusively in works which will be freely sent to anyone interested, that there is no support for this blasphemous assumption anywhere else in the Bible. Is there any proof in these passages from Job?

Firstly, it ought not to be taken for granted that the word clean refers to the physical flesh. Reference to any concordance will show that there are about 100 passages containing the word “clean,” eight of them in the book of Job and not once does it qualify the word “flesh.” Scripturally the word “clean” is used in a legal or moral sense and does not describe a quality of human flesh. People are clean or unclean by Law, without any alteration of the literal flesh.

This is sufficient of itself to dispose of the Sinful Flesh theory as unscriptural and one which ought to be cast out of our minds as apostate theology,

The right answer to these statements of Job is that all born of the will of the flesh are sinners or unclean when legally included in the bondage resulting from Adam's sin, which bears rule over them unto death, i.e., the doctrinal death appointed unto all men; and before they can become legally clean they must become the subjects of the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is imperative that all, by faith and obedience, participate in Adam's redemption under the Ransom provided for man's salvation, by which they are set free from the Adamic condemnation and made clean and righteous.

That this is rightly dividing the word is abundantly evident in regard to the 2nd and 3rd texts from the parallelism:-

CLEAN : RIGHTEOUS

CLEAN : JUSTIFIED

If unclean flesh were involved there would be no point in the statements; and in regard to the first, the answer is that what man could not do, God did, by bringing forth His own Son to redeem those who as children of Adam, are born under the Law of Sin. "Now are ye clean through the word I have spoken unto you." How simple and harmonious is this with Paul's statements: -

"God hath showed me that I should not call any man (much less our Saviour) common or unclean." Acts 10:28.

This shows what poverty of argument there is to those who would endeavour to seek support from Scripture for "sin-in-the-flesh.

The oft quoted statement of Dr.Thomas that "sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there," is sadly, an absurdity in itself, for sin was not condemned in the body of Jesus. Jesus condemned sin by being sinless and thus proving that human beings could resist all temptation if they will. He showed it could be done, for this He did while in the likeness of our flesh, and we too, can be perfectly obedient; the fact that we are not is our fault because we don't try hard enough. Indeed perfect obedience is what Jesus Christ asks of us - "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Jesus overcame temptation by the same means open to His humblest followers - the intelligent use of the Word of God - "It is written..."

We have shown many times and in many ways that flesh is not essentially unclean. Romans 8:3 reads: "...God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh." But "sinful" is not a correct adjective to qualify "flesh," A man can have a sinful character, that is to say he has a bad character but that does not make his flesh bad, or full of sin. But this word "sinful" in Romans 8:3 is not a true translation. A better translation of this sentence would read "God sending His Son in the likeness of the flesh of sin," that is, flesh belonging to sin, or the possession of sin. The Christadelphian theory reminds me of the strange story of Mr Green, the farmer, who lost a cow. Some Christadelphians found a green cow and immediately said "Eureka, we have found the cow which the farmer has lost!" And ever since they have been mesmerized by this vision of their "Green Cow." "Sin-in-the-flesh" is the Christadelphian "Green Cow." Some of us can see their error, that "Green" applies to the farmer's name and not to the colour of the cow, others, even when this fact has been pointed out, still pretend that there is no difference between sinful flesh and sin's flesh.

The action of Robert Roberts reported in paragraph 21 proves it was he and not Turney who caused the division. He, Dr.Thomas, David Handley and many others had wavered for perhaps 15 or more years on this subject and if the matter had been talked through as it should have been, and properly aired before all the brethren and sisters instead of being suppressed and false reports given out, all would have ended well for the Truth but the Christadelphians have ever given false reports on the clean-flesh controversy and have done their level best to prevent their followers from knowing the truth of the matters contended for.

It is over 120 years since the incitement of this division by Robert Roberts and ever since there have been one or two here and there who have seen through the falsity of his teachings embedded in the Statement of Faith. During this 120 years many booklets and pamphlets have been written and circulated for the benefit of those with eyes to see and ears to hear the Spirit's teaching.

We appeal to all our Christadelphian friends to earnestly reconsider their position in relation to Bible teaching and the Statement of Faith- Have you considered why most of the Bible references given to support each Clause are, in fact, no support at all? Have you asked each other or the “elders” of your ecclesias where to find proof of “Sin-in-the-flesh,” or of Jesus Christ having to die for Himself, or of rising in corruptible bodies, or even giving a cogent reason for Christ's crucifixion?

I urge you all to take to heart the message of Malachi 3:16-18; “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of host, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”

Russell Gregory.