



Nottingham Revisited

— E. W. Turney and the Clean Flesh Theory

WHILST Christadelphians would, in the main, recognise 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.

The *Christadelphian* for Oct., 1873 (p. 476; see also Nov., p. 525), reported that several brethren — E. W. Turney and W. H. Farmer — renounced the Truth that had been painstakingly unearthed by Bro. 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 Theory.”

Turmoil and Debacle — The Renunciationist Theory

During the months of August and September, 1873, the brethren in Birmingham were subject to considerable turmoil. Bro. 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 “Bro. Handley” at Nottingham. Bro. 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.

In the following week, Bro. 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. Bro. Roberts arrived back in Birmingham on Monday, 25th, and the following day he was questioned by supporters of Turney, whereupon Bro. Roberts agreed to put questions to him at the close of his lecture on the Thursday.

A large number of Christadelphians were present at the lecture, many expecting to hear Bro. Roberts put questions to E.W.Turney, but it was not to be, for Turney spoke for nearly two and a half hours, leaving no time for Bro. Roberts, who was disallowed. Consequently, Bro. Roberts challenged Turney to a debate the following week. This challenge was not taken up in the confusion. Bro. 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

There was a real danger that the Truth, so dearly won in the investigations of Bro. Thomas, could now be submerged again by the Gnostic fables that troubled the apostles in their day, namely the teaching of those who “con-

fess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1Jn. 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 & 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. 13). 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, p. 314).

At the beginning Bro. Roberts was not confident that he could easily turn the brethren around, 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, p. 474). However, following his lecture *The Slain Lamb*, Bro. 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" (p. 475).

Standing for the Faith

We earlier said that Bro. 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, Aug. 18, to lecture four times in Ballybay and Cootehill. This was near Dundalk, a seaport on the west coast of Ireland.

When halfway through the lecture, Bro. 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."

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 Bro. Roberts to a vehicle, and away. The brethren considered it unwise to hold another meeting, and so Bro. Roberts departed for Birmingham, arriving back at 3am on Aug. 25th.

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 Bro. Roberts suffered ill health!

These background events may help to explain why Bro. 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 par., *The Slain Lamb*; see also *The Christadelphian*, 1873; p. 474).

The Division

In view of the danger of the Truth being again lost, Bro. 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, p. 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, p. 451).

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 Bro. 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:

Bro. Smith (Edinburgh):

"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..."

**Bro. McKillop (Leith)
for the Ecclesia:**

"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."

Sis. Hage (Bilthorpe):

"We have the Review today which I have run through. I like it much; and we thank Bro. 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, Bro. 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."

Bro. Bairstow (Halifax):

"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 realised before he could be delivered from it.*" (Christadelphian, Oct, Sept, 1873).

The Flesh Essentially Unclean

Bro. 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*, p. 114; 14th ed.: pp. 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, p. 361).

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.

Bro. 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?

Three months had elapsed since the public promulgation of the new doctrine. Bro. 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: "*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, Oct. 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, p. 526).

The Outcome

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 pronounce no opinion: they leave this with Him. Their only concern is their duty.*"

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, p. 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

In Nottingham, the seat of the errorists, the majority not only refused to withdraw from the renunciationists, but passed a resolution (proposed by E. 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 the 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 recognise even in this ‘our Father’s hand,’ and our hearts rise in thankfulness that we are still on the side of the Truth*” (ibid, p. 477).

However, good comes out of all adversity and challenge, to those in Christ, and whilst Bro. 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, p. 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

Letters of support came from the brotherhood far and wide. Sis. 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...*” Bro. 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, p. 358).

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.

Bro. 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!*”

Echoes of the first century Clean Flesh Theory are with us today. Bro. 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 firstborns 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, pp. 361-162). Again in *Eureka*, vol. 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.*”

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!**” (Mk. 4:39).

— Stan Snow.



Nottingham

Revisited ... Part Two

— E. W. Turney and the Clean Flesh Theory

IN our previous article (*Logos* vol. 63, pp. 5-9), we recounted how several brethren, including E. W. Turney, and W. H. Farmer, renounced the Truth that had been painstakingly unearthed by Bro. 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 new teaching which was foreign to the Brotherhood, was aptly named *The Clean Flesh Theory*. Addressing a meeting in Temperance Hall, Birmingham, on Thursday, 28th August, 1873, E. W. Turney further expounded his new ideas. He excluded Jesus from "Adam's posterity" by defining that phrase to mean "every human being who had been born of **two human parents**" (see *Logos*, Vol. 63, p. 6); he stated that "Jesus was not a son of Adam," that "the body of Christ was not under condemnation," and that Christ was not redeemed by his own sacrifice (see *Christadelphian*, 1873, p. 314).

Many today may not appreciate just how close the community came to losing the Truth at that time. There was a real danger that the Truth could again be submerged by the fables that troubled the apostles in their day, namely the teaching of those who "confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1Jn. 4:3).

It is vital for brethren and sisters today to realise the importance of

faithfully upholding the things taught to us by our pioneer brethren. We shall consider events and discussions that followed through the years 1873-74, which were trying times of turmoil, resulting in *faithful brethren* contending earnestly for the Faith, *that we might still find it* in our day of opportunity. Chief of these was Bro. Robert Roberts, editor of the *Christadelphian* magazine, whose sterling efforts can only be described as extraordinary, and at great personal cost to his health.

Yahweh's Firstborn of Mary

Firstly, let us elaborate upon the statement of Bro. Thomas, quoted in our previous article, which read: "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 the firstborns of Israel were 'holy things'... Hence the holiness of Mary's babe was not of nature, but of constitution by the law" (*Christadelphian*, 1873, p. 361; *Logos* vol. 63, p. 9).

All the firstborns of Israel were "holy things," and the case of the firstling of an ass is worthy of further comment.

Exo. 13:13 declares: "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt *break his neck*." The ass in Scripture especially represents Israel

(cp. Gen. 22:3, 5; Exo. 4:20; Jud. 5:10; 10:4; 2Sam. 16:1-4; 1Kgs. 1:33, 35). The ass whose firstling is redeemed represents Israel as they *should have been*, and as God intended them to be. The ass whose firstling is *not* redeemed represents Israel as they actually are: *stiffnecked, rebellious and broken* as a nation because of this obdurate attitude to their God and Maker. Hence their "neck was broken," and they perished in the wilderness, and subsequently in the land at the hand of invaders. But the joy in all of this is given to us by Zechariah: "I will pour upon the house of David... the spirit of grace and supplications; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son... as one is in bitterness for his *firstborn*" (Zech. 12:10). In this future "Day of Yahweh," Israel *will accept* their Messiah and Saviour, and finally be truly represented by the firstling of the ass, *redeemed by the Lamb of God*.

Holy, Harmless, Undeified

In what way was Jesus "holy, harmless, and undeified"? The succinct explanation of Bro. Thomas is worthy of reiterating: "... the *character* of Jesus was holy, harmless, undeified, without spot or blemish, or any such thing; but *his flesh was like our flesh* in all its points — weak, emotional and unclean" (*Eureka*, vol. 1, p. 106). Again: "However perfect and complete, the *moral* manifestation of the Deity was in Jesus of Nazareth, the divine manifestation was nevertheless imperfect as concerning the *substance*, or *body*, of Jesus. This was what we are familiar with as the flesh... styled by Paul, *flesh of sin*" (ibid, p. 106).

Ecclesial Management

Whilst today we are grateful for the firm stand taken by the founding editor of the *Christadelphian* in the "Clean Flesh Controversy," there were then, as

now, strong critics of his "dictatorial" handling of ecclesial affairs. The magazine reported enquiries "as to what scriptural authority existed for the system of ecclesial management in vogue in Birmingham... a plan which could only be favoured by despotic minds, and could not fail but be productive of disaster, etc., etc."

Bro. Roberts' reply is interesting in the light of the way ecclesias are conducted today:

"If it be asked, why not the matters be decided by the general body in the first instance, the answer is, it cannot be done without frustrating the general objects of our assembly as an ecclesia. We found this by experience in Birmingham. When we started, we were only a few, and any business to be attended to was attended to by all at the close of our ordinary meetings. But as we grew large, business multiplied and it grew to be a spiritual evil to have to detain the brethren after every meeting to attend to mere matters of temporal detail... Therefore with one consent, we delegated the matter of management to a select few... The managing brethren are merely servants, whose acts require ratification, and whose decisions may be set aside by a special meeting of the ecclesia at any time, without waiting for the quarterly meeting. If scriptural authority be needed for these reasonable arrangements, it is found in the injunction to... 'Let all things be done decently and in order;' We have no power to appoint rulers such as they had in the first century..." (*Christadelphian*, Jan. 1874, pp. 39-40).

These things give an insight into the mind and character of this pioneer, Robert Roberts, to whom we owe the continued existence of the Truth today.

— Stan Snow.

To be continued: Edward Turney, the Man.



Nottingham

Revisited ... Part Three

— E. W. Turney and the Clean Flesh Theory

BOTH Edward Turney of Nottingham and David Handley of Maldon in Essex, have been described as “outstanding men with big frames and vigorous intellects.” God raises up special men for special purposes, be it a Moses on the one hand, or a Pharaoh on the other (Rom. 9:21).

1873 witnessed the work of two quite special men — gladiators — and the point at issue was the truth of the gospel, only recently revived in the earth by Bro. Thomas. One man was resolved to die, if necessary, to defend this Truth (*Christadelphian*, 1873, p. 451). The other was determined to both forsake and overturn the Christadelphian understanding of the gospel.

Today, little has changed in this regard, for there are those who are prepared to sacrifice their all to maintain the gospel Truth as taught by our pioneer brethren, and there are those who seem to ignore important principles of the things we believe, being prepared to spend a lifetime endeavouring to overturn it.

An Outstanding Speaker

Edward Turney was a special man. He first came to my notice when I was carefully reading the *Christadelphian* magazines for the year 1868. Bro. Roberts wrote of the ecclesia at Nottingham: “*They meet in the People’s Hall, Beck Lane... and in the evening brother Edward Turney lectures to the public*” (p. 257). Intelligence columns in the magazine frequently reported the zeal and effectiveness of his speaking abilities. He was obviously talented with speaking ability and gained personal popularity. Bro. D. Clement of Mumbles wrote: “*Brother Turney possesses the ability of commanding the attention and securing the interest of an audience, which very few brethren are able to do.*” The local paper reported: “*Mr. Turney of Nottingham... explained at great length and with much ability... Mr. Turney has a clear intellect, a pleasant voice, with about as much nasalism in it as you might expect in an American’s, and he is a fluent speaker, who indulges, when he has an opportunity, in a considerable amount of satire... All this did not seem to have much connection with his subject; but a discourse is less tedious when well spiced with irony... The speaker said that heaven was nowhere promised in the Scriptures... and he offered to forfeit £50 if any person could prove that it was.*” (*Chr.*, Sept. 1871, pp. 298-299).

The father of Bro. Islip Collyer knew him well. Bro. Collyer wrote: “*He had the reputation of being an orator of exceptional power, but if he deserved such commendation it must have been in manner and delivery that he excelled, rather than in matter, for his published lectures are most disappointing. This was indeed recognized by some who remembered him well... Here is one little incident which*

is far more revealing of the man than unimaginative readers may realize... Edward Turney was called upon to speak. He strode to the front of the platform, and in distinct but conversational tones said, 'Will a gentleman right at the back tell me if my voice is quite clear to him there? It is no use my speaking unless you can all hear me.' 'Yes,' said someone on the back row, 'I can hear you perfectly.' 'Thank you,' said Edward Turney, and forthwith plunged into his subject. Students of psychology will immediately perceive what the effect of this would be... There was the valuable element of surprise, there was the distinct impression of a commanding personality, absolutely at home on the platform, and above all there was the clear suggestion of something coming which all ought to hear. It immediately captured favoured attention, the first step in any argument. If Edward Turney could sustain such psychological appeals as they were needed, there is little wonder that he won a great reputation even with a slender equipment of ideas." (Robert Roberts, by Islip Collyer, pp. 77-78).

Amazing Turn Around

In our previous article, we pointed out that David Handley had a new idea regarding the atonement. When thoroughly examined, it was not new, but a return to the old church teaching that all men are held personally responsible for Adam's sin. The irony is that Handley later came to see the unreasonableness of the theory and had to abandon it.

But Turney "took it up with extraordinary suddenness and worked it out in detail," abandoning the gospel Truth he had gratefully acquired from the labours of Bro. John Thomas. Only twelve months before he had said in the presence of two hundred brethren and sisters, "It was unnecessary to assure

them that he was an ardent admirer of that man [Bro. Thomas]... that the man John Thomas was to him a model man in this day and generation, not only with regard to his writing and platform powers, but also with respect to his walk and conduct; and therefore he had great pleasure in holding him up to them as such... He could not refrain from saying as he had mentioned the Dr.'s name, what a splendid reader he was. He [E. Turney] would go ten miles to hear him read one chapter, if he did not say one word afterwards, for his reading was almost equal to another man's exposition... He thought they all felt as he felt... the beginning of their confidence was a thing unshaken as a rock. The big shoulders of the hurrican might push against it in vain" (Chr., Sept. 1872, pp. 436-437).

Notwithstanding this lavish eulogy, one year later, within a week of his conversion to this new doctrine, he had brought out a pamphlet with a definite and emphatic "renunciation" of old convictions and a statement of the new.

Contending for the Faith in 1873/74

The authors of Renunciationism were responsible for a slight arresting of the progress of the Truth in the year 1874. Numbers of baptisms in Great Britain had climbed steadily since 1865, when there were 86 baptisms, until 1873, when there were 288, and in 1874 there were only 212. But in 1875 the number began to climb again to 242, so that the Truth began to recover from the shock of "the reckless attempt that was made [against it] by some of its most prominent professors towards the end of 1873" (Chr., July 1875, p. 330).

Discussions with David Handley were held on 7th December, 1873, when it was "positively denied [by him] that Jesus was one of the 'heavenly things' typified in the Mosaic

law, which required purifying 'with better sacrifices' than animals (Heb. 9:23); **but no reason was furnished for excluding him who was the 'body' or substance of the Mosaic 'shadow'** (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1)." (Chr., 1874, p. 45)

Failure to Recognise Types: a Folly

The present writer has found in forty years of contending for the Faith, that failure to appreciate Bible types is a characteristic of errorists, and this was observed in the days of this controversy last century (Chr., 1873, p. 459). Hence, in discussions with David Handley: "*The offering up of sacrifice 'for himself' in the age to come (Eze. 45:22) was stigmatized as 'absurd.' It was considered [by him] that the 'prince' mentioned by Ezekiel could not be the Messiah because of the statements in Eze. 45:9; 46:16-18*" (Chr., 1874, p. 46).

The matter of the identity of the "Prince" in Ezekiel is one that we have had to answer many, many times, and so a word upon it here will doubtless be profitable. Our English word "prince" in Ezekiel is from the Latin *princeps*, "a chief, or sovereign," which, in turn, is from *primus capere*, "first choice." The original meaning of "prince" in English was "sovereign," and by extension, a royal personage of either sex (*Century Dictionary*, Times, London).

The Hebrew word for "prince" in Ezekiel is *nasi*, meaning "lifted up; exalted." Ezekiel uses the term "Prince—Nasi" as being synonymous with the **King of Israel**: "My servant David, a *prince* among them" (ch. 34:24). Again, "Thou profane wicked *prince* of Israel (i.e., King Zedekiah)" (21:25), and "My servant David [*the Beloved*] shall be their *prince* for ever" (37:25) — and this can only refer to Christ.

Daniel speaks of "Messiah, the *Prince*" (9:25). The book of Revelation

testifies that Jesus Christ is "the *prince* of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). The book of Acts speaks of "the *prince* of life whom God hath raised from the dead" (3:15), while Isaiah terms the Messiah as "the *Prince of Peace*" (9:6).

Ezek. 44:1-3 informs us that the eastern gate of the future sanctuary shall be reserved for the *prince* that "he" may go through it to "eat bread before Yahweh." This is sufficient to show that Ezekiel's "prince" is identical with the "prince of the kings of the earth" (Rev. 1:5). To deny that the "prince" of Ezekiel is Messiah, is equivalent to affirming that there is one who will attain a higher position on the earth in the Age to come, than the "king of kings"!

Why did Ezekiel refer to Messiah as the *Nasi* (the Exalted and Lifted Up One)? Bro. Henry Sulley sums it up well: "*These passages demonstrate that Jesus, 'the Prince of Life,' is invested by the Father with supreme authority. The title Prince, therefore, is indicative of absolute supremacy, as pointedly expressed by the apostle Peter, thus: 'him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour' — Acts 5:31.*" (*The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy*, ch. 5, Sect. 2, p.88).

Messiah Offers Sacrifice for Himself

Why should Messiah offer up sacrifice for himself (Eze. 45:22)?

Bro. C. C. Walker is succinct. Let us hear him: "*The Lord Jesus now is an immortal manifestation of the Father, yet as Prince in the Temple, worships the Father from whom he proceeded. He eats passover bread before Yahweh then, just as he ate the passover before he suffered, representative of that true bread of life which he was. In the future it will be a retrospective memorial of the same divine gift. Indeed the requisition is highly instructive, viz., that the Prince of the Kings should keep*

*before them, and before all the people of the earth, the unalterable fact that he himself **was once a mortal man** though sinless — **a man like themselves needing redemption from death**. The same necessity arises for this man to offer a bullock, as it was necessary for*

him, though keeping perfectly the Mosaic Law, to be baptised for remission of sins (Mat. 3:14-15) in order that he might, as he himself said, 'fulfil all righteousness'." (ibid, p. 184, Logos ed., p. 90).

— *Stan Snow.*
[To be continued]



Nottingham *Revisited*

PART 4 — THE GREAT DEBATE

THE much argued, proposed debate between Bro. Roberts and E. W. Turney never took place. The controversy as to who, if anyone, refused to debate, continues today in some quarters. Turney had been out of the country for nearly nine months, and upon his return, Bro. Roberts wrote to him as follows: “64 Belgrave Rd., Birmingham, 16th, April, 1874. Mr. Edward Turney, As the period of your absence from England is now drawing to a close, I think it well to inform you that I am ready to debate with you, either at Birmingham or Nottingham, the question you have raised among the friends of the Truth. I will affirm during four nights... Or I will take the negative of any proposition you may affirm, provided it is worded in a way to admit of my doing so... Let me hear at once, that I may arrange... Robert Roberts.” (*Christadelphian*, June 1874, p. 279).

To this he received no reply, except in a printed circular four weeks later a refusal to debate except along lines of Turney’s choosing. Bro. Roberts wrote back to him: “You refuse to accept the discussion proposed, although originally challenged by yourself nine months ago... Nevertheless, **I will consent** to the two nights’ attack and defence, if you will first go through the unfettered discussion which you yourself offered nine months ago, and which I did not ‘refuse’ but accept, now that the time has arrived... finally, I do not teach that Christ was a sinner by birth or any other means: this is your misrepresentation. I believe he inherited in his flesh the result of Adam’s sin, as we do; not that he was a sinner himself” (*ibid*, pp. 280-281).

Clean Flesh Theory Not New

In the *Christadelphian* for Jan. 1874, the comment appeared: “Until the Nottingham pamphlets appeared, the theory (Clean Flesh) was never set forth in the full-blown manner in which it has recently been exhibited. The idea that David Handley was the first discoverer, in the present generation, of this supposed ‘glorious truth,’ is quite erroneous. It was one of the elements which led to a division among the Plymouth Brethren upwards of twenty years ago. One of their leading writers (B. W. Newton) contended that... The opposite party, answering to the Renunciationists with us, held that... So far from it being a new idea, it is as old as the apostasy and no older. It is necessarily involved in the popular idea of substitution... they have not got their minds wholly exorcised of the wine of the Romish harlot” (*ibid*, p. 47).

The Agitation Continued Through 1874

It was a time of sorting out in the Brotherhood. The “Intelligence” columns in the *Christadelphian* reported events worldwide, some glad, some sad. The June 1874 issue stated on p. 287: “Birmingham — On Sunday, May 10th, after six months

consideration of the questions agitated by her brother; sister **Mary Turney** resumed her place at the table, having previously intimated her repudiation of Renunciationist error, and the fellowship of all who hold it. The event was a cause of great joy to all the brethren."

On a sadder note, the August *Christadelphian* (pp. 385-386) reported that Edward Turney went deeper into error by joining hands with the Dowieites, from whom the Christadelphians had withdrawn years earlier, over "their parley with the popular doctrine of the immortality of the soul," their belief in a supernatural devil, etc. In this withdrawal, Edward Turney had taken part, declaring at that time, "with all their cleverness and versatility, they did not understand the A-B-C of the Truth." Brother Roberts now wrote: "*Edward Turney... renouncing an important element of the Truth, declares that for fifteen years he preached it without understanding it; puts forth all his strength to subvert the brotherhood, fails, except with a few, and now goes to Edinburgh, and makes overtures to the Dowieites... his presence in Edinburgh for a week, and of his sending for the Dowieites... addressing them as 'brethren'... proposing that they should sink 'minor differences,' and 'unite under one standard' to proclaim the gospel.*"

To this day the followers of Turney are very critical of Bro. Roberts for refusing to agree to a private meeting with Turney (The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter, No. 160, May/June 1996, pp. 28-29). But there are two sides to every story. Bro. Roberts wrote: "*Without a single attempt at conference with colleagues, within a week of his change, Edward Turney proclaimed his renunciation to the four winds by printed pamphlet... Fire was scattered in the brotherhood, war against the Truth declared, and then an ostentatious*

proposal for private meeting! And now we have the sequel — another renunciation. Edward Turney renounced the fellowship of the Dowieites years ago, and now he renounces his renunciation, and asks them, with open arms, to come to his bosom... In this proposal of marriage with Dowieism, Renunciationism is inconsistent with itself. It began by declaring that the reception of its doctrine was essential to salvation; its coquetry with Dowieism seems a declaration that nothing is essential except the historic faith of the old Campbellites with which Dowieism began — see 2John 10-11 (Christadelphian, Aug. 1874, p. 386).

Throughout 1874, "Intelligence" columns in the *Christadelphian* reported the activities of Turney and supporters, as the battle continued. A message came from the Leith Ecclesia: "*Brother Ker writes to counteract the impression that Leith ecclesia has gone over to Renunciationism. He says they had a visit from Edward Turney and William Ellis, the former of whom was allowed to explain his 'free life' theory on the understanding that questions would be answered. He (Turney), however, occupied from a little before eight in the evening until about twenty minutes after ten, so that only one or two questions were put, and these under a sense that the questioners were intruding, they being reminded by the lecturer of the lateness of the hour... Their visit, therefore, has done us good, but in a very different way from that represented. We have not a single Turney sympathiser now, far less accepting as an ecclesia, their scheme of 'free life' redemption*" (pp. 388-389).

Further, the August 1874 *Christadelphian* reported that the Clean Flesh Theory had reached the United States. Bro. Packie wrote for the Baltimore Ecclesia: "*The heresy has reached this*

country, assisted by pamphlets, tracts, etc., from England. Baltimore has, however, escaped so far... acted in a Christian spirit all through... Though all England turn against you, your duty must be done" (p. 390).

Next month the magazine reported that Messrs. Turney and Ellis were active in Glasgow. Bro. Nesbit wrote: "Notwithstanding recent efforts to subvert them (the Glasgow Ecclesia) by a personal visit of Edward Turney and William Ellis, only one declension has resulted... We cross-questioned him (Turney) at some length, but were very dissatisfied with his answers... I was struck by the difference in the atmosphere which surrounds him from that surrounding (and I say it without any intention to flatter) you. He has too many 'good words and fair speeches' for our taste. Mother, who overheard part of the conversation, remarked 'Oh, but he has a wily tongue, that man...' There is more 'sinful flesh' about it than anything else." (p. 435). On the other hand, the same issue reported Bro. A. Sintzenich that "the great wave of commotion... has crossed the ocean, and its disturbing elements are among and around us... our ecclesia, for fourteen years of its existence has maintained the form of sound doctrine, till the advent of T. H. Dunn here last January... I am sorry to say that some in our ecclesia (Rochester, NY) have given heed to the strange doctrines lately put forth" (pp. 439-440).

In What Way Was God's Son Unblemished?

Today, as in E. W. Turney's day, the Nazarene Fellowship have difficulty in discerning in what way Jesus was without blemish. Listen to one of their recent writers: "...The man Roberts, who wrested Scripture right, left and centre to bring God's unblemished and uncondemned Son into that very position of

condemnation and blemish, forbidden to an Israelite under the law to offer" (Circular Letter No. 160, p. 25).

Adherents to the Clean Flesh teaching do not understand that the spotless animals required for offering under the Law of Moses, taught (for the Law was didactic: Gal. 3:24) that the Son of God would come into the world with a **character** and **mind** and **personal deeds** that would be **without blemish**. But his body (nature) was required to be like ours in every respect, and able to feel temptation's pull, though not yielding to it. His substance or body was as ours, called by Paul, "flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3).

Human Nature is Sinful

One hundred and twenty-four years after the Turney controversy, his supporters continue to actively oppose the truth of Christ's saving work. Consider this recent statement: "Robert's statement that 'All New Testament allusions to the subject teach that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing,' is nothing short of a lie. Such extravagant language is not conducive to finding the truth of anything. There is not in the whole of the Scriptures anywhere taught that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing. I put the challenge to our many Christadelphian readers to find just one" (Circular Letter No. 160, 1996, p. 30).

No doubt our Christadelphian readers will quickly think of a great many Bible verses, but here is one by Paul: "For I know that in me (that is **in my flesh**) dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18). I think that our antagonists would agree that Paul's flesh was the same as our flesh. This is clearly defined by Paul in ch. 8:3 as "sinful flesh," or more literally "flesh of sin" (Gr. *sarkos hamartias*; see Interlinear Gr. NT, George Ricker Berry). This is none other than the **Devil** of the Bible. Supporters of E. W. Turney have necessarily slid back in

their understanding of the Bible “devil.” The fact is that when God created the first human pair in the Garden, and all animals, everything, including the serpent, was “very good, there was *no devil in existence*. Adam and Eve brought the devil into existence by their rebellion — a rebellion which caused a change in their conscience and bodily nature, for the formally *good flesh* became *sinful flesh*, which is scripturally personified as *The Devil*.

Where the Controversy Rests Today

To not understand the identity of the “devil” of the Bible is to not understand just what Jesus’ death achieved and what he came to destroy (Heb. 2:14). What the present writer finds astonishing is the fact that this subject has been taught to our Sunday School scholars throughout the years, and therefore cannot, and should not, be beyond the grasp of adults — yet, it seems for some, it is! The Christadelphian publication, *The Declaration*, under Bible Proposition No. 23: *The Devil — Who is he?* states: “*It is of great importance to understand the question, because the Son of God was manifested expressly for the purpose of destroying the Devil and his works (1Jn. 3:8; Heb. 2:14)... The Devil is a scriptural personification of sin in the flesh, in its several phases of manifestation — subjective (existing in the mind), individual, aggregate, social, and political, in history, current experience, and prophecy; after the style of metaphor which speaks of wisdom as a woman, riches as mammon and the god of this world, sin as a master, etc.*”

Extremes Beget Extremes

One of the impressive characteristics of Bro. Roberts, was his ability to allow himself to be pushed into an extreme view in any given controversy. Consequently, when many years after the Turney upheaval, Bro. J. J. Andrew

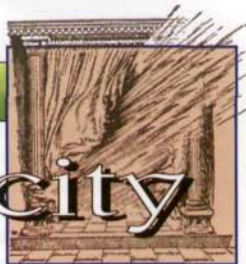
began to teach the *extreme viewpoint* against the Clean Flesh Theory, once again Bro. Roberts stood firm upon the Gospel Truth. Although J. J. Andrew had remained steadfast with Bro. Roberts when the latter was combating the errors of Edward Turney, he (JJA) later went to the extreme of teaching, that though Adam’s posterity inherited the physical consequences of the first sin, and thus became “mortal through sin,” yet *in addition*, inherited a “legal condemnation.” This meant that mankind was *alienated* from God through the nature they have inherited, and, therefore, unless there was justification from this legal condemnation, no one would rise from the grave, no matter how much knowledge of the Truth he or she might possess. This new theory taught that justification for the Jew was by circumcision, and for the Gentile believer by baptism.

As we said, again Bro. Roberts stood firm against this extreme. He knew that men are alienated from God *only by ignorance and wicked works*, and *not* by their inherited human nature (Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21). The theory is false because it claims that God holds us accountable in a legal sense *for what Adam did!* It is false because it claims that Christ was himself regarded as a “sinner,” “legally guilty of original sin,” and the subject of alienation on account of his nature.

The present writer is eternally grateful that Bro. Roberts would have none of either of these extreme views, yet both errors have drawn some away, and still do so. We are happy to render to him, and those like him who have followed, that they “be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and Doctrine” (1Tim. 5:17).

— Stan Snow.

The Simplicity in Christ



The "Partial Atonement" controversy brought to notice in recent Logos correspondence, continues to gain ground in North America. This article, based on many hours of discussion and study of the matter, will be useful to Logos readers.

EDWARD TURNEY'S theory that mankind is still "very good" at birth, and that obedience to God was all that the Deity required, effectively separated Christ from his sacrificial work. It is now 127 years later, and we see a new assault to redefine our understanding of the Atonement. Considered as a theory* of "Partial Atonement," it acknowledges that although mankind is heir to a sin-prone condition of nature, the sacrifice of Christ was not for its cleansing.

The proponents of this current theory conclude that Christ's shedding of blood was all "for us," and was solely for forgiveness of sins. It is not really a "new" theory, but a combination of errors promulgated by Edward Turney and A. D. Strickler. It is a revamped theory which nullifies the teachings of the Law, prophets, apostles and Christ.

Separating Christ From the Work He Came to Do

Brethren have become confused with the simplicity of the Atonement by sectioning it into components of "us" and "him" (Christ). The result of this new appearance of an age-old theory attacks the very core of Bible teaching. It removes Christ from the benefit of his work of salvation, and redefines the phraseology of our *Statement of Faith*. Bro. John Carter wisely commented at the time of unity in Australia: "**He [Christ] needed salvation from death. The confusion arises when we isolate him from his work**" (*The Christadelphian*, 1958, p. 324).

The word "representative" (*BASF*, clause 12) is no longer seen to include Christ in his sacrificial work for our redemption. He is effectively excluded. The term is now explained as "a lawyer representing a client" in these terms:

"We approach God through Christ. As our high priest, he represents us as his people in the presence of God, in the Holy place... Here, representative does not mean a 'typical human,' but someone who represents someone else in God's presence, such as a high priest... Christ's paternity from his Father disqualifies him as representative (or example) of the human race, and so clause #12 of the BASF speaks only of Christ as our high priest, representative now in heaven, through whom we approach in prayer."

When we come around the Table of the Lord on the first day of the week, it is to remember how salvation comes through the blood of Christ. The human race succumbed to temptation and all hope would have been lost apart from divine intervention to bring salvation to the race. In His abounding mercy, God conceived a

* A booklet explaining these issues is currently being prepared. — Ed.

plan of redemption which, without setting aside His just and necessary law of sin and death, should ultimately rescue the race from destruction. Christ was part of that race, and therefore incorporated into the rescue.

Christ died *“for us”* but it is also evident that the phrase *“for us”* means *on account of us.* Christ was born in the substance of sin’s flesh and endured the hereditary effects of that nature; pain, sorrow, weakness, sin prone, to name a few. Though it is true that he did it *“for us,”* surely we cannot deny that as the elder brother of the family he was also individually comprehended in the salvation process? Is he not the first-born among many brethren, whom, as captain, he leads to glory? — see Rom. 8:29; Heb. 2:10; Lk. 12:50; Jn. 18:11.

A Change to the *“Slain Lamb”*

The writings of Brother Roberts are being misused to give the impression that perfect obedience saved the Lord Jesus from eternal death. Some might be surprised to learn that publications of *The Slain Lamb*, circulating in the Amended Brotherhood, have been edited to the extent that some of Brother Roberts’ arguments in his lecture are not included!

The *Slain Lamb* resulted from a lecture delivered in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham, July 29, 1873. It was given in reply to the Renunciationist lecture by Edward Turney the previous night. The lecture by Bro. Roberts was reproduced from shorthand notes prepared by Bro. Meakin, and published in *The Christadelphian*, October, 1873, and later in booklet form.

The original manuscript has been faithfully reproduced in *The Atonement*, a volume available from the *Logos Office*, but there are other versions which have surfaced. Copies of a 1921 edited version are being today used to support the neo-Turney ideas. By contrasting the opening paragraphs

of *The Christadelphian*, 1873 (p. 442; see *The Atonement*, p. 38) with the 1921 edition (reproduced in 1984) of *The Slain Lamb* at page 12, reveals that a large section is missing in the latter!

Reading the 1921 edition, we might be led to believe that Bro. Roberts taught that the keeping of the Law would give eternal life, but the next paragraph qualifies his thoughts, as follows (missing from the 1921 reproduction):

“But then how about the Adamic condemnation in such a case? Well, if there had been a Jew who had kept the Law in all things, having done the will of the Father from the very beginning of life to the end of his life, he would have been in the very position of the Lord Jesus himself; it would have been in his power, by dying, to cleanse himself from the Adamic condemnation, and his righteousness would have assured his resurrection from the dead.”

Through his perfect obedience, the Lord Jesus gained a promise of resurrection from the grave — but it *required more* to be raised to eternal life. God required the shedding of blood of a righteous man to defeat the power of sin. This was the way designed to correct all the effects of Adam’s transgression, and by this means the flesh was shown to be rightly related to death. In Heb. 9:12, Paul states: *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place”* (i.e., spirit nature).

The words *“for us”* in the AV of this verse should be ignored, as in the RV, Diaglott, etc. The Greek tense is in the middle voice, including something that one does for oneself. It should read: *“...by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having found for himself eternal redemption.”*

“Saved by His Life”

The expression found in Rom. 5:10,

is often gravely misapplied to the ministry of the Lord Jesus. In fact, it follows Paul's exposition of the Lord's death, and therefore relates to the life beyond death: to the power of resurrection and immortality.

The phrase is given credence by quoting *The Slain Lamb*. This is causing confusion among some brethren in North America. Indeed, the types found in the Law are being pushed aside to make room for a wrong teaching. We hear: "... *this subject of how the Law antitypes the Atonement is not covered in the Statement of Faith, so we do not need to agree on how the Mosaic ordinances spiritually type Christ's death.*"

The "clean flesh" supporters who left the brotherhood in 1873 also ignored the significance of the types and allegories in the Law (see *The Christadelphian*, 1873, p. 459). This should be a warning to those who use similar lines of argument today.

A further statement missing from the 1921 *Slain Lamb* reproduction, summarises what Bro. Roberts taught on this subject. In the original copy of *The Slain Lamb* he wrote: "*Death purifies him from hereditary condemnation (Rom. 6:7; 1Pet. 4:1); resurrection comes by righteousness (Rom. 5:9).*" See *The Atonement*, p. 38.

Bro. Roberts clearly understood and taught that a life of perfect obedience could bring a person out of the grave, but his argument continues to show that a resurrection leading to immortal life can only come through the blood of the everlasting covenant.

In the *Law of Moses*, he further shows that the Burnt Sacrifice illustrated "the consumption of sin-nature" (p. 238), and this was required *in addition* to a life of perfect dedication to God, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Who is a Representative?

The teaching that Christ was "a rep-

resentative of Adam's disobedient race" is being challenged to fit the "saved by his life" theory. The neo-Turneyites attempt to avoid the burden of proving their new found ideas by hedging over the blood-letting in the Law, and particularly the significance of the atonement made for the altar. We are being asked to accede to the following line of argument: "*Can you agree to the following phrases in our Statement of Faith without reservation, in their normal English language definition, without adding additional modifying or qualifying phrases?*"

We are asked to accept the *Statement of Faith* without qualifying what it teaches! This runs contrary to the example of the apostles, for Peter urges us "... to be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason (Gr. *apologia*, signifying a plea or defence) for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1Pet. 3:15). Paul adds: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (Gr. *orthotomeo*, signifying to dissect, expound; the Diaglott has: "cutting straight") the Word of God."

We continue to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, in the hope that those who are caught up in these new ideas might see through the fog into which they have cast themselves

We conclude with thoughts from the pen of Bro. H. P. Mansfield:

"As a representative sacrifice, as the shepherd of the sheep, he revealed to all humanity the seeming anomaly that since the advent of sin the way to life is through death. What Christ did, believers must attempt. Paul taught that 'he died unto sin once' (Rom. 6:10); and in context with that statement, he exhorts 'likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord' (v. 11)."

— Trevor Snow.