COMMENTS ON BROTHER RON KIDD'S 2 ARTICLES

Overall Assessment

After having read Brother Kidd's 2 recent articles in the Christadelphian Landmark Magazine, I found them to be unsatisfying from a number of perspectives:

- mixture of truth and error;
- contradictions;
- inconsistencies;
- conflicts with scripture, the promises, the pioneer Christadelphian brethren, and the BASF;
- and most importantly, avoidance of the second acceptation of sin as used in scripture and as defined by Brother Thomas in Elpis Israel.

Because of time constraints, I have just a few comments in a couple of areas.

Fundamental Christadelphian Beliefs

In his work, Elpis Israel, which was published essentially at the beginning of the Christadelphian movement in 1849, Brother Thomas included a chapter entitled "The Constitution of Sin". In the chapter, he explained the Biblical use of the word "sin". An excerpt from that section follows.

The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "the transgression of the law"; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "which has the power of death"; and it is called sin, because the development, or fixation, of this evil in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh," that is, "flesh full of sin"; so that sin, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man. In human flesh "dwells no good thing"; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. (Elpis Israel (14th ed.), pg. 127)

This second acceptation of sin, i.e. "that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust", or sin in the flesh, is consistent with other Bible teaching and Christadelphian understanding. For example, Hebrews 2:14 speaks of the nature of Christ as being identical with the nature of the children of Adam, and it speaks of his work, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil", which is a personification of sin in the flesh as defined by Brother Thomas.

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a² Rom. 7:18, 17.

a³ Rom. 7:18, 17.
The Christadelphian community at the time of *Elpis Israel* had this understanding of the "physical principle of the animal nature". This is what I accepted when I came to a knowledge of the Truth, and this is what I still believe.

On page 16 of the September-October CLM, Brother Kidd describes the second way "sin" is used in scripture in the following way:

"Secondly, it is used in a representative manner and describes the propensities or motions of sin which "work in our members" (Romans 7:5).

This conflicts with Brother Thomas' definition of the second acceptation of sin as given above.

It also conflicts with Brother Thomas' description of the working of the second acceptation of sin, or sin in the flesh, given in *Elpis Israel*, page 127.

"In human flesh dwells no good thing, and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the "propensities", and these set the "intellect" and "sentiments" to work." (*Elpis Israel* (14th ed.), pg. 127)

This shows that Brother Thomas believed that sin in the flesh was not the propensities themselves, but rather the principle resident in the flesh which drove the propensities.

**What do we inherit from Adam?**

Many Christadelphians now believe that what we inherit from Adam is mortality and a proneness to sin. But they have forgotten or disbelieve the understanding that it is the physical principle of sin in the flesh that PRODUCES mortality. It is the physical principle of sin in the flesh that PRODUCES the proneness to actual transgression. It is the physical principle of sin in the flesh that CAUSES diseases, death and resolution to dust.

It would seem from Brother Kidd's articles that he does not believe the second acceptation of sin since he defines sin in the flesh in other ways. Brother Kidd focuses on the carnal mind itself as being sin in the flesh, and disbelieves the fact that the carnal mind, (the mind of the flesh, the minding of the flesh, the mindset of the flesh, in other renderings) is a PRODUCT of sin in the flesh. Consider the following statements by Bro. Kidd. (my underlining):

"The indwelling of sin, in this context, refers to the thought impulses that arise within a person when God's lawn is viewed as an obstacle to pleasing self." (July August CLM, pg.17)

"It did not arise from the natural inclinations of the flesh generated by the carnal mind ....." (July August CLM, pg.17)

" .... Under this new constitution the influence of sin, expressed by Paul as "the carnal mind" (Romans 8:6), became a resident member of the flesh, styled "sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:20)" (July August CLM, pg.18)
This last quote is particularly strange because it appears that Brother Kidd is stating that a mental condition, i.e. the "carnal mind", is also a physical condition, i.e. "resident member of the flesh".

Brother Thomas stated the following:

"Sin in the flesh is hereditary; ...." ([Elpis Israel] 14th ed. pg. 127)

One must ask, "Can the carnal mind be hereditary?"

"Human Nature is not sin"?

Brother Kidd stated that:

"Human nature is not sin". (July August CLM, pg.18)

"Human nature is not sin in itself; it is prone to sin...." (July August CLM, pg.18)

But Brother Thomas said the following:

"Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature." ([Elpis Israel] 14th ed. pg. 127)

He also said the following:

"Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled “sinful flesh,” that is, “flesh full of sin”; so that sin, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man." ([Elpis Israel] 14th ed. pg. 127)

Again, here is another case of conflict with the teaching of a pioneer Christadelphian.

Brother Kidd does in places use terminology which seems to reflect traditional Christadelphian teaching, e.g. "racial alienation", and "constitution of sin", terms which are not often found in Christadelphian literature today. It would be interesting to know how much of the section in "The Constitution of Sin" in [Elpis Israel] that Brother Kidd does believe and teach.

Separation from God - confusion/contradiction

On the subject of alienation, Brother Kidd stated the following: "We are not separated from God because we are a member of Adam’s race." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014, pg.16)

Then, two sentences later, he said this: "However, our mortality does create a barrier to full and complete fellowship with God because we are told that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (1 Corinthians 15:50). Whether we like it or not, and through no fault of our own, we find ourselves in an unclean, defiled condition, mortal and corruptible." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014, pg.16-17)
Surely this barrier, this condition, describes a "separation from God".

In addition, consider Ephesians 2:12 which describes the state of the natural man from birth:

Ephesians 2:12
12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

Is this condition not one of separation from God?

Made Sin

Brother Kidd devotes much time discussing Jesus "being made sin".

"Being made sin is the equivalent of being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh in order that God's righteousness might in some way be extended to us." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 16)

Here Brother Kidd defines the meaning of being made sin, i.e. "being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh". But then right away, he asks the question that he has just answered:

"But what does it mean to be made sin?" (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 16)

Brother Kidd then goes in a different direction and arrives at the following:

"Being made sin for us is the same as saying he bore our sins in his own body." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 16)

Brother Kidd then proceeds to ask another question:

"But in what sense could our sins be in his body?" (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 16)

His answer is this.

"Only by his personal encounter with sin as a human being; by his knowledge of sin brought about by experience (Isaiah 53:11). Jesus became the sin bearer because Yahweh "hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all" by being "made like unto his brethren" (Isaiah 53:6; Hebrews 2:17). No matter where we look the conclusion is the same." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 16)

Following this logic from start to finish, we find the following:

"Being made sin" = "he bore our sins in his own body" = "his personal encounter with sin as a human being; by his knowledge of sin brought about by experience" = "Yahweh "hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all"" = "by being "made like unto his brethren"".
Neglecting the items in the central part of this logic train, could we not say that "being made sin" = "being made like unto his brethren"? Was not his nature the same as the nature of those he came to save? Does mainstream Christadelphian not teach that our nature is a condemned, defiled, unclean, sin-nature?

**Public Placard**

On page 17, Brother Kidd described the actions of Jesus in this way:

> "though subject to the same motions of sin as ourselves, he controlled them during his mortal life by the power of the word of God, and by his voluntary submission to death of the cross publicly placarded what sin deserved". (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 17)

The "public placarding" is true, but the fundamental issue is that through death, "he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14), i.e. the destruction of sin in the flesh.

**God Raised Him**

On page 17, Brother Kidd makes this statement:

> "However, when Jesus died a unique set of circumstances existed; a man had come under the sentence of death that had done nothing worthy of death. Because of this God raised Jesus from the dead, "because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24)." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 17)

These 2 sentences should be considered carefully.

**First sentence**

This sentence is not correct. Newborn children sometimes die, even though they have done nothing worthy of death, because every human is under the sentence of death from birth. The set of circumstances in that respect was not unique.

One must ask: "What is the sentence of death that Brother Kidd had in mind?" If it was from Pilate, one must ask if he was not under sentence to death before that as part of the inheritance from Adam?

**Second sentence**

Acts 2:24 is used quite often in Christadelphia. However, there is more that can be said. It "was not possible that he should be holden of it" on 3 counts.

1. Acts 2:25-32 goes on to explain why Jesus was raised, i.e. because of the promises of God.
3. Hebrews 13:20 tells us that Jesus was raised through the blood of the everlasting
covenant. Christ, by his perfect sacrifice, brought the everlasting covenant, the
Abrahamic, into full force, and Jesus was the first recipient of part of the blessings
promised or inferred in that covenant.

First for His Own Sins

In discussing the question of what the sins were for which Jesus was required to offer,
Brother Kidd said the following:

"Some would answer that it was for his sin-nature, but is this reasonable? The
antitype must be consistent with the type and in this case the sins referred to are
sins of transgression, and we are not at liberty to change the shadow in order to suit
our own interpretation."

It is true that care is required in the discussion of types and antitypes. However, the
statement of Brother Kidd that "the antitype must be consistent with the type" is not
correct, in my opinion. Consider, for example, the requirement that the animal sacrifices
under the Law had to be physically perfect. These sacrifices pointed forward to the
sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not physically perfect (Heb. 2:17, Isa. 53:2, Isa.
52:14), but he was certainly morally perfect (Heb. 4:15). This is not a one-to-one
relationship between type and antitype.

Representative

On page 18, Brother Kidd introduces the term representative.

"It is difficult to escape the conclusion that has already been demonstrated, that the
Lord Jesus was a representative of the people he came to save and that the sins
referred to here are "our sins (borne) in his own body" (1Peter 2:24)." (CLM Sept-
Oct 2014 pg. 18)

By reading that Jesus was a representative by having "our sins borne in his body", one
may conclude that Jesus was a representative in the sense of being an agent, one doing a
job, but not directly involved the need for the work undertaken. Surely Jesus was a
representative by having the same nature of his people, with its attendant problems.

On the next page, Brother Kidd says this:

"From the table it is apparent that the promises to David describe God's son as a
representative of those with whom he is identified by birth, their transgressions and
iniquities are borne by him, he is chastened with the rod of men because "he hath
borne our grief, and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4). Thus David's seed, by divine
appointment, is described as the sin bearer through whom the sons of Adam find
redemption. It is in this sense, and this sense alone, that Jesus offered first for his
own sins." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 19)
This statement is not well thought out. My comments concerning representative are given above. How Jesus offered first for his own sins, by having their transgressions and iniquities borne by him, is not readily apparent. For the phrase "chastened with the rod of men", note the exposition on pg. 18.

"The promises reveal that the seed would be both son of David and son of God, yet in the context we also read, “If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men” (2 Samuel 7:14). The parallel with Hebrews 7:26 cannot be missed, in the one reference the Lord offers "for his own sins", in the other he "commits iniquity"." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 18)

"In the other he commits iniquity" is an incredible statement. The text says "If he commit iniquity…", not that he does commit iniquity. Brother Thomas suggested an alternate rendering similar to the following: "In suffering for iniquity…." 

No "atonement for nature"?

Brother Kidd spent a lot of time on the point that everything Jesus did was "for us" – "for our sins", "for our transgressions", "for our iniquities", "for us". This is certainly true. But it was also "for himself". If this were not so, then the sacrifice of Christ would have been substitutionary.

Brother Kidd made the following statement:

"The concept that human nature is something in need of atonement is foreign to the scripture." (CLM Sept-Oct 2014 pg. 17)

The 1875 Christadelphian, shortly after the Turney renunciation, included the following:

"FOR HIMSELF, THAT IT MIGHT BE FOR US"

J.W.C.—The statement of Paul in Heb. 7:27 is, that Christ did “once” in his death what the high priests under the law did daily, viz., offered “first for his own sins and then for the people’s.” But there is all the difference between the two cases that there always is between shadow and substance. Christ’s “own sins” were not like the sins of the priests; they were not sins of his own committing. He was without sin, so far as his own actions were concerned. Yet as the bearer of the sins of his people—whether “in Adam” or otherwise, he stood in the position of having these as “his own,” from the effects of which he had himself first to be delivered. Consequently, he offered first for himself; he was the first delivered. He is “Christ the first fruits.” He obtained eternal redemption in and for himself, as the middle voice of the Greek verb euramenoz (Heb. 9:12) implies. (The “for us” is not in the original.) He was brought again from the dead “through the blood of the everlasting covenant.” - (Heb. 13:20). But this offering for himself was also the offering for his people. The two aspects of the double typical offering were combined in one act. He had not twice to offer for himself. “By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” Yet, though combined, the two relations of the act are visibly separate. Christ was the first saved from death (Heb. 5:9); “afterwards, they that are Christ’s at his coming."
(1 Cor. 15:23.) In this way the Mosaic type has its counterpart. There is no inconsistency whatever between these facts and the constant declaration that “Christ died for us.” All that Christ was and did was “for us.” It was “for us” he was born; “for us” he bore sin; “for us” he came under the curse of the law; “for us” he died; and the fact that personally he was without sin where all were transgressors, gives all the more point to the declaration. It was “for us” that he came to be in the position of having first to offer for himself. The “for us” does not deny that what he submitted to “for us” was our own position. “He was made sin for us who knew no sin;” and does not sin require an offering? (my underlining) (The Christadelphian, volume 12 (1875), page 139 (electronic ed. 2001))

Further to this, Brother Roberts in his work "The Blood of Christ", and in connection with our nature, said the following:

"This is why it was necessary that Jesus should be "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3), that he might partake of the very flesh and blood of man (Heb. 2:14). It was this nature that was to be operated upon and redeemed in him." (my underlining) ("The Blood of Christ", Robert Roberts, in The Atonement, LOGOS, 1990, page 169)

As a final example, I suggest that Psalm 40 is a worthwhile study. Psalm 40 is very definitely Messianic, but focus for now on verses 11 and 12.

Psalm 40:11-12
11 Withhold not thou thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.
12 For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me.

If it is agreed that Psalm 40 is Messianic, then the iniquities specified in verse 12 are not transgressions. They can only be outputs from the flesh, which are basically temptations to sin, characteristic of the nature that we bear.

This same use of the word "iniquity" or "iniquities" to describe our nature was accepted by the pioneer brethren.

In Eureka we find an example, this one dealing with Zechariah's vision of Joshua the high priest and the change of nature Joshua experienced when an angel took away his filthy garments and gave him new clean garments.

Jesus, then, like all his brethren, is to be considered in two states, each state having a nature peculiar to it. In the former state, "he was crucified through weakness; " but in the after state wherein he now is, "he liveth by the power of the Deity—2Cor.13:4. In the former state, the flesh was, "the filthy garments," with which the SPIRIT-WORD was clothed (Zech.3:3); "the iniquity of us all" that was laid upon him; the soul made an offering for sin" (Isa.53:6,10); but, as He now is, the filthy garments have been taken away; "his iniquity has passed from him," and he is clothed with "change of raiment." His flesh thus designated has been subjected to the
transforming energy of the radiant power of the Eternal Spirit. By this energy his flesh has been transformed into spirit, styled by Paul, *pneuma hagiosunes, spirit of holiness*. (my underlining) (*Eureka* page 108)

Here is the sense in which Jesus sacrificed for his own sins – that the nature he bore might be changed – and it was.

My Personal Belief

My own personal belief is this:

I believe the first and the second acceptation of sin as defined by Brother Thomas in *Elpis Israel*.

I have the hope of a change from my current sin-nature, and everything associated with it, to the glorious divine nature now possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe that forgiveness of sin and the change of nature to immortality are implicit in the Abrahamic covenant.

I believe that both the forgiveness of sins now and this change of nature in the future are possible only through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by grace.

Overall assessment of Brother Kidd's articles

These articles are manifestations of the current pressure towards the Australian position, which has a strong clean flesh heritage. This pressure has had a large influence in recent years, and the language of clean flesh is becoming more prominent. After all, how can the brethren that teach these doctrines be wrong? They are constantly in demand at Bible Schools, study days, and speaking tours.

The facts are these. Brother Thomas' expression of the second acceptation of sin as used in the Bible, i.e. sin in the flesh, is being removed from circulation in Christadelphia. In addition, the concept of the Bible devil, another name for sin in the flesh, is being pushed into the background. This all is tragic, because the issue of the nature of man, and the nature and sacrifice of Christ, i.e. atonement issues, are the fundamental issues of our faith, and there is increasing danger, in my opinion, that they may be lost to many.