

To The Law and To The Testimony

“If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” - Isaiah 8:20.

A Challenge!

As a body who believe in the infallibility and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and claim that their teaching is based wholly on the Bible, it behoves Christadelphians to make sure that the things they believe are indeed the Truth as it is in Jesus and not, as in all the other sects of Christendom, partly truth and partly tradition. With this object, we challenge Christadelphians to produce a single passage of Scripture which proves any one of the following articles of their faith.

1. That the nature of Adam was changed after he sinned –

Proof to the contrary:

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men” - Acts 17:26

“There is one flesh of man...the first man Adam became a living soul... of the earth, earthy” - 1 Corinthians 15:39,45.

2. That Jesus Christ was Sinful Flesh -

Proof to the contrary:

“and in Him is no sin” - 1 John 3:5.

“Christ, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot” - 1 Peter 1:19.

“But was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” - Hebrews 4:15.

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” - 1 Peter 2:22.

3. That Jesus had to die to redeem Himself -

Proof to the contrary:

“Christ died for the ungodly... Christ died for us” - Romans 5:6,8.

“For thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood” - Revelation 5:9.

“Who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20.

“With His stripes we are healed” - Isaiah 53:5.

4. That we do not know whether our sins are forgiven –

Proof to the contrary:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” - 1 John 1:19.

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins” - 1 John 2:1,2.

“That your Father...may forgive your trespasses” - Mark 11:25.

It will be evident to an unprejudiced reader of the foregoing comparisons, that some of the doctrines that are accepted almost without question by Christadelphians to-day very seriously misrepresent the teaching of the Bible. Many of the questions involved have been the subject of controversy and division in the past and while this is to be regretted, it should not deter us from studying them and arriving at our own conclusions independently of what has been done in the past. If we accept our religion ready made, as a legacy from brethren dead and gone we are no better than any other sect, and commonsense will recognise that there is at least the possibility that those who settled these questions before we were born may have been mistaken.

Most of the points mentioned in the challenge above have been dealt with fully in pamphlets and reprints of lectures given at various periods over the past seventy years and copies of these can be obtained without cost from any of those whose addresses are given at the end of this book. So that during practically the whole history of the Truth there have been before the brethren the alternatives of swallowing man-made theories like the four unscriptural statements above, or of proving all things for themselves and holding fast only that which is good according to the Word. In order that you may realise the danger of following human leaders and setting their word before that of the Almighty, you are invited to study the following contradictory statements, all made at various times by leading Christadelphians, showing the confusion that exists in their teaching.

Christadelphian Contradictions

1. On the results of Adam's disobedience:

"We believe that the change was moral not physical" - Dr. Thomas in "Herald of the Kingdom," page 159.

"A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being" – "Birmingham Statement of Faith," Clause 5.

2. On the question of sin and its effects:

"Fixation of this evil in the flesh was the result of transgression. The remote cause of these motions is that physical principle or quality of the flesh, styled indwelling sin, which returns the mortal body to the dust" – "Elpis Israel," pages 126 and 137.

"Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he transgressed. There is no evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely contrary. There was a change in Adam's relation to his maker, but not in the nature of his organisation" – "Ambassador," March 1869.

3. On how the sentence of death came into operation:

"It required what men called 'a miracle' to depress to the level of the beasts that perish" - The Visible Hand of God, Pages 19,20.

"Seeing that man had become a transgressor of Divine law, there was no need of a 'miracle' for the infliction of death" - Eureka, Volume 1, page 248.

4. On whether Jesus was clean or defiled:

"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 for whom He died" – "Elpis Israel," page 128.

"The blood of Jesus was more precious than the life blood of any other man... the blood of Jesus was the only blood of all the generations of Adam, that had not been generated by the lust of the flesh... Jesus was unblemished man, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; for he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" – "Eureka," Volume 1, page 278.

5. On whether "The Grave" removes sin:

"Passing through the grave cleanses no one" - Dr. Thomas in "Eureka,"

"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 it, 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 caused his resurrection from the dead.” R.Roberts in “The Slain Lamb.”

6. On what the so-called Free-Life theory teaches:

“The doctrine here resisted... (is) that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. They renounce the doctrine that he was a son of man” - R. Roberts in “The Slain Lamb,” page 2.

“The Renunciationist heresy makes him (Jesus) a mere man” - R. Roberts in The Slain Lamb, page 6.

7. On understanding the sacrifice of the Saviour:

“The Crucifixion... was Christ’s great act of obedience; and yet nothing is more simple than the Scriptural elements of the case when all are placed together.” – “Christendom Astray,” page 111.

“The question as a whole is a difficult one. It is only after a prolonged spiritual education that we come to this” - R. Roberts in “The Slain Lamb,” page 3.

The comparison of such contradictory and self-destructive statements upon simple scriptural doctrines should be sufficient to convince any independent mind of the need for investigation. Get in touch with one or other of the brethren whose names and addresses are given and discuss your difficulties or objections; their one desire is to help you to a better understanding of the Word and even if you do not agree you will be no worse off. Read the explanations which follow of Scriptures which are used to uphold the misconceptions referred to above and judge for yourselves.

How Christ was Made to be Sin

This verse is brought forward to prove that Jesus, the only begotten Son of the Father, was under condemnation. It reads:-

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

2 Corinthians 5:21.

Dr. Thomas expounds this verse in “EIpis Israel” by making the word ‘sin’ mean ‘sinful flesh’ and he paraphrases it as follows:-

“God made Jesus, who knew not sin, to be sin (that is, sinful flesh) for them, that they might be constituted God’s righteousness in Him, so that, being introduced into Him (for an individual cannot be in a federal person unless introduced into him), the crucified and resurrected Jesus became “the Lord their righteousness”.”

Omitting the words ‘sinful flesh’ this statement is true. We are all imputed sinners in Adam. This imputation is the legal sentence of condemnation passed upon all men in Adam (Rom. 5:18).

Now if the condemnation passed upon all men was physical, how can it be removed at baptism? And how can we put off Adam and put on Christ in a physical sense? Surely it is evident that the condemnation passed upon all men is the same as the condemnation that the Apostle Paul says is removed from those in Christ (Romans 8:1).

Therefore Adam is the one Federal Head and Jesus is the other; the head of a new order. Jesus was not constituted in Adam or He could not be the Federal Head of another order; there is no middle

course, either He was in Adam or He was not in Adam. And the truth is that He was not in Adam because He was not born of the will of the flesh but was the Son of God. He had the same kind and quality of flesh as Adam, but not Adamic life. Like Adam, Jesus received His life direct from God, but unlike Adam, Jesus did not forfeit that life by disobedience. He voluntarily gave that life as the ransom price. If Jesus was under Adamic condemnation and the argument of Dr. Thomas above correct, Jesus must have been introduced into Himself in order to become the Federal Head of the new order; an absurd proposition.

Writing in "The Ambassador," March 1869, Robert Roberts used the same mistaken arguments, saying of Jesus:-

"The sentence of death ran in the blood which he inherited from Adam through Mary. He was therefore, in the days of his flesh, as much under its power as those he came to save; it testified that "He was made sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). As he was not of sinful character, this only could apply to his physical nature, which, drawn from the veins of Mary, was made "sin"."

The truth of the matter is that in this passage the word "sin" no more applies to Jesus' flesh or nature than it does to His character; instead it tells us what Jesus was made "for us" and that is, a "sin-offering." Dr. A. Clarke gives the proof in these words:-

"The word "sin" occurs here twice; in the first place it means transgression and guilt... in the second place it signifies a Sin-offering, or Sacrifice for Sin and answers to the *Chataah* and *Chataath* of the Hebrew text, which signifies both Sin and Sin-offering in a great variety of places in the Pentateuch... Had our translators attended to their own method of translating the word in other places, where it means the same as here, they would not have given this false view of a passage, which has been made the foundation of a most blasphemous doctrine... But that it may be plainly seen that "Sin-offering" and not "Sin" is the meaning of the word in this verse, I will set down the places from the Septuagint where the word occurs; and where it answers to the Hebrew words already quoted; and where our translators have rendered correctly what they here render incorrectly."

Then follows a list of passages from Exodus 29:14; Leviticus 4:3; Numbers 6:11, etc.

Prominent writers amongst Christadelphians have admitted the correctness of this view from time to time, but either they cannot see, or more likely, dare not admit the necessity for correcting the false interpretations of the brethren quoted above.

Brother H. Fry, in "Echoes of Past Controversies," writes,

"This phrase, "made sin" is adopted from Leviticus 16:9 - "And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which Jehovah's lot fell and offer him for a sin-offering (literally "make him sin")." Newberry "...Hence, sin-offerings were called "sin" (e.g. Hosea 4:8; Leviticus 10:17), the Hebrew word for "sin-offering" being the same. See Parkhurst."

Brother J. Carter, in "The Christadelphian," January 1930, writing on the similar text in Romans 8:3, says,

"The R.V. substitutes "and as an offering for sin" and puts "and for sin" in the margin. That the R.V. text is correct is evident, for the idea is defined by the constant recurrence of the phrase in the Septuagint (more than 50 times in the book of Leviticus alone) for a Sin-offering. The matter was discussed in The Christadelphian for December 1913 by Brother W.J. Young, and reasons given in favour of the R.V. text as against the margin and the A.V. God, in sending Christ, was providing a sin-offering. This purpose had been the subject of revelation from the days of Eden, when God provided coverings of skins in place of the humanly devised fig-leaf coverings."

"The Emphatic Diaglot" renders the passage:-

“For him who knew no sin, he made a sin-offering on our behalf that we might become God’s righteousness in him.”

No Greek scholar will dispute this rendering and in some places Dr.Thomas and R. Roberts agree with it, while in other contexts they use the faulty A.V. translation to support the Sinful Flesh Assumption, and this in spite of the fact that they have denied that any physical change took place after the fall of man. Why are both aspects contended for? Simply because the “sinful flesh” delusion forces them to involve Christ because He was of the same nature as ourselves. “Sin is transgression of Law” as we are told in 1 John 3:4 and not a synonym for human nature. Brother A.L.Wilson explained the text as follows:-

“2 Corinthians 5:21 contains a Divinely Balanced Antithesis. Whatever Jesus is made here, we are made the exact opposite. All abstract nouns have their opposite (see Galatians 5:19-23). The opposite of sin is therefore, righteousness, exactly what this scripture declares. If Jesus was made Physical Sin at birth then we are made Physical Righteousness. We must therefore, in justice to Jesus, analyse the evidence and examine it separately. It says “God hath made him to be sin for us” and there follows an adjectival clause to “him” viz “who knew no sin.” The meanest grammarian will observe that the verb of this clause goes a tense further back than the principle, indicating that Jesus, prior to His being “made sin,” had victoriously conquered every trial. Then follows an adverbial of purpose, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” This evidence shows that Jesus was no more made “sin” by His birth of a woman than we are made the righteousness of God by our birth of a woman. What it does show is that God made Jesus, who knew no sin, a Sin-offering for us, when He was 33 years of age that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him when we are baptised into His sacrificial death.”

So that a discriminating use of this passage lends no support to the theory that our Saviour was made of “Sinful flesh” and had therefore to die on account of His sinful nature before He could be our Saviour. The fact that it has been so used is reason for sorrow and honest brethren who desire to be faithful to Him who has called them will not seek to justify it but rather to undo the harm that has resulted.

“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us”
(1 Corinthians 5:7).

The Filthy Garments

**“Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments,
and stood before the angel.”
Zechariah 3:3**

Here is a verse which is used to prove that the flesh with which we are born is unclean and sinful. In “The Atonement” C.C.Walker wrote:-

“In the divine symbolism the flesh is always regarded as unclean and defiling, as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), filthy garments (Zechariah 3:3)”

Yet though he thus uses the passage to prove that flesh is unclean, the same writer, in The Ministry of the Prophets, page 738 gives the correct exposition as follows:-

“The answer in the very words of the context, is our iniquity.”

Thus he contradicts himself and destroys his own argument in “The Atonement.”

The word “filthy” is used about twenty times in the Bible but it is not once applied to literal flesh, yet this passage is brought forward to prove that Jesus must have been clothed with physical filthy flesh to fulfil this type and be a fitting high priest for His people. This is false and unjustifiable use of Scripture and only the manifest unsoundness of the doctrine of

Jesus being under Adamic condemnation could have led brethren to use it so. There is nothing here which proves that either Joshua or Christ or any other man has “filthy flesh.” The context shows that the iniquity typified was to be taken away in one day, verse 9, and in verse 4 we perceive that Joshua’s filthy garments were removed and a change of raiment given. So that it is not a question of flesh but of something “put on” after birth. Imagine the angel saying to Mary “Wherefore that filthy thing that shall be born of thee...” In effect that is what Christadelphians say; the angel said, “Wherefore that Holy thing...”

In the sacrifices under the Law, the sins were laid on the animal and the prophet tells us “The Lord hath laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:6) and John Baptist said, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh (beareth) away the sin of the world.” Jesus was made a Sin-offering for us. On what principle? Without the shedding of blood there is no remission and the animals slain in Eden were a type and under the Mosaic Law the sacrificial animals had to be clean and without spot or blemish, legally and physically. Each offering showed that the Wages of Sin is inflicted death and they were slain instead of the sinner. In the same way Christ, the anti-type, died instead of Adam, as the blood of the animal was not the real equivalent of the blood of Adam, not being a moral creature capable of voluntary submission. As Adam was a literal transgressor of Law, and the Federal Head of the race, so Jesus literally died to release Adam, and us “in him” on the federal principle, from Sin’s captivity. In this way our sins were laid on Jesus and taken away. Therefore we must recognise that He is exempt from Sin’s claim before He could give His life a ransom for the Sin of the world.

It is said of Jesus, “In him is no sin” - 1 John 3:5; “Yet without sin” – Hebrews 4:18; “Who did no sin” - 1 Peter 2:22. These are words of wisdom, which are from above and pure, and not of flesh. This is the simplicity of the Gospel, Good News about the ransom of the spotless Lamb of God’s providing.

Consider the following Scriptures and see how impossible it is to justify the teaching that even we, not to mention the Holy One of God, are born with filthy, defiled flesh:-

“Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you.” - Luke 11).

“Lay apart all filthiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word” - James 1:21.

“Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you” - John 15:3.

The Mind of The Flesh versus The Mind of The Spirit

A consideration of Romans chapter 7

There is reason for deep sorrow and concern at the general ignorance of the true exposition of this chapter, not only because the mistaken understanding of its teaching clouds the whole conception of the Plan of God, but because the indiscriminating acceptance of the idea that, on account of the inherent sinfulness of human flesh, it is impossible for us to keep the commandments, is endangering the salvation of many sincere and well-meaning people.

It should not be necessary to remind Bible students, that to arrive at a correct understanding of any passage, it is essential to keep in mind the context and make proper allowance for the various figures of speech employed, and also not to seek to interpret one passage in a way which contradicts another or the general tenor of Scriptural teaching. Failure to observe these rules will make a true understanding impossible, and if the questions involved are vital, the mistake may amount to a wresting of Scripture, as the apostle says, “to their own destruction.”

One readily admits that a superficial reading of the 7th of Romans, without particular regard for the preceding and following chapters, might lead one to the conclusion that there is a “sin-principle” in the flesh or physical body which makes the living of an acceptable life an impossibility; and if one were merely seeking to support the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, one would leave it there. If on the other hand, it is desired to arrive at the truth of what Paul is teaching, we shall not be so easily satisfied.

On the face of it, we should not expect that God would command us anything we are physically incapable of performing and should count it unreasonable and unjust in an earthly father to do so, and any passage which seems to represent our heavenly Father as acting so unfairly ought to be carefully examined, lest by our own mistaken interpretation, we charge God with foolishness. “He is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it.”

The subject with which the apostle is dealing is the victory over Sin., and how it is accomplished, and not literal flesh, and in order to understand the 7th chapter, it is very necessary to keep in mind the conclusions which Paul had already drawn in the 6th chapter. Notice carefully the following statements:-

Verse : -

1. Shall we continue in sin? God forbid.
2. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?
4. Even so, we also should walk in newness of life.
6. That the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.
7. For he that is dead is freed from sin.
11. Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.
12. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body.
13. Neither yield ye your members unto sin.
14. For sin shall not have dominion over you.
15. What then, shall we sin? God forbid.
17. Whereas, ye were the servants of sin (past tense).
18. Being then made free from sin.
22. But now, being made free from sin.

All the foregoing passages are positive and negative statements describing the present position of believers in regard to sin, and from the repeated use of the pronoun “we,” Paul regarded himself as included with the brethren at Rome to whom he was writing. This then is the context of the chapter we are considering, and the whole theme and tenor of the teaching is that when a man is in Christ, he is not under the dominion of Sin and must not serve Sin or let Sin reign in his body and control his actions. That being so, and Paul; having so simply and clearly stated the fact in more than twelve different and separate ways, it is bad exposition and worse logic to so construe his words in the very next chapter as to make him contradict his whole argument and stultify himself. After what he has said in the 6th chapter, quoted above, is it not the height of absurdity to regard Paul’s statement in chapter 7, verse 14, “I am carnal, sold under Sin,” or verse 18, “In me (my flesh) dwelleth no good thing,” as referring to himself in his redeemed condition. He has already clearly and definitely stated that in Christ a man is “dead unto sin” and “made free from sin.”

We should therefore look for an explanation which does no violence to the facts and which harmonises with the rest of Scripture, and not follow blind leaders into false conclusions lest we all fall into the ditch together. The key to this explanation is in the first verse of chapter 7, which will then be seen to be a digression from the main course of the argument, which he resumes in the 8th chapter.

He says, “Know ye not brethren (for I speak to them which know the Law), how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth,” and as he proceeds, speaking of “When we were in the flesh,” and describing how he himself “was alive without the Law once,” we realise that he is recounting the experiences he passed through as a Jew, brought under the Mosaic Law, and proved by that law on the federal principle, to be a sinner and worthy of death.

As an unregenerate Jew, Paul delighted in the strict observance of the Law; he described himself elsewhere as a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and his mental joy as such, had been the carrying out of the ordinances and ceremonies, the keeping of the feasts and fasts, of the Mosaic Code. But he had come to realise, that though it was holy, just and good, and ordained to life, it actually condemned him by proving him a sinner, and thus brought him into captivity to the law of sin and under the penalty of death. Not because he could not, or did not, obey the law, for so far as the law itself was concerned, Paul, or rather Saul as he then was, kept it blamelessly (Philippians 3:6), but because in doing so he could make no allowance for his own personal feeling or sentiment, being ruled by the Law. “For what I would (if he pleased himself) that I do not,” “What I hate (according to his natural inclinations) that I do,” in order that is, to keep the Law. This is how Paul proves and illustrates his statement in verse 5, “For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were (seen to be sins) by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.”

This was the way in which the Mosaic Law was a “schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.” The types and sacrifices under the law all pointed to Christ, and even though one like Paul kept the letter of it blamelessly, it could not give eternal life, because it was “weak through the flesh.” Now this weakness was not, as some have thought, because of the inability of human beings to keep it, but because all men are in Adamic bondage, or as Paul here says, “Sold under sin,” and needed redemption before works of the law or personal righteousness could count.

When, therefore, Paul, as a saint in Christ, looked back over his life and recalled his misguided zeal for the Law, and how that his misinterpretation of what was intrinsically “holy, just and good” had led him even to the length of persecuting the church and the followers of Christ, he realised that the works of the Law were not of faith, but merely a manifestation of the mind of the flesh and therefore sin; thus he says, “Sin, taking advantage of the commandments of the Law, deceived me, and by it (the Law) slew me.” The Law thus simply served to justify, and in the case of the Jews, accentuate, the way in which God had concluded all under the first sin of Adam; but if a Jew under the Law was of similar character to Abraham, and saw by the eye of faith the purpose of God typified in the Law of Sacrifice, he was justified by his faith and brought within the scope of the redemption through Jesus Christ. Thus, as can be seen from Matthew 19:6 and Luke 10:25, the Law was ordained to life and there is good reason to believe that many Jews, as for example the parents of John the Baptist, perceived the underlying spirit and will receive the reward of faith.

When the apostle says, verse 17, “Now it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” he is not explaining why it was impossible for him to obey, because he could and did obey; he is showing how, when actuated by the mind of the flesh, which is the opposite of the mind of the spirit, he is allowing Sin to rule his mind and showing himself under the dominion of Sin. Obviously however, this does not apply to him after he was enlightened and had obeyed the Gospel, as is proved by the numerous passages quoted above from the previous chapter; for example, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law but under grace.”

Many scholars have recognised the pitfalls of this chapter; Dr. Adam Clarke wrote as follows;-

“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 of 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 a Gospel, or showing what his own state was ...while without Christ.”

The puzzling 24th verse, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?” can be understood when we recall that in early times one of the more particularly horrible modes of inflicting death, was to bind a dead corps upon the back of a living man until the corruption and putrefaction destroyed the victim. It is suggested that the Apostle had this practice in mind when he spoke of the law as “this body of death” and thanked God, who had delivered him from it through Jesus Christ.

These are some of the things which Paul wrote which are hard to be understood and unless careful discrimination is used in expounding them, confusion will result; and worse still, if we found erroneous doctrine upon them, and conclude that we neither can nor are expected to overcome the tendencies of the flesh, it may be the cause of our losing that for which we hope. In Paul’s speech, the terms “The Flesh,” “The mind of the flesh” “The carnal mind” signify the state of alienation from God and are contrasted with “The Spirit,” “The Mind of Christ” and “The Spiritual Mind.” The physical flesh only enters into the question in so far as both states of mind are manifested in the same flesh. When the mind of the flesh is superseded by the mind of Christ, the flesh remains unchanged and exactly what it was, but the mind comes under a different control and the natural tendencies take a new direction. This is the conclusion of the argument to which the Apostle comes at the end of the 7th chapter, “Consequently then, I myself, by the mind, am in subjection to the law of God, but by the flesh (i.e. the mind of the flesh, not literal flesh) to the law of Sin.”

As he proceeds in the 8th chapter, this becomes obvious beyond question and the un-justifiable nature of the deductions which have been drawn from the 7th chapter becomes fully evident. “To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” So that anyone who is comforting himself that his failure to live up to the example of Christ is due to sin-impulses of the flesh beyond his control, and thinks he has any justification in the words of Paul, is badly mistaken. This shows the importance of sound doctrine and how wrong beliefs can affect the moral and mental life of the person concerned. The whole object of the Apostle, is to show the contrast between the sinner, in Adam, living for self and controlled by the natural mind, and the saint, in Christ, led by the spirit of God and living for others. In Paul’s phraseology, the former state is “the flesh” and the latter is “the Spirit,” hence he says “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the spirit of God dwell in you.” In both states, equally the same flesh and blood, but differently related to God and His purpose.

Finally, consider the following Scriptures, and ask yourself if there is anything which God asks us to do but which we are unable to perform because of “sin in the flesh” or because we are born with tendencies in the direction of sin which we cannot control:-

“Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous.” - 1 John 3:7.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” - Matthew 5:48.

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God” - James 4:4.

“Not every one which saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” - Matthew 7:23.

The Sinful Flesh Delusion - Romans 8:3

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

Romans 8:3

This verse is the only place in Scripture where the expression “Sinful flesh” occurs and it has been and still is one of the strongholds of the foolish and God-dishonouring doctrines considered in this pamphlet and a realisation of the correct interpretation would remove one of the principle obstacles to a sound and intelligent understanding of the Plan of Salvation. The doctrine of inherited “Sin-in-the-flesh,” which involves the obnoxious theory that it is impossible for human beings to keep the commandments because of their sinful flesh, is embedded in both Christadelphian and Orthodox theology and makes utter confusion of facts which are in reality the perfection of simplicity and harmony.

In “Elpis Israel,” page 137, Dr. Thomas writes, “The law of sin pervades every particle of the flesh,” and again on page 128, “Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there.”

In “The Slain Lamb,” page 20, R.Roberts says, “This flesh is weak, unclean and sinful.”

The Birmingham Statement of Faith, clause 5 states, “A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being and was transmitted to all his posterity.”

If these statements are compared with the Word of God and considered in the light of Challenge and the Contradictions already dealt with, it will be seen that they are doctrines and commandments of men, and not only have they no foundation in the Bible, but they are destructive of vital elementary principles of Gospel. To continue to give even tacit support to such errors after enlightenment is to merit reproof at the lips of our Master.

The first point of importance is that the Authorised Version, here as in a number of other places which to Bible readers need not be specified, reflects the bias of the translators, who held the apostate doctrine of Original Sin. The Revised Version gives the correct rendering of the Greek and if followed would have prevented the regrettable errors mentioned elsewhere in this booklet for which justification is sought in the A.V. Those who follow the Authorised Version, reason that Adam was created very good in the beginning, but after he transgressed the divine law his body was changed from very good to very bad, or sinful flesh, and that all his descendants inherit from him thus sin-defiled flesh from which they can only be delivered by dying. If, therefore, it can be proved that the phrase “sinful flesh” never occurs in the Greek original, and that the expression penned by Paul means something entirely different, then it should no longer be used to prove what is contrary both to the plain teaching of Scripture and to commonsense.

The Greek words “*sarkos hamartias*” are rendered in the Revised Version margin as “flesh of sin,” which is an entirely different thing from “sinful flesh,” or as Dr. Thomas quotes them, “flesh full of sin.” Any decent commentary will confirm that this is the correct translation and that what R.Roberts termed “the idiomatic equivalent,” i.e. Sinful flesh, is a false and misleading representation of what Paul wrote and no honest argument ought to be based upon it-

Dealing with the passage in “The Sacrifice of Christ,” E.Turney says:-

“Excuse me pointing out that adjectives qualify nouns; for example, we say “white paper”. The word white qualifies or shows the colour of the noun paper, and so forth, and you cannot find in Scripture that sinful applies to flesh... Sinful is not a proper adjective to qualify the noun flesh; but it qualifies the noun character. A sinful man is a man of bad character not of bad flesh. Sin is an act, not a fixed principle. (1 John 3:4; 1 Corinthians 6:18)... The Greek words are “*en homoiomati sarkos-hamartias*” which in English is “in the likeness of flesh of sin.” But in good English we do not say “the hat of John” but “John’s hat” and so we must say for “*sarkos-hamartias*,” “sin’s flesh.” This is a scriptural phrase and it sets forth a scriptural doctrine. You all know what is meant by the “possessive case;” it means possession or ownership, e.g. John’s book, that is the book that belongs to John. Change the name then and put in the word “sin”, “sin’s book,” to the book that belongs to sin.

Let us take another figure, a figure of flesh, the horse for instance, “sin’s horse,” the horse which belongs to sin, which is his property. Do you think that sin’s horse is necessarily a horse that is made of sinful flesh? I think you will see the absurdity of the conclusion. Well, let us again change the figure, “sin’s man,” that is, a man belonging to sin. Is the man’s flesh necessarily full of sin, because he belongs to sin? Certainly not.

Take yet one more figure, here are two sheep, they both belong to one shepherd, one strays away, the other remains in the care of the shepherd. The stray sheep wanders over a boundary line and becomes the property of a person whom we will call sin; for “sin” is personified in the Scriptures as a King reigning, etc. Now here is the other sheep still where they both were at first. Do you think the wool, the skin or the flesh of the stray sheep are at all changed? Have they become any different from those of the sheep which remain with their master? I cannot see any difference whatever; it is merely a question of possession. It may be thought that this is scarcely a proper illustration, perhaps it may be objected to as being too commercial or too carnal. Well it is carnal inasmuch as it relates to flesh, for sheep are made of flesh, and it happens to be scriptural, as can be seen from Isaiah 53:6 “All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Now when those sheep had gone astray, whose property were they? “His servants ye are whom ye obey.” They had served sin, and they are sin’s sheep. Was Israel at all changed in regard to their flesh?... A very important and serious change had taken place, but that change was in their character and their relation to God and not in their flesh, and God proposed to redeem or buy them back to Himself... Now cannot you see that if Jesus was Sin’s flesh then God is a swindler and a bungler. We must not forget that God is just as well as a justifier, but if He effected the redemption of man by yielding up to sin what already belonged to sin, then we are redeemed by fraud. That is the logical outcome of the Sinful flesh theory.”

If the argument in the above extract is understood, and it is surely well within the scope of even a babe in Christ who has a sincere desire to know the truth, it becomes instantly evident why Paul says that Jesus was sent “in the likeness” of the flesh belonging to sin. R.Roberts attempted to discredit Brother Turney and those who followed him, by saying that he, Edward Turney contended that the nature of Jesus was different from that of all other men. This was a wicked misrepresentation; there in not and never was any suggestion that the word “likeness” implied a different flesh. The distinction which Paul settles for ever is a question of descent or ownership.

Adam and Jesus were both of one and the same human flesh and nature, and both were Sons of God; the first by creation, the second by begettal. Adam, by disobedience sold himself into bondage to sin; Jesus by obedience retained His relationship and then, by the sacrifice of Himself, He condemned sin (while He was) in the flesh, by bearing Himself the penalty due to His brother Adam and those federally in him.

In the Atonement, it was not unclean flesh, the imaginary physical Sin-in-the-flesh, which was condemned. It was Sin or transgression of God’s law which was condemned, by a man of the same

flesh and blood nature proving that obedience was possible, by living a sinless life and then by becoming an offering for sin, Jesus did what the law of Moses could not do, set humanity free from the bondage of sin.

It is more than strange to find that almost without exception Christadelphian writers have at one time or another given expression to the true interpretation, but few have so far had the moral courage to throw off the shackles of “changed flesh.” Here are a few examples:-

C.C.Walker: “Jesus was the subject of a change of nature from the human to the divine...but he was never the subject of a change of status...as to adoption... still less does this apply to our Lord.”

J.Carter: “Jesus could and did say “My Father,” while he taught his disciples to say “our Father.” He never joined them in the use of “Our Father,” thereby maintaining the difference between their sonship and his, for he was Son in actual fact, but they are sons through him, sons by adoption.”

R.Roberts: “Our friend 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 contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his organisation.”

Dr.Thomas: “We dissent from our correspondent’s notion that all creation became corrupt, by which we understand him to mean, constitutionally impregnated with corruptibility at the Fall. We believe that the change was moral not physical.”

If the recognition of the true doctrine of alienation and redemption, which is evident in the above quotations, had been consistently applied in their interpretations, Christadelphians would not now be facing the world with a jumble of truth and error which makes it impossible for them to preach the basic facts of the Gospel, the power of God unto salvation.

The Misused Texts of Job

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

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

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

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 minds supposed to be freed from apostate theology.

The right answer to these statements from 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 parallelisms:-

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:-

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the Law of sin and death” (Adamic condemnation). “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1,2).

“God hath showed me that I should not call any man (much less our Saviour) common or unclean.” (Acts 10.28).

Did Jesus Offer for Himself?

**“Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice,
first for his own sins, then for the people: for this he did once,
when he offered up himself.”
Hebrews 7:27.**

This verse of Scripture has been so much misunderstood that we are impelled by a reverence for God’s Word to call your attention to the true facts; this we propose to do under four headings: -

1. A consideration of the context.
2. The key word in the original Greek.
3. A review of the whole chapter.
4. The type and anti-type of sacrifice.

1. The Context. It is actual sins of which Paul writes in this verse, so that if the Lord Jesus offered for Himself, then it was ‘for His own sins,’ as the verse states, not sin-nature; the subject is

not unclean flesh or even mortal nature but actual sins. Now what sins of His own had Jesus to offer for in addition to “those of the people”? If Paul wished us to believe that Jesus, like Aaron, offered for His own sins and those of the people also, he would not have said “this he did once,” but “these He did once,” there being two separate and distinct offerings. Beside this, what could He offer, if as contended, the offering was the shedding of His life blood for the people, after He had offered it for Himself? The difference between Aaron’s sacrifices and Christ’s sacrifice has been often remarked by expositors; Macknight observes:-

“The apostle takes notice of those particulars which distinguish the sacrifice offered by Christ from those offered by the Jewish High Priest. 1) He offered no sacrifice for Himself, but only for the people. 2) He did not offer that sacrifice annually, but once for all. 3) The sacrifice which He offered for the people, was not of calves and goats, but Himself.”

2. The Greek Word. There is complete unanimity amongst Greek scholars that the word translated “this” in the phrase “this he did once,” (*touto*, neut, sing, Gr.), can mean only one thing and not two things. It cannot include both ‘sacrifice first for his own sins’ and also ‘sacrifice for those of the people.’ It can refer to only one of those two things. Further, grammarians are agreed that in occurrences such as this, “*touto*” carries the additional significance of ‘this latter thing.’ Accordingly Weymouth’s translation reads, ‘this latter thing he did-’

We can test for ourselves the truth of what the scholars say by examining similar passages in the Apostles writings. For instance, in 1 Peter 2:20 we read that “this (*touto*) is acceptable to God.” Clearly Peter is here referring to the latter of the two things he has just mentioned, namely, (1) “buffeted for your faults” and (2) “suffering for well doing.” Again in 1 John 4:3, two spirits are mentioned, (1) “that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,” (2) “that confesseth not that” truth and the same word is used again, “and this (*touto*) is that spirit of antichrist” clearly again referring only to the latter of two different things. So that when we are asked to believe that as the Levitical priests had to offer for themselves before they offered for the people, so Jesus had to offer for Himself on account of His condemned nature, and Hebrews 7:27 is cited as proof, we say it is a wicked wresting of Scripture.

3. The Chapter. Throughout the chapter Paul is contrasting the case of the Aaronic High Priest with that of the Lord Jesus- The word “but” in verses 6,8,16,19,21,24, and 28, joins the contrasted ideas. Similarly in verse 27, Paul is contrasting and not comparing the two cases, and here he shows a double contrast, (1) The high priest offered continually, but Jesus only once, (2) The high priest had first to offer for his own sins and afterward for the people, but Jesus offered for the people straightway.

Hear now the Apostle’s exposition of the subject, “For the Law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the Law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.” Is it possible for language to present a greater and more striking contrast? Does this favour the idea of the Lord Jesus requiring to sacrifice Himself to cleanse Himself? But so it has been laid down by Christadelphian leaders in the past and to-day, either lacking the spiritual discernment to discover the fact, or the moral courage to admit it, brethren refuse to confess that in spite of their fine achievements, in this matter they are mistaken. “Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing that he alloweth.”

4. The Subject. Why had the High Priest first of all to offer for himself? Obviously because he had to be cleansed from sin before he could be a fit type of the Lord Jesus Christ. After the High Priest had offered for his own sins and become legally clean he was a fitting type of Jesus the Sinless One. When Aaron offered the sacrifice for the sins of the people, like our Saviour he needed not to offer for himself, because he had already done so. Jesus had no need to do so, being from birth “that Holy Thing.”

But there is another aspect of the matter which shows the falseness of the deductions based on the supposed parallel between the Priest offering for his own sins and Jesus offering for His defiled nature, for Paul says, "If he were on earth, he should not be a priest" or as we should phrase it "He could not even be a priest while on the earth." What then becomes of the argument for His requiring to offer for His supposed "condemned nature"? The truth of the matter is, that while on earth He was the Victim not the Priest. Paul says, "Christ our Passover is slain for us" and the verb is in the passive voice, indicating that Jesus did not slay Himself, nor did He offer Himself "on the Cross." The Apostle says He was not at that time a priest (Hebrews 8:4) and therefore the idea of His offering for His own condemnation is a complete delusion. It will not do to confound the High Offices of the Messiah after this fashion. There is abundant testimony regarding Christ's Priesthood but we must follow the Divine order and consider Him first as the Victim.

John invites us to "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Peter says this Lamb was "without spot." Isaiah says "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Abraham declared that God would provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering, and he slew the type "In the stead of his son." So that at the time of his death, Jesus was the Victim provided by God and in harmony with the types, was the property of the Offerer, and without spot or blemish, and not one of those for whom the offering was made, or the priest who made it.

Who, then, was the officiating High Priest in this greatest of all sacrifices? Again John tells us, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son;" and Isaiah says, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Paul says, "God made him who knew no sin to be (a sin-offering) for us," that "God did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all;" "It pleased the Lord to bruise him;" "I will smite the shepherd." Thus the Almighty arranged His great scheme of Redemption on His foreknowledge that the Jews would murder His Son (Acts 2:23 and 3:18). If on the strength of all the foregoing, God be not the Sacrificer of His own Lamb, then the writer must close the Book in hopeless scepticism; but he rests implicit faith on "the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world," believing that Lamb will yet stand on mount Zion encircled by His Blood-washed myriads.

In regard to our Saviour's Priesthood the records declare, "Thou art a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedec" (Psalm 101:4). Now hear Paul's exposition, in regard to the Levitical he says, "And they truly were many priests; because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." This explicit testimony establishes beyond question the fact that Jesus was consecrated an incorruptible Priest. Is it not now clear why the Levitical priest required to offer "first for himself"? There was only one divinely recognised priesthood in the days of Jesus, and Jesus was not of that tribe. "For he," says Paul, "of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." "And," continues Paul, "it is yet far more evident, for that after the similitude of Melchizedec there ariseth another priest who is consecrated, Not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

Is any further testimony necessary to prove that there is nothing in this Scripture or any other which justifies the doctrine that Jesus either needed a sacrifice or could have offered one, for remission of His own condemnation?

"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"
1 Timothy 1:15-

How was Christ Made a Curse for us?

**“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law,
being made a curse for us, for it is written.
Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”
Galatians 3:13.**

There would not seem to be much difficulty in understanding this verse and to the childlike mind it would imply simply what it says, that in being hung upon a tree in other words, crucified, Jesus suffered the curse of the law, namely death, on account of others. This plain explanation however will not fit into the Christadelphian scheme and in view of the preposterous theories which it is brought forward to prove, we will examine it more closely.

In seeking to support his teaching that Jesus, in order to redeem the human race from Adamic condemnation, must have been in the same condemnation Himself. Brother Roberts uses this passage. He reasoned that it proves that Jesus had to be cursed by the Mosaic Law in order to redeem Israel and similarly had to be cursed by the Adamic law of sin and death in order to redeem all mankind. He wrote as follows:-

“Before he was lifted to his place on the cross, he was not liable to a violent death; but as soon as he suffered himself to be suspended there, he became so by reason of the curse of the law resting on him.”

It would be difficult to imagine a more foolish utterance than this; we are persuaded that the Truth does not require this kind of exposition and its very existence would lead sensible people to scrutinize carefully the doctrines sought to be established by its author.

The Apostle Paul writing to the Galatians quotes, in this text, from Deuteronomy 21, verses 22 and 23, and the matter dealt with is that of a man who had committed a sin worthy of death. The hanging on a tree was the exhibition of the body of the criminal, already dead, as an example. Such an one “is accursed of God” and must be buried that the “land be not defiled.” it does not state nor can it be argued, that it was the hanging on a tree that was the breach of Law; it was because the one concerned “had committed a sin worthy of death” (verses 21 and 22) and was thus accursed of God.

Now we need only ask the question, Did Jesus ever break the law? He did not, and therefore He was not under its curse. Any law only has power to inflict its penalties on those who break it. Jesus could challenge the world, “Which of you convicteth me of sin?”

But Jesus did undoubtedly suffer a violent death, the penalty due to one who had committed a sin worthy of death, and if that death was not due to Himself, not being a transgressor, to whom was it due? The answer is in the same verse, Galatians 3:13, He was made “a curse for us.” The conclusion is inescapable, the guilty one is the human race, proven sinners in Adam on the federal principle. It was Adam’s life that was forfeit, and we in him, and it was Jesus that paid the penalty, the Just for the unjust, the Sinless One for the guilty

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus accursed.”

Extracts from Letters to R.Roberts

by W.D.JARDINE

These extracts are reproduced for the purpose of showing that brethren of repute have perceived and expressed the truth but have been either bludgeoned into silence by vested interests, or excommunicated.

Brother Jardine wrote:-

“The true answer to question 21 should be, “Had Jesus owed his paternity to Adam through Joseph, He would have been born under condemnation of the law, and therefore, of no value to us than any other interesting friend.”“

Referring to animals slain in sacrifice:-

“They in sacrifice died, the innocent victims for transgressors. Free from the penalty passed on Adam, and free from the transgressions of the law, they as the type of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, signified the taking away sin by shedding the blood of one to come, similarly situated. Sacrificial death, though occasioned by the fall, was not caused by the fall. The cause of sacrificial death was LOVE, not sin. Had God not intervened to save, the sentence of death that was brought about by sin would have been irrevocable. No soul could have escaped its grasp. It was God who caused, or originated, sacrificial death, as the basis of His plan of salvation; and though it may be aptly said that God caused the other death, yet in the one case we may have it against His will, and in the other, according to His will; for God was never willing that any man should perish. Therefore, had there been no sacrificial death, there could have been no resurrection from the dead; and so, the fact that God raised Jesus from the dead is one fact to prove He did not die under the penalty of Adam.”

“The passing of death upon all men is but a sentence, the execution of which is revocable. Salvation in fact, is primarily an escape from the penalty passed upon all men, because it is impossible for one to obtain salvation whilst under it. The Gospel call is to come out of Adam into Jesus Christ, to flee and escape for one’s life before the sentence passed can be executed. If Lot had remained in Sodom, he would have died with the Sodomites; if one remains in Adam he will die with the Adamites.”

“Now referring to Moses; all in Moses died by reason of the Law. They died under its penalty. They (the baptised) sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, and were therefore, sinners by their own acts, and hence were not sinners by the imputation of Adam’s sin. This is proof that they could not have died under the penalty passed upon Adam.”

“Death under condemnation, and death under no condemnation, present two different features.”

“The death Jesus died was a ransom paid; it was not wages received.”

“By this clause He legally died the Just for the unjust, the sinless one for sinners.”

“Jesus obedience unto death was the crowning act of His obedience under the law.”

“Death under the penalty of the law, and death under the penalty passed on Adam, must not be confounded.”

“The Apostle says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.” This sets forth a present privilege. It is not said, “There shall be no condemnation” but “there is now

no condemnation.” It is needless to say the now-no- condemnation here mentioned is prospective; for where it so, our reconciliation to God by the death of Jesus would be prospective likewise.”

“The phrase, “and so death passed upon all men” must not be understood to mean that all men are under condemnation because they die. As well say that all animals are under the sentence because they die. It does not follow that because a sentence is passed it cannot be revoked or abated; and if abated, the original sentence is done away with.”

“Now if with adopted sons, there can be such a condition of things as a “now-no-condemnation state,” surely there must have been a like freedom from condemnation in the case of Jesus Christ, and for these reasons:-

1) Adopted sons become so by being begotten by the Word of Truth. By this means they pass from Adam into Jesus Christ.

2) Jesus Christ became the Son of God by being begotten of the Father by the brooding virtue of the Holy Spirit. In this way He became the Only Begotten Son of God. Therefore, as adopted sons pass in a spiritual sense from Adam into Christ, by being begotten of the Word of Truth, how is it possible Jesus Christ could ever have been in Adam in a spiritual sense, seeing the conception of Him was God’s begetting of Him?”

3) As it is taught in the Scripture that the adopted sons are now heirs and joint heirs with Jesus Christ - and this surely cannot be regarded as prospective, whatever shadow of reason there may appear for anything else being so - the fact of heirship is an evidence of freedom from condemnation, seeing that one condemned to death can be heir to nothing. Now, as in this of relationship and circumstances, there is brought about no change of nature, so must the Adamic nature of Jesus Christ be regarded as no obstacle to His having been, while in the flesh, under no condemnation.”

“We must not assume that because Jesus was in the Adamic nature, He was therefore, under the Adamic curse.”

“We must not assume that because Jesus was of corruptible nature, therefore He was condemned to die.”

“We must not assume that because Jesus was in the likeness of flesh belonging to sin, therefore He was in flesh identical with that belonging to sin.”

“We must not assume that because He never knew sin, and therefore was never a transgressor, that He could not have sinned.”

“When a man transgresses a law, the law by its administrators lays hold of the transgressor. And if it is a law of Sin and Death the man has transgressed, the law holds the life of the transgressor in its possession; and if, while his life is in possession of the law he begets children, the lives of these children naturally belong to the law likewise; the same as in a state of bondage or slavery, the children of the slave belong to the owner of the slave.”

“Now in the case of Jesus Christ, He was made “like to His brethren,” that is, the Jews; He was made under the Law. This was His “likeness.” But in what did He differ? In nothing save that by His begetting, in place of inheriting a life in possession of the Law, a forfeited life, as He would have done had Joseph been His father, He on the contrary inherited from His Father, God, the freedom of the Firstborn. He was born Free. The Law had no claim on Him whatsoever.”

“But again, the phrase “sinful flesh” as it stands in Romans 8:3 should properly read, “Flesh belonging to Sin.”

“The transgression revealed the character of those natural desires, for it was an obedience to those desires.”

“Deplore not this controversy, but seek to guide the spirit by which it shall be carried on, that humility, gentleness and sobriety may characterise it all. Be not afraid of consequences, the truth will prevail.”

“The now-no-condemnation state of the saints in Christ, I take to argue a similar position for Christ by birth. The position of Jesus Christ by birth and that by nature are two different positions.”

“The saints, you say, are but in process of adoption. They wait for the redemption of the body. This last is true, but as the Apostle is particular in stating what adoption he means that they waited for, it makes the other none the less true, namely, that they “had received the spirit of adoption” and that therefore, while they were waiting for the one, they were not waiting for the other. Query: was Jesus Christ not the Son of God until His body was redeemed from the grave?”

“To be under the law is one thing; to be under the penalty of the law is another thing. Are we who have committed no offence against the Queen, not under her laws; and are we not in different circumstances from those who are suffering the penalties due to their offences? It is one thing to be under the dominion of sin and another to be destined to receive the Wages of Sin. Is it not one thing to be under the law of death and another thing to die?”

“They that are in the flesh cannot please God.” Are not the phrases “in the flesh” and “not in the flesh” equivalent to “in Adam” and “Not in Adam”?

To The Reader

From what has been written in the preceding pages, you will have realised that a completely true and full understanding of the Plan of Redemption has not been handed down to us by the early brethren; and that it is not safe for us to accept their interpretation of every point without satisfying ourselves of their soundness.

The revelation of God is progressive; this is true of the Scriptures themselves in their gradual unfolding from Genesis to Revelation; it is true of the working out of the Plan itself; and it seems to be equally true of the re-discovery of the Truth in these last days. Dr. Thomas was not the only instrument, nor was he inspired; he was indebted for the Bible itself to the scholars and translators of the middle ages; for religious freedom and much of his understanding to the reformers and for the groundwork of his prophetic studies to earlier students. These facts in no way affect the honour and credit due to him for the flood of light that came by reason of his work. But they should lead us to avoid the foolish error of imagining that any one man or agency has been the sole exponent of the Truth.

A study of his life will show how the Doctor progressed from light to light, and had not death put an end to his research he might have realised that some of his earlier ideas needed reconsideration; those responsible for this pamphlet believe that had it been so, he was both honest enough and humble enough to have followed where the Truth led. It is those who came after who must bear the blame for closing the door against investigation and who shackled the Christadelphian community with errors and misconceptions which under a more enlightened leadership and in a teachable and Christlike spirit, it might have cast off and real growth and unity maintained.

The responsibility now rests upon you, the reader, to decide where the Truth lies and what your own position is. Do not be put off with the excuse that these questions are deep and involved and beyond your ability. The plain truth of the matter is that they are so utterly simple, when once the mind has been freed from the unscriptural errors of “changed nature” and “Sinful flesh,” that one is amazed that they are still so strenuously opposed and wrong views tenaciously held. The obstacle of the majority is to entertain for a moment the possibility that they may not have the whole truth, or can possibly learn anything new. Such an attitude effectively bars progress in any direction; but as that is the attitude which Christadelphians deplore in those to whom they preach it would be wiser to follow the scriptural advice and “prove all things.”

Do you know why the death of our Saviour was necessary for our Salvation? If not, ask some of your leading brethren to tell you. If they cannot explain it to your satisfaction, or tell you it is too deep for simple people to understand, send to one of the addresses below and we will undertake not only to make you wise unto Salvation, but help you to a fuller and deeper appreciation of the Love of God in Christ, and to be able to read your Bible with a new and better understanding.

Compiled