

# The Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter No. 105

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## Editorial

The purpose of this issue of the Nazarene Fellowship Circular Letter is to provide encouragement, guidance, help and comfort to those seeking a better understanding of the Atonement. Many brethren and sisters throughout the Christadelphian community hold the beliefs expressed herein although they do not raise the subject openly, but for the sake of peace remain in the background treasuring an understanding that brings them personal joy and comfort which they are unable to share with those they love because they have so often been met with hostility. The beliefs held by these seekers after truth are shared only in the privacy of their homes. They would much rather share the wonder of the love of God and of His Son openly, in love, "to the edifying of the church," knowing that open and free discussion of the scriptures leads to greater knowledge and better understanding. It is sad that throughout the past hundred years many have had to leave the Christadelphian community through the intolerance of a small minority who feel it is right, above all else, to abide by the Statement of Faith.

May we ask those who hold fast to the orthodox Christadelphian views that they read and report accurately our views when endeavouring to counter them. We welcome discussion but not controversy, for controversy is but a war of opinions. Discussion however, is edifying and helps clear away the sands of assumptions to reveal the bedrock of truth. What more could we earnestly desire than to find this firm foundation on which to build and share our findings with our fellows.

This issue then, containing a few short articles, letters and comments by Christadelphians and ex-Christadelphians is our small offering to all those who will consider these matters.

Russell Gregory.

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## **Extract from a letter written 77 years ago from one Christadelphian sister to another:**

“Dr Thomas, on the first few pages of Catachesis states clearly what I believe and have always believed. My only object in writing was to get to know as much as possible on the subject and as far as I can see at present it is mostly phrases objected to on both sides. I am sorry someone in the past did not see fit to go more thoroughly into the matter and understand what was contended for. Any brother that passes the remark that “Renunciationists make Jesus a different kind of flesh” proves to my mind they do not understand what is contended for. This remark, both in writing and in speaking was the one that made me feel dissatisfied with the way the subject was handled... I find more often than not they are grossly misrepresented.”

Sister Maud Warre

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## **From the pen of Dr Thomas:**

“Redemption is release for a ransom. All who become God’s servants are therefore released from a former lord by purchase. The Purchaser is God; and the price or ransom paid, the precious blood of the flesh... of Christ, as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.” - Eureka, page 50,

This is our basic foundation upon which we build the whole structure of God’s plan of salvation as centred in Christ Jesus. This meaning of redemption cannot be put more plainly nor concisely. It expresses our belief in such a way that we do not wish to add, alter, take away, nor even qualify one word. We believe if this was studied the basic idea of Redemption would be solved”

Extract from “Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver” by F. J. Pearce.

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## **A JEW ACCEPTS JESUS**

This is the testimony for Jesus written to his friends:

Let me explain how I, Leopold Dreifuss, accepted these Truths. Being a natural Jew, and having attended Christadelphian lectures for some time, I “became interested in the views of the Nazarene Fellowship.

I don’t know whether you know us by this name. Most Christadelphians call us “Renunciationists,” or “Clean Flesh Heretics,” because of their mistaken idea that we deny that Jesus has come in our flesh.

Now, let me say from the outset that this is not true. Let me make it quite clear to you that we do acknowledge that Jesus has come in our flesh. Now, in the following I will try to explain to you just where we differ from the Christadelphians, and how I came to be convinced of it.

In our opinion the most essential thing in the understanding of Scripture is to know the Lord; to understand the mission which God sent Him to fulfil. But to understand that we must first go into the questions of Sacrifice and Redemption.

Let us start right from the beginning of Creation and examine Adam’s position before He sinned. There we see the first man created by God from the ground and pronounced “very good”. He was corruptible, for we read that there was the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Now, he had only one single commandment to keep - not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He was given a free will,

therefore it was in his power to choose whether he would keep God's commandment or not. But although Adam and Eve were created very good, we must bear in mind that they were corruptible, and could sin if they so chose. For had they not the inclination to sin before they were driven out of Eden the serpent could never have succeeded in tempting them. However, the serpent did succeed, and they sinned.

Now, God said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Let us find out what sort of death it was - natural death, or violent death? Very probably it was not to be a natural death, for he was corruptible in any case and depended on the Tree of Life if he was not to die. But we will discover yet better evidence as to which of the two deaths God meant. In the Hebrew text the sentence "thou shalt surely die" reads "dying thou shalt die." This construction of a sentence is often used in Hebrew, and it indicates a strong affirmation. For example, when we say in English "he did come" in the sense "he surely came", the Hebrew says "coming he came." So, "dying, thou shalt die," means a very certain death. Moreover, the same phrase occurs again later on in Genesis where Abimelech, king of Gera, took Sarah, thinking she was Abraham's sister. God, appearing to him in a dream, said, "thou shalt surely die" - in the Hebrew "dying thou shalt die." There cannot be any doubt that this means judicial death, for he would have died the natural death anyway, and had it not been a sudden judicial death, why should Abimelech have been in such a hurry to send Sarah away. Again, the phrase occurs when Solomon tells one of his enemies not to cross the brook of Kidron. But Shimei did cross the river, and we read that he was stabbed to death. So here we have the evidence that the sentence "thou shalt surely die" is a violent, sudden or judicial death.

This death Adam deserved, but, had he suffered it there and then, none of us would ever have lived, and God's purpose to fill the earth with His glory would have been frustrated. This could not be. The first thing God did was to act in mercy. He slew a lamb and thus transferred Adam's guilt to an innocent animal. This, of course, was only a temporary measure, until Christ came, but I shall say more on that later. Only let me say here that God is merciful, but He is also just, a just God who will never repent. Adam's sin had to be paid for somehow. It could not have been forgiven, for how could God look over the breaking of His commandment and yet establish His authority? The lamb which was sacrificed, and whose skin He subsequently used to clothe Adam and Eve, was only a temporary measure. Of course, God foreknew what He was going to do. But until Christ paid the penalty, the slaying of animals had to continue.

Man was now in a position in which he was estranged from God. God had to keep him from the Tree of Life, because before man was once more qualified to Eternal Life, the first sin, or rather the penalty for it, had to be paid for. Until Christ's advent man's right to Eternal Life was forfeited, or in the words of Paul (Romans 7:14) mankind was "sold under sin."

It is a general principle in Scripture, by which God gives man a choice to serve either good or evil. When man chooses the evil, he has nobody but himself to blame for the consequences. Cain and Abel had that choice: one chose the good, the other the evil. Joshua put that choice before the children of Israel. He said, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Going back to Adam, he also chose the evil when he transgressed. He was now sold under sin, the servant of sin. Sin is often personified in Scripture as a master. Adam sold himself to that master.

This last sentence, of course, is figurative speech, and it really means, as explained above, that he was estranged from God. But let us again examine the phrase "sold under sin." You will, no doubt, know that in old times, when slavery was practised, a slave was the property of his master. Everybody who was born to him while he served became automatically his master's property.

If he wanted to become free he had to be redeemed. With this at the back of your mind you should now appreciate what it means to be "sold under sin." It means that the whole of Adam's posterity was under the master of Sin. In practice, that meant that they were born without the right to Eternal Life, unless they obtained that right by bringing their sacrifices as recognition of their need of redemption. Needless to say, of course, that these sacrifices had to be brought in the right spirit of faith.

Under the Law of Moses this need was even more pressed home. What was the meaning of the daily sacrifices, the Passover Lamb, the services on the Day of Atonement? Was it not the constant lesson that there was a need of redemption? These sacrifices were not for any particular transgression of any particular law: for if anyone sinned he had to bring a sacrifice in addition to all these, and if he brought it in the right

spirit of faith and true repentance, God forgave him, for how often do we read in Leviticus, “If a soul sin, he shall bring... and it shall be forgiven him,” God does not exact a penalty over and over again - that is not the idea of a merciful God. So the daily sacrifices, etc., must have been for something else.

As you know, these sacrifices in themselves cannot take away sin. The redemption of mankind from this bondage to Sin could only be paid for by the antitypical Sacrifice of Christ Himself. But although these animals could not redeem mankind as a whole, the keeping of the law, together with faith, did give a few individuals title to eternal life, to mention only Elijah, Caleb and Joshua (the only two to survive Israel’s 40 years’ journey in the wilderness). There were also Enoch and Noah, before the Mosaic Law, of whom the Scripture records that they pleased God. Even after the introduction of the Mosaic Law we read of many who have kept it. “The law and the commandment is holy, just and good,” and it was “ordained to life” (Romans 7:10).

What was it then that the law could not do? It could give title to eternal life to individuals, and we know that Moses and David, who are now asleep, have obtained a title to it. They were sold under sin as much as anybody. “What the law could not do” was to redeem from Adam’s sin.

When we want to gain information about God’s plan concerning anything, we look at the Old Testament and then apply it to the New Testament. Let us now do that to find out something about the Divine plan concerning redemption.

According to the Mosaic Law, an Israelite who became a bondservant could redeem himself if he had the means; otherwise the next of kin had to do it. But we can learn even more about this topic from Exodus. Israel was in bondage to Pharaoh. God chose Moses as their redeemer. Moses was an Israelite by birth, but by law he was in a position different from the other Israelites, He was not under the Egyptian bondage, for Pharaoh’s daughter adopted him and brought him up as her son.

Let us now apply this to Christ, our Redeemer from the Adamic bondage to Sin. He was born of a woman, our nature. But He was the Son of God, and therefore not under bondage to Sin. For by divine law the man, the father, decides under Law whose the child is. But this will not affect his flesh and blood; his nature is the same. Similarly, Jesus was of human nature, but not born servant to Sin, He was one who had power to redeem. And just as Moses was brought up by Pharaoh’s daughter and dwelt at Midian in the wilderness until the time came that God appointed him his task, so Jesus was brought up with a human foster father, and He went into the wilderness where He was tempted, before He began the preaching of the Gospel.

Because Jesus was of our flesh he had, of course, the same inclination to sin as we all. He had to make the choice between good and evil - between fulfilling His Father’s will and His own will. But where Adam failed, He succeeded. Here, then, are the essential points about Jesus’ redemptive work.

He, like Adam, had a free and unforfeited life. Whereas Adam was the son of God by creation, Jesus was the Son of God by begetting, and thus Adam’s next-of-kin, and hence in a position to redeem Adam from the bondage to Sin. He paid the penalty which Adam should have paid, and which the animals paid in type – that is, a violent death, with the pouring out of His blood (for “dying, thou shall die,” was God’s sentence).

There was no violation here of Moses’ Commandment in Deuteronomy that the children shall not be put to death for their parents ...for Jesus gave His life. He didn’t need to give it to reconcile Himself to His own Father: for He was never under Sin, and never forfeited His right to life. But He died for Adam’s sin, which had become “the Sin of the world”; He offered Himself, knowing that He had the power to lay down His life and take it up again - for why shouldn’t He have had that power?

What is mankind’s position today? Adam’s sin has been paid for - God is just, and nobody ever has to die again as a punishment for Adam’s sin. But Adam’s act has left mankind under a great disadvantage. He has cut off all his posterity from the Tree of Life. If we want to obtain eternal life, we must associate ourselves with Christ. Of course, those that never see the Light are just like the beasts of the field that perish. But those who do see the Light become responsible,

I was convinced of this doctrine, for I found it far more logical than anything I have ever heard on religion. Nothing which any minister preaches is anything like it. I have learned a lot by attending Christadelphian lectures. But I have never seen it so clearly. Because I realised this responsibility I was immersed, for once a person sees Light and does not avail himself of this great salvation, he confirms Adam's sin. He is then "in Adam," and Paul writes: "As in Adam all die..." (1 Corinthians 15:2a). This death, which all in Adam die, is the judicial death on the day of judgement, for, from what I have been saying all the time, you should find that it cannot be the natural death; for everybody dies this death - even those who never see Light and are under no Divine law; for where there is no law there is no transgression (Romans 4:15), Hence, those people will not incur the penalty for sin, which is violent death, yet they die a natural death.

Once we are "baptised we are in the same legal position as Adam before he sinned, or Jesus. But, of course, we can forfeit our right to eternal life if we sin wilfully: for if we sin "a sin unto death" now and get our name blotted out of the book of life, there is now no sacrifice but a fearful looking for the fiery judgment. But otherwise, we are now the Children of God, not through anything we have done, but only because of God's mercy in sending His Son. And even so, we are only children by adoption, while Jesus is God's Son by begetting. Well, can you now explain why it was necessary that Jesus should have been born the miraculous way in which He was? And can you now see why men like Moses and Elijah and Noah could not redeem us from "the Sin of the world," although their records show a life which pleased God?

Well, there is just one more topic which, to our great regret, presents a difficulty to many Christadelphians, so that they cannot see many of the beauties of God's word. Concerning this idea of "sinful flesh." This phrase occurs only once in Scripture - in Romans 8:5. All linguists agree that this is a faulty translation. The Greek version says "Sin's flesh". The word "sin" in Scripture is very frequently used for "sin offering" (see Genesis 4:7, which is absolutely without any sense unless "sin" here means "sin offering" - a lamb, or a bullock; for in Cain's day people were shepherds, and there would be an animal at his door handy if required for sacrifice). And in Romans 8:5 "sin" also means "sin offering," or, according to the margin of my Bible, "sacrifice for sin".

The seventh chapter of Romans is regarded as very difficult by most Christadelphians.

Let us link this up with chapters 6 and 8. In chapter 6, verse 20, Paul says, "for when ye were servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." He goes on to explain how we were made free from sin, etc. Now he inserts chapter 7, as in parenthesis, in which he describes his position before he was converted, while he was the servant of Sin. Then, in chapter 8, or rather the last verse of chapter 7, he links up his former statement with his new position, and then, in chapter 8, declares: "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." Now, here the word "flesh" cannot be our natural literal flesh: for we have that after our immersion exactly as before. It refers, of course, to his position before he was converted. This now gives us the key to chapter 7. When Paul says "in my flesh dwelleth no good thing," he speaks of the time before his conversion. For, if in our literal flesh dwelt no good thing, how could our bodies possibly be the temple of God?

Finally, let us look again at chapter 8, verse 9. "But ye are not in the flesh" (those brethren were, of course, in their natural flesh), "but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." So, then, the "flesh" means the state before baptism, the "spirit" afterwards, or sometimes, instead of the "flesh" we read about the old man - "put off the old man."

Now, if you think about these things, I am sure that with the interest and scriptural knowledge you have got, you will find out many interesting and beautiful things.

If you want to know more about these beautiful truths, write to me,

Sincerely your brother in Christ, Leopold Dreifuss.

# Why Jesus Christ Chose To Die

## Introduction

Many and complex arguments have been adduced from the scriptures attempting to explain the reason for Christ's crucifixion making this a very difficult subject to understand. This difficulty is brought about by the anomalies contained in the arguments advanced in support of the various views. We all know the importance of seeking truth in every statement of doctrine with an unbiased mind and we may feel sure we have sought the truth with some success, so why then, are there so many different views regarding what is truth? The great variety of opinions proves the majority must be mistaken. Determination to seek truth wherever it may lead is not the easiest path to tread as it is full of questions, doubts and hesitations, but because we naturally want to reach conclusions as quickly as we can we accept a ready prepared statement of faith. This is easy and convenient but not without its dangers, and because of these dangers we find the need for watchfulness against deviations from a simple uncompromising truth and the first question we must ask of any statement is, is it founded on fact? The endeavour throughout this essay has been to exercise this premise and with what success readers must judge for themselves.

### Christ hath made us free

Let us begin our subject by making four observations, or foundation statements, upon which to build; four statements which must surely be acceptable to all students of scripture, and they are:

- 1) Adam was offered immortality as a reward for perfect obedience, but he failed.
- 2) Adam was then offered immortality as a reward for faith.
- 3) We, too, are offered immortality as a reward for faith.
- 4) Jesus Christ had right to immortality by birth, which right could be forfeited by disobedience, but He did not fail.

In the second chapter of the book of Genesis we read of Adam being created a natural being and placed in the Garden of Eden with but one commandment, which to disobey meant death. It is reasonable to say that to obey meant life, that is, eternal life, at some time after a period of probation, and as Adam was created a natural being this would mean a change to immortality, and is expressed by the Apostle Paul in the first letter, to the Corinthians, chapter 14, verse 46 in this way: "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual", and again, in verse 44, "it is sewn a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body... when this mortal must put on immortality

There can be no doubt that Adam could have remained sinless and that his sin was his fault, for he had no need to disobey the commandment given him by his Creator and neither would God pass a harsh punishment upon Adam for doing something he was unable to avoid but failure to keep a commandment of God is sin and Adam failed. Adam had no need of redemption until he sinned but after his transgression, redemption was essential otherwise he would perish for ever, for by disobedience he not only lost the opportunity of his reward of immortality for perfect obedience but he also lost hope of his mortal life (i.e. natural life) beyond that day; for God had said to him "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," (Genesis 2:17). Why then did not Adam receive the judicial punishment required, by the law for transgression of a divine commandment? It was "because God, in His mercy, having anticipated Adam's failure was ready with another way of providing the opportunity of eternal life through the provision of a sin offering revealing the way of faith.

### Reward for faith replaces reward for obedience

Having transgressed the one and only commandment given him by God there was one of two things that could follow, either –

- 1) Adam could be put to death for his sin, as God had said, or
- 2) Adam could be released from the judicial sentence of death.

Had Adam not been redeemed on the day of his transgression there would have been no offspring of his to people the earth and the human race would have been at an end, but through love and compassion for His creatures God released Adam from the sentence of death, giving him further opportunity of eternal life, though not on the basis of obedience, but as a reward for faith. The first indication we have of this plan is in Genesis 5:15 where God said to the serpent "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed: and it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." We see this as a reference to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was to suffer a temporary 'bruising' on Calvary's Cross but who would, in turn, destroy the devil, i.e. the power of sin.

The days of Adam was not the time for the Son of God to come into the world and so the death of the animal in the day Adam sinned provided him with a covering for his sin, foreshadowing the day when Jesus Christ would give His life on the Cross. But this covering for Adam did not confer on him immortality. The animal's life was sacrificed that Adam should have the opportunity to live in faith, and while the "blood of bulls and goats" could not take away sin it could and did provide the necessary covering for sin until such time as it was right in the sight of God to send His Son into the world.

### **Imputed Righteousness**

The extension of Adam's life meant life also for Adam's descendants for he had no children while in the Garden of Eden, so on what basis could the offer of immortality be extended to them? It could have been in one of two ways, either -

- 1) Adam's offspring could each in turn be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for perfect obedience, or
- 2) They could be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for faith.

If Adam's descendants were to be rewarded with eternal life for perfect obedience and failed in that obedience, as did Adam, then it would be necessary for a redeemer to die for each sinner that the sinner be given the opportunity of eternal life as a reward for faith, as was Adam. Quite clearly such an arrangement would be unsatisfactory, and therefore Adam's descendants were offered immortality on the same basis as was Adam after his transgression, i.e. as a reward for faith. So hereby we see, that, although these descendants were not born sinners, they were counted as such and dealt with as though sinners, i.e., they had sin imputed to them and this was done for the purpose of salvation, Paul expresses this thought in Romans 5:19 where he writes "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." All born of the will of the flesh come under this imputed sin that they might be saved. The Apostle, in writing to the Galatians, in chapter three verses 21 and 22 says "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin that the promise of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." The law, then, could not give life because it could not give righteousness, but faith in Christ Jesus is counted for righteousness and so, for the faithful, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to them "that they might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:5).

### **Sold to Sin**

In his letter to the Romans Paul uses the illustration of sin being a slave-owner to whom the human race has been sold. "Sold under sin" we read in Romans 7:14 while in chapter 6 verse 16 Paul writes "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness" so when Adam sinned in Eden he sold himself to sin and became the bondservant of sin, and we, his offspring are born into that same bondage. Our position in Adam is vividly illustrated in the Law of Moses where provision was made for bondservants, for if anyone in Israel fell on hard times the law allowed that man to sell himself to a wealthy neighbour and become his bondservant, or slave, his wife and children also being taken into bondage. This was done in order that the poor man and his family might have some means of livelihood though lacking the freedom previously enjoyed. The law also made provision for the bondservant to redeem himself if his circumstances should by some means improve sufficiently for him to buy his freedom. If this was to prove impossible then all was not lost if a near kinsman should come forward who was both willing and able to pay the redemptive price. Such a relative was not bound by the law to pay the price of redemption but he had the legal right to redeem and it was up to him to exercise that right if he so wished. Most certainly, if that kinsman had love and

compassion for his less fortunate relatives it would give him great joy to see his relatives freed from bondage.

### **The Purchased Possession**

Jesus Christ was the only one both willing and able to redeem Adam and free his family (the human race) from bondage to sin; for being born of a woman He was the near kinsman required by the law and, as Son of God He was born free of the imputed sin of Adam. It was for this very reason that Jesus Christ was the Son of God by begetting. He had His life direct from His Father and was in a similar position to Adam in the garden of Eden; but with a right to eternal life providing He remained sinless. He did not forfeit His life by transgression at any time and was never in bondage to sin. He was “made under the law” but He never broke that law, for we read in Galatians 5:10, “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” and as Jesus Christ did continue in all things that are written in the book of the law then the curse was not on Him. He was the only man who had the power to retain His life or give it freely as the Ransom price for the sin of the world, as He said “I lay it down of Myself, I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” (John 10:17). Our Lord and Saviour, unlike the rest of the human race was born of the will of the Father and lived a life of perfect obedience to the whole law, and more than this, for He went “the extra mile” also, by fulfilling His Father’s wishes, for Jesus Christ received immortality for His perfect obedience to the law, but that law did not demand of Him that He lay down His life for the sin of the world. This He did to please His Father, as He said “Therefore doth my Father love me”, for voluntarily offering Himself as the Lamb of God without spot or blemish “who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame” (Hebrews 12:2), not in obedience to any commandment, for His was a free-will offering of Himself.

It would not have been a sin for Jesus Christ to refuse to go to His death on the Cross for He could have asked His Father for twelve legions of angels to save Him from that hour, and it is quite inconceivable that His Father would have provided those angels in order to help His own Son to transgress. His Life was His own by right and never belonged to sin, else how could He have said “My life I give...”?

The death of Jesus Christ does not confer immortality on us, for our present life is our redeemed life and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the essential step in the plan of salvation which He took for us that we might remain on probation, having the opportunity of eternal life through faith in Him.

### **Propitiation**

As the slaying of the animal in Eden provided a covering for Adam’s sin, protecting him from the law of sin and death, so the covering provided by Jesus Christ protects us from judgement. For the explanation of this let us go back to Moses and the giving of the law at Sinai, Moses went up into the mountain to receive the law, but at the same time he was given the pattern of the Tabernacle. (Hebrews 8:5). Prior to this the people had said “All the words which the Lord hath said will we do” (Exodus 24:5) but here too God had anticipated failure and so, with the law which condemned the sinner. He provided also the means of salvation in the pattern of the Tabernacle which pointed to Jesus Christ’

Moses, on coming down from the mountain, saw the people dancing and in his righteous anger he cast the tables of stone upon the ground and broke them to pieces, showing what Israel had already done by their worship of the Golden Calf. Before Moses could present them with the tables of the law, the people had already broken the law, but in His mercy, God had provided, again, a temporary covering, pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, so that the transgressor might not perish, for the pattern and instructions for the Tabernacle was God’s answer to the judgement of the law.

Every part of this Tabernacle pointed to the Lamb of God and was focused on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. The two tables of stone which Moses broke at the foot of the mountain were replaced and these were then hidden in the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle. The Ark was the central object, the very heart of the Tabernacle teaching. It was a box overlaid with gold and covered by a lid of gold with two cherubim overshadowing it.



In this box, or Ark were placed these second tables of the law, which cried out for justice, so God placed over it a lid called the “Mercy-Seat”, Within the Ark, the law pronounced the sentence of death upon the sinner, but God had provided a covering, the Mercy-Seat, which was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Romans 5:25 Jesus Christ is called our “Mercy-Seat” where we read “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood,” The word translated ‘propitiation’ is *hilasterion* and means literally ‘Mercy-Seat’ and is so translated in Hebrews 9:5. Upon this Mercy-Seat, covering the law which called for the death of the sinful nation, the High Priest, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, took blood from the altar in the Court of the Tabernacle and sprinkled it upon the Mercy-Seat over the (broken) law, and then when God descended in the cloud of Shekinah glory into the Holy of Holies He did not look upon the broken law but upon the blood, for God had said “When I see the blood I will pass over you. . .” (Exodus 12:15).

What the law could not do, Jesus Christ did, for during His lifetime in the flesh He condemned sin in precept and example, and at the same time provided atonement for the sinner who will go to Him in faith, by the shedding of His blood and by His death and resurrection. The throne of God which by the law had become a throne of judgement and death, became a throne of grace, mercy and Life.

The law stands as the pronouncer of death on all who fail to accept, by Faith, God’s means of salvation. While the law is powerful in condemning the sinner it is powerless to save the sinner. It is powerless to condemn the faithful in Christ Jesus, for the child of God is free from the judgement of the law, for there is no judgement to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. There may well be the chastening of the Lord when we offend, but this is not judgement, for God has made provision for our sins to be forgiven after we have been baptised into Christ Jesus, for He is our High Priest interceding for us, so “when we confess our sins He is faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (John 1:9). “For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made us free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2). “...for we have passed from death into life.” (John 5:24 & 1 John 5:14). “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,” (Galatians 5:1).

May our hearts overflow with thanksgiving and praise that Jesus Christ, though He did not have to die, He chose to die that we might live with Him for ever.

Russell Gregory.

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## **Extract from “Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver”**

“But we must remember that Jesus could and did, say ‘My Father,’ while He taught His disciples to say ‘Our Father.’ He never joined with 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.”

J. Carter.

“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 term apply to our Lord.”

C. C. Walker.

“As regards His moral relation to the Father, He was under no curse whatever. He was not in the position of guilty man, who is outside Eden, and can approach the Father only with a petition for forgiveness. His relation to the Father was not that of one alienated from Him as was Adam and all his descendants. He was from the beginning Holy (Luke 1:55), ‘a beloved Son in whom the Father was well pleased.’”

J. J. Hadley.

These three extracts could not express our belief more satisfactorily. All know that Jesus is the Son of God as the records plainly show; but when His nature is considered all sorts of ideas are given which overwhelm the basic principle. Why this is so, is only because they will not for one moment consider that Adam's nature was the same before and after the fall. We cannot say Jesus was Son of God and Son of Adam at the same time. Either God was His Father or Joseph. Adam was son of God by creation; Jesus was Son of God by begetting of His Spirit. Further comments are not necessary if this distinction of relationship be observed.

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“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: “but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” - John 12:24.

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**Extract from a letter dated 19th June 1911 and written “by the late bro. Harry Warre in answer to a fellow Christadelphian:-**

“Now if Christ needed a sin offering for His flesh and blood “body then He was held guilty by God for its possession - for being born. When one reflects on that that was an act He did not do and could not prevent we can see the absolute injustice of requiring the sin offering. Your teaching makes the God of Right and Justice more unjust than man. To teach that He requires a sin offering for an act that one did not perform and could not prevent, to thus make one a sinner who always did those things that pleased His Father, who held every desire in check; is to surpass every Christ dishonouring teaching of Unitarianism of the ‘New Theology.’ Look seriously at your teaching. You make the sinless One a sinner.” You make God's Holy One unholy! You make Him in whom John testifies was “no sin”, full of sin. Can you put your finger on anything in the teachings of an apostasy to parallel it? I cannot. In this connection think of the words of Christ “He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father that sent Him.” Do you honour the Son by unscriptural terming Him a sinner? Is not this awful doctrine worthy of your more careful consideration?

What of these promptings? Did they not exist in and form part of the “very good” man God made? Were not the desires equally present before as after transgression? Was it not because Eve saw that the fruit was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make one wise, that she took and ate? Would she have been a sinner had she conquered her desires? Would she have needed a sin offering although she never sinned? But would not rather the words of James be applied in her case “Blessed is the one that endureth temptation.”?

Is it sinful to be corruptible flesh and “blood? Then Adam was created a sinner. Christ needed to be changed to immortality, and so did Adam when God created him, for Adam was an animal body, weak, corruptible, mortal, when created. See Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 and Moses in Genesis 1 and 2 and do read Dr Thomas in Catechesis - first part.

When Adam and Eve sinned their moral and legal standing were altered, they became alienated and strangers, but physically they were still corruptible flesh and blood. So all begotten by them are also morally and legally alienated, un-covenanted, “dead”, “constituted sinners” - but Christ was not begotten of the will of the fleshy - He was God's Holy One from the womb, whilst we were without strength Christ died for the un-godly, for us.

“For ye know (or should know) the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich (in possession of the ransom price for the world) yet He became poor for our sakes, that we may by His becoming poor be made rich.”

May God in His mercy open the eyes of the brethren to see this grace, to understand the Lord that bought them, so that they may praise Him for His love.

Waiting the dawn of the day when the “purchased possession” shall be delivered, I am, sincerely your brother.

H. W. Warre.

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And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be out off, but not for Himself. - Daniel 9:26.  
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## **Why The Cross was Necessary for Salvation**

### **What is Salvation**

It is well known fact that all animals, human or otherwise, must inevitably die (one exception recorded in the scriptures is that of Enoch, who was translated “that he should not see death”. But this exception goes to prove that God can alter this rule at His will.) There will be, in the future, others who will not die, but who “shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump.” (1 Corinthians 15:52) at the return of Jesus.

We are told in John 5:6 that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Also we read “I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,” (John 11:25) “I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). See also Luke 9:56 etc.

Thus we see that salvation is a saving from (or out of) death. Believers from the beginning of the creation, who have died, are not reckoned as having perished, for they are all written in God’s Book of Life (Phil 4:5; Rev 5:5, etc.) and they will take part in a resurrection at the appointed day (compare the statement of Jesus “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” to prove to the Sadducees the certainty of the resurrection.)

### **Why does man die?**

Paul tells us clearly (Rom. 5:12) “By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This one man was, of course, Adam (verse 14) who, by eating of the forbidden fruit, transgressed God’s law, and as a consequence was expelled from the Garden of Eden, “lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever” (Gen 5: 22). To this day the tree of life is withheld from us and we die. Our own Individual sins do not constitute the cause of our dying (for otherwise there would be no infant deaths) nor can our own righteousness bring about everlasting life, “For there is none other name (but Jesus) under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

### **The qualifications of a Saviour**

a) The Saviour must be a man.

Since it is mankind which is guilty of sin, it would not be right, even according to man’s view of justice, to inflict the penalty on some other animal or creature. Scripture takes the same view, for in it we read (Heb 10:4) “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.” But how can we

know that human blood (under certain circumstances) may accomplish this? Well, it is laid down in God's plan of salvation which began to operate in the very earliest days, and we may understand some of it by studying His word. If we turn for a moment to the first pair who sinned we can see some of the principles involved.

After their transgression, Adam and Eve immediately became conscious of a feeling of nakedness which they sought to overcome by wearing aprons of fig leaves, As a mere bodily covering no doubt these served their purpose, but evidently they were not approved by God, who made coats of skins and clothed them, their consciousness of nakedness and of guilt thereby becoming dulled or non-existent. (We may here remember the words of David "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." Psalm 52:1) But in order to cover them with skins it had been necessary to cause the death of some animal, or animals and here we see a principle of salvation coming to light. The penalty of Adam's transgression was death in the day that he ate of the fruit. Adam did not die that day, but some animal did. Now we read in Revelation 12:8 about the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; an obvious reference to Jesus (see Revelation 5), and so we see that the animal slain in the Garden of Eden was but a representative of Jesus - a token payment - a promise that in due time someone should come who by his death, would pay in full the price of Adam's transgression.

It is not surprising that this person had to be a male when we consider the following:-

a) The law in Eden was given to Adam when he was the sole human on the earth. We are not told whether it was later expressly given to Eve, but undoubtedly she understood the law to be binding upon her also (Genesis 5:5). At any rate, Adam was the responsible party though not actually the first to transgress.

b) Eve was formed from Adam's rib and can still be regarded as being "in Adam" or part of Adam, or, as he himself said, "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:25), and in the same way that Levi is said to have paid tithes in Abraham (Hebrews 7:9), so also Eve may "be said to be in Adam.

c) God called their name Adam (Genesis 2), thus showing again that the man was responsible, and that the actions of Eve were done in, or under, his name.

B) The Saviour must be an Israelite.

This may not have been necessary for the salvation of the Gentiles, but for the Jews it was vital that he should be of their race, for they were under another law or system of laws, with its own benefits for adherents thereto and its own penalties for infringement. For some offences the penalty was death. Now, we read in Deut, 27:26, "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." and in James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Therefore the children at Israel needed to be redeemed from the death penalty - even those who might not have committed sins worthy of death, and to do this their redeemer must also be under the same law.

C) The Saviour must be sinless.

Obviously a man under the sentence of death cannot be bought back by someone under the same sentence, and so it is necessary that the redeemer should be guiltless.

D) The Saviour must have a life to give.

It is obvious that a man cannot be said to give his life for someone else if he is bound to die in any case. Therefore a redeemer must possess a life which cannot be taken from him without his consent.

E) The Saviour must be willing.

It would not be just to exact from an innocent person the penalty due to a sinner but if the innocent one willingly offers to die in the place of the sinner then there is no injustice.

### **How Jesus fulfilled all these conditions.**

A & B) Jesus was the son of Mary who was of the tribe of Judah. The law recognised Joseph, the husband of Mary, as the father of Jesus, but Joseph was also of the tribe of Judah.

C) There are many references which testify to the absolute sinlessness of Jesus.

For example:” “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Hebrews 7:26). “For He hath made Him to be sin (sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin.” (2 Corinthians 5:21). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust.” (1 Peter 5:18). “He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.” (1 John 5:5).

D) Adam was the first Son of God (See Luke 5:58); Jesus, though not a new creation was the only begotten Son of God, for although He was born of Mary, His life came direct from God who was His Father. For this reason He is called the second wan (1 Corinthians 15:47) or last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45). As Jesus had a life unforfeited by transgression he had the right to eat of the Tree of Life like the first Adam before his transgression. Jesus himself said; “As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). “I lay down my life that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself, I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.” (John 10;17). “I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6).

E) His voluntary submission to His Father’s will was as complete during the sufferings on the cross as throughout the whole of His lifetime - “I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). “I lay it down of myself (John 10:18). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:15). “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” (Matthew 26:59).

### **Why the Cross?**

It was His Father’s will that Jesus should endure the sufferings of the cross, and so we must conclude that those sufferings must have been absolutely necessary. A natural death (i.e. one due to old age or ‘natural causes’) would not have sufficed. Most of us die a natural death, but this is not the penalty of sin, as even innocent babies die. The wages of sin is an inflicted death from which we are saved by belief in Jesus who, though Himself sinless, took our punishment upon Himself. Thus, by His sacrifice, we have been permitted to have life (through Adam, whose life was spared on account of that sacrifice) and those who are accounted worthy will later receive life more abundantly, (see John 10:10).

Paul states that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (i.e. of sin) (Hebrews 9:22 also Leviticus 17:11). This was in relation to the Law of Moses which pointed forward to Christ (Col. 2:17 etc) and the principle still applies. Therefore the mode of death of the Saviour necessitated the shedding of His blood.

The Jewish method of execution was by stoning, but under the Roman law which was in force over the Jews at the time of Jesus, the method was crucifixion. Now, whereas it may be possible for a man to be stoned to death without the shedding of blood (by a blow on the head, for example) the crucifixion of Jesus made the shedding of blood a certainty, for His hands and feet were pierced in order to nail Him to the cross. (Much more blood was spilled later when His side was pierced with a spear).

But since the blood shedding could have been brought about some other way there must be some other reason for the use of a cross. Paul explains the reason to us in Galatians 5:10-14. As has been mentioned before, the Law of Moses contained a curse “for everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” It is written in Deut. 21:25 and quoted in Galatians 5:15 that “cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree,” By His suffering on that wooden cross Jesus took upon Himself that curse (of death) which the law held over the Jews, and by this means He redeemed the Jews from that curse “that the blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 5:14).

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God” - Romans 2:55.

Herbert Taberner.

“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... The phrase “sin-in-the-flesh” is metonymical. It is not expression of a literal element or principle pervading the physical organisation. Literally sin is disobedience, or act of rebellion.”

Robert Roberts.

“Death and corruption then, with reproduction, is a fundamental Law of the physical system of the six days... From these premises it will be seen that 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,”

Dr Thomas.

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## FALSE ACCUSATION

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Proverbs 18:15.

Learning not long ago that an address dealing with the so-called Clean Flesh Heresy was to be given to the Scotts Green ecclesia of the “Dawn” fellowship, the writer attended and was astounded to hear a Mr Shakespeare put forward an utterly false and misleading account of the beliefs of the Nazarene Fellowship.

He commenced by quoting from 1 John 4 “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the Spirit of Antichrist;” and he proceeded, to lay against us the charge that we teach that the flesh of Jesus Christ was different from the flesh of other men and therefore deny that He came in the flesh. It was abundantly clear that the speaker had never read any of the literature circulated by the Nazarene Fellowship nor had he any first-hand knowledge of what we believe, yet he had the impudence to stand up and attack us publicly and make these most serious and unfounded allegations.

We rose and protested against the speaker’s misrepresentation and pointed out the futility of an attack which first attributes to the opponent a doctrine he does not hold and then proceeds to demolish it. Finally, somewhat grudgingly, he allowed that possibly this writer personally did not affirm there was any difference in Jesus’ flesh but he stoutly maintained that his account of what the Clean Flesh Heresy consist in was correct. We challenged him to produce a scrap of evidence that anyone has ever suggested there was a difference between the flesh of Jesus and that of other men, but all we got was a round assertion “everybody knows that that is what ‘Clean Flesh’ means.”

It appears that there is in fact a very widespread misconception and it is the purpose of this book, among other things, to nail it down as a lie. We shall show where it originated and why it has been sedulously cultivated for more, than 80 years.

Let it be said at once, we accept the Apostles’ word that anyone who denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh would be an Antichrist, and if we did in fact believe or teach that the flesh of Jesus was different from ours we should deserve the opprobrium which Mr Shakespeare heaped upon us so unadvisedly; we should ourselves regard anyone who doubted the humanity of Jesus as practically certifiable; but the charge is as false as it is absurd.

It transpired that he had derived the information upon which his address was based from a booklet circulated by the "Dawn" fellowship entitled "The Past 100 Years" by W. J. White, in which this same false accusation is made against Edward Turney.

On page 4, "The First Declension - Clean Flesh" the author says, "We are referring of course to the heresy which has become known as Renunciationism." He affirms that Edward Turney taught that the nature of Jesus was different from others, but he gives no source, quotation or evidence or proof of his statement, so that it is evident that W. J. White's allegations are just as much a matter of hearsay as Mr Shakespeare's. We have probably read more than most people of what Edward Turney wrote and said, and challenge anyone to find one word of his which by any stretch of imagination whatsoever could imply that he believed Jesus' flesh was different from other men's. His lecture is available in print.

What Edward Turney did say was that there is a legal difference between Jesus and all other men, in the fact that His life came direct from God while all others are traceable back to Adam. He showed that there is no such thing as literal sin in human flesh, either in the flesh of Jesus or in the flesh of any other man, and it was his enemies who labelled his teaching 'Clean Flesh' and started the false rumours that he believed that Jesus' flesh was superior to ours. Robert Roberts was the man chiefly responsible for the almost complete misunderstanding current even today, and while we must recognise his outstanding character and achievements, it is evident that these were offset by some grave faults, not the least of which was his intolerance. It is probable that W. J. White has simply accepted without question the statement in "The Slain Lamb", page 5, that Edward Turney believed "that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh. They renounce the doctrine that he was the Son of Man."

If this had been the truth, the present writer would not be spending his strength to defend him or it; he would be in complete agreement with those who look on him as a heretic. But it is utterly and completely false. Neither he nor we ever affirmed that Jesus did not come in the flesh. Neither he nor we have ever renounced the doctrine that He was the Son of Man.

It is not however a very good principle in a writer or a speaker to derive his information concerning a person's position from his opponents or the unsupported testimony of his critics; even a criminal is allowed to be heard in his own defence. We could have had more respect for the author of "The Past 100 Years" if, before slandering one who has gone where he can no longer defend himself he had taken the trouble to read "The Sacrifice of Christ" and get to know just what he is up against. More especially, one could expect a writer of any judgement to "be cautious of accepting Robert Roberts' statement on page 5 of "The Slain Lamb" that "they renounce the doctrine that he was the Son of Man," since on page 6 of the same work he says "The Renunciationist Heresy makes him a mere man."

How anyone could "deny that Jesus came in the flesh" and at the same time "make him a mere man" is rather difficult to understand, and before coming to the conclusion that there was some inexplicable complication in Edward Turney's teaching, the reader might consider whether the explanation of the contradiction was not Robert Roberts' determination at all costs to obscure the true issue. It was this: was the purpose of the Virgin Birth, to endow Jesus with special power to resist sin, or was it to produce a man who was legally in a position to make an offering for sin?

As Mr White says, this was the first division in the community and, like all divisions it is to be regretted. What is immeasurably more of a pity is that the majority were in the wrong and (as we were informed recently in a letter from a Christadelphian of over 90 who actually remembers the events) had imposed upon them by the oppressive personality of Robert Roberts a doctrine which he himself had dismissed as imagination only shortly before.

The same correspondent also says. Since reading "Too True to be New" I am satisfied Bro. Brady that you have the truth and things which have puzzled me for over seventy years are now clear."

The truth of the matter is this; there is no difference between us as to the fact that Jesus did really come in actual flesh - the same human flesh as that of His mother and brothers and sisters and all other men. We believe this heartily and sincerely and so did Edward Turney and the publication of "The Past 100 Years" is a shame and a dishonour to its author and those responsible for its publication. To reject the belief that the

flesh of Jesus was sinful is not to deny that he came in the flesh, for just as forcibly we reject the belief that we ourselves or even the most depraved sinner have sinful flesh. The question Edward Turney raised concerning Jesus was not a question of flesh but of the relation which he (Jesus) bore to the law of sin and death in contrast to that of all other men. Whether this is understood and accepted, or whether it is rejected depends upon the capacity and the conscience of the individual. It is a simple enough matter, and if men's minds had not been cluttered up with all the rubbish resulting from the idea that original sin is the cause of natural corruption little more would need to be said. It is, however, necessary to show how all aspects of the Gospel hinge upon it and that is why it is necessary to deal in detail with the beliefs and writings of those who hold it.

All we are concerned about is to remove the misunderstanding and enable people to have a fair look at the alternatives. They have the right and a duty to make up their own minds, and we make no complaint if after hearing both sides, the view we believe to be the right one is rejected. What we do complain of is seeing and hearing our beliefs either wilfully or ignorantly misrepresented so that people are not in a position to judge.

It has been & source of considerable comfort and & vindication of the good judgement of the average person when he has the true facts before him, that since the events referred to above nine members of the "Dawn" Fellowship have realised the hopelessness of the Christadelphian position and have been re-baptised into the true faith of Jesus Christ "who without spot offered Himself to God." Hebrews 9:14.

Extract from "What God Hath Cleansed" by Ernest Brady.

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"Now the blood of Jesus Christ was more precious than the life-blood of any other man. If it had not been so, it would have been inadequate to the purchase for the world... 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 an unblemished man, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; for 'He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.'"

Dr Thomas. Eureka, Vol. 1 page 278.

We have been told that we have some mysterious idea about the life and nature of Jesus. Well, as we entirely agree with Dr Thomas you charge him also. 1 Peter 1:19 says the blood of Jesus was precious. Wherein was Jesus RICH and we POOR? 2 Corinthians 8:9 "though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28).

Extract from "Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver."

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### **Extract from a letter sent to Michael Ashton, Editor of "The Christadelphian" magazine in February 1988:-**

"There is just one point which, to me is so very important and I would be most grateful to receive your considered reply to it and it is this:- As there are many very sincere and earnest Brethren and Sisters who do not believe any change took place in Adam's flesh when he disobeyed God's command and ate of the forbidden Tree, where does one turn to in the Scriptures for the infallible, unassailable and essential proof that Adam's flesh was changed in order to counter such beliefs? I find it very easy to express this view as an opinion but where is the necessary proof which shows beyond all reasonable doubt that the change in Adam's flesh took place?



I am sure you will understand when I say this matter has exercised my mind quite considerably of late and I feel I need help in finding the answers.”

Unfortunately, no reply was received and this was the end of eight months of correspondence.

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## Why We Changed

I will endeavour to show in this article why having lovingly held for 14 years that form of doctrine known as “The Truth” by Christadelphians we have sorrowfully had to leave them.

We will first consider Adam: When dealing with those who believe in immortal souls, we show Adam was created a living soul, not given one, and go on to explain that we are still the same today. However, when considering man’s nature, we say there was a change.

Let us consider; was there a change? I honestly cannot find mention of one in scripture; and was there need for one? If Adam could, and we are told he did, sin in the nature he was created in, what was the need for a changed one? It is claimed that a physical change took place, but what was physically wrong with Adam? It would appear not much, for we read that he still could have lived for ever had he not been barred from the Tree of Life.

If natural death was the punishment for Adam’s sin, then God not only punished Adam but all He had created. This does not appear to be a God of love. It can be seen however, by careful study, that the death by sin, that entered the world through Adam, was an inflicted death. We read that it was to happen to him the day that he sinned, yet we find he lived on. Why?

It is clear that had he died on that day, the earth would have been left without people, and we know God wishes to have people to worship Him. Therefore something stopped Adam dying that day. What was it? We read God clothed him with skins, which means some animal had to die. A sacrifice had been made. Adam had brought death into the world by his sin, but the shedding of blood was a remission for him, but not a full redemption. The blood of animals could not do this. (Hebrews 10:4).

Adam, having sold himself to sin, all born of him came under the same master, however. God, in His mercy, promised the woman a seed who would release them (Genesis 3:15). The seed of the woman was also foreshadowed in the sacrificial animal, which we find by reading to be a lamb, and that lamb, that seed of the woman, to be the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us go on to consider our Lord. We read that he was the Lamb to take away the sin of the world. (John 1:29), the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8). This was Christ’s purpose then - the ransom to buy back to God, from sin, Adam and Adam’s seed. We have been taught that our Lord was also Adam’s seed and that He had to die because of it. But where in scripture does it say so? Christ was the seed of the woman promised; God was His Father. Who would deny this? God’s only begotten Son, the second Adam, the only man who could truly say “I proceed forth and came from God; ye are of your father, the devil” (sin) (John 8:42-44). Also “For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself” (John 5:26). Also “No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:8). Does not this clearly show that His life was not of Adam, and except for us, our Lord had no need to die? Was His death not “the Just for the unjust”? (1 Peter 3:18). Can we not begin to see the beauty of His loving act, dying for our sins? Galatians 1:4; Isaiah 53; Romans 4:25). Giving His life for us? (John 10:11; 1 Corinthians 5:9; 1 Peter 2:24). Do we not see a wonderful beauty in this and give thanks?

We read in the scriptures that all we must do to get out of Adam and become Christ's is to go through the waters of baptism, thereby symbolically dying, and moving out of Adam into Christ. As we remain the same person physically, that must rule out again the physical change to Adam's nature.

To go back to the physical change teaching for a moment, we are taught that flesh and blood, cannot be faithful, that we have a bias to sin. Was not our Lord flesh and blood? Did He sin? The answer to the first question is yes. He was made like unto His brethren (Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 4:15) and to the second question, no. Who will deny this? Therefore it is possible to overcome. Read again the list of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19). Is there anything there that cannot be overcome? Likewise with the list of the spiritual fruits (Galatians 5:22,25). Is there anything there that cannot be attained to?

If we read honestly we can find many righteous people in the scriptures, ones who have overcome for themselves, but without power to redeem their brothers (Psalm 49:7) because they are the seed of Adam. Which again shows Christ cannot have been, or we are yet without hope.

Dear readers, there are many other things we could consider, but we shall look at only one more. The subject of the resurrection. We have been taught a mortal resurrection. But let us read again. Consider Paul (1 Corinthians 15:42-55). All the verses show a contrast between the natural and the spiritual, but verse 52 is emphatic - "the dead shall be raised incorruptible." Revelation 20:6 reads "Blessed and holy is he (she) that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power."

We have been taught of a mixed mortal resurrection and a judgement where some are cast out. But do we not read (1 Thessalonians 4:16) "the dead in Christ rise first", not a mixed body of people? Consider again all the scriptures relating to judgement in their context. Consider again what there is to answer for if we are truly in Christ, Do we not make a new start at our baptism? Have we not a mediator? (1 Timothy 5:5). Is He not willing to intercede for us should we fail and confess? (Hebrews 7:25) Is not God faithful to forgive? Read again Hebrews 10:9-25. What then remaineth to answer for?

The answer is we have been taught a lie, therefore we have changed, for no lie is of the truth. We would appeal to any who read this, if believing it to be scriptural that if they have been baptised by a community believing our Lord had to die for Himself, please consider your standing and put on the Christ who died only for us, as we have done this day.

Eric and Lillian Moore.

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### **Extract from "Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver"**

"Make His death a penalty due to Himself personally, and you destroy both aspects of His loving obedience, for there is no virtue whatever in submitting to a penalty legally due to oneself."

H. Fry.

Could anything be plainer or more beautiful? We believe not. In our words, could anyone in any sort of bondage free himself, much less any other? Let these words enter into your heart with the sweet knowledge that Jesus was without sin, the Just dying for the unjust.

# An Open Letter

It was in 1955 that I first came to realise the simple and beautiful truth about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The truth dawned on me as I read the “booklet “by the late Brother Ernest Brady “Too True to be New.” Since that time, some 33 years ago, the subject has been very often in my thoughts and I must say that it has profoundly affected my life and outlook.

The substitutionary explanation of the Atonement is obviously true - when we come to realise that it is purely conjectural to think that the disobedience of Adam and Eve changed their natures - when we see that their relationship to God changed.

A lot of misunderstanding has arisen over this matter, not only between the Nazarene Fellowship and Christadelphians, but down the centuries among the Protestant Churches. The Catholics, however, share the Christadelphian view, i.e. the Representative Theory.

Nowhere in Genesis does it say that Adam’s nature was changed. In the indictment by God however, Adam was reminded of salient facts about himself and Eve – his mortality from his creation and that until his ultimate return to the ground, his life would no longer be easy, and that Eve would know pain in childbirth. Nowhere does the record state “a bias for evil” was then implanted within them. The threat of death in the event of disobedience was not carried out, but the animal which was sacrificed, did lose its life and Adam and Eve were temporarily covered lay and with its skin. Adam clearly paid in part for his disobedience, but not with his life. Indeed he lived a long, long time after all this and became the father of all living.

There was a breakdown in relationship between Adam and Eve and God, but Adam was spared by God, or the human race would have ended there and then.

The penalty (wages) of sin is death (oblivion), but the gift of God is eternal life, now, through Jesus Christ our Lord, and the last enemy to be destroyed is physical death. It is not sin to exist. It is sin to break God’s laws.

The price of Adam’s sin had to be paid ultimately, and Jesus brought to the cross two main qualifications - He was not the Son of Adam, but the Son of God, and, as Son of Mary He kept the law perfectly. Indeed, He was born of a woman under the law, which law He kept perfectly. It was therefore not human nature He condemned in His sacrificial death on the cross, but sin, wherever and whenever it held sway.

If we refuse to accept this and prefer to believe that the Lamb of God, prepared from the foundation of the world, was in fact as condemned as those He came to save, that is up to us, and when we stand before Him we can tell Him so at our peril, Would we really dare to say “Oh yes Lord, I did this and that, but You remember I could not help it.”? The “Divine Court” may resound with laughter, because the fact is, it is not our “natures” that let us down, it is our characters. We are nevertheless, not perfect but if we confess our sins to the Throne of Grace He is faithful to forgive us for Christ’s sake, who died a Ransom for many,

Sincerely your brother, Harold Dawson.

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## Concluding Remarks

To summarise, then, we of the Nazarene Fellowship are in agreement with much of what is proclaimed week by week from Christadelphian platforms and we are very grateful for the experience of being in, or having been in the Christadelphian community. Our difference is seen in regard to the transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden for the Bible gives no evidence of any change taking place in their

physical Nature. This being so Adam and Eve did not have sin abiding in their flesh as if it were a physical attribute, so neither could such a condition be passed on to their offspring. It follows then that Jesus Christ could not have had sin-in-the-flesh and therefore it was quite unnecessary for Him to have had to die for Himself to cleanse Himself of this supposed defilement.

Our understanding of the Atonement is in keeping with the early Christadelphians and it is a sobering thought to realise that anyone holding the view that Adam's nature was changed to sin-in-the-flesh nature would have been refused baptism prior to the change of direction of Robert Roberts in the 1870's. We are sure that if this false teaching was corrected it would naturally follow on to be seen that Jesus Christ died only for us, which gives Him the greater honour.

Jesus Christ loved us to the utmost and asks us to love one another likewise. It is in this spirit of love that we have prepared this Circular Letter and now offer it to you for your careful thought. May we ask you to give it more than a superficial reading, for we have endeavoured to honour and glorify our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ for their great love and mercy which they have shown to us in calling us out to be a special people, giving us every opportunity to seek the way of life and in providing for our every need.

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” This cleansing, this purifying, this annulling of sin, is the work of God in Jesus Christ and this reference to Isaiah 1:18 is the occasion of our Creator's invitation to come and reason with Him upon this very subject, God is not the author of confusion and it is our desire that we together, may search the scriptures, rightly dividing the word, for the truth of these matters, not for our glory, but for His. God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord. Let us render to the Father and the Son all the honour that is their due.

Can we possibly give more honour to our Creator than He merits? Of course we cannot! Or to the Son more than He merits? Again, we cannot. So let us see which gives Jesus Christ the greater honour - to say He had to die, or to say He chose to die? Again we ask which gives Jesus Christ the greater honour - to say, though He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin because He exercised His free will with great determination and thereby overcame every temptation, or to say He was able to overcome because He was given special strength to do so?

We must surely answer such questions for ourselves rather than leaving it to others to give us their answers.

Jesus said “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they ere they which testify of me.” Let us be certain we have eternal life, for there is not much time left before He comes again.

“Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead that Shepherd of the sheep (made great by the blood of an Aeonian Covenant) even our Lord Jesus, knit you together in every good work, in order to do His will; producing in you that which is well pleasing in His presence, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for the Ages of the Ages.” (Hebrews 15:20-21. Emphatic Diaglott)

Amen.