

The TRUTH Concerning The Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

- The Christadelphian position vindicated

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking of the “exceeding abundant” grace of God, the Apostle declared “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, *that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*” (1 Tim 1:15). Here, in these few words, we have a wonderful declaration of the purpose of Christ - to save sinners. But as sinners who seek to be saved by him, we need to try to look at the matter further. We need to have a clear understanding of *why* we are sinners, *why* we need saving, and *how* we can be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ. Only then can we say that we “know” the Lord Jesus Christ (Jno 17:3), and share his victory over sin.

But we also need to understand how the salvation of man through Christ Jesus fits in to the overall purpose of God. The Creator’s original purpose, as we shall see, was to populate the entire earth with a single family, each of whom displayed His Glorious Attributes. But the fall of Adam through sin resulted instead with the earth being populated with dying sinners, who have no regard for the Almighty. Does this mean that the Purpose of God will fail? By no means, for it will be accomplished through the eventual removal of Sin. Through the provision of His only Son, who was after His Image and Likeness, God has initiated a means of redemption, so that ultimately wickedness and sin shall be destroyed, and the earth shall be filled with the Divine Family, consisting of Christ and his Brethren.

This understanding of the Atonement is unique amongst Christadelphians. Yet this teaching, the most central pivot of our faith is under attack, not just by those outside, but also from the enemy within. Misunderstanding and erroneous teachings on the subject abound. Even amongst those who do not themselves hold error, there is an evident lack of discernment. In 1971, Bro HP Mansfield wrote: “It is a fact that some occupying positions of authority in the Ecclesias, do not know Andrewism when they see it, though they wax eloquent about the ‘blasphemy’ of certain statements that are in accordance with the Truth” (*Logos, July 1971, p. 382*) The same is true today, as the same destructive errors that our earlier brethren had to contend against are eating at the Body like a canker (2 Tim 2:17), in some cases being openly taught by prominent brethren, seemingly without hindrance or opposition.

This booklet is produced in response to these false teachers; its purpose is to present a defence for the Christadelphian position of the Atonement, as believed by Brethren Thomas and Roberts by demonstrating its soundness from the Scriptures. “The Law and the Testimony” (Is 8:20) was their only authority, as ours; it is only by searching the word of God, that we can come to understand this wonderful subject. It is our hope that both those experienced in the Truth and those newly baptised might be encouraged by this short work to study it afresh, to understand the beauty of how the

Almighty Creator demonstrated His Love to all mankind by giving His Only Begotten Son to die that we might be reconciled to Him. And when we behold the beauty of the Truth, we shall be able to see all other theories for what they really are - nothing more than the fables of men.

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

We have already seen that that it was necessary for Christ to die in order to “save sinners”. But in the Divine Scheme of things, the salvation of men rather than being an end in itself, is the means whereby the Greater Purpose of the Creator will be achieved. We have an indication of this in Psalm 85:5; “Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; *that* glory may dwell in our land”. From this, we learn that salvation is provided to those who fear Yahweh for a purpose - that Glory, that is, God's Glory, may dwell in the land (*cp Zech 2:5*). And although “our land”, here is clearly referring to the Land of Israel, the Scriptures testify that Jerusalem will be the centre of the Purpose of God with all the earth. When the Kingdom is restored to Israel (*Acts 1:6*), it will be a kingdom which will extend across the whole world (*Dan 2:35*), and so when Glory is dwelling in the Land of Israel, it also shall fill the whole earth as the following testimonies show:

“I will set my glory *among the heathen*” (*Ezek 39:21*)

“But as truly as I live, *all the earth* shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh” (*Num 14:21*)

“Blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let *the whole earth* be filled with his glory; Amen and Amen” (*Psa 72:19*)

“Holy, holy, holy is Yahweh of hosts: *the whole earth* is full of his glory” (*Is 6:3*)

“for *the earth* shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh, as the waters cover the sea” (*Hab 2:14*).

So then, because of “his salvation”, the Glory of God shall dwell in all the earth, that is, in a world-wide kingdom, with Israel as it's nucleus. But what is God's Glory? And How will it fill the earth?

THE GLORY OF YAHWEH REVEALED TO MOSES

The great prophet Moses asked to see God's Glory, saying, “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory”. And the answer duly came, “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Yahweh before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy” (*Ex 33:19*). Notice that when Moses asked to see God's glory, he was told that he would see God's Goodness! We may conclude from this, that the Glory of God is His Goodness. But, wherein does the Glorious Goodness of God consist? The answer is in what happened next: “And Yahweh passed by before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh, Yahweh God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering,

and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty ...” (*Verses 6,7*).

All of these wonderful qualities are the various attributes that collectively form the Goodness, and Glory of Almighty God. This then is what it means for the earth to be filled with God’s glory - it will be filled with His Glorious Attributes. But how can all the earth be filled with these? By being populated by a multitude who are in His Image! As it is written, “Thus saith Yahweh that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it *to be inhabited*: I am Yahweh; and there is none else” (*Is 45:18*).

THE FATHER’S PURPOSE WITH ADAM

The purpose of Adam and his wife was to populate the earth with those who were in God’s Likeness, as we can see from Genesis Chapter 1: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ... so God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (*Gen 1:26,27*). And so, the Creator formed beings who were to be in both His Image and Likeness, and that of the heavenly host (indicated by the plural, “our”). In this way, Adam, as a son (*Luke 3:18*) was to show the Character of his Father-maker.

From Adam’s side was formed Eve, also therefore, in God’s Image. And whilst the pair were in their sinless

state, God “blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill (*Heb.*) the earth” (*Gen 1:28*).

It was from Adam, therefore, that there was to come this great multitude of men and women, each of whom being in the Image of God - that would constitute the Glory which would fill the whole earth. But Adam failed. As the Apostle declares, “... by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”. And so there came instead a race of death-stricken sinners, who although they are still in the physical image of their Creator (*Jas 3:9*) fail to show the moral attributes, which comprise His Glory.

CHRIST - THE IMAGE OF GOD

But, the Lord Jesus succeeded where Adam failed. Of all men, he only was truly the “Image of God” (*2 Cor 4:4*), being “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person” (*Heb 1:3*). He only could say, “I have glorified thee on the earth” (*Jno 17:4*) and so it is through him that the Father’s purpose might yet be accomplished, for he is the only One who bore the weakness of human mortality, yet overcame.

Yet those who are his brethren, having found forgiveness in him, are also called upon to forsake Sin and show forth the Glory of their Heavenly Father. Even though they cannot do so as perfectly as their Lord, they must strive to overcome the flesh, and reflect the Glorious

Attributes of Yahweh. And so it is written of the purpose of God in relation to the believers, "to them who are the called *according to his purpose* ... whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate (lit *marked out before*) to be *conformed to the image of his Son*, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (*Rom 8:28-29*). As we seek to put off "the old man", we endeavour to be like the Lord Jesus, and so like his Father. We "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (*Col 3:10*). We have our sins forgiven in Christ, and although we yet labour under the burden of mortal weakness, we are assured of a time yet future when "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (*1Jno 3:2*), that is, free from the Law of Sin and Death rejoicing with him in Immortality.

This, then is the great work of our Saviour. When we come to consider the Lord Jesus Christ, we must not do so simply in the context of Human Salvation. Rather, we must see the salvation of a multitude as being a means to achieving that greater purpose, whereby God might manifest Himself on earth. This is the ultimate aim: to populate the earth with an immortal multitude of men and women, who have sought to develop the Attributes of God in their lives, having been redeemed through the shed blood of our Lord. And this will be the final result, for after the Millennial Age of fleshly subjection, the Kingdom will be delivered up to the Father, "that God may be all in all" (*1 Cor 15:28*), that is, that all of God (i.e. all His Glorious Attributes) may be in all of man (i.e. the immortal multitude who will show His Glory).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION

In 'The Christadelphian' in 1889 (when Bro Roberts was editor), Bro B J Dowling wrote: "We cannot have a proper understanding of the death of the second Adam unless we have a clear perception of the cause of the death of the first ... When Adam roamed in the beautiful fields of Eden he was not hampered with the shackles of sin, groaning under the bondage of corruption, with sorrow of heart and bodily pain. No; his home was one of 'joy and gladness', and he 'a living soul', neither mortal nor immortal, but entirely free from the 'power of death'. But the transgression brought both a moral and physical change. His flesh and blood nature was then no longer free from the principle of death. There was infixed in it the seeds of decay, which ultimately brought forth death. His flesh became *diabolos* flesh, or 'sinful flesh'. Sin became a law of his being - a physical principle in his constitution. This principle was denominated '*sin in the flesh*,' and it was transmitted to all his descendants, Jesus Christ included, whose genealogy is traced back to Adam in the third chapter of Luke."

This epitomises standard Christadelphian teaching, that Adam's offence had a twofold effect, moral and physical, which also affected all who came from

him. The penalty for disobedience to God's law is recorded in Genesis 3, where in verse 19, Adam was told, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". And so the process of corruption began, with travail and suffering as part of that process. But the consequence of Adam's offence was a condemnation which affected the whole of Creation, not just man. For instance, we read that the ground was cursed, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake ... thorns and thistles shall it bring forth ..." (*Gen 3:17,18*). All animals were cursed, as the Lord said to the Serpent, who bore a greater condemnation: "thou art cursed *above all cattle, and above every beast of the field*". Thus it was that in the day that "death" came "by sin", the physical condition of Adam's nature was changed, the process of mortality began, and since that day, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (*Rom 8:22*).

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

But Adam's offence, as well as having an effect on the rest of Creation, also affects his descendants, for all his progeny inherit his condemned nature. From the Fall onwards both he and those who came from him came to possess the principle of sin and death in their physical make-up. Consider the following testimonies:

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, *and so death passed upon all men*, for that all have sinned" (*Rom 5:12*)

"Through the offence of one, many be dead" (*Rom 5:15*)

"Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgement came upon *all men* to condemnation" (*Rom 5:18*)

"For by one man's disobedience, many were *made sinners*" (*Rom 5:19*)

"As in Adam all die ..." (*1Cor 15:22*)

As Bro Dowling shows, because we are descended from Adam, although we are innocent of his offence, a judgement to "condemnation" falls upon us - the condemnation of death. In other words, we have as part of our physical constitution what the Apostle describes as "the law of sin and death" (*Rom 8:2*). What Bro Dowling calls the "seeds of decay" became fixed principles within Adamic nature. This is why babies, who have done no sin (*Rom 9:11*) die, for although they are guiltless of Adam's transgression, they possess a condemned nature, having the law of sin and death as part of their constitution - a misfortune which no son of Adam can avoid. This simple fact is plainly taught in the BASF: "That Adam broke this law, and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground

from whence he was taken - a sentence *which defiled and became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity*".

Bro Roberts clearly summarised the matter thus: "The position of men was that they were under condemnation to die because of sin, and that not their own sin, in the first instance, but ancestral sin at the beginning. The forgiveness of personal offences is the prominent feature of the apostolic proclamation, because personal offences are the greater barrier. Nevertheless, men are mortal because of sin, quite independently of their own transgressions" (*The Law of Moses, p173*).

THE INHERITANCE OF A SINFUL NATURE

Having transgressed, Adam was now constituted a sinner, and began to experience the effect of divine displeasure - dying, he did die. And once sin had conceived in his mind, he developed a tendency to continue in sin, a tendency which was passed down to his children as he was soon to discover, for his first son was a murderer. The simple truth is that Adam became a dying sinner, and so all who have come from him since are also dying sinners, for we inherit his dying, sinful nature.

That the bias to commit sin passed to all Adam's progeny is amply shown in Scripture. Natural man is graphically described in Gen 6:5, "God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually". And again, "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (*Gen 8:21*). This emphasises the truth of Paul's inspired words as quoted above, "By one man's disobedience *many were made sinners*". As a direct consequence of what Adam did, all who come from him are born into a situation whereby it is inevitable that they also will become sinners, as they inherit his sinful nature. How different this is to the "very good" state in which Man was created! How truly the Apostle was able to declare, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing" (*Rom 7:18*).

But this inherent bias in the flesh, the cause of transgression in all of Adam's children is itself called "sin" in the scriptures. Bro. Thomas wrote: "The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, *'the transgression of the law'*, and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh *'which has the power of death'*; and it is called sin, because the development, or fixation of this evil in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh", that is, *'flesh full of sin'*"; so that sin in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man. In human flesh "dwells no good thing"; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him" (*Elpis Israel, pp 126,127*).

The point of this passage, is that we are born with such a powerful tendency to transgress, that the fact of our becoming sinners is inevitable. And because this tendency is present as a consequence of Adam's sin, and because it can itself only lead to sin, the Scripture speaks of it as being sin: "sinful flesh" (*Rom 8:3*), "sin that dwelleth in me" (*Rom 7:17*), "the motions of sins" which "work in our members" (*Rom 7:5*). The nature, or flesh of man is inherently sinful. Sin is a condition as well as an act. Not in the sense that we bear any guilt, or that we need to be forgiven for being born Human! Rather, we suffer under the physical condition of sin, which will inevitably manifest itself in actual transgression. This point is vital for us to understand, in order to understand the whole point of Christ's Sacrifice. In order for Mankind to be ultimately restored to friendship with God, the cause of sin, sin in the flesh itself has to be overcome. This was achieved in the Lord Jesus, for he came to condemn (*Rom 8:3*) and destroy (*Heb 2:14*) it, in order to provide a foundation upon which we might be ultimately cleansed from sin, both physically, and morally. It is for this reason that this booklet focuses on the problem of our nature - it is only by overcoming the root cause of sin that forgiveness might be possible.

METONYMY

We have shown above, that although the principal sense of "sin" in Scripture is to describe acts of transgression, our human nature must have within it sinful tendencies for the act to take place. And the Spirit also uses "sin" to describe those resident tendencies, because they come from, and produce only sin. This form of speech (i.e., putting cause for effect) is known as "metonymy". Bro Roberts spoke of this: "Now what is this element called 'uncleanness', 'sin', 'iniquity', etc? *The difficulty experienced by some in the solution of this question, arises from a disregard of the secondary use of terms.* Knowing that sin is the act of transgression, they read "act of transgression" every time they see the term sin, *ignoring the fact that there is a metonymy in the use of all words which apply even to sin*". And again, "*A disregard for metonymy ... has led to most of the errors of the apostasy; and is leading some back to them who had escaped*" (*The Christadelphian, 1874*)

So then, the term "sin" describes the actual act of transgression, which we are morally accountable for. But in a different sense, a *metonymical* sense, it also describes the desires of the flesh that gives rise to these offences. One reason why the condition of our nature is described as "sin", is that it came into existence as a direct cause of sin - this is Metonymy of cause, the cause is put for the effect. But there is another, more significant sense in which the desires of the flesh can be described as being sinful; they can produce nothing but sin (*Rom 7:17,20,23, Jas 1:14*). This is a Metonymy of effect, where the effect is put for the cause. Bro Roberts explained it very succinctly thus: "My conception is this, that death became a physical law of Adam's nature in consequence of Adam's sin; that it became so by the power of the sentence of death operating physically upon him, as the sentence of life at the

judgement seat will operate physically upon the bodies of the accepted, causing them to become incorruptible; that becoming a part of his being, it was therefore necessarily transmitted to all of Adam's posterity who partook of that death-stricken being by physical descent, and became in them also a tendency to moral corruption; that, therefore, as the whole mischief originated in sin, taking effect in the flesh, it could, by casual language, and on that principle of metonymy (putting cause for effect), be described as sin in the flesh: "sin that dwelleth in me" (Preface to *Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility*).

The *effect* of the inherent bias we possess is that we inevitably commit sin. Therefore, that bias, the *cause* is itself described as sin. This does not mean that "sin in the flesh" is not a reality of sin as some claim, we shall show this in the next section. Rather it explains why it is referred to in this way. Metonymy describes sin as cause and effect, a fundamental truth of our nature. By being descended from Adam, we are born with the physical condition of sin. This, we inherit, it "is our misfortune, not our crime that we possess it" (*Elpis Israel*, P 77).

SIN IN THE FLESH IS REAL!

There are some who cannot accept that there is a physical condition of sin, which in itself does not in any way involve guilt, or need forgiveness and therefore deny that there is such a real thing as "sin in the flesh" (*Rom 8:38:3*). They misunderstand metonymy, and claim that "sin in the flesh" is simply a figure, or metaphor for the acts of sin which we will inevitably commit, and is not sin in a real sense. But this cannot be so, for if "sin in the flesh" is not actual and real, then God, when he sent "his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" did not condemn sin in an actual and real way, but only by a figure of speech! And, if sin was not condemned in reality, what provision is there for forgiveness in reality? This view of things reduces all of the wonderful principles of the Atonement into nothing more than a figure of speech, which leaves *real* sin uncondemned! But this notion that the flesh itself is not sinful in any real way, is not a new theory, it has its roots in Turney's Clean Flesh heresy that Bro. Roberts opposed. In "The Slain Lamb", Bro. Roberts says of a lecture given by Turney:

"I will quote from the notes I made: "There is nothing evil in the flesh. Sin is not in the flesh, but sin is in the character. Sin applies to the character and not to the flesh" ... Now what is character, brothers? Is it not the manifestation of the qualities of the flesh? I could understand an immortal soulist talking like this; but how you can understand a man talking in this way who recognises that the flesh thinks, and that character is but the outward manifestations of that thinking flesh is difficult to say. It is a marvellous piece of newborn wisdom to say that

“sinful” applies to the character but not to the substance that produces the character. That it does apply to the thing that produces it we shall see. Paul's definitions are more philosophical than Edward Turney's, for Paul goes to the root of the matter, and says that “in the flesh dwelleth no good”.

“What Paul says is absolutely true, that the mind of the flesh is an evil and a sinful thing”

“Romans 7, immediately preceding supplies the sense of the words “flesh of sin” used in Rom 8:3. Galatians 5 and all New Testament allusions teach that the flesh of human nature is a sinful thing” (*The Slain Lamb*).

To say that the element in the human constitution which leads to transgression is called sin because it came from and produces sin does not mean that it is not sin in a real sense. The Lord Jesus warned his disciples, “Beware of false prophets ... ye shall know them by their fruits ... every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (*Mat 7:16,18*). Thus, the nature of the tree, or prophet is determined by what is produced. A tree, or prophet that produces evil fruit is known to be corrupt. Upon the same principle, because the natural propensity of man is to produce nothing but sin, it is determined to be sinful. Would any deny that a prophet producing evil fruit is false and evil in reality? Only those unenlightened by Divine things would suggest this. Why then, do some doubt that our nature which produces evil works is anything other than evil and sinful? The principle of Metonymy then, does not in any way dispense with the reality, rather it explains the reality of sin in both cause and effect.

WE ARE NOT GUILTY OF ADAM'S SIN

There are those who believe that we are in some way held accountable for Adam's transgression. They reason that because we have “sin” by being descended from Adam, in some way it is his sin which is being legally imputed to us. Yet, this would be unjust, and against the revealed ways of God (*see Ezek 18:2-4,20*). The truth of the matter is that although we in no sense bear any guilt, or are held accountable in any way for what Adam did, we do bear the consequences of it, just like the rest of Creation did. Like an infant who contracts a loathsome disease in the womb from it's mother, we inherit the disease of sin. Because our first parents were sinful, dying creatures, so are we, for “who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (*Job 14:4*). We are no more guilty for this, than the ground is guilty for being cursed, bringing forth thistles, or the animal creation for being cursed - both as a direct consequence of Adam's sin. Yet, these are the circumstances we have to labour under in the present constitution; the whole of Creation is under condemnation, and we have the disease of sin, the cure being provided in Christ, the Great Physician.

SEPARATION FROM GOD

Bro. Roberts explained the condition of alienation from God thus: “in the state of nature, we are totally without hope or comfort; that sin reigns unto death in every member of the human family, that judgement hath passed upon all men unto condemnation ... we are by nature the children of wrath. We are born into a state of sin and under condemnation. We are made subject to vanity, though not willingly ... in Adam we are in the grip of an irrevocable destiny which makes us strangers in Creation” (*Seasons of Comfort*, p 104).

We have shown that from the moment we are born, we have a tendency to transgress, having the principle of Sin dwelling within us (*Rom 7:17*). But because of our inability to overcome this physical condition, the seeds of sin produces its corrupt fruits in acts of rebellion, and we become “estranged”, or “alienated” from God, as was Adam. As it is written, “the wicked are *estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born*, speaking lies” (*Psalms 58:3*). And again, in expounding these things, the Apostle wrote “... in time past ye walked according to ... the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were *by nature (Gr. from birth) the children of wrath*, even as others” (*Eph 2:3*). Even from birth, the desires of sinful flesh begin to lead us astray, so that we become deserving only of the wrath of God for the transgressions we inevitably commit.

As the means of reconciliation comes through the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to understand how we are separated from God. From the above, we have seen that one thing which is a cause of separation, is wicked works, succumbing to the flesh (*Col 1:21, Is 59:2*). Another cause is ignorance (*Eph 4:18*), for how can God be at one with someone who is unaware of His existence? And also, “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be” (*Rom 8:7*).

THE CARNAL MIND

The “carnal mind”, or more accurately, the “minding of the flesh” is a whole way of thinking; which develops through constantly succumbing to sin in the flesh. By definition therefore neither the carnal mind, nor the “motions of sins” that lead to its development can be brought under God’s Law, they are “enmity” against Him, for sin cannot exist in God’s Dominion. It must be destroyed, and overcome, as it was in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus, Bro. Thomas wrote: “The Old Man of Sin’s flesh, who is the devil cannot be converted. His destiny is destruction; “for this purpose was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy the “*works of the Devil*”, or the

works of the flesh, which are the same things; and “forasmuch as the children (of his Father) are partakers of flesh and blood, he (the Son) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, *the Devil*” (1Jno 3:8, Heb 2:14)” (*Phanerosis p 42*).

Again, in describing the carnal mind, Bro Thomas wrote that it is “a hideous deformity, whose conception is referable to the infidelity and disobedience of our first parents: by whom “sin entered into the world, and death by sin”. It is *the serpent mind*; because it was through his untruthful reasonings believed, that a like mode of thinking to his was generated in the heart of Eve and her husband. The seed sown there by the Serpent was corruptible seed. Hence the carnal mind, or thinking of the flesh, unenlightened by the truth, is *the serpent in the flesh*. It was for this reason that Jesus styled his enemies, “serpents, and a generation of vipers” (*Elpis Israel, p 91*)

This fleshly way of thinking which is at enmity with God, is developed from the principle of sin which dwells in us. So before we can be truly reconciled to God, we need to be physically cleansed from this principle. As Bro Roberts said in his debate with J J Andrew, “the whole human race is in a state of alienation from Him; it can only become reconciled by coming into harmony with him, and sinful flesh cannot be in harmony with him” (*A Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility*).

So there is *within our very nature itself* something which is at enmity with God, as it leads only to a fleshly, sinful way of thinking, something which it is His Purpose to ultimately destroy, and which was perfectly condemned in His Son. Bro H P Mansfield wrote, “Sin in the flesh cannot be atoned for, reconciled to God, or redeemed, though its possessors may be. It must be “mortified”, “put to death”, “crucified”, and the nature “changed” (*1Cor 15:51*)” (*The Atonement, p 215*).

From the above testimonies, it is clear that simply by being born into the state of affairs brought about by sin, we become unwillingly subject to vanity, being under condemnation, and in need of reconciliation with God (*Rom 8:20, 5:17-18*). And the way of Salvation in Christ, must involve both the forgiveness of sin, and transformation, or cleansing of nature, for only if the root cause of sin is finally removed can mankind be ultimately restored to friendship with God.

THE PHYSICAL EFFECT OF SIN

There are those who deny that Adam’s sin had any physical effect, but that rather Adam was merely excluded from eating of the Tree of Life (*e.g. The New Bible Student, 1998 Vol 5, No 2, pp 41-45*). They claim that Adam was created in a mortal, decaying state, but the process of death was arrested by partaking of the Tree of Life before the fall. Thus, they reason that Adam,

when excluded from access to the tree would naturally die. Against these theorists, Bro B J Dowling wrote in 1889:

“In the Mosaic account of the creation of man, Adam is described as being “very good”, and if there was no physical change in him at the time of his condemnation, he remained so throughout his life, and in that case his posterity who inherited the qualities of his physical organisation, would surely be described by subsequent writers as having at least something good dwelling in their nature; but the contrary is found to be the case, for Paul in Rom 7:18 wrote: “In me (that is, *in my flesh*) dwelleth NO GOOD thing”.

And Bro Roberts condemned the theory outright as “a plausible theory to the effect that we do not inherit death from Adam by any physical law, but merely by denial of access to the tree of life; that *the sentence of death took no effect on Adam's body*, and therefore not in ours: that, in fact, we are the “very good” and uncursed Adamic nature ... that our nature is not an unclean and sinful nature: that there is no such thing as sin in the flesh ... it is the old doctrine of Renunciationism in a new form. *It is worse than Renunciationism* ... While apparently an innocuous and harmless theory, *it fatally corrupts and upsets and perverts the truth at its very threshold* ...” (*The Christadelphian*, July 1896). Those who would teach these heresies in the name of Christadelphians should consider these words very carefully, for they are teaching things which true brethren have always withstood.

THE SOLUTION IN CHRIST

So far, we have considered in some detail the issue of Sin, particularly the Sinful Nature which we inherit from Adam. The reason for this, is that “death” comes “by sin” (*Rom 5:12*), and sinful actions come from our sinful nature. Thus, as far as we are concerned, the root of the problem which needs to be overcome, is the nature we bear.

Only if the cause of sin is overcome, can our iniquities be removed, or forgiven, that we might be reconciled to God. The way of salvation must therefore involve the overcoming of that sinful nature by one who is a partaker thereof, but who has never sinned, and who is therefore undeserving of death. This, as we shall see, is what took place in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we must not forget that the dreadful state into which man has degenerated also reflects the failure of man to show the Glory of God, which it was his original purpose to do. As we have seen, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (*Rom 3:23*). Thus, God’s glory is the standard by which we are judged to be sinners; it is our failure to uphold, and attain to that standard which makes us worthy only of death. The Word of God itself is a

powerful antidote to our hereditary weakness, as it strengthens us to resist sin, and develop a spiritual mind, which in some measure reflects the glory of God. But we still fail, and fall short. Salvation cannot come by our own efforts, but by the provision of the only begotten Son of God.

**PRINCIPLES OF
THE ATONEMENT**

When we come to consider the solution in Christ then, there are a number of essential principles which we should expect to find:

1. First and foremost, Jesus had to succeed in achieving what Adam failed to do, namely, to be like God, showing His Glorious Attributes, reaching the standard of God's Glory. That is, rather than show the sinfulness of man, he was to proclaim the Righteousness of God, which was denied at the fall.
2. As part of the process of declaring God's Righteousness, "sin in the flesh" had to be condemned. It was Christ's stated mission to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil", (*Heb 2:14*). And logically, it must have existed in him to be destroyed, meaning that he had to share our nature.
3. Having overcome Sin, he subsequently had to undergo a change of Nature, so that the principles of sin and death which existed in his human constitution, were removed.

4. In order to ultimately accomplish the purpose of God, to develop a Divine family among men, the Lord Jesus had to lay a foundation upon which others might be reconciled to God.

5. This way of forgiveness must be implemented without setting aside God's just and necessary law of sin and death, which required that condemned human nature would return to the dust from whence it came.

**THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
CARNAL MIND**

In Genesis 3:15, we read of the first promise of a redeemer, who would overcome the power of sin, in the words of God to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel". Here is a prophecy of how sin was to be destroyed by one who would himself be "bruised" by it. The "serpent" here, stands for the origin of sinful actions styled elsewhere, the *diabolos*, or devil (*Heb 2:14, Rev 20:2*). It was the "head" which was to be bruised by the seed of the woman. That is, the serpent-mind, or the "carnal mind" (*see Appendix*) which "is at enmity with God" was to receive a death-blow by one who had the power to overcome it.

It was the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ to destroy that which has the power of death, that is, to destroy that which was to afflict him in the heel - the power of sin - the *diabolos*, or devil. But in order for him to do that,

he had to have this principle of sin within him to overcome. The “carnal mind”, as we have seen, is a sinful way of thinking which develops through succumbing to our sinful nature. In order to overcome this utterly, the Lord had to constantly suppress sin in the flesh, never allowing it to develop further, finally destroying it in death. That is, he had to be of an identical nature as ourselves, yet overcome that nature. So we read, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same *that* through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil”, or “Sin”, who pays death as wages (*Heb 2:14, Rom 6:23, cp Rom 7:13*).

CHRIST - THE LIKENESS OF SINFUL FLESH

Again, we read that “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (*Rom 8:3*). Here, we see the dual origin of Christ, Divine and human, the Son of God, and yet sinful human flesh. As the promised “seed” of the woman, he was “made of a woman, made under the law”. But as the one who had the power to overcome, he was also the Son whom God “made strong” (*Ps 80:17*) and “sent forth” (*Gal 4:4*). This apparent paradox, misunderstood by so many who cannot receive it, is the Key to understanding the Atoning work of our Lord. That one could have sinful human flesh, and yet be the perfect Son of God has posed a stumbling block, and rock of offence to many. But yet, this is the Truth, and the Apostle's declaration, that in

sinful human flesh, God was made manifest (*1Tim 3:16*).

That the Lord, whilst being morally perfect, partook of the sinfulness of our nature is amply demonstrated in Scripture. He was descended from Adam. Just as Adam, it is testified, “began a son in his own likeness, after his image” (*Gen 5:3*), that is, the likeness of one who was now sinful, so the Lord in being a son of Adam, was also “in the likeness of sinful flesh”. Thus, we also read that he “was in all points tempted like as we are ...” (*Heb 4:15*). And in order for him to be tempted, he must have had the source of temptation, or “sin in the flesh” as part of his physical constitution, just as we do. Indeed, it must be so, for if Jesus did not have sin residing within him (*Rom 7:17*), then how could he have overcome it?

The Lord, then also shared this constitutional sinfulness, being of human descent. The Apostle informs us that God “hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin” (*2 Cor 5:21*).

Speaking of how the Lord was “made sin”, Bro Thomas wrote: “SIN” is a word in Paul's argument, which stands for “human nature”, with its affections and desires. Hence, to become sin, or for one to be “made sin” for others (*2 Cor 5:21*) is to become flesh and blood. This is called “*sin*”, or “*Sin's flesh*”, because it is *what it is* in consequence of sin, or transgression”. And again, “This perishing body is “sin”, and left to perish because of “sin”. *Sin* in its application to the body, stands for all its constituents and laws. The power of death is in its very constitution, so

that the law of its nature is styled “the law of Sin and Death”. In the combination of the elements of the law, the power of death resides, so that “to destroy that having the power of death”, is to abolish this physical law of sin and death, and instead thereof to substitute the physical “law of the spirit of life”, by which the same body would be changed in its constitution, and live for ever”. (*Eureka, Vol 1, p 247,248*).

Some just dismiss this by a misapplication of metonymy, saying that Christ was not really made sin, it's just a figure of speech, a matter of expression. But this is just playing with words as we have shown. When the Lord hung in agony upon the cross for us, it was not playing with words, it was very real. In a very real way, Christ, in being “sinful flesh” “condemned sin in the flesh”. **He was “made sin”**, that is, the stuff that he was made of was sin. It was not simply the case that he experienced certain temptations (*Heb 4:15*), *He was made sin*. Metonymy, although it is present as we have shown, does not enable us to dispense with the reality - rather it explains why. Our flesh came from sin, and can produce only sin - and so is in itself something which is sinful. When Christ overcame his nature in rendering perfect obedience in death, he “condemned sin”, not just in a matter of words, or merely by a figure of speech - but in reality. Sin was overcome, and the righteous One *had* to be raised from the dead, to be granted an immortal, sin-free nature.

There are those who, out of a mistaken reverence for the Lord Jesus

cannot entertain the idea that there was sin *in any form* in him. They cannot accept that the Lord could have been defiled in any respect. Yet, the Scriptures explicitly demonstrate, as we have seen, that there was in the Lord Jesus Christ something which was obnoxious to the Father, which the Father purposed to “destroy” (*Heb 2:14*) and “condemn” (*Rom 8:3*). Being “tempted in all points like as we are” (*Heb 4:15*), he therefore inherited as part of his constitution, “sin in the flesh”, which can only produce that which is at enmity with God (*Rom 8:7*), which in all others manifests itself in acts of transgression, making the bearers thereof worthy of death.

Yet the Lord Jesus overcame “the carnal mind”. In the terms of *Gen 3:15*, he crushed the serpent's head. And this he did throughout his life, overcoming every temptation in loving obedience to His Father. He never allowed Sin to have dominion over him; the carnal mind was never allowed to develop further in him. To truly revere the Lord Jesus is to recognise these facts, for only then can we begin to appreciate the wonder of how, despite wearing our defiled nature, he was able to remain sinless, and wholly obedient in every respect.

In the article quoted earlier, Bro Dowling speaks of this: “as Jesus was born with this nature, we can see how he, while being perfect morally, was yet not “very good” constitutionally, or physically. Had he been as perfect physically as he was morally, or as good physically as Adam was before the Fall, death would have had no claim

on him whatever, and consequently there would have been an injustice committed in giving such an one over to death; and had he been as imperfect morally as he was physically, there would have been no resurrection and consequently no salvation. Both features were required in the plan of redemption that God "might be just and the justifier of him that believeth" (*The Christadelphian*, 1889).

THE ANTITYPICAL VEIL

Bro Roberts understood the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ to be a barrier which had to be overcome before he could appear in the presence of his Father, from a consideration of the veil separating the Holy place from the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. He wrote of the veil, "Why was there a veil? We see the answer when we ascertain what it represents. This we ascertain from the circumstance reported by Matthew, that when Jesus died, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (*Mat 27:51*); considered in connection with the exegetical remark of Paul in Heb 10:20, that there is a "new and living way which Jesus hath consecrated for us *through the veil*, THAT IS TO SAY, HIS FLESH". The veil, then, stands for the flesh of present mortal nature, as possessed by Christ in his natural days. This nature veils off or stands between us and the glorious realities signified by the golden ark-throne in the holiest of all ... The veil had to be torn asunder that we might enter from the one to the other. This was done in Christ ... A successful rupturing of the veil required the righteousness of a perfectly obedient man, which existed only in Christ. Therefore, the veil, while

standing for the flesh nature, stood particularly for the Christ form of that nature - through which only could the new and living way be opened" (*The Law of Moses*).

The Lord Jesus Christ, although morally perfect in every respect, never having transgressed, nevertheless had sinful human flesh, in common with all humankind - a physical barrier that lay between him and the antitypical Holy of Holies. But being the Son of God, he was able to suppress "the carnal mind", and so overcome "sin in the flesh". And having overcome, he was able to enter into the antitypical Holy of Holies, as our representative as it is written: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (*Heb 9:24*). As "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (*1 Cor 15:50*), even the Lord Jesus himself could not enter before God's presence, without a change of nature. But having overcome sin, and having been given an immortal nature, no longer under the dominion of death, no longer having sin residing within it (*Rom 6:9,10, 1 Pet 4:2*), he has entered beyond the veil of the flesh, being "purified" with his "better" sacrifice (*Heb 9:23*).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST

In Genesis 3:15, we read of how not only would the seed of the woman crush the serpent's head, but also that in the act of so doing, as part of the process of stamping the head underfoot, he would himself undergo a bruising: "Thou shalt bruise his heel". That is to say, the Lord's walk

in life would be interrupted temporarily in the act of slaying the serpent in himself.

In the Divine Plan, it was not only necessary for the Lord to bear our sin nature, he himself had to suffer the consequences of sin, that is, death. The Lord died for us, to save us from sin and death, but we need to realise that in order to redeem us, he had to first redeem himself!

Again, Bro Roberts: “the statement that he did these things “for us” has blinded many to the fact that he did them “for himself” first - without which, he could not have done them for us, for it was by doing them for himself that he did them for us. He did them for us only as we may become part of him, in merging our individualities in him by taking part in his death, and putting on his name and sharing his life afterwards. He is, as it were, a new centre of healthy life, in which we must become incorporate before we can be saved” (*Law of Moses, p 174*).

In Isaiah 53:5, we read that “he was wounded for *our* transgressions, he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes, *we* are healed”. In these things therefore, we learn how the Lord was to die as a *representative* man. In being bruised in the heel, he was bruised for us. The whole work wrought in Christ was to lay a foundation for the forgiveness of others, who were too weak to save themselves (*Rom 5:6*). In that day when the Lord was crucified, not only was he bruised, but so was Sin; it was crushed and

destroyed in him. And Sin having been destroyed, a door of salvation was thrown open.

A DECLARATION OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

But the real value of the life and subsequent death of the Lord Jesus was not simply that he did not do wrong. It is in that by obedience, he did that which was right! Rather than yielding to the “devil” within him, the Lord humbled himself in obedience to His Father. He “pleased not himself” (*Rom 15:3*), but rather pleased God (*Mat 17:15*). He “learned obedience by the things which he suffered” (*Heb 5:8*), and though he were a son, he humbled himself to become a servant. As a son, he perfectly showed the glorious attributes of His Father, as we have shown. He was the “express image of his person” (*Heb 1:3*). Yet, although he was “in the form of God” in this sense, rather than seeking to grasp at equality with God, as did Adam in Eden, he “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant”. He “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name” (*Phil 2:6-9*). In the life of the Lord Jesus Christ then, we see a life of willing, and loving service to God, a wonderful obedience interrupted temporarily only by the sleep of death.

The sacrifice of Christ was a wonderful example of obedience, but it was not merely an example, as some claim. It was also a vital part of the process of

redemption. In his Sacrifice, as the BASF expresses it, the Lord was “a propitiation to declare the righteousness of God as a basis for the remission of sins”. It is impossible for man in his mortal weakness to make such a proclamation of righteousness. Yet despite sharing our nature, the Lord also had the strength to overcome. As it is written, “when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” (*Rom 5:6*).

Bro Roberts wrote: “the death of Christ was to “declare the righteousness of God” as the ground of the exercise of His forbearance. That is to say, God maintains His own righteousness and His own supremacy while forgiving us; and exacts the recognition of them and submission to them, as the condition of the exercise of His forbearance in the remission of our sins. Now as we look at Christ, we find in his death the declaration of that righteousness ... the death of Christ was “that God might be just” while acting the part of the justifier or forgiver”” (*The Blood of Christ*).

It was because the Master declared God's righteousness that we might be forgiven our sins. This is the Apostolic testimony of the Lord “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, *to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past*, through the forbearance of God; *to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness*, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (*Rom 3:25,26*).

Again, Bro Roberts wrote: “God required that our sinful and condemned nature should be federally put to death

in one who had done no sin, through whom, after resurrection, we could come, in baptismal identification with his death, for forgiveness and friendship with God, “if we continue in the faith grounded and settled”. It was our very nature that was put to death in him. It was righteously so done because of his physical participation in the results of Edenic transgression” (*The Christadelphian*, 1892).

Because the Lord never did any work of sin, he never earned the wages of death. He was not worthy of the sentence of death, yet because he inherited our condemned nature, with the Law of Sin and Death dwelling within it as a physical principle, it was not possible for him to avoid the grave. It was right and in harmony with the Law established at Eden that God would require the death of one born under the condemnation brought about through Adam. Even though the Lord was sinless in character, he had our sinful nature, and so had to die. Indeed, this was the only way that “the devil”, or “sin in the flesh” could be destroyed, as it is written, “he that is dead is freed from sin” (*Rom 6:7*).

When the Lord expired upon the tree, “lifted up” as an ensign for all to see, he demonstrated what God rightly required, and proclaimed the weakness and corruptness of our sin-stricken state. Yet because he had not sinned, being unworthy to die, the grave could not hold him: he *had* to be raised. It would be a violation of God's righteousness for it to have been otherwise. As Peter was inspired to say concerning him “Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it

was *not possible* that he should be holden of it” (*Acts 2:24*).

In his obedience even in death, the Lord perfectly overcame the Law of sin and death which was in him. He “condemned” it, for he never yielded to it, but rather suppressed it, and destroyed it in death. And after the Lord Jesus was risen, having overcome sin, he was granted a sinless, immortal nature; a “glorious” body (*Phil 3:21*).

Having suffered in the mortal weakness of sinful flesh, he was made pure, and undefiled in nature. As the Apostle testified, “he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (*1 Pet 4:2*). And again, “Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God” (*Rom 6:10*).

PARTAKERS OF CHRIST'S VICTORY

So, in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we see a victory over sin, and a proclamation of God's righteousness. But as we have said, the emphasis in Scripture is that these things were done *for us*. As Bro Roberts remarked, “it was for himself that it *might be for us*”. And as the Apostle declared; “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, how much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our

Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement (*Greek = reconciliation*)” (*Rom 5:11*). The question is, therefore, how is it that we can be forgiven through what Christ did?

The key to understanding this question as we have already indicated, is to recognise that the Lord Jesus Christ is able to appear before God *as our representative*. In Genesis 3, in addition to the sentence which was pronounced, we read that Adam and Eve were driven out from Eden, that is, the place of fellowship and unity with God: “Therefore Yahweh God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man ...” (*Gen 3:24*).

All who were descended from him, as we have shown, were also born *outside* of the Edenic paradise, under the constitution of Sin, bearing condemnation, subject to vanity, groaning for the day of liberation. But in contrast to this, the Lord Jesus Christ, himself a member of Adam's race now appears in God's presence. His victory over sin complete, he departed into a “far country” (*Mat 21:33*) to receive for himself a Kingdom. And as the Great High Priest, Christ “is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (*Heb 9:24*).

CHRIST OUR REPRESENTATIVE

We have already seen how under the Law of Moses, the High Priest would go beyond the veil into the Holy of

Holies, representing the people. He symbolically stood in the presence of God on behalf of the people, offering sacrifices for his purification and theirs (*Lev 16*). But this was a mere shadow of what would come to pass in Jesus Christ. He appears in the presence of the Almighty as a representative of those who are under the constitution of Sin, yet who seek forgiveness and reconciliation. And as the Almighty beholds the people's representative, he sees one who is free from sin, who is holy and undefiled. He beholds only righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, which is in fact God's own righteousness, as declared by him, and not the sins of the people who Christ represents. He is able to be a representative, for he was one of us, who laboured under the dominion of death (*Rom 6:9*), who was a partaker of the infirmities of our nature. Yet he is able to appear before God on our behalf, because he overcame that nature, and can stand before God free from sin.

The way of salvation, then must involve an identification with that holy man, as Bro Roberts said, we must "become part of him, in merging our individualities in him by taking part in his death, and putting on his name and sharing his life afterwards" (*The Law of Moses, p 174*).

IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

We have no name of our own which can stand. We cannot plead our own righteousness, for "all have sinned". Yet through baptism into the Name of Jesus Christ, we embrace, and take part of His declaration of God's

righteousness. Through faith in his name, sins are no longer imputed to us, for in the Son whom we have become at one with, there is no sin. As God beholds only righteousness in him who stands before Him on our behalf, his righteousness is imputed to us (*Rom 3:23,24; 4:1-8, 6:3-11, Rev 19:8, 7:14, 2 Cor 5:21*).

In the first section, we showed how that because of our relationship to Adam, we are under the curse of sin and death. Because he is, as it were, the Federal Head of the Human race, all who stand related to him inherit the condemnation of his nature, without in any sense being guilty of his sin. But in the Lord Jesus Christ, we find a way of escape. As the Firstborn from the dead (*Col 1:18*), he is the Federal head of the Family of God. Therefore, by becoming related to him, we can inherit his righteousness through faith, and our sins are covered.

This is the Apostolic Testimony: "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many ... for if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of

one shall many be made righteous" (*Rom 5:15-19*).

In "*The Slain Lamb*", Bro Roberts speaks of how we might be forgiven for Christ's sake: "God is pleased, the sin-and-death law of our race being carried out upon His hereditarily, mortal, but righteous though law-cursed Son, to raise him for His righteousness sake; and then asks us to look to him to whom He has given the power of dealing with the rest of mankind. If we bow down to Him and recognise our position, He is pleased, for Christ's sake to forgive us. He is not obliged to forgive us ... Christ's birth and death is the arrangement of His own mercy. We cannot claim it; it is all of grace: not of works, lest any man should boast"

And again, in "*The Blood of Christ*", he wrote: "God says now: 'If you will recognise your position, repent, and

come under that man's wing, I will receive you back to favour and forgive you. My righteousness has been declared in him; I have crowned him with everlasting days; because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and was obedient unto death, I have crowned him with life eternal. It is in him for you if you will submit and believe in him and put on his name, which is a confession that you have no name of your own which will stand. Obey his commandments, and I will receive you and forgive you for his sake, and ye shall be my sons and daughters' ... We are cleansed from sin by this beautiful means, that God forgives us because of what Christ has done, if we will accept him and be baptised. In baptism we are provided with a ceremony in which we are baptised into his death, and in which, in a figure, we are washed from our sins in his blood".

FOR WHAT ARE WE BAPTISED?

The Scriptures testify that baptism is always for remission of personal offences (*Acts 2:38, 22:26 etc*), never for the removal of the imputed guilt of another. It is a means of becoming part of the family of which the Lord Jesus Christ is Head, for we are "baptised into Jesus Christ" (*Rom 6:3*), we "put on Christ" (*Gal 3:26*) and become "one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal 3:28,29*). And we are introduced into a new relationship with the Father, as we are able to approach His Throne of Grace through Christ as our representative (*Heb 10:19,22, Rom 5:1,2*).

But there are some who maintain that Adam's sin is in some way legally imputed to us, and that when we are baptised, we are therefore freed from this legal condemnation - as well as having our sins forgiven. So they reason that, unless we have this legal sentence of eternal death removed through baptism, we are not accountable to judgement. Yet we have already shown how the fact that our nature is mortal and sinful does not mean that we are accountable in any way for Adam's transgression, and so there is no "legal condemnation" to be removed.

But at the same time, there are others who allow this to blind them to the fact that we are born into a situation of “condemnation” by descent from Adam, and that this condemnation can be removed by becoming a member of the family of Christ by baptism. This is the clear teaching of Scripture: “as by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men *unto justification of life*” (*Rom 5:18*). And again, “There is therefore **now** *no condemnation* to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (*Rom 8:2*). From these testimonies, it is clear that whilst baptism is for the remission of our offences, it also introduces us into a situation whereby we might no longer bear the condemnation we inherit from Adam.

The condemnation given against Adam was a sentence of death passed because of sin. This sentence “became a physical law of his being, and was transmitted to all his posterity” (*BASF clause V*) as the Apostle declared: “by the offence of one judgement came upon all men to condemnation” (*Rom 5:18*). The sentence of death was inflicted upon Adam, and we are partakers of that sentence, not in a legal sense, but *physically* by the inheritance of his condemned nature.

But in Christ, there is “now no condemnation” (*Rom 8:1*), that is *no* condemnation *now*, either from Adam, or because of our own transgressions. Bro. Roberts spoke of this: “What is cancelled at baptism (and it is only cancelled potentially - for there is an “if” all the way through) is the condemnation resting upon us as individual sinners, *and the condemnation which we physically inherit*” (*Preface to The Debate on Resurrectional Responsibility*). But the condemnation we bear from Adam, is the physical inheritance of a mortal, sinful nature, and this is not removed until Immortality is bestowed. As Bro. Roberts showed later in the same debate, “there are two stages in the process of being saved, one a moral, and one a physical; one having to do with the mind and the other the body. That is the distinction. We are justified from the moral now”. And in answer to the question, “Are we not justified from “sin in the flesh” at the same time as from wicked deeds, he replied, “that is your way of putting it. I put the facts; that God forgives our sins when we are baptized, and takes away sin in the flesh when we are changed”.

So then, we will not be justified physically (*1 Tim 3:16*) until immortality is bestowed. In what sense, then can it be said that there is “*now* no condemnation”, if the condemnation we physically inherit now remains with us? The answer, is that we are prospectively freed from condemnation now, although the physical reality will not actually take place until the Judgement Seat.

Bro Roberts clearly explained the situation thus: “*Legally, a man is freed from the Adamic condemnation at the time he obeys the truth and receives*

remission of sins; but actually its physical effects remain till “this mortal” (i.e. this Adamic condemned nature) is swallowed up in the life that Christ will bestow upon his brethren at his coming. Those whom Christ does not approve are delivered up to death again (*because of their own sins and not because of Adam*). Although reconciled to Christ, we remain under the physical effect of Adam's sentence till we are “changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump”. The case is parallel with what takes place between two nations at war (alienated) who arrive at terms of peace. As soon as the treaty is signed, they are legally at peace, yet the effects of the war are not at once ended, for the forces of the one remain in the territories of the other until the ratification of the treaty and the arrival of the date fixed for evacuation. Peace between God and the disobedient is signed, so to speak, when the believing sinner submits to the righteousness of God in being baptised INTO THE DEATH OF HIS SON! But war measures are not entirely withdrawn until the reconciliation is ratified at the judgement seat of Christ” (*The Christadelphian*, 1878, p 225). In his debate with JJ Andrew, in speaking of this quotation (*Question 686 & Preface*), Bro Roberts clarified what he meant by the term “Legally”. He did not refer to the notion of a legal guilt being removed, that JJ Andrew taught. Rather, he said “legal mortality would be that which is constituted, ordered, or determined upon by law. In this sense, we pass (potentially) from death to life at baptism - which is a very important sense certainly, for without it there could be no hope of the physical deliverance that waits at the coming of Christ”.

As we have shown, the way in which our transgressions are forgiven, is that they are taken away by Christ, as our representative. Being baptised, we are represented before God in Christ as our High Priest, and because in him, there is no sin, sin is not imputed to us. But in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only is it the case that there is no sin, the physical condemnation he inherited from Adam has also been removed. The BASF speaks of the Lord “who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, *abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him*” (*Clause VII*).

Therefore, as we appear before God, even though in actual fact we are still sinners, and even though we are still the partakers of a condemned nature, because our representative is neither a sinner, nor any longer a partaker of that nature, both of these things are removed. The law of condemnation has been abrogated, and sins are no longer imputed. We can do no better than to conclude this section with the words of Bro Roberts in debate with JJ Andrew, when JJ Andrew was the questioner concerning the quotation from *The Christadelphian*, cited above:

690. Do you adhere to this statement that he (*i.e. the obedient believer -CM*) is legally freed from Adamic condemnation? **Answer:** I understand God

gives the obedient believer a clean slate, as you might say.

691. What is wiped out? **Answer:** Everything that stands against us in any way, whether from Adam or ourselves.

692. Then there is a passing out of Adam into Christ at baptism: **Answer:** Certainly.

693. When a man passes into Christ, what has he in Adam that he loses when he passes into Christ? **Answer:** His relation to the whole death dispensation which Adam introduced. There is a preliminary deliverance at baptism, but it is not actual till the resurrection.

So then it is clear that Baptism forms the basis of forgiveness of sins by association with the perfect sacrifice of the one who destroyed sin. But also, it forms the basis for the ultimate purification of our nature, and in this sense, we are also prospectively freed from the condemnation we inherit from Adam. In Apostolic terms, because we are “planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (*Rom 6:5*), that is, our body shall be changed “that is may be fashioned like unto his glorious body” (*Phil 3:21*), “When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (*1Jno 3:2*).

CONCLUSION

In this booklet, there are many wonderful aspects of the Atonement which we have not dealt with. For example, we have not considered how the Sacrifices under the Law pointed forward to Christ. We have only touched upon the Priesthood of the Lord, and how the Tabernacle arrangement of things typified him. Again, we have only very briefly considered the beautiful subject of Justification by Faith, and we haven't mentioned how the mode of Christ's death was essential to redeem those living under the Law. Yet, these are all important aspects of the Atonement which we must not neglect, and all have been considered in the publications listed at the back of this booklet.

This study is not intended to be exhaustive by any means - rather it is hoped that it might rekindle a dying interest in the hearts of many to consider, and meditate on the very centre of everything we stand for, that is, the way of Salvation in Christ Jesus. But if only one person is encouraged by this work to this end, we will have accomplished our aim. The Truth is under attack. There are many theories of men which are presented in the Name of Christadelphianism to the brotherhood concerning this vital issue, yet upon further consideration all can be found to be nothing more than variations of the doctrines taught by the Churches around us.

We have attempted to show from Scripture that the beliefs of Brethren Thomas and Roberts, the understanding which has been accepted by all true

Christadelphians for generations, is soundly based, being Bible Teaching. Those who cannot accept this are denying the very centre and foundation of our faith, and ought not call themselves by the term “Christadelphian”.

But these essential truths are not simply doctrines to be understood and believed - they are fundamental principles for daily life. In the Apostolic writings, Christ is constantly presented to us as an example to be followed. “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously” (*1 Pet 2:21-23*).

And yet, when we measure ourselves against the wonderful example of Christ, how inferior we feel, how conscious we are of our many failings. How aware we are that we are not capable of living the life of Christ for a day, let alone a lifetime. But this is the intention. At Eden, God was disbelieved. His Righteousness was questioned - His Truth doubted. But the way of salvation He has so graciously appointed means that “no flesh should glory in his presence” (*1 Cor 1:29*). Salvation is not of ourselves; but of Grace, “lest any man should boast” (*Eph 2:9*).

And herein we see Love, God's Love extended to those who are unworthy of it. As it is written: “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another” (*1 Jno 4:9-11*).

Let us then be provoked to deeply meditate upon the Love of God revealed to us in the provision of His Son. Let us resolve to walk in love, love towards God, and love towards each other. Let us take the example of the Lord to our hearts, and strive to be like him, in showing loving obedience to the Father's requirements, in recognition of His Saving Grace. For then, if we seek to demonstrate our appreciation of what has been done for us in our lives, we might be given salvation in Christ, that we might rejoice with him in glorious immortality, throughout the Ages to Come.

Chris Maddocks

APPENDIX - THE CARNAL MIND

Following the publication of this booklet, we are grateful to a number of readers for indicating a need for greater clarification concerning the Carnal Mind, particularly as there are those who deny that our Lord was “tempted in all points like as we are” (*Heb 4:15*) by claiming that he could never have experienced the “lust of the flesh” (*Gal 5:16,17*), or the thought to transgress. This was an area we had not dealt with in the booklet, and so it is hoped that this appendix will in some measure make up the deficiency, and help clarify the explanation we gave earlier.

In Romans Chapter 8, the Apostle wrote under inspiration concerning two classes of humanity: “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be *carnally minded* is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the *carnal mind* is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be” (*Rom 8:5-7*). Notice here that it is those who walk “after the flesh” that constitute the “carnally minded”, demonstrating that the “carnal mind” is a natural, fleshly way of thinking, that leads men into a way of life which is “enmity against God”.

Bro Thomas commented on this passage thus: “*The Carnal Mind* is an expression used by Paul; or rather, it is the translation of words used by him ... it is not so explicit as the original. The words he wrote are ... *the thinking of the flesh*” (*Elpis Israel*, p89). The natural constitution of man being “sinful flesh”, the “thinking of the flesh” is his natural inclination of thought towards the fulfilment of his natural lusts. In our previous considerations, we saw that man can naturally produce no good thing, for no good thing dwells within him (*Rom 7:18*), only Sin (*Rom 7:20*), that is, “sin in the flesh” (*Rom 8:3*). Even from the womb (*Pss 58:3*), man is motivated entirely by his carnal desires, and in this respect is no better than the beasts that perish (*Pss 40:20*). Like the beasts, his grovelling instincts can rise no higher than the lusts of the flesh, for it was by the adoption of a beast's mind that the first act of sin took place. The serpent, it is testified was “more subtle than any beast of the field which Yahweh Elohim had made” (*Gen 3:1*), and it was by hearkening to its subtle reasoning that Eve and her husband were induced to transgress the Divine Command. They received the Serpent's carnal thoughts into their hearts; the result being that by transgression, “the eyes of them both were opened” to a new carnal awareness, and the carnal serpentine mind became infixed within them. By the very nature of things therefore, the unenlightened man “cannot please God”; he walks only “according to the course of this world”, fulfilling “the desires of the flesh and of the mind”, being worthy only of the wrath of God (*Eph 2:2,3*).

This bestial class of men, the Apostle describes as “they that are after the flesh”, or the “carnally minded”, being related only to “death”, in contradistinction to

those who are “after the spirit”, or the “spiritually minded”, who are related to “life and peace”. Rather than to allow the lust of the flesh to lead them into rebellion, this latter class seek to overcome the Carnal Mind, “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2Cor 10:5). Having received with meekness the implanted Word (Jas 1:21), they wage war against the flesh, and seek to suppress their carnal desires. The Apostle speaks of this mental warfare, exhorting: “Walk in the Spirit, and *ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh*. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and *these are contrary the one to the other ...*” (Gal 5:16,17).

There is then, two conflicting minds, or ways of thinking extant within the disciple of Christ. One is hereditary, being derived from the Serpent in the first instance and passed to all men through descent from Adam, whereas the other is derived from the Spirit word being implanted into the heart. And by the very nature of things, there is enmity between the two; they are “contrary the one to the other”. And this enmity subsists between those who are led by these contrary motives, the “carnally minded”, and the “spiritually minded”.

In Genesis 3:15, these mutually antagonistic classes are termed the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the woman: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”. The Serpent stands in Scripture, as the source of transgression, whether it be the creature in Eden, or the *diabolos* within us. Thus, Bro Thomas wrote: “the carnal mind, or thinking of the flesh, unenlightened by the Truth is *the serpent in the flesh* ... by a figure, sin is put for the serpent, the effect for the cause; seeing that he was the suggestor of unbelief and disobedience to man, by whom it entered into the world. Hence, the idea of the serpent in the flesh is expressed by “sin in the flesh”, which was “condemned in the flesh” when Jesus was crucified for, or on account of, sin, “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (*Elpis Israel*, P 91,92). The seed of the serpent then, are the “carnally minded”, at enmity with the pre-eminent seed of the woman, who destroyed the serpent in his flesh.

But notice here, that speaking prophetically of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the serpent is bruised in *the head*. The head contains the brain, and therefore *the mind*; hence we are being taught that the victory against sin would be won *by crushing the Serpent-Mind*, or the Carnal Mind. In terms which take us right back to the Edenic promise, the Apostle describes that which the Lord crushed, or destroyed in death, as the devil, or *diabolos*: “forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that *through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (*Heb 2:14*). Notice the echoes of Gen 3:15 - *through death*, (that is the smiting of his heel) he might destroy *that which has the power of death*, (that is the serpent, more particularly, the serpent's venomous head). The serpent's head then, is the *diabolos*, the great enemy within, which entices us to transgress - it is that

existing in our mind which renders it Carnal in its operations. (This is further proved in Rev 20:2, where we read of the laying hold of “the dragon, *that old serpent, which is the diabolos*”).

We see from this then, that the crushing of the Serpent's head, is a graphic depiction of the overcoming of the mind of sin, by one who had the power to suppress it, and finally take it victoriously to the grave. But for the mind of the flesh, or the Serpent-Mind to be crushed by the Lord, it must have existed within him! There are those who would recoil in horror at the suggestion of our Lord possessing the Carnal Mind, for how could our Lord Jesus have anything within him which was “enmity against God”? But put it another way, did the Lord Jesus have the *diabolos*, or “sin in the flesh” within him? Undoubtedly he did, as we proved earlier, for how else could he have destroyed it by dying? How could he have condemned it, if it were not there to condemn? And will any deny that the *diabolos* or the Devil, is the great enemy of God, bringing it’s possessors to rebel against Him?

The simple truth of the matter, is that by descent from Adam through Mary, the Lord Jesus was “made sin” (2 Cor 5:21), by being made “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom 8:3), in order that His Father could “condemn” and “destroy” sin in the flesh, or the head of the serpent within him. Being “made of a woman” (Gal 4:4), he physically inherited the *diabolos*, and therefore experienced the “thinking of the flesh”. He was “tempted in all points like as we are” (Heb 4:15), something which just could not have been possible if he did not ever experience the “lust of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). There are those who claim that the Lord, by his Divine Parentage, was born with a mind which only inclined towards the things of God; that he would automatically seek to obey his Father, so that any temptation to sin could only come from outside. But let them hear the Apostolic testimony: “though he were a Son, *yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered*” (Heb 4:8). Even though he were a Son, he was not innately “programmed” to obey - he “*learned*” obedience through a lifetime of suffering.

If it could be said of his brethren that within them “the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh” (Gal 5:17), the same must be true of the Lord who partook of “the flesh”: “forasmuch then as the children are partakers of *flesh* and blood he also himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb 2:14). Is the flesh of the Children “sinful flesh” (Rom 8:3)? Then he also himself likewise took part of the same. And on what “flesh” does the *diabolos* primarily operate, to induce transgression? The brain, that special organisation of “the flesh” into thinking substance - the mind consisting of those thoughts this “flesh” generates. The brain-flesh of all Adam's progeny, being by it's very nature “sinful”, so it was also in the case of our Lord.

But whereas “the children” are “yet without strength” (Rom 5:6) to overcome their natural minds, the Lord Jesus was made strong (Ps 80:17) by his Divine Begettal for this purpose. It was there within him - he had the potential for it

to develop into sinful actions, or “the works of the devil” (*1Jno 3:8*). He had the potential for it to develop into its most advanced stages of degeneracy, as witnessed in the basest of men around us, whose only desire is to satisfy their grovelling instincts before they perish. It is this advanced state that we referred to earlier as being developed through “constantly succumbing to sin in the flesh”; by this means, the thinking of the flesh will so develop that it will dominate our minds to the exclusion of things spiritual. But this never happened with our Lord - he possessed the mind of the flesh, but it never possessed him. He had by inheritance the carnal mind, but he was never “carnally minded”, for he was “made strong” by His Father to overcome it.

Whereas in the Garden of Eden, we witness the failure of man to resist the serpent, in the Garden of Gethsemane we witness the greatest struggle between the Flesh and the Spirit ever, as our Lord subjected his own natural will to that of His Father. Let those who deny that the Lord ever experienced the thinking of the flesh, hear the anguish of one who prayed “with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death” (*Heb 5:7*) “Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; *take away this cup* from me: nevertheless *not what I will, but what thou wilt*” (*Mark 14:36*). Here, we see the Flesh and the Spirit, and the enmity between the two - the natural will of Christ that the cup of suffering be taken away, and the Will of His Father that he should drink therefrom. And here we see the thinking of the flesh, the Carnal Mind restrained and overcome by the loving obedience of our Lord to his Father. The Spirit prevailed, for in our Lord Jesus, the mind of the flesh was allowed to develop no further; it was led into captivity during his life, nailed to the Cross during his Crucifixion, and finally “condemned”, “destroyed” and “bruised” in his death.

Let us therefore not detract from the great victory of Christ, by diminishing the virulence of the enemy within him, but rather behold the reality of what he achieved. We have within us a great enemy, the serpent within, which is the root of all iniquity. And the Lord Jesus, as “the Captain of our Salvation” (*Heb 2:10*) also possessed this same enemy in order that he might destroy it utterly, and “crush” it in death. Although he were a Son, yet he subjected himself to a lifetime of suffering, that he might learn obedience, and become a faithful servant to his Father. Let us therefore take heed to his example: “let *this mind* be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God thought not equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, *he humbled himself, and became obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross ...” (*Phil 2:5-8*).

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