

**THE LAST
UNDERSTANDING
OF
DR JOHN THOMAS**

**Regarding
The Nature of Jesus Christ**



A Nazarene Fellowship Publication

The Last Understanding of Dr John Thomas

CONTENTS

		Page
Introduction	Brother Russell Gregory	3
Forward	Dr John Stevenson	5
“What Is Flesh?”	Dr John Thomas	5
Note regarding above	Sister E.J. Lassius	7
Comment on “What Is Flesh”	Brother Russell Gregory	7
Appendix	Brother Phil Parry	10
“On The Nature Of Christ”	Sister E.J.Lassius	13
Comment on above	Brother Edward Turney	15
Part of Letter	Brother John Coffman	17
Letter	Brother Samuel Coffman	17
Comment on above Letter	Brother Edward Turney	19
Part of second letter	Brother John Coffman	19
Comment on above Letter	Brother Edward Turney	20
“God’s Son”	Brother John Coffman	21
Extract from letter	Brother W. A. Harris	22
Brief Report of Meeting	Brother Samuel Coffman	23
Response to Report	Brother Edward Turney	24
In Conclusion	Brother Russell Gregory	25
Contrast between teachings of R. Roberts and Dr John Thomas		26
List of References		27

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Dr. John Thomas' Last Understanding

Introduction

It is evident that about five years before he died Dr Thomas changed his beliefs regarding Jesus Christ. He no longer believed He had a condemned nature and did not therefore die for Himself. This change of view seems never to have been picked up by Christadelphians and yet it is there. The first time it came to my notice is when I read Dr Thomas' unfinished letter which was published in the Christadelphian magazine following his death. It had been sent to Robert Roberts by his daughter, Mrs E.J.Lassius. It is published below.

It was a year or two later when reading through the first two volumes of The Christadelphian Lamp – Edited by Edward Turney I came across letters and writings dated from 1867 onwards containing some Christadelphian history of events on both sides of the Atlantic. Here came to light the extent to which Dr Thomas' last teachings spread throughout the USA and the opposition they received on that side of the pond in like manner as did the opposition to Edward Turney in the U.K.

Yet, despite the best efforts of Robert Roberts and all subsequent Editors of the various Christadelphian Magazines, they have never entirely destroyed the Bible teaching that it is our sin that God condemns, not our supposed sin-nature. This is the understanding which Dr Thomas began teaching before Edward Turney but it was not until 1873 that R.Roberts fought tooth and nail to defend Dr Thomas' earlier beliefs which he, as Editor of the Christadelphian magazine was able to promote world-wide using his verbose oratory skills to misrepresent his opponent, - and yet, we ask, why was it so many ecclesias world-wide began sending their monthly "Intelligence" to the magazine which Edward Turney started in November 1873, instead of to the Christadelphian magazine?

This history of the supposed "Clean Flesh Heresy" has never before been presented and needs to be made available to all Christadelphians and to those who have been disfellowshipped for not accepting the Christadelphian Statements of Faith

This is what we wish to do here.

The first few pages of this article were written as a booklet entitled "The Last Writings of Dr. Thomas" and first published by the Nazarene Fellowship in 2004. It is an unfinished letter to an unnamed recipient but sufficient is said for us to realise he was very concerned that he should be understood and for this reason we recommend a second and third reading in order to appreciate the Dr's meaning.

Also we must not be intimidated by Dr. Thomas’s language; his title leaves us in no doubt that he was answering this very question – “What Is Flesh.”

Russell Gregory

THE LAST WRITINGS OF DR THOMAS

Foreword

I am pleased and honoured to introduce this last fragment of the writings of Dr. John Thomas, which concerns a subject of vital importance and interest. Although quite short, it is long enough to convey a clear idea of the message, or part of it, that he had in mind, and which manifestly does not support the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. (BASF).

I particularly like his second paragraph, which castigates the propensity of many religious leaders to waffle over and above the heads of their flocks and also the little comment appended by his daughter, Mrs E.J.Lassius.

Dr. Thomas is careful to be very clear about the points he is making, and although the use of the word “spirit” is risky (the Shorter OED gives two large columns of the myriad diverse meanings and senses), he is meticulous in defining the particular sense in which he uses the word.

Like his daughter, we are sad that he could not complete this article, which might have made it impossible for Robert Roberts to de-rail the Christadelphian organization. I appreciate the thoughtful comments on this “Last Writing” by Russell Gregory, and his publication of this valuable fragment, for all those who would, to read, mark, and inwardly digest.

Dr. John Stevenson.

WHAT IS FLESH?

“I would suggest, that discussion of the very knotty and intricate subject of the *quo modo* of the manifestation of Deity in flesh be suspended among you, till each member of the ecclesia be furnished with a copy of my forthcoming *Pictorial Illustration* and explanatory *Key*. In the meantime, it may not be amiss for our metaphysical friends to see if they can agree among themselves with regard to the more simple, proximate, and primary question, What is flesh? before they

undertake to speculate dogmatically concerning the manifestation of Deity in flesh, who is spirit.

You will excuse me, perhaps, just reminding you here that metaphysics are of a very unsubstantial and shadowy nature. As a system, it is a science so-called that treats of things immaterial, and, therefore, intangible and ethereal, or visionary; and which may be considered quite beyond the sphere of all profitable enquiry by plain, unphilosophical men, whose faith is based upon the revealed testimony of God, and not upon the *modus in quo*, or manner in which essences are generated; and how entities and quiddities* are induced. We can believe the testimony of John, that Deity can of stones raise up children to Abraham, with a true and valid faith, which is not at all impaired by our metaphysical inability to explain the process by which he is able to arrive at such a result; for the faith which saves men is the belief of testimony divinely given, not a metaphysical or scientific comprehension of processes. Metaphysics are capital things for ‘doubtful disputation,’ and admirably adapted to the development of ‘sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.’ Let our friends, therefore, who would grow in the knowledge of God and in His favour, eschew metaphysics, by which they can be neither enlightened nor improved; for, as they say in Scotland, which has been befuddled and befooled by the science falsely so-called: “Metaphysics, is when twa men talk thegither, and the ane who hears dinna ken what the ither says; and the ane who speaks dinna ken what he says himsel.”

To give our friends a start then, towards the solution of the primary and proximate question of *What is flesh?* they will, perhaps, allow me to direct their attention to what He who made all flesh says it is. The spirit in David testifies, in Psalm lxxviii, 39, that *flesh is spirit that passeth away, and cometh not again.* The common version says ‘flesh’ is ‘a wind;’ but in the Hebrew, the word is *ruach*, which in Genesis 1:2 is translated *spirit*, as also in a multitude of other places. Flesh then, is spirit, if we are to believe the word. Hence, Peter, all of whose ideas that were really good, came from the spirit, styles the dead antediluvians, who were flesh in common with ourselves, ‘spirits in prison.’ But if you and I, and all mankind, and other beasts in general, be spirit, what is the most obvious difference in view of the divine testimony, between men and angels, who are incorruptible and deathless? Men and angels are both spirit in a certain sense; for in Scripture they are both styled spirits; only the one class *a little lower than* the other: what, then, is the most obvious or striking difference between the two kinds of spirit, or nature, the human and angelic? It is this: human nature in general, is *spirit that passeth away*, and cometh not again; while angelic, or divine nature, or substance, is *spirit that doth not pass away*, and is therefore incorruptible and immortal.

There is, of necessity, an essential difference between these two kinds of spirits, which constitute the one kind transitory, and the other permanent. This

difference is not obvious. It is beyond the ken of the generality. There is a constitutional difference made between them by the Creator, and upon such a basis that the one can readily and instantaneously be transformed or made to pass into the other. This is a question not of essence, but of *organization*, which metaphysicians and theosophists have not been able to expound.

Now in illustration of this, let us consider the relations of steam-power and the metal, iron. Look abroad and behold the almost infinite diversity of results, operated by steam-power through iron. If the iron be in the state simply of ore, bar, or pig, steam power develops nothing; and for the obvious reason, that the iron is in a raw, crude and unorganized condition. But suppose that by the wisdom and science of the artificer, the iron is made to assume the form of the machinery of an ocean steamer, and steam power be applied, what then? The iron fabric is set in motion, and the vessel is propelled by the steam-power through the deep. Now, the same steam-power will spin and weave cotton, print newspapers and grind corn; but will the steam-power spin, weave, print and grind, by setting in motion the machinery of a steam-ship? Why not; it is iron machinery and steam-power? True; but the artistic organization of the metal is not adapted to such results. Steam-power and iron will spin, weave, print, grind and do anything else, if the power be applied to iron properly and scientifically organized.

Thus much by way of illustration. Now, for steam-power, let us substitute divine creative-power; and for iron ore, the dust of the ground. This abstract relation of elements develops no spiritual or mental and physical phenomena. Why? There is the wisdom and power that can do all things, and there is the material for developments? True; but the dust of the ground is not organized. It must be artistically developed into diversities of machinery, that each diversity may give development to diversity of results. If the creative power, which is spirit, organize the dust of the ground into different kinds of living machines or organisms, these are *spirit-forms*, which become capable of giving expression to an almost infinite variety of operations. These spirit-forms are styled by Moses, “the spirits of all flesh,” to which Adam gave appropriate names, when the Creating-Power, ‘in whom they lived and moved and had their being,’ caused them to pass in review before him. One of these spirits was a lion, another an elephant, a third a horse, and so forth. We all know what sort of spirit-manifestation can be displayed through the high mettled spirit-form conventionally termed horse; why cannot the same results be operated through a sloth or an elephant? It is the same power that works in them all to do or act? Because the animal-machine termed elephant, is a dust-of-the-ground organization of a peculiar contrivance designed for elephantine and not equine manifestations. It is the Creator’s artistic organization of the dust of the ground that gives diversity of expression or manifestation to His power, on which account He is styled by Moses, ‘the Elohim of the Spirits of all Flesh.’

According to the constitution of the organism, so is the manifestation of results. Divine Power has made spirit out of the dust of the ground, and called it Man. He has so made or organized it that if not further interfered with by His power, it may pass away. This is called flesh, or spirit that passeth away; and, under ordinary conditions, cometh not again. The human organism is the most perfect of all animal-machines; hence its mental or spiritual manifestations are of a higher and more perfect order than all the rest. His more perfect cerebral organization is the long sort for, but hitherto never found boundary line between instinct and reason. The transforming energy of divine power will convert spirit that passeth away into spirit that passeth not away. They who may be the subject of this operation will be exalted to equality with the angels, whose substance doth not waste nor pass away....”

*Quiddity = inherent nature.

In reporting the above letter, Dr Thomas’s daughter wrote: -

“And with this sentence, appropriate to the last, the Dr. laid down his pen, to lift it no more in the arduous work in which he had spent his life; and spent it not in vain... The foregoing article shows that the Dr’s marvellous intellect remained vigorous to the last. The reading of it naturally leads to the thought expressed by a dear friend who, on finishing the perusal of it, said, “What a pity so great a mind should cease to work,” at a time too when it is so much needed!”

COMMENT

In his argument, Dr. Thomas rejects any change (*meta*) in Adam’s physical nature at the ‘fall’ and states that he was created so that natural death was to be the end of him unless God chose otherwise. This is seen most clearly towards the end of the article when Dr Thomas writes:-

“Divine Power made spirit out of the dust of the ground, and called it Man. He has so made or organized it that if not further interfered with by His power, it may pass away. This is called flesh, or spirit that passeth away; and under ordinary conditions, cometh not again.”

It may be the view Dr Thomas was opposing was widespread, whether this was the case or not, it is very clear that there were quite a number who were doubting his teaching and were arguing for belief in the changed flesh of Adam at the Fall, a

belief common and widespread in the 19th century, at a time when so many new sects were starting up. Most of these newly formed sects embraced this belief but Dr Thomas is here rejecting it outright, reminding them,

“that metaphysics are of a very unsubstantial and shadowy nature. As a system, it is a science so-called that treats of things immaterial, and, therefore, intangible and ethereal, or visionary and which may be considered quite beyond the sphere of all profitable enquiry by plain, unphilosophical men, whose faith is based upon the revealed testimony...”

It was Dr. Thomas’s intention to address this discontent and not allow false teaching to take hold and one can only speculate that had he lived a few more years that he, along with Edward Turney, who believed the same, would have settled the matter once and for all, and Robert Roberts could never have turned the Christadelphian community upside down by his brilliant but misguided rhetoric in choosing rather to adopt the view Dr. Thomas was here opposing.

Indeed, what a great pity Dr Thomas was not allowed to continue his work for a few more years just when it was so much needed. However, let us not forget the Lord works in mysterious ways.

What now? The Christadelphian Establishment knows it is facing a growing challenge. The whole body is in continual crisis. There is more unrest than ever before. There are more divisions than ever. Letters such as that from the Belfast (Balmoral) ecclesia in May 2002, sent to all ecclesias, are proof of growing discontent and dissatisfaction throughout the body. The Testimony magazine also for May 2002 is another attempt to stem the tide. In it we read such things as,

“Why is it that we appear to be losing our edge, our sharpness, our vitality... there is a blandness about us... The forgiveness of our sins, and our salvation in Christ, no longer humble us and bring us to our knees... The uncomfortable truth we have to face is that we lack the faith and the conviction that our beliefs demand of us...”

Dr. Thomas set an example to us all in doing his utmost to get as close to the true understanding of the Scriptures as he possibly could, yet from the foregoing article it is abundantly clear he would not have approved of the B.A.S.F. and would indeed have vigorously opposed it; it could never have been formulated while he was alive. Some of the elements of the Statement of Faith were not preached by the apostles, and other churches are found to be just as close to the Scriptures as are Christadelphians but they too, have faulty doctrines which originated in the Roman Catholic system.

Perhaps one day there may arise ecclesias which claim to be Non-BASF but it is my opinion that if such should happen then it would involve only a small number. For over 125 years there have been a handful of so-called Clean-flesh heretics proclaiming the truth of these matters. It would indeed be an encouragement to us to see this number grow, but the Lord knows who are His, and knowing this, we are content.

Yet there have always been Christadelphians who have known these things. Why haven't they been heard? Because they have not been allowed to speak what they know; they have been told 'not to rock the boat;' they have been intimidated and silenced by 'those who know better,' though we have heard occasionally that these things have been spoken of from the platform, when no one seems to have noticed, but some have been cast out as Clean-flesh heretics.

It is imperative every Christadelphian seriously considers where this present situation leaves him or her. The challenge facing the Christadelphian establishment has never been greater.

How can they change their Statement of Faith to embrace the teachings of Dr. Thomas. How can they turn around and tell the rank and file

- that natural death is not the result of, nor punishment for sin;
- that flesh did not change at the so-called 'fall'.
- that there is no such thing as sin in the flesh;
- that Jesus Christ did not have to die for Himself.
- that it is now necessary to find another reason for the crucifixion and explain the Atonement in quite different terms than hitherto.

If Jesus was not compelled to die for his sinful flesh then why did God require the death of an innocent man?

There is no stopping place along the road to a true understanding of the Atonement once belief in a changed flesh is forsaken. A logical explanation of why Christ gave His life for our redemption can be clearly seen by those who have travelled the straight road, but for some it is a big task, because it means accepting 'substitution' which, for so long, has been a blackened word in Christadelphia. However, it seems not widely recognized that there are two types of 'Substitution;' one evil and the other righteous. To punish an innocent man in order to let the guilty go free, is indeed evil, but if a good and kindly man pays off a debt owed by a poor man who is unable to pay it himself, then, this is Christian teaching – "Bear ye one another's burdens." This is what Jesus did in giving His life in place of Adam's forfeited life, so that for those in Him "there is now no condemnation."

But one thing is certain – there is no halfway house, or to change the metaphor, one cannot jump over a gate and stop halfway. I am convinced there are many good people in the Christadelphian community. May God give them the courage of their convictions to do what they know should be done – Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and so worship God in Spirit and in truth The reward is unspeakable joy!

Russell Gregory

APPENDIX

At the start of this booklet we are informed that Dr Thomas died 5th March 1871 at which time he was in the midst of writing an article entitled “What is flesh?” We are also informed that although this is an unfinished letter, it is worth reading through two or three times in order to fully appreciate Dr Thomas’s understanding. While this may be true in general of many different subjects, it is shown in the above Comment that Christadelphians, though they have laid so much stress and conviction on the works of Dr Thomas, had read them effectively would have found him declaring truth in one place and contradicting it in another.

Dr Thomas’ article “What Is Flesh?” though unfinished is true so far as he limits flesh to its physical quality as he taught in Elpis Israel, chapter 2, page 35 where he stated of the nature of Jesus was identical with the very good created nature of Adam. This then is the simple answer to his question “What is Flesh?” and there is nothing more added than what he explains here as a physical corruptible nature capable of death and destined to die if left to itself without change to the superior nature of the Angels.

Why then the inconsistent use of terms where the Dr describe the flesh of Jesus as “Sin’s Flesh” and “Sinful Flesh” when he has already said the flesh of Jesus was identical in quality with that of Adam when created? Some accused him of being inconsistent but He himself said, “If necessary I will change my mind every day until I get it right at last.”

Adam was not “Sinful Flesh” nor was he “Sin’s Flesh” at creation, and neither term can describe Jesus’ flesh; He was Flesh as Dr. Thomas has described it at the start and in Elpis Israel chapter 2, page 35.

Now on the matter of Adam’s sin and its penalty we have confirmation of the Dr’s view in opposition to that of Robert Roberts in the following quotations in dealing with the subject of how the sentence of death came into operation. Robert Roberts said:

“It required what men called a miracle to depress (Adam) to the level of the beasts that perish” (Robert Roberts in “The Visible Hand of God,” pp 19,20). But Dr Thomas said:

“Seeing that Adam had become a transgressor of Divine Law there was no need of a miracle for the infliction of death all that was necessary was to prevent him from eating of the Tree of Life and to leave his flesh and blood nature to the operation of the laws peculiar to it. It was not a nature formed for interminable existence.” (“Eureka,” Vol. I page 248).

As far as the operation of the physical law of natural or common death is concerned Dr Thomas is correct and R.Roberts incorrect, yet neither of their statements agree with Genesis 2:16, 17 for eating of the forbidden fruit is breaking the law and requires a legal sentence of death not the implantation of a physical law changing Adam’s nature; it is a legal sentence of death related to blood-shedding for the taking away of life forfeited to a transgressed law which governs the position.

Dr Thomas in Eureka Vol. 1, page 248 does not describe the penalty for Adam’s sin but the result of his life being provisionally spared through the blood of the lamb foreshadowing Jesus. And though Dr Thomas in “Elpis Israel” states of Jesus being the “Substitutional Testator” (Elpis Israel, page 213) he has not rid himself of the idea of natural death being the penalty for sin. He should have realised that the death of Jesus was not by natural decay but by the shedding of blood and that without the shedding of blood is no remission of sin. We wonder then “into what death was he and his followers baptised?” For as Paul states, there is only one baptism. If Christ be a substitute it could only be for the death incurred by Adam which was judicial in scripture teaching, “by the shedding of blood” the mode of death Jesus suffered for all, that the world through him might be saved and is operative on the principle of belief, understanding and faith.

In the light of this it should appear strange to the surface reader a description of the meaning of Redemption in Christ put forward by Dr. Thomas in Eureka where he stresses the importance of the blood of Christ the conveyor of natural life being the Ransom price to make free from the Law of Sin and Death which he mistakenly believed to be a fixation of physical decay ending in natural death. His explanation of redemption proves that the subject of redemption experience no physical change. I will quote what he states in Eureka:

“Redemption is release for a Ransom; all who become God’s servants have been released from a former lord by purchase, the purchaser is God and the

Ransom paid, the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and without blemish.”

Now in Romans 8:1-2 Paul speaks of himself in the present tense and converted to Christ, he himself being now a subject of the redeeming blood of Christ yet not having died physically, he says, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh” i.e. unregenerated in minds, see Romans 7:4-6 and 8:5-19. It is worthwhile reading all the above and ask your conscience what happened to Paul’s so called sinful-condemned flesh? - for he was physically alive when he wrote the above chapters.

Some have posed the question in the past, “Who is the former lord from which God’s servants had been released or made free?” In the above references Paul has answered, and Dr. Thomas has confirmed that answer, but if you are still unconvinced due to the unscriptural ‘sinful-condemned flesh’ bias received by vain tradition and Apostasy, read what Paul says in Romans 6:11-22 to those believers and present servants of God who had not died physically nor risen from literal death, yet in such an exalted position through the love of God and the grace of His Son, released from a former lord by the Ransom paid.

I refer now to the letter written by Dr Thomas’s daughter, (page 5); yet what I have written regarding Dr Thomas’s failure to see that the death Adam incurred by sin was not the death he experienced at the age of 930 years, does not detract from what his daughter has written and also the respect we have for his intelligence and spiritual motives.

I recommend the enlightening Comments above and I am of the same opinion that if the Dr. had lived to the time when Edward Turney and David Handley were exchanging views with Robert Roberts their views would preferably have been addressed to Dr. Thomas, call this mere assumption if you choose but it was not to be and Russell Gregory has exposed the result.

In conclusion and in reading of the preaching of the disciples of Jesus involving the necessity of understanding their Gospel message of why Jesus died an inflicted death by giving his life in the blood, it should be recognised therefore on that basis in Acts 13:47,48 “And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” If this is not present day judgment, words have no meaning.

Phil Parry (2004)

Let's now go back to April 1867:

In April 1867 the Ambassador magazine (Editor – Robert Roberts) published an article written by Sister E. J. Lassius, the daughter of Dr John Thomas. Here it is –

ON THE NATURE OF CHRIST.

By Dr. Thomas's Daughter.

“There are, at this time, some interesting points of doctrine in process of discussion among some in different places, and we do earnestly hope that all parties engaged therein, will be enlightened in the end, and that no cause of strife may arise therefrom. I wish in this letter, to mention and enlarge a little upon one of these points. It is about the nature and constitution of Jesus Christ. Some parties affirm that He did not possess the Divine nature in any respect; that He was constitutionally a sinner like any other son of Adam; that when a child He was no more than any other child, and when arrived at years of maturity the Deity saw that His character was good and suitable for His purpose, therefore He made use of Him, and filled Him with the Holy Spirit at His baptism.

Others affirm that He was constitutionally righteous and incapable of sinning, and devoid of the propensities inherent in our nature. Now, evidently the truth of the matter is not wholly on either position according to the Scriptures.

That Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous there can be no doubt, but, that He was incapable of sinning we do not believe. If this were so, there would have been no virtue or merit in withstanding temptation; consequently, the temptation, as recorded in the New Testament, would have been a useless performance.

We learn from the testimony that Jesus was created by the Father out of the substance of His mother Mary, at the time appointed by Jehovah - according as it is written - “When the fulness of time was come, He was made of a woman,” and the angel Gabriel appeared unto the Virgin Mary and told her the manner of its fulfilment – that the “Holy Spirit should come upon her, and the power of the Highest should overshadow her,” and, “That Holy Thing that should be born of her should be called the Son of God.” Now we know that, as a general thing, all children partake of the nature, constitution, and character of BOTH their parents. No child is ever wholly, and entirely, and in all respects like one parent only, and we are not warranted in making an exception to this law in the case of the Son of God. From His mother, He derived all the faculties, propensities, and instincts which belong to the nature of the first Adam - as it is written - “He took upon Himself the nature of the seed of Abraham,” that sin might be condemned in the

nature which had sinned; and also, that He might be able to sympathise with our infirmities, and to “succour those who are tempted,” “forasmuch, as he also was compassed with infirmity.” This was the “body prepared” for a habitation of the Spirit in all fulness - as it is written – “A body hast Thou prepared for me,” “Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God.”

Now we understand what was the nature of the medium of manifestation, but what was that which was manifested? Was it merely the natural manifestations of a natural man? By no means. It is written, “He shall be called Immanuel,” that is, being interpreted, “God with us.” This was God manifested in the flesh, although the Spirit of God has operated through other media, both in word and sign. He is called the “only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Some might ask, how was the Deity manifested? We answer, in the character of the Son and His mental attributes. The Apostle John says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” and, “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.” The Word of God is the wisdom of God; the thoughts or intelligence of Deity. This word of wisdom is personified in the Proverbs of Solomon, thus, - I, wisdom, dwell with prudence and find out knowledge of witty inventions,” with many other similar passages. Jesus Christ was the wisdom of God embodied in the flesh - “the express image of His person” or character, because it was ordained that in Him should dwell the fulness of the Godhead bodily, so that it became essential that he should not only receive the Spirit without measure at His baptism for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and working miracles, but, that he should also have power within Himself to become perfect in all virtue that He might be found without transgression and without fault from His infancy and childhood; that He might be the lamb without spot or blemish. So, from the Deity, His Father, he inherited wisdom, thought, intelligence, elevation, and purity of character. Being aware of His divine origin and mission at twelve years of age, and perhaps before, He was able to discuss matters pertaining to the law with men of years and education - professed doctors of divinity. Thus we see that He displayed, even in the years of childhood, wisdom and knowledge inherited from His heavenly Father. “Being the Son of God He thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” as all children are, in a certain sense, equal with their parents.

The natural illustrates the spiritual. In studying human character we find that the inward thoughts, judgment, or intelligence is something different and distinct from the desires, affections, and propensities; all these are right and good in their proper sphere, when directed and circumscribed within certain limits prescribed by the law of God. If the judgment is clear and well regulated and controlled by the word of God, it will entirely subjugate the desires and affections, and only allow them a certain limited scope. This, however, is a state of mind never completely attained to by us who are born after the flesh by the will of man. Jesus being the

word, thought, or intelligence of His Father, consequently the will of the flesh was far more subjugated and subdued, and He was not liable to be led away by excited impulses and perverted desires. The desires of His nature were in a natural state, such as those with which the first Adam was endowed at his creation. Some of the first Adam's descendants, however, have so nourished and cultivated those propensities (which in their simplicity are good enough), that they have become perverted and altogether unnatural. In the consideration of this or any other subject of Bible doctrine, we should seek to harmonize all the passages bearing upon any particular point; and not accept some and reject others, which (to our limited comprehension) seems to convey opposition of meaning; when in reality there is no contradiction, but a beautiful harmony when rightly put together.

Mrs E. J. Lassius." - Ambassador, April, 1867.

The above article by Dr Thomas' daughter was republished by Edward Turney in The Christian Lamp magazine, in October 1875 with the following remarks -

COMMENT.

By Edward Turney

"We reprint the foregoing for several reasons, all of which it is not necessary to state. It is clear that Dr. Thomas's daughter wrote this article with her father's consent or approval, and those who are familiar with her father's writing will recognise in it both his ideas and his language. It is also equally clear that the editor of the Christadelphian (Robert Roberts) approved of this article from what precedes it, as well as from the prominence it holds in that paper, being the leading article for the month. It was in the month of April, 1867, that this article was published. We are now in the month of August, 1875, making some comment upon it. During the last two years of this interval the Christadelphian and its editor have in many ways denounced us and anathematized us in language of unmeasured bitterness because we are not now able to believe that flesh is full of sin, and that Jesus was a constitutional sinner. We do not now intend to make more than an allusion to our answers to these charges. We wish at this time to call special notice to this article from the pen of Dr. Thomas's daughter, which affords the strongest possible proof of one of two things, either that the editor of the Christadelphian did not understand its teaching, or that he believed it true. What then does it teach? Let us set the matter in order:

1. Some parties affirm that Jesus was a constitutional sinner,* like any other son of Adam.

2. That the truth of the matter is that Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous.

3. That the desires, affections, and propensities are right and good in their proper sphere, when directed and circumscribed within certain limits prescribed by the law of God.

4. That the desires of Jesus' nature were in a natural state, such as those with which the first Adam was endowed at his creation.

According to the first item Dr. Thomas, and his daughter, and perhaps the editor of the Christadelphian, believed it, in 1867, unscriptural to teach that Jesus was a constitutional sinner.

From the second item it is undeniable that Dr. Thomas and his daughter, and perhaps the editor of the Christadelphian, believed that Jesus was constitutionally good and righteous.

In the third item, they (the Dr. and his daughter) affirm that the propensities are good when properly guided; in the fourth that Jesus was in the same state as Adam at his creation.

Now every reader of the controversy between ourselves and the editor of the Christadelphian must be aware that we endorse the four items above set forth, and that the editor of the Christadelphian denies each and all of them. He has iterated and reiterated

- (1.) that Jesus was a constitutional sinner.
- (2.) That the desires of the flesh are sinful and corrupt.
- (3.) That because Jesus was born of Mary He was involved in the same state as all Adam's children.

And these things he obstinately avers without a shred of proof, giving it out all the while that he stands and will stand or fall on Dr. Thomas's platform!!! Is it possible for a sane person in face of the foregoing testimony, to say nothing of much more already adduced in the Lamp and the Lecture on the Sacrifice of Christ; is it possible we say for a sane person not to see that the editor of the Christadelphian has long since committed logical suicide. We cannot be persuaded that had any other man fallen into such flagrant contradiction that the editor of the Christadelphian would have been slow to perceive it, and we are the more confirmed from this fresh evidence of his error, that it is not argument but something else that gives him so much resemblance to the proverbial obstinacy of a very useful animal. But in the very nature of things this is but a preparation for eating the dish of "humble pie." This dish is before him, and the longer he refuses to eat it up the more unsavoury it will become. We shall continue to remind him as opportunity offers that the "pie" is not consumed.

- Editor." (Edward Turney)

*Note: "Constitutional sinner" - Under the condemnation of sinful flesh..

We now give some observations made by friends of Dr Thomas. First, just the opening portion of a long and detailed letter from Brother John Coffman to Brother Edward Turney in 1874 in which he writes: -

Adeline, Ogle County, Illinois, United States of America, Feb. 2nd, 1874 *End
Ref. 2

“DEAR BRO. TURNEY - Great and important events having taken place in England among the brotherhood induces me to address you, and although personally unacquainted, we are nevertheless connected by that fellowship which all believers of the truth who walk worthy of their high calling have, one with another. I perceive that you are branded as a heretic. I have seen no just reason for so grave a charge if we can act on the supposition that you know and can demonstrate your own position. There is a candour and honesty in your course that is very charming to those who love the truth for its own sake. A disposition to accept what is Scriptural irrespective of what the Dr. might term “preconceived Babel speculations.” There is also an absence of that spirit now so prevalent, which is expressed in the observation made by Pilate, “What I have written, I have written.” This, in our estimation, is good evidence of that true nobility which should characterize the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. What more noble than to say I was wrong, I did not understand the subject though honest in my belief; from this time forward I know better, and thank God for it.

Of the much-discussed question on your side of the water, it appears to me that such a controversy as is now going on will, in the end, result in good. Agitation as you know prevents stagnation. The position on the subject of the Christ held by a goodly few in this country, is at last assailed in the columns of the ‘Christadelphian’ and as we have no hope that our side of the argument would be permitted to see the light through its pages, we turn to you and ask to be heard through the medium of the “Lamp,” believing that you will not shrink from the divine testimonies, knowing that truth has nothing to fear and no favours to ask of error in a fair field and on equal terms.”

This as far as we need go in John Coffman’s letter.

- - - - -

Next we go forward two months to a letter from Samuel Coffman, the father of John Coffman:

Adeline, Ogle Co., Illinois, U.S.A. 27th April, 1874. *[Ref. 3]

“Dear Bro. Turney, - The April number of the Lamp has appeared, and been read with much pleasure, as in it is set forth the grand truth of eternal power

manifest in flesh common to the seed of Abraham. For some time I thought we would go down to the dust ere our progressive ideas on this grand theme would be set before the brethren at large, therefore accept my thanks for the insertion of my son John's condensed article - - - . Owing to my feeble health, I only slightly read my son's epistle ere it was sent, in the meantime thinking it would be hid from the light as has been the case in other quarters. Consequently I feel thankful for its insertion, and your gentle reasonable comment thereon. The article referred to is calculated to set before the brethren what we believe the word of the Almighty teaches on this grand theme. You are right. Indeed we are too easily misunderstood, but the truth has had this to contend with in all ages; we surely do not believe in the eternal sonship. But, as Bro. Ellis said, the Son is not the Father, neither the Father the Son; but the Father was the progenitor of the Son; and the Son came out from the Father, and was a physical Son, as any man who comes from his father a literal son, as with his father. Now, can we realise how we pre-existed with our fathers? You are correct in regard to the passage, Isa. xl. 3 that John was preparing the way for Elohim; this makes it a necessity that Jesus was a substantial Son of God in the same sense as all men are substantial sons of their fathers. This view was well understood by the Jews, and was what they rejected, knowing their acceptance of it would be an acknowledgment of the claims of Jesus that He was the Son of God; in fact, an equal, an Eloah, equal of the other Eloah, who came in the form of a dove. An anointed personage, let him be ever so well organised would not be the Saviour, the Christ, that preached through Noah. Bro. Ellis is correct; I hope he may succeed in demonstrating to the minds of the brethren that Jesus was substantially the Son of God, first physically, then mentally and morally, upon the principle that Jesus was the Son of God, as all men are the sons of their fathers, and SURELY WAS NOT UNDER CONDEMNATION.

I had considerable private conversation with the Doctor previous to his death, and amongst his last words on this point he spake in this manner to me: - "You had a son who died." "Yes." "Was he a manifestation of you?" "Yes." "Well he being so, and now dead, you died in manifestation. Upon the like principle Deity died in manifestation." I said, "Doctor, is this a correct illustration?" He said "Yes, and very simple."

In conclusion, I desire that we all, the brethren of Christ - babes as it were - lay aside our prejudices and extremes, and truly grow in the knowledge of the Father and the Lord Jesus anointed; and rise above the infant state, and become men, able to bear strong meat, and talk less about re-immersion on the present occasion. I feel satisfied there is a way, if we had the will, to become united in peace and love one towards the other. We all know there is strength in unity, but by all means our unity must be based upon the truth; and to discourage progress in the truth to effect unity, has certainly a bad effect; therefore, I pray to the Father through the Son,

that we may all grow in knowledge, not looking backward, but forward, that we may make our calling and election sure.

Kind regards, SAMUEL W. COFFMAN.”

In response to this letter, Bro. Edward Turney wrote:

“This letter came in after our June impression was complete or it should have appeared therein. The writer of it was very familiar with the late Dr. Thomas for many years, and the impression he has of the Doctors latest views of the Christ is that he - the Doctor - did not believe Christ was under condemnation.

Bro. Coffman complains of the tyrannical and suppressive spirit on the part of the Editor of the Christadelphian; who, to make out his own case, has treated the Doctor’s writings from the 1852 Herald the same as he has those of Bro. Coffman’s, friends - “hid them from the light,” and for what reason? Because the brethren might misunderstand them! Choice excuse certainly. And why may they not also misunderstand what this considerate guardian has reprinted?

The sentiments of our aged Bro. Coffman touching unity and peace will be cordially reciprocated by all those whose Christian principles operate on their hearts, as well as on their heads. Finally, to our venerable Bro., and to all the brethren, we say, that while ever the Lamp continues to burn, their views shall be read by its impartial light.

EDITOR.” (Edward Turney.)”

Brother John Coffman again writes at length to Brother Edward Turney and here again, we reproduce only a part as follows: -

To the Editor of the “Christadelphian Lamp”

Adeline, Ogle County, Illinois, U.S of America, July 30th, 1874. *[Ref. No. 4]

“Dear Bro. Turney, - Some six months since, I had the pleasure of writing you on a subject in which the Brethren at large appeared to be intensely interested. The candid, courteous, and manly way in which you met those points with which you could not agree, induces me to address you again on this topic, and believe me, Bro. Turney, it is with no idea of cavilling, or for the sake of seeking to establish a theory, that I do so. I firmly believe what I endeavour to set forth is the truth of God, taught in His word. To this authority I am ever willing to appeal, and it is my earnest desire to stand upon that foundation; hence, I shall esteem it a favor, if I am

wrong, to be put right, for what advantage do I gain by an imperfect, or incorrect understanding of the glorious doctrine of the ever blessed Son of God.

On this subject it appears to be impossible so to write as not to be misunderstood, and as I have no desire to cast stumbling-blocks in the path of those who desire to understand me correctly, I will endeavour to be as lucid in my remarks as it is possible for me to be, without sacrificing the testimonies laid down for our acceptance. I do not intend to teach that the invisible God was born in the city of Bethlehem, and I do not think you so understand me, but rather that my language is calculated to produce such an impression. I say that the visible image of the invisible God, or a manifestation of this only true God, was the personage born; God's son, whose name He was by birthright fully entitled to bear, hence it will be observed that the same word precisely, is used in the 11th verse of the 2nd chap. of Luke, to designate the son, as is applied in the 9th, 23rd, 24th, and 26th verses to the invisible Deity and Father; the original of which I apprehend, is the Greek word *Kurios*, answering to the Hebrew *Adon*. . . ”

(And to conclude) “ . . . God's only begotten Son, then, ranks high above all humanity in one most important respect, which would be difficult to overestimate, and that is, His divine origin; He “proceeded forth, and came from God, who sent Him as the bread of life, to give salvation to a perishing world; herein is the love of God manifested “towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ (His Son) died for us. The extraordinary prophecies concerning Him, and the remarkable discourses He uttered concerning Himself, have puzzled past ages and generations, and have produced more intense and bitter contentions than probably any other subject yet set forth in the scriptures. We, who are waiting for Him, who are His brethren should, of all people in the world, understand and faithfully receive His savings. Let us give them our prayerful study and meditation, and our reward will be great.

Faithfully yours, JOHN D. COFFMAN.”

In commenting on this letter, Brother Edward Turney wrote: -

“This letter contains many excellent things, and leaves the writer of it much less liable, as we think, to be misunderstood than his former communication; but, as it is probable that some of our readers will ask what he means by substance of God, as applied to Jesus, perhaps he will keep that point before him in his next article. The term substance of God indicates to most peoples' minds deathless substance, but we do not apprehend brother Coffman means that. - EDITOR.”

Three months later this next letter from John Coffman is entitled : -

GOD'S SON.

Adeline, Ogle Co., III., U. S. A., October 31st, 1874. *[Ref. No. 5]

“Dear Bro. Turney, - In reply to your short, but pointed observations on my last epistle, I now send you an article for publication, which, in connection with my last, I trust will meet the difficulty, and perhaps clear up some other points that may not have been understood. Praying for the welfare of the truth during the absence of the Master, and that we may be found faithful stewards by Him at His appearing.

Yours faithfully in the Christ, J. D. COFFMAN.

THERE is no subject in the Scriptures more calculated to excite the gratitude and admiration of the faithful saint than that love which the Creator has manifested for the creature, exhibited in the sending forth, and giving up for us, of His well-beloved, and only begotten Son, who came not “to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might he saved.” We have often imagined what Abraham’s feelings must have been when on the eve of offering up his Son Isaac. What a faith in God’s promises and power to perform them must he have had, to overcome the love for his child, and to willingly offer him up, through whom the seed was promised. No doubting, no questioning, simply a grand and childlike faith and obedience, which was abundantly confirmed, when a victim was provided, suitable for the occasion, as a substitute, pointing forward to the providing of another victim, (Gen. xxii. 13) even the “Lamb of God” - His well-beloved Son - “that taketh away the sin of the world. . .”

Again we leave John’s letter as it is too long to insert here, but for brevity we give Brother Edward Turney’s summary of it as follows: -

- “1. Jesus the Christ was the only begotten Son of God.
2. That His begetting was essentially different from the creation of Adam from the ground.
3. That this difference constituted a nearer relationship to God than was possessed by Adam or any of his descendants.
4. That this relationship, together with His missions, is the ground of the declared oneness and equality of Jesus with His Father.
5. That Jesus existed with His Father in the same sense that any other son exists with his father.
6. That He was, like all children, a partaker of His Father’s substance.
7. That this substance being Deity He, Jesus, partook of Deity, and is styled Deity.

8. That Deity, thus “took upon Himself the seed of Abraham,” and “appeared in the likeness of men.”

9. That the process of this operation is not explained by Scripture, nor need be attempted by man. It is a matter of simple belief, or faith.

10. That this view of Jesus differs from both Trinitarianism and Unitarianism doctrine concerning Him.

11. That two persons, either separate or united, existing before birth of Jesus, called Christ and God are not sustained by Scripture.

12. That the “mere-man” idea is false, because it denies Divine begettal.

13. That “the Spirit-produced,” “Spirit-moulded,” and “the Spirit-guided” theory, come far short of the truth, and leave Jesus, the second Adam, on a par with the first Adam in these particulars.

We have endeavoured to present the pith of Bro. Coffman’s several papers in a plain, clear manner, and as briefly as possible; and, while fully concurring in his argument for the literality of the Sonship of Jesus, we, with him, would impress upon our readers the importance of always discussing so exalted a subject in a proper spirit, lest haply we be found classed with the uproarious wranglers who persecuted “the Lord of Glory.”

- Editor.” (Edward Turney)

And now we reproduce an extract from a letter from W. A. Harris to Brother Edward Turney from Chicago, dated December 18th, 1874:- * [Ref. No 6]

“Dear Brother Turney, - Your long and interesting letter of the 2nd November to Brother S. W. Coffman, was read by me with very great pleasure. Brother Jno. D. Coffman handed it to me for perusal on his way through Chicago for Maryland, where he at present is. Allow me to congratulate you on the doctrinal position you have assumed, which seems to be identical with our own, and strictly scriptural, and which Brother Donaldson, of Detroit, has been proclaiming by word of mouth, with the assistance of a chart, for a number of years, in fact, from a period prior to the Doctor’s death until now; and this he has done in the face of the most violent opposition, and sometimes personal abuse, as well as with a feeble condition of health, often relapsing into prostration and sickness; so you may judge how pleased we all feel that there is now a prospect of this subject being thoroughly and critically canvassed by yourself - whose ability to take hold and to analyse a subject we all most cordially admit - and therefore, thank God that a door is now open for the brethren to see and consider the doctrine in all its depth, grandeur, and sublimity. It appears to us now, and has for two years past, that this subject must come up among the brethren prior to the Apocalypse of our Lord and Saviour in the same manner as did the subject of the Judgment: for – as I wrote Brother

Roberts - "If this doctrine be of God it will prevail, and a man will be found to publish it whether we like it or not" - and now, indeed, this appears to be coming to pass, and though you will find the agitation of the doctrine attended by much unpleasant and violent opposition, yet, this is no more than attended its publication by Jesus Himself in the first century. The servant is not above his master. If they have called the "master of the house" a blasphemer on this account, you may very well expect to be regarded as such by those who are faithless or ignorant. But is it not a duty, as well as a pleasure, to suffer some of the ignominy which He suffered, and, especially so, when on account of upholding the identical doctrine He taught. Is there any occupation more noble than this? I know of none. If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him, but if we deny Him He also will deny us, says the apostle. Therefore I wish you God-speed in your efforts to maintain the truth, for in this way it is that you may "honour the Son even as you honour the Father" - quibbles to the contrary notwithstanding - and we shall ever pray that in this work you may be undaunted by all opposition, and with an eye - single to the glory of God and His testimony - you will advocate it, if you have to do it single-handed. O what a glorious thing it is to feel with our feet the solid rock we stand upon, and this more especially when we observe those who are on the quick-sands of infidelity and doubt ever wavering; to-day occupying apparently solid ground and to-morrow washed hither and thither by speculation and a desire to harmonize "what I have written" with later and contradictory teaching. Our watchword must be now, since the Doctor's death, more than ever, "to the law and to the testimony." This is the rock we stand on, and therefore we can rejoice in the goodness, long suffering, mercy, and love, manifested to us by the mighty Ail, whom we are now able to address as Father, and to approach unto with confidence devoid of fear, through the manifestation of His Son, who took away the sin of the world and became our High Priest within the veil. The thunders and lightnings of Sinai veiling the stern majesty of Omnipotence, and causing those who saw and heard them to tremble, have been put away, and the beloved Son of God Himself preaching peace and glad-tidings of great joy, invites us, in loving words, to "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That you may be successful in promoting this greatest and most noble feature of the system of God's righteousness is the prayer of yours sincerely,

W. A. HARRIS."

Next we refer to a report on 'the Meeting at Adeline': - * [Ref. No 7]

"There was a meeting of Christadelphians held at Adeline, Ogle Co., Ill., U. S. A., June 11th and 12th, 1875, the following Ecclesias were represented, either in person or by letter, viz.:- Detroit, Mich.; Milwaukee, Wis.; Springfield, Ohio; Bristol, Wis.; Chicago, Ill.; State Centre, Iowa; Boston, Mass.; and Worcester,

Mass. Letters were also received from the following Brethren and Sisters :- Bro. Vreedenburgh, Jersey City, N. J.; Sister Eusebia Lassius, Hoboken, N. J.; Bro. Frank Chester, Kankakee, Ill.; Bro. Fred. Druf, Riverside, Iowa; Bro. W. A Harris, Chicago, Ill.; and Bro. C. Askew, Pewaukee, Wis.”

Brother Samuel Coffman sent the following: -

“Dear Bro. Turney, I forward the foregoing report of our meeting, hoping you will give it publicity. The doctrine on this issue held by us, we feel able to prove was identical with what Dr. Thomas believed for some time before his death. The Doctor told me that, if he lived to go over to England, and to get control of Roberts’s paper, (The Christadelphian Magazine) he would teach it, regardless of seeming self-contradictions. S. W. COFFMAN.”

In response to the report Brother Edward Turney wrote: -

“The key-note of the Adeline Meeting was the Divine Sonship of the Christ. No more worthy or important topic could have engaged the intellect and affections of the persons assembled. If Jesus were not God’s begotten, His only begotten Son, the prophets and the apostles are liars, and Jesus Himself stands convicted of falsehood by the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas was then right, “we have heard his blasphemy.” Now, from this grand fact, unique in the annals of the world, it is justly impossible to escape the conclusion – a conclusion alluded to in Bro. S. W. Coffman’s speech - that the legal condemnation resting upon all Adam’s children did not and could not rest upon Jesus, who was God’s Child. God, then, was manifested in His own Child, as Adam - and indeed every father - was manifested in his. But the Editor of the Christadelphian has condemned Christ; he has placed Him among the condemned Adamites, and one of his contributors has openly professed that Jesus was born of diabolos!!

We shall not dwell upon the fact - patent enough - that it is since the Lamp came into existence that the Divine begetting of Jesus and its great consequences have grown into such prominence among our body. Look at all the testimony of Brother Donaldson and Bro. Harper? Where can we find the like of it before? And at what meeting of the Brethren was the begetting of Jesus and its meaning ever the subject of so much attention? God forbid that we should boast, save in Christ Jesus our Lord; but this meeting is an event among the American Brotherhood whose significance cannot be hidden. And this doctrine, namely, the Divine paternity of Jesus and its practical relation to mankind, will yet move the whole body, as the trees are moved with the wind. It is gratifying to us to see present at Adeline so many of our friends - friends who evidence their friendship by supporting the Lamp, the only organ in which this question was ever held up to the light, which has given a living personality and an immortal significance to God’s

act in begetting a Son. Had we been present at Adeline we should not have refrained from lifting up our voice and contributing our testimony to this subject. We might not - judging from the Report - have been able to acquiesce in all that transpired. There are several texts of Scripture misapplied, some probably through following the English translation, which is incorrect. But the principal feature in this report - the key-note, as we have said before - is the Divine Sonship of Jesus and its import to us. At another time we may perhaps deal with the defects alluded to. This month there is no space.”

Edward Turney

In Conclusion

One of the most memorable sayings of Dr Thomas is his reply to someone who confronted him for changing his mind on a certain point; the Dr. responded by saying “Must a man never progress? If he discover an error in his premises, must he for ever hold to it for the sake of consistency? May such a calamity never befall me. Rather let me change every day, till I get right at last.”

This seems to have been prophetic yet the last changes which Dr Thomas made to his understanding are never mentioned by those who follow Robert Roberts and his Statement of Faith. In fact, Robert Roberts boasted of following Dr Thomas – but he didn’t.

However, as I said, Dr Thomas was very concerned about Robert Roberts and to show this I quoted above (page 22) an extract from a letter written by Brother Samuel Coffman to Brother Edward Turney; here it is again : -

“Dear Bro. Turney: I forward the foregoing report of our meeting, hoping you will give it publicity. The doctrine on this issue held by us, we feel able to prove was identical with what Dr. Thomas believed for some time before his death. The Doctor told me that, if he lived to go over to England, and to get control of Roberts’s paper, (The Christadelphian Magazine) he would teach it, regardless of seeming self-contradictions. S. W. COFFMAN.”

This says it all really and it is for this reason we wish to publish what we have discovered from our researches, and then others can consider the position for themselves and so make properly informed choices and not be misled by false reports which have, sadly, abounded for far too long throughout Christadelphia.

May the grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

Russell Gregory

Dr Thomas died in March 1871 at which time he had been teaching for five or six years that there was no change in the flesh of Adam and Eve when they transgressed God’s commandment in the Garden of Eden.

Therefore there was no sin dwelling in human flesh as taught by the Roman Catholic Doctrine of Original Sin. And there was no reason for Jesus to die for He was altogether sinless in every way. He was that “Holy thing who was born to Mary and never once sinned, of whom His Father said, “This is my well-beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

<u>Robert Roberts taught...</u>	<u>Dr John Thomas taught...</u>
<p>When Adam sinned in Eden human flesh was changed so that sin now dwells in our flesh, making all mankind constitutional sinners.* That Jesus Christ, too, being born of Mary, had sin in His flesh making Him a constitutional sinner.</p>	<p>There was no change in human flesh when Adam sinned in Eden. There is no such thing as sin in the flesh. Our flesh remains as God created it in the beginning, i.e. corruptible.</p>
<p>All our natural desires (the desires of the flesh) are sinful and corrupt</p>	<p>Jesus Christ did not have sin in His flesh; He was constitutionally good and righteous</p>
<p>Jesus Christ’s’ natural desires were equally sinful and corrupt.</p>	<p>That the desires, affections, and propensities are right and good in their proper sphere, when directed and circumscribed within certain limits prescribed by the law of God.</p>
<p>God condemns our flesh because it is full of sin</p>	<p>God condemns sin. Not our flesh.</p>
<p>Natural death is the punishment for sin.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ did not have to die.</p>
<p>But Jesus Christ had to die a violent death in order to cleanse Himself of His sinful flesh.</p>	<p>Jesus Christ chose to die because He loved mankind, His Father’s creation, and chose to die in order to save the faithful.</p>
<p>Jesus Christ died for Himself so that He could die for us as our Representative.</p>	<p>The Bible never tells us that Jesus Christ died for Himself.</p>

Note. * “constitutional sinner” is someone under the condemnation of sinful flesh

Dr John Thomas wanted to come over to England, get control of The Christadelphian Magazine (Roberts' paper) and teach his latest beliefs having been convinced his earlier beliefs contained errors and he had "got it right at last."

It will be seen throughout this booklet that the Nazarene Fellowship have followed on from where Dr John Thomas left off.

With love in Jesus to all our readers, Russell Gregory



"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

All that has been published here can be verified by reference to **The Nazarene Fellowship website** under the heading of "The Christian Lamp Magazines" and are listed here for easy access -

Ref		See
1	Article by Mrs E.J.Lassius published in Ambassador Mag. in April 1867 Reproduced in the Christian Lamp Oct 1875	Vol 2 No. 12 page 2
2	Letter from John Coffman dated February 2 nd 1874	Vol 1 No. 6 Page 6
3	Letter from Samuel Coffman dated April 27 th 1874	Vol 1 No. 9 Page 9
4	Letter from John Coffman dated July 30 th 1874	Vol 1 No. 12 Page 22
5	Letter from John Coffman dated October 31 st 1874	Vol 2 No 3 Page 8
6	Letter from W. A. Harris dated December 18 th 1874	Vol 2 No. 11 Page 21
7	Report from S.W.Coffman dated June 11th & 12th 1875	Vol 2 No. 11 Page 13

E-mail address – bygrace@nazarenes.org.uk

<http://www.thenazarenefellowship.co.uk/>

The Nazarene Fellowship has no constitution, creed or statement of faith outside the pages of the Bible. It has reached its present understanding by reading and discussion of Scripture and study of any and every variety of opinion, past and present. If or when anyone feels that he can show that any point is in conflict with reason or revelation, we are glad to discuss it, for if we are wrong our chief aim is to get it right, but we do not attach much value to tradition.