

**The following article by Anthony Hone is taken from The Dawn Fellowship Magazine for December 1995 and January 1996 in which it appeared under the heading of "FUNDAMENTALS."**

**Paragraphs are numbered to help reference the comments in the correspondence which follows the article.**

## **THE NATURE OF CHRIST**

(1) This subject is a first principle one; it concerns matters on which we were all instructed and which we understood before we were baptized. Yet it is one which has probably given rise to more controversy than any other. From the very earliest times of the Christian era, right down to the days in which we live, the question of the nature of Christ has given rise to false teaching - teaching which attacks the very foundations of the hope of salvation which God has provided through Jesus Christ.

(2) You will remember how the apostle John refers repeatedly to this in his epistle. He writes, "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist." Again, "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world." Even while the apostles were still alive, false teaching concerning the nature of Christ was thus being promulgated. And so it has been ever since. It was wrong teaching on this matter which was the cause of the very first division among the brethren and sisters after the revival of the Truth by Dr. Thomas and Brother Roberts. In the year 1873 Brother Edward Turney gave a lecture, and subsequently published a booklet, entitled "The Sacrifice of Christ" in which he set out unsound ideas on this subject. He claimed that Jesus did not inherit the curse placed upon Adam, and was therefore not mortal; that he had what Brother Turney termed "a free life," and could if he had chosen have avoided death and entered into eternal life alone. His sacrifice, it was contended, consisted of offering up an "unforfeited life" in payment of the penalty incurred by Adam, and this unforfeited life was given in the room and stead of the forfeited lives of all believers of Adam's race.

(3) We will look at these ideas in more detail as we proceed; but you will immediately see that they go to the very root of the meaning and purpose of Christ's work. Some thirty years later, in the early years of this century, somewhat similar ideas were put forward by Brother A.D. Strickler of Buffalo, U.S.A. He set them out in a book entitled "Out of Darkness into Light" which received a wide circulation and is, I believe, still in circulation to-day. Brother Strickler's teaching did not have much influence in Britain, but it did in America and Australia, and his ideas are held today by many in those countries. Indeed, false teaching on this subject is still actively promulgated. A booklet entitled "To The Law and To The Testimony," which strongly advocates many of the ideas put forward by Edward Turney was published in 1943 and is in active circulation today.

(4) It is therefore important that we should be reminded from time to time of the teaching of the Scriptures on this subject. Some of the arguments put forward in these writings are very subtle, and we should all be in a position to be able to discern the unsoundness of the reasoning put forward, should we be confronted by it at any time.

## **A Positive Approach**

(5) Now we will not get too involved in the somewhat tortuous arguments put forward by Edward Turney. While it will be necessary to examine some of the basic concepts and to show that they have no foundation in Scripture, we will adopt as far as possible a positive approach to the subject, to see what the Scriptures do tell us, in clear unmistakable terms, concerning the nature of Christ. We can then look at what may be regarded as more contentious passages and see how they fit in with the positive teaching.

(6) The first point to draw attention to is the constant emphasis which the Scriptures place upon Christ's descent from Adam. This, of course, is in contrast to the Trinitarian concept, which lays all the emphasis on what they call the "incarnation," namely that Christ was really God come down to earth in the form of a man, and that for this purpose he had to be formed in the womb of Mary. If that were so, and Mary was "immaculate," as the Roman Catholics claim, then Jesus was not, in any real sense, descended from Adam. But the Scriptures emphasize again and again that he was of Adam's race. In Eden it was foretold that the Saviour was to be "the seed of [the woman]," Abraham was told that "in thy seed (that is, his natural, fleshly descendants) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;" David was told, "Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;" the New Testament opens with the words, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," Romans 1:3 speaks of "Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;" in Galatians 4 Paul says that "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

(7) These and many other passages teach very clearly, not only that Jesus was a member of Adam's race, but that the fact was fundamental to his mission as the Saviour.

(8) Having established that, we must now go on to examine what were the implications of him having been descended from Adam. That takes us back to the garden of Eden and what happened there. We all know the details well enough. Adam had been told that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would surely die" and when he disobeyed, the threatened sentence was passed upon him: "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."

## **Death Passed on All**

(9) So what happened as a result of Adam's disobedience? He became a corruptible, death-stricken being. Prior to his disobedience he had been "very good." He had been in a state of innocence, suffering no evil, no pain, no weakness, no grief; although not immortal, in the sense of being incapable of death, he was not corruptible. But with the curse that was pronounced upon him all that was changed. By nature - by constitution - he became corruptible, subject to frailty, to illness, to suffering and, in the end, death. And this became the nature and constitution of all those descended from him. As Paul writes, "In Adam all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22); and again, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men." (Romans 5:12).

(10) Now the question arises - and this is the crucial question as far as our subject is concerned - did Christ partake of the condemnation passed upon Adam? Did he inherit Adam's nature and constitution, that is a constitution subject to the same infirmities, the same weaknesses as ourselves, condemned to decay and death?

(11) Those who follow the teaching of Edward Turney claim that he did not. While asserting that he had the same kind of flesh as Adam, they claim that he did not possess the same nature. We quote from the booklet “To The Law and To The Testimony.” “Jesus was not constituted in Adam.” “He had the same kind and quality of flesh as Adam, but not Adamic life.” “Jesus received his life direct from God.”

(12) They are saying, in effect, that Jesus did not inherit the curse placed upon Adam. They say that, just as Adam when he was created received life direct from God, so did Christ, and thus he had the same nature as Adam before the fall; and they then go on to say that “he did not forfeit that life by disobedience” and so was not subject to death as a natural inheritance. It is then asserted that it was this unforfeited life which Jesus gave as a ransom price for mankind.

### **No Scriptural Support**

(13) Now, this idea of Jesus having received a “free life” direct from God is not to be found in Scripture. No attempt is made by those who advance it to provide any Scriptural evidence for it. The idea is a myth, an invention, a fantasy. As far as I am aware, the only Scriptural passage ever advanced (though not in this booklet) is Christ's words in John 5:26:

“For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” But it is quite clear from the context that Christ is not here speaking of the nature he had before his crucifixion, but of the resurrection: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (verse 25). Jesus then goes on to speak of the power given to him by his Father to bestow life upon those who will be raised from the dead at his return. It has nothing whatever to do with a “free life” given to him at birth.

(14) The fact is, this teaching conflicts with all that the Scriptures have to tell us concerning Jesus. Take, for example, the contention that Jesus possessed the same nature as Adam before the fall, that is, before the sentence of death was passed. As we have seen, before the fall Adam suffered no evil, no pain, no weakness, no grief. Was that true of Jesus? We know it was not. It was testified of him that he was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;” that he “offered up prayers with strong crying and tears;” that he “learned obedience by the things which he suffered;” that he “was crucified through weakness.” In other words, he experienced in himself those consequences that came from Adam's disobedience.

(15) Again, what do the propounders of this theory mean when they say that Jesus “had the same kind and quality of flesh as Adam, but not Adamic life? Such a statement seems to suppose that “life” is some abstract essence which can exist independently of the body, like a 'soul' of popular orthodoxy. But this is a fallacy. The Scriptures tell us that “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11), which is a well-known scientific fact, for it is the blood which transmits the life-giving oxygen in the air we breathe to all parts of the body. If, therefore, Jesus possessed the same kind and quality of flesh as Adam, then he must have possessed the same kind of life. Indeed, the Scriptures equate his life with his body: his sacrifice is variously spoken of as “the laying down of his life” (John 10:17,18); “the giving of his body” (Luke 22:19); “the pouring out of his soul” (Isaiah 53:12); “the offering up of himself” (Hebrews 9:25). His body, or his flesh, and his life were inseparable; so that if he possessed the same kind and quality of flesh as Adam, then he must have possessed the same kind of life. The only alternative is to say that he was a spirit being energized directly by the power of God, and that is exactly what was believed by those in the first century who were so strongly condemned by John in his epistles.

**(16)** The teaching of the Scriptures on this point is quite plain and very emphatic. The passages are well known, but let us look at them. First Hebrews 2 (a chapter not as much as mentioned in this booklet). We usually quote from verse 14, but we will go back to get the context: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me” (Verse 9- 13).

**(17)** Note the repeated emphasis which the apostle lays upon Christ's relationship to his brethren. He then develops the theme: “Forasmuch then as the children (that is the children whom God had given him -v. 13; his brethren - v. 11) are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same” (v. 14).

**(18)** We will be coming back to the rest of the verse, but let us go straight on to verse 16: “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

### **One of Our Race**

**(19)** You will see that the whole point of what the apostle is saying is to emphasize the kinship - the natural flesh and blood relationship between Christ and his brethren. He makes the point again and again. He was a partaker of flesh and blood; he took on him, not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; he was made in all things like unto his brethren - not like unto Adam before the fall, but like unto his brethren, those descendants of Adam who inherited the condemnation passed upon the father of the race.

**(20)** Now what does all this tell us about the work of redemption Jesus came to do? If Jesus was made in all points like unto his brethren, then he was subject to the feelings, the temptations, the promptings to sin that we have. This is all part of human nature, of which he partook. Paul speaks very graphically of what this human nature really is in Romans 7:

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (verses 18-23).

**(21)** Those verses very tellingly describe the human nature which we all possess – the struggle in which all those who try to do God's will are engaged. We know what is right - we have learned it from God's Word - but how often we fail to do it, due to the weakness of our human sinful flesh. And Jesus possessed the same human, sinful flesh as ourselves – he was

engaged in the struggle as we are. It is testified that he was “in all points tempted like as we are” (Hebrews 4: 15), but, unlike us, who so often succumb to the temptation, he successfully resisted; and so the verse continues: “yet without sin.” Again, we are told that “he suffered, being tempted” (Hebrews 2:18); “who in the days of his flesh... offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears... though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:7,8).

**(22)** It was because Jesus possessed the same nature as ourselves - a nature subject to the desires and promptings of the flesh - that his victory over those temptations was able to achieve our salvation.

**(23)** Let us go back now to the latter part of verse 14 in Hebrews 2. Paul says: “He also himself likewise took part of the same (flesh and blood); that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

**(24)** What does that mean exactly? The devil is sin-in-the-flesh - those promptings to do wrong of which we have just spoken. Unless Jesus had had those promptings by reason of his inheritance of Adamic (sinful) nature, how could he have destroyed the devil by his death? The same truth is expounded elsewhere. To the Colossians Paul writes (1:21,22):

“You...hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death.” It was not an “unforfeited life” that Christ offered; it was a human body in which God's Name had been glorified by obedience to His will. “He offered himself {that is, his flesh and blood body) without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14); or, as Peter writes (1 Peter 2:24), “His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” and again, “For Christ also hath once suffered for sin...being put to death in the flesh” (1 Peter 3:18). In what sense could these things be said of him unless his body, his flesh, was of the same sin-stricken nature as ourselves - a body in which he had triumphed over the temptations of the flesh, and was thus an acceptable sacrifice to the Almighty? If it were not so, what do we make of Paul's quotation from the Psalm in Hebrews 10:5; “Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me”? and again, verse 10: “We are sanctified through the offering of the body (not the unforfeited life) of Jesus Christ.” Why, it is this same important truth to which we testify each week when we partake of the emblems. We partake, symbolically, of his body and his poured-out blood in recognition of the fact that we “who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ, (he) having reconciled us unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby (margin:” in himself”) (Ephesians 2:13,16). All these passages teach that the acceptability of Christ's sacrifice lay in the fact that it was the offering of a human, Adamic body, in which all the frailties and temptations of the flesh had been over-come by complete submission to the will of God.

**(25)** Now it must be clear from what has been said that when we speak of “the flesh,” both in relation to ourselves and to Jesus, we mean that corruptible human nature which we have inherited from Adam, that constitution which is inherently frail, and subject to the desires and temptations which come from within. But some have found a difficulty here. They refer to such a passage as Romans 8:8, which reads, “they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” How could Jesus be “in the flesh,” they ask, if they that be in the flesh cannot please God? This does call for an explanation, so we will spend a few moments examining more closely the way in which this term “the flesh” is used in Scripture, so that we can be quite clear that there is no contradiction between the statement of Paul in that verse and the statements elsewhere that Jesus Christ, who did no sin, came in the flesh.

## **The Flesh Defined**

(26) As we have seen man, by reason of his descent from Adam, is inherently sinful. He has within him the desire to do things which are contrary to God's will. Those desires come from the mind, of course; but because we inherit them by reason of our fleshly descent from Adam, they are frequently spoken of as pertaining to the flesh. For example, in those verses we looked at in Romans 7 the apostle says, "in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Jesus used a similar form of speech when he said that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts" and so on. These things do not literally proceed out of the heart, but from the mind; it is a figure of speech called metonymy – using one thing to represent something closely associated with it. Thus it is that the term "the flesh" is used to represent anything which is sinful and out of harmony with the mind and will of God. We find, particularly in the epistles of Paul, that two contrasting concepts are used. On the one hand there is what is described as "the mind of the flesh," that is a mind which is attracted to all those things which are contrary to God's will, such as those sinful practices enumerated by Jesus in the passage just quoted; on the other hand, there is what is described as "the mind of the Spirit" - another metonym, since what is meant is not literally a mind belonging to the Spirit, but a mind, a human mind, which is influenced in all its thinking by the teaching of the Spirit, as expressed in God's Holy Word.

(27) It is quite clear from the context, that this is the sense in which Paul uses the term "the flesh" in Romans 8:8. In verse 7 he says; "the carnal (fleshly) mind is enmity against God... so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It has nothing to do with the physical constitution. Christ came "in the flesh" inasmuch as he was descended from Adam, and inherited his sin-cursed nature; but he overcame his fleshly tendencies, and by his absorption of the teaching of God's Word he exhibited the mind of the Spirit at all times. We are expected to do the same, although, whereas Christ fully succeeded, we often fail.

(28) It is a failure to recognize, or acknowledge, these forms of speech which has led to some of the more absurd arguments put forward by those who hold the "free life" theory. For example, in this same chapter of Romans, verse 32 speaks of God having sent His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh?.." "Sinful flesh" is a phrase to which they take the strongest exception. They insist that it should be translated "flesh of sin," although what difference that makes to the idea expressed by the apostle I do not know. They say that there is no such thing as sinful flesh - it is the mind that sins. Taken absolutely literally, that is true; but, as we have seen, the term is used to describe the constitution we have inherited from Adam, and that Christ also possessed. It does not mean that Christ was a sinner. Although subject to the same temptations as ourselves, he resisted them; and it was because of this that he, as the apostle continues in this verse, "condemned sin in the flesh." He overcame sin, he condemned it, he conquered it, in that nature which he bore, a thing he could not have done if he had not inherited the same nature as all Adam's descendants.

## **Day of Atonement**

(29) Finally, I would like to look at the matter from a somewhat different angle, but one which forms the basis of much of Paul's argument in the letter to the Hebrews. A study of the book of Leviticus reveals that virtually the whole of the provisions of the law of Moses, as regards sacrifices and offerings, pointed forward to and typified the work of Christ; and nowhere does this come out more strongly than in the ceremonies which took place on the Day of Atonement. Those provisions of the Law teach us fundamental truths concerning Christ and the nature of his sacrifice. So let us remind ourselves briefly of what took place on the Day of Atonement.

**(30)** Firstly, the High Priest had to wash, and then to clothe himself with the garments of white linen. What does that teach us? Why, that atonement could only be procured by one who was morally perfect - one who was cleansed from sin, and was clothed in purity and righteousness.

**(31)** Thus attired the High Priest then made two offerings. The first was for himself, the second for the people. These two offerings were dealt with differently, and by this means teach important truths. It was not until he had killed the sin-offering for himself that the High Priest was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place. This he did bearing incense, and the blood of the sin offering, which he sprinkled seven times on the Mercy Seat. There is no need for our purpose now to look at the details of the offering for the people; it is this offering for himself on which the apostle Paul particularly comments in Hebrews: "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself" (Hebrews 7:26,27). So Paul is clearly applying the type under the law to Christ. Just as the High Priest offered first for himself, so did Christ, except that whereas the Levitical priests had to do it repeatedly, Christ did it once for all time.

**(32)** Now this does not suit those who hold the "free life" theory. According to them Christ did not inherit Adamic condemnation and so, as he was personally sinless, he did not need redemption. There was nothing to be redeemed from as he already had an unforfeited life. So they try to argue that this 27th verse does not mean that Christ offered for himself. I do not intend to examine their arguments: it is not necessary, because the apostle makes the same point several times elsewhere in this epistle in passages which are completely ignored in this booklet: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin... For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins" (Hebrews 4:15; 5:1-3).

**(33)** Note that the high priest must offer for himself because of his infirmity - a characteristic of Christ to which the apostle has drawn attention in chapter 4:15. He then continues, concerning Christ: "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications (foreshadowed by the incense offered up by the High Priest when he went into the Most Holy Place with the offering for himself) with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death (Note; if Christ had a free life he did not need saving from death), and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect (Note: he was not already perfect, as the "free life" theory postulates - he was "made perfect" after being saved from death by being raised from the tomb), he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (verses 7-9).

**(34)** The apostle reverts to the same theme in chapter 9:7 and 11, "But into the second (the Most Holy Place) went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people... Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

(35) The words “for us” in italics should not be there; the grammatical sense of the phrase is “having obtained for himself eternal redemption.” Just as the high Priest went into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the sacrificial bullock as an offering for his own sins, so Christ did likewise with his own blood, and thus obtained eternal redemption – redemption from the condemnation to death he had inherited from Adam. The apostle concludes this part of his dissertation by saying: “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (NIV “not to bear sin”) unto salvation” (verse 28). This again parallels the Day of Atonement. Just as the Israelite on that day waited for the reappearance of the High Priest from within the Tabernacle, having offered for himself and for them, so we await the reappearance of the sinless and glorified Christ, to bestow salvation on those who look for him.

(36) This dissertation of the apostle in Hebrews on the parallels between the enactments under the Law and their fulfilment in the work of Christ can leave us in no doubt about the nature of Christ, and that wonderful means of salvation through him which has been provided by our loving and merciful Father in heaven. So we cannot do better in conclusion than to quote the exhortation of the apostle in the following chapter, where he draws together the threads of what he has been saying concerning the work of Christ as both the offering and the priest; “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering...and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”

(37) That, surely, should be the effect upon us of a full appreciation of all that God has done for us, in providing His only Begotten Son, that we might be redeemed from the curse which came upon Adam's race because of sin.

Anthony Hone (Dawn Fellowship)

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### **In Reply:-**

Dear Brother Hone,

25th August 1996

1. Thank you for being patient with me in waiting for my commentary on your article “The Nature of Christ” (which I have retyped with numbered paragraphs for ease of reference). Indeed even now I have not completed a full analysis, but at this stage have limited my observations mainly to your presentation, noting some contradictions, although a certain amount of doctrine inevitably comes into it.

2. First then, we will go to paragraph 8 where you state that “the threatened sentence was... in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground...” Adam was not foretold of this, so strictly speaking it cannot be said that this is what he was threatened with.

**3.** In paragraphs 11 and 12 I see a direct contradiction where you state in paragraph 12 “They say... Christ had the same nature as Adam.” But in paragraph 11 you say “They claim that he did not possess the same nature.” This is confusing; if they said both can you please give references?

**4.** Now in paragraph 15 you find fault with Turney and his followers in suggesting that they make a difference between the life of Adam and the life of Christ yet they had the same flesh as each other, thereby making a distinction between the flesh and the life. Then you correctly state, “indeed the Scriptures equate his life with his body.” However, you go on to do as you accuse others, for in paragraph 24 you make a difference between Christ’s body and His life where you state, “It was not an unforfeited life that Christ offered; it was a human body... He offered... his flesh and blood body without spot to God.” Perhaps you can clarify this for me. (I notice you say “unforfeited life” but whether forfeited or not it is still Jesus’ life we are considering).

**5.** Also I wonder if you have been taken to task for saying that Jesus offered a spotless body to God when the Christadelphian teaching is that His character was spotless but His body was full of sin? But then again, you have it both ways for you go on to say, “In what sense could these things be said of Him unless his body, his flesh, was of the same sin-stricken nature as ourselves?” How is it possible for His body to be spotless and yet sin-stricken?

**6.** Also in paragraph 24 you say that “sin-in-the-flesh” is the Devil. But if sin-in-the-flesh is the devil then it should be possible to use the expression in at least some of the places where the word devil occurs, but we can’t, as it never makes any sense; for example “resist the sin-in-the-flesh and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). I cannot find a single occurrence of “devil” where we can put “sin-in-the-flesh” in its place.

**7** The best definition I know for “Devil” is that it is the personification of man’s will when opposed to God’s will; and this idea is expressed in the words you quote, “the mind of the flesh... contrary to God’s will.” Again, you write, in paragraph 26, “the term ‘the flesh’ is used to represent anything which is sinful or out of harmony with the mind and will of God.” Do you not think this is a very much better definition of the devil than that “the devil is sin-in-the-flesh.”?

**8.** Once again I find contradiction in what you say in paragraphs 25 and 27 where you write in paragraph 25; “When we speak of the flesh...we mean that corruptible human nature which we have inherited from Adam” but you confuse this by stating in paragraph 27, “It has nothing to do with the physical constitution.” I’m sure you mean to clarify, but feel you only add confusion to the ways in which the term “flesh” is used in Scripture.

**9.** Finally, a query regarding the way you use the letter to the Hebrews which tells us that Jesus Christ was not of the priestly tribe; Hebrews 7:14, “For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood,” and was therefore not a priest, let alone a High Priest. In fact He was the Offering, the Lamb of God, not the Offerer. He first prepared himself to be the Offering - the Lamb of God (“A body hast thou prepared me”), and He brought Himself to His Father without spot or blemish to be offered as the Lamb. He became our High Priest after He ascended into heaven.

**10.** Considering this, how can Jesus Christ have been as the Levitical High Priests who had to offer for themselves? Where is the parallel, for the priests were not the offerings? I feel I

have gone on long enough for now, but I would be very interested in your views after considering the above comments and look forward to hearing from you in due time.

Sincerely your brother is seeking Truth, Russell Gregory.

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Dear Brother Gregory

30th August 1996

Thank you for your letter of the 25th August relating to my article on “the Nature of Christ,”

I was expecting that some matters of substance would be raised, although I could not imagine what they would be. As it is, the points you mention are little more than quibbles, arising from a less than careful reading of the article. Let us look at them:

Paragraph 2 of your letter. You say that the sentence passed upon Adam in Genesis 3:19 was not what he had been threatened with. But Adam had been told that if he ate of the forbidden tree he would “surely die.” After he had sinned he was told (as I quote) that he would “return to the ground” and that “unto dust shalt thou return.” Was not this what he had been threatened with?

Paragraph 3. What I wrote was “they say... Christ... had the same nature as Adam before the fall.” You omit the operative words “before the fall.” The claim of E. Turney was that Christ did not possess the same nature as Adam after the fall, which is clear from the context of my paragraph 11.

Paragraph 4. The term “an unforfeited life” is one used by Turney, not by me. The whole point of my argument is that we cannot make this distinction (which Turney tries to do) between the flesh of Adam and the life of Adam. Please read what I have written more carefully.

Paragraph 5. The phrase “Without spot” in Hebrews 9:14 clearly refers to Christ’s character. The margin of the A.V. gives “without fault.” His body was sin-stricken, but his character was without fault.

Paragraphs 6 & 7- I did not write that “sin-in-the-flesh is the devil.” I wrote that “the devil (referred to in Hebrews 2:14) is sin in the flesh.” But I do not understand your objection. I used the term “sin in the flesh” because that term is used by Paul in Romans 8:3. This verse is virtually a parallelism of Hebrews 2:14. Romans 8:3 reads, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh... condemned sin in the flesh;” Hebrews 2:14 reads, “He also... partook of (flesh and blood); that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, “the devil.” The ‘devil’ of Hebrews 2 is therefore the “sin in the flesh” of Romans 8.

Paragraph 8. Again, your supposed contradiction arises from taking quotations out of context. Paragraphs 26 and 27 of my article contain an explanation of Paul’s use of the term “in the flesh” in Romans 8:8. If you read those paragraphs carefully you will see that there is no contradiction with the statement in paragraph 25. Also read again paragraph 28.

Paragraphs 9 and 30. In Hebrews 7 the apostle shows that although Jesus was of the tribe of Juda, not Levi, yet he was a priest after the order of Melchisedec. He then shows in verses 26,27 that he was both the offering and the priest; “For such an high priest became us...who needeth not daily, as those high priests (under the law of Moses) to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”

A proper understanding of the nature of Christ is absolutely vital to an understanding of the means of salvation God has provided through him. The ideas propounded by E. Turney, and still propagated by some today, subvert the whole teaching of Scripture on this subject, and thus undermine the basis of our faith and hope. I hope that you will again read carefully what I have written. I do not know what your views are in this subject, but trust that you will allow them to be guided by the teaching of Scripture, that you may truly be one of Christ's followers.

Sincerely your brother, Anthony Hone.

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## **2<sup>nd</sup> reply:-**

Dear Brother Hone, Thank you for your letter of the 30th August.

I wish to refer to your last paragraph first and say how I wholeheartedly agree with you that “a proper understanding of the nature of Christ is absolutely vital to an understanding of the means of salvation God has provided through him.” And I wish to assure you I have read your article through again and again and I pray always that my views on this subject be guided by the teaching of Scripture, that I may truly be one of Christ’s followers.” I trust this is also your supreme aim, for it is because of these things that I first approached the Dawn Book Supply for a copy of your article and why I wrote to you in July; I also believe that no teaching is harmless which may put a stumbling block in the path of any sincere Christian.

My response to your letter of the 30th August, carries far more weight than you seem to have realized and is not easily dismissed as “little more than quibbles.” I stand by every point I made and I disagree with you when you say “the ideas propounded by E. Turney, and still propagated by some today, subvert the whole teaching of Scripture on this subject, and thus undermine the basis of our faith and hope.”

I do not need to deal with your letter separately but will now go to your article “The Nature of Christ.” In the middle of paragraph 2 you write “It was wrong teaching on this matter which was the cause of the very first division among the brethren and sisters after the revival of the Truth by Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts.” The matter you quote from John is whether or not Jesus Christ came in the flesh but the division you go on to talk about had nothing whatever to do with this, but had to do with whether or not Jesus Christ had sin-in-the-flesh.

You give a fair and brief summary of Turney’s views when you write: -

“He claimed that Jesus did not inherit the curse placed upon Adam, and was therefore not mortal; that he had what Brother Turney termed “a free life,” and could if he had chosen have avoided death and entered into eternal life alone. His sacrifice, it was contended, consisted of offering up an “unforfeited life” in payment of the penalty incurred by Adam, and this unforfeited life was given in the room and stead of the forfeited lives of all believers of Adam’s race.”

It is perhaps a good place here to mention that Turney makes a distinction between mortal and corruptible so that in saying Jesus was not mortal he is not teaching that Jesus was immortal nor that He was incorruptible. In his book “The Sacrifice of Christ” Turney explains that “mortal” relates to a legal position, while corruptible indicates that there is a natural end to all flesh. Before the law was broken Adam was corruptible just as any other animal. He became mortal when he broke the law. As did Dr Thomas, they both believed that mortal was a legal term.

Regarding the term “free life,” we see Paul’s teaching in his letter to the Romans that Adam lost his freedom when he came into bondage to Sin at the ‘fall’, therefore previous to this he was not in bondage, that is, his life was free from bondage - he had a “free life.” It is a scriptural concept and teaching and not at all difficult to understand.

You mention A.D.Strickler in paragraph 4 and while I have never seen the book you refer to I quote from a letter he wrote to F.J.Pearce of the Nazarene Fellowship dated 10<sup>th</sup> December 1936:- “Your unscriptural teaching that the one sin of Adam affects his posterity federally, as also the one sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, ransoms that one sin federally - there is no foundation for such speculation in the word of God.” I quote this simply to show that A.D.Strickler had very different views to the Nazarene Fellowship in some respects, and his refusal to see the federal principle undermines his understanding of the whole plan of redemption, though he, too, rejected the notion of sin-in-the-flesh, held by the whole of Trinitarian Christendom along with Christadelphians, as unscriptural. I shall deal with sinful flesh and Romans 8:3 a little later.

In paragraph 8 you insist that Adam suffered the threatened penalty of death for sin and that Genesis 3:19 was the fulfilment of that threat. We say this is not so and I am enclosing our booklet entitled “The Usage and Meaning of *Muth Temuth* and *B'Yom*” which shows beyond dispute that the proper meaning of the Genesis account is that Adam was to have been slain in the same day in which he sinned, that he was threatened with judicial execution, not natural death, as is shown by more than a dozen other similar passages of Scripture. One cannot make Genesis 2:17 the exception. Adam and Eve were not put to death, but neither were they left without punishment altogether, and the punishment declared in Genesis 3:19. was for their reprieved position and new circumstances in which they were placed. Though punished in measure Adam and Eve were given wonderful promises and hope for the future. I consider the booklet “The Usage and meaning of *Muth Temuth* and *B'Yom*” essential reading for all Bible students for it straightens out the true meaning of Genesis 2:17 once and for all. Consequently your view expressed in paragraph 9, that Adam “became a corruptible death-stricken being” is seen not to be Bible teaching but the result of building a theory based on a false premise. 1 Corinthians 15:42 to 56 shows that Adam was created corruptible. We will quote verses 45 and 46: “And so it is written, the first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. However that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” The Scriptures teach no other condition; from creation it has been first the natural, then the spiritual. Adam and Eve were still in the very good state of creation after they sinned and nowhere in the Bible can it be shown that there was any change in their physical make-up.

When Paul wrote “As in Adam all die” (1 Corinthians 15:22) he was explaining the federal principle in salvation; the position we were in before being baptized into Christ. At baptism we were no longer “in Adam” but “in Christ” in whom we were made alive. It is again the legal position which is being explained by Paul. Legal matters have to do with law and when Adam broke the law then death by sin passed upon him; he was now in bondage and indebted to the law of sin and death. See Romans 5:12. While we remain “in Adam” we are under the law of sin and death so we must come out from under this law by being baptized into Christ, for those “in Christ” are under grace; they have passed from death to life.

Paragraph 10 asks “Did Christ partake of the condemnation passed upon Adam?” The answer to this has to be, No. The first Adam had been given a life free of condemnation and this freedom he lost the day he sinned and became the bond-servant to Sin. The second Adam was also given free life and did not lose it by sinning. He was sinless. You ask “Did Jesus inherit Adam's nature?” and the answer is, Yes, through His mother, Mary, He was of the same physical nature as all men; but you go on to make the false supposition that Adam's constitution was condemned to decay and death, which it was not. Natural death is not a punishment, and it was not a condemnation, but the natural outcome and condition of his creation as a natural corruptible human being, made very good for the purpose for which God created it. We see no reason to suppose that Jesus Christ was made differently.

Paragraphs 11 & 12. When in the booklet “To The Law and To The Testimony” one reads that “Jesus was not constituted in Adam” it should be clear from the context what is meant by the word “constituted.” A Thesaurus shows there are five definitions and to choose the wrong meaning and then criticize it is not the way to understand anything. The writer is certainly not making distinction between the flesh of Adam and the nature of Adam. The distinction is between the origin of Jesus life and the origin of ours. Our life originated in Adam; the life which has been passed down from generation to generation ever since Adam and Eve sold that life to Sin. It was for this very reason that Jesus Christ had His life direct from God – a life of His own; a life not sold to Sin; a life He could give for the purchase of the world. “Know ye not that ye have been bought with a price” - “Even the precious blood of Christ” - “Who gave Himself for the life of the world”? You correctly quote Turney:- “Just as Adam when he was created received life direct from God, so did Christ,” and that “He did not forfeit that life by disobedience.” But you are in error when you add that Jesus was therefore “not subject to death as a natural inheritance.” It does not follow as a logical sequence and is an unjustifiable supposition. We believe He was of the same corruptible human nature as Adam at creation, and indeed the entire human race.

Contrary to your assumption made in paragraph 13 we have shown that the idea of “free life” is proven in Scripture by the very fact that we no longer have a free life but one sold to Sin; also the need for baptism shows that we must come out of Adam and in to Christ that we should no longer be under the law of sin and death but under grace. Those in Adam will perish, those in Christ will not, because they are free from the law of sin and death. What more proof does one need to show that Adam had a free life at creation? Those in Adam are subjects of the law of sin and death while those in Christ are freed from this bondage and are now subjects of God's grace. Free life is opposite to life in bondage and this is seen in Paul's arguments in Romans and elsewhere. Paul's reasoning is not myth, nor invention, nor a fantasy.

Personally I do not recall ever seeing John 5:26 used for supporting this matter.

Your paragraph 14 is indeed a muddle. To say that before the fall Adam “suffered no pain,” and “no weakness,” is pure fantasy. Certainly he would suffer no evil while in the Garden of Eden because God was overseeing his welfare, and grief is an evil he had no experience of until after he sinned. Jesus Christ was never in the same situation as Adam and neither did He come into the world for the same purpose. He was born to be King.

Paragraph 15. Your suppositions and alternatives are curious indeed. It seems you want to misrepresent what “the propounders of this theory mean.” Did Christ receive His life direct from his Father as we do from ours? The Scriptures make it very plain that God was the Father of Jesus Christ - His only begotten Son. Did He then have two fathers, Adam and God? Life is passed down from father to child. No descendant of Adam passed his life on to Jesus. What then of this rubbish - “such a statement seems to suppose that “life” is some abstract essence which can exist independently of the body, like the 'soul' of popular theology”? And “the only alternative is to say that he (Jesus) was a spirit being energized directly by the power of God, and that is exactly what was believed by those in the first century who were so strongly condemned by John in his epistles”? You pretend to know “exactly” what others believed over nineteen hundred years ago and yet in your article you have shown yourself unable to quote correctly what we believe today.

Paragraph 17 notes “the repeated emphasis which the apostle lays upon Christ's relationship to his brethren.” This is of course an essential to His position and work as Redeemer and shows the need for Him to have been born of a woman in order to be the next of kin as required by and taught in the law of Moses in cases of redemption. A matter of the law being “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ.”

In paragraph 20 you introduce Romans 7 and use it in the wrong way. You have referred to the booklet “To The Law and To the Testimony” and yet you completely ignore the writings of its various contributors who prove their cases from the Scriptures. I quote from the booklet:

“There is reason for deep sorrow and concern at the general ignorance of the true exposition of this chapter (Romans 7). not only because the mistaken understanding of its teaching clouds the whole conception of the Plan of God, but because the indiscriminating acceptance of the idea that, on account of the inherent sinfulness of human flesh, it is impossible for us to keep the commandments, is endangering the salvation of many sincere and well-meaning people. It should not be necessary to remind Bible students, that to arrive at a correct understanding of any passage, it is essential to keep in mind the context and make proper allowance for their various figures of speech employed, and also not to seek to interpret one passage in a way which contradicts another or the general tenor of scriptural teaching. Failure to observe these rules will make a true understanding impossible, and if the questions involved are vital, the mistake may amount to a wresting of Scripture, as the apostle says, “to their own destruction.”

Your paragraphs 6 and 7 establish the Bible teaching that Jesus Christ was a human being just as much as was Adam, but you make Christ a Son of Adam rather than the Son of God and nowhere in your article do you show the need for Jesus Christ to have been the Son of God. Even in your paragraphs 21 and 22 you show that anyone who lived a perfect life could have been the Saviour of the world. In paragraph 22 you claim that “it was because Jesus possessed the same nature as ourselves... that his victory over temptations was able to achieve our salvation.” No one should minimize Christ's wonderful achievement in overcoming every trial and temptation and in an article elsewhere in this Circular Letter Brother John Higgins shows something of what was involved in those temptations, but our salvation

required also that our Redeemer should be free from Adamic condemnation just as the type in the law of Moses shows us that one who redeems a slave must himself be not only a near kinsman but also be in possession of the redemptive price. No fellow slave can ever have the price of redemption in his possession. We see Jesus Christ, however, as the great Anti-type, the near Kinsman of Adam and his descendants, free and rich but who made Himself poor for our sakes when He paid the price of our release.

Paragraphs 23 and 24. Here you talk of sin-in-the-flesh and quote Romans 8:3. Let us again refer to the booklet "To The Law and To The Testimony" where we read under the heading of "The Sinful Flesh Delusion:"

"The doctrine of inherited "Sin-in-the-flesh," which involves the obnoxious theory that it is impossible for human beings to keep the commandments because of their sinful flesh, is embedded in both Christadelphian and Orthodox theology and makes utter confusion of facts which are in reality the perfection of simplicity and harmony."

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

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

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

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

The fact is that "sinful flesh" never once occurs in the original Greek and the expression means "flesh belonging to Sin" – i.e. the possession of Sin. We are in flesh belonging to Sin and Jesus Christ came into the world in flesh like ours which did not belong to sin, as we read, He came in the likeness of sin's flesh, that is to say, it looked like sin's flesh but was not sin's flesh - a difference of ownership. I quote again from "To The Law and To The Testimony":

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

In the Atonement, it was not unclean flesh, the imaginary physical Sin-in-the-flesh, which was condemned. It was SIN or transgression of God's law which was condemned, by a man of the same flesh and blood nature proving that obedience was possible, by living a sinless life, and then by becoming the offering for sin, Jesus did what the law of Moses could not do, set humanity free from the bondage of sin. It is more than strange to find that almost without exception Christadelphian writers have at one time or another given expression to the

true interpretation, but few have so far had the moral courage to throw off the shackles of “changed flesh.” Here are a few examples:-

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

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

**Robert Roberts:** “Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatever and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam's relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his organization.”

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

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

You quote in paragraph 36 the exhortation to be found in Hebrews 10:19-24 but you seem to assume Jesus Christ was both the Offering and the High Priest at one and the same time. This is not so. Under the law of Moses it was necessary for the High Priest to offer for himself in order to make himself acceptable to God before offering for the people. Jesus Christ was already acceptable and in offering Himself it was not for Himself but for us. If He first offered for Himself He would not have been alive to offer for the people! Was the blood of the lamb presented in the Holy of Holies while the lamb was still alive? Of course not. The lamb's life had been taken never to be given back - before its blood was presented at the altar. Jesus Christ had His life taken by wicked men, and not given back to Him, but it was spirit life He was given at His resurrection and before He entered into Heaven it self, and here He became our High Priest for evermore after the order of Melchisedec.

Dear Brother Hone, early in your article you say “Some of the arguments put forward in these writings are very subtle, and we should all be in a position to be able to discern the unsoundness of the reasoning put forward, should we be confronted by it at any time.” You are now in that position and we challenge you to prove where we use Scripture in any false way,

Sincerely your brother earnestly contending for the faith, Russell Gregory.

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**Phil Parry now comments on “The Nature of Christ,” the article by Anthony Hone under the heading “Fundamentals” :-**

With the many divisions of the Christadelphian Community and on reading Mr Hone's views in the above article, one wonders what it is that they are divided on, seeing that all seem to be united on the Apostate doctrine and false theories set forth by Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts concerning Adam's nature at creation, his sin, and the penalty he incurred. Yet it was necessary for God to provide His Son Jesus as the beginning of a new creation, a new man of the same flesh and blood, but by begetting a life independent and unforfeited to the dominion of Sin under which all Adam's posterity were sold, being the teaching of Jesus himself and of the Apostles especially Paul, and accepted as the Truth of the Gospel by the Nazarene Fellowship yet rejected by Christadelphians subservient to “The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith,” in other words “The Robert Roberts formula.”

It is plain to me from the beginning of his article that Mr Hone is not only biased against Nazarene views but ignorant and misinformed on those views and on the plain record of Genesis which supports them.

Paragraph 1. Mr Hone says concerning the nature of Christ, “This subject is a first principle one, it concerns matters on which we were all instructed and which we understood before we were baptized. Yet it has given rise to more controversy than any other.” Who were the instructors Mr Hone? Moses, the Prophets, and Jesus and his Apostles? Or was it the followers of the Roberts formula which accepted the Apostate teaching of changed and condemned nature as a result of Adam's sin? If for example I were to impersonate an immortal soul believer and declare to you or one of your “instructed” that I would not really die but that my soul would live on after death independent of my body, what would be the reaction? No doubt about it, an immediate reference to Genesis describing the creation of Adam and its application to man as he is at the present time, a living soul or natural body of life, yet you quote the Genesis account of what constitutes a living soul in order to counter the false teaching of immortal-soulism in other people. Thus the result is that you must accept that Jesus was of the same corruptible nature at his birth as was Adam at creation and that after he sinned no change of nature took place neither was it in any way necessary.

If you had taken the trouble to read correctly the Genesis account instead of accepting the false views of your instructors who followed the error of Roberts, you would have known that the sentence or penalty for sin was to be by infliction at the time or day in which the Divine decree had been violated.

It is Robert Roberts's changed view to that of the Apostasy which has caused the greatest error imaginable throughout the history of Christadelphians, for change he did, from the very views he and Dr. Thomas first advocated when they stated, “Our friend imagines there was a change in Adam's nature when he transgressed. There is no evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely contrary. There was a change in Adam's relation to his Maker, but not in the nature of his organisation” - “The Ambassador,” March 1869. “We believe that the change was moral not physical” - Dr. Thomas in “Herald of the Kingdom” page 159.

The leaders and writers of present day “Christadelphia” may try to hide these statements from their younger candidates but the evidence is in print and eternity will not efface the facts.

In effect it is Spiritually barren on its failure to understand “Death by creation” and “Death by Sin” - the former of God, and the latter by Adam. The former applicable to human and animal creation in whose nostrils is the breath of life - the latter to all under the legal dominion of Sin and Death who come to that knowledge by enlightenment and have the option of release through Jesus, or choose to remain under it and accept Sins Wages – Death in whatever form. Release from such a position requires no physical change of nature, and this fact is the stumbling block introduced onto the Christadelphian scene by Robert Roberts - a position which Edward Turney sought to rectify in his zeal for truth and the spiritual welfare of his brethren. Look where you choose in the written works and statements of Edward Turney and nowhere will you find him teaching that Jesus was of a different nature from Adam, or his brethren. It is you, Mr Hone and your instructors, who have and are inventing these misinterpretations and misrepresentations of what Edward Turney taught, thus the wrong teaching which you say in your article was the cause of the very first division among the brethren and sisters, and of which you accuse Brother Turney, “was in fact attributable to Robert Roberts in 1873, though Dr. Thomas also violated the teaching of Genesis after 1869 when in that year he and Roberts had supported what E. Turney was contending for in 1873.

We give credit for what truth Thomas and Roberts taught, but whether you like it or not we have proved, and it is still being proved, that what 'Light' (which was already in the world) they had in a small measure revived, they subsequently turned into the doctrine of confusion. All due to discarding what they believed in 1869 for a belief in the false doctrine of “condemned nature and natural decay and death” as the penalty for Adam's sin, which is not the teaching of Genesis 2:17 nor of Paul in Romans 5:12.

When Turney used the term “free life” in reference to Jesus he meant that as Adam at creation was free from transgression and therefore not under penalty of death by law (though physically subject to death), even so Jesus, a new man of a new creation yet at birth of the same flesh and blood nature as Adam, was born free of the condemnation and dominion of sin which God legally, not physically, passed upon all men. By sin Adam forfeited his “free life” and right to the title “Son of God.” By contrast Jesus was “Son of God” by Divine power, if this were not the case how could the term “New Man” apply? Nevertheless the status “New Man” must be maintained to prove the possibility of sinless conduct, and in addition, lay down his life in the blood free and unforfeited to sin and death, the equivalent life Adam forfeited by transgression of the law, in other words “A free life,” which you, Mr Hone, say is a “myth” in your support of Robert Roberts.

You say in paragraph 6 of the emphasis which the Scriptures place upon Christ's descent from Adam. Where do you find this in Scripture? Can you find his descent in the male side of his pedigree or genealogy? You cannot, for God was his Father not Adam nor Joseph though his nature was of Mary, the seed of David according to flesh.

You appear to be as confused as those people Jesus questioned “What think ye of Christ, whose son is he? They answered, The Son of David.” Jesus confounded them with his reply, “If David by the Spirit calleth him Lord, how then is he his son?”

There is only one male side of Jesus recorded in Scripture and this is in Luke 1:35, where the angel speaks of the power of the Highest overshadowing Mary to produce the Son of God. Of course 'Male' may not be a fitting term for the “Power of the Highest” but I am using it in that sense of explanation. If you have ever used the Christadelphian Hymn Book of October 1932 preface authorized by C.C. Walker, the hymn 87 commences “The sons of God did rejoice at creation.” It goes on to speak of the dominion given to Adam and then the contrast between Adam who lost the dominion and status of Son of God by his transgression, and of

Jesus the second man (1 Corinthians 15:45,47) as the words of the hymn express “A New Man comes, angel hosts now adore him; The Son of God, and David's Son; Salvation's horn, he excels all before him; Divine, and with the Father One. The Lord a new thing upon earth createth; The Virgin-born, Emmanuel, The Heir of all things, to men God revealing, The Light of Life, behold him come:- O Witness True, First of God's new creation, Thy power take, which peace accords, and Judge the earth as Messiah and Saviour, The King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

This is not a quotation of all the verses but even the few lines I have quoted lend no support to a Christ as a New Man needing redemption. Your continual reference to flesh and blood in an adverse sense blinds you to the real understanding of the Atoning work of Christ and in fact invalidates your baptism as a means of salvation, for do you not possess the same flesh and blood you had prior to baptism and are therefore in the same state or position of condemnation, or as you term it “Condemned, sin-stricken nature”? This latter is not even a description of being in Adam, for the term “In Adam” is a legal not a physical term, used by Paul and “In Christ” is a term used by Paul of those baptized believers who were free of condemnation, though they were still flesh and blood.

I think paragraph 9 is a subject on which you are very much astray. You violate the teaching of Jesus and of Paul in your statement that Adam did not become corruptible until he disobeyed. Jesus compares those people of his day as the same nature as Adam before he sinned. See Matthew 19:4-6; also 1 Corinthians 15:45,46.

And what a pity the Creator did not know Adam could not suffer pain nor weakness as you state, when he took the rib from Adam after putting him in a deep sleep! This would have been unnecessary according to your theory; neither would Adam have needed food from the trees for energy to withstand weakness, God having provided them for that purpose.

I think my last article on the teaching of Robert Roberts in his book “The Visible Hand of God,” shows the weakness of his dogmatic assumptions and similarly your own.

I am now aware that Brother Russell Gregory has made some comments on your article, so I will not proceed any further with my own, but there is much more I could say or write if you really have the love and respect for the Scriptures more than that handed down by teachers of error and misrepresentation. I have been very outspoken but there is great need of an Elijah. John the Baptist, Jeremiah or one of the old prophets in these days. I hope it is not too late.

Yours in Hope of Life Eternal in The Kingdom, P.Parry.

P.S. Please note, the death Jesus prayed to be delivered from was the crucifixion. He was heard but he was not saved from it. He tasted death for every man, by the Grace of God.

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