

Immortalization No. 6

Our Original Community Understandings of Sin

In our previous considerations we examined the two acceptations of sin, the fact that there were six sin offerings under divine law for guilty sin from which repentance was needed, as well as six sin offerings for divinely unacceptable physical conditions for which no repentance was needed as no guilt was assigned. Although we will pursue the shadow projections of this double six pattern of both guilty sin reconciliation and physical salvation from the effects of sin in our next consideration – the 7th, now we'll direct our attention to our Christadelphian community's point of origin on this issue of the two acceptations of sin... that has everything to do with our overall theme of immortalization.

We are examining divine principles. Scripture is our only solid foundation for truth. And it's certainly understood that our Christadelphian pioneers were not divinely inspired and we can't quote them with any divine authority. Frequently this objection about the writings of our pioneers **not** being inspired is thrown at Brethren quoting these pioneers. Absolutely no one is foolish enough to suggest such an absurd position as the divine inspiration for any of the writings of Bro John Thomas or Bro Robert Roberts. That objection itself is frequently just a defensive posture to divert the attention away from the weakness of an argument. However, despite the recognition that our Christadelphian pioneers were not divinely inspired we have the advantage of examining our community's original understandings. We can use these original understandings as a potential recalibrating position, if that is necessary. Sadly Dr Thomas seems to be selectively quoted by everyone, from all different sides of the same argument. If this wasn't such a serious issue, this selective quoting of Dr Thomas to support diametrically opposed reasoning would be rather humorous.

So let's not just look at one or two little snippets of Bro Thomas' comments. Let's go back to the beginning, to Elpis Israel and see what Bro Thomas says about the two separate aspects of sin through a string of quotes from this foundational book. The page references will be based on the Elpis Israel issue that is available in the Libronix Bible library and Bible study software.

From Elpis Israel on page 126

The word *sin* is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, “*the transgression of the law*”; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh “*which has the power of death*”; and it is called *sin*, because the development, or fixation, of this *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression.

It shouldn't be any surprise why those promoting the two aspects of sin being transgressional sin and fake sin or just a substance-less shadow of transgressional sin don't quote this entire reference from Elpis Israel. This shows Dr Thomas understood the

2nd aspect of sin to be physical and not simply a shadow or a metonymous expression. This second aspect of sin is a physical principle... the animal nature.. which he says is sin... **because** this physical condition was the direct result of transgression. We were **not** created this way, with a dying, disease prone, transgression favoring mind and body.

From page 76 in Elpis Israel:

These turbulent propensities the apostle styles “sin in the flesh”, of which it is full; hence, he also terms it “sinful flesh”. This is human nature; and the evil in it, made so apparent by the law of God, he personifies as “*pre-eminently* A SINNER”

Bro Thomas refers to this sin producing force within the flesh as sin in the flesh and also as human nature. Again, it is no wonder the disciples of the minimalization of sin never quote this statement of Dr Thomas... as he completely disagreed with their representation of the second acceptance of sin being fake sin or just a shadow of the first aspect of sin, having no substance in its own definition and nothing to do with a physical application in our nature.

Elpis Israel page 77

This sinful nature we inherit. It is our misfortune, not our crime, that we possess it. We are only blameworthy when, being supplied with the power of subduing it, we permit it to reign over us.

Here is where Bro Thomas explains that this second aspect of sin, this sin producing flesh nature we inherit carries no guilt with it whatsoever. This sin nature he describes is not our crime. The crime, the blameworthiness, the guilt is assigned when we embrace that sin power emanating from within us, welcoming its control over us. This is when lust generated from within our hearts is allowed to conceive and become thereby qualify as transgressional sin. Bro Thomas references both aspects of sin in these two sentences... the first being our cursed, unclean, sin generating nature for which we bear no guilt whatsoever and then the transgression of the law in the permitting of this sin nature to reign in our lives. It should be no surprise that this phrase from Elpis Israel is never quoted by the Christadelphians who promote the idea that we do bear guilt for our sin nature, for mortality. Bro Thomas absolutely disagreed with that distortion of the gospel truth.

Pg 94 But serpent-sin, being a constituent of human nature, is treated of in the scripture in the aggregate, as well as in its individual manifestations. The “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”, generated in our nature by sin, and displayed in all the children of sin, taken in the aggregate constitute “*the world*”, which stands opposed to God. Serpent-sin in the flesh is the god of the world, who possesses the glory of it.

Bro Thomas expresses his understanding of one of the aspects of sin as being serpent sin... a power within our flesh nature – our mortal human nature, that generates sinful impulses. He also introduces us to the extended understanding of individual sin and aggregate sin. This same concept is expressed in the shadows of scripture in the sense of a serpent as opposed to a dragon. The serpent is a scriptural shadow of this sin that is our nature, promoting the transgressions of the law that demonstrates the other aspect of sin. The dragon is a scriptural shadow of sin in the aggregate, the political application of sin

producing human nature... which is why the dragon political system we see in Daniel and again in Revelation 12 mutates from pagan Rome to Christian Rome and then mutates again in Revelation 13 as the beast of the sea and the beast of the land and then politically mutates again in chapter 17. This dragon is referenced again with the other three sin identifications of the serpent, the devil and satan in Revelation 20. These dragon references are all mutations of the same dragon, that political or aggregate projection of the ruler of this world... sin (the individual and the political expressions of sin nature) are all bound in chains in the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. That indicates the period of rest from sin and the accompanying rest from the physical effects of sin. There is no aggregate scriptural shadow of the other aspect of sin that is known as the transgression of the law. The aggregate expression of sin is limited to the power of sin within our nature that does defile us but we are not guilty for that. We are simply guilty for surrendering to its power... transgressing divine law.

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Human nature, or "sinful flesh", has three principal channels through which it displays its waywardness against the law of God. These are expressed by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life".

Bro Thomas interchanges the terms "sinful flesh" (in other words flesh full of sin) and human nature. The producer of sin, our unclean nature, is presented as that other aspect of sin. He explains that it is this flesh full of sin that expresses itself in the three separate channels of lust and pride. This sin is an active force within our cursed nature, as Paul emphasizes so powerfully in Romans chapter 7.

Elpis Israel Pg 91

By a figure, *sin is put for the serpent*, the effect for the cause; seeing that he was *the suggester* of unbelief and disobedience to man, by whom it entered into the world. Hence, the idea of the serpent in the flesh is expressed by "sin in the flesh"; which was "condemned in the flesh" when Jesus was crucified for, or on account of, sin, "in the likeness of sinful flesh".

This communication tool of expressing the cause as the effect with the same term is known as a metonymy. It should be understood that the correct application for a metonymous expression requires two separate, independently identifiable (real) but related items. Scriptural expositions referencing the use of the communication tool of metonymy often define this tool of expression by quoting the sons of the prophets when they excitedly declare to Elisha: man of God, there is death in the pot. This is correctly offered as an example of a metonymous expression. The poisonous wild gourds in the stew were expressed as death itself, since that poisonous food would generate death. The cause was being expressed as the effect. However, frequently this example is then oddly extended to an impossible application of how transgressional sin is somehow expressed as fake sin, to some expression of sin where transgressional sin can't possibly be hammered into the text to make any sense. Instead of trying to understand the divine principles being expressed some of our commentators try to hide behind this idea of these other expressions of sin that just can't fit within the definition of being transgressional sin as being nothing more than a metonymous expression. However for a legitimate metonymous expression we actually need two separate, independently identifiable items.... Such as the poisonous

gourds and the death that results from eating it. Real sin and a mere shadow of that same real sin, would not qualify as a metonymous expression. There is no independence. They are both the same thing. It is just that transgressional sin is understood to be real and all the other references to sin are expected to be just a fake version of the same thing. This appears to be done based on the false foundational presumption that any reference to real sin must apply some level of guilt. Therefore those uses of the word sin that cannot possibly fit within the understanding of transgressional sin are illegitimately brushed aside with this metonymy excuse.... When that particular application is not a metonymy at all. That application would be like saying there is pot in the pot... or death in the death.

In this quote from page 91 of Elpis Israel Bro Thomas explains how the term sin and serpent are used interchangeably... on the basis that sin entered the world through the serpent sowing the seed of doubt into Adam and Eve, suggesting that the Creator could be wrong. Bro Thomas expresses how the condemnation of sin in the flesh of Christ is the same thing as condemning the serpent in the flesh. We can see this in the shadow of the bronze serpent on the pole that Moses was commanded to place in the center of the camp to save believers from the physical effect of the venom from the bite of the sand serpents. We also know this bronze serpent on a stake represented our Messiah in his crucifixion (John 3:14) when Jesus condemned that serpent/sin in his flesh. Belief in Jesus can also save us from the serpent's venom, from that sting of death, which is sin (1 Cor 15: 56). This bronze serpent serves as the shadow image for that internalized serpent power within us that scripture refers to as sin, for which we bear no guilt whatsoever. This "likeness" status of sinful flesh Bro Thomas references from Romans 8:3 is that Jesus had never actually permitted the exercising of that guilt-free, serpent/sin power within him that he inherited from his mother... therefore it was only a likeness.

Now let's add a quote from Elpis Israel we briefly considered to another quote on the next page of the book and consider both quotes together.

Let's just look again at the original quote we considered on page 126 and tie it to an extended quote from the next page of Elpis Israel.

Page 126

The word *sin* is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, "*the transgression of the law*"; and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh "*which has the power of death*"; and it is called *sin*, because the development, or fixation, of this *evil* in the flesh, was the result of transgression.

Pg 127 Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature. Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as *unclean*.

Bro Thomas not only states there are two separate aspects to sin but defines them as well. The first is the definition on which everyone seems to agree... the transgression of the law. It is clear that Bro Thomas was not an oversimplification disciple. He did not unconsciously read the word 'only' into the text of 1 John 3 where it states that sin is the transgression of the law. That second acceptation for sin is our cursed human nature, often referred to in scripture as "sin." However, this sin has no guilt assigned to it. This sin which is our cursed human nature, was the direct result of the first law transgression and it is why we die. He

never believed we were created in a dying state and that the divine threat of death was intended to be an immediate execution, as some suggest. This sin, which Bro Thomas defines as human nature, has the power of death. We inherit this guilt-free category of sin, this human nature, from our parents. We bear absolutely no guilt for this sin/human nature, despite its unclean status, its divine unacceptability status on the basis of our God's creational standards. We do not need any repentance ritual for this guilt-free sin aspect. However we do need cleansing or purging and there are definitely divine rituals for cleansing or purging this second acceptance of sin. These are the two stages... both sin forgiveness and sin nature purging which is separate from forgiveness but also progressive in that there can be no final and complete purging until after forgiveness. These two aspects of sin are highlighted by the two sets of six sin offerings under divine law for each sin aspect, each of the two sin acceptations defined by Bro Thomas. These issues are at the core of the two appearances of our Messiah. He has already reconciled us to our Creator through his death. We have access to the complete forgiveness of our transgressions, our guilty sins. He did this by condemning sin in his body at his crucifixion, totally free of any guilt whatsoever. He comes the second time without that sin/without that sin producing and unclean human nature he came with the first time. At his second appearance, he will save us, indicating the purging of our sin nature with the covering of immortality that will eliminate our shameful nakedness before our Creator, as Paul expresses this. These are the progressive stages of dealing with the guilt of sin in reconciliation and then the purging of sin nature through salvation.

Jesus condemned sin in his body through his death by completely exposing the curse of sin and death, unshielded from the divine judgment of death by the guilt of even a single guilty transgression. The root cause of transgressional sin, the engine of transgressional sin... was put to death in his body on the cross. This is **why** we break the memorial service bread, to indicate how the power of sin was broken in the body of our savior upon his death. This is **why** the temple veil (representing the flesh of Christ Heb 10:19–20) was torn from heaven to earth at the very point of Christ's death. This is **why** the crucifixion rock at Rephidim had to be struck by the serpent rod of Aaron and cleave in two for the living waters to rush out. This is **why** the three dustbound animals, each three years old, had to be severed in two in the heaven and earth covenant between God and Abram in Genesis 15. The death of Christ was a declaration of the righteousness of our Creator... that sin deserves death, that the judgment of the Creator in Eden was absolutely right... as opposed to the God-despising presumptions of mankind ever since that sin can be just as eternal as righteousness, with their consistent religious delusions of immortal souls and sin promoting immortal pagan gods and angels. This is **why** Jesus had to be baptized... to declare **all** the righteousness of his Father in both our justified death due to sin and in our resurrection on the basis of grace. God is right in both His judgments and His mercy, with that rightness being testified in the Jordan baptism of Jesus.

Dr Thomas had it right at the beginning. His explanations blend perfectly with scripture, including the laws, rituals and expressions of the Ecclesial Age as well as the laws, rituals and expressions of the 1st Kingdom Age. That is our recalibration point concerning all the instinctive, heart generated distortions about sin that have been and are still are being promoted from within our community. There are two acceptations of sin. They are both real sin, as opposed to one being just a shadow or a false metonymy of the first... a kind of fake sin. One acceptation of sin is transgression of divine law. We need forgiveness for this category of sin. The other acceptation of sin is human nature, described scripturally and in Elpis Israel as sin in the flesh... a direct result of the very first divine law transgression. That serpent philosophy that was originally an exterior influence to mankind in the garden became internalized into our nature, bringing death, just as Paul says in Romans 5:12 that sin entered the world by one man and death came by that one man's sin, therefore passing upon all men. We inherit this second aspect of sin from our mortal parents. We bear no guilt for this sin whatsoever, but this **does** make us unclean, or not in compliance with the original creational standards, that eternal rightness of divine standards. We do not need forgiveness for his category of sin, but we do need purging, cleansing. We need both reconciliation from guilty sin and we need to be saved from sin nature, from the curse of mortality.

Pg 136 The remote cause of these “motions” is that physical principle, or quality, of the flesh, styled indwelling sin, which returns the mortal body to the dust; and that which excites the latent disposition is the law of God forbidding to do thus and so; for, “I had not known sin, but by the law”.

Pg 137 The law of sin pervades every particle of the flesh; but in the thinking flesh it reigns especially in the propensities.

Bro Thomas expresses the concept of that second acceptation of sin as serving as the sin engine dwelling within the mortal body. This second acceptation of sin is not simply the transgressional sin generator, it is that mortal body's decay generator. Let's apply our community's original understanding of the two acceptations of sin into the New Testament expressions we previously considered that powerfully eliminated any possibility that there could only be one aspect to sin.

Rom 7:8 *But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.*

We have already noted how this specific aspect of sin referenced by Paul cannot be fit into the limited concept of transgression of the law. This sin is an active force and not a condition of guilt. However when we apply the explanation of Bro Thomas and the precedent of the second category of guilt-free sin offerings under Kingdom law we can easily understand what Paul is saying: But sin (unclean human nature... sin in the flesh), taking advantage of the commandment (divine law), worked within myself all manner of

forbidden lust. Lust is the first of the three stage progression of sin, according to James 1:14-15

*But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own **lust**, and enticed. ¹⁵ Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth **sin**: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth **death**.*

The three progressive stages of sin are 1) lust 2) sin 3) death. In this application lust is not a guilty condition. This lust is prior to the conception of sin. Temptation itself does not constitute guilty sin. Jesus was certainly tempted, as Hebrews 4 emphatically declares... in all points like as we are, yet without sin.. indicating transgressional sin. Jesus experienced the first stage, suffering as we do with human nature (which Bro Thomas explains is a synonym for sin, that 2nd acceptance of sin). That unclean, sin promoting nature that Jesus was born with certainly generated temptations within Christ. He simply never allowed the conception of temptation into sin.

Let's continue in Paul's use of both aspects of sin in Romans 7 and see how the things we have learned and our community's original understandings fit within the text.

Rom 7:11-13 *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. ¹² Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*

It would be absolutely absurd to try to superimpose the definition of transgression of the law to this expression of sin, used in this context. This sin is a devious active force within Paul, not a guilty condition due to an overt or even an ignorant act. Paul says this aspect of sin... identified by Bro Thomas as human nature, the serpent nature... deviously took advantage of the restricting divine commandment. In effect we see the three progressive stages of sin presented by James. We see the initial lust stage where human nature (which Paul expresses as sin) takes advantage of divine laws forbidding certain behavior... in other words prompting the lust stage ... which then conceived into sin and then as Paul states... "by it slew me," constituting the last of the 3 stages... the death stage. Interestingly, Paul anticipates how the instinctive, defensive thought process of human nature will then accuse divine laws of being evil, because they are the tool by which sin-generating human nature tricks us into guilty sin. He explains this is an illegitimate thought process. We can't blame divine law for our own failings. Paul is emphatic: *Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. ¹³ Was then that which is good made death unto me?* Paul asks if it is the holy law that actually kills us? He answers, absolutely not and then explains the purpose of the law: *But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.* Divine law was intended to take sin nature out of the shadows, revealing, spotlighting and magnifying it... making it exceeding sinful. Sin producing human nature... here expressed simply as "sin" works death in us, taking advantage of the commandments ... just like the serpent in the garden took advantage of the commandment and twisted it around to make it look like God was lying and holding Adam and Eve back

from God-like-ness. This aspect of sin that Paul is referencing is that serpent thought process that was internalized into mankind upon their failure. This is the 2nd acceptance of sin explained so well by Dr Thomas.

Paul then goes on with his sad confession of frustrating repetitive failure. He explains that no matter how good his intentions are, he finds it impossible to deny that relentless power of sin **within** him. *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.* Paul goes on to explain why this is the case, why he does the things he doesn't intend to do, things that he hates himself for. *If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.* ¹⁷ *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* Paul explains that we are not free to blame divine law for our failures. He knows this is human nature's way of defensively diverting the blame for our failures right back to God... just like the pagans and now the Christians with their convenient creation of an immortal evil god tempting us and promoting failure. This is just a ploy of the serpent power of sin within human nature to avoid the unpleasant sensation of guilt coming from the divinely provided conscience. The Apostle says he has to consent that the law is good. He says the reason he can't always do the right thing is because of sin that lives within him... Paul says it is sin... that **dwells** in him. That 2nd aspect, that 2nd acceptance of sin is an active, devious force with an agenda. It is our adversary, for which the Hebrew word is satan and this active serpent sin nature within us is a deceiver, just like the serpent in the garden, for which the Greek word is diabolos.... satan and the devil. This is why, after the 70 return to Jesus telling of how diseases were subject to their healing power Jesus had given them, Jesus happily testifies: I beheld satan as lightning fall from heaven. Jesus is simply saying that his disciples ability to exercise power over the destructive and disease generating powers of sin producing human nature (satan) was a sign of hope for the eventual fall of that dominant power of our sin nature (satan) that promotes rebellion against righteousness and truth, also generating disease, violence, suffering and death.

This is the living force 'dwelling' within Paul that prevented his hopeful flawless performance of the divine will, the realization of his best intentions. This is what Paul repeatedly expresses as simply 'sin'. Paul repeats this line of reasoning again, distressed by his inability to perform those best intentions but recognizing his opposing unclean nature that actively resists these best efforts. Verses 18–20 *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.* ¹⁹ *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.* ²⁰ *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* Paul defines the force opposing his best intentions as sin. Again he explains that this sin that actively opposes his best intentions is actually living within him... opposing him, prompting him to not do right and to do wrong. Paul expresses this living force within him... as sin. This is that 2nd acceptance of sin... human nature... our adversary, our deceiver within our unclean, disease and death producing nature, for which

we do not need to pursue a repentance... simply for being born into this condition. The guilt comes when we don't oppose the inclinations of our nature.

Paul emphasizes this issue by repeating the same reasoning yet again. In vs 23 we read: *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.* There is a law, a rule of life, that lives within our 'members' (the components of our mortal frame and mental composition). That component within us is at war with our mind, intent on promoting its superior influence. This is what society refers to as instinct. It is also defined both scripturally and societally as our heart. This is why all levels of society chant the same mindless exhortation to always listen to our hearts and to go with our first instincts as they will always be right. That reasoning is absolute rubbish. Society, the children of men, advise us not to fight that inner law but to surrender to its power and then completely redefine right and wrong in relation to the instinctive impressions of that inner law, that heart generated thinking. This is why our Creator's advice is exactly the opposite. Yahweh warns us through Jeremiah in chapter 17: *The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?*

Paul doesn't leave us with this despondent, completely frustrated frame of reference... that no matter what we do we can't win... that our serpent nature will not permit our perfect compliance with divine will, no matter how motivated we may be. Continuing, Paul actually drives us further into the depths of despair and then catapults us to the joy and hope of the realization that we have a hero to save us. We have a savior, by whose leadership and power we can escape this horrible and depressing incapacity to live in the image and likeness of our glorious Creator, our deeply loved Heavenly Father. Paul says: *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Paul asks who shall deliver me from sin... from the body of this death... this body infused with this living force that prevents me from achieving my best intentions. The answer is Jesus Christ our Lord, for which we can thank his Father.

It is extremely odd to see the chapter break at this point, between Romans 7 and Romans 8. The uninspired chapter separators obviously had no idea what Paul was talking about here. Paul is leading us step by step by step. We are climbing the stairs of ascending enlightenment concerning divine principles. This chapter break should not be mistaken as suggesting some sort of redirected thought pattern. The continuing reasoning in Romans 8 is entirely dependent of the progressive reasoning presented in the first seven chapters and completely dependent on the precedents immediately preceding the introduction of chapter 8.

This is an extremely significant understanding, as the first 3 verses of Romans 8 have been horribly twisted and inverted and manipulated by commentators outside and within the Christadelphian community for well over 100 years, offering fuel for fellowship separations

within our global community. We need Paul's reasoning from chapter seven to understand the terms he uses in chapter 8. If we try to divorce the first 3 verses of Romans 8 from the precedents in chapter 7 we are unshackling the power of our hearts to deceive us, coming to conclusions that elevate ourselves at God's and Christ's expense. As we have already noted, this is always and without any exception, the result of false scriptural understandings. These always degrade God and always exalt the flesh. False scriptural understandings, false doctrine, is all about worshipping ourselves, serving that deceitful, self-validating serpent philosophy that dwells within our members.

When we read Romans 8:1–3 we can define the terms by the previous context... not outside that context.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. ³ For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.

These terms like "condemnation" and "the likeness of sin" and "sin in the flesh" have to be understood in the context of the Paul's immediately preceding foundational reasoning. The Christadelphian community's odd fascination with manipulating word definitions with concordances and lexicons over the last 2–3 generations does not have the authority to evaporate the power of the progressive context in defining and bordering these terms. We also have to beware of our instinctive willingness to impose the 'only' trap, to take for granted that any expression is completely comprehensive and there are no caveats or conditional understandings that might restrict our preferred simplistic definitions.

The fact that there is no condemnation to those in Christ is limited in verse 1 to those actually walking after the spirit and not the flesh. Therefore we have no freedom to suggest that baptism (**one** of the parallels to being "in" Christ) somehow wipes away some blanket condemnation against mankind. It has been assumed by some that this condemnation we escape by being "in" Christ is the guilt of our sin nature. However Paul makes it clear that this particular condemnation we are freed from in this context is conditional upon walking after the spirit as well and conditionally dependent upon **not** walking after the flesh. There are certainly those who have been baptized into Christ that do not walk after the spirit and do walk after the flesh. Therefore baptism cannot serve as the exclusive device freeing us from this condemnation being referenced. We have also already seen from different but complimentary avenues how there is no guilt assigned to our sin nature, that there is no category of guilty sin that is inherited at birth from which we need repentance. That presumption would be a contradiction to the righteousness of our Creator.

However other Christadelphian commentators, desperately trying to avoid this concept of inherited guilty sin... but still sharing the illegitimate presumption that any references to real sin must somehow assign a degree of guilt or just be a sin shadow – fake sin.... These commentators apply some strange and impossible applications to the uses of the word sin in the next two verses.... Again completely removing these terms from Paul's preceding expresses.

In verse 2 of Romans 8 Paul declares: *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.* This is the same law of sin and death Paul was referencing all through his reasoning in the previous chapter. This is the law of sin and death that is so highlighted and emphasized by the holy commandments. This is the law of sin and death that is a living force within the mortal human nature that deviously takes advantage of these restrictive divine laws, prompting us to contradict our Creator's righteousness in thought, word and deed. Those in Christ who actually pursue righteousness and run from wickedness are freed from the assured condemnation to death, guaranteed by our incapacity to live in perfect compliance with those holy commandments. It was Christ that reversed the absolute and inescapable condemnation from the holy laws of the Kingdom of God. We can only access that elimination of assured condemnation if we are in Christ to the degree of continually pursuing his behavior pattern, not simply satisfying a simple ritual, such as baptism.

In verse 3 of Romans 8 Paul explains the law's incapacity to save us, as well as the process by which Christ satisfied both the requirements of the law and opened an avenue of escape from condemnation for those who will emulate him to the frustration of that law of sin and death dwelling within our members.

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

The law could not save. It could only condemn. However the law's processing of that condemnation of sin was inadequate. It was incomplete, which is why it was repeated over and over and over and over. The very repetition of the law's condemnation of sin through animal sacrifice is highlighted in Hebrews as proof of the limited application of the law. Freedom from the condemnation of sin that Paul had highlighted throughout the previous chapter – chap 7 - had to be achieved in a better way, with a finality. This is why God commissioned his son to condemn sin in the flesh, but it had to be different from the partial and repetitive sin condemnation within the rituals of the law. This is why Jesus, in his sacrificial profile, had to be without any transgression whatsoever. He came in the likeness of sin, which can indicate both explanations that are often provided for this expression... a **likeness** of sinful flesh. One definition is that Jesus **appeared** with sinful flesh (as the Greek word for likeness can indicate the understanding of appearing) ... in other words he appeared on the scene with sinful flesh. The other possible application is limiting the Greek and translated English word to an understanding of just the opposite of appearance... indicating a similarity but with a distinctive difference. Interestingly this opposite definition can also fit perfectly, as the difference in Christ's sin nature that he appeared with is that he never exercised that sin nature even once in his life. This would qualify the sin nature he took to his crucifixion as only a likeness in the sense of not being exactly the same as the activated and willingly operated sin nature every other human being has taken to their deaths. It makes no difference which Greek word application one prefers to emphasize. The correct application, directed by the immediate context from the previous chapter, does not change the necessary conclusion.

Jesus came with the same actively sin promoting nature as everyone else. However, differently –**unlike**– everyone else he never submitted to the influence of that nature in a single instance. Therefore at his death there was no **guilt** assigned to either category of sin for his life or his body. This exposed the serpent nature (as Dr

Thomas so appropriately refers to human nature) to an exclusive condemnation in the violent execution of Christ's death. Jesus condemned sin in the flesh (as Paul expresses it in Romans 8:3). This is exactly the condemnation we offer at our baptism, although ours is but a shadow confirmation, based on understanding the truths and principles projected by that ritual and the level of commitment required. In his voluntary sacrificial death, Jesus declared that his Father was absolutely right to demand death for sin. Like baptism, Christ's death was voluntary. He did not accommodate any of the parade of opportunities he was offered to escape that sacrificial death... such the frightened mob, armed to the teeth that came to arrest him in the middle of the night in Gethsemane. With their weapons and torches they fell backwards over themselves to the ground when all he did was identify himself in the dark, after they refused to move on him when Judas had already identified him in the dark with a kiss (John 18:6). Jesus refused to help Pilate in his attempts to release Jesus. Christ's death, although violent, horrible and terribly painful, was completely voluntary. Sin could never be defeated gently. Divine law confirms this truth with the unique action verb (nazah) used to describe the violent spattering of the blood of the sin offering, as opposed to the verb (zaraq) used to direct the more gentle sprinkling of the blood for the three other blood centered altar offerings. Sin could never be condemned gently. In the same sense the hordes of sin worshippers governing the earth in this final generation of the Ecclesial Age will suffer the sword issuing from the mouth of the King of Kings when they violently oppose the spread of righteousness and divine glory in the earth. Sin will not surrender its influence gently...as evidenced in our messiah and as it will be done in the world.

All rituals and all divine laws and the entire progressive divine educational plan for the maturing of creation and creation's caretaker promote the right-ness of the Creator, that He is right in everything. Christ's death perfectly projected this understanding with a voluntary submission to a horrible death in a guilt free body, declaring emphatically that our Creator was absolutely right to demand death for sin, an understanding absolutely opposed by all other forms of false religion. The absence of any shred of guilt in Christ upon his voluntary sacrificial death to condemn sin as worthy of the divinely imposed death sentence is exactly why death could not hold him. Jesus Christ had broken the power of sin in his body... in his flesh. This same breaking of the power of sin in the guilt-free body of the Messiah is portrayed in the breaking of the unleavened bread in the memorial service. We demonstrate that condemning of sin in the flesh by partaking of that broken bread that Jesus says represents his body, that guilt-free body that inherited sin in the flesh from his mother... which is why she had to offer a sin offering for her own atonement for giving birth to Jesus. We break that bread before eating it to recognize that the power of sin we all inherit from our ancestors was finally and completely condemned in the sacrificial death of our savior, to whom we offer complete loyalty and dedication... so that – as Paul says in verse 1 of Romans 8 – if we will not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit... **then** we can escape a justified condemnation of our active sin nature. That escape from a justified condemnation is conditional on our pursuit of righteousness and our avoidance of wickedness. That escape from condemnation is certainly not completely achieved by a mere ritual such as baptism or circumcision.

This escape from condemnation referenced in Romans 8:1 is the same two stage process described in Romans 5:10. We have been reconciled by the death of Jesus. We shall be saved by the resurrection of Christ. We have access to forgiveness of sins through the condemnation of sin afforded through the sacrificial death of our Savior. We have access to the eventual purification of our sin-defiled nature (for which we need no forgiveness)

through the resurrection of our Savior. There is more to salvation than simply the forgiveness of sins. That very common presumption would be a destructive minimalization of divine truths and principles and a cloaking device to hide the immense glory in the depth and breadth and width of the validating shadows of those truths in the parables, rituals, miracles, laws, and carefully detailed historical events of each progressive divine education stage. Therefore, before actually continuing in this specific aspect of the understandings of our Christadelphian pioneers and considering the recorded explanations of Bro Roberts as well as the Birmingham Statement of Faith and the doctrines to be rejected, let's just consider some of these shadow confirmations. These shadows are reserved only for the enlightened faithful with seeing eyes and hearing ears... through a circumcised heart.

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