

*the*  
**INCARNATION**  
*of*  
**CHRIST**

**ADAM'S HUMAN NATURE**

*versus*

**FALLEN HUMAN NATURE**

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September, 1964

Dear Reader:

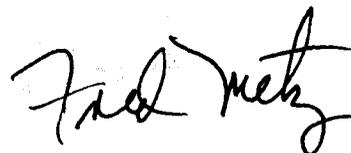
In a previous brochure called Is Perfection Possible? Versus How Is Perfection Possible?, copies of which are still available from me, I called your attention to one facet of a major doctrinal issue among Seventh-day Adventists. The basis of the theological differences seems to lie in something fundamental--a serious difference on the subject of the human nature of Christ. Representing one point of view on the subject of the Incarnation are quotations from The Ministry, the editor of which is Dr. R.A. Anderson. Representing the other point of view is an article by Robert D. Brinsmead.

I have no burden here to press you to take your stand on one side or the other, but I am interested in placing before you the clearest facts I can find expressed by both sides. Truth has nothing to lose by candid investigation. There is no clearer evidence of emotional and spiritual sickness than the inability to candidly and thoughtfully examine controverted points. I received some letters from my last mailing that were so emotionally charged that I am sure the correspondents decided the matter from the standpoint of feeling rather than from an objective analysis of all the evidence. Loyalty to truth does not require that we carry on like this. We live in a democratic country, and we are supposed to have a democratic church. People in this country can take issue with the views of the Administration without being considered traitors to the country. Are the children of this world wiser in their generation than the children of light?

Some think that nothing but harm can result from the present agitation. But I can see a great amount of good resulting from it. There are two irreconcilable theologies within Adventism today. They are in serious and determined conflict. Between them there is a great mass of Seventh-day Adventist people who are soundly "asleep," largely pre-occupied with the treadmill of life. God wants an intelligent, awakened people. As yet, the general run of Adventist ministers and laymen have no idea what the issues of the present conflict are about. But as things are developing and the lines are being drawn, more and more are asking: "What is the agitation all about?" As they individually investigate and decide for themselves, it is leading to a waking up in Laodicea. With it must come the great shaking, but ultimately the glorious destiny, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city."--Isaiah 52:1.

Trusting that the perusal of the following material will be a blessing to all who read, I am

Your brother in Christ,



# TOOK SINLESS NATURE OF ADAM BEFORE THE FALL



Official Organ of the  
MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

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## HUMAN, NOT CARNAL

By R. A. Anderson, September 1956

Soteriology is a theological term that covers the many aspects of the great doctrine of salvation. But it is often easier to express a word than explain its meaning. That is certainly true when we come to the study of redeeming grace. To reduce the great doctrine of God and the incarnation to human language is impossible, for when we have done our best it all sounds so meager in comparison with the immensity of God's revelation in Christ.

In contemplating the incarnation of Christ in humanity, we stand baffled before an unfathomable mystery, that the human mind cannot comprehend. The more we reflect upon it, the more amazing does it appear.—Ellen G. White in "The Signs of the Times," July 30, 1896.

The all-absorbing theme of the apostle Paul was "the mystery of godliness." He sought to explain it in many ways; but he once summed it up in a series of expressions: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16). Some claim this was a stanza from one of the apostolic hymns. It might well have been, but whatever the origin of this poem it certainly expresses the salient features

# "LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN"

By R. D. Brinsmead

In recent years teachings have been coming in among Seventh-day Adventists that would have us believe that the incarnate Christ possessed nothing more than the physical degeneracy of mankind. Except for the decreased size of the physical form, it is being affirmed that Christ's human nature was wholly like that of Adam's before sin entered.

The purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that the logical end of this teaching is the acceptance of the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and Sunday-sacredness.

## Weakened Physical, Mental and Moral Powers

The Bible declares: "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the *same nature* [as the children] . . . Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in every respect." Hebrews 2:14, 17. RSV. In declaring that Jesus had the same nature as the children of men, Paul is not referring to the condition of the heart and mind as in Ephesians 2:3, but he means "flesh and blood"—the whole human organism. The nature of man is threefold—physical, mental, and moral (Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 522). Jesus took the physical, mental, and moral powers of the fallen race.

In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam's failure. But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him. He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in **physical strength**, in **mental power**, and in **moral worth**; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation. "The Desire of Ages," p. 117 (emphasis ours) See also "Selected Messages," Book 1, p. 267-8

He who was one with the Father stepped down from the glorious throne in heaven, laid aside His royal robe and crown, and clothed His divinity with humanity, thus bringing Himself to the level of man's feeble faculties. "Review and Herald," Dec. 11, 1888

## The Inter-Dependence of the Physical, Mental and Moral Powers

Catholics and Protestants in general admit that Christ's bodily form was not that of Adam's when

of the gospel of salvation. When God became flesh, that was the greatest mystery of the ages. How Deity could clothe Himself with humanity, and at the same time retain His deity—that will challenge the thinking of men and angels throughout eternity. The deepest theologians during nineteen centuries have tried to explain this truth, but it is beyond human comprehension and expression.

This issue of THE MINISTRY carries in the Counsel section as full a coverage of this subject as can be found in the writings of Ellen G. White (turn to pages 17-24). The gathering together and classifying of these quotations represent the combined efforts of your editors, certain General Conference officers, and the Ellen G. White Publications staff. As far as we have been able to discover, this compilation fully represents the thinking of the messenger of the Lord on this question. A few other statements have been found, but these are either repetitions or mere verbal variations, and add no new thought. This editorial is written to urge all our readers to take time to carefully and prayerfully study these illuminating paragraphs.

Throughout our denominational history we have not always had as clear an understanding of this subject as would have been helpful. In fact, this particular point in Adventist theology has drawn severe censure from many outstanding Biblical scholars both inside and outside our ranks. Through the years statements have been made in sermons, and occasionally some have appeared in print, that, taken at their face value, have disparaged the person and work of Christ Jesus our Lord. We have been charged with making Him altogether human.

Such opinions have been molded in the main by two or three expressions in *The Desire of Ages*. And coming from such a source, these have naturally been regarded as final authority. However, these are but a fraction of the published statements by the same writer, all of which, taken together, throw much light on this theme. Unfortunately this larger group of statements has been overlooked. One reason is that most of these key statements have been published in articles in our leading periodicals, appearing frequently from 1888 onward, and files of these periodicals have not been readily accessible to our workers in general.

A hasty reading of the two or three statements from *The Desire of Ages* without the repeated counterbalancing statements found in so many other places has led some to conclude our official po-

he stood in his original perfection. But since they conceive of the soul as a meta-physical, separate entity from the body, they do not consider that these bodily weaknesses had any real bearing on the life of Christ. But the third angel's message has given Adventists a totally different view of the nature of man. We see man as fundamentally a physical organism, with every function of his being operating through the function of a physical body. "The body is the only medium through which the mind and the soul are developed for the upbuilding of character." *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 130 Therefore whatever weakens the physical powers of man will also weaken his mental and moral powers. Instruction upon this point in the Spirit of Prophecy is definite:

Since the mind and soul find expression through the body, both mental and spiritual vigor are in a great degree dependent upon physical strength and activity; whatever promotes physical health, promotes the development of a strong mind and a well-balanced character. "Education," p. 195

Whatever injures the health, not only lessens physical vigor, but tends to weaken the mental and moral powers. "The Ministry of Healing," p. 128.

Mental and moral power is dependent upon physical health. "Review and Herald," Oct. 31, 1871.

Anything that lessens physical strength enfeebles the mind. . . . "Counsels on Diet and Food," p. 48.

. . . Vigor of mind depends largely upon vigor of body. "Testimonies," vol. 7, p. 247.

Between the mind and the body there is a mysterious and wonderful relation. "Testimonies," vol. 3, p. 485.

If Christ took man's degenerate physical powers, He also took the degenerate mental and moral powers of the human organism. If we deny this, we deny the most fundamental truths on the nature of man, and in order to be logical, we would have to accept the "Babylonian" concept of the nature of man—that the condition of the physical powers has no vital relation to the soul of man. If only we had kept before us the great principles upon which the health reform message is based, we could never have become so confused on the nature of Christ as to contend along with Catholics and the Protestant world that Christ possessed only the physical weaknesses of the fallen race.

### **The Sinlessness of Jesus' Human Nature**

The Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy abound in statements affirming the sinlessness of the human nature of Christ. The proponents of the "new-view" of the nature of Christ have done so well in quoting them that there is no need to repeat

sition to be that Christ, during His incarnation, partook of our corrupt, carnal nature, and therefore was no different from any other human being. In fact, a few have declared that such would have to be the case in order for Him to be "in all points tempted like as we are"; that He would have to share our corrupt, sinful nature in order to understand our needs and sympathize with lost mankind. On the surface such reasoning sounds somewhat plausible; but when we begin to think it through more carefully, when we sink the shaft of truth deeper into the mine of God's revelation, a new and glorious vista opens to our view.

The Scriptures state clearly that through Adam's transgression death passed upon all men, for "by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The only sinless One who ever lived on earth was our Lord Jesus Christ—"holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." He was born holy and He lived on a plane separate from sinners. He was sinless not only in His outward conduct but also in His very nature.

Had this not been the case, He could never have redeemed us. If He had been born with a carnal nature, with all its propensities to evil, as is the case with every natural son and daughter of Adam, then He Himself would have needed a Saviour, and under no circumstances could He have been our Redeemer. His nature must of necessity be holy in order to atone for ours, which is unholy. His mother, Mary, highly favored of the Lord, recognized her need of salvation, for in the Magnificat she sang of "God my Saviour." While she recognized her need of a Saviour, she also realized that Jesus, her Son in the flesh, was the Lamb of God, who had come to take away the sin of the world. Yet she could not comprehend this mystery any more than can we. In fact, it was doubtless more difficult for her to grasp this truth than for those who have lived since the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. As the Son of God, Jesus stood in contrast with all other members of the human family, for He was God manifest in the flesh.

Among the many important paragraphs already referred to, it is emphasized that our Lord partook of our limited human nature, but not our corrupt, carnal nature with all its propensities to sin and lust. *In Him was no sin, either inherited or cultivated*, as is common to all the natural descendants of Adam. We grant that this is a mystery. But the Lord through His messenger has warned us to exercise extreme care how we present this subject lest we give the impression that Christ was altogether hu-

them here. We must agree wholeheartedly on the emphasis on the sinlessness of the human nature of Christ—that He had no propensity, inclination or bent to sin. But the statements declaring Christ's sinlessness do not deny that Jesus took man's degenerate faculties. "The mental and moral powers which God has given us do not constitute character. They are talents, which we are to improve, and which, if properly improved, will form a right character." *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 606. The faculties are the "tools" with which man forms his character. Christ did not have the "tools" which Adam had, but He took the inferior "tools" common to all the sons of men.

While Christ took man's weakened mental and moral powers, we do not say that the Master was weak in mental and moral powers. "In Christ, divinity and humanity were combined." *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 649. "Having taken our fallen nature, He showed what it might become, by accepting the ample provision He has made for it, and by becoming partaker of the divine nature." *Ibid.*, p. 657. Christ revealed more than ordinary mental perception, not because the laws of inheritance failed to operate in His birth, but because "His divine nature knew what was in man." *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1124. So too, Christ was strong in moral power, not because His human nature was inherently strong in moral power, but because through surrender and faith He united His weakened human nature to the infinite source of moral power. Christ had to demonstrate that one who is weakest in moral power may overcome in the strength given of God. For this reason, the Spirit led Christ to the wilderness:

For forty days He fasted and prayed. Weak and emaciated from hunger, worn and haggard with mental agony, "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men." Isa. 52:14. Now was Satan's opportunity. Now he supposed that he could overcome Christ. . . . It was in the time of greatest weakness that Christ was assailed by the fiercest temptations. Thus Satan thought to prevail. By this policy he had gained the victory over men. When strength failed, and the will power weakened, and faith ceased to repose in God, then those who had stood long and valiantly for the right were overcome. "The Desire of Ages," p. 118, 120.

In the wilderness, Jesus demonstrated how even the soul who is weakest in mental and moral power may overcome. For here Jesus Himself was weakened to the point of death. Not only were His physical powers weakened to the uttermost, but He was greatly weakened in mental and moral powers. Whatever weakens physical strength weakens the strength of the mental and moral powers. Christ was haggard with mental agony. When His strength

man and simply one like ourselves. Note carefully these timely cautions:

Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. He is that second Adam. The first Adam was created a pure, sinless being, without a taint of sin upon him; he was in the image of God.—Ellen G. White letter 8, 1895, quoted in "The SDA Bible Commentary," vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129.

In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity. . . . These words do not refer to any human being, except to the Son of the infinite God. Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. . . . But let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it cannot be.—*Ibid.*, pp. 1128, 1129.

Other quotations from this letter appear in the Counsel section, pages 17-24, as well as in volume 5 of the *Commentary*.

In only three or four places in all these inspired counsels have we found such expressions as "fallen nature" and "sinful nature." But these are strongly counterbalanced and clearly explained by many other statements that reveal the thought of the writer. Christ did indeed partake of our *nature*, our *human* nature with all its physical limitations, but not of our *carnal* nature with all its lustful corruptions. When He entered the human family it was after the race had been greatly weakened by degeneracy. For thousands of years mankind had been physically deteriorating. Compared with Adam and his immediate posterity, humanity, when God appeared in human flesh, was stunted in stature, longevity, and vitality.

These conditions were in marked contrast with those of Adam in his Edenic environment. He knew nothing of infirmities or degeneracy in his physical or mental being, for he came fresh from the hand of his Creator. But when the Creator Himself became man in order to take Adam's place He faced hazards the like of which Adam in Eden could never have imagined. Our Saviour met the archfoe time and again when physical limitations had weakened Him. He was hungry and emaciated when He met the tempter in the wilderness. But while He suffered physical hunger, His was not a corrupt, carnal nature. When He took upon Him sinless human nature, He did not cease to be God, for He was God manifest in the flesh. True, we cannot understand it, but we can accept it by faith.

Many years ago a statement appeared in *Bible Readings for the Home Circle* (1915 edition) which declared that Christ came "in sinful flesh." Just how this expression slipped into the book is dif-

failed His will power weakened too. Now the Saviour could experience what the weakest mortal must experience when striving against sin and temptation. "Christ's humanity alone could never have endured this test, but His divine power combined with humanity gained in behalf of man an infinite victory." *Review and Herald*, Oct. 13, 1874. Not through the strength of His human will did Christ overcome, but through the *right action* of His weakened human will He overcame. Through surrender He said, "Not My will, but Thy will be done." He linked the weak human will with the divine will, and proved the truth of the following statement: "As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent." *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 333. His victory declares that man may copy the pattern, that he may overcome as Christ overcame. His experience declares that there is not a soul who is so weak in moral power that he cannot find victory through laying hold of the infinite fund of moral power in the divine nature. His example shows that when the weakest human will co-operates with the divine will, it becomes omnipotent.

He met man as man, and testified by His connection with God that divine power was not given to Him in a different way to what it will be given to us . . . "SDA Bible Commentary," vol. 7, p. 925.

When we give to His human nature a power that it is not possible for man to have in his conflicts with Satan, we destroy the completeness of His humanity . . . Jesus, the world's Redeemer, could only keep the commandments of God in the same way that humanity can keep them. "*Ibid.*" p. 929.

### Did Christ Take the Sinless Nature of Man?

Not only does the "new-view" deny that Christ was subjected to all our infirmities—for we have much more than mere physical infirmities to contend with—but it proposes that Christ "took sinless human nature," or that He "took the sinless nature of Adam before the Fall." (See *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 650, Heading; *The Ministry*, Sept. 1956, Headings p. 19). Are there statements from Inspiration which support this contention? Indeed there are statements affirming the very opposite:

. . . He took upon Him our sinful nature. "*Review and Herald*," Dec. 15, 1896.

He took upon His sinless nature our sinful nature. . . . "*Medical Ministry*," p. 181.

The nature of God, whose law had been transgressed, and the nature of Adam, the transgressor, meet in Jesus. . . . "SDA Bible Commentary," vol. 7, p. 926.

When Christ came to this earth, there was no "sinless human nature" for Him to take. Christ was

difficult to know. It has been quoted many times by critics, and all around the world, as being typical of Adventist Christology. But when that book was revised in 1946 this expression was eliminated, since it was recognized as being out of harmony with our true position.

A. V. Olson, January 1962

Wonder of wonders, the majestic being who from the beginning was *with God*, and who *was God* (John 1:1)—the mighty God, the Creator and upholder of all things (Heb. 1:3)—“*was made flesh, and dwelt among us*” (John 1:14)! Because of His unfathomable love for lost mankind, He left His throne, came down to earth, clothed His divinity with humanity, lived with us as one with us, and died in our stead, that we might have life (John 10:10).

Speaking of this wonderful voluntary humiliation of the Son of God, the apostle Paul says, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

Amazed by this wonderful voluntary humiliation of Christ, E. G. White exclaims:

What humility was this! It amazed angels. The tongue can never describe it; the imagination cannot take it in. The eternal Word consented to be made flesh! **God became man!** It was a wonderful humility.—“Review and Herald,” July 5, 1887. Quoted in “Questions on Doctrine,” p. 56. (Boldface supplied.)

The voluntary humiliation of Christ went farther than to take human nature.

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin. Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity.—“The Desire of Ages,” p. 49.

In this citation our attention is called to the sad fact that sin has had a deteriorating effect on the human race. When Adam was created he was lofty of stature, with corresponding strength and vitality. We read:

As Adam came forth from the hand of his Creator, he was of noble height, and of beautiful symmetry. He was more than twice as tall as men now living upon the earth, and was well proportioned. His features were perfect and beautiful.—“The Spirit of Prophecy,” vol. 1, p. 25.

made of a woman, and she had no sinless human nature to give to Him. Yet Christ did take a sinless nature, not the sinless human nature of Adam before the Fall, but the sinless nature of His own eternal pre-existence. Through being born of the Holy Spirit, He united this sinless nature to the nature He received from Mary. The result of this union was that Christ's human nature was sinless. We must be careful to notice that Christ's human nature was sinless, not because He took a superior human nature, but because He united the human nature to the divine nature. This means that we may overcome as Christ overcame. He showed us what fallen nature might become when united to the divine nature. “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4.

Christ's human nature was sinless because that human nature was fully united to the divine nature. In this union is our only hope. This wonderful union cannot be explained, but it may be experienced. When a fallen, sinful man becomes a partaker of the divine nature, he becomes a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17), sinful propensities are cut away from the character (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 943), “a new moral taste is created,” (*Christ our Righteousness*, 1926 Ed., p. 122), and he is given “new motives new tastes, new tendencies.” (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1101). And the more fully a believer partakes of the divine nature, the more fully will he experience the power of the “new creation.” Christ was that “new creation” of the Holy Spirit. When the offending nature of man united with the divine nature of the Deity in the person of Jesus, there was a “new creation.” Human nature became sanctified and sinless. And only because Jesus chose to be guided by and filled with the Holy Spirit every moment of His life was His human nature sinless. His temptations were the same as ours. Satan appealed to the instincts of self-preservation and self-expression when tempting the Saviour. “Save Thyself” was the basis of every temptation. But moment by moment Jesus “emptied Himself.” He chose the cross of self-denial at every step, and did the Father's will. Thus Christ crucified “self”—which is in essence the sinful nature—and the devil found in Him no response to please Himself. Calvary was but the culmination of a whole lifetime of cross bearing for Jesus.

Such was not the size, strength, and perfection of the human race when Jesus was born into the world. Four thousand years of reckless violation of the divine laws of nature had greatly reduced the size and impaired the strength and perfection of the human body. Nerves and muscles had been weakened through centuries of indulgence. By permitting the law of heredity to operate in His incarnation, Jesus inherited, from the side of His mother, a body comparable in size to that of the bodies of the men of His day, and was subject to the infirmities and weaknesses of other men. Thus, speaking prophetically of Jesus when He was here on earth, Isaiah declares that He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," that "surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows" (Isa. 53:3, 4). Referring to this declaration, Matthew says of Jesus: "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). Weymouth's translation reads: "He took on Him our weaknesses, and bore the burden of our diseases." Thus in this sense the second Adam was not physically identical with the first Adam. It was also in this sense of depreciation in size and vitality that Christ by the law of heredity is said to have taken upon Himself our "fallen nature" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 112), "our nature in its deteriorated condition" (*Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1898).

J. R. Spangler, December 1963

It would have been a condescension beyond description for Christ to have assumed human form when the world first stood without blot or blemish. His entrance was made when the magnificence of Eden had been contaminated with the false philosophy of Satan's corrupt mind. The moment of His birth came when darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people. Romans 1 is a forthright description of the Greco-Roman world during the time of Christ.

To have assumed the full and complete physical stature of Adam would have been of utmost humiliation. But Christ came after sickness and disease had dwarfed the physical nature of man for four thousand years. Christ as a man was no physical giant, and according to Isaiah 53 those who saw Him during His Incarnation would find no beauty that would make them desire Him.

Another step down in the ladder of mortification was the town in which He was born. Micah 5:2 emphasizes the insignificance of Bethlehem. How eager we are to identify our own birthplace with a city of renown, but Christ forfeited all

We should not place the obedience and sinless life of Christ by itself as something for which His human nature was peculiarly adapted. To the church awaiting translation is given the promise: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, *even as I also overcame*, and am set down with my Father in His throne." Revelation 3:21. We may overcome as Christ overcame. By partaking of the divine nature, every hereditary and cultivated tendency to evil may be cut away from the character (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 943). By being filled with the Spirit as He was filled with the Spirit, the work of grace may be completed in our natures so that they may be "pure and holy." *Our High Calling*, p. 278. "Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was." *The Desire of Ages*, p. 664. This is the hope of those expecting translation after attaining through the grace of Christ the following experience:

Not even by a thought could our Saviour be brought to yield to the power of temptation. Satan finds in human hearts some point where he can gain a foothold; some sinful desire is cherished, by means of which his temptations assert their power. But Christ declared of Himself, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." Satan could find nothing in the Son of God that would enable him to gain the victory. He had kept His Father's commandments, and there was no sin in Him that Satan could use to his advantage. This is the condition in which those must be found who shall stand in the time of trouble. "The Great Controversy," p. 623.

Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God's commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression. They testify to their love of Christ by obeying all His precepts. "SDA Bible Commentary," vol. 6, p. 1118

The transformation of character must take place before His coming. Our natures must be pure and holy. . . . "Our High Calling," p. 278.

While Christ is in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, His followers on earth must unite with Him in the full and complete union of divinity and humanity which Jesus knew in His own experience. This is "the marriage" which will be consummated while Jesus is in the most holy place. It is the experience that the 144,000 will enter into by faith.

### The Issues at Stake

The nature of man and the law of God will be the points especially controverted in the final battle between truth and error. In the crisis, a larger proportion than we now anticipate will defect from

this. He assumed human nature in its lowest common denominator, which would result in a cover of salvation for all mankind and would forever seal the lips of any person from saying that Christ's experience cannot touch that of humanity.

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*Mrs. Ernest W. Cox, December, 1957*

Before Adam fell, he was pure and clean, without any taint of sin. He possessed human nature, undefiled, as God created it. When Jesus, "the second man," "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45-47), came, in addition to His divine nature, He also possessed human nature, undefiled, as God had originally created it. Naturally, Christ was without Adam's stature and pristine physical splendor, thus fulfilling the Messianic forecast of Isaiah 53:2: "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." There is great spiritual significance in the fact that Christ assumed the infirmities of a degenerate race without partaking of their sinfulness. On this point Ellen G. White declares, "For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity. Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

Mrs. White here refers to Christ's acceptance of a degenerated physical human frame, such as is common to man. Even a superficial reading of the Gospels is sufficient to show that He was far from deficient in mental power. His keen perception was the terror of His foes. Equally, He is shown far to transcend the sons of men in moral worth. Had Christ appeared with the stature of the unfallen Adam, He would at once have become an object of curiosity, rather than an object of faith. Therefore, He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3). Being in the likeness of sinful flesh cannot mean that Christ became sinful flesh, any more than our being made after the likeness of God (Gen. 1:26) can, of itself, confer on us divinity.

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#### Note

Next page see "The Ministry's" compilation of Ellen G. White statements. Pay particular attention to the headings which are added.—Ed.

the third angel's message and accept the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and Sunday-sacredness. (See *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 369; *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 463). But what we must realize is that a big step in that direction has already been taken right within the ranks of Adventism.

*The Nature of Man:* When the Spirit of Prophecy tells us that Christ took "our nature in its deteriorated condition," some of our theologians are telling us that this means only that Christ's physical powers were weakened. But the nature of man is three-fold—physical, mental and moral—and if the physical powers are weakened, the mental and moral powers will be weakened also. To deny this is to deny fundamental truth on the nature of man and take the "Babylonian" position on the nature of man—that the condition of the physical powers has no real effect on the soul. The logical end of this concept is the doctrine of the immortal soul; and the logical end of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is Spiritualism.

*The Law of God:* Not only do those who take the "new-view" of the Incarnation deny that Christ took man's degenerate mental and moral powers, but they affirm that He took the sinless nature of Adam before the fall. Granted, Christ's human nature was sinless, but this was not due to His taking some superior human nature; rather it was due to His being born of the Holy Spirit, surrendered to the Holy Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit, and filled with the Holy Spirit through the right action of His will every moment of His earthly life. The difference between these two concepts—that of Christ's taking the sinless nature of man, and that of Christ's having a sinless human nature because the human nature was united to the divine nature—is the difference between life and death. The first concept places the sinlessness of Christ by itself, for none of us partake of the sinless human nature of Adam before the fall. But the second concept places the obedience and sinless life of Christ within the reach of all who will choose to be born of the Holy Spirit, surrendered to the Holy Spirit, guided by the Holy Spirit, and filled with the Holy Spirit even as Jesus was.

Those who teach that Christ took a superior human nature draw the logical conclusion that it is impossible for the rest of mankind to perfectly obey the law of Jehovah in this life. Everywhere today we hear the pronouncements from pen and pulpit that God has not made provision for man to live a sinless life on this earth. Those who accept

SEPTEMBER, 1956

## III. Took Sinless Nature of Adam Before the Fall

1. CHRIST TOOK HUMANITY AS GOD CREATED IT.—“Christ came to the earth, taking humanity and *standing as man's representative*, to show in the controversy with Satan that man, as God created him, connected with the Father and the Son, could obey every divine requirement.”—*The Signs of the Times*, June 9, 1898.

2. BEGAN WHERE ADAM FIRST BEGAN.—“Christ is called the second Adam. In purity and holiness, connected with God and beloved by God, *He began where the first Adam began*. Willingly *He passed over the ground where Adam fell*, and redeemed Adam's failure.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, June 2, 1898.

3. TOOK HUMAN FORM BUT NOT CORRUPTED SINFUL NATURE.—“In the fullness of time He was to be revealed in human form. He was to *take His position at the head of humanity by taking the nature but not the sinfulness of man*. In heaven was heard the voice, ‘The Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.’”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 29, 1901.

4. TOOK ADAM'S SINLESS HUMAN NATURE.—“When Christ bowed His head and died, He bore the pillars of Satan's kingdom with Him to the earth. He *vanquished Satan in the same nature over which in Eden Satan obtained the victory*. The enemy was overcome by Christ in His human nature. The power of the Saviour's Godhead was hidden. He overcame in human nature, relying upon God for power.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, April 25, 1901.

## VI. Bore the Imputed Sin and Guilt of the World

1. BORE IMPUTED GUILT OF WORLD'S SIN.—“Christ *bore the guilt of the sins of the world*. Our sufficiency is found only in the incarnation and death of the Son of God. He could suffer, because sustained by divinity. *He could endure, because He was without one taint of disloyalty or sin*.”—*The Youth's Instructor*, Aug. 4, 1898.

2. BORE PHYSICAL INFIRMITIES OF DEGENERATE RACE.—“He [Christ] took human nature, and *bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race*.”—*The Review and Herald*, July 28, 1874. YEARS' HEREDITY.—“It would have been an almost infinite

3. ACCEPTED WEAKENING RESULTS OF FOUR THOUSAND YEARS' HEREDITY.—“It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But *Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin*. Like every child of Adam He *accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity*. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the *example of a sinless life*.

“Satan in heaven had hated Christ for His position in the courts of God. He hated Him the more when he himself was dethroned. He hated Him who pledged Himself to redeem a race of sinners. Yet into the world where Satan claimed dominion God permitted His Son to come, a helpless babe, *subject to the weakness of humanity*. He permitted Him to meet life's peril in common with every human soul, to fight the battle as every child of humanity must fight it, at the risk of failure and eternal loss.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 49.

this “new-view” of the Incarnation logically take the side of Satan in the great controversy over the law, claiming that God has not made provision for us to perfectly obey it. If God's people accept this delusion, then there will be no third angel's message, no sealing of the saints, no finishing of the mystery of God, no cleansing of the sanctuary, no community of saints prepared to live without a Mediator, no first fruits of the harvest, and no people ready for translation—at least as far as they are concerned.

Did Jesus come to prove that we cannot keep the law of God? Is this what we are supposed to learn from the great truth of the Incarnation? See how this is answered by one of the most explicit declarations found in the Spirit of Prophecy:

Satan represents God's law of love as a law of selfishness. He declares that it is impossible for us to obey its precepts, . . . Jesus was to unveil this deception. As one of us He was to give us an example of obedience. For this He took upon Himself our nature, and passed through our experiences. “In all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” Heb. 2:17. If we had to bear anything which Jesus did not endure, then upon this point Satan would represent the power of God as insufficient for us. . . . His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God. “The Desire of Ages,” p. 24.

## Three Steps

Ellen G. White saw that God had three steps to the platform of truth (*Early Writings*, p. 258). Satan has three steps down from the platform. The first step is the teaching that Christ took the human nature of man as it was before the fall. This leads to the second step—to the teaching that man cannot find the grace to perfectly obey the law of God in his life. This will inevitably lead to the third step—giving up the Sabbath. This last step must logically follow the original premise, for if it be conceded that we cannot obey *all* the law *all* the time, then there is no point in the Sabbath being a test question. The great argument for the Sabbath is found in James 2:10: “Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” But the “new-view” of the Incarnation leads to the conclusion that we cannot really “keep the whole law.”

Led by certain prominent theologians, many in our ranks have already taken steps numbers one and two down from the third angel's message. “And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house, and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their *backs toward the temple of the Lord* [rejecting the great sanctuary

ACCEPTED INROADS OF PHYSICAL DEGENERACY AND DISEASE.—“Wondrous combination of man and God! He *might have helped His human nature to withstand the inroads of disease by pouring from His divine nature vitality and undecaying vigor to the human.* But He humbled Himself to man’s nature. . . . God became man!”—*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 4, 1900.

5. CAME AFTER FOUR THOUSAND YEARS DETERIORATION OF RACE.—“In our humanity, Christ was to redeem Adam’s failure. *But when Adam was assailed by the tempter, none of the effects of sin were upon him.* He stood in the strength of perfect manhood, possessing the full vigor of mind and body. He was surrounded with the glories of Eden, and was in daily communion with heavenly beings. *It was not thus with Jesus when He entered the wilderness to cope with Satan. For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power, and in moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity.* Only thus could He rescue man from the lowest depths of his degradation.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 117.

6. BORE IMPUTED SINS OF OUR SINFUL NATURE.—“Clad in the vestments of humanity, the Son of God *came down to the level of those He wished to save. In Him was no guile or sinfulness; He was ever pure and undefiled; yet He took upon Him our sinful nature.* Clothing His divinity with humanity, *that He might associate with fallen humanity,* He sought to regain for man that which, by disobedience, Adam had lost for himself and for the world. In His own character *He displayed to the world the character of God.*”—*The Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1896.

[END]

message], and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the sun toward the east.” Ezekiel 8:16. Thus the foundation is already laid for a great landslide into the camp of the Sunday-keepers. This is an indication that the final test on the law of God is right upon the church. Soon the “man with the writer’s inkhorn” must “go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.” Ezekiel 9:4.

“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.” 2 Timothy 2:19. “The church may appear as about to fall, but it does not fall. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out—the chaff separated from the precious wheat.” *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 380.

[END]

# AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE TEACHING OF THE INCARNATION IN ADVENTIST LITERATURE

**From 1844-1888.** In the formative years of Seventh-day Adventist theology, there is found scarcely any reference of a specific nature to Christ's human nature. The pioneers were preoccupied with studying and establishing such distinctive teachings as the nature of man, the sanctuary, and the commandments of God. However, the first of these distinctive doctrines, the nature of man, was bound to lead Adventists to take a view on the nature of Christ out of harmony with the teaching held by the fallen churches.

Very early in our history, Mrs. White made a few brief references to the kind of human nature taken by the Saviour:

The angels prostrated themselves before Him . . . Jesus also told them that they would have a part to act, to be with Him and at different times strengthen Him; that He would take man's fallen nature, and His strength would not be equal with theirs. . . . "Early Writings," p. 150.

He [Satan] told his angels that when Jesus should take fallen man's nature, he could overpower Him. . . . "Ibid.," p. 152

Later, in a series of articles in the *Review and Herald* in 1874, Mrs. White wrote more definitely about Christ's human nature. The series is about Christ's temptation and victory in the wilderness, and in it the writer powerfully shows how Christ brought the possibility of overcoming to every member of the human family. A few brief extracts here will illustrate her train of thought:

The Son of God humbled Himself and took man's nature after the race had wandered four thousand years from Eden and from their original state of purity and uprightness. Sin had been making its terrible marks upon the race for ages; and physical, mental, and moral degeneracy prevailed throughout the human family. . . . In behalf of the race, with the weaknesses of fallen man upon Him, He was to stand the temptations of Satan upon all points wherewith man would be assailed. . . .

In order to elevate man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. . . .

The humanity of Christ reached to the very depths of human wretchedness, and identified itself with the weaknesses and necessities of fallen man, while His divine nature grasped the Eternal. "Selected Messages," Book 1, p. 267-8, 272-3.

Such penetrating and cogent statements on the human nature of Christ were confined to the pen of Mrs. White. Other Adventist writers had little to

say on Christology, and evidently taking too much for granted in their understanding of righteousness by faith, they continued on with their basic arguments on the state of the dead, the sabbath, the 2300 days, and prophetic exegesis. As one reads through about 40 years of the *Review and Herald*, one can understand Mrs. White's outburst in 1890: "As a people we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa, that had neither dew nor rain." *Review and Herald*, March 11, 1890.

**The Message of 1888:** In 1888 there came to the Seventh-day Adventist Church a very definite awakening message on the theme of the righteousness of Christ. Concerning it, Mrs. White declared: "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God." *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 91-2. The servant of the Lord went on to say that the message, if accepted, would bring the latter rain to the church and the loud cry to the world.

There is no record of the actual preaching of Jones and Waggoner at the historic Minneapolis meeting, but available sermons and writings from these men while they were still the Lord's messengers shortly after 1888 gives a fair idea of the nature of their message. What is immediately and strikingly evident is that here were men who had broken through the mere doctrinal outlines of Adventism, and had begun to explore the vast vistas of truth on the righteousness of Christ in the light of the third angel's message. The reader cannot help but be impressed with how much A. T. Jones had to say on the Incarnation. This was the foundation of his presentation on righteousness by faith [See Appendix]. Aside from a few statements from Ellen G. White, his was the first real preaching in the denomination on the subject of righteousness by faith in the light of the Incarnation. The messages of Waggoner and Jones were a practical application of the Incarnation to Christian experience. They

powerfully presented the reality of Christ's human nature, arguing that His flesh was the same as ours, that God came to dwell in our flesh in the person of Jesus, that Christ overcame by faith in His Father, and that the same victory and sinless life is available to us in the faith of Jesus. Jones unsparingly attacked the doctrine which postulates that the flesh of Christ was the flesh of the sinless Adam, pointing out that such a doctrine had its origin in the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. [See Appendix]

Thus, in the 1888 message, we find for the first time in Adventist teaching (outside of a few statements from Mrs. White) that the logic of the Adventist teaching on the nature of man was followed through to apply to the Incarnation and righteousness by faith. That Christ should have the same nature as man came as a surprise to some of the brethren, and being critical of the message of Waggoner and Jones, some even wrote to Mrs. White protesting the point. However, she rallied to the support of the doctrine that God had sent to the church through His chosen messengers. Referring to the controversy over Waggoner and Jones' message, she wrote:

Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper. It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battle as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature. . . .

He withstood the temptation, through the power that man may command. He laid hold on the throne of God, and there is not a man or woman who may not have access to the same help through faith in God. "Selected Messages," Book 1, p. 408-9 (1890)

Thereafter, Mrs. White began making numerous statements on the human nature of Christ, statements which were clearly the complement of Waggoner and Jones's view on the Incarnation. It is interesting to notice from the *General Conference Bulletin* of 1895 that Jones quoted extensively from statements from Mrs. White which were fresh off the press.

**Warning Against Extravagant Expressions:** The prophet told the church that the message brought by Waggoner and Jones was precious light for God's people. She placed her full endorsement on the message in general. However, she also added: "No one has said that we shall find perfection in any man's investigations. . . ." *Review and Herald*, Mar. 25, 1890. Jones, being of a very positive

disposition, had a tendency to overstate his case. (See *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 377-8). There is some evidence that he did this in a few expressions on the human nature of Christ. [See Appendix]. Later, other Adventist writers began to express similar views on the Incarnation, and there is definite evidence that they were influenced by Jones' mode of expression. It is interesting to notice that the 1889 edition of *Bible Readings For the Home Circle* made no specific remarks on Christ's human nature. It was yet too early for the editors of the book to be influenced by Jones's teaching. But later editions of the book, prepared by a group of SDA Bible scholars, were a clear reflection of the teaching of Jones. [See Appendix]. While this position on the nature of Christ in humanity was basically sound, there appeared in Adventist literature a tendency to go overboard in stressing Christ's likeness to the fallen race. This called for some counsel from Mrs. White:

"Be careful, exceedingly careful as to how you dwell upon the human nature of Christ. Do not set Him before the people as a man with the propensities of sin. . . . Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood. . . . Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption. . . . I perceive that there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell on the humanity of the Son of the infinite God." "SDA Bible Commentary," vol. 5, p. 1128-9.

These cautions were not made public to the church, but were filed under *Letter 8*, 1895. It seems that if the cautions had been more widely known they would have tempered some statements that appeared in denominational print. But in all fairness to Jones (and also others who wrote similarly), it should be noted that he clearly understood that the person of Christ Himself was without the propensities, passions, or inclinations to sin. Notice His words:

Thus in the flesh of Jesus Christ—not in Himself, but in His flesh, our flesh which He took in human nature—there were just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me. "The Third Angels Message, Lecture 14, "General Conference Bulletin," 1895.

Now as to Christ's not having "like passions" with us: in the Scriptures all the way through He is like us, and with us according to the flesh. He is the seed of David according to the flesh. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Don't go too far. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; not in the likeness of sinful mind. Do not drag His mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was "the mind of Christ Jesus." "Ibid," Lecture 17.

So too with the other Adventist writers. They proclaimed emphatically that in thought, will, and affections, Christ was entirely without any taint of or inclination to corruption. Although they declared that in Christ's flesh were the same tendencies to sin that are in our flesh, this is not to

be taken to mean that they taught that Christ Himself had sinful propensities. A sinful propensity exists only in the heart, for the flesh of itself cannot act contrary to the will of God. However, our writers would have benefited if they had known and heeded the following counsel: "In treating upon the humanity of Christ, you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply, and thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity." *Letter 8, 1895.*

**A Change In Teaching:** Adventist teaching on the human nature of Christ has often been the subject of criticism and misunderstanding among non-Adventist Christians. True, matters have not been helped by some of the more extreme expressions found in our literature, but as long as there is a difference in our understanding on the nature of man, there must be a difference in our understanding on the human nature of Christ. A Baptist theologian shows that he understands the problem when he states: "Adventism's position on the two preceding subjects—those of Man and Death—determines its doctrine of Christ. This is inevitable, for Christ is man as well as God, and He, as well as we, has been subjected to death." Norman F. Douty, *Another Look At Seventh-day Adventism*, p. 48.

In the year 1950, a development began to take place in the circles of Adventist theologians, known as "Christ-centered preaching." It took real shape and direction at the Ministerial Association meetings at the pre-session of the General Conference Session of that year. The Secretary of the Ministerial Association, Elder R. A. Anderson, was one of the prominent leaders in this "awakening." Two delegates to the session, Elders Wieland and Short, appealed to the General Conference Committee that much of this "Christ-centered preaching" was in reality "anti-christ-centered preaching" which would lead us to the acceptance of the "Christ" of apostate Protestantism. The warning seemed too fantastic to merit any serious consideration, and was therefore summarily dismissed.

In 1956 a group of our leading theologians met with representatives of the "Evangelical" Protestant churches to discuss the points of doctrine that separated Adventists from the rest of the "Evangelical" Protestant churches. Dr. Barnhouse, one of the representatives from the "Evangelical" cause, records the results of the interview in the following words: "Immediately it was perceived that the Adventist were strenuously denying certain doctrinal positions which had been previously attributed to them." He goes on to mention how that one of

the main points under consideration was the human nature of Christ. It is clear that the Adventist representatives repudiated the position that Christ took the fallen nature of man after 4,000 years of sin. It is true that most of the statements referring to Christ's taking man's fallen nature appear in the book *Questions on Doctrine* (which book grew out of the discussions with the "Evangelicals"), but the writers of the book would fain make these statements merely to mean that Christ only took this nature in His redemptive act on the cross—i. e., that such a nature was only *imputed* to Christ. However, as an over-all result of these discussions, Dr. Walter Martin, the other "Evangelical" representative, came out before the world, stating: "True Seventh-day Adventism, despite its difference from us, is one with us in the great work of winning men to Jesus Christ and in preaching the wonders of His matchless redeeming grace." *Eternity*, Jan. 1957 (See *Witnessing A Metamorphosis* for a full documentation of these discussions).

While these things were taking place in our church in America, there were some significant developments in the Australasian Division. A certain conference President, Pastor R. A. Greive, also became very interested in a revival of "Christ-centered" preaching as a means of reviving the church. It appeared to this Adventist leader that the foundation of the disillusionment and discouragement of the Christian experience of many of the church members lay in what he supposed was the false teaching among us on the human nature of Christ. Having taken the position that Christ's human nature was wholly like that of Adam's before he sinned (except for some obvious physical weaknesses), he began to tell the church members that perfect obedience to God's law was neither possible nor necessary in this life. Some of the lay members were alarmed at such startling innovations to the Advent faith, but the ministry of the conference stood solidly behind the President. Subsequently, a few "heretics" were disfellowshipped, and the rest were frightened into submission. In 1956, R. A. Greive took up the position of President of the North New Zealand Conference. The concern of some people was aroused, and finally the leaders of the Division began to question some of the teachings of R. A. Greive. About this time, he received some encouragement from Elder R. A. Anderson who was at the General Conference. To bolster up support for himself, Greive circulated some of the correspondence which he received from the General Conference office. As this throws important light on what has been taking place, we cite the main parts of this correspondence here:

Ministerial Assoc. Gen. Conf. of S.D.A.  
Washington 12, D.C.  
January 19, 1956.

Pastor R. A. Greive,  
North N. Z. Conference,  
Box 8541, Upper Symonds St., P.O.  
AUCKLAND, N. Z.

My dear Brother Greive:

This letter is long, long overdue and it carries sincerest apologies for what is an unpardonable neglect. At the time of your accident in New Guinea I was under a terrific pressure with appointments away from the office, and as you know when you get back things pile high, and some-how this was overlooked. I wrote to Stan Gander and it some-how was in the back of my mind that I had written you as well. How thankful we are that the Lord spared your lives, although it was a terrible experience.

Well now, brother, we are in the midst of a most interesting study. For your sake I wish you could be here in Washington right now. You remember the things we discussed in both Australia and Auckland, especially concerning the nature of Christ. Well, at that time some things that Sister White wrote more than half a century ago were kind of in the back-ground. Practically nobody knew of their existence although they were published in the *Review* and also in personal letters and counsels, etc. The pity of it is that these statements which throw a great deal of light on the subject had not been made available to our workers generally long before now.

As soon as I returned from Australia I was plunged into the thick of a very important series of counsels with some outstanding theologians belonging to several different groups, but remarkable Christians, each of them. They had been given the task of writing against us, and when they came down here to get first-handed material they discovered that instead of our being a cult we were sound evangelical Christians. This discovery was a shock to them and after some days of study they openly and joyfully received us as brethren in Christ, gripping our hands in the spirit of fellowship. Their eyes filled with tears as they told of their remarkable change of concept and of how thrilled they were to discover that on the great fundamentals of Christianity we rang absolutely true.

One of the important features of discussion was the nature of Christ, and how thankful we were

that we could show from the Spirit of Prophecy a very clear position concerning the absolute sinlessness of Jesus.

Now this is just a wee note to tell you that while we have not yet finished our research and our work with these men, yet the present situation is very encouraging. What I am saying is not for publication right now, although doubtless within a few months we will be able to share these things with all our workers; and they should be shared. Brethren L. Froom and W. E. Read and I have been a trio working very closely with these men and it has demanded much of our time, for we have been studying to state our beliefs in terms that could not be misunderstood by the theologians.

You may remember drawing my attention to a book you were reading just as we were going into a meeting on the Sabbath morning there in Auckland. You read a fine paragraph from it; but I failed to take the name of the book or even the name of the author. We discussed Campbell Morgan and others, but this man I think was an English theologian and his statements seemed so clear. I would appreciate it if you could let me know the title of the book and the author for I would like a copy.

You are absolutely right in the contention that Jesus did not partake of our sinful nature. If I could put it simply it would be in these words: He partook of *human* nature but not *carnal* nature. He was made in the *likeness* of *sinful* flesh, not just sinful flesh, so that He could say to His apostles, "The Prince of this world cometh and hath nothing (findeth no response) in Me."

Well, this opens up a very big question and in a very little while I will send you some things that I know will delight your heart. This is just a friendly letter to tell you how much I appreciated the many kindnesses you showed us and to express the hope that the Lord is giving you success in the leadership of that important field.

If I could drop one little sentence of friendly counsel it would be: Don't stress theology among your workers for the time being. Your best intentions can be and often are misunderstood. But be assured that some of these very points of discussion will be brought into the open, and then maybe you can give them the emphasis they will need.

Well God bless you. Give my greetings to all the workers there.

Sincerely your brother.

(Signed) R. Allan Anderson.

April 23, 1956

Pastor R. A. Greive,  
Box 8541, Auckland,  
Dear Brother Greive:

. . . It would seem from your letter that there are some out there in the Australasian field who have the impression that these questions and answers have been prepared by just a small group and because the General Conf. Committee has not passed action upon them that they are not authoritative. Actually, the General Conf. Committee does not rule on matters of faith and doctrine or church policy. All such matters must be dealt with at a General Conf. in session. Between such sessions, however, the General Conf. officers who represent the administration of the cause of God serve as a body of counsel on all such matters, but of course these brethren have no authority to change any teaching. It was to this group that these questions and answers were presented. A number of the leading officers with certain selected individuals have given much time to the study of these answers. In fact very careful attention has been given to every particular word. These answers therefore represent the painstaking effort of a large group of the most responsible leaders of the denomination, the General Conf. President being the chairman at every such meeting. . . .

One thing should be made clear; we are not trying to harmonize our beliefs with those of other Christian groups. In fact the ministers with whom we have been working represent different denominations, and are therefore in disagreement among themselves on minor points of faith, such as the mode of baptism, church organization, etc. But on the essentials of the gospel, as they relate to the person and work of Jesus Christ, they stand together. And when they have discovered that we stand with them on these vital issues, it has brought to them a great joy and satisfaction. Some of these men have been among the most able opponents of Adventism but that was because they did not know what we actually believe, having received their concepts from some of our older books. And of course, believing that Sister White had also taught these things, they regarded her as a false prophet and branded the whole denomination as a cult, eaten through and through with heresy. Their discovery of our understanding of real New Testament truth has made them our friends and has led them to a very deep and thorough study of our other points of faith which, as they point out, are not at the heart of the gospel but rather on *the periph-*

*ery*; they are works of righteousness which grow out of our relationship to Christ and not the basis of that relationship. *Such doctrines are the Sabbath, tithing, health reform, etc.*

You have asked concerning the nature of Christ during the incarnation. This is a point on which many of our writers and preachers have not been clear. . . . It is a point of faith in which our preachers and writers have expressed themselves very emphatically at times but usually on the wrong side of the truth. . . .

If you would suffer me this little word of counsel as a friend, I would suggest that you hold these thoughts in your heart and not make an issue of them until we as a people have come to the place where we understand this doctrine as clearly as we should, and as clearly as we do other points of faith. The fellowship of the brethren and the communion of saints is too precious an experience to have destroyed by the spirit of controversy. I am confident that the time is near when this great mystery of godliness will be understood better by us as a people. But until then it would seem wise if we could confine ourselves to a prayerful discussion of it between us as workers. While it is truth, we should be very careful not to set it before the laity until we are prepared to speak with a united voice. I think you will recall a suggestion I made to you on this point before and will not misunderstand my mentioning it again. . . .

In closing let me declare as my personal conviction that we have come to the time in our history and the history of the evangelical Christian church in general that we are moving into the experience of the Pentecostal outpouring of power. . . .

(signed) R. Allan Anderson

The sequel to the issue with R. A. Greive in Australia was that not long after receiving this correspondence from R. A. Anderson, he left the Seventh-day Adventist Church, gave up the Sabbath, and fully joined the "Evangelical" cause. In an article published to the world in 1958, called *In Chains of Seventh-day Adventism*. R. A. Greive explained his defection. First he came to the position that Christ did not take man's fallen nature. (He explained that this was the foundation). Second, he concluded from that, very logically, that it is impossible for us to be without sin as Christ was, and to render perfect obedience to His law. The third and final step was logical enough too—he gave up the Sabbath. In the article he triumphantly declared that the leading theologians of the church had also come around to his way of

thinking on the human nature of Christ. They have not followed him to the logical conclusion of giving up the Sabbath, but they have certainly followed him in the first two steps. [*In Chains of Seventh-day Adventism* available on request. Ed.]

Anyone who examines past and present positions on the nature of Christ will know that there has been a change. Even Dr. Anderson admitted this frankly to R. A. Greive in correspondence. In public statements we do not find such frankness, for rather than there being some public acknowledgment of a change, it is said that our past pronouncements somehow "slipped into" the books. Moreover, as the correspondence to Greive clearly bears out, it is regarded as poor procedure to let the laity know what is going on until the ministry is educated in the new position.

**Conclusion:** It may be wondered how the "new-view" was ushered in so easily. The Scripture says, "While men slept, the enemy sowed tares." It is well known that some of our fundamentalist theologians tried to defend the historic position of the church against the introduction of the "new-view." But the fundamentalists were caught off guard. They tried to defend the truth with some of the unsound arguments and extravagant expressions of the past. Those contending for the "new-view" were fully ready, using the almost unknown counsels of Mrs. White which speak out against "making Christ altogether human." Now "loyalty" to the church and the brethren prevents any public comment or protest. In fact, most of the fundamentalists have now become so used to the new teaching, that they have ceased to be alarmed. Meanwhile, the Secretary of the Ministerial Association is busy entrenching the ministry in the "new-view" the world around, and in this work he is being ably

supported by most of our institutions of learning, especially Andrews University.

Basically, the "new-view" of the Incarnation is erroneous. Our past writers and editors did not hesitate to brand such teachings as the doctrine of anti-Christ. [See Appendix]. It leads directly to the denial of God's purpose for the Advent Movement—the development of a community of saints who will render perfect obedience to the law of God through their personal application of the experience of the Incarnation. Yet the "new-view" is certainly not all error. There is much truth in it. We need to understand the perfect sinlessness of the human nature of Christ. But the facts of Christ's sinless human nature are wrongly applied. Christ's human nature was sinless because of its union with divinity, and in this we find the hope of the fallen race. In this we see demonstrated what our fallen natures might become when united to divinity. But the "new-view" draws disastrous conclusions from the sinlessness of Christ's human nature. It draws the conclusion that Christ took a superior and sinless human nature, something out of the reach of the rest of mankind. This places the obedience and sinless life of Jesus as something for which He was peculiarly adapted, and takes away the faith that will lead God's people to reflect the image of Jesus fully.

On the other hand, the position taken by the past writers and editors of the Advent movement is basically true, and it is the faith of Jesus that will lead to the development of the sealed saints. Yet sometimes, in an effort to stress Christ's complete victory in human flesh, the same writers did make some statements that tended to be extreme. The present agitation on the Incarnation will no doubt lead God's people to a more perfect and intelligent understanding of this vital truth that lay at the basis of the 1888 message. R.D.B.

## APPENDIX

# WHAT DID PAST LEADERS AND THEOLOGIANs AMONG SDA'S TEACH?

The reader will probably be interested in a collection of statements from the pens of leading Seventh-day Adventist authorities of the past. I found that they all taught very much the same thing; and the following statements are representative. They are all taken from official Seventh-day Adventist publications.

Editor.

## E. J. Waggoner

### Christ and His Righteousness

Echo Publishing Company (Melbourne) 1892.

A little thought will be sufficient to show anybody that if Christ took upon Himself the likeness of man, in order that He might redeem man, it must have been sinful man that He was made like, for it is sinful man that He came to redeem. Death could have no power over a sinless man, as Adam was in Eden; and it could not have had any power over Christ, if the Lord had not laid on Him the iniquity of us all. Moreover, the fact that Christ took upon Himself the flesh, not of a sinless being, but of sinful man, that is, that the flesh which He assumed had all the weaknesses and sinful tendencies to which fallen human nature is subject, is shown by the statement that He "was made of the seed of David *according to the flesh.*" David had all the passions of human nature. He says of himself, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Ps. 51:5.

The following statement in the book of Hebrews is very clear on this point:—

"For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. [“For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.” Revised Version.] Wherefore in all things it behooved 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 succor them that are tempted.” Heb. 2:16-18.

*If He was made in all things like unto His brethren, then He must have suffered all the infirmities, and been subject to all the temptations, of His brethren.* Two more texts that put this matter very forcibly will be sufficient evidence on this point. We first quote 2 Cor. 5:21:—

“For He (God) hath made Him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

This is much stronger than the statement that He was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” He was *made to be sin*. Here is the same mystery as that the Son of God should die. The spotless Lamb of God, who knew no sin, was made to be sin. Sinless, yet not only counted as a sinner, but actually taking upon Himself sinful nature. *He* was made to be sin in order that *we* might be made righteousness. So Paul says to the Galatians that “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Gal. 4:4, 5.

“In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted.” “For we have not a 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. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 2:18: 4:15, 16.

One more point, and then we can learn the entire lesson that we should learn from the fact that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." How was it that Christ could be thus "compassed with infirmity" (Heb. 5:2), and still know no sin? Some may have thought, while reading thus far, that we were depreciating the character of Jesus, by bringing him down to the level of sinful man. On the contrary, we are simply exalting the "Divine power" of our blessed Saviour, who Himself voluntarily descended to the level of sinful man, in order that He might exalt man to His own spotless purity, which He retained under the most adverse circumstances. His humanity only veiled His Divine nature, by which He was inseparably connected with the invisible God, and which was more than able successfully to resist the weaknesses of the flesh. There was in His whole life a struggle. The flesh, moved upon by the enemy of all righteousness, would tend to sin, yet His Divine nature never for a moment harbored an evil desire, nor did His Divine power for a moment waver. Having suffered in the flesh all that men can possibly suffer, He returned to the throne of the Father as spotless as when He left the courts of glory. When He lay in the tomb, under the power of death, "it was impossible that He should be holden of it," because He "knew no sin."

But someone will say, "I don't see any comfort in this for me. To be sure, I have an example, but I can't follow it, for I haven't the power that Christ had. He was God even while here on earth; I am but a man." Yes, but you may have the same power that He had if you want it. He was "compassed with infirmity," yet He "did no sin," because of the Divine power constantly dwelling within Him. Now listen to the inspired words of the apostle Paul, and learn what it is our privilege to have:—

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that *Christ may dwell in your hearts* by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that *ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*" Eph. 3:14-19.

Who could ask for more? Christ, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, may dwell in our hearts, so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. What a wonderful promise! He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmity." That is, having suffered all that sinful flesh is heir to, He knows all about it, and so closely does He identify Himself with His children that whatever presses upon them makes a like impression upon Him, and He knows how much Divine power is necessary to resist it; and if we but sincerely desire to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts," He is able and anxious to give to us strength "exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think." All the power which Christ had dwelling in Him by nature, we may have dwelling in us by grace, for He freely bestows it upon us.

Then let the weary, feeble, sin-oppressed souls take courage. Let them "come boldly unto the throne of grace," where they are sure to find grace to help in time of need, because that need is felt by our Saviour in the very time of need. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmity." If it were simply that He suffered eighteen hundred years ago, we might fear that He had forgotten some of the infirmity; but no, the very temptation that presses you touches Him. His wounds are ever fresh, and He ever lives to make intercession for you.

What wonderful possibilities there are for the Christian! To what heights of holiness he may attain! No matter how much Satan may war against him, assaulting him where the flesh is weakest, he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be filled with the fullness of God's strength. The One stronger than Satan may dwell in his heart continually; and so, looking at Satan's assaults as from a strong fortress, he may say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

# A. T. JONES

## THE GENERAL CONFERENCE BULLETIN 1895

Lecture Series; "*The Third Angel's Message.*"

Look at the fourteenth verse of the first chapter of John. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." That tells the same story that we are reading here in the first two chapters of Hebrews. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—flesh and blood as ours is.

Now what kind of flesh is it? What kind of flesh alone is it that this world knows?—Just such flesh as you and I have. This world does not know any other flesh of man, and has not known any other since the necessity for Christ's coming was created. Therefore, as this world knows only such flesh as we have, as it is now, it is certainly true that when "the Word was made flesh", He was made just such flesh as ours is. It cannot be otherwise.

Again: What kind of flesh is our flesh, as it is in itself? Let us turn to the eighth chapter of Romans, and read whether Christ's human nature meets ours, and is as ours in the respect wherein ours is sinful flesh. Rom. 8:3: "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son" did. . . .

So it is written: "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" in order "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now do not get a wrong idea of that word "likeness." It is not the shape; it is not the photograph; it is not the likeness in the sense of an image; but it is the likeness in the sense of being like indeed.

The word "likeness" here is not the thought that is in the second chapter of Philippians, where it is shape, form, or likeness as to form; but here, in the book of Hebrews, it is likeness, in nature, likeness to the flesh as it is in itself, God sending His own Son in that which is just like sinful flesh. And in order to get just like sinful flesh, it would have to be sinful flesh; in order to be made flesh at all, as it is in this world, He would have to be just such flesh as it is in this world,—just such as we have, and that is sinful flesh. This is what is said in the words "likeness of sinful flesh."

This is shown in the ninth and tenth verses of Hebrews 2, also: "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels"—not only as man was made lower than the angels when he was created.

Man was sinless when God made him a little lower than the angels. That was sinless flesh. But man fell from that place and condition, and became sinful flesh.

Now we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels; but not as man was made when he was first made a little lower than the angels, but as man since he sinned, and became still lower than the angels. That is where we see Jesus. Let us read and see: "We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels." What for? "For the suffering of death." Then Christ's being made as much lower than the angels as man is, is as much lower than the angels as man is since he sinned and became subject to death. We see Him "crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became Him [it was appropriate for 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."

Therefore, as He became subject to suffering and death, this demonstrates strongly enough that the point lower than the angels at which Christ came to stand; where He does stand; and where "we see Him," is the point to which man came when he, in sin, stepped still lower than where God made him—even then a little lower than the angels.

Again: the sixteenth verse: "Verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham:" He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the nature of Abraham and the seed of Abraham is only human nature.

Again: "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." In how many things?—All things. Then in His human nature there is not a particle of difference between Him and you.

Let us read the scripture. Let us study this closely. I want to see that we shall stand by it. Let us read it over: "Are all of one." He took part of flesh and blood in the same way that we take part of flesh and blood. He took not the nature of angels, but the seed, the nature, of Abraham. Wherefore, for these reasons,—It behoved Him—what is "behooved"?—It was the proper thing for Him to do; it became Him; it was appropriate. It behoved Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren. Who are His brethren, though?—the human race. "All of one;" and for this cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Because we are all of one, He is not ashamed to call you and me brethren. "Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren." . . .

He could not have been tempted in all points like as I am, if He were not in all points like as I am to start with. Therefore it behoved Him to be made in all points like me, if He is going to help me where I need help. I know that right there is where I need it. And oh, I know it is right there where I get it. Thank the Lord! There is where Christ stands, and there is my help.

"We have not a high priest which cannot be touched"—two negatives there; have *not* a high priest which *cannot* be touched. Then what do we have on the affirmative side? We have a high priest who can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities,—my infirmities, your infirmities, our infirmities. Does He feel my infirmities?—Yes. Does He feel your infirmities? Yes. What is an infirmity?—Weakness,—that is expressive enough. We have many of them; all of us have many of them. We feel our weaknesses. Thank the Lord there is One who feels them also,—yea, not only feels them but is touched with the feeling of them. There is more in that word, "touched" than simply that He is reached with the feeling of our weaknesses, and feels as we feel. He feels as we feel, that is true, but beyond that He is "touched"; that is, He is tenderly affected; His sympathy is stirred. He is touched to tenderness and affected to sympathy, and He helps us. This is what is said in the words, "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Thank the Lord for such a Saviour!

But I say again, He cannot be tempted in all points like as I am unless He was in all points like I am to start with. He could not feel as I do unless He is where I am, and *as* I am. In other words, He could not be tempted in all points as I am, and feel as I feel, unless He was just myself over again. The Word of God says: "In all points like as we are."

Let us study this further. There are things that will tempt you strongly, that will draw hard on you, that are no more to me than a zephyr in a summer day. Something will draw hard on me, even to my overthrowing, that would not affect you at all. What strongly tempts one may not affect another. Then, in order to help me, Jesus must be where He can feel what I feel, and be tempted in all points where I could be tempted with any power at all. But as things that tempt me may not affect you at all, and things that affect you may not affect me, Christ has to stand where you and I both are, so as to meet all the temptations of both. He must feel all those which you meet that do not affect me, and also all those which I meet that do not affect you. He has to take the place of both of us. That is so.

Then there is the other man. There are things that tempt him to his overthrow, that do not affect you or me either. Then Jesus has to take all the feelings and the nature of myself, of yourself, and of the other man also so that He could be tempted in all points like as I am, and in all points as you are, and in all points like as the other man is. But when you and I and the other man, are taken in Him, how many does that embrace?—That takes the whole human race.

And this is exactly the truth. Christ was in the place, and He had the nature, of the whole human race. And in Him met all the weaknesses of mankind, so that every man on the earth who can be tempted at all, finds in Jesus Christ power against that temptation. For every soul there is in Jesus Christ victory against all temptation, and relief from the power of it. That is the truth.

Let us look at it from another side. There is one in the world—Satan the god of this world—who is interested in seeing that we are tempted just as much as possible; but he does not have to employ much of his time nor very much of his power in temptation to get us to yield.

That same one was here, and he was particularly interested in getting Jesus to yield to temptation. He tried Jesus upon every point upon which he would ever have to try me to get me to sin; and he tried in vain. He utterly failed to get Jesus to consent to sin in any single point upon which I could ever be tempted.

He also tried Jesus upon every point upon which he ever tried you or ever can try you, to get you to sin; and he utterly failed there too. That takes you and me both then; and Jesus has conquered in all points for both you and me.

But when He tried Jesus upon all the points that he has tried upon both you and me and failed there, as he did completely fail, he had to try Him more than that yet. He had to try Him upon all the points upon which he has tried the other man, to get him to yield. Satan did this also, and also there completely failed.

Thus Satan had to try, and he did try Jesus upon all the points that he ever had to try me upon; and upon all the points that he ever had to try you upon, and also upon all the points that he would have to try the other man upon. Consequently he had to try Jesus upon every point upon which it is possible for a temptation to rise in any man of the human race.

Satan is the author of all temptation, and he had to try Jesus in all points upon which he ever had to try any man. He also had to try Jesus upon every point upon which it is possible for Satan himself to raise a temptation. And in all he failed all the time. Thank the Lord!

More than that: Satan not only had to try Jesus upon all the points where he had ever had to try me, but he had to try Jesus with a good deal more power than he ever had to exert upon me. He never had to try very hard, nor use very much of his power in temptation, to get me to yield. But taking the same points upon which Satan has ever tried me in which he got me to sin, or would ever have to try to get me to sin, he had to try Jesus on those same points a good deal harder than he ever did to get me to sin. He had to try him with all the power of temptation that he possibly knows. That is, the devil I mean,—and failed. Thank the Lord! So in Christ I am free.

He had to try Jesus in all points where he ever tempted, or ever can tempt you, and he had to try Him with all the power that he knows, and he failed again. Thank the Lord! So you are free in Christ. He had also to try Jesus upon every point that affects the other man, with all his Satanic power also; and still he failed. Thank the Lord! And in Christ the other man is free.

Therefore he had to try Jesus upon every point that ever the human race could be tried upon, and failed; he had to try Jesus with all the knowledge that he has, and all the cunning that he knows, and failed; and he had to try Jesus with all his might upon each particular point, and still he failed.

Then there is a threefold,—yes, a complete,—failure on the devil's part all around. In the presence of Christ, Satan is absolutely conquered;

and in Christ we are conquerors of Satan. Jesus said, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." In Christ, then, we escape him. In Christ we meet in Satan a completely conquered and a completely exhausted enemy.

This is not to say that we have no more fighting to do. But it is to say, and to say emphatically and joyfully, that *in Christ* we fight the fight of victory. Out of Christ, we fight,—but it is all defeat. In Him our victory is complete, as well as in all things in Him we are complete. But, O do not forget the expression: It is in *Him!*

Then, as Satan has exhausted all the temptations that he knows, or possibly can know, and has exhausted all his power in the temptation too, what is he? in the presence of Christ, what is he? Powerless! And when he finds us in Christ, and then would reach us and harrass us, what is he?—Powerless. Praise and magnify the Lord!

Let us rejoice in this; for in Him we are victors; in Him we are free; in Him Satan is powerless toward us; Let us be thankful for that. In Him we are complete. Study No. 13.

Thus in the flesh of Jesus Christ,—not in Himself, but in His flesh—our flesh which He took in the human nature,—there were just the same tendencies to sin that are in you and me. And when He was tempted, it was the drawing away of these desires that were in the flesh. These tendencies to sin that were in His flesh, drew upon Him, and sought to entice Him, to consent to the wrong. But by the love of God and by His trust in God, He received the power, and the strength, and the grace to say "No" to all of it, and put it all under foot. And thus being in the likeness of sinful flesh, He condemned sin in the flesh. Study No. 14.

The mystery of God is not God manifest in sinless flesh. There is no mystery about God being manifest in sinless flesh: that is natural enough. Is not God Himself sinless? Is there then, any room for wonder that God could manifest Himself through or in sinless flesh? Is there any mystery as to God's manifesting His power and His righteousness and glory through Gabriel, or through the bright seraphim or the cherubim, No; that is natural enough. But the wonder is that God can do that through and in sinful flesh. That is the mystery of God—God manifested in sinful flesh. Study No. 15.

In Jesus Christ alone is the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; and in Jesus Christ we find the brotherhood of man only when we find Christ the Brother of every man.

It is written, "For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Not ashamed to call who brethren? Every one that is of flesh and blood,—Christ is not ashamed to call him brother. He is not ashamed to go and take him by the hand, even though his breath does smell of liquor, and say, "Come with me, and let us go a better way." That is the brotherhood of man.

It has been Satan's work always to get men to think that God is as far away as possible. But it is the Lord's everlasting effort to get men to find out that He is as near to every one as possible. So it is written: "He is not far from every one of us."

The great trouble with heathenism was to think that God was so far away,—not only far away, but full of wrath at them all; and only waiting to get a chance to pick them up, and savagely shake them, and plunge them into perdition. So viewing Him, they made offerings to get Him in a good humor, and to keep Him from hurting them. But He was not far from every one of them all the time. "Not far!" That is near,—so near that all they had to do was to "feel after Him." Although they were blind and in the dark too, all they had to do was to feel after Him, and they would "find Him" (Acts 17:21-28).

Then the papacy came in, the very incarnation of that enmity between man and God. This incarnation of evil entered under the name of Christianity; and it again puts God and Christ so far away that nobody can come near to them. Everybody else comes in before God.

Then in addition to all this, He is so far away that Mary, and her mother, and her father,—and then all the rest of the Catholic saints, clear down to Joan of Arc, and Christopher Columbus pretty soon,—so as to make sure a connection that all can be sure that they are noticed by Him.

The incarnation of that enmity that is against God, and that separates between man and God,—the papacy,—has built up this, and now here is this same thought that we mentioned a moment ago, the false idea that He is so holy that it would be entirely unbecoming in Him to come near to us, and be possessed of such a nature as we have,—sinful, depraved, fallen human nature. Therefore Mary must be born immaculate, perfect, sinless, and higher than the cherubim and seraphim; and then Christ must be so born of her as to take His human nature in absolute sinlessness from her. But that puts him farther away from us than the cherubim and seraphim are, and in a sinless nature.

But if He comes no nearer to us than in a sinless nature, that is a long way off; because I need somebody that is nearer to me than that. I need someone to help me who knows something about sinful nature; for that is the nature that I have; and such the Lord did take. He became one of us. Thus, you see, this is present truth in every respect, now that the papacy is taking possession of the world, and the image of it is going on in the wrong way, forgetting all that God is in Jesus Christ, and all that Christ is in the world—having the form of godliness without the reality, without the power. In this day is it not just the thing that is needed in the world, that God should proclaim the real merits of Jesus Christ once more, and His holiness? Study No. 16.

Now as to Christ's not having "like passions" with us. In the Scriptures all the way through He is like us, and with us according to the flesh. He is the seed of David according to the flesh. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Don't go too far. He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh; not in the likeness of sinful mind. Do not drag His mind into it. His flesh was our flesh; but the mind was "the mind of Christ Jesus." Study No. 17.

# THE REVIEW AND HERALD, Dec. 21, 1905

Editor: W. W. Prescott  
Associates: L. A. Smith  
W. A. Spicer

## "IN . . . SINFUL FLESH."

A READER of the Review has written to the editor at some length concerning the statement made in a recent editorial to the effect that the flesh which Jesus took was sinful flesh. Many questions are asked, but the most of them will be answered by settling the main question at issue.

The paragraph to which objection is offered reads as follows:—

And it is further declared that the flesh which Jesus took, and in which he was tempted, was the same as the flesh of the other members of the family, sinful flesh. Here is the direct statement: "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."

Referring to this paragraph, our correspondent says:—

I notice that this scripture does not say that God sent his own Son "in sinful flesh," but "in the likeness of sinful flesh." To me this seems a very different statement. How could one in sinful flesh be perfect, be holy, be unblemished (free from stain)?

There are two ways in which we might deal with this inquiry. We might introduce positive proof in support of our view, or we might show that such consequences would follow from the position taken by our correspondent as would forbid us to accept it. To make assurance doubly sure, we shall do both of these things.

Let us, then, consider some of the positive statements of the Scriptures bearing directly upon this matter. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same." The natural and legitimate conclusion from this declaration would be that the flesh and blood of Jesus were the same as the children had. This is further emphasized in the same connection: "For verily He taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham He taketh hold [margin]. Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." The mission of Jesus was not to rescue fallen angels, but to save fallen man. He therefore identified Himself with man, and not with angels, and he became "in all things" like unto those whom He proposed to help. The flesh of man is sinful. In order to be "in all things" like unto man, it was necessary that Jesus should take sinful flesh.

Again we have the statement previously quoted: "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 suggestion is made that the expression "in the likeness of sinful flesh" does not mean the same as "in sinful flesh." We might then properly ask, What does it mean? Does it mean "in sinless flesh"? If so, why did it not say so? Why are the words "flesh of sin," as it reads in the margin of the Revised Version, introduced, if it is not the intent to convey the meaning that the flesh of Jesus was the same sinful flesh which we have? It seems to require a forced interpretation in order to attach any other meaning to the statement.

But we may apprehend the meaning of this passage more clearly if we compare it with another statement in which a similar form of expression is used. Here is one: He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Do we not rightly conclude that Jesus was really a man when we read that he was made "in the likeness of men"?—Most certainly. The only way in which he could be "in the likeness of men" was to become a man. That he did really become a man, and that he still is a man, is shown by the assertion that there is "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Is it not equally clear that the only way in which God could send His Son "in the likeness of sinful flesh" would be for that Son to have sinful flesh? How would it be possible for Him to be "in the likeness of sinful flesh," and yet His flesh be sinless? Such an interpretation would involve a contradiction of terms.

It should of course, be remembered that although Jesus was sent "in the likeness of sinful flesh," yet He did not commit sin. "Him who knew no sin He made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We now turn to consider some of the consequences which follow if Jesus did not take sinful flesh. We must remember that Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, being both Son of God and Son of man. This is the great central truth of

Christianity, and from it come blessed results to believers. "The Saviour was deeply anxious for his disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them." In order that the character of God might be manifested in sinful men who should believe on Him, it was necessary that Jesus should unite divinity and humanity in Himself, and that the flesh which He bore should be the same as the other men in whom God was thus to be manifested. Another way of expressing it would be to say that the Son of God tabernacled in the flesh when He appeared in Judea, in order that the way might be prepared for Him to dwell in the flesh of all believers, and that it was therefore necessary that He should take the same kind of flesh as that in which He would afterward dwell when He should take up his abode in the members of his church.

This is not a mere matter of theory. It is intensely practical in its bearings. If the Son of God did not dwell in sinful flesh when He was born into the world, then the ladder has not been let down from heaven to earth, and the gulf between a holy God and fallen humanity has not been bridged. It would then be necessary that some further means should be provided in order to complete the connection between the Son of God and sinful flesh. And this is exactly what the Roman Catholic Church has done. The creed of that organization is in perfect harmony with the view taken by our correspondent. The formal expression of this doctrine is called the dogma of the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary, according to which the mother of Jesus was "by a special privilege preserved immaculate, that is, free from the stain of original sin, from the first moment of her conception." As the mother was thus entirely different from other women, so the flesh which Jesus took from her would be different from the flesh of other men, and there would still be a separation between Jesus and men in sinful flesh. The Roman Catholic Church, having created this separation by

its creed, has introduced a system of mediation between the Son of God and men in sinful flesh. First come the priests on earth, which are known to have sinful flesh; then come those who did dwell in sinful flesh, but are now canonized by the church as saints in heaven; next the angels; and lastly the mother of Jesus. Thus the door into heaven is not Jesus, but the church, and such a price is charged for opening the door as it is believed the sinner or his friends can pay. These are the consequences which naturally follow the doctrine that Jesus did not take sinful flesh, and we avoid these consequences by denying the doctrine, and holding to the plain teaching of the Scriptures.

Furthermore, our correspondent asks, "How could one in sinful flesh be perfect, be holy?" This question touches the very heart of our Christianity. The teaching of Jesus is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." And through the apostle Peter comes the instruction, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." No one will deny that we have sinful flesh, and we therefore ask how it will be possible to meet the requirements of the Scripture if it is not possible for one to be perfect or holy in sinful flesh. The very hope of our attaining perfection and holiness is based upon the wonderful truth that the perfection and holiness of divinity were revealed in sinful flesh in the person of Jesus. We are not able to explain how this could be, but our salvation is found in believing the fact. Then may be fulfilled the promise of Jesus: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." It is the crowning glory of our religion that even flesh of sin may become a temple for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Much more could be said in reply to the question of our correspondent, but we hope that the principles involved and their relation to Christian experience have been made clear, and we trust that none of our readers will accept the doctrine of the papacy because they are unable to explain the mystery of godliness. It is safe to believe the plain teaching of the Scriptures.

# Christian Edwardson

## FACTS OF FAITH

(Revised), Southern Publishing Association, 1943.

The second objection was that while "the Antichrist" would deny the incarnation, for he would deny that "Christ is come in the flesh" (2 John 7), the pope does not deny this, therefore he cannot be the Antichrist. This argument has seemed so logical and conclusive that Protestants, to a large extent, have given up the Protestant doctrine that the Papacy is Antichrist, and have ceased to *protest*.

This argument, however, is based on a misunderstanding, caused by overlooking one word in the text. Antichrist was not to deny that Christ had come in flesh, but was to deny that He had "come in *the* flesh," in "*the same*" kind of flesh, as the human race He came to save. (See 1 John 4:3; 2 John 7, and Hebrews 2:14, 17.) On this vital difference hinges the real "truth of the gospel." Did Christ come *all the way down* to make contact with the fallen race, or only part way, so that we must have saints, popes, and priests intercede for us with a Christ who is removed too far from fallen humanity and its needs to make *direct contact with the individual sinner*? Right here lies the great divide that parts Protestantism from Roman Catholicism. In order to understand this point clearly, let us briefly consider the gospel of Christ.

### THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST VERSUS THE GOSPEL OF ROME.

Through sin man has separated himself from God, and his fallen nature is opposed to the divine will; therefore he cannot by his own effort live a godly life, nor can he change his own heart. (Isaiah 59:1; Romans 8:7; Jeremiah 13:23; John 15:5.) Only through Christ, our Mediator, can man be rescued from sin, and again be brought into connection with the source of purity and power.

But in order to become such a connecting link Christ had to partake both of the divinity of God and of the humanity of man so that He with His divine arm could encircle God, and with His human arm embrace man, thus connecting both in His own person. In this union of the human with the divine lies the "mystery" of the gospel, the secret of power

to lift man from his degradation. "Great is the mystery of godliness: *God* was manifest in *the* flesh." 1 Timothy 3:16. The "mystery," or secret of power to live a godly life in *human* flesh, was manifest in the life of Jesus Christ while on earth. (And "Christ in you" is the secret of power to conquer sin. Colossians 1:27.)

But mark! It was fallen man that was to be rescued from sin. And to make contact with him Christ had to condescend to take *our* nature upon Himself (not some higher kind of flesh). "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, *He also Himself likewise took part of the same* . . . Wherefore in *all* things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren." Hebrews 2:14, 17. This text is so worded that it cannot be misunderstood. Christ "took part of the *same*" flesh and blood as ours; He came in "the flesh." To deny this is the mark of Anti-Christ. (1 John 4:3; 2 John 7.) To bridge the gulf that sin has made, Christ must be one with the Father in divinity, and one with man in humanity, and thus connect again earth with heaven.

God revealed this truth to the Patriarch Jacob that lonely night at Bethel. When he feared that his sins had cut him off from heaven, God showed him that mystic Ladder, connecting earth with heaven, which Christ explained to be "the Son of man." (Genesis 28:12; John 1:51.) Modernism has tried to cut off the upper part of this ladder by denying Christ's divinity; while the Roman Catholic Church cuts off the lower rounds by teaching that the Virgin Mary was born without sin, and that therefore Christ did not take upon Himself our kind of flesh and blood, but holy flesh, so far above us that He does not make contact with our humanity. For this reason the poor sinner cannot come to Him directly, they say, but must come through Mary, saints, popes, and priests, who will mediate for him. This has opened the floodgate for all the idolatry of the Catholic Church. . . .

The divine ladder has been cut off, and Mary, saints, and priests have been substituted. But the Bible knows of only "one Mediator," Jesus Christ. (1 Timothy 2:5; Psalm 49:7, 8.)

## M. C. WILCOX, QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS,

Pacific Press, Publishing Association. 1911

In this step the eternal logos "became flesh" the same as we are; for He was "born of woman, born under the law," under its condemnation, as a human, having the flesh with all the human tendencies; a partaker of the "flesh and blood" of

humanity; "in all things made like unto His brethren," "suffered being tempted." And He met all the temptations even as you and I must meet them, by faith in the will and Word of God. There is not a tendency in the flesh of humanity but what dwelt in His. And He overcame them all.

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## BIBLE READINGS FOR THE HOME CIRCLE,

Pacific Press Publishing Association; 1916: Page  
174.

In His humanity Christ partook of our sinful, fallen nature. If not, then, He was not made "like unto His brethren," was not "in all points tempted like as we are," did not overcome as we have to overcome, and is not, therefore, the complete and perfect Saviour man needs and must have to be saved. The idea that Christ was born of an immaculate or sinless mother, inherited no tendencies to sin, and for this reason did not sin, removes Him from the realm of a fallen world, and from the very place where help is needed. On His human side, Christ in-

herited just what every child of Adam inherits—a sinful nature. On the divine side, from His very conception He was begotten and born of the Spirit. And this was done to place mankind on vantage-ground, and to demonstrate that in the *same way* every one who is "born of the Spirit" may gain like victories over sin in his own sinful flesh. Thus each one is to overcome as Christ overcame (Revelation 3:21). Without this birth there can be no victory over temptation, and no salvation from sin (John 3:7).

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## SABBATH SCHOOL LESSON QUARTERLY,

FIRST QUARTER, 1921.

All the prophets foretold the advent of Christ (Acts 3:24), beginning even with Moses (Luke 24:27). Isaiah testified to the fact of Christ's birth (Isa. 9:6, 7); . . . In due time, He was "born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4, A.R.V.; Matt. 2:1), taking the same flesh and blood that we have (Heb.

2:14), *even sinful flesh* (Rom. 8:3), and becoming in all things like us (Heb. 2:17). He thus exchanged the form of God for the form of a servant. Phil. 2:5-7."

Christ assumed, not the original unfallen, but our fallen humanity.