

Christadelphian

UNITY IN
AUSTRALIA

THE ACCEPTED BASIS



WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORK

OF THE LATE JOHN CARTER TOWARDS

REUNION IN 1958.

“Called in One Body” (Col. 3:15)

THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTADELPHIAN

CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE

SYDNEY — 1963

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EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY THE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTADELPHIAN
CENTRAL STANDING COMMITTEE

John Carter (died 1962)

Late Editor of "The Christadelphian"

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| FOREWORD | 4 |
| BACKGROUND TO UNITY MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA..... | 6 |
| A LETTER ON UNITY..... | 8 |
| ADDENDUM..... | 12 |
| BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP | 13 |
| AN APPEAL LETTER..... | 15 |
| FIRST REPORT ON UNITY IN AUSTRALIA | 17 |
| ECCLESIAS ACCEPTING BASIS FOR FELLOWSHIP..... | 22 |
| EDITORIAL APPEARING IN “THE CHRISTADELPHIAN” | 23 |
| ADDRESS: “THE ATONEMENT” | 25 |
| ADDRESS: “ISAIAH, CHAPTER 53” | 42 |
| DOCTRINAL ERROR EXPOSED | 59 |
| ANDREW-ROBERTS’ DEBATE ON J.J. ANDREW’S TEACHING | 66 |
| Extracts-J. J. Andrew’s “The Blood Of Covenant” | 70 |
| REFERENCE TO PIONEER WRITINGS..... | 72 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 83 |
| INDEX TO SUBJECTS..... | 85 |
| INDEX TO SCRIPTURE REFERENCES | 88 |

FOREWORD

To the brethren and sisters of Central Fellowship ecclesias throughout Australia:

Individually and collectively, in ecclesial life and worship, we have for the past five years, enjoyed the fruits of Unity in Christ Jesus.

These fruits unto God spring from the free spiritual and social intercourse of minds, untrammelled by the tensions and stresses of doctrinal controversy. Under this stimulus, our minds bend towards the more important tasks of proclaiming the gospel to a perishing world, and of nourishing and admonishing the household to a greater understanding of the Word of God; with appreciation of spiritual values and conduct in Christ.

In expressing thanks to our Heavenly Father for this respite from long periods of household division, we are mindful that the labour and wisdom of our late beloved John Carter, expended in personal sacrifice, was instrumental in setting unity on a firm and acceptable basis in Australia. Nor can we forget the goodwill and energy of individual brethren and ecclesias of both fellowships, now united, who laboured assiduously in committee, to formulate an acceptable basis of fellowship, and to gain common assent from practically the whole brotherhood throughout Australia.

It is now felt by ecclesias generally, and by many responsible brethren throughout the Commonwealth, that the lapse of five years since the establishment of unity, calls for a comprehensive record and reminder of the principles of doctrine and fellowship, constituting the basis of Unity in Australia. Also to remind us that this unity was virtually an extension of the unity achieved in England between the two fellowships there. This made it possible for all ecclesias assenting to unity, both here and in Great Britain, to subscribe to what is known as the "Central Fellowship".

If the booklet constitutes in some way, a memorial to the late John Carter, it is incidentally so. It is because we cannot separate unity from the rich spiritual insight that he brought to bear upon the nature and sacrifice of Christ. Unity is equally indebted to his restrained but objective approach to the personal problems involved, as well as his lucid explanation of words and terms in and out of scripture, which hitherto were surrounded with some confusion of thought.

The two outstanding addresses by Bro. Carter, delivered in Australia in 1958, under the titles, “The Atonement” and “Isaiah Chapter 53”, lifted the subject under review to a high spiritual plane and are reproduced here, as perhaps the highlight of his contribution to ecclesial unity in Australia. The beauty and profundity of these expositions are strongly commended to the brethren and sisters, for earnest study and meditation.

The several articles appearing in “The Christadelphian”, 1958, under the title “The Truth in Australia”, resulted from his visit here and are reproduced, by kind permission of the present Editor, to remind us of the actual “Basis of Fellowship” finally accepted. They also serve to show the mind of Bro. Carter on those more difficult aspects of doctrine. His humble and reverent approach to difficult scriptural passages served to avoid the more rabid and extreme interpretations of past years, which were responsible for much misunderstanding and division.

Perhaps we can never rise to a worthwhile understanding and deep appreciation of the Truth in its various aspects, until we are confronted by a challenge. This applies both to our “inward” and “outward” responsibilities in the service of Christ.

It is well said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and anything so valuable as unity in the brotherhood, achieved by prayerful labour, study and personal sacrifice, and which sustains our sacred liberty in Christ, is equally worth all of our prayers, labour and goodwill for its preservation.

In compiling this record, we have omitted certain of the matter in the articles from “The Christadelphian” where this was considered irrelevant to the end in view. It was thought desirable to include Bro. Carter’s references to “historic” controversies, which have undoubtedly assisted in leading us to a more mature and balanced understanding of the central theme of our Salvation in Christ.

It is the earnest desire and prayer of the Central Standing Committee, that this short history of unity achievement among the Christadelphian ecclesias of Australia, may stimulate each and every brother and sister to a higher appreciation of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Also that it may give us a higher sense of duty towards the preservation of those principles of doctrine and fellowship, which form the basis of our Unity in Christ.

—*The Central Standing Committee.*

Sydney, August, 1963.

BACKGROUND TO UNITY MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

Events leading up to Unity among Australian ecclesias can best be summarised by quoting the introductory portion of Bro. Carter's first report on Unity, appearing in "The Christadelphian", July 1958, page 324.

Bro. Carter reported as follows:

THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA

All who have read the diaries of the visits to Australia by Bro. Robert Roberts will remember that again and again he was engaged in discussion concerning the nature of Adam when created, the effect of sin upon him, and the work of Jesus Christ in relation to man's redemption.

There was a recurrence of trouble in the early years of this century which led to division. We have read over the ecclesial intelligence of those troubled years, with the usual charge and countercharge, which Bro. C. C. Walker at the time described as a "nebulous controversy". At the time Bro. Walker expressed the view that by personal face-to-face discussions he might do some good; later in 1911, he mentions a proposal for a visit by him, in which financial co-operation by both sections of the brotherhood was offered.

He felt the difficulty arising from "the divisions that obtain", but added that "if both parties could agree upon an invitation to brotherly mediation the way would be open."

Apparently the proposal fell through for we can find no further reference to the matter. And now, when more than a half century has passed by, a sufficiently representative invitation "to brotherly mediation" has led the present Editor to visit Australia and this report of the work there is submitted to the brotherhood in Great Britain, Canada, U.S.A., South Africa and New Zealand, and wherever brethren may be scattered abroad.

BACKGROUND TO SITUATION

Some reference must be made to the background to the situation during the last few years. The majority of ecclesias in Australia have been identified as "SHIELD" ecclesias. "The Christadelphian Shield" (begun we think when Bro. Roberts was in Australia) has been the magazine representing these ecclesias. If for this record we continue to use the name, it is for purposes of identification and to facilitate the writing of this report. These ecclesias are principally in the cities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. In more recent years, as the cities have

grown, district ecclesias have been formed in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

The "Central" fellowship has been mainly represented by ecclesial in Melbourne, Sydney (Concord) and Brisbane (Elizabeth Street), with a few smaller groups in other places.

INVITATION TO VISIT AUSTRALIA

The invitation to visit Australia came in the first instance from the committee responsible for a gathering, or Conference as it is called, which is held biennially, this year's venue being Melbourne. This committee consisted almost entirely of representatives of central ecclesias. (This statement will doubtless provoke a denial in some places, but a later explanation will make it clear). Later the reunion committees in Melbourne and Sydney joined in the invitation and it was decided to accept it and give what help lay in our power to clarify the situation.

For some time we have had a note at the head of Australian intelligence items that the position was confused. A word of explanation may be here added. As reported in "The Christadelphian", 1956, page 189, the Victorian ecclesias (that is, in Melbourne and the vicinity) had agreed in 1953 on a basis for reunion, and with the exception of two ecclesias (one of which has since joined up), were co-operating together. This left somewhat undefined their position with regard to the ecclesias elsewhere in Australia and throughout the world.

A TEMPORARY PROBLEM

This was but a temporary problem, such as confronted the English ecclesias in the reunion in February, 1957. A committee of "Shield" ecclesias was formed in Sydney to co-operate in putting the effort begun in Victoria on an interstate basis. Then an invitation from the Conference committee in 1956 to the Editors of "The Christadelphian" and the "Fraternal Visitor" to contribute to the discussions on reunion by a letter, led to the writing of the communication which was reprinted in "The Christadelphian" of 1956, page 269.

In that a suggestion was made that "when it was necessary in the interests of definition of a doctrine, sound simple clear language should be sought and the basic principles set forth". In an ADDENDUM to the latter, a restatement of certain doctrines which have been the cause of strife was set forth as an illustration of our meaning. In the developments that followed, the addendum was adopted as part of a statement that was drawn up and submitted to all Central and "Shield" ecclesias as a basis of reunion.

PROPOSED BASIS FOR REUNION

In June, 1957, the reunion committee addressed a letter to the recording brethren of all these Australian ecclesias, the letter being reproduced in "The Christadelphian", 1957, page 311- Then in the issue for March of this year we reprinted the proposed BASIS FOR REUNION to which reference has been made; and we added the comment: "It might be expected there will be margins of uncertainty for a time; but there appears to be a very wide spread acceptance of the STATEMENT given above, and in consequence the early co-operation of many ecclesias on that basis may be expected" (page 132).

A LETTER ON UNITY

COPY OF A LETTER TO THE 1956 CONFERENCE, RECEIVED FROM BRETHREN C. COOPER AND J. CARTER OF ENGLAND AND READ AT THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS MEETING ON 12th APRIL, 1956.

3rd April, 1956

TO THE BRETHREN AND SISTERS AT THE ADELAIDE CONFERENCE.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

We have been invited jointly to send a message to your Conference particularly on the subject of the division in our midst and of what might be done in the way of reunion. We are conscious that we do not know and are not personally known to the brethren in Australia and that we should be careful in intervening in an issue where personal factors can play so large a part. We have both, however, had considerable experience of the problems that beset efforts for reunion; and we have had many private talks together, before the reunion issue in Great Britain was put on a broader basis by the appointment of two Committees to take up the task of finding out if conditions for that desired did exist. We therefore respond to the invitation to address you by letter in the hope that something helpful may be said.

It is axiomatic that there cannot be understanding without sympathy and it is necessary that an effort should be made to understand exactly what is the position held by a person from whom we are separated. To do that we should eschew prejudice and with open minds be ready to explore whether issues which justify division do exist today. Extreme language should be avoided; temperateness in speech, candour in approach, fairness in reaching a decision are all essential.

We are in a highly privileged position by our knowledge of God's revealed purpose. Many earnest religious people are in darkness concerning God's truth. We owe our present position to the fact that, under God, Dr. Thomas was instrumental in reviving the gospel from the traditions in Christendom. Those traditions had held sway over the minds of men as the result of the corrupting influences of teachers who had overlaid the truth of God with human theories. Dr. Thomas went back to the Word of God and as the result of much study and discussion he found the Truth.

When we reflect on the fact that the Truth had been lost and darkness had overcome the light, we see the need for heeding the apostle's counsel to hold fast that which has been wrought. We cannot read the epistles without feeling the sense of foreboding that pervades them and the history of the early centuries only too sadly shows how truly the Spirit had guided the apostle's utterances. In our turn we have the responsibility of "guarding the deposit", as Paul describes the Truth in his letter to Timothy, seeing that, like a deposit in a banker's hands, it must be preserved without loss.

What are the essentials of saving truth? We have generally recognised that these essentials are formulated in the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. Not that other Statements may not also give a true outline but the Birmingham Statement is the one most widely known. It is recognised by all in what we call the Central Fellowship and in the recent discussions in Great Britain it has been acknowledged by both Central and Suffolk Street groups of ecclesias as the one to which all could subscribe as setting out the First Principles of the One Faith. A Statement of Faith is essential for any community of believers to define their beliefs to ensure harmonious working together and consistent testimony to those without. To decry a Statement as man-made and to speak of the Bible as alone sufficient reveals a marked failure to perceive the problems of ecclesial life and its duties. All the sects of Christendom claim to base their beliefs on the Bible, a fact which in itself demonstrates the need for a Statement of what we understand to be the teaching of the Word of God.

We understand that most of the ecclesias in Australia do use the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. As an indication of the unity of the Faith that is enjoined upon believers, is it not possible for all to approve it as the definition that is best known and most widely accepted? May we commend this to your earnest attention.

There are ecclesial duties and responsibilities in regard to the Revealed Purpose, duties which turn inwards and outwards. Inwards— in that we have a duty to nourish the Gospel in the minds of our members, to build them up in the Faith, to promote mutual love and obedience to the commandments of the Lord. But we also have a duty to protest against error. What a number of the epistles in the New Testament were written in discharge of this duty by the apostle! How Paul yearned over his converts, that they should be steadfast to the things he had preached! If he thought of the believers as sheep, he also regarded the false teachers as wolves that devoured the flock. If he thought with gratitude of the faithful men who toiled in the work with him, he also spoke with apprehension of those he called false apostles. We make these references not to apply this language to anyone but to point the lesson of our duty and responsibility within the fold.

We have an ecclesial responsibility to the Lord, in Adelaide, in Melbourne, in Sydney, or in any other place. And that responsibility is ours in our own ecclesia. We must have the right of judging the position of our members, with their weaknesses and idiosyncrasies and in doubtful cases each ecclesia must decide. While this belongs to us (and we should see that none takes it from us) we have a duty to other ecclesias. While an individual ecclesia, we are also a part of the One Ecclesia—the Church, and our duty to other ecclesias is to preserve on our part the Truth and let the light shine unobscured by vain speculations. But the converse is sadly true—if an ecclesia wilfully and persistently preaches error, how can we avoid responsibility except by disclaiming association? If this principle has on occasion been pressed too far, we must not therefore fail to give it its proper place.

It is the duty of all to seek to promote unity. We must avoid the things that make for disunity, contentions and strifes of words. Unity is a unity of faith, however, and that involves agreement on essentials. Here perhaps we may be permitted to speak plainly. In our efforts to seek unity and peace in Great Britain brethren abroad have reminded us in various ways of the problems that exist in other lands where there are extensions of the troubles here, aggravated by their own local differences. The citations of utterances such as that the Statement of Faith contains blasphemous assertions, by brethren in Australia who are still retained in association, create great difficulties for us. If we have a duty to avoid putting any stumbling block in your path, is not the duty reciprocal and should not you seek to remove grave hindrances to unity, either by so instructing your members that you can happily declare there is oneness of Faith, or by removing from your association, sad though it may be to have to do it, the teacher of error. “Purge out the old leaven” is apostolic counsel.

In pursuing this thought, we would make clear that we should not “make a man an offender for a word”. We would eschew slick labels which are easily used but often do not truly define. We must distinguish between true principles and uncertain details. Clichés of speech are full of dangers, as are also figures of speech pressed into the moulds of literal definitions. Wild charges exacerbate feelings and hinder understanding. To make local difficulties a world issue is the same as spreading germs of disease; local difficulties should be confined by faithful treatment to local situations and if the church as a whole must be told, then just as it is a rule in law that a decision must not only be just but must also be seen to be just, so in any separation it must not only be Scriptural and faithful to the Lord’s commandments but it must be seen to be such. It must be reasonable and be seen to be reasonable.

We believe there are hundreds of brethren separated as the result of the work of teachers who have been in error or whose speech and behaviour have fostered the view that they taught error. A grave responsibility rests upon such. But we should all seek to remove the hindrances and stumbling blocks in the way of those of one mind who are separated through no fault of their own. When it is necessary in the interests of definition of a disputed item of doctrine, sound, simple, clear language should be sought and the basic principles set forth. For example, Clauses 5 and 12 of the Statement have been much discussed and we are afraid the doctrines therein set out disputed. We attach an attempt to state in simple, straight language what we think those clauses mean. In addition, an address on these clauses was given at the Jersey City (U.S.A.) Conference four years ago by the request of the delegates, to set out the understanding of the Editor of The Christadelphian on the subject. We understand that the recordings of this address have reached Australia and have been listened to by some among you.

We take, then, this opportunity to ask your co-operation in the pursuit of peace and unity of those of like mind. If the Lord could hold against a first century ecclesia that they held a doctrine which he hated, or suffered those who held such a doctrine, we see how seriously he views some things. Surely none of us would adopt a position where He would have to say it of us. As, therefore, we hear reports of vocal protagonists of things which are not believed amongst us, making also stout charges against things we do believe, might we ask you to help us either by removing those brethren who make discord and division by their words, or by showing (after enquiry) that the charges made against them are not true. We feel sure that by so doing you will greatly help the cause of truth throughout the world and the work of peace in ecclesias of your land and of ours.

We would end with the prayer that God would bless our efforts together to the praise of His name, to the uplifting of the hearts of His saints, to the knitting together of those who, believing God's precious promises, look for the redemption to be brought by the Lord when He comes again. May the divine blessing rest also upon your gathering to that same end.

Sincerely your brethren in the Lord,

CYRIL COOPER

201 Hempstead Road,

Watford, Herts.,

England.

JOHN CARTER

21 Hendon Road,

Sparkhill, Birmingham 11,

England.

ADDENDUM

STATEMENT REGARDING CLAUSES 5 AND 12 OF THE BIRMINGHAM AMENDED STATEMENT OF FAITH REFERRED TO IN THE MESSAGE TO THE 1956 CONFERENCE FROM BROTHERS C. COOPER AND J. CARTER.

We believe that Adam was made of the earth and declared to be very good; because of disobedience to God's law he was sentenced to return to the dust. He fell from his very good state and suffered the consequences of sin—shame, a denied conscience and mortality. As his descendants, we partake of that mortality that came by sin and inherit a nature prone to sin. By our own actions we become sinners and stand in need of forgiveness of sins before we can be acceptable to God. Forgiveness and reconciliation God has provided by the offering of His son; though Son of God he partook of the same nature—the same flesh and blood—as all of us, but did no sin. In his death he voluntarily declared God's righteousness; God was honoured and the flesh shown to be by divine appointment rightly related to death. To share in God's forgiveness we must be united with Christ by baptism into his death, rising from baptism dead to the past to walk in newness of life. The form of baptism is a token of burial and of resurrection and in submitting to it we identify ourselves with the principles established in the death of Jesus "who died unto sin," recognising that God is righteous in decreeing that the wages of sin is death; and that as members of the race we are rightly related to a dispensation of death.

In all His appointments God wills to be honoured, sanctified and hallowed by all who approach unto Him. By His promises God sets before man a hope of life and a prospect of resuming those relationships that are lost by sin. With the setting forth of this hope there comes a new basis of responsibility. Times of ignorance God overlooks but with knowledge a man becomes an accountable and responsible creature with the obligation to believe and obey God.

A REPORT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS UNITY

“That we may be one” (John 17:22).

A Report was issued by the Unity Committees of N.S.W. and Victoria in 1957. It appeared in “The Christadelphian” of March 1958, page 132.

This in effect was the BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP formulated for presentation to all ecclesias in Australia and New Zealand for the implementation of Unity.

The Basis was presented to ecclesias in both fellowships and included the addendum of the Carter-Cooper letter (see p. 12), now known as the “Carter-Cooper Addendum” in explanation of clauses 5 and 12 of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.

UNITY IN AUSTRALIA

The Unity Committee meeting in Sydney, N.S.W., and working in conjunction with the Unity Committee in Victoria, wish to bring to the notice of the brotherhood, the objects of their labours, together with an indication of the progress that has been made.

Following constant labour extending over a period of almost two years, a clear basis for ecclesial unity has now been formulated. This basis which we here set forth has received the support of the great majority of the ecclesias and numerically almost the whole of the total membership comprising the Shield and Victorian group ecclesias, consents having been communicated to us in writing.

The basis arrived at and which is offered as a means to ecclesial association is as follows:

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

(1) GENERAL BELIEFS

- (a) We agree that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us, without reservation, are the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures, of which the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (with positive and negative clauses and the Commandments of Christ) gives a true definition. Clauses 5 and 12 are understood in harmony with the explanations provided by Brethren Carter and Cooper, reading:

“We believe that Adam was made of the earth, and declared to be very good; because of disobedience to God’s Law, he was sentenced to return to the dust. He fell from his very good estate, and suffered the consequences of sin— shame, a defiled conscience and mortality. As his descendants, we partake of that mortality that came by sin, and inherit a nature, prone to sin. By our own actions we become sinners and stand in need of forgiveness of sins before we can be acceptable before God. Forgiveness and reconciliation God has provided by the offering of His Son; though Son of God, He partook of the same nature—the same flesh and blood as all of us, but did no sin. In His death He voluntarily declared God’s righteousness; God was honoured, and the flesh shown to be by divine appointment rightly related to death. To share in God’s forgiveness, we must be united with Christ by baptism into His death, rising from baptism dead to the past, to walk in newness of life. The form of baptism is a token of burial and of resurrection, and in submitting to it we identify ourselves with the principles established in the death of Jesus “Who died unto sin”, recognising that God is righteous in decreeing that the wages of sin is death, and that as members of the race, we are rightly related to a dispensation of death.” “In all His appointments. God wills to be honoured, sanctified and hallowed by all who approach to Him. By His promises God sets before man a hope of life and a prospect of resuming those relationships that are lost by sin. With the setting forth of this hope, there comes a new basis of responsibility. Times of ignorance God overlooks, but with knowledge a man becomes accountable, and a responsible creature with the obligation to believe and obey God.”

- (b) Acceptance of this basis would not preclude the use of any other adequate Statement of Faith by an ecclesia, provided this is in harmony with the B.A.S.F. understood as in Clause 1 (a) above.

(2) FELLOWSHIP It is affirmed that:

- (a) Where any brethren depart from any element of the One Faith, either in doctrine or practice, they shall be dealt with according to the Apostolic precept and that extreme action would be ecclesial disfellowship of the offender. (Matt. 18: 15-17; Titus 3: 10-11.)

- (b) If it is established that an ecclesia sets itself out by design to preach and propagate at large, false doctrine, then it would become necessary to dissociate from such an ecclesia.
- (c) The course of action necessitated by the above clauses (a) and (b), will be regulated by the principles of the Scripture and follow the spirit of the Ecclesial Guide, Sections 32, 41 and 42.

This basis is now in the hands of all ecclesias throughout Australia and New Zealand, not only of the Shield and Victorian groups but also what are known to us as the Central fellowship meetings.

AN APPEAL LETTER

This report also included a letter, signed by the Secretary and members of the N.S.W. Unity Committee, which accompanied submission of the proposed basis to those ecclesias with whom the “Shield” group sought resumption of fellowship.

This letter, dated 14th October, 1957, read in part as follows:

“Dear Brethren,

“Following constant labour in the cause of unity in the brotherhood, a position now obtains whereby a clear basis for ecclesial unity has been formulated for peace in the ecclesias in Australia and New Zealand. This work has been carried on, not only from our own desire to heal the breaches of the past, but also because of the reunion which has been successfully achieved in Britain by the Central and Suffolk Street meetings, and arising from it, their expressed desire to achieve a satisfactory settlement with the Australian Ecclesias. Suggestion has been made by our English brethren, that, say, a simple endorsement of the Amended Birmingham Statement of Faith, coupled with the addendum to the Cooper-Carter letter or some equivalent together with a clause defining fellowship, will suffice for this purpose.

“Accordingly we attach a statement as a basis for re-union. This basis provides for the incorporation of the Cooper-Carter explanations affecting clauses 5 and 12 of the statement of faith and the remaining portion of the basis has been worked up in conjunction with the Victorian Ecclesias. This basis has received the support of the Shield Ecclesias throughout Australia as also the Victorian Ecclesias in the main, and those yet to endorse it have, nevertheless, expressed themselves favourably disposed towards it.

“We earnestly seek the support of Ecclesias not now meeting with us to give consideration to this basis, in order to end division in this country and your attitude is asked.

“The basis is, we believe, fundamental, and we trust will give a foundation of assurance in any contemplated step. Clause 5 of the Amended Birmingham Statement of Faith has been described, and correctly so, the cause of dispute, and in many of your minds the divergences of belief arising from these differences you believe to be vital. So do we, and the explanations are designed to overcome the technical problems concerned with past disputes, and we believe sufficient to safeguard the truths we cherish, and are also by design short and simple.

“We believe that the individual standing of brethren should be regulated, not according to private judgment, but by the appropriate procedures provided for in the Constitution of the Amended Statement of Faith, Birmingham, and following the spirit of the Ecclesial Guide-example, Sections 32, 41 and 42.”

FIRST REPORT ON UNITY IN AUSTRALIA

This report by Bro. Carter on his visit to Australia, appeared in "The Christadelphian," July 1958, page 324, on his return to England.

The first portion of the report has been used in this publication as an introductory background to the Unity movement, as pertaining to steps already taken in Australia to foster Unity, prior to the coming of Bro. Carter in 1958.

This second and major portion takes up events from his arrival in Sydney. As well as being a record of his movements and meetings in Australia, he discusses the main doctrinal issues involved.

Also appended is a list of the ecclesias throughout Australia, as it appeared with this report in "The Christadelphian," which endorsed the BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP set out previously.

To these are here also added the names of other ecclesias who later approved of the basis and were listed in "The Christadelphian" of November, 1958, page 519.

THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA

ARRIVAL IN SYDNEY

On our arrival in Sydney we met the Unity Committee and had reports on the response of the ecclesias to the circular setting out the proposed basis for reunion. Consent to this in writing had been received from ecclesias representing upwards of 95 per cent of the brethren of the "Shield" and Victoria ecclesias. Two or three ecclesias in the country with very small membership were in doubt, but the Committee expressed their intention to clarify the position with them and also to deal with any cases of difficulty that might arise in the process of reunion. These assurances were endorsed later by the Unity Committee in Melbourne, and we were then enabled to go forward with a programme that had been drawn up. This covered the following:

April 2-15, Melbourne; 16, 17, Launceston, Tasmania; 18-24, Sydney (with lecture at Newcastle); 25-30, Brisbane; May 1-7, Adelaide (and district ecclesias); 8-12, Perth; 13 and 14, Sydney. These arrangements were later modified a little to enable meetings for discussion to be held in Sydney, which curtailed the visits to Brisbane and Perth each by a day.

THE WORK INVOLVED

Some idea of the work involved can be gained from the following summary. In twelve days spent in New Zealand before going on to Australia, we met four groups of arranging brethren, exhorted twice, lectured seven times and addressed two Fraternal Gatherings, in addition to private talks undertaken at the request of brethren. In Australia we met the Unity Committee in Sydney three times, the Melbourne Committee once. We met the arranging brethren of Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth ecclesias, and had several talks with the arranging brethren of Melbourne ecclesias. These conversations, usually occupying a whole evening, and sometimes a late sitting, were cordial and helpful. We also had meetings with the brethren in Sydney (Concord) and Brisbane who had dissociated themselves from Central fellowship at the time of reunion in England, and also with the Northcote arranging brethren who have separated from Horticultural Hall, Melbourne, since they disagree with a basis for dealing with visitors agreed by that ecclesia (see Intelligence from Melbourne, March, 1958, and Northcote, April, 1958). To some of these meetings we must refer at greater length. We also met brethren from the small ecclesias in Largs Bay, and at Perth, who had supported Concord West and Brisbane (Elizabeth Street) in counter proposals to the basis which had been accepted.

UNITY MATTERS IN ENGLAND AND AUSTRALIA

Meetings in Brisbane and Adelaide were addressed on unity matters in England and Australia. In addition, some 17 lectures were given (one on the Atonement in each town); exhortations were given every Sunday but one; three fraternal gatherings were addressed and two farewell meetings. On the whole it was a strenuous time, but it was greatly helped by the co-operation of the brethren in the arrangement of all transport, both local and from city to city, and the kind hospitality of the homes where we stayed, where the sisters did everything possible for comfort and rest.

THE DIFFICULTIES

We will next consider the difficulties. That there were such we hinted in the article "The Truth in Australia" in "The Christadelphian", 1956, page 311. Now perhaps we should put the issue plainly. The Concord ecclesia was at one time in Central fellowship; then separated and, we believe, was associated with the Berean group; but again resumed fellowship about 1940 with Central ecclesias. Over the years a series of pamphlets and circulars have emanated from a Bro. P. O. Barnard of Concord, sometimes with the endorsement of the ecclesia, but at

other times on his own responsibility. A feature of the “Berean” fellowship has been a leaning towards the teaching of J. J. Andrew which was controverted in the 1890’s; not, be it said, to his views on resurrectional responsibility, but to those doctrines of condemnation and inherited sin and alienation which were the basis upon which he built the denial of resurrectional responsibility. This tendency was evident years ago in the U.S.A. and was pointed out in a “Message to all Christadelphians” which was sent to a conference convened in October, 1947, when Detroit was chosen as the meeting place. In that “Message” we sought to meet some questions to which answers were demanded by a brother in the Berean group and who has again separated himself since reunion in England. In our reply we showed there was not only identity of thought but identity of language with that of J. J. Andrew. The same doctrinal outlook is discernible in the teaching of Bro. Barnard and those who support him.

CLEAR DOCTRINAL ISSUES

We propose going into this matter in some detail next month, as we think something should be said not only to help the brethren in Australia but also to put the doctrinal issues in clearer perspective. There are doubtless brethren with Bro. P. O. Barnard who know little of these issues but who have been imbued with the idea of doctrinal unsoundness on the part of those who do not subscribe to Bro. Barnard’s teaching, and something should be said for their sakes. In all contentions extremes tend to beget extremes and some utterances by “Shield” brethren have doubtless been provoked by this teaching and must be looked at in this context. Again and again we found that brethren thought the B.A.S.F. had to be interpreted in the way Concord ecclesia taught. After patient enquiry it was evident that the “Shield” ecclesias were more representative of Central position than either Concord or Brisbane (Elizabeth Street) so far as the latter can be judged by the statements of their arranging brethren.

ALIENATION BY IGNORANCE AND WICKED WORKS

The contentions current are not new, as we have said. They concern condemnation and alienation for our physical nature; being children of wrath by birth; that Jesus needed because of his physical inheritance to be “brought nigh” to God. Yet the facts of Scripture are quite simple. If we ask, For what are we baptized? the answer of the Scripture is always, For the remission of sins. Was Jesus a child of wrath? To ask such a question is to answer it, for everyone who is not entrammelled in the legal mystifications of the arguments advanced. Is a man estranged because of his physical nature? The answer of Scripture is that we are alienated by ignorance and by wicked works.

A few words might be added in response to requests made several times to

clear up points of uncertainty concerning the usage of Bible language. What are the broad facts of Scripture teaching? Adam sinned and death came by sin. But two other things followed; death passed through to all men for that all sinned (Rom. 5:12). It is a fact that all have sinned (except the Lord Jesus) and this fact is explicable only because through Adam's sin the original very good state was lost, and his posterity inherit a nature with a tendency to sin to which all have succumbed. Because this inherited tendency is so evident a characteristic of human nature, and because it is the result and the cause of sin, Paul by the use of metonymy can describe it as sin: "It is no more I but sin that dwelleth in me." He gives it other names as well, such as "*a law—evil present with me,*" the "*flesh*", "*a law in my members,*" etc. (Rom. 7).

A similar usage of metonymy is found in 2 Cor. 5:21, where Paul says that "Him who knew no sin God made to be sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This statement is one of a whole series of paradoxes in 2 Cor. 5:7. Christ the sinless was made to be sin in sharing in the effect of sin in his life, and by his death providing the conditions for the forgiveness of sins and, finally, the removal of all the effects of sin. The same usage occurs in Heb. 9:28, which declares that Jesus will appear the second time *apart from sin* unto salvation. It is a fallacy in reasoning to say that what is affirmable of sin literal must apply to sin used in this metonymical way. We are blameworthy for our sins, but we cannot help the possession of the natures with which we were born. Sins need forgiving and our nature needs changing. Sins are forgiven now for Christ's sake but the change of nature takes place when the Lord comes. "The most outrageous statement that has been made (in the Andrew controversy) is the one that men are objects of divine anger because they are flesh" ("The Christadelphian," 1894, page 466).

PERSONIFICATION OF SIN

In Romans 5:8 by the figure of personification Sin is represented as a Master that pays wages, as a king that reigns, and as a slave owner. By the same figure Sin is represented in a court scene as being condemned—its ownership of men was lost and its own destruction was decreed. God condemned Sin in the work and death of Jesus. Hence Jesus shared our nature that in the very arena where Sin ruled, its claim could be contested and overthrown. Therefore, Paul adds. that God condemned Sin, in the flesh—the flesh in question being the flesh that Jesus and all other men alike share. Much confusion has arisen from treating the phrase "*sin in the flesh*", which occurs but once, as a hyphenated expression. Similarly, the phrase "*sinful flesh*" which also occurs only once, is strictly "*flesh of sin*", in which phrase the figure of personification and ownership is continued.

ANOTHER DIFFICULTY

Another cause of difficulty arises out of the Lord's relationship to his own death. It is affirmed in Scripture that "by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption"; and that "God brought from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant"; and that he was saved out of death. He needed redemption; he needed salvation from death. The confusion arises when we isolate him from his work. He was there to be our Saviour, and but for our needs we may reverently say he would not have been there.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

God purposed that as by man came death, by man must come resurrection. He must be one who died but whose resurrection was assured. God set him forth to declare His righteousness, that identifying ourselves with him we subscribe to the declaration of God's righteousness made by him. He did these things for himself that it might be for us. We are not entitled to say what he would have had to do had he stood alone—that is purely hypothetical, neither may we say that because God required his death in the given circumstances in becoming our Saviour, God would have required the same under different conditions. We do not know. On the one hand we must accept what is written concerning *his benefit from his own work*, while on the other hand we keep clearly in mind that the purpose of it all was *that we might be saved through him*.

These added comments will, we hope, help to keep in right perspective the revealed facts concerning sin, and the use of the word by the figure of personification and metonymy.

THE LOVE OF GOD

The wondrous love of God in giving Jesus, his perfect obedience to the Father, even unto death on the Cross, the offer of the forgiveness of sins, the promise of life by the transformation of our bodies like unto the body of his glory, the provision of one who ever liveth to make intercession for us, and who can save to the uttermost— these and kindred truths can be overlaid with cloudy and mystifying strifes of words, which dishearten the simple earnest believer, annoy the earnest seeker after the deeper things of divine truth, and destroy the soul enlarging and purifying effects which God intended the offering of His Son should produce. The love of Christ constrains to holiness, not to strife.

We append a list of ecclesias in Australia who have subscribed to the Basis set out in "The Christadelphian," 1958, page 132; and who thereby have entered into fellowship with each other and with Central ecclesias everywhere. Intelligence from these ecclesias will be received for "The Christadelphian".

ECCLESIAS ACCEPTING BASIS FOR FELLOWSHIP

NEW SOUTH WALES:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Regent Hall | Doonside | Cessnock |
| Malvern Hall | Sutherland | Albury |
| Hurstville | Yagoona | Ballina |
| Lakemba | Campsie | Avoca |
| Granville | Newcastle | Charlestown |
| West Ryde | Wollongong | |

QUEENSLAND:

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Brisbane | South Brisbane | Southport |
| Bundaberg | Townsville | Rockhampton |

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:

| | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| Adelaide | Glenlock | Cumberland |
| Woodville | | |

VICTORIA:

| | | |
|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Moorabbin | Latrobe Street | Chadstone |
| Canterbury | Beechworth | Coburg Geelong |
| Moorland | Tyers | Malvem |

WEST AUSTRALIA:

Perth

TASMANIA:

Launceston

"Malvern Hall" ecclesia as listed under N.S.W, is now the "Shaftesbury Road (Burwood)" ecclesia.

Also in "The Christadelphian" for November 1958, page 519:

To the list of ecclesias in Australia that have accepted the Basis of Reunion and are now in fellowship, published in July, the following must be added:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| NEW SOUTH WALES: | North Sydney |
| VICTORIA: | Tecoma |
| QUEENSLAND: | Toowoomba |

The list of ecclesias accepting THE BASIS in 1958 should also include the following:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| NEW SOUTH WALES: | Blue Mountains |
| VICTORIA: | Horticultural Hall |
| QUEENSLAND: | Booval, Wynnum Central, Mackay |
| SOUTH AUSTRALIA: | Enfield |

As at the present time (1963), other ecclesias since formed and meeting under the Unity Basis are:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| NEW SOUTH WALES: | Burwood (Belmore Street) Bosley Park |
| VICTORIA: | Frankston, Lower Plenty, Ormond, Pascoe Vale, Ringwood, Clayton, Ballarat. |
| QUEENSLAND: | Redcliffe. |
| WESTERN AUSTRALIA: | Perth (Yokine). |
| TASMANIA: | Hobart. |

There are several ecclesias smaller than those listed, as well as some family groups in private homes, who meet under the Unity Basis.

EDITORIAL APPEARING IN “THE CHRISTADELPHIAN”

July 1958, p. 320.

This encouraging editorial reveals the satisfaction then existing in the mind of our late Bro. Carter as a result of his work in Australia.

“THE CHRISTADELPHIAN”

(“He is not ashamed to call them brethren” Hebrews 2:1). July 1958.

REUNION IN AUSTRALIA

On another page we give some notes on Australian ecclesias and of the Editor’s visit to New Zealand and Australia. It must be a cause of satisfaction to all who are truly concerned with the Truth when an agreed basis, scriptural and good, is accepted and brethren who have been divided for years can work together in happy fellowship. The reunion in Australia provides for that satisfaction.

Agreement has been reached by almost all ecclesias (probably 98 per cent of the numerical strength of the “Shield” ecclesias have endorsed the Statement). Some “Central” ecclesias have been cooperating with the “Shield” ecclesias for some time, but matters have now been put on a good basis for the widest exchange of fellowship with Central ecclesias.

We regret that there are some dissenters to these arrangements and we shall doubtless hear of their existence. There are, however, two sides to a matter and we hope to provide reasons in the next section of our report for thinking that their own position might well be re-examined.

Meanwhile, those of our mind can rejoice in the fellowship of one another. There will be a greater mutual interest in the work of the Truth both here and in Australia; and while not many may pay visits, those who do will have a wider welcome than has hitherto obtained. Let us hope the united work of the ecclesias will be for the furtherance of the preaching of the gospel, and the up-building of God's people.

TWO NOTABLE EXPOSITIONS

Full audiences of brethren and sisters whose hearts and minds were bent toward the achievement of Unity, were deeply appreciative of an address entitled "THE ATONEMENT" given by Bro. Carter in several states and for his outstanding address in Sydney on "ISAIAH CHAPTER 53".

Reproduced here are the two addresses under these respective headings, which, while lifting consideration of the nature and sacrifice of Christ to a high spiritual plane, made clear by appeal to both heart and intellect, the doctrinal issues involved.

ADDRESS: "THE ATONEMENT"

By JOHN CARTER

Delivered in Malvern Town Hall (Melbourne), 1958.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

You have already been reminded that this is a subject that has been the occasion of controversy in our midst. It is not a peculiarity of our Body, for the history of Christendom reveals that the subject has been a source of strife and dissention through the ages. It might seem futile therefore, that we should ever attempt to contribute something by way of a help towards an understanding of a subject that must, of itself, be beset with a certain amount of difficulty, and yet withal, this subject is vital to our standing. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that in him, God raised up a son in order that we might be saved. We have come to recognise by a knowledge of the Truth that we are mortal men and women; and that apart from Christ Jesus there is no hope of the future; and that future will be realised by a resurrection from the dead when he comes again.

We recognise that Jesus Christ was the Son of God; and we must give due place for that. At the same time, we recognise that the doctrine of the trinity is one that is not found in the pages of the Bible. The twin errors of the doctrine of the trinity and the immortality of the soul, which have beset and entangled the paths of those who have sought to expound this doctrine in the orthodox churches, is one from which we ourselves are free. We can come to the subject with an understanding of the basic facts, that we are mortal because of sin, and that in Jesus Christ we have one whom God raised up to save His people from their sins. Among the first things that the Apostle Paul preached when he went to Corinth was, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins," said the Apostle in his

letter to the Ephesians, and so on in. numberless passages that could be quoted.

This subject affects us closely. It may indeed be, in beginning our life in the Truth, sufficient that we understand the basic facts connected with this work of Jesus Christ, but as we grow older in the Truth, we naturally want to know some things connected with the how and why God did this work in Christ Jesus.

We are entering into a discussion and a consideration of God's ways, which are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts. Yet so far as He has revealed them, it is our duty to seek humbly and patiently to follow wherein He has revealed.

We would say that, among the primary things for the student in this field, there should be a humility of mind; teachableness from the word of God. For the presence of arrogance is something that can befoul our thinking and hinder us from the right appreciation of the Word of God.

The Pattern Student was the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who spoke of God opening his ears and he was not disobedient. He listened to the counsel of God and sought in all his ways to serve Him. So it is with regard to those that are at last redeemed; it is written in the prophets: "They shall all be taught of God," and it is as humble students of the Word of God that we come together tonight, to see if we can by looking at some of the passages of scripture, wherein God has spoken of these wondrous ways in Christ Jesus for our redemption, we might appreciate a little the more what God has done for us in His beloved son.

A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF WORDS

The words of scripture bound up with this subject are such that we ought to try to ascertain their meanings. Words are used as the instrument of thought and of course it is important that we have a right understanding of words. There are a great number of words bound up with this subject. We are not going to traverse them all, but we do want to suggest to you, that a comprehensive examination of this subject would involve a whole series of studies, of the meanings and usages of words. Such for example, "*redemption*" and its cognate word "*ransom*", with the related term of "*Bought*". There are the words "*enmity*" and "*alienation*" and their counterparts "*reconciled*" and "*forgiven*". There is the word "*righteousness*" and the related words, although they come from another root in English, "*justification*", "*justify*", and "*just*". There is the word "*sanctification*", and the word "*propitiation*", and we come to the series of terms that are used in connection with the work of Jesus in relation to our sins, such as "*bearing our sins*", "*bearing our sins in his body to the tree*"; "*he suffered for sins*"; "*the remission of sins*". We have the series of terms used as descriptive of the work of

the Lord himself, such as the phrase, "*The blood of Christ*" where we must think beyond the literal and think of what is meant by "the blood of Christ", as the token of the sacrifice of Christ. Then we must go forward again and ask of what did his sacrifice consist? Why was it necessary? We have the phrases related to the *offering of the body of Jesus once and for all* and the phrase "*laying down his life*". We have the phrase "*the sacrifice of Christ*" and we are told "*that Christ died for us*". Now here are a whole range of words, and we have not gathered them all together by any means; every one of which ought to receive careful consideration before we enter the lists as disputants in such a doctrine as this. I am quite sure that a patient examination of these words would make us a little the more humble in our study of the scriptures; and a little more patient of the shortcoming of others in their understanding. It would increase a greater diligence in ourselves, that we be sure that we understand rightly the words that are used.

RECONCILIATION

Now the word "*Atonement*" occurs once in the Bible, and there it is a word related to "*reconciliation*". In fact, the word which Paul used which is translated "*Atonement*" in one passage of the Bible, is translated "*reconciliation*" in the R.V. But let us look at that verse at the beginning of our examination of this subject. In Romans Chapter 5, you will find that many of the phrases that we have already cited as pertaining to this subject are mentioned. Reading in the 6th verse, "*when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*". "*For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his 'own' (RV) love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were 'reconciled' to God by the death of His son, much more, being 'reconciled', we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the 'atonement',*" (or as the margin has it, the "*reconciliation*"). The word is indeed related to the word translated "*reconciled*", "for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more being *reconciled*". So the Apostle repeating the word again says "by whom we have now received the "*reconciliation*". But at once, when we use the word "*reconciliation*", we realise that we are dealing with personal relationships. Estrangement is a matter of something that has come between persons. What has come between ourselves and God is that we are sinners. While we were sinners Christ died for us; and the purpose of the work of reconciliation is, that we who were enemies might be made friends and brought into harmony with God. In order that this might be done, we have been the subjects of *justification*, whatever that might be, as we

come to examine it a little later. What we want to emphasise first of all is that *reconciliation has to do with a relationship between individuals*. In this case between ourselves, as sinners, and God.

ALIENATED BY SIN

Now we must come to the question, “*Why is it that, as sinners, we are alienated from God? What is sin?*” Now the Apostle tells us something about sin in the next verse to what we have read, in the 12th verse of Romans Ch. 5. He is beginning a series of comparisons between Adam and the results of his sin; and Christ and the result of his work of obedience. Here he states the foundation upon which he is going to reason out this work of God in Christ. “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,*” and then in the characteristic way of Paul, he drops into a parenthesis and does not resume it until the 18th verse; when he takes up the word “*therefore*”. “*Therefore,*” *as by this* so something else in connection with Christ Jesus.

But first of all let us look at this basis, *this “Wherefore as by this”* before we come to consider, “*so that*” as to what. “*Wherefore as by one man*”—and Paul has four affirmations in this verse, “*As by one man sin entered into the world; secondly, that death came through sin; thirdly, that death passed through to all men; and fourthly, for that all have sinned.*” In this connection let us say quite firmly, that the marginal reference, “*in whom*” is not permissible as a translation. The Apostle is saying, *one*, that Adam sinned; *secondly*, that death entered the world of mankind as a result of his sin; *thirdly*, that all of us share in that death which has come into the world as his descendants, *with the added point that all of us*, as a consequence of that sin in the beginning, *are ourselves sinners*.

SIN — ITS INCEPTION

What is sin? Sin is defined by John in the A.V. translation, *as transgression of law* (1 John 3:4). More profoundly, and in keeping with the words of Paul, the revisers have given us, “*Sin is lawlessness.*” We go back to the beginning, to the time when sin entered into the world, in the light of that interpretation, and we think of Adam and Eve made very good, though of the dust of the ground. They were placed on probation, because, that by virtue of their constitution, they were reasoning beings and moral beings. Because of that they had the capacity to respond to right or wrong. Because of their very mental and moral constitution, with their consequent personal relationship to God, made in the image of God, it was necessary that law should be given. God told them that of every tree of the garden they may freely eat; but said that if they disobeyed they should surely die.

Now doubt entered the woman's mind through the suggestion of the serpent, and it is interesting to observe, in the detailed accuracy of the record which we have in the scriptures throughout, that the woman trimmed as the result of doubt entering her mind. She dropped the word "*freely*", making God a little arbitrary. No longer was it "*of every tree we may freely eat*" but "of every tree we may eat." But she also dropped the word "*surely*" concerning the certainty of the consequences, and so we can see how doubt assails the mind; a trimming of the word of God and then a reaching out for that which is forbidden. Adam partook with her of the forbidden fruit and we behold this man and woman, who before had sweet and free converse with God, now become aware of a sense of shame and fear. They hide themselves from God, and are themselves aware of the necessity of covering themselves. We know how God repudiated their own devices for their covering; and substituted that which he himself provided in the covering of skins; but we mustn't go into the typology of that at the present time. But sufficient to notice that they experienced a sense of shame and the sentence was passed that "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". Here death came, as the Apostle says, into the world through sin.

ALL SINNERS BUT ONE

But by and by children are born. What is it that they inherit? This nature related to death, that had now become the lot of Adam and his wife. How could it be otherwise? But something else is evident: there is a bias in their nature inherited too; and we see in the offspring of the first pair, one who pursues righteousness and one who thought evil and who murdered his brother. It is a melancholy fact that the Apostle testifies that the whole race are transgressors before God. In the opening chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul indicted the Gentile world of all their abominable practices, in which he three times said, "*God has given them up to their own devices.*" It is a law of God. God gives them up to their own devices, with an ever overwhelming calamity of evil, until at last at the very climax of it the Apostle says "they not only do evil but rejoice in them that do it". Was the Jewish world any better? Not a bit; although they had the law, they by it, only became more acutely aware of the fact that they were sinners. The Apostle says that all the world is guilty before God. "*All have sinned and come short of the Glory of God,*" and that is the result of transgression in Eden. "All have sinned": *there is one blessed exception*, but it needed the work of God in raising up a saviour; to produce a man among men who was sinless.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN

But let us think a little further about sin. I wonder if we have given sufficient attention to it. Sin leaves its mark upon the individual. If anyone of us sin, it leaves its mark upon us. A man may be guilty of a little sharp practice in his business and he experiences a sense of shame. But the second time he does it, the shame is not so keen and after repeated acts he comes at last to rationalise, as modern psychologists describe it. He rationalises the process and justifies, what, at the beginning caused him a sense of shame. Thus it is that we sometimes behold the spectacle of a man who was once upright in his dealings, gradually falling away from the standard of right until at last we read of him being in the court, having been guilty of some serious embezzlement or some other crime. But it's been by a gradual decline in many cases, through the lowering of a standard; and instead of a consciousness of sin, very often that man only manifests self pity.

Why is it? It is because sin has a peculiarly blinding effect upon us. Sin distorts the view of righteousness. Sin deceives. The Apostle speaks of the deceitfulness of sin and in a very striking figure he can even say: "that Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light"; that so deceiving is sin, that he can even parade as righteousness. But here is one of the dire consequences that comes with sin, that the more a man becomes familiar with it as performing and yielding himself to it, so he becomes less aware of the *real* character of sin. It is one of the most striking of the moral laws of God, that the more a man knows of sin the less he is aware of what it is.

SIN AS PART OF THE MAN

Here, brethren and sisters, is one of the secondary problems, and a very real one, bound up with the fact of sin. William James in one of his books, tells the story of a man who had repeatedly given way to drink, and he repeatedly said as he yields once more, "I will not count this one." And James comments: "he may not and a merciful heaven may not, but the cells of his brain are recording every lapse and every lapse that comes makes the next one easier." Which means that sin, in its out-working, becomes at last a part of the individual himself. So that when we come to the question of the forgiveness of sins we must face the problem: how can sin be forgiven when it has become a part of the individual himself, and it is the expression of what the man has become? When we see the enormity of sin as it is revealed for us in the Bible, we begin to appreciate what a terrible problem it is; how many that are sinners can be reconciled to God.

SIN BLINDS THE EYES

There are one or two passages of scripture that we would like to quote in this connection. We turn to 1 John, chapter 2 and verse 11. Reading from verse 9 for the connection: “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother *is in darkness, and walketh in darkness*”, and mark this “*and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes*”. There you have, in stark, simple language, an annunciation of the fact, that sin can so distort the vision that at last a man is disabled from seeing. What can you do to break in to such a bondage as that?

But Isaiah has said much the same thing before. Will you turn to Isaiah Chap. 44. Here is an indictment of idolatry. Derisively the prophet pictures a man choosing a tree of some good wood, cutting it down, engaging a carpenter to make for him an image; and he uses the remainder of the chippings to light a fire to warm himself and to bake his bread. He said in verse 18, “they have not known nor understood: for He hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts that they cannot understand.” Here is the expression of that law of God to which we have referred. These men were going in darkness and could not discern the fact that they were so walking “and none,” saith the prophet, “considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh and eaten it; and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree?” The Divine comment is, “*He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?*” He cannot deliver his soul neither can he discern that a lie is in his right hand.

PAUL’S INTERNAL STRUGGLE

These passages and these considerations are by no means exhausted; but help us to appreciate what is involved in sin in its dire effects upon ourselves; and as affecting our relationship to the Almighty. There is, perhaps, nowhere in the scriptures a greater piece of poignant biography than what we have in the 7th chapter of the letter to the Romans, where the Apostle, examining himself, speaks of his efforts after righteousness and his failure to attain it. He came to know the Truth and was conscious of a conflict within himself, so that the things that he would do he failed to perform, and the things that he would not do, he did. He cried out in his anguish; “*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from*

the body of this death?"

A criticism must be levelled here against some interpretations. The Roman Catholics, for example, assert that the Apostle was guilty of some carnal sin and he was here referring to it. Others explain it as having reference to Paul before he came into contact with Christ. Some have expressed a doubt how the Apostle, so earnest and righteous a man, could thus speak. But here we get the inverse of that of which we spoke when we said: sin blinded the eyes. It is the man who seeks after righteousness who is the most acutely aware of his shortcomings. Thus you have the apparent paradox, that a man who seems to stand high above his fellows in his zeal for righteousness and the holiness of his walk; can yet bemoan the fact that he is the chief of sinners. But it is in perfect harmony with what we find to be the facts, concerning sin and its effects.

But before we leave this subject I want to comment on a usage of words. The Apostle in this 7th chapter of Romans, verse 20, speaks of *sin that dwelleth in him*. "Now then it is no more I that do it, but *sin that dwelleth in me*. For I know that in me (that is in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not." What is it that is within us, that the Apostle describes as sin? Clearly there are the impulses that lead to sin. There are impulses there that are the result of sin at the beginning, which we have by inheritance. But if we may here turn aside to the use of grammatical terms, in order that we might define the matter; in what way is sin used here? *Sin is lawlessness. Sin is the expression of ourselves in defiance of the will of God, either in thought or act.*

METONYMY APPLIED TO SIN

But how could Paul speak of these impulses which were latent in him, which sprang to life as he said, when the commandment came? How can he speak of them as sin? By a well known figure of speech; the figure of speech of metonymy is that where a word which stands related to another as cause or effect, or a mere adjunct maybe, is put for that to which it stands related. And sometimes we find brethren *speaking of two aspects of sin*. It might be permissible to use the phrase, providing it is understood. But I want to enter here and now a mild caveat against the use of that phrase, "*two aspects of sin.*" *There are not two aspects of sin, there are many aspects of sin.* Sin is what? Well you have a list of the works of the flesh; Adultery and all the abominations with a list of other things such as ill-will, bitterness, wrath, anger, strife, sedition and so on. All these are aspects of sin. They are all aspects of something that comes within the one category.

But now the Apostle uses sin by Metonymy and *immediately you say, he uses*

it by metonymy it isn't an aspect of sin. It's a use of the word in another sense, used by a figure. Let me give you one or two illustrations: you have aspects of a mountain, you look at it from one vantage point and you look at it from another vantage point and you see different aspects of it. But you speak of a man's troubles and you say: he makes mountains out of molehills. Would you say that a man's troubles was an aspect of mountains? No! You would say by a figure of speech, as describing his troubles as mountains; but they are not an aspect of mountains. In a similar way we turn to another figure, the figure of metaphor. The Lord said, "this is my body." The Roman Catholic insists upon it in its literal terms and insists that the bread is the body of Jesus. We say No! That is the use of metaphor. "All flesh is grass" is metaphor. "All flesh is as grass" is the figure simile. The figure simile is literally true. Figure metaphor is boldly true though not literally accurate. Jesus said "this is my body" but would you say that there are two aspects of the body of Jesus, one of flesh and one of flour? Because "all flesh is grass" would you say that there are two aspects of grass; one with roots and the other with legs? You say No! One is used as a figure and one is an expression of a literal fact. So it is with regard to this. *We mustn't preach sin that dwells in us*; which is a word used metonymically for the impulses within us, *as being sin in that sense of lawlessness of which the Apostle speaks*. I think that if we can get that clear in our minds, we are getting rid of some of the problems that have beset us in connection with this. I have here several illustrations from the scriptures of the use of metonymy, but my time is going quicker than I am with my address. But don't forget that we use metonymy in our ordinary speech and sometimes do not recognise it.

I had a very happy journey into the country with two brethren and as we passed a house, which had been built by the chemist who made Aspro popular, they said: that house is built on Aspro. You don't think of foundations of Aspro on which the house is built. You mean, that house was built by the profits that were made from the sales of Aspro. By metonymy, you say it was built on Aspro. We use it in ordinary speech but we use our commonsense in the understanding of it.

Now let us press on. If Sin is such as we have seen, what can the remedy be? Now let us think first of all, that sin is in itself a challenge to God. Adam said, I am going to do my way, when he had an obligation to do God's way and, as the result of man's sin, he introduced a duality into God's universe and God's supremacy was challenged. What else could God do under those circumstances than impose death, if He is going to maintain His supremacy. We might think about that but we cannot extend it.

A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR

But another thought comes in connection with it, and it is this: if God is supreme, God cannot allow man's challenge to go without response, because God cannot allow man's sin to frustrate the purpose that He had in placing man upon the earth. But the two things bring us to a focal point, *the problem bound up with reconciliation*. How can God, *while maintaining His own principles of righteousness and maintaining His own supremacy* (which involves that man should be sentenced with death) yet achieve the purpose in harmony with that, whereby men who should die because of their sin, can at last, be sharers in the eternal purpose of God. But listen to these expressions from Isaiah chapter 43 verse 22: "But thou hast not called upon me, Oh Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not brought ME." (We must emphasise the "Me" to bring out the sense. They had been following the practices of sacrifice and so on, but they hadn't done it according to God's will and in real service to Him.) "Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offering; neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices. I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices. BUT (and mark these words) thou hast *made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities*" and yet despite that, God said: "*I, even I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins*".

In the 45th chapter the prophet gives what is the final reason for the folly of idolatry. Reading at the 20th verse, "assemble yourselves and come; draw near together ye that are escaped of the nations", and say unto the nation: "they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image and pray unto a god that cannot save." For a god that cannot save has abdicated his position as god. Since an image cannot save it is proved to be no god. So God announces Himself as the *Saviour*. "Tell ye and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together; who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me; *a Just God and a Saviour*; there is none beside me. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." There is brought together, in that juxtaposition of terms, the very nerve of this problem: that God is at once *a just God and a Saviour*. The prophet goes on to speak of all being brought to bow the knee to God; which you will remember the Apostle takes up and applies to God's work in Christ in his letter to the Philippians. How then can He save? What has He done that we might be saved? Well, we know that He has raised up Jesus, who lived a life of perfect obedience to Him; an obedience which in his case, took him to the cross. "For," said Paul, "*He was obedient in all things, even to the death of the*

cross.”

MADE LIKE US YET WITHOUT SIN

And now we must press beyond the mere externals in the declaration of the facts accomplished, to ask what was there about the death of Jesus that made it possible for God to forgive us our sins; and to receive us into His favour? We must look at Jesus and see first of all, with all the emphasis that the Apostle puts upon it, that he shared our nature. To cite one passage: (Heb. 2:14)—“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he took part of the same.” But the Apostle is not content with that, he says: “He *also* took part of the same”, and even that isn’t sufficient: “He *also, himself*, took part of the same” and even that isn’t enough: “He *also himself, likewise*, took part of the same.” With that assertion of the likeness of Jesus to us, in his nature, we may be content here. But because of that it is affirmed of him: “for he was tempted in all points like as we are”; but with this difference: “*yet without sin*”. He was beset by trials and difficulties, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Yet in the words of the prophet Isaiah verse 8 of the 50th chapter, he could say: “He is near that justifieth me:” and *to justify is to pronounce righteous*. Jesus is the only one that could lay claim to the fact, that God would justify him in the primary sense of the word; that God would pronounce him to be righteous. So Peter, who had looked on Jesus when he stood before his judges, could recognise by revelation afterwards, that when he stood there, reviled and threatened, but not threatening in return; that he was committing himself to Him that judgeth righteously. The righteous judge pronounced His son to be righteous by raising him up from death.

But he was there, one of us, and God raised up one who was like us, and yet who, because he was the son of God, was able to live a perfectly obedient life. Thus, upon the very conditions that had brought death through sin, He provided the way for resurrection from the dead and the bestowal of immortality upon the beloved son of God.

A PROPITIATION OR MERCY SEAT

But what was done by Jesus that he might be the saviour? There is a passage in the letter to the Romans, which I think is the key; passage and I’m going to dwell principally on this. Will you turn to Romans chapter 3 verse 23? The Apostle says; “*For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God; being justified (or pronounced righteous) freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*” (you notice how these words come in, that I listed at the beginning, all of which need explaining). “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, *to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins*

that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; *that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*” Here is the key passage to this subject. Let us look at it a little more closely. “*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation.*” The word is an adjective, “*a propitiatory*” and the noun has to be supplied. Some have suggested supplying the word “gift” that is “*a propitiatory gift.*” But the identical word is used in the letter to the Hebrews of the place of propitiation. The *propitiatory place, the Mercy Seat*; and the word is translated “*mercy seat*” in the letter to the Hebrews.

But at once we are led back to the symbolism of the O.T. ritual. What was the mercy seat? God himself defined it as the place of meeting. “There will I meet with thee and there will I commune with thee.” But that meeting with God was not one of free access at that time. Only once every year, the high priest, stripped of the regalia of his office and not as the head of the Levitical system; but in white robes symbolic of the white righteousness of the man who *would* enter, pulled aside the veil to go in, with blood which was sprinkled upon the mercy seat. It was a prophecy of the opening of the way to God: but it was a declaration of the fact that the way was not then opened. For the high priest came out and the curtain fell to, and the act was repeated year by year, a testimony, as the Apostle says, to the inefficacy of the ritual. But it was a prophecy of *one to come*, through whom the way *would* be opened and the significance of that fact was when the Lord died, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom. It was God’s work and it was a declaration of the fact that, through the death of Jesus, the way was open to access to the Father. As the Apostle says in the 5th chapter of his letter to the Romans verse 2, “We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” So Jesus has been set forth as *a propitiation*. There, upon the basis of one coming with shed blood, there, as the throne of God, and although a throne, the place where God the King had his abode, *it was there the place of mercy*. So the Apostle brings together the fact that we are to come boldly to the throne of grace. It was a throne, let us not forget that. A throne in which the principles of God’s holiness were upheld as a condition of man’s approach through the ritual ceremony of shed blood. So in Romans 3:25 the Apostle goes on: “to be a propitiation (mercy seat) *through faith*” (that is our response to what God has done) “*in his blood*”. At once we must go back to the ritual type again and ask what does this mean? The blood of the animal was a token of life taken and an identification of the man with the animal; by placing his hands upon its head and saying in effect: This is what ought to happen to me; I’m taking its life but I’m the sinner and death is due to me. It becomes the ritual expression of the fact that the man recognises that death was due for sin.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS DECLARED

What did the Lord do in his sacrifice? The Apostle goes on to explain: “*to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.*” “*To declare His righteousness*”, leads us to consider in this connection, a phrase closely akin to it, which was used by the Lord himself, when He came to the baptism of John: “suffer it to be so now *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*” What did the Lord mean by that? Let our imagination play around the circumstances just a little. Here was John calling upon men to repent of their sins and to be baptised; and a procession of men, day by day, while he was preaching, waded out into the Jordan to be baptised of him. What was John preaching? The gospels do not tell us specifically, but the prophecy in Isaiah 40:6 tells us that the voice who was the herald of the Lord, had to cry: “and he said, What shall I cry?” and the message he had to give was: “all flesh is grass and the glory of man as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away. Surely the people is grass.” We in England with our evergreen fields, cannot appreciate the force of the figure used. I’ve been in Palestine in Autumn time and the green and flowered fields of spring have all passed away and all you see is the brown bare hillsides. Here and there, there may be a goat or a camel eating, you cannot tell what, but it’s just the tufts of dried herbage. The grass has come and gone and to people familiar with such a cycle of life, there comes home with a terrific message, the comparison of man with grass. He is here and then gone. Man is mortal. That was the message John had to give.

Now we go back to John in Jordan and one day, perhaps the last of many people who had gone down into the water, there steps forward a grave young man in the fullness of his powers, with a quiet reserve and dignity. When all others had said to John: I confess my sins and my iniquities and my transgressions, for the Hebrew language was rich in words descriptive of man’s falling short of God’s standard; and this man says what? We do not know. It may be he said something like this: I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. But we may be sure that he said something like that and we can understand John’s recoil as he said: “I have need to be baptised of thee and comest thou to me?” Then comes the answer of Jesus, “Suffer it to be so now, *for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*” The Lord, against the background of the message of John that all flesh is grass, that man is mortal and Jesus is the sharer of our mortality, witnesses to his acknowledgment of the fact by the symbolic baptism, as he goes down into this symbolic death, fulfilling all righteousness. It was only a symbol but what was there a symbol was wrought out in fact, three and a half years later, when he voluntarily went to the cross.

There is a convergence of all kinds of things in connection with the cross, but

isolating for the moment this particular aspect, the Lord could have turned back at any time. Did he not plead in his agony in the garden: “if it be possible let this cup pass, but not my will but thine be done”, and he went forward in the stern consciousness that he must do his Father’s will and voluntarily accepted crucifixion. Paul said (Rom. 3:25) that God set him forth “*to declare His righteousness*”, to provide the conditions whereby God could forgive sins. Paul emphasises the fact that it was to declare the righteousness of God by repeating it as you notice, “To declare, I say at this time, His righteousness; *that He might be just.*” And now we must stop to point out that the word “*just*” and its cognate word “*justifier*” and the related word “*justification*”, are a build up in English from one root. We have the word “*righteous*” and we have the word “*righteousness*”, but we have no verb from the same root. We cannot say “to righteousify”, and so the translators have taken words from two roots where Paul used one word. Let us paraphrase then the Apostle: “to declare I say at this time His righteousness, that *He might be righteous Himself* and the bestower of righteousness on him which believeth in Jesus.”

So Paul emphasises that *the essential fact is, that Jesus declared the righteousness of God.*

THE BASIS OF OUR FORGIVENESS

Now we have been led along the way to understand what he did, as we considered his baptism. Here he was, a mortal man. Was it right that he was related to death as a member of the race: Was God righteous in His decrees? The answer is in the voluntary submission to that on the part of Jesus; that God *was* right and he *upheld the law of God* and vindicated the righteousness of God. He did it as one of us, as a representative man and in the very fact that he was a representative man we have that which provides the nexus between himself and God. While God has set him forth to be the place of meeting, in a man who thus upheld His righteousness; God said if you will identify yourself with him for his sake, I will forgive you your sins and receive you to favour. Therefore it is. that when the Apostle, (Romans 6:4) would speak of the significance of our baptism, he said, “we are buried with him by baptism into death” but before our baptism there is something else, and it is an important fact in connection with it. We come to baptism with the recognition that we are being baptised for the remission of our sins; and with a consciousness that we are sinners in God’s sight. We come with a consciousness that we have done wrong and we repent, and that we are willing to turn our back on sin and turn our faces to righteousness. That is our contribution in the first instance to this problem of reconciliation. For such is the nature of sin that you cannot pass it by lightly.

OUR IDENTIFICATION WITH CHRIST

How tragic has been many a home life, when one of the children of the home has followed the course of waywardness and the parents have lightly passed it by. What an anguished problem a parent has when one of the children takes wrong ways. How much they enter, in their love for the offspring, into the question of how the one gone astray can be reclaimed, in order that they might turn back from the evil and turn their paths into right. That in a dim sort of way, brethren and sisters, is what is involved in our approach to God. We should turn our backs on sin and recognise it for what it is, and recognise ourselves as sinners, then we reach out to an appreciation of the fact that God will forgive us our sins for Christ's sake. We are identified with him and buried with him, by baptism into his death, "*that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the Glory of the Father: so we also should walk in newness of life.*" (Rom. 6:4). It is in the use of that word "*with*" which recurs in the 6th chapter of the letter to the Romans, that we have this principle of our identification with him in the recognition of the principles that he upheld. So *we are identified "with" him* as the second Adam. As in the first Adam, by our inheritance in him, we receive this mortality, so in the second one we receive this hope of life; the forgiveness of sins; the hope of resurrection from the dead; and emancipation from this body of corruption to which we are subject.

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

There is a passage in the letter to the Galatians, where the Apostle expresses in rather different terms, this fact of identification with Christ. In the 2nd Chapter, 19th verse, he says: "I, through the law am dead to the law, *that I might live unto God.*" We might point out that this is part of the reply of Paul to Peter, when Peter and Barnabas dissembled in Antioch, but the point of Paul's citation, of what he told Peter, was that the ecclesias in Galatia had defected from the Truth and were turning to the beggarly elements, away from the cross of Christ as the means of their redemption. The Apostle had set forth Christ among them, as he said in the opening verse of chapter three, "Before whose eyes Jesus" has been PLACARDED before you, that is "*crucified among you*" and now they were turning back to life by the law. Since when Paul had met Peter and recited to Peter the same fact, in reciting it his mind travelled back to his address in Galatia. We have the little bit of biography, so full of emotion, yet never, never straying from the sheerly logical presentation of this work in Paul through Christ's sacrifice. "I through the Law am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness*

came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” So Paul could say, “*I am crucified with Christ.*”

It is written in the gospels, there were two other crucified with Christ. There you have on the stake the central figure, and two other crucified with him. Paul who was well known to the Jewish authorities, the favourite pupil of Gamaliel, a man presently to have a seat in the Sanhedrin, had been fully aware of this work of Jesus during his ministry. Why, Josephus tells us that there were two million Jews in Jerusalem at the Passover and the news of Jesus and his ministry had travelled throughout Jewry and throughout the world. Not merely those in Israel were agog with excitement as to whether Jesus was the Messiah or not, the whole nation was alive with it. Well indeed might the authorities say, not at the feast day lest there be a tumult; when you think of the numbers in the city. Paul, although living in Tarsus, knew all about it we may be sure. He had assented to what the authorities had done. In thought he stood with the crowd around and jeered as the rulers had jeered. “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” Then when Paul was on his persecuting work to Damascus, he met the risen Lord and Paul’s whole thought world came shattering down in ruins as he thought, that *he was wrong* and these Christians in their belief in Christ *were right*, for Christ was risen. Therefore Christ had received God’s approval and the only way for Paul was to start and rethink his whole thought and change his allegiance. It means that Paul who stood around and jeered must now step across, whatever the rest of the jeerers might think, must step across the space and take his place with “*other crucified with him.*” Paul must be crucified with him.

That is what Paul means; and it is with all the vividness of a man who had seen crucifixion enacted again and again in the Holy Land, that he can use the figure. There is no glamour about it such as we see sometimes associated with the cross of Christ. It was a sheer stark disagreeable awkward thing, that a man was crucified and Paul had to take his place with him; with all the shame that was associated with it in men’s minds. But it was God’s way, God’s principles upheld and Paul must be there, identified with God’s principles upheld in Christ.

ALIVE IN CHRIST

Then Paul found something else: that though he was crucified with Christ he says, “*yet I live*”. How did he live? “The life which I now live in the flesh *I live by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20.) Or as he puts it in his letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:14), “The love of Christ constraineth me, for I thus judge that if one died for all then all died,” Immediately we begin to see this effect of the love of God in Christ; we realise that here is an emancipation from that thralldom of sin that we found was part of the problem, that sin had become ourselves and how could we be delivered from it? Here is the answer: our sins are forgiven and a new motive power is brought into our life, whereby, reconciled to God, we can live as unto God to the Glory of His name. This, brethren and sisters, is the way God reconciles us. It is all bound up with the personal relationship between ourselves and Him.

He has wrought in Christ to provide us a Redeemer, who, sharing our nature, went to the cross to declare the righteousness of God; and we identify ourselves with him in upholding God’s righteousness and God is honoured, as God will be honoured in all His ways. “*I will be sanctified in them that draw nigh unto me.*” Sanctifying him in our humble approach, in submitting to the symbol of death, which is our due in identification with Christ in baptism; we rise, not to our old selves, but to walk in newness of life as men and women reconciled to God, in hope of the great salvation that is established in Christ Jesus.

ADDRESS: “ISAIAH, CHAPTER 53”

By JOHN CARTER

(Delivered in Regent Hall, 1958)

Dear Brethren and Sisters, may we regard this evening’s study as being in the nature of an exposition or meditation. Let us first consider, through the eyes of the prophet Isaiah, what was fulfilled in him who was the servant of God; and realise how closely his work is connected with ourselves. We may then, through the very word that God has given to us, feel something of that, which those men felt who accompanied with the Lord; when out of the wealth of his understanding of the Word of God, he opened up unto them the scriptures. They were able to say: “Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way.” So may it be that the Word of God will have a like effect of that on us tonight, as we study it together; that our appreciation of it may be enlarged, our spiritual understanding deepened and our hearts more aglow in response to the wonderful things that God has done in Jesus Christ our Lord.

HEZEKIAH’S ILLNESS

The prophet Isaiah, as we know, ministered in the days of Uzziah, Jotham Ahaz and Hezekiah. Uzziah was that king who entered into the holy place daring and presuming upon the office of priesthood, only to withdraw himself hurriedly as he was smitten by God, with the leprosy mounting up on his face. Perhaps we can solve something of the chronology of this period by recognising that Jotham would reign as co-ruler with his father Uzziah, who must have been withdrawn from public service because of the leprosy which came upon him. But leprosy was not limited to King Uzziah. We are told of Hezekiah himself, that he was smitten with something for which the word *boil* is used, in what the prophet told him to do, by way of healing. But it is generally considered that Hezekiah himself at this time was suffering from what is known as elephantiasis, a form of leprosy in which the limbs swell and blacken and thus resemble the legs of an elephant, from which the name of ‘this particular form of leprosy is taken.

There were circumstances in Hezekiah’s life which provided *a kind* of background (I use the words, a kind of background, advisedly) to what the prophet had to say. The king was smitten— smitten with leprosy, and the words that are used in this prophecy, “We esteemed him *stricken*” — “For the transgression of my people was he *stricken*” are words that are used peculiarly in the 13th and 14th chapters of Leviticus, in which sanitary regulations governing skin diseases are provided; wherein the priest had to diagnose what were

infectious diseases. It is a word that is peculiarly applied to leprosy. But when a case was healed of leprosy, it was the province of the priest to pronounce the man healed, and the very word that occurs in those chapters concerning leprosy is the word that occurs here: “with his stripes we are *healed*.”

Here then in the circumstances of the king’s life, was something which provided the language of this chapter in these respects, but not only so, the king himself was the subject of a *prolonging of days*, even as the prophet speaks of the greater than Hezekiah. He shall prolong his days for there was an extension of life given to him. But at the time his malady afflicted him he was not married. He hadn’t taken the necessary steps for ensuring a succession to the throne and immediately after his recovery he married Hephzibah and the marriage is commemorated in the words of Isaiah in a later chapter where he speaks of the land being *Beulah* and *Hephzibah*. “The Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be married,”—playing upon the name of the one who became the wife of Hezekiah. Then sometime afterwards Manassah was born and he saw his seed and there alas the parallel breaks down very sadly indeed. But here were circumstances which did suggest somewhat, the meaning of the words of the prophet.

HEZEKIAH HEALED

But there is one further point which I think is interesting in connection with this parallel and that is found in the second book of Kings, Chapter 20. In the 5th verse we read, where God is speaking, to the prophet: “Turn again and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father; I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears, behold I will *heal* thee. On the third day thou shall go up unto the House of the Lord.” You will remember that Paul, in opening the 15th chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians said: that the first things he preached to them was that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures. (Suppose we put to ourselves the exercise of finding how many passages there are in the Old Testament, that Christ would rise the third day according to the scriptures.) Paul tells us that he demonstrated to the Corinthians from the scriptures that Christ would rise the third day. Well there was one in connection with the offering of the first sheaf to which Paul himself alludes in the same chapter, where he says: “Christ the first fruits, afterwards they that are Christ’s at his coming, then the end.” A clear reference to the three feasts of Israel. He tells us that in the parable of the calendar, the cycle of the agricultural ingathering in Israel’s life was a prefiguration of God’s ingathering by resurrection from the dead. But the first sheaf was offered on the morrow after the sabbath on the third day. May not one of the references to the third day be

found in the experience of Hezekiah, whose prolonging of days in entering into the House of the Lord was on the third day.

Be that as it may, I think it is evident that there were, in the circumstances of Hezekiah's life, that which did provide a kind of parallel to what the prophet is speaking about.

JESUS AS A SERVANT

Now, and much more importantly, we turn to what the prophet had to say concerning the greater servant of God, the Lord Jesus. Now we must notice that this prophecy is one of what are known as the servant prophecies of Isaiah. They begin with the 42nd chapter. "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect *in whom my soul delighteth.*" and the important thing in connection with that verse is that word for word for the Greek translation of those words in Isaiah, they are what we are told in the gospels, what the Almighty said when Jesus was baptised: "This is my beloved son *in whom I am well pleased.*" Here we have the first identification of the servant from the Almighty Himself. But as we read on in these servant prophecies we observe that there is an ever clearer recognition of the fact that the servant must suffer. He shall not fail nor be discouraged is a mere suggestion, but the reference that he should be cut off for the covenant of the people is more than a hint that, through his death, the covenants of God would be confirmed.

In the 50th chapter, verse 6. we are told however, that "he would set his face like a flint and hide not his face from shame and spitting". The one to whom that had come was the pattern student, the one whose ear was always open to hear God's word and to attend upon His word. More than that it was one who could say, and say it in his own right: "He is near that justifieth me." Those words imply that the servant of God would be the sinless one: for he is the only one of whom it could be said in his own right that God would justify him. For to justify is to pronounce righteous and God could look upon His Son and recognise that there were *no hidden motives or secrets*, away from Him.

Therefore God could exalt him and vindicate him and justify him. It is written in this chapter that by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. It is on the basis of our sins forgiven for Christ's sake that we are justified or esteemed by God as righteous, but that, by the forgiveness of sins. But it is written concerning the servant of God, "that he would be near." who would justify him and the particular bearing of that upon the Lord's own life and experience we shall see by and by.

JESUS ACKNOWLEDGES THE SERVANT'S ROLE

The word “servant” is one that comes out in the Lord’s own utterances, hidden a little by the variant usage of language in our Authorised Version. In the context where he speaks of brethren serving one another he tells us that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto or using the same word, came not to be “*served*” but to serve and to give his life a ransom for *many*. So speaking the Lord identified his work with that of a servant and the very word “many” comes from this chapter. As it does also in another reference when he said, taking the wine which was one of the cups at the Jewish passover, and transforming it into the memorial of his own work, he said, “This is the blood of the new covenant shed for *many* for the remission of sins.” The use of that word “many” by Jesus in those two passages and others too, turn our minds back to these phrases in this prophecy of Isaiah and I believe are a clear allusion to them. That is to say, the very phrasing of the prophet so permeated the mind of the Lord Jesus that his very language echoes the words of the prophet Isaiah. That word “many” should never be read without thinking of its background in this chapter.

But there are other specific allusions, as for example in Acts chapter 4, verse 27. The disciples are assembled and are in prayer to God: “For of a truth against thy *holy child, Jesus*, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” Then the last sentence of verse 30: “signs and wonders may be done by the name of *thy holy child, Jesus*.” The word “child” there is the translation of a word that means “boy” and just as in the colonial sense, where white people have coloured servants and they have a house boy, or so many boys on their staff, so the Greek word here translated “child” which means “boy” is used in the sense of “servant”. That is to say it wasn’t used in the sense of a descendant from a parent, but in the sense of being one of the domestics or servants. The revisers recognising that, they have here given us the word servant “of a truth against thy *holy servant, Jesus*”. “By the name of thy *holy servant, Jesus*.” That too is a distinct allusion to the servant prophecies of Isaiah.

THE SERVANT TO BE EXALTED

There are one or two others that we shall more specifically look at when we come to them. But just as we have turned to these phrases in the New Testament, to find linkage with this prophet, so the prophet’s words himself will turn us elsewhere, in order that we might catch the allusion that he is making. Now we will turn to verse 13 of chapter 52 and continue along, stopping here and anon to

turn to other passages which throw light upon the statements of the prophet: trying to understand his meaning, trying to fathom the connection between the various statements he makes, so that we can see the development of a theme, and a purpose through the chapter.

“Behold,” he says, “my servant shall deal prudently” (or “prosper” as the margin has it) the word that is used when Joshua had to lead them into the inheritance. If you do this, said God, “thou shalt *prosper* in all thy ways,” and here is another Joshua to lead them into an inheritance. “He shall be exalted and extolled and be very high.” Now in the 6th chapter of Isaiah: In the very year that Uzziah, the leprous king, died, the prophet had a vision of the king-to-be. “In the year that Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne; high and lifted up and his train filled the temple.” When John quotes some later words of this chapter in his gospel, he says, “These things spake Isaiah when he saw his glory and spake of him” (John 12:41). So John tells us in his gospel that Isaiah was speaking of the glory of Christ here and that “the Lord high and lifted up.” (6:1) is the manifestation of the Eternal in the one who would sit upon David’s throne. He saw him sitting upon a throne. He was not only a king upon his throne but in contrast to this king who had presumed upon the office of priesthood, this one is not only king but also priest, by virtue of Divine appointment. His train, or as the margin has it, “his skirts,” filled the temple. The words “his skirts” are priestly robes, for the king here “*high and lifted up*” is not only the King of the age to come, but being after the order of Melchisedec he is a king upon his throne and a priest upon his throne. That it refers to the Millennial age is clear, because the third verse tells us:

“One cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.”

When then, Isaiah says (52:13), concerning this servant of God, that “*he shall be exalted and lifted up,*” he is telling us that this servant is none other than the one who is going to be king, whom he saw enthroned, when the earth shall be filled with the Glory of God and that threefold description of Holiness will ascend to the Almighty. But how, and in what way, is there going to be this manifestation of the Almighty? The answer comes in a surprising way and the surprise deepens as we go through the chapter. “*As many,*” says the prophet, “*were astonished at thee,*” and just as the word “*as*” implies as a counter point the word “*so*”; just to that extent must our minds travel on until we find that word “*so*”. “*As many were astonished at thee*” and the “*so*” comes in the opening words of verse 15. If any of you mark your Bibles I suggest you put parenthesis marks around, “His visage was so marred more than any man and his form than the sons of men,” because they are a parenthetic explanation of why men were astonished at him. The prophet

says: “*as many were astonished so shall he sprinkle many nations.*” There is a contrast quantitatively; as *many* (individuals) so shall he sprinkle *many* nations.

HIS VISAGE MARRED BY SUFFERING

But why were the many astonished at him. The answer comes in that parenthetical explanation: “*His visage was so marred more than any man and his form more than the sons of men.*” This, as I have said, comes as a surprising piece of information here, and we have to ask how, and in what way, was it fulfilled. First of all I think we must recognise that the Lord normally must have been a healthy person. He had a goodly heritage. He lived according to the laws of life and we may be sure there were no abuses whatever in his life. We may think of him as being in the fullness of healthy manly vigour when he began his ministry. But we are not left just to that inference. I think that the very fact that the women were so ready to bring their children to him shows that there must have been a charm and a comeliness and a graciousness about him. In fact we are told they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, in fulfilment of the prophetic Psalm: “Grace is poured into thy lips.” So we can think of him as winsome and attractive; one that won the confidence of men and women by his grace and his kindness and the general character that beamed out of him.

How then must we understand these words. I think against that background, and remembering what the prophet has to say as his theme develops, we are made to understand how they were fulfilled. The prophet is dealing with the closing hours of the life of the servant of God and in those closing hours these words were fulfilled. We can begin to trace their fulfilment when we think of him leaving the city after he had instituted his supper; after he had spoken the words of those (13th onward to the 17th) chapters of John. We think of him lingering a while maybe in the temple courts, for they were opened at midnight at the passover season; and perhaps that was the very safest place after they had arisen and gone in to speak the other chapters (the 16th and 17th) of John. Then the journey down into the valley, dark with shadows, and John points out in the 18th chapter in a picture that he draws; that there, was a picture of the Lord going down into the darkness.

The other gospel writers tell us of the agony when he sweats, as it were, great drops of blood. The writer to the Hebrews gives a little item of information which the gospel writers do not. He tells us *that* “*with strong crying and tears, he made supplication to Him, who was able to save him out of death and was heard in that he feared.*” Men have gone through a crisis in life and have come out of it with lined faces, sometimes with bleached hair and an impress has been left upon them that has never left them. But who has gone through a crisis like that which the

Lord went through in Gethsemane. Reverence demands that we do not seek to penetrate too far. But surely it was something outside the ordinary experience of ordinary men, that it produced such an effect upon him. It was bound up with his work which was to be consummated on the morrow, for there the battle was won. There the determination was reached that the cup must not pass from him for it was not the Father's will that it should be.

It was, incidentally (and perhaps this helps along the explanation) the anniversary of that dark night of the Lord when the passover lamb was slain. The anniversary was not on the morrow of that. It was when he was in Gethsemane that there was the anniversary, day for day. for that dark night in Egypt when the passover lamb was slain. May it not be that even there, was the beginning of his sufferings, which were only consummated on the day afterward. Sufferings bound up, inscrutable though it may be, with the work that he had to do as the Lamb of God that *bearth away the sin* of the world. When we think of how God views sin, and here in him is going to be provided the way whereby sin can be removed, can we possibly think that in some way the full horror of what sin meant and of the tremendous burden that lay upon him, as he was meeting the cross, met there, in the Lord's consciousness, as he pleaded with the Father. We cannot think for a moment that he came out of Gethsemane without the effects of the struggle being present upon his countenance. Yet the determination was made that enabled him, with that wonderful composure, to go through all that followed on the day afterwards.

But even there things were done that added to his appearance, when that crown of thorns was pressed upon his head. It wasn't done gently and the thorns were really thorns, if the traditional plant of the crown of thorns was correct. For it had spikes an inch long which would leave their scars upon his brow. Then when we remember that he hid not his face from spitting, we can well see how the words of the prophet were fulfilled: "*that his visage was so marred more than the sons of men*" (Isa. 52:14).

It may be from this point of view, that we need not think of Pilate as jesting or mocking or many other words which have been used. in an attempt to define Pilate's feeling, as he led Jesus out of the Judgment Hall and put him there before the Jews. Wasn't there something possibly of wonder and pathos in his words. What a sad and sorry spectacle this man of sorrows must have then presented after all he'd gone through, as Pilate said, "*Behold the man.*" There was no compassion in their hearts towards him, because it had been written that they had to esteem him *stricken* and *smitten*, of God. But there he was and there is the appeal of Pilate to behold him and to behold the man, as he was bearing the sorrows that came upon him.

MANY NATIONS SPRINKLED

But that this work was bound up with the work of Jesus as “the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world” is apparent when we go on to the next verse and take up that word “so”. As many were astonished at this which was done in connection with him, “*so shall he sprinkle many nations.*” The word “*sprinkle*” has given occasion to discussion, but here again the scriptures themselves help us. The word is used again and again in the book of Leviticus. It is used for example, in connection with the work of the day of Atonement, when the high priest had to sprinkle the blood of the atoning sacrifice upon the mercy seat. Following that, we can see, that just as in that sprinkling, there was the application of the atoning sacrifice in type; so here, in regard to this servant of God. When we are told, “*So shall he sprinkle many nations,*” we must not follow the words in their literal connotation. It means to say, he will bring to bear upon them, the effects of his work, which will be for the reconciliation of them towards God, for their atonement with God. The sprinkling was the application of the sacrifice in the appointed way, in whatever form it may have taken in the various symbolic ordinances of the law. Here, this one has to sprinkle many nations and the “*many*” in the one case is the contrast to the “*many*” in the other. But the fact that it is nations, enlarges the scope beyond the Jewish nation and in fact takes us back to the Abrahamic promises, where God said, “*In thee and in thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.*” So shall he sprinkle many nations and that that is the correct interpretation, is borne out by the use by Paul of the subsequent words of this verse, in his letter to the Romans.

The prophet says, “Kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them they shall see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.” We turn to Romans chapter 15 and note Paul’s application of these verses at verse 20. “So have I strived,” says Paul, “to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation. But as it is written, to whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand.” So the Apostle uses the words of the prophet in his own preaching and for bringing to the knowledge of men, the Gospel of Christ.

Now that being Paul’s usage of them, we turn back to the prophet and find that, with the interpretation of the word sprinkle, we have given, the chapter and the verse is in perfect harmony throughout. He shall bring to bear the effects of his sacrificial work upon nations, for the word of the Gospel of Christ will be preached to kings and to all that live and that which they have not heard, they shall consider; in the proclamation of the Gospel of their salvation at that time.

We see then from these opening verses, that the prophet is dealing with one

who is going to be exalted and enthroned; who is going to be a King and a Priest; who will go through dire sufferings in the process of his work. But the outcome of it will be that many nations will come within the scope of his redeeming work.

Now from that background we move on to a consideration of chapter 53, which continues the theme. In view of the largeness of what the prophet has indicated, he asks the question, "Who hath believed our report." You see he has just said at the end of verse 15 of Chapter 52 that kings will hear it. All nations will hear it.

A ROOT OUT OF DRY GROUND

Now he turns back to the circumstances of the servant, as he was manifested at first. Was he then going to receive such a reception. If ultimately kings will shut their mouths at him, if ultimately nations will receive of the benefit of his work; what would be his reception, when he appeared? So he asks, "Who *hath* believed our report and to whom *is* the arm of the Lord revealed?" (verse 1). Is it to be to nations then; is it to be to the one nation? Or when he comes will there be a failure to understand and a failure to appreciate him? Well, says the prophet, consider. He won't come as men expect such a one to come. It is expected that those who are heirs to royal thrones will be born in kings' palaces. Was this one to be born in high estate? Was the attention of all nations concerned with the birth? Not at all. "*He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground*" (verse 2). So God arranges His schemes, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

The Apostle tells us that the Jews looked for a sign and the Greeks sought after wisdom. Supposing the one whom God raised up to be a Redeemer had come in the way the Jews looked for him, marked by wondrous signs and displays of power. He would have attracted to him those who loved such display; those who were questing for powers themselves. It would have appealed to a certain type of men and women. Suppose he had come as the Greeks looked for him; in the world of intellectual achievement; in the schools of dialectics in which the Greek delighted. He would then have come to a still more limited group of people.

God's intention was that the appeal, bound up with the work of this servant, should be universal and it could only come to low and high alike, by the servant coming in the lowliest of estates; so that those that were high might be humbled; that the humble might receive him with glad hearts. That, in all the working of the purpose, God alone might be glorified. For it is God's purpose that no flesh should glory in His presence. So it was that a maiden, living in the remote parts of Galilee, in a little village of Nazareth, tucked away among the hills above the

plain of Ezdraelon; that such a maiden was chosen to be the mother of the Lord. The child was born in David's royal city, but so much was he a tender plant and a root out of a dry ground, that there was no room for them in the inn. The kahn or the inn consisted of two levels of floor, the lower level where the animals rested and fed, and a slightly raised level, say three or four feet above the ground, where the people who lodged at the inn (or the Kahn) lay down, using their outer clothes for covering for the night to sleep. Along the edge of that raised level was the trough in which the food of the animals was placed, and there the new born child was laid;

No reception in kings' palaces. No acclaim as is to be expected of a royal personage. But as one out of a dry ground.

From another point of view, a story which is told about a Roman Emperor, who, hearing of the fame of Jesus, asked that all of that line should be brought before him; still illustrates the point from another aspect. For there were gathered to the emperor as many as could be found of David's descendants and they were so manifestly of the peasant class, that it was so clear that they could not be possible claimants to royalty, and that they wouldn't in the least way be likely to raise the standard of revolt, or lead any agitation or revolution; that the emperor dismissed them from his presence. "A root out of a dry ground."

ARM OF THE LORD

In that sense we interpret the words, "*He hath no form nor comeliness, no beauty that we should desire him*" (verse 2). There were not those features about him that men looked for as desirable elements from a human point of view in connection with the offices to which this man will some day ascend. Now in contrast, "*he is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*" (verse 3). While he was the *Arm of the Lord* and the *Servant of God*, men hid their faces from him, and esteemed him not. We might, to see the full significance of that, ponder for a moment or two, what is implied in that word, the *Arm of the Lord*. The arm of a man is, of course, a part of his body. The arm of a man is that which he stretches out to help and the *Arm of the Lord* is what God has done to help. But just as the arm of a man is connected with the man, so pursuing the figure, we must see that there is some intimate connection between the Lord Jesus and the Almighty, to justify the term, "*the Arm of the Lord*" in connection with Jesus. Although not explicit, we believe it is fully implicit in the use of that figure, that Jesus was the Son of God. It is indeed indicated in the 52nd chapter, that this manifestation of God's power in His holy Arm, was for men's salvation. Listen to the 10th verse of chapter 52: "The Lord *hath made bare His holy arm* in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the

salvation of our God.” That is, of course, a beautiful illustration of the parallelism that characterises Hebrew speech. “He has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations and all the ends of the earth shall see” and parallel with the holy arm is “*the salvation of God*”, for here was the Saviour.

God has stretched out His arm in raising up a Son to be a Saviour, because we could not have been provided with a saviour apart from it, because no human being could have possibly lived the life of perfect obedience, that would ensure resurrection from the dead; and so provide one in whom could be vested the power to raise others also.

When the *Arm of the Lord* was revealed and the Son of God came this is how men treated him. We might stop for a second to think of the evidential value to the truth of the record in this fact. You can’t imagine any prophet, looking forward and speaking of one to come, who would be the Son of God, who of himself would depict such a treatment as is here described. Would he not naturally have described him as being in some way recognised and acclaimed and approved and exalted by men. I think we should. How comes it that the prophet has delineated such an opposite reception. It was as the prophet foretold, but the message could only be of God, who would reveal this which was so contrary to what would naturally have happened, as men would view it. But there was a Divine reason and that reason has already emerged from what we have considered in connection with his work, of sprinkling many nations. He was to be the one through whom redemption would come. So it is said, He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.

ESTEEMED A LEPER

Yet men *looked upon him* as an outcast and a leper. Not as a leper in fact but like as a leper as being an outcast. A leper was an outcast and yet in fact we were; not literally lepers but such as were leprous by sin, in that our sins were as a leprosy. “By his stripes we are *healed*.” You will remember, as we pointed out, that word was taken from that figure of leprosy. But we are *healed* because of him, because “*he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*” (Isa. 53:5). There was no iniquity in *him*. There were no transgressions in him. Why should the Lord have to suffer in the way that he did? Because God appointed that in him there should be declared His righteousness. And it could only be by one who was there, just where we are, in respect of our inheritance from Adam who could declare God’s righteousness (but we are involved in that) and so provide the way so that our sins could be forgiven. But the prophet doesn’t enter into that explanation. He states the simple fact that he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. Not that they were transferred to him as such, but that as a

result of his work they are taken away. But we would make a sad mistake if, while we have said that they were not, and could not be literally transferred to him that there was no burden upon him, in providing the condition for their removal.

BEARING OUR INFIRMITIES

Let us look at two passages in the New Testament. One in Matthew 8:17: Jesus had been healing and “when the evening was come they brought to him many that were possessed with devils and he healed all that were sick; that it might be fulfilled that was spoken by Esias the prophet, *Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses.*” Was there no sense of labour, no welling up of compassion for these people, that led him to do it? Of course there was. Since we are told that on one occasion he perceived that virtue had gone out of him, perhaps we may infer that his toilsome healing work was not without a sense of *giving of himself* as he did the work. Not only in the welling up of his large compassionate heart, as he looked upon them as sheep having no shepherd and as he entered into the feeling of their sufferings; but in the very giving of something in the physical power involved in doing this work of healing as he perceived that virtue had gone out of him.

BEARING OUR INIQUITIES

The other passage is in Peter’s first epistle, chapter 2. At verse 20, he says, “What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? If, when you do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even here unto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; (and Peter is looking back at Isaiah 53 here). When he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to Him that judgeth *righteously.*” (We will refer to this passage a little later.) “Who his own self *bare our sins in his own body on (or to) the tree*, that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness; *by whose stripes ye were healed.*” You will observe how Peter is quoting that. Then he quotes again, “ye were as sheep going astray,” and since we are sheep, he is the shepherd although he is the *Lamb of God* by a beautiful introversion of Divine figures. “Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” “Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body to the tree” and that explains how it was done, that when his body was nailed to the tree, there was a declaration of a Divine purpose, as a condition upon which our sins are forgiven. It was because, Son of God as he was, that the Lord’s body was a body belonging to the Adamic race, dying because of sin, Adam’s sin. There is the inheritance, there is the entail.

There in that voluntary going to the cross, (this is *the nerve of it*, brethren and sisters), *he declared the righteousness of God*. So then in a figure (just as it is in a figure that the blood of Jesus cleanses us from sin for blood can cleanse nothing in itself), he bore our sins in his body to the tree. But it was because his body could *rightly* go there and that he could go there *voluntarily*, that he could bare our sins, and our sins could be forgiven for his sake. That is Peter's explanation of what we are reading in this prophecy. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. "We have turned," he says, "everyone to his own way, like sheep." What does it mean to say that we have turned, everyone to his own way. Adam chose his own way at the beginning and we have all repeated Adam's mistake of going our own way.

What's the alternative to going our own way? There's the Lord's way and who alone chose the Lord's way, but the Lord's anointed himself. That's the contrast; we've chosen our own way; he chose the Lord's way. "Not my will but thine be done."

HIS SUFFERING AND TRIAL PUBLICISED

Now since this is to happen to the servant of God; how could it be arranged, that this could be done in such a way, that the Divine objects could be brought to men. The Lord could have retired to the wilderness and in the presence of the Angels, say, have laid down his life. Would that have achieved the Divine purpose? So far as the offering of himself. But that was not the whole of the purpose, because this, you see; what the Son was doing: this that the servant of God was doing, was something that dynamically concerned men and women and therefore it had to be done in such a way, that the very fact of it, as well as the effects of it, were brought to bear on men and women. Now how could that be done? Only by some publicity attaching to the way our Lord laid down his life. There must be some publicity. Paul gets the idea when writing to Galatians, after he has been speaking. "*I am crucified with Christ*," he says, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that you have so soon turned away, before whom Christ was evidently set forth—and the word is "*placarded*", that expresses the word "*placarded*" like the placards in the street that are designed to *force* themselves upon your attention. They're there to attract your attention, to bring to bear with all that power, that the person who has the placard put there, wishes you to notice. It was just so here. It was necessary that, in some way the Lord should die; that the facts of his death were so evident that men were *constrained* to look at them. But how could it be accomplished? Well the prophet indicates how God did accomplish it.

"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He was taken

from prison and from judgment” (Isa.. 53:7,8). So the death of the Servant had to be associated with judicial forms, a procedure of judgment; and there is perhaps no other way that can so focus attention upon the issues as a judicial procedure. How our papers publicise the decisions of the courts. How interested the people of ancient times were, as they gathered around the open space of the market, within the gates, to hear the decisions of the judges. How the oral decisions of the judges in ancient times were impressed upon the minds of the people and became, as it were, unwritten laws, for their social life. When the judgment assumed more detailed forms, still more was the floodlight of publicity on what was done. So in the eyes of the whole nation of Israel, the facts connected with Jesus were brought to bear in an inescapable way.

We have mentioned the multitudes that assembled in Jerusalem for the passover. Josephus says two million people. I’m not concerned” whether this figure is accurate or not. The fact that he can name such a figure impresses us with the fact that the place must have been crowded; and all that crowd knew of the judicial procedure. But it was a judicial procedure that was a scandal to justice. He is afflicted and he opened not his mouth, for the procedure of justice was wrong. The jurisprudence of Israel had built up a series of regulations to safeguard the interests of the prisoner, the charges had to be made by witnesses; no trial should be by night; no trial should be clandestine and a host of other details, everyone of which _ was disregarded, as the whole system was torn to tatters by the attitude of the rulers of Israel. When the Lord stood before Pilate, who confessed that he found no fault in him, he had him scourged, which. was a crime, for an innocent man to be subjected to. Still more was it a crime, that Pilate should pronounce him innocent and then allow him to be condemned to the gallows.

“*He was taken from prison and from judgment*” (verse 8) and yet Peter tells us that while he was there, he wasn’t stood before Pilate or Annas or Caiaphas. “He committed himself,” says Peter, who saw the Lord in the judgment hall and didn’t know what the Lord was doing, unless it had been revealed to him, “he committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.” The Lord’s mind was not centred on Herod or Pilate, Annas or Caiaphas, it was centred on his Father in heaven and *he knew* that He would *vindicate* him. Surely at that time, the words must have been in his mind, “*He is near that justifieth me*” and how abundantly the Father justified him when presently he was “raised from the dead and exalted to His own right hand.”

“Who shall declare his generation?” A question that suggests that he, being cut off, there would be a termination of his life and a termination of all succession with him. “He was *cut off out of the land* of the living; for the transgression of my

people was he smitten” (verse 8). Here then is going to be a seedless man apparently without a posterity. Yet we shall be told presently “*he shall see his seed*” but we’ll wait till we get there, noting merely the fact the question asked.

AN HONOURABLE BURIAL

But now there is another problem. If it was by judicial procedure that the Lord had to meet his death, in order that there might be this publicity attaching to it, that God required for His purposes and since it was the custom in the New Testament times, that the body of one crucified should be cast out into Gehenna; how could the Lord’s purpose, that His holy one should not see corruption, but should he raised from the dead, be accomplished again, with due regard, not only of the decorum of the matter, but also the facts to be established? The answer is in the prophet. It is wonderful, brethren and sisters, when we face these issues and look at these problems, how the answers come in the prophecy of Isaiah. “He made his grave with the *wicked*,” crucified with malefactors, and “with a *rich man* was his tomb”. The prophet tells us why that and it may seem at first obscure why! “Because he had done no violence, neither was there deceit in his mouth.” Why was it, because of his sinlessness, he had to share a rich man’s tomb? Because if there hadn’t been a man of sufficient influence and with that rare courage at that time, to go to Pilate and beg the body of Jesus, there would have been no *honourable* burial for the Son of God. But God foresaw its need and provided for it. Thus it was that two men were there who summoned up their courage and came out of their secret discipleship. The one to go and buy what was a princely amount of, spices.

A MULTITUDINOUS SEED

“When he shall be made an offering for sin, he shall see his seed (*his seed*) (verse 10), and who shall declare his generation?” Jesus said before Pilate, knowing that his work would go on, “he that is of the Truth heareth my voice.” What a sublime declaration that was in such a crisis. “What is Truth?” said Pilate, and Jesus answered, “he that is of the Truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37). But this isn’t the end, there is going to be a succession of men who hear the Truth, the Truth for which I’m standing, the Truth which is being illustrated and embodied in me. There will be adherents of this. The contemporary writer with Isaiah in the Psalms (45:16) says, “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.” “*He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*” (verse 10). Then we get another word that is rather significant: “He shall see of the *travail* of his soul and shall be satisfied” (verse 11). “*Travail*” is distinctly the woman’s lot in life. “I will multiply thy sorrow and thy conception.” How strangely that the figure of

travail should be used here, and yet it's right. For travail is the toil from which comes the new birth, the new order or the new being as the case may be. Here out of this man's sufferings is going to emerge new things, a new creation and therefore it's *travail*.

But since we are looking at this by meditation as well as devotion, might we think also that the word leads us to this. Here he was suffering the effects of what had come by sin, dying; "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee" (Gen. 3:17). There were thorns upon his brow and to complete the cycle pertaining to the consequences that came by sin, here is the travail too, the travail of soul. Thus from his sufferings emerges a new creation and he will be satisfied when he sees it. This is the practical effect that, "by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for he shall bear their iniquities" (verse 11).

Now we must stop for a moment, for "*bear their iniquities*" takes us back to the day of Atonement when two goats were taken, both for the Lord, one slain and then the priest confessed all the sins and iniquities and transgressions upon the head of the live goat. Then by a fit man it was taken away into a land that was uninhabited, the land of forgetfulness. As is the offering for sin so is the goat that bears away to forgetfulness our sins. "*For he shall bear their iniquities.*"

JESUS HIGHLY EXALTED

So God will divide him a portion with the great, the immortal great, because of his work. The strong who are immortally strong seeing they have been exalted because of him; and that because he has poured out his soul unto death, because he had been numbered with transgressors and because he has borne the sin of many. "He poured out his soul unto death." Do you recall the expression in Philippians where Paul harks back to this. It is lost in our Authorised version. But another version is so common that it ought to suggest it to us at once. Here it is in Philippians 2, verse 5, "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God (as the arm of the Lord) thought it not a thing to be *grasped at* (R.V.) to be equal with God." "Ye shall be as gods" was said at the beginning and they grasped at it. But he *emptied himself*, a reference to "*he poured out his soul unto death*" (Isa. 53:12). "He emptied himself and took upon him the form of a servant," as these servant prophecies required, "and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, the death of the cross wherefore God has (and mark again how Paul gathers up the words of the prophecy) "*Highly exalted him.*" "He shall be *lifted up*" and "*very high*" and that because he has poured out his soul unto death. The offerer for sin is the priest. "He made intercession for the

transgressors.”

Well, brethren and sisters, perhaps we have been able to suggest a few lines of thought in connection with this very very wonderful prophecy. If it humbles our pride as we see God’s work in Christ Jesus; if it makes our hearts glow at the wonder of His grace, in providing such a one for our sins, surely the Word of God has not been written in vain.

DOCTRINAL ERROR EXPOSED

In presenting his second article "THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA" in THE CHRISTADELPHIAN, August 1958, page 372, Bro. Carter alludes to the writings of a certain contemporary brother in Australia (outside the "Shield" fellowship) whose teachings on the nature and sacrifice of Christ, were set out from time to time in various pamphlets, extant at the time of his visit to Australia.

Bro. Carter felt it his duty, in the interests of reunion, to expose these teachings as being out of harmony with doctrines held as scriptural by the "Central Fellowship" in Great Britain.

The citations quoted by Bro. Carter from these writings are essential to the understanding of his comments in refuting them, and are therefore given in full.

Under the heading "CITATION" is the quotation Bro. Carter makes from the writings of Bro. ————. In each case the "COMMENT" is that of Bro. Carter. The teachings of Bro. ———— are expressed by Bro. Carter in propositions I to VII.

THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA

Last month we reported on the reunion efforts in Australia, and pointed out that in the cross currents and agitations there, ideas had been put forward by certain brethren which were as far astray one way, as ideas they were opposing were the other.

As we pointed out last month, we have long recognised the tendency on the part of some "Berean" brethren to swing towards the doctrines of the late J. J. Andrew; and the same can be recognised in the contentions of some in Australia. We will now examine some of these contentions, which have been dogmatically, but in our judgment, mistakenly advanced as representing the views of the Central Fellowship. We might introduce the matter with a quotation from a letter recently received from the U.S.A.

The writer says:

"Your article 'Christ Given' (CHRISTADELPHIAN, May, page 127) is certainly one that strikes the core of the matter and in my opinion brings to light the fact that I have long suspected, that many of the extremists in the former "Berean" fellowship, now quite fittingly supporters of 'The Old Paths', are in reality closer to the teaching of J. J. Andrew than they realise.

“I wonder if the ‘Old Path’ supporters endorse the belief which I know is a part of their followers’ doctrine and those with whom they are in fellowship now of the Berean side, i.e., that it is a sin to be born into the human family.

“Consequently they say Christ is a ‘*sinner*’ in that respect and alienated from God by being a son of Adam. I think the time has come when those who are so keenly concerned in ‘heresy hunting’ should be given some information in starting to clean their own house; or else agree the things they fellowship are believed by them too as being truth.”

This brings the matter to a focus. We mentioned in THE CHRISTADELPHIAN, 1957, page 311, the similarity between the teaching of Bro. ——— (referred to above) and J. J. Andrew.

We propose now illustrating our assessment of this matter by giving some quotations from Bro. ———’s writings with comments.

In doing this we do not forget the nebulosness of some of these discussions and the sterility in ecclesial life they seem to foster. Bro. ——— teaches the following:

I. THAT WE ARE ALIENATED FROM GOD BY CONDEMNATION IN ADAM.

CITATION: (from Bro. ———) “Before being baptised a believer is dead in being alienated from God (a) by ignorance, (b) condemnation inherited from Adam, and (c) trespasses and sins.”

COMMENT: (by Bro. Carter) The Bible supports (a) and (c) (see Eph. 4:18; Col. 1:21), but is silent about (b).

CITATION: “The trespass in Eden produced two related results, both of which excited God’s displeasure and were causes of Adam’s position as an outcast. These were (a) his personal guilt and (b) his unclean physical condition.”

“No one in Adam can cease to be ‘by nature’ a child of wrath on his own terms.”

“Paul in Eph. 2:3 declares all to be ‘by nature children of wrath’. The wrath here referred to is the wrath or displeasure of God. Now only one thing is the cause of His disfavour namely sin. With what sin, then, in a newly born irresponsible infant is God displeased? Obviously not disobedience but inherited sin is the answer.”

COMMENT: These statements are full of errors. Although what we do arises out of our nature, yet it is for what we do, and not for our nature, that we are “*children of wrath*”. The context in Eph. 2:3 shows this. That “*by nature*” is too narrowly construed is evident when we note that Gentiles “*by nature*” fulfil the law (Rom. 2:14). It is clear that “*by birth*” or “*by physical constitution*” is not the meaning. To talk of “*inherited sin*” is to talk jargon. We inherit mortality and a tendency to sin but this does not make us the subject of wrath until we sin. Otherwise, since Jesus was of our nature he would be a child of wrath: which is absurd.

CITATION: Speaking of Romans 8:1, 2, we are told: “this simply means that the release (by the sacrifice of Christ) from the condemnation inherited from Adam plus transgression was the answer—cherished by them ‘in faith’—to the indwelling deathfulness which was their weakness when experiencing persecution.”

COMMENT: This is “*simply*” not correct. The only “*condemnation*” inherited from Adam is mortality: we do not inherit any personal condemnation; we shall receive personal condemnation for our sins unless they are forgiven now and our mortality will be swallowed up of life at the coming of the Lord.

CITATION: He speaks of men “by legacy from Adam” being still “children of wrath” and then adds: “But those ‘in Christ’, not being ‘in the flesh’—i.e. ‘in Adam’—*can* please God; not because baptism renders physically inactive their fleshly tendencies to transgress, but because by baptismal induction into Christ their relationship to the constitution of sin *involving the condemnation inherited from Adam*—is, as a basis for the blotting out of past sins, cancelled; and that, conditional on their walking ‘in the light’, they are cleansed from all future unrighteous acts through the mediation of Jesus their High Priest (1 John 1:9; Heb. 2:17).”

COMMENT: This is a confused sentence. We are all ‘*in Adam*’ so long as we live; for ‘*in Adam*’ defines the physical relationship we sustain to the first man. However, the paragraph affirms that our relationship to the ‘constitution of sin’ involves a condemnation inherited from Adam. This we believe to be unscriptural. Moreover, “in the flesh” cannot be equated with “in Adam”. “*In Adam*” denotes only physical descent, but “*in the flesh*” in Rom. 8:9 means to have the mind of the flesh in opposition to God.

CITATION: Further since we are told: “Because it was the result of, and conditioned by sin, this ‘corruption’ or ‘unclean-ness’ defiled the nature it cursed. That *its possession caused estrangement from God* is decisively proved by the fact that myriads of human beings, innocent of transgression (infants)

have died and still die. If transgression (as ‘the only form of sin’) left Adam’s ‘very good’ body unchanged and if (as logically follows) infants, at birth, are at one with God, why do they die?”

COMMENT: There is here more confusion. Infants die because they inherit the mortality that has come by sin. But that does not mean they die because they are estranged. Estrangement arises from ignorance or wicked works: the word can only be rightly applied where reconciliation is possible; babies are just flesh and as such sustain no relationship personally to God one way or the other. To talk of “*possession*” of human nature causing estrangement misses entirely the essential factors of separation from God and reconciliation to Him. Its fallacy is shown by the fact that Jesus possessed our nature, but he was never estranged from God.

II. THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS OF SIN THAT SEPARATE FROM GOD.

CITATION: “There is one thing that I firmly believe, that you once believed and that was believed by brethren Dr. Thomas, R. Roberts and C. C. Walker as well as by Bro. J. J. Andrew, viz., that *two* aspects of sin separate all unregenerate men from God: (a) man’s inherited uncleanness and (b) transgression. The former (a) Paul variously styles ‘the law of sin and death’ (Rom. 7:23; 8:2); ‘him that had the power of death’ (Heb. 2:14); ‘the sting of death’ (I Cor. 15:56); ‘our old man’ (Rom 6:6) and ‘the uncircumcision of your flesh’ (Col. 2:13). The latter (b) he refers to as ‘your sins’.”

“What was the *barrier preventing fellowship* between God and man? Man’s guilt *and inherited sinful nature*. In scriptural phrasing ‘transgressions’ and ‘uncleanness’ (Lev. 16:16).” “Between the fall of Adam and crucifixion of Christ, sin as cause and effect existed as a barrier between God and man. Before God can favourably look upon man, his evil and iniquity must be covered. This applies to death and corruption as well as transgression.”

“Accordingly the devil (sin enthroned in the flesh) and his works (disobedience) stood as a barrier or obstacle between fallen man and divine favour, for sin (both as an actuating principle in the flesh, and transgression) is rebellion against the authority of God.”

“It may be asked, what proof have we that the ‘devil’ or ‘sin in the flesh’, as well as disobedience, was a barrier between God and man?”

“That the blood of Christ made of none effect as a barrier between God and His people, that in the flesh having the power of death (the devil) as well as personal sins (the works of the devil), is the direct teaching of the Spirit word, and does not, as some assert, logically result in the acceptance of the Andrew

theory of the non-resurrection of enlightened rejectors.”

“The cause of disobedience dwelling in and animating the flesh, is obnoxious to God, and unoffered for, alienates all its possessors from Him. That is why, although possessing a spotless character, Jesus required to be ‘brought nigh’.

COMMENT: There are as *many* aspects of sin as there are forms of transgression. All the works of the flesh enumerated by Paul are aspects of sin. The confusion in the above extracts arises from treating sin in its literal sense and “*sin*” when used metonymically for the impulses to sin, as both belonging to one category. Anger and malice are alike aspects of sin: but impulses are not literally sin until they are expressed in wrong thought or action.

Sin used as a literal term, and “*sin*” used by metonymy, cannot be classed in one category. Because we read “all flesh is grass” we do not say there are two kinds of grass—the green variety that is rooted in the soil and a variety that walks on two legs. Because Jesus said “This is my body” as he took the bread of the Passover in his hands, we do not say there are two kinds of bodies of Jesus, one of flesh and one of flour. The Romanist denies the metaphor and believes in “transubstantiation”—although the actual body of Jesus was there when Jesus spoke the words.

The argument we are considering confuses the literal and figurative and brings them both within one category. In addition, if the flesh is the “barrier” between God and man, then it was a barrier in the case of Jesus. This appears to be recognised by saying that Jesus needed to be “brought nigh”. Was there ever a barrier between Jesus and God that estranged him? How did he need to be brought nigh? Was he not always the beloved Son?

III. JESUS WAS UNDER A CURSE AND WAS A CHILD OF WRATH.

This is involved in the preceding, but finds precise expression in the following:

CITATION: “But in possessing the nature of a condemned race he (Jesus) came under condemnation: ‘sin in the flesh’ could not have been anti-typically condemned in anyone upon whom the condemnation common to the race did not rest. Jesus was born under the condemnation or curse, so that ‘through death he could make it of none effect. *At birth, therefore, his relationship to God was no different from that of other descendants of Adam, who, ‘by nature’ are ‘children of wrath’.* (Eph. 2:4).

COMMENT: That the disfavour of God towards Jesus is intended is clear from the further statement:

“to concede that a thing is condemned and yet contend that it is not the object of disfavour, is to postulate a contradiction in terms.”

When in the 1890’s a correspondent used the phrase “alienation of Christ” only to refute it, Bro. Roberts interpolated the phrase “God pardon the expression appearing in THE CHRISTADELPHIAN”. A theory that makes the son of God a child of wrath is self-condemned.

IV. MAN IS ESTRANGED BECAUSE OF HIS NATURE WHETHER “SINNER OR NO”.

CITATION: “Besides man’s defilement having ‘actual’ or ‘literal’ *sin as its source*, its inner essence consists in the organic permeation of his ‘being’ by a sin-principle that continually projects into his consciousness ‘contrary to God’ ideas and inclinations; thus perpetually echoing ‘the spirit of disobedience’ infused into the mind of the first man by disobedience.

“This sin-impregnated nature God justifiably views with extreme disfavour and (mainly because that nature is instinct with sin-begotten opposition to His law) *He regards its possessors as estranged from Him whether they are transgressors or not*. He, therefore, required ‘sin by metonymy’ as well as ‘literal’ sin to be condemned by sacrifice: so that ‘through death’ it—as ‘the devil’ having ‘the power of death’—might be ‘destroyed’, ‘brought to nought’, ‘made of none effect’, ‘put off’ or ‘put away’.

“Could God be other than *displeased with and estranged from* a nature containing, swayed and energised by ‘a principle contrary to’ Him? Can He be completely ‘at one’ with any possessor (*sinner or no*) of a ‘tendency so inevitable in its sin-producing power that Paul can say that through Adam’s sin all sinned’?”

“Man’s inherited uncleanness, then—possessed by whomsoever, sinner or no—stands as an obstacle between every unregenerate son of Adam and resurrection to eternal life as well as personal transgression.”

“From this it is certain that at baptism not only are ‘the sins’ of the believer ‘washed away’, the *state of estrangement occasioned ‘by nature’* is, provisionally, at an end too. In thus contending Bro. J. J. Andrew was quite right.”

COMMENT: It is important that we note the words “*sinner or no*” in these extracts, because the use of these words clearly includes Jesus, the sinless one, in the estrangement and displeasure of God. One would have thought such a

conclusion was of itself sufficient to show that there is something wrong with the premises laid down. God is estranged from individuals, and it is foolish to speak of estrangement from “a nature”. But there is more.

V. JESUS WAS PROVISIONALLY CLEANSED BY CIRCUMCISION.

CITATION: “That Jesus, being ‘born of a woman’, was no exception is proved by the fact that, like all other Jews, He was provisionally cleansed from inherited sin by being circumcised, and that His mother offered according to the law for her cleansing (Lev. 12:8, Luke 2:21 to 24).”

COMMENT: How could a rite performed on a babe cleanse anything, provisionally or in fact? Human nature with its weakness and mortality, will be cleansed by transformation wrought by the Spirit of God after the resurrection. This mortality is our misfortune and not our fault, as Dr. Thomas said, and it is an outrage on justice to talk of estrangement as a result of something a person cannot help. We shall be cleansed of our mortality by the transforming energy of the Spirit of God when the Lord comes.

VI. JESUS WAS LIABLE TO A VIOLENT DEATH BECAUSE HE SHARED OUR NATURE.

CITATION: “The plain truth is that any possessor of sinful flesh is liable to pain or death *in any form* . . . this liability is not negated by a guiltless character . . . His being ‘born of a woman’ rendered Him liable to suffer a violent death.”

COMMENT: If death is a punishment, and surely an imposed violent death must be so regarded, then we are now told that the possession of a nature conferred by birth brings a liability for punishment. To what strange ends can theories lead us!

VII. BAPTISM IS NOT FOR SINS ONLY.

CITATION: “I deny that baptism is only concerned with the washing away of ‘our sins’ and affirm, in harmony with our pioneers, that it also symbolises the crucifixion of ‘our old man’ (the diabolos or sin-nature) ‘with him’ (Jesus), (Rom. 6) and that, therefore, baptism signifies the provisional cancellation of ‘the racial condemnation which we physically inherit’ as well as the forgiveness of ‘our sins’.”

COMMENT: Bro. C. C. Walker wrote in 1900: “We believe that in baptism, upon belief of the gospel, God forgives us ‘our sins’ for Christ’s sake, and that the name of Christ was preached among Jews and Gentiles for this express purpose by his express commission: ‘Go ye and teach all nations, baptising them in the

name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19). "Thus it is written and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that *repentance and remission of sins* should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:46-47). He had forgiven sins himself (Luke 5:20; 7:47). It was 'thy sins' in both cases referred to. How could it be otherwise? He taught his disciples to pray, 'Forgive us *our sins*' (Luke 11:4). The Apostolic preaching of his name always had reference to the repentance and remission of the sins of those who heard the word . . . there is no mention of 'Adamic sin'."

ANDREW-ROBERTS' DEBATE ON J.J. ANDREW'S TEACHING

We might go on, but enough has been quoted. We will now quote briefly from the Andrew-Roberts Debate, to show that all this is the same as J. J. Andrew's teaching.

Bro. Andrew wrote:

"Lust being the cause of physical corruption, every member of the race is necessarily the subject of Divine condemnation by reason of its possession; and the removal of this condemnation is requisite before they can 'have peace with God' (Rom. 5:1)."

"The denial that condemnation in Adam is legally taken away at baptism deprives that ceremony of half its efficacy."

The following questions and answers from the Andrew-Roberts Debate are also relevant. The questions are by J. J. Andrew and the replies by R. Roberts.

Q. 100.—The question is not whether a man can sin, but whether he was made or constituted a sinner by the offence of Adam?

A.—By Adam's offence he was brought into such a state of things that his being a sinner was inevitable. That is the fact of the case, and you must harmonise the facts and your maxims.

Q. 106.—Is it necessary for the shedding of blood to take away the sinful condition associated with birth?

A.—The object of the shedding of blood was to declare God's righteousness as the basis of His offer of forgiveness.

Q. 118-125.—Are we not alienated from God before we commit a single wicked work?

A.—Not in the same sense.

Q.—Not in the same sense?

A.—No. We are members of a sinful stock which will certainly bring forth wicked works left to itself.

Q.—Is it not the sinful condition which we have by nature in itself a cause of alienation from God?

A.—The whole human race is in a state of alienation from Him; it can only become reconciled by coming into harmony with Him, and sinful flesh cannot be in harmony with him.

Q.—Is “sinful flesh” in itself the cause of alienation from God, before a single act has been committed?

A.—It is the root of the mischief.

Q.—Is it in itself a cause of alienation from God?

A.—As we cannot consider the thing in itself, the question cannot be narrowed in that way.

Q.—Why cannot we consider it in itself? Are there not human creatures born who die before they have committed a single act?

A.—Yes. They are mere bits of animal organism.

Q.—Were they not in a state of alienation from God at birth?

A.—Alienation is only applicable to those who are capable of reconciliation.

Q.—Is it not applicable to any who are unable to do right or wrong?

A.—No. It is a moral relation, not affirmable of an unconscious babe.

Q. 129-138.— Are we not justified from “sin in the flesh” at the same time as from wicked deeds?

A.—That is your way of putting it. I put the facts: that God forgives our sins when we are baptised, and takes away sin in the flesh when we are changed.

Q.—In Eph. 2 we read, “And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins”. What do you mean by “trespasses and sins?”

A.—Wicked works.

Q.—Does it include “sin in the flesh” or the offence of Adam?

A.—Certainly not.

Q.—When it says in the third verse, “Ye were children of wrath”, it does not of course mean they were children of wrath then, because it is in the past tense?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Does it mean they were “children of wrath” previously?

A.—It means they were “by nature” such as become children of disobedience or wrath, such as sin, such as become transgressors.

Q.—Previous to baptism?

A.—Previous to baptism.

Q.—Were they not children of wrath in consequence of their nature?

A.—No doubt. I prefer to understand things rather than to jingle phrases.

Q.—It is not a jingling of phrases at all. Are those who possess “sin in the flesh” and have not committed a single wicked thing, children of wrath?

A.—It is the sense in which a young serpent would be an object of your

repugnance; although it has not power to sting you, it will have by and by if it grows.

Q.—Is it not the subject .of anger for its condition then? For its sinful nature?

A.—To be angry with a thing for its condition is absurd.

Q. 146.—But is not “sin in the flesh” in itself the object of divine wrath?

A.—It is “sin in the flesh” only in the sense of being that which will lead to sin afterwards. It is the impulse, but kept in subjection, it ceases to be the cause of wrath.

Q. 269.—When it becomes holy is not “sin -in the flesh” which defiled it the subject of justification?

A.—No. “Sin in the flesh” is physical; justification from that is by the change that is to come at another stage, viz., at the resurrection. Justification is moral first, physical afterwards.

Q. 280.—Not legally?

A.—I do not wish to deal in shadowy terms. I prefer the naked substance of truth. Adam sinned and was condemned, and we as his children inherit the mortality which was the consequence. God does not hold us responsible for what he did, but for our own sins.

Q. 413-415.—Did not that judgment bring condemnation upon all his descendants for his offences?

A.—It established a condition of things in which, if posterity ensued, they were necessarily sinners and therefore condemnation became the universal rule, and there can be no remission of that condemnation or forgiveness of sin without a preliminary vindication of God’s authority in the shedding of blood.

Q.—Are they not under condemnation for the offence of Adam before they do anything themselves, right or wrong?

A.—They are mortal because of Adam’s sin.

Q.—That is not an answer. Are they not under condemnation for the offence of Adam before they do anything, right or wrong?

A.—God condemns no man for Adam’s offence in the individual sense. Condemnation comes through it, which is a very different idea.

Q. 422.—Are they not “children of wrath”, and do they not die under the condemnation under which they are born?

A.—They are children who would grow up to be men who would provoke God’s wrath by disobedience if they lived, but as babies the wrath has not begun.

These questions and answers reveal the character of J. J. Andrew’s reasoning and the resemblance between the position of Bro. J. J. Andrew and Bro. _____ — is evident.

Extracts-J. J. Andrew’s “The Blood Of Covenant”

A few short quotations from Bro. Andrew’s pamphlet *The Blood of Covenant* confirm this impression.

“Sin in the flesh ... is the subject of divine reprobation.” (Page 4.)

“Adam’s descendants are ‘made sinners’ (Rom. 5:19) without any exercise on their part.” “Sacrifice is as essential to take away sin in its physical as in its moral aspect.”

“Christ only possessed sin physically, not morally, but all who are sprinkled with his blood possess sin in both forms.” (Page 7.)

The baptism of those who enter Christ is “a practical confession that they deserved for their ‘sin in the flesh’ and for their ‘wicked works’ a violent death similar to that which was inflicted on Christ”.

Abraham “was a sinner by birth and by deed, and needed sacrifice to cover his sin”. (Page 11.)

Circumcision showed that the “child was a sinner by birth.” (Page 12.)

“The sons of Adam cannot be cleansed from sinful flesh without bloodshedding.” (Page 17.)

“Justification from individual sins is necessary as well as justification from the offence of Adam.” (Page 18.)

Speaking of circumcision of Jesus: “This was the first act of justification of which Jesus partook. Its effect was to transfer him from the state of condemnation to death under which he was born into the condition described as being ‘alive’”. (Page 23.)

“To be justified in God’s sight is impossible for anyone inheriting sin’s nature.” (Page 34.)

“Sin in the flesh deserves the same penalty as personal transgression”; and so on with many references to “inherited sin” and justification from it.

Further citation is unnecessary... That these ideas were resisted at the time they were advanced is abundantly evident from the discussions in THE CHRISTADELPHIAN in the 1890’s.

We believe they are far removed from the plain truths of Scripture, which can be expressed in terms the simplest can understand, whereas contentions along the lines of these extracts, while sometimes having a show of logic, lead to strife about legal abstractions. Those who pursue them live in a fantasy world of words.

As Bro. Collyer said in the article we reproduced last month:

“Earnest brethren and sisters, anxious to hold the truth, have sometimes been perplexed and almost distracted in the strife of words, beyond their power to understand. The havoc that such strife may cause is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that one of the most capable men we ever had among us, in his efforts for legal logic, ended by teaching justification for sin without faith, and we were all slow to realise the full enormity of the position. I well remember the surprise and even consternation of one of his supporters when he was first shown this feature of the case.”

“That men are objects of divine anger because they are flesh,” was described by Bro. Collyer sixty years ago as the most outrageous statement made in the controversy on Adamic condemnation. To that we subscribe. These contentions have also embittered and estranged brethren who could find harmony and cooperation by accepting the facts of Scripture testimony. *But when legalistic minds insist on pursuing these mystifying tracks, and condemning all who will not follow them, we can only let them go their own way while we seek the sound paths of Scripture truth.*

REFERENCE TO PIONEER WRITINGS

Bro. Carter's third and final article appeared in THE CHRISTADELPHIAN, November 1958, page 515. In this he quotes extensively from our pioneer writers in support of the doctrinal position he adopted in the first two articles on "THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA".

THE TRUTH IN AUSTRALIA

- A FURTHER STATEMENT

Bro. Carter firstly refers to a letter of rejoinder from Bro. — to his "comments" on citations from this brother's writings. In this letter Bro. — gave a series of quotations from THE CHRISTADELPHIAN and other works on the truth to support his views. Bro. Carter then proceeds as follows:

What then of his quotations from Dr. Thomas and Bro Roberts? The answer is that in every controversy for the last eighty years, both sides have quoted Dr. Thomas, and in the 1890's Bro. Roberts' earlier writings were quoted against himself despite his denial of the inferences which were drawn from his earlier writings.

We need not be disturbed at this. It may be admitted that occasionally Dr. Thomas used language that is technical in character and is therefore liable to misuse. We shall show this presently. But that he taught what has been deduced from some of his words we believe can be roundly denied. We all know how (he words of Scripture are cited to prove the immortality of the soul. We have known strange ideas to be expressed by brethren, based upon misused Scripture language. The sentence upon Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," has been used to show that the sweat glands (and other cleansing organs) did not function until Adam had sinned; it has also been cited to prove that Adam was appointed a change of diet after sinning—now he must eat bread.

There is real point in the Lord's question, "How readest thou?" We propose, therefore, to give some quotations in which the very ideas that we understand Bro. — to teach are controverted, but which, controversy apart, are helpful to a right apprehension of the teaching of Scripture.

DEFILEMENT BY TRANSGRESSION

The Scriptures teach that all men are sinners, and wickedness has at times been so bad that God has seen that every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts

was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

The Lord witnesses to the fact that “out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matt. 15:19). He can even interpolate the phrase as axiomatic, “If ye *being evil*”.

The works of the flesh are catalogued by Paul more than once (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5) and in Rom. 1 his description of the Roman world of his day shows to what depths human nature descends when free from any controlling influence of the Word of God. James says that every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust (1:14).

Paul gives a personal account of his own conflicts as a man who is “carnal, sold under sin”—not carnal in the sense of being guilty of base sins, but fleshly as all are fleshly. And “SIN” is personified as the owner of men, because they have yielded service to sin. Paul then speaks of these wayward impulses working contrary to his own better desires as “sin that dwelleth in me”.

Here Paul uses the word as a metonym for the impulses within, which are sinful and are opposed to God’s will. He uses a series of parallel expressions for these wayward impulses such as “*a law—evil present with me,*” “*the law of sin in my members,*” and these parallels make clear what he meant by “*sin dwelling in me*”. Bro. ——— scoffingly derides this insistence on the use of metonymy, referring to it as a “jingle”, and “the semi-enigmatic terms ‘metonym’, ‘metonymy’, and ‘metonymical’”; but the figure has always been recognised, as we shall see by the quotations to be given.

These being the characteristics of the flesh it can be described as “unclean”. Besides having the inherited tendencies to sin we all do one or other of the things which Jesus said “defiles a man”.

DEATH OUR INHERITANCE

In addition to this inheritance of sinfulness man also inherits a dying nature. Paul traces both the sinfulness and the mortality to the fact that “by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

He proves that death is an inherited evil by recalling the fact that death reigned from Adam to Moses over men that had not sinned, as Adam had, under a penal code. The Edenic law carried a death penalty for disobedience, and some of the Mosaic laws involved death for disobedience; but we know of no such penal enactments throughout the patriarchal age. Yet death reigned—reigned because

death passed through to all men. All men are mortal and all have sinned.

ADAMIC CONDEMNATION DEFINED

It is at this point where theories of Adamic condemnation and language such as “inherited condemnation” and “inherited wrath” start up confusion and misunderstanding. The phrase “Adamic condemnation” has been used in the Truth’s literature, not as expressive of any personal condemnation derived from our descent from Adam but as a useful description of the inherited mortality that came into the world by the condemnation upon Adam.

It will be sufficient to cite Bro. Roberts’ lecture given in reply to Edward Turney, entitled THE SLAIN LAMB (page 9-10):

“It is the person, the individual, *the nature* that is condemned, because it was the person, Adam, that was the sinner. Condemnation in Adam means, therefore, that we are mortal in Adam; mortal in the physical constitution—the organisation. Look at any of us *when we are just newly born*. Why are we mortal at that moment? We have not sinned. Oh, but we sinned in Adam says the same theory. Did we sin in the individual sense in him? How could we sin individually when we did not exist? Paul says No! He says death reigned over them that *had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression*.

“Why is it we are mortal, then? In what sense is the sentence of Adam upon us when we are born? Well, we are Adam’s organisation. It is in the organisation that the law of mortality resides. It is in the physical substance that the principle of death is at work. Hence the phrase ‘this corruptible’. If the substance were not corruptible ‘life’ would be ours for ever.”

In THE CHRISTADELPHIAN he wrote:

“Suffering the Adamic condemnation is a question of physical constitution.” (1874, page 233), also again in the same year, “This mortality is our condemnation in Adam.”

ON ADAMIC NATURE

But let us hear Dr. Thomas. Speaking of Adam and Eve, he says:

“But when they adopted the Serpent’s reasonings as their own, these being at variance with the truth, caused an enmity against it in their thinkings, which is equivalent to ‘enmity against God’. When their sin was perfected, the propensities, or lusts, having been inflamed, became ‘a law in their members’;

and because it was implanted in their flesh by transgression, it is styled ‘the law of sin’; and death being the wages of sin, it is also termed, ‘the law of sin and death’; but by philosophy, ‘the law of nature’.”

Then in an oft-quoted passage he says:

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

“Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled ‘sinful flesh’, that is, *flesh full of sin*; so that *sin*, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called *man*. In human flesh ‘dwelleth no good thing’; and all the evil a man does is the result of this principle dwelling in him. Operating upon the brain, it excites the ‘propensities’ and sets the ‘intellect’ and ‘sentiments’ to work. The propensities are blind, and so are the intellect and sentiments in a purely natural state; when, therefore, the latter operate under the sole impulse of the propensities, ‘the understanding is darkened through ignorance, because of the blindness of the heart’. The nature of the lower animals is as full of this physical evil principle as the nature of man; though it cannot be styled *sin* with the same expressiveness; because it does not possess them as a result of their own transgression; the name, however, does not alter the nature of the thing.” (Elpis Israel.)

DR. THOMAS ON “CONSTITUTION”

In the same section Dr. Thomas draws out the figure of “Constitution”—that men are born citizens of Satan’s kingdom, as a man is born a British or American citizen. In this context he makes a much abused remark that “Children are born sinners because they are born of sinful flesh” to which he adds: *“This is a misfortune and not a crime.”*

In the same section he speaks of “men not only being made or constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam, but they become sinners even as he by actual transgression.” The last sentence of the quotation concerning the lower animals is usually quietly ignored.

This phrase “constituted sinners” was misused both in the controversies of the ‘70’s and also the ‘90’s. In June 1874, Bro. Roberts wrote:

“Only perversity would suppress the word ‘constitutional’, and allege that the Christadelphians teach Christ to have been a sinner,” and he added, “Finally, I do not teach that Christ was a sinner by birth or any other means: this is your misrepresentation. I believe he inherited in his flesh the result of Adam’s sin, as we do; not that he was a sinner himself... And here I add, for the sake of a few who are wondering what the phrase ‘constitutional sinner’ means, as once or twice employed by Dr. Thomas in reference to Christ; it means that he stood related to a sin-constitution of things—a state of things arising out of sin; without being himself a committer of sin. Sorrow arises out of sin; and he was a man of sorrow. Pain (among men) arises out of sin, and he suffered pain. Weakness arises from sin, and he was ‘crucified through weakness’. Mortality (among men) is the result of sin, and he was mortal, requiring to be saved from death (Heb. 5:7), and bringing life by his obedience (Rom. 5).

“Into this state of things he was introduced as we are introduced, in being born of a sinful woman. This is the sense of the phrase ‘a constitutional sinner’.”

In 1894 the following was written by Bro. F. G. Jannaway:

“An effort is then put forth to make Dr. Thomas endorse ‘the idea of imputing *the sin of Adam to helpless babes*’, by quoting the following remarks from THE REVEALED MYSTERY: ‘All mankind are born of corruptible parents into a *state of sin*. By this natural birth they become members of this sinful and evil state, and heirs of its disabilities. By virtue of this birth they are *constituted sinners*’.

“It would have been well if it had been noticed that Dr. Thomas uses this word *constituted* as Bro. Roberts uses it, *as a verb*, and *not as an adjective*. The doctor reveals his mind in further explaining the term thus—‘that is, they were endowed with a nature like his (Adam’s), which had become unclean as the result of disobedience’, and he distinctly states, ‘*not* because they were *responsible* transgressors’.

“Yet some are now contending that we require forgiving for that for which we are not responsible. The word of God teaches that we need *forgiving our own sins and redeeming from our vile bodies* (both of which are traceable to Adam’s offence, but which is a different thing from our being held guilty of that offence).

“Then some speak ‘of “*inherited wrath of God*”, from which “*we are at baptism delivered*”.’ This has been correctly described as jargon. Speak as the

oracles of God. Bible deliverance from Adamic inheritance is future. Thus Paul exclaimed, ‘Who *shall* deliver me?’ when speaking of the state into which he was born.

“‘*By nature children of wrath.*’ True! But what does Paul mean? Does he mean that- God is angry with us as soon as we are born? The very text in which the phrase occurs excludes such an unreasonable doctrine (Eph. 2:3). He speaks of ‘lusts of the flesh’, ‘desires of the flesh’, ‘desires of the mind’, ‘conversation in times past’, ‘*wherein we walked*’, ‘the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience’, all of which have to do with nature, but which require action superadded.

“Of all sin it may truly be said, ‘it is our nature so to do’. We are truly ‘by nature children of wrath’, but it is wrath against evil-doing; any other wrath is inconceivable.”

On this Bro. Roberts commented: “Bro. Jannaway has sufficiently answered the suggestion that Dr. Thomas in his phrases ‘constituted sinners’, ‘state of sin’, etc., harmonises with the contention now raised, that God ‘imputes’ the sin of Adam to his descendants.

“It is pretty much a strife of words in the way the thing is argued. Test the thing by its commonsense application, and the true state of the case must appear. If you impute an offence to a man, of course you can charge him with it. Imagine yourself charged by God or man with eating the forbidden fruit in Eden. Would not your understanding be outraged? Is it necessary to say, ‘You never did eat of the fruit; that you weren’t there to eat’? Adam ate; Adam sinned; Adam was condemned to death; Adam was driven out into a state of evil because of sin; you have been born into that state, or constitution of things, sharing his very being in all its relations, and therefore may be described as constitutional members of a sinful state, *alias* constituted sinners, that is, men helplessly made subject to a state of sin, from which you cannot by your own will deliver yourself.

“This is intelligible enough, and all that Dr. Thomas meant, or could mean by his definitions. To talk of ‘imputing sin’, is to confuse our understanding with an unscriptural conception. ‘Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,’ that is, to whom the Lord will not impute his own sin, but will forgive him his sins: the idea of imputing someone else’s sins to him is foreign alike to the Scriptures and commonsense.”

ONLY SIN CAN ALIENATE

Our relationship to Adam is physical; we share the evil and mortality that

belongs to him. But that physical inheritance is our misfortune; we cannot help it, and we are not to blame for it.

We are not alienated from God because we possess this flesh which is mortal, but because we sin and so become alienated by wicked works. Bro. ——— pinpoints this as the issue: his own repeated phrase “sinner or no” fixes his view that the possession of the flesh alienates. (See quotations August CHRISTADELPHIAN, page 374). On that view Jesus was alienated and it is here where the falsity of the teaching becomes evident. This has been discerned in previous controversies.

For example in 1874 (page 526), Bro. Roberts wrote:

“Was Jesus born under condemnation? Answer: In the scriptural sense of hereditary condemnation, the answer is, yes; but this requires to be fenced against the misunderstanding natural to the terms employed. Condemnation, in its individual application, implies displeasure, which cannot be affirmed of Jesus, who was the beloved of the Father. But no one is born under condemnation in its individual application. That is, no one is condemned as an individual till his actions as an individual call for it.

“But hereditary condemnation is not a matter of displeasure, but of misfortune. The displeasure of wrath arises afterwards, when the men so born work unrighteousness. This unrighteousness they doubtless work ‘by nature’, and are, therefore, by nature, children of wrath—that is, by nature, they are such as evoke wrath by unrighteousness.

“It was here that Jesus differed from all men. Though born under the hereditary law of mortality, as his mission required, his relation to the Father, as the Son of God, exempted him from the uncontrolled subjection to unrighteousness.”

In the LAW OF MOSES, Bro. Roberts quotes the following from another brother:

“We are forgiven and shall be saved for Christ’s sake, he required no forgiveness... Christ was undefiled in mind, absolutely pure, therefore he required no cleansing as pertaining to the conscience at baptism, for *there never was a moment in his life when God was displeased with him*; he always did and said what pleased the Father. He only required cleansing in nature which was done after resurrection.”

JESUS SHARED OUR NATURE

At the same time it was rightly insisted that Jesus shared our nature with its sorrows and temptations, but always overcame every trial. As Bro. Roberts wrote (1875, page 376):

“He was a sufferer from the hereditary effects of sin; for these effects are physical effects. Death is a physical law in our members implanted there through sin ages ago, and handed down from generation to generation. Consequently, partaking our physical nature, he partook of this, and his own deliverance (as ‘Christ the first fruits’) was as necessary as that of his brethren. In fact, if Christ had not first been saved from death (Heb. 5:7), if he had not first obtained eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12), there would have been no hope for us, for we obtain salvation only through what he has accomplished in himself, of which we become heirs by union with him. He overcomes and we share his victory, by uniting with him, if he at the judgment seat permit.”

CAN ALL “SIN IN ADAM”?

Our next quotation concerns the phrase “In Adam all sinned”. This is based upon the A.V. translation of Rom. 5:12, “in whom all sinned”. A footnote to ELPIS ISRAEL for half a century has pointed out that this translation cannot be sustained. But if it is insisted upon, what does the phrase mean? Here Bro. Roberts answers (1873, page 409):

“The words ‘in him (Adam) all sinned’ (Rom. 5:12), only amount to ‘as I may so say’, as in the case of Levi said to have paid tithes (or more properly, ‘to have been tithed’) in the loins of his father Abraham (Heb. 7:10). He says (verse 9) ‘As I may so say, Levi did so and so’. That is, in an indirect sense, not to be practically pressed. Our sinning in Adam can be made to mean nothing more than that from him we were destined to be generated, and that his act affected our state when we should appear. But this is not the meaning of ‘sin’, when we come to discuss ‘sin’ as affecting individual destiny.

“Using the term in its correct sense, Paul expressly isolates Adam’s descendants from Adam’s sin. He says: ‘Death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them who had NOT SINNED AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF ADAM’S TRANSGRESSION’ (Rom. 5:14). The point of his argument is that ‘through the offence of ONE many are dead’, who sinned not after the similitude of that offence being no ‘parties to the transaction’, and not being ‘in at the job’, to use phrases whose allusion will be understood; but that the glory of God’s grace is to release penitent and reforming offenders from many offences through the righteousness of ONE.

“The new argument destroys this beautiful fact by huddling the millions of Adam’s race all into one Edenic offender, and making them all ‘parties to the transaction’... Adam’s descendents have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression; but are his companions only in the sense of being heirs of the consequences of his act; among whom was Jesus, who, however, being the begotten of God in the channel of those consequences, could annul them, in the bearing of them into a grave that God could open because of his holiness.”

SIN IN THE FLESH

The phrase “sin in the flesh” has always provoked contention. The argument of Edward Turney was that “the life” was condemned. This is really absurd, for it separates the life from the individual. It treats of something which is only an abstraction separated from the man.

It was Adam who sinned; it was Adam who was condemned; it was the dust formed organisation that was sentenced to return to the ground. It was the physical man that sustained such changes as brought shame and fear and a defiled conscience, a defilement which then became, in Dr. Thomas’ word, “corporeal”. But the opposite error is now being taught. “Sin” used by metonymy for the fleshly impulses, is now being separated from the individual and is being made of itself a reason for alienation and estrangement.

Man is an entity; a man sustains a relationship to God by his acts; *he* sins and is alienated; *he* is forgiven and is reconciled. Moral terms are wrongly given an application to the flesh when “the flesh” is considered as separable from the individual as a whole.

In 1874 (page 88) Bro. Roberts answered the question, “What do you mean by ‘sin in the flesh’, which some speak of as a fixed principle?”

“Answer: Job speaking of ‘man that is born of woman’, says ‘Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?’ and David, by the Spirit, says, in Psalm 51:5: ‘Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.’ Furthermore, the annual atonement under the law (Lev. 16) was appointed ‘even for the holy place’, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, besides their ‘transgressions in all their sins’ (verse 16). ‘Sin in the flesh,’ which is Paul’s phrase, refers to the same thing. It is also what Paul calls ‘Sin that dwelleth in me’ (Rom. 7:17), adding, ‘I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing’.

“Now, what is this element called ‘uncleanness’, ‘sin’, ‘iniquity’, etc.? *The difficulty experienced by some in the solution of this question, arises from a*

disregard of the secondary use of terms. Knowing that sin is the act of transgression, they read ‘act of transgression’ every time they see the term sin, *ignoring the fact that there is a metonymy in the use of all words which apply even to sin.*

“Suppose a similar treatment of the word DEATH. Primarily, death means the state to which a living man is reduced— when his life ceases. Now we read of one of the sons of the prophets saying, ‘there is death in the pot’. Does this mean there was a corpse in the pot? No, but that which makes a corpse of any living man. ‘Death’ literally meant ‘that which : would lead to death’. Again ‘death hath passed upon all men’, means the condition that leads to death. So, ‘let the dead bury their dead’, means, ‘Let those who are destined to be numbered with the dead, bury those who are actually dead’. ‘Past from death unto life’, means ‘Passed from that relation that ends in death, to that which leads to life’.

“A disregard for metonymy and ellipsis in such statements, has led to most of the errors of the apostacy; and is leading some back to them who had escaped.

“There is a principle, element, or peculiarity in our constitution (it matters not how you word it) which leads to the decay of the strongest or the healthiest. Its implantation came by sin, for death came by sin; and the infliction of death and the implantation of this peculiarity are synonymous things.” In 1873 (page 447) he has also written:

“Adam was driven out of Eden because of disobedience; He was therefore thrown back upon himself, so to speak, and he soon found in himself and his progeny how weak and evil a thing the flesh is, for his first son was a murderer. And because disobedience or sin, was the cause of his expulsion, and that sin was the result of the desires of the flesh, and because all the desires that are natural to the flesh organisation are because of native ignorance, in directions forbidden, there is no exaggeration, no high figure in talking of sin in the flesh.

“It is Paul’s figure. He speaks of ‘sin that dwelleth in me’, and as he defines me to be ‘my flesh’, sin that dwelleth in me is ‘sin in the flesh’ — *a metonym for those impulses which are native to the flesh*, while knowledge of God and of duty is not native to the flesh.”

SIN AS IT AFFECTED JESUS

In 1875 (page 375) he says concerning Jesus:

“He was a sufferer from the effects of sin in all the items of weakness, labour, pain, sorrow, death; and in this sense (as a partaker with us of the effects of sin) has been described as a constitutional sinner, or one subject to a sin-constitution of things. But *as this phrase gives occasion to disingenuous cavil, it is well to discard the phrase and look at the meaning, which has been stated.*

“As a sufferer from the effects of sin, he had himself to be delivered from those effects; and as the mode of deliverance was by death on the cross, that death was for himself first, not for sins of his own committing, but for deliverance from the (effect of the) sin of Adam from which he suffered in common with his brethren, and from the sins of his brethren which were laid upon him.”

“BY NATURE CHILDREN OF WRATH”

We come now to the phrase “by nature children of wrath” which is always called into service in connection with what is virtually the importing of responsibility for “original sin”.

The phrase has been mentioned in a previous quotation. It was discussed in the DEBATE as quoted in the August CHRISTADELPHIAN, page 375; in 1873 (page 554) Bro. Roberts wrote:

“The case of his brethren was much different. They were ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ (Eph. 2:1). It was not merely that they were mortal because descended from Adam, but they were ‘alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works’ (Col;1:21). They were among the children of DISOBEDIENCE; ‘Among whom,’ says Paul, ‘we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind’ (Eph. 2:3). It was this (to which they are prone by nature) that constituted them the children of wrath, even as others; for ‘the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men’ (Rom. 1:18). The wrath of God is not revealed toward us because Adam sinned (as the Apostasy and Renunciationism teach), *but because we ourselves transgress.* Believers were all at one time subject to this wrath, because as Paul further says, ‘We ourselves also were sometime foolish, DISOBEDIENT, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.’” (Titus 3:3.)

“The most conspicuous feature of the goodness of God toward us in the gospel is in the forgiveness of these ‘many offences’ (Rom. 5:16). Our hereditary mortality would have been a trivial obstacle if we ourselves had been found righteous before God. It was our iniquities that separated us from God. Hence the

glory of the gospel in the proclamation of the remission of these, in the belief and obedience of the gospel of His son.”

The battle of quotations could be continued indefinitely but although we could parallel those from the earlier controversy (1873-4) with others from the later disputes (1894-5-6) we do not propose to continue the discussion.

The extracts quoted above are clear: they were written to refute the very ideas now being imposed as the correct interpretation of the STATEMENT OF FAITH, and which it would appear are being endorsed by the ‘minority’ in Great Britain, who have separated with the cry of purity of doctrine, and now espouse old errors which have twice been overthrown.

CONCLUSION

The reunion effected some five years ago was not a capricious action but the result of years of effort by brethren having deep conviction of the truth and love of the brotherhood. The faults and misunderstandings of some 50 years of division were not overcome in a moment.

Our heartfelt thanks should go out to those brethren who laboured so patiently to bring about a better understanding amongst brethren and sisters. Particularly do we acknowledge our great indebtedness to Bro. John Carter for the wealth of understanding and patience he brought to bear upon the problems concerning reunion in Australia.

The benefits and fruits of this reunion have been so precious that all brethren and sisters are urged not only to familiarise themselves with the history of reunion and the basis upon which it was effected, but to realise their individual responsibility to do all in their power to preserve the blessings of this reunion.

Purity of doctrine is essential, but above all, *the Truth must reach the heart and engage the affections*. Brethren are urged to avoid the mistakes of the past, to avoid personalities and discord in the body (1 Cor. 12:20); to cease from all evil speaking, slander, enmity, strife, dissensions, party spirit, base suspicions, morbid craving for controversy and disputes about words, all of which things are works of the flesh that destroy unity and harmony, and will exclude from the Kingdom of God. [1 Pet. 2:1; Gal. 5:19-21 (R.S.V.); 1 Tim. 6:3-5 (R.S.V).]

We exhort brethren everywhere to have a deeper appreciation of the blessings of reunion, to maintain the spirit of Christ amongst us and to excel in those lovely fruits of the spirit, “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*” (Gal. 5:22-23 R.S.V.; Eph. 4; 1 Cor. 13 R.S.V.).

It is our sincere prayer that each brother and sister may ever seek the wellbeing of the brotherhood in love (Rom. 14:19, Phil. 2:4, 1 John 3:14-19; 1 Peter 1:22, John 13:34), and may it please the Father to guide us in the way of all Truth and to bless all our efforts to “*maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*”.

INDEX TO SUBJECTS

- Adam:
 His transgression, 28, 29
 Covering for his sin, 29
 Sentence on, 29
 Our inheritance from, 29, 61, 79, 81
 Adamic condemnation:
 Defined by R. Roberts, 74, 77, 80
 Applies only to Mortality, 61, 74
 Adamic nature defined
 by Dr. Thomas, 74
 Adamic sin:
 Its inception, 28, 80
 “In him all sinned”,
 an explanation, 61, 79
 Alienation:
 Only by ignorance and wicked works,
 19, 28, 76, 77
 Error of inherited, 60, 64
 Not true of Christ, 78
 Andrew, J. J.:
 His erroneous teaching, 59, 66-70
 Extracts from “The Blood of Covenant”,
 70
 Andrew-Roberts debate:
 Extracts from, 66-69
 Atonement:
 Address on the, by Bro. Carter, 25
 Humility essential to understand, 26
 Associated words — meanings and
 usage, 26
 Related to reconciliation, 27
 Background to Unity, 6
 Basis of Fellowship adopted, 13
 B.A.S.F. foundation of Basis, 13
 Clauses 5 and 12 explained, 12, 14
 Teaching of, misrepresented, 19, 82
 Baptism:
 Identifies with Christ’s Sacrifice, 38, 39,
 41
 Its true meaning, 39
 For remission of sins only, 19, 66
 Carter, Bro. John:
 Testimony to his work for Unity, 4, 83
 Invitation to visit Australia, 7
 His itinerary, meetings and talks, 17, 18
 Carter-Cooper Addendum, 12, 14
 “Children of wrath” explained, 82
 Christ—the Servant:
 His relation to his own death, 21
 Purpose of his death, 21
 The suffering servant, 44
 Justification by God, 44
 To be made high and lifted up, 46
 His visage marred, 47, 48
 A man goodly to behold, 47
 His gracious character, 47
 The crisis of Gethsemane, 47, 48
 “A tender plant out of dry ground”, 50
 Humble birth of, 51
 As “Arm of the Lord”, 51
 Viewed as outcast and leper, 52
 Wounded for our transgressions, 52
 Took our infirmities, 53
 Bearing our iniquities, 53, 54, 57
 His trial—mockery of Justice, 55, 56
 Honourable burial—a Divine provision,
 56
 Shall see his Seed, 56, 57
 Embodiment of Truth, 56
 Travail of Soul, 57
 Highly exalted, 57, 58
 Sufferer from the effects of sin, 75, 76
 Collyer, Islip—comments on inherited
 condemnation, 71
 Concord ecclesia—reference to, 19
 Condemnation
 Inherited—defined by R. Roberts, 74
 Not born individually under, 62, 74
 Without Divine displeasure apart
 From sin, 76, 78
 As affecting Christ, 78

- “Constitutional Sinner”:
 Explained by brethren Roberts and Jannaway, 76, 77
 As applied to Christ, 81
 The term discarded by R. Roberts, 81
- Crucifixion:
 Jesus “PLACARDED”, 54
 Publicity essential, 54, 55
 We with Paul are crucified with him, 39, 40, 54
 Publicised in procedure of judgment, 55
- Defilement by transgression only, 72, 73
 Doctrinal error exposed, 59
- Ecclesias accepting “BASIS” in 1958 and as at 1963, 22, 23
 Editorial on Reunion, “Christadelphian” 1958, 23
- Errors refuted:
 That we are alienated by inheritance, 60
 That two aspects of sin alienate from God, 62
 That Jesus was under a curse, 63
 That “Sinner or no” we are estranged from God, 64
 That Jesus was cleansed by circumcision, 65
 That Jesus was liable to a violent death by reason of his nature, 65
 That baptism is not for sins only, 65
- Errors twice overthrown, 82
- False doctrine—the Lord’s view of, 11
 Fellowship—Difficulties and doctrinal issues, 18, 19
- Fellowship—principles involved:
 Ecclesial right to judge sound doctrine, 10
 Ecclesial dissociation, 10, 15
 Unity of Faith essential, 10
 Errorists—Scriptural injunction concerning, 10
 Should not make “offender for a word”, 11
 Terms to be eschewed, 11
 As included in Basis of fellowship, 14, 15
- Fellowship and “Ecclesial guide”, 14, 15
- Flesh not an object of Divine anger in itself, 20
- God—just and a Saviour, 34
 God’s righteousness declared in death of Jesus, 12, 37
- “Isaiah Chapter 53”—Address by Bro. Carter, 42
- Jesus:
 Not a child of wrath, 19, 61, 62, 63, 65, 78
 As affected by sin, 78, 81
 Shared our nature, 20, 35, 78, 81
 Justified and pronounced righteous, 35, 44
 Declared God’s righteousness, 12, 14, 37, 38, 54
 Propitiation or Mercy Seat, 35, 36
 Not under a curse, 63
 God’s love in giving, 21
- Justification:
 Of Jesus the servant, 35, 38, 44, 55, 56
 Of many, 45
- Letter on Unity from brethren Cooper and Carter, 8
 An invitation to help, 8
 Statement of Faith essential, 9
 Essentials of Truth in B.A.S.F., 9
 B.A.S.F. used by most ecclesias, 9
 Ecclesial duties and responsibilities, 10
 Doctrinal purity enjoined, 10, 11
- Letter of appeal to ecclesias, 15
 Letter to “Christadelphian” on doctrinal error, 59
- Metonymy, figure of:
 Applied to Sin, 20, 32, 33, 80, 81
 Illustrations of use of, 33, 80
- New South Wales Unity Committee:
 Formation for interstate reunion, 7
 Carter-Cooper Addendum adopted for reunion, 7
 Submission of and acceptance of Basis by ecclesias, 8, 13

- Pioneer writings quoted, 72-82
- Propitiation:
 Defined in Christ, 35, 36
 A Mercy Seat at God's throne, 36
 Through faith in the blood of Christ, 36, 37
 As typified in the blood of the animal, 37
- Reconciliation, 27, 39, 41, 62, 80
- Reunion:
 Editorial on, "Christadelphian" 1958, 23
 Wider scope for fellowship, 24
- Robert Roberts—excerpts from his writings, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 82
- Righteousness of God:
 Upheld in Christ, 34, 37, 38
 Just, yet a Saviour, 34
- Sanctification, 14, 41
- Servant prophecies:
 Suffering predicted, 44
 Meaning of "servant", 45
 A multitudinous seed, 56, 57
- "Shield" ecclesias:
 So called for identification, 6
 Relation to Central Fellowship, 19
- Sin:
 By Metonymy, 20, 32, 73, 80, 81
 Blameworthy for transgression only. 20, 80
 Personified, 20
 In the Flesh, 20, 79, 80, 81
 Defined, 28, 32, 80
 Of Adam, 28, 29, 77
 All guilty of, except one, 29, 30
 Deceitfulness of, 30
 Becomes part of the individual, 30
 Blinds the eyes, 31
 Of Idolatry, 31 Its effects on Paul, 20, 31, 32, 73
 Impulses leading to, 32, 73, 75
 Not two aspects but many, 32, 63
 By metonymy not an aspect of lawlessness, 33, 80
 Challenge to God, 33, 34
 Turning our backs to, 39
 God's goodness in forgiving, 41, 82
- Sprinkle (as used in Isaiah 53):
 Meaning of, 49
 As applied to many nations, 49
- Stricken (as used in Isaiah 53) applied to leprosy, 42
- Thomas, Dr., on Adamic nature and constitution, 74, 75
 "Travail" of Christ results in a multitudinous seed, 57
 Type in Hezekiah's leprosy, 43
- Unity:
 Its Fruits, 4, 83
 Difficulties encountered, 7, 18, 19
 Work of late John Carter, 4, 5, 83
 Initiated among Victorian ecclesias, 1953, 7
- Victorian and N.S.W. Committees co-operate, 7
- Walker, later Bro. C. C. —proposal to visit Australia, 6

INDEX TO SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|------------|
| GENESIS | ACTS | COLOSSIANS |
| 3:17 | 4:27-30 | 1:21 |
| 6:5 | | 2:13 |
| | ROMANS | 3:5 |
| LEVITICUS | 1:18 | |
| 12:8 | 2:14 | 1 TIMOTHY |
| 16:16 | 3:23 | 6:3-5 |
| | 3:25 | |
| 2 KINGS | 5:1 | TITUS |
| 20:5 | 5:2 | 3:3 |
| | 5:6-11 | 3:10, 11 |
| PSALMS | 5:8 | |
| 45:16 | 5:12 | HEBREWS |
| 51:5 | 5:14 | 2:1 |
| | 5:16 | 2:14 |
| ISAIAH | 5:19 | 2:17 |
| 6:1 | 6:4 | 5:7 |
| 40:6 | 6:6 | 7:9, 10 |
| 42:1 | 7:14 | 9:12 |
| 43:22-25 | 7:17 | 9:28 |
| 44:9-20 | 7:20 | |
| 45:20 | 7:23 | JAMES |
| 50:6-8 | 7:24 | 1:14 |
| 50:8 | 8:1, 2 | |
| 52:10 | 8:9 | 1 PETER |
| 52:13-15 | 14:19 | 1:22 |
| 52:14 | 15:20 | 2:1 |
| 52:15 | | 2:20-25 |
| 53:2 | 1 CORINTHIANS | |
| 53:3 | 12:20 | 1 JOHN |
| 53:5 | 13th Chapter | 1:9 |
| 53:7 | 15:3 | 2:9-11 |
| 53:8 | 15:56 | 3:4 |
| 53:10 | | 3:14-19 |
| 53:11 | 2 CORINTHIANS | |
| 53:12 | 5:7 | |
| | 5:14 | |
| MATTHEW | 5:21 | |
| 8:17 | | |
| 15:19 | GALATIANS | |
| 18:15-17 | 2:19 | |
| 28:19 | 2:20 | |
| | 5:19-21 | |
| LUKE | | |
| 2:21-24 | EPHESIANS | |
| 5:20 | 2:1 | |
| 7:47 | 2:3 | |
| 11:4 | 2:4 | |
| 22:19 | 4th Chapter | |
| 24:46-47 | 4:18 | |
| | 5:3 | |
| JOHN | | |
| 12:41 | PHILIPPIANS | |
| 13-17 | 2:4 | |
| 13:34 | 2:5 | |
| 18:37 | | |

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