

THERE IS ONE BODY

THE DOCTRINE OF FELLOWSHIP AND A REVIEW OF HERESIES OF RECENT TIMES

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” – Paul

“Believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” – John

There is One Body

THE TEACHING OF CHRIST AND THE APOSTLES

For those who have given their serious consideration to the New Testament record, with a sincere desire to return to Apostolic Faith and Practice, there can be no doubt of the difference existing between original Christianity and the perplexing state of affairs among those called Christians in this latter part of the twentieth century.

Today there are a multitude of denominations and sects all professing the name of Christ, many acknowledge the validity of one another's claims to be truly "Christian" notwithstanding their varied opinions. This situation inevitably leads to the perplexing question: How is it possible for so many institutions to represent the same religious truths as taught by the Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles and yet be so out of harmony in matters of doctrine?

It does not require a great knowledge of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal that there is little similarity between the community of Christians of New Testament times and the denominations of Christendom today.

Where there is a determined effort to return to the primitive teachings and practices of the early believers, a careful study will be made of the Gospels and the Epistles and it will be observed that the early disciples were united together by their mutual acceptance of a certain form of doctrine described as the Gospel or Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God and the Things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ.

Salvation from sin and the hope of eternal life were dependent upon the belief of the doctrines contained in the 'Good News'. For the Lord Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel, and he declared:

"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned." Mark 16:16

The apostles were obedient to the command, and accordingly they went firstly throughout Judea and afterwards throughout the Roman World preaching the gospel committed to them by Christ.

The importance of knowing what was contained in the gospel preached by the apostles can be determined from Paul's remarks in his letter to the Romans:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." Romans 1:16

"But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart THAT FORM OF DOCTRINE which was delivered unto you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." Romans 6:17,18

It is evident from what the apostle says, that obedience rendered to a certain FORM OF DOCTRINE constituted men and women servants of righteousness, which emphasises how important a matter it is to know what the doctrines were that the apostles advocated. It is also clear from Paul's letter to the Galatians, that a gospel or form of doctrine which had been altered or corrupted could not make men and women servants of righteousness at all; for he denounces all and any who would pervert the truth he had spoken.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel which is not another, but there be some that trouble you and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, let him be accursed." Galatians 1:6-8

Why was the apostle so vehemently opposed to those who would modify his teaching? It was because he had received it “not from man.....but by revelation of Jesus Christ”; and he understood clearly that there was only one way of salvation, one means of reconciliation between God and man: and that was the way appointed by God Himself.

The acceptance of the apostle’s position must lead to certain conclusions which have ample confirmation elsewhere in the New Testament: - that there was originally only one body of disciples, and that these all believed and practised the same things taught by the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles, and that they did not acknowledge men and women to be participants in the same hope or members of the same body who did not subscribe to the teachings which they had received. Thus we find it testified of the early believers:-

“They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” Acts 2:42

When men and women became Christians of the genuine sort, after the pattern established by Christ and his apostles, they became members of the ‘Church’ or Ecclesia: a word which in the Bible never signifies a place of worship, but rather the community of those who have responded to an invitation to ‘come out’. (Ecclesia Gr. From *EK* ‘out from’ and *KALEO* ‘to call’).

Consequently when people responded to the Gospel of the Kingdom they accepted an invitation to come out from the world as servants of sin, to become members of the Church of Christ otherwise styled his Body the Ecclesia.

Thus when men and women truly embrace the Faith of Jesus they become members of the “Ecclesia of the Firstborn” and as such were addressed in the apostolic letter as *KLETOS*, ‘the called or invited’ of Jesus Anointed: as made Holy in Jesus Anointed, called Saints or ‘holy ones’; as ‘the faithful in Christ Jesus’; as the ‘faithful brethren in Christ’; and as ‘the Ecclesia IN God the Father and IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. They were considered to be in God, in Christ and the anointing being in them they were a manifestation of God in the flesh: thus the apostle Paul did not hesitate to address them in the following terms:-

“Ye are all sons of God in Christ Jesus through faith: for as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ: there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise.” Gal 3:26-29.

From these premises, it will be readily perceived that there is indeed a distinction existing between CHURCHES in the usual acceptation, and *the ECCLESIA* as defined in the New Testament, which is not fanciful but real and important. The Apostolic Ecclesia in the Word of God refers to:

“ONE undivided body of disciples, collected together by the personal labours of the apostles and evangelists: and all through subsequent generations who should *believe and practise the same truth*. To this one body energised by the one spirit^(a) and perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment^(b) and styled ‘the Bride’, is committed the work of making known the manifold wisdom of God^(c) as contained in the Word, and of inviting the world to be reconciled to God.^(d) No member of this body is exempt from the obligation of co-operating in this work. It is the duty and privilege of everyone in his own sphere to endeavour to turn men to righteousness; for there is no distinction of clergy and laity in the family of God.”

J. Thomas *ELPIS ISRAEL*

(a) Eph 4:4 (b) 1 Cor. 1:10 Acts 4:32 (c) Eph. 3:10 (d) Rev. 22:17.

Again, the apostles acknowledged that there was only one community of true believers in Christ Jesus and this is evident from the following testimonies:

“For as the body is ONE and hath many members and all the members of that one body being many are ONE BODY: so also is Christ. For by ONE Spirit are we all baptised into ONE BODY whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” 1 Cor. 12:12, 13.

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to the which also ye are called in ONE body; and be ye thankful.” Col. 3:15.

"That he might reconcile both (Jew and Gentile) unto God in ONE body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by ONE Spirit unto the Father." Ephesians 2:16-18.

"There is ONE BODY, and ONE SPIRIT, even as ye are called in ONE HOPE of your calling, ONE LORD, ONE FAITH, ONE BAPTISM, ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL." Ephesians 4:4-6.

"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of ONE: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." Hebrews 2:11.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have FELLOWSHIP WITH US, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3.

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are ONE BREAD and ONE BODY; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

ONLY TWO POSITIONS: IN THE ECCLESIA OR IN THE WORLD

Clearly, in the apostles' teaching, those who held the faith of Christ were a united, separate and distinct community. Further, there were only two recognised positions: men and women were either in Christ, belonging to the Truth and members of the One Body; or they were outside the fellowship of the Father and His Son. Thus before they embraced the hope of the gospel, their position is described:-

"At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God *in the world*." Eph. 2:12.

But when they became convinced of the truth as it is in Jesus, and were baptised into him, they became a separate people: those who were sanctified, or saints: and as such they refused to be joined to the world, and would not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; but they understood that they were now constituent members of a spiritual house, by the indwelling of the Truth in their hearts and minds. Thus the apostle writes:

"Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore COME OUT from among them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. 6:16-18.

A true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ underwent a complete change of mind and received an altered sense of values, for there was to be indeed a transformation of character by the renewing of the mind effected by the word of Christ dwelling richly in him; and he realised how essential it was to be separate from the world, because he had been called to be part of:

"a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." 1 Peter 2:9-10.

Consequently his personal conduct was to be exemplary, and it was his constant endeavour to:

"Deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world." Titus 2:12.

He also recognised that he could not serve two masters, but that his new calling in Christ demanded absolute allegiance and unwavering obedience; and this affected his personal friendships, as he realised that:

"Friendship with the world is enmity with God, and that whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4-5.

and again:

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world." 1 Jno 2:15-16.

So it is that we find the fellowship of the apostles did indeed consist of men and women who all believed the same doctrines, endeavouring to practise the same Truth and to maintain the same with all purity, by keeping separate from the world and its ways.

PRESERVING THE PURITY OF THE FAITH

Yet there is much evidence to show that although this was the original position, and that there was ONE BODY, whose integrity the true servants of Christ spare no effort to maintain; there were nonetheless men whom the apostles describe as deceitful workers, false prophets, men crept in unawares, who continually strove to make the apostles teaching more amenable to popular taste, in order on the one hand to avoid persecution for the cross of Christ; and on the other to satisfy their own ambition by gaining a following. Such persons were responsible for blurring the lines of demarcation between the ecclesia and the world: and little by little the influence of the world left its corrupting mark upon the work of the apostles.

What was to be done? Paul was quite aware of the dangers that threatened, and he warned the elders of the ecclesia in Ephesus:

"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the ecclesia of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts 20:27-30

and again,

"I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2-3.

The issues that such dangers presented were quite simple:- was the original purity of the One Body to be preserved? Or were these influences to be allowed to have their pernicious effect?

Again the apostles were determined that no alteration either of their doctrines or of the commandments of Christ would be tolerated. Thus we read of the following instructions where either an individual or group of individuals were responsible for conduct or teaching unworthy of the name of Christ.

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Cor. 5:7.

"I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat." 1 Cor. 5:11.

"If any man obey not our word by this epistle, have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." 2 Thess. 3:14.

"Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." 2 Thess. 3:6.

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing from such withdraw thyself." 1 Tim. 6:3-5.

"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Tit. 3:10-11.

"Whoso transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." 2 Jno. 9,10.

Only by the action indicated in the foregoing testimonies could a community based on the Truth preserve that truth in purity in its midst; and this means exacting of all who belong to it, an implicit adherence to the facts, principles, points and tenets which go to make up the Truth in its ENTIRETY; and by refusing to associate with those who oppose or refuse to endorse any of those elements.

BROADENING THE WAY: APOSTACY FROM THE FAITH

But though the apostles emphasised the need for separation from error so forcibly, their worst fears were ultimately realised. Eventually a majority in the ecclesias opted for a broader way, and the evil workers and seducers, pious and respected persons, gained the control of the minds of the believers and led them astray from the principles of divine Truth, fulfilling the apostles' anticipations:-

"There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Jude: 4

"Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come WHEN THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." 2 Tim. 4:2-4.

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day (the day of Christ's return) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." 2 Thess. 2:3.

"Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness, and their word will eat as doth a canker." 2 Tim. 2:16-17.

"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13.

"But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you." 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

It was not long after the death of the apostles that these anticipations were realised; and before many years elapsed, the organisation that claimed Christ as its foundation, became a State Institution; and as such was completely unrecognisable as that One Body, the community of believers, over which the apostle exercised such godly jealousy to present her as a chaste virgin to Christ. An extract from the ecclesiastical historian Mosheim serves to illustrate how soon, and how far nominal Christians comprising 'THE CHURCH' had fallen from Apostolic Truth:

"At their first appearance in these general councils, the bishops acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their respective churches, and that they acted in the name and by the appointment of their people. But they soon changed their humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion and their counsels into laws; and openly asserted at length that Christ had empowered them to proscribe to his people authoritative rules of faith and manners." *Century II Part 2 Chapter 2*

"Whilst the Roman Emperors were studious to promote the honour of Christianity the bishops cast a cloud over the beauty and simplicity of the Gospel by the prodigious number of rites and ceremonies which they had invented to embellish it. The rites and institutions of the Greeks and Romans and other nations were now adopted by Christian bishops and employed in the service of the true God so that the nations would receive Christianity with more facility. Hence it happened in these times that the religions of the Greeks and Romans differed very little in external appearance from that of the Christians. They both had a pompous and most splendid ritual. Gorgeous robes, mitres, tiaras, wax tapers, croziers, processions, lustrations, images, gold and silver vases and many such circumstances of pageantry, were equally to be seen in the heathen temples and the Christian churches." *Century IV Part 2 Chapter 4*

So it was that the original teachings of Christ were completely corrupted and obscured; and the light of the glorious gospel of Christ became almost extinguished by a horrible counterfeit 'Christianity', whose policy it was to suppress the influence of the Word of God, and silence those who testified against the blasphemous pretensions of 'THE CHURCH'. For many centuries now, the world has co-operated with, and been influenced

by this system, which is made up of every departure from the positive institutions and practices of the New Testament.

But as has been demonstrated by the writings of the New Testament, original Christianity, which is as pure in the sacred writings as when first delivered to the Jewish nation by the apostles, recognises only *“one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one Body, one Spirit, one Hope and one God and Father of all.”* But a survey of the religious world at the present time reveals an aspect of hopeless disunity, comprising: lords many, faiths and gospels without number, as many bodies as there are sects, and spirits of all kinds but the Spirit of Christ. Christendom, in whole or in part, can nowhere be found in the Scriptures, except as the apostacy; which, they declare, would arise and cover the face of all nations, as with a veil of “strong delusion.”

THE LATTER DAY REVIVAL OF APOSTOLIC FAITH AND PRACTICE

It was an appreciation of the disparity existing between the teachings of the many sects of Christendom on the one hand, and the doctrines of the Word of God on the other, that provoked an earnest enquiry into what comprised the faith and practice of the Apostles. This enquiry was made by one John Thomas, whose investigations from about the year 1834 revealed how the Truth of the Gospel had become buried beneath the accumulated rubbish of human tradition. His discovery of what the Scriptures actually taught brought with it the conviction that only by an insistence upon an absolute submission to the Word of God could there be a revival of the ancient faith once delivered to the saints. (Jude: 3) His determination to stand by the Word of God regardless of the consequences, caused him to be forsaken of former friends and acquaintances; but notwithstanding, the Truth was made to shine with the brilliance and clearness of the rising sun that dispels the gloom at the dawning of the day.

By his efforts over a number of years, men and women responded to the Light and they became known as *“Christadelphians”*, or brethren of Christ: and they styled their congregations *“ecclesias”*, to distinguish them from the so called churches of the apostacy, and because they were constituted of men and women *called out* from the sects of the apostacy, by accepting the gospel invitation to God’s Kingdom and glory on intelligently believing the Truth, and being baptised into the God-name. Convinced that this was the only Scriptural constitution of the *“one body”*, of which Christ Jesus is the head, and who has no personal representative on earth; they repudiated the popular churches and all their associations as being no part of that body; and they affirmed that there was no salvation within the pale of any of them.

It was realised that religion as such was a useless and empty profession unless it was recognised by God Himself: and to have fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, it was necessary to have fellowship with the Apostles by believing the truth promulgated by them. This is styled *‘walking in the light of God’*: in the light by which believers had fellowship one with another, so constituting the One Body of which Christ is the head. So it was observed:-

“We might be in approved fellowship with all Christendom, Papal and Protestant, Church and Dissenters: and yet have no fellowship with God. ‘For if we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness (ignorance) we lie and do not the truth’, - because Papalism and Protestantism, while claiming fellowship with God, are mantled in the darkness of human tradition, and pervert and persecute the truth, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. It is the duty therefore of all who would embrace the Christianity of the Bible to lay hold of the things indicated for men’s faith and obedience, and to separate themselves from all Papal and Protestant sects, and either to maintain their own individuality; or, if sufficiently numerous, associate themselves together as a community of witnesses ‘who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.’” Rev. 22:11-17

With the revival of the Truth, those who wholeheartedly embraced it desired to see:

“a people who shall be separate from all others; the foundation of whose distinctiveness shall be the intelligent belief and obedience of the Truth. A prepared people must be separate and distinct from this (the religious world) in faith and

hope and love. There can be no identity and sympathy between them. We cannot fraternise with the religious world and be prepared for the coming of the Lord, who comes to destroy it. A prepared people are Christ's brethren and rejoice in this exclusive relationship."

The nature of this work was recognised as an invitation to "come out" from every other denomination, to separate from all worldly associations; and if necessary, to be prepared to suffer shame for the name of Christ. The early Christadelphians earnestly maintained that the Churches and Chapels were places of darkness; and that any who would receive the True Light, must come out from them and be baptised into the One Body of Christ, wherein that Light was to be found exclusively. This is illustrated in the following appeal:-

"If men are to be faithful to the apostolic testimony, they have no alternative but to "come out" from communities that both in works and words deny it; and if being spoken against is the result, they will accept it in the spirit of the apostles, who rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. This has been the decision of many. Their "coming out" has necessarily resulted in the formation of a sect, and they have called themselves by the name "Christadelphian" because of the necessity for a name that will distinguish them from those who profess a belief in the Bible but do not submit to its teachings, and because that name proclaims a fact that Christendom has forgotten: viz that all who believe and obey Christ are his brethren, whom "he is not ashamed to call such." Heb. 2:11. But as a sect, they have no sacerdotal pretensions. They are a number of private men and women who have surrendered to the claims of Scripture teaching, by the exercise of inestimable right of private judgment, and who, on that basis, are seeking to "work out their own salvation" by conformity to the law of Christ in all things. They make public efforts, not because they have anything of themselves to offer the public, but because that public effort is made part of their duty by the law of Christ. Without boasting, they are sure that they have the Truth. They invite their neighbours to look into the matter, and see whether this is so or not; and, finding that it is so, to follow the example of others, and identify themselves with "the sect everywhere spoken against."

Robert Roberts. The Sect Everywhere Spoken Against

For a number of years, the work of proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ made considerable progress, and the latter day Believers in Christ became settled as a distinct community, growing both in numbers and influence. But as the apostles experienced, the growth in numbers and the increasing respectability of the sect that was once "everywhere spoken against", brought a decrease in purity, and it was observed:-

"The greatest and most dangerous enemies to Christ are those who pretend to be His friends, but are not faithful to His doctrine; and they are unfaithful who, from motives of personal interest, would weaken the point of doctrine, or soften it for the gratification of their natural feelings, or for fear of hurting the feelings of the enemy and so affecting their popularity with him."

As time continued it became evident that the latter day revival of the Truth was to follow the same pattern of declension that occurred in the first century after the death of the apostles. Indeed the warnings and predictions of the Scripture appear with increased emphasis:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that *in the latter times* some shall depart from THE FAITH." 1 Tim. 4:1

"This know also that in *the last days* perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." 2 Tim. 3:1-5.

Thus, as the Word of God declares, heresies did arise amongst those who held the Faith in the latter times, and the reason for this occurrence is given by the Apostle Paul

"I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. 11:18-19.

What were the heresies of the latter times, and how did they come about?

1866 "DOWIEISM", "PERSONAL DEVIL" "ETERNAL TORMENTS" AND "FELLOWSHIP"

Only about sixteen years from the setting forth of "The Truth" by John Thomas, came division because of false teaching regarding the devil and the punishment of the wicked. The difficulty was not so much the persistent teaching of the heresy but the refusal to withdraw from the wrong. Certain members of the Assembly in Edinburgh objected to fellowshiping the false teachers, but the leaders were against taking action. One said, 'We allow great liberty of conscience in such matters which are not essentials,' and another refused to declare his position, and the majority were for leaving the question for the sake of peace.

The faithful witness for "Truth" who had worked so diligently to find it, denounced the heresy, pointing out that there was no authority for making one part of the Truth less important than another. The heretics were reminded that those in "The Faith" had come out from the world; had separated from the Apostacy; and had withdrawn fellowship from both, and that if any should come and bring not the true doctrine, they were not to be received into the house of the believer nor to be bidden God-speed.

The necessity of preserving the purity of the One Faith and the One Body at this time was pointed out by John Thomas in the following words:

"The characteristic of a true Christadelphian is the '*obedience of faith*', and a walk worthy of God; in other words, he first understands the things of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ; secondly he believes what he understands and *loves* what he believes above every other thing; thirdly his faith working by love causes him to be immersed into the Divine Name; fourthly he walks in the truth and is careful to do nothing to its injury; and fifthly, HE WILL NOT FELLOWSHIP THOSE WHO DO NOT SO BELIEVE AND DO. This is Christadelphian theory and practice which separates us from Dowieites."

Ambassador Feb. 1866 Page 33

1873 RENUNCIATIONISM Edward Turney declared that he renounced his former belief concerning the nature of Christ

It was in this year that the heresy known as "Renunciationism" was introduced. A declaration was made renouncing the views previously held that Jesus was made of the same sin-stricken nature as the rest of mankind. In place thereof the belief was set forth that the body of Jesus was not under condemnation, and was free from the promptings of sin. Although the divine teaching was so clear that Jesus was made in all points like unto His brethren, the heresy took away a great number who, after the manner of the "Laodiceans", had become satisfied with this life, and so were unwilling to be bearers of the reproach, "outside the gate".

The followers of Edward Turney resolved that in future they would meet on the basis of an 'uncondemned Christ'. Nothing remained therefore but for those who would maintain their standing in Christ to withhold themselves from fellowshiping the error.

At this time it was quite clear that when a person espoused new and erroneous teachings, he departed from the One Faith, and being subverted, was no longer entitled to be addressed as Brother, This was made clear by Robert Roberts in reply to the question:-

"Why do you speak of Edward Turney, David Handley? Why don't you call them brother, or at least give them the title 'Mr'?"

Answer:-

"We have no wish to be harsh or discourteous. The men referred to have a certain standing in the Truth by their profession. 'Mr' would conceal this. Yet their present position being one of 'renunciation' of what they believed, they cannot be called brother without implying that the doctrine of the sacrifice of Christ is of no importance. True that a man once a brother is always a brother in a technical sense, till the Lord cut him off at the judgment seat; but IF HE DEPART FROM THE FAITH, THE TERM CEASES TO BE A CONVENIENT DESCRIPTION OF HIM."

It was realised that if every professing brother was to be allowed his reservation on points of doctrine, soon the whole would be corrupted, as Robert Roberts declared:

"In fact there is no element of the Truth that has not a secret enemy in some who profess friendship for it as a whole. If they were all to have their way there would be no truth left. The times are perilous. There is but one safe position, and in that we mean by the favour of God to entrench ourselves.... viz. The whole truth as brought to light by Dr Thomas."

Christadelphian 1873 p564

1884 "PARTIAL INSPIRATION"

The heresy known as "Partial Inspiration" made its public appearance at this time. Though so evidently wrong, viewed from this distance of time, like all the works of sin this evil insinuated itself with characteristic subtlety. At first with apparent innocence, it was said that only those parts of the Bible were inspired, which required inspiration, and there were many portions of the Scriptures which did not need divine aid for their compilation – such as historical events, and the number of horses possessed by Solomon.

The argument was very plausibly put, as the following extract reveals:

"The inspirational power would therefore probably come upon the writer in silence, and it would serve as an infallible guide to them for all its purposes. This of course, would only apply to the original documents, and in our view, to only such parts of them as could not otherwise be produced."

Robert Ashcroft's "Exegetist"

The unwary failed to perceive that once the absolute inspiration of the Bible was repudiated, then its power as an infallible guide was finished.

There were many, perhaps the majority of the victims of this Apostacy who declared that they still believed as they always had done that the Bible was inspired. These failed to perceive that offences and heresies came as trials for the manifestation of those who are to be approved. Instead therefore of holding fast to the divine statement that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16), and in obedience to those Scriptures, withdrawing from those who consented not to the wholesome words, they refused to be disturbed. Withdrawal was condemned as cruel as setting oneself up as a judge: and as being self righteous.

At this time the deluded ones endeavoured to ignore the separation. The term brother was retained in speaking of those who had separated and they were referred to as "the other meeting" and as being "on the other side"; forgetful of the fact that there are only two sides: inside the House and outside.

How different is the attitude of those who desire to uphold faithfully the principles of the doctrine of Christ. There was no confusion in the mind of John Thomas concerning the status of those who had departed from the faith. In *The Christadelphian*, August 1870, in answer to a letter from the Secretary of the Chicago Christadelphian Ecclesia, which addressed Dr Thomas as "Dear Brother", the latter replied: "Dear Sir" and the reason for his doing so is made plain:-

"It has come to my ears that the ecclesia I knew is no longer in being; that is, instead of one, there are in Chicago two societies, each claiming to be the Chicago Ecclesia! I could understand both of these being the "One Body" of Christ in Chicago, if both were of the "One Faith" and of the "One Lord", but this I am informed is not the fact; the one believing one thing about the Lord and Saviour, and the other something entirely different. If this be so I CANNOT ADMIT THAT THE TWO ECCLESIAS ARE THE ONE BODY: neither of them may be; but two societies holding antagonistic and mutually destructive theories cannot. IT WOULD BE CHRIST DIVIDED AGAINST HIMSELF."

1894 THE NON-RESPONSIBILITY OF ENLIGHTENED REJECTORS

Ten years again and the false teaching known as “the non-responsibility of enlightened rejectors” made its appearance. Like its predecessors this lie assumed an innocent guise. It declared that all in Adam die and will not rise; that only those who have been baptized into Christ will rise to Judgment.

Those whose love had grown cold were again deceived. What presumption it was to say that people may know God, and understand His mercy, and then deliberately to turn their back upon the goodness of God and to say, “I prefer my own way: I shall enjoy the desires of the flesh, and, so long as I refuse to be baptized I am not responsible to future judgment. Only if I make a start in the way of obeying God, am I in danger of being punished at the Judgment.”

The Editor of *The Christadelphian* during the course of a debate with the leading advocate of the novel doctrine, J. J. Andrew, testified against the theory in the following words:-

“The theory which we are invited to adopt just clouds that all over and makes God disregard knowledge. That is to say: “Go into the water and I have got hold of you, but if you defy Me to the extent of setting Me and My Son at utter defiance and you keep out of the water, I cannot touch you. It is absurd.”

Resurrectional Responsibility Debate

At this time also many followed the sedition: not because they believed the lie, but because they refused to separate from it. The cry was raised: “Leave it an open question” even though the Holy Scriptures testified: “The Word that I have spoken the same shall Judge *him in the last day.*” Jn. 12:48.

But the issue involved more than the denial of the resurrection of enlightened rejectors, for the teaching required a revision of the principles of the doctrine of the atonement, which strikes at the very foundation of the claim to have revived, in the latter days, the faith of the apostles. The doctrine of the atonement is central to the purpose of God, and deficiency in understanding with regard to it must invalidate any claim to know the Truth. J. J. Andrew at length came to differ to such an extent from the teaching of Dr Thomas and Robert Roberts on the matter that he confessed that his understanding had previously been at fault; and embracing his new found conviction, he was re-immersed in October 1900. Concerning this he subsequently wrote:

“It has been contended that if baptism into Christ justifies a believer from inherited sin, as well as secures forgiveness for personal sins, many of those bearing the name Christadelphian have been immersed in vain. But this is obviously no argument against the recognition of Scriptural Truth.”

“The Sanctuary Keeper” page 67, June 1901

This being the case, another foundation was laid; no longer can it be consistently held by those subscribing to the position of J. J. Andrew that the Truth was Providentially revived by Dr John Thomas.

SOLEMN WARNINGS OF CHRISTADELPHIAN APOSTACY

From the year 1894 general laxity developed: and as zeal for the Word of God declined, naturally the need for separateness from the world was forgotten. Warnings were given however, and the lesson of Israel’s miserable ruin, because of the same forgetfulness, was constantly brought to notice. But “Lukewarmness” deadened the sense of holiness. False doctrine and false practice were both condoned. Re-union with the various heretical Assemblies was openly advocated; marriage with the alien became of frequent occurrence. Furthermore, local separations were not to hinder the pleasure of visits to and from other Ecclesias.

In vain prominent brethren pleaded with the Editors of the magazine to give a firm lead, of which the following manifesto from the pen of W.H Boulton is but one example of many, published in a pamphlet at the time, entitled “*Solemn Warnings of a Christadelphian Apostacy.*”

"We are aware that we have no voice in the conduct of the 'Christadelphian' and that it is solely your responsibility to decide what shall or what shall not appear in its pages. This would be an unanswerable argument were the magazine always regarded as a private venture. But this is not the case; it is the 'The Christadelphian'. If the policy of recent numbers is to continue, this is a misnomer, for we are convinced that its tone and attitude do not reflect the real views of faithful and tried brethren, nor of the ecclesias generally. Its lack of robustness, its failure to speak boldly for the separation of the Household of Faith from the trammels of the world, the opening of its pages for manifestoes of those not in fellowship, and the cessation of its testimony "in opposition to the dogmas of Papal and Protestant Christendom", are all indications of degeneracy, and cause real sorrow to many in all parts. Those of us who move about the country are constantly reminded about the facts. The situation is generally deplored."

Another brother declared that not only had the Editors compromised the whole Body with regard to former heresies, but the entire Birmingham Ecclesia was guilty, because it retained in fellowship those who resorted to the Suffolk Street Meeting to have their marriages solemnized by the officials of the State, "licensed Christadelphians", men deemed unfit for the Table of the Lord. In Temperance Hall. He was appalled at the false distinction being drawn between worship and fellowship, fellowship being confined to the Memorial Feast, and wrote:

"Just think of it: arranging brethren from the Temperance Hall Ecclesia having meetings with arranging brethren from the Suffolk Street Ecclesia, and mutually arranging for the Editor of the 'Christadelphian' and the Editor of the Fraternal Visitor to alternately open the meeting with prayer, while refusing the other a place at the Table of the Lord. What a farce!"

F.G. Jannaway

1915-23 WIDESPREAD APOSTASY

Breaking down the hedge (Ecc. 10:8)

"Non-Combatant Service" "Special Constabulary" "Clean Flesh" "Voting"

The war which broke out in 1914 revealed much weakness. In 1915 the command not to take oaths, or to resist evil was openly disregarded. "*The Christadelphian*" for that year in the February issue declared that it was "*the nature of the oath*" for military service which could not be approved. Refusal to join any branch of military service had been objected to some months earlier.

The former editor of *The Christadelphian*, Robert Roberts, anticipated such a development and there was no doubt in his mind as to what the law of Christ required under such circumstances:-

"If we must pay heavy penalties, unless we choose to break the law of God, let the penalties be paid. If we must be killed and all our families with us, unless we forfeit the approbation of our Lord and Master and loose eternal life at his coming, let us die at once. We are not to consider consequences at all. It is a mistake to hamper the question of duty with any secondary consideration whatsoever." *Christadelphian* 1872 page 489

Yet when the test came, and the brotherhood declared themselves as a people who must be *outside the Army*, the Magazine set itself for: '*outside the fighting line only*' (See issues September 1914 and April 1916). In April 1916, the Magazine argued for "Liberty of conscience" regarding non-combatant service.

When representations were made on behalf of the Christadelphian community, to the Government, an offer was made by the London Standing Committee, whereby conditional exemption might be obtained. The offer was in the nature of compromise, and stated:-

"We are willing to place our services at the disposal of the State in any direction needed, but not as part of the Army, or in any combatant or non-combatant capacity.....

"We are willing as a matter of duty that our powers should be used for the good of the country in any work not involving violation of conscience; and are ready to consider with the utmost reason of which we are capable any suggestions which may be offered."

Was such an offer of service necessary, and was it wise? In the opinion of the one responsible for making it:

"Every bona fide Christadelphian, although not permitted by his Lord to fight, will do his best in civil life to help the land of his birth in its hour of distress." Preface *WITHOUT THE CAMP*, F.G. Jannaway

How different from the mind of the apostles, and the faithful of old time, who declared:-

"Confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" Heb. 11:13 and who declared:-

"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach; for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Heb. 13:13-14

It is important to bear in mind that the term 'bona fide Christadelphian' in the mind of the author of *"Without the Camp"*, covered not only those with whom he was in fellowship, but also those who belonged to the Suffolk Street and Advocate assemblies, with whom he was supposed to be out of fellowship. All bearing the name Christadelphian were represented to the authorities regardless of their separation.

In various places the old heresy regarding the nature of Christ re-appeared.

In 1921, the possibility of compulsory voting at Parliamentary elections was referred to by the Editor of *"The Christadelphian"*; not however to warn his readers of approaching danger, and to remind them that here they had "no continuing city"; but to declare that he should "simply draw lots" as to which candidate he would vote for! Thus again setting aside divine instruction.

Two years later, *"The Christadelphian"*, referring to the death of a prominent Jew, mentioned the possibility of such men (although unbaptized) rising from the dead "to see the glories of the Kingdom"; such possibility was said to be "God's secret", and was "not for us to judge." Apparently in ignorance of the fact that God has revealed the secret to who shall rise from the dead.

1923 THE CRISIS

Accumulating evidences of corruption led to a crisis in 1923, when in open meeting at Birmingham, it was contended that it was the duty of brethren to do violence when called upon by the State; and of 1,300 members, only a mere handful stood loyal to the Bible commands. The division rent the "Body" throughout the world; the vast majority tolerating by fellowship the heresies introduced.

The circumstances attending this division related to an objection first voiced in 1917. Two members of the Birmingham Temperance Hall Ecclesia, in order to avoid conscription, enlisted as Special Constables. To do this they were required to take THE OATH, which stated:-

"F.A.B., do swear, That I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord, the King on the office of Special Constable..... without favour or affection, malice or ill will; and that I will to the best of my power cause the peace to be kept and preserved, and prevent all offences against the persons and properties of his Majesty's subjects, and that while I hold the said office I will to the best of my skill and knowledge discharge all the duties thereof faithfully according to the law.

So help me God."

Obviously such an oath was contrary to the requirements of Christ; yet when at a special meeting convened to consider the issue a motion calling for withdrawal was put forward, it was opposed by two who held office in the Ecclesia: T.E. Pearce and A. Davis. These men both made speeches which clearly revealed that they did not condemn service in the police force.

Later in a statement A. Davis wrote:-

"I have never justified service in the Constabulary nor do I do so now. I say that any brother who joined would be very foolish. If I knew anyone who proposed doing so I would do my utmost to dissuade him; but if in spite of that he still joined, I would not accept the responsibility of disfellowshipping him."

Pearce and Davis were asked to repudiate their unrighteous statements, and when they refused, a minority who contended that these two should also be withdrawn from, found themselves ostracised by the arranging brethren and then withdrawn from themselves.

Eventually the position was examined by other Ecclesias, and appeals were made to the Birmingham Ecclesia to conform to their own published Statement of Faith; and separate from the offenders and those who sympathised with them. The Birmingham Ecclesia ignored the appeals to deal with the matter as the law of Christ required, and division ensued. Those who separated from Temperance Hall and all in fellowship with them, became known as the 'Berean Christadelphians'; and these for a while endeavoured to maintain the Faith and purity of the One Body.

DARKNESS DESCENDS ON TEMPERANCE HALL

The close of that year saw further obscuring of the Light of the Truth, and a joining up with the "Beast full of Names" depicted in Rev. 17. It was resolved in the Birmingham Assembly that on November 11th the Ecclesia should, as all other religious "bodies" would: stand in silence for two minutes; in response to the Royal proclamation that such silence should be observed in honour of the glorious dead.

In 1924 in the April issue of the Magazine, the following statement was published:

"The world is wide, and if certain applicants should be stumbled by honest scruples of Christadelphians, they will be able to find fellowship elsewhere, and will not by such scruples be prejudiced in the slightest degree in the eyes of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Judge of all."

What are the ramifications of such a 'philosophy' as this reasoning advocates? Surely it is the destruction of the Scriptural teaching of belonging to 'One Body', or that the 'One Faith' is of necessity possessed only by those who are members of that One Body. For if it is possible to "find fellowship elsewhere" in the world and "not be prejudiced in the eyes of the Judge of all"; whatever reason is there for maintaining a separate position in the first place? If a man can find fellowship with Christ and have an equal opportunity of being saved *outside* the "Christadelphian Fellowship", what reason is there for becoming a "Christadelphian" at all? One is led to ask, "What do they offer that cannot be received elsewhere?"

1926 THE DIVORCE QUESTION

Having been freed from the corrupting "plague in the House" which had spread like a leprous infection, the minority declared their determination to unite in upholding God's Holy Law. But only three years passed before the "lust of the flesh" again obtruded itself and demanded that the Word of God should be set aside to make room for it. In 1926 came the shocking contention that if divorce were desired on account of unfaithfulness to the marriage bond, it was lawful to have that bond legally set aside so that re-marriage might take place. This heresy introduced into the "Clapham" Assembly declared that for such unfaithfulness, divorce and re-marriage were allowed by the law of Christ. In fact, it was contended that such an unfaithful act itself severed the marriage bond, and that legal proceedings were taken merely to have the fact registered.

Possibly the heretics did not realise the enormity of the doctrine which means that all people who commit such a sin, automatically become un-married.

The divine law teaches that adultery is a crime worthy of death! and certainly brings no such release as is contended for.

Withdrawal from the heresy ensued. Those withdrawing holding up the Bible declaration: - "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Matt.19:6

1927 A CONFESSED CHANGE OF BELIEF, A BROADER WAY

The following year brought a further shaking to those who, having separated from 'Temperance Hall' in 1923, called themselves 'Berean Christadelphians', because of the determination to stand by the Scriptures and refuse the vain philosophies of men. It came then all the more as a shock, when a prominent brother F.G. Jannaway, who had given such useful service in time past, published a letter in which he confessed a change of belief, as stated in the following extract:-

"When I embraced the Truth in 1875 (and by the Truth I mean the First Principles set out in the Birmingham Statement of the One Faith), there was to my knowledge, only one community holding those First Principles as a Basis of Fellowship. That community was known as "Christadelphian," then a despised, albeit, a happy and united little flock. **In those far off days, to withdraw, or to be withdrawn from that community (whose headquarters were in Birmingham) was, in the mind of the writer, to be outside the One Body of Christ. Now however, there are at least twelve fraternities calling themselves "Christadelphians", each refusing to fellowship the other eleven. This division of the body has led me to take a wider view than I did in 1875, for I am convinced that it is more than possible that those on the "right hand" in the Day of Judgment will include some from each of the said divisions, notwithstanding their present separation.**

Thus by one fell stroke the fortress of truth was betrayed, and all the old heresies were allowed to enter in. Of course, each sect must still be in a separate building, but what of that if each contains the elect?

Withdrawal ought only to take place for offences against the law of God and in obedience to His commands, and the God-Breathed Word declared that "He that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God." 2 Jn. 5:9.

True withdrawal is to separate from those whose conduct separates from the fellowship of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, the action of faithful withdrawal is a loosing in heaven, just as true baptism into the Body of Christ is a binding in heaven. If not, of what value is it? With the broader view all the sections called Christadelphian are the dear brethren of each other; and so the evil working of the earlier heresies at last prevailed.

What a contrast this 'change of belief' makes with the forthright attitude of John Thomas in the dealings with the Secretary of the Chicago Ecclesia, and of Robert Roberts with Edward Turney. The 'new view' of course was not new, it had been advocated all along by those who were responsible for the introduction of heresy, or those who had refused to disassociate themselves from it.

In the view of those known as Suffolk Street Christadelphians and the Advocate Christadelphians, the withdrawals of 1884 and 1894 were regarded as wrong and unscriptural. Thus one of their writers recalls:-

"The effects of the procedure adopted by Brother Roberts had far reaching consequences, since they were felt the world over, and blighted the work of the Truth by reason of a divided household. However, in the course of time, and it was a long

time: thirty-four years; circumstances arose which eventuated in a "re-union" happily maintained since 1920 Thus some 'good' came out of the 'evil', though it is much deplored that the evil was wrought in the first place." *The Story of The Truth*, G. M. Lees 1944.

Subsequently reunion has been effected between Suffolk Street and Temperance Hall in 1957, upon the basis of a majority vote, and they are now known as "Central Fellowship". But the question may well be asked as to where they now stand in relation to the vital issues of 1884 and 1894; and above all, what is their opinion of the 'Doctrine of Fellowship' as taught and practised by Robert Roberts? This undoubtedly has been disregarded. Now it is maintained:

"That the Ecclesia is now only a means to an end, the training ground of candidates for the King-priestship of the Age to come. At any particular moment some in the Assembly are on the upgrade, some are on the downgrade. There is no authority to sever any person's connection with this training institution, however bad he may appear, except for immorality. The major divisions of 1885 and 1923 were not Scriptural, the faithful ought to continue in the face of evil, and patiently contend with error until it please God to change the situation. This is a necessary training appointed by God, and we must not run away from it. We should depart from an assembly only when we dare to say it has passed the Laodicean mark.

Faithful and Unfaithful Brethren Together in the Ecclesias - Remarks by Graham Pearce

Whether a faithful remnant should remain in a corrupt assembly or not, is a question to be determined from the Word of God, and not from the writings of men, however highly esteemed. The action of John Thomas himself in the face of heresy is sufficient to show that the above conclusions, though ostensibly derived from his writings, are not in harmony with the known facts.

For 280 years it is suggested the faithful remained in fellowship with a corrupt Assembly of Satan, preferring (those who were still alive) to stay until they were ejected. The application is then made to our times, that the Body of Christ is growing more and more corrupt, but you are not to separate, you must wait until the unfaithful cast you out. Therefore the corrupt mass is to separate from the pure. But the Word of God says that it is the leaven which will corrupt the whole mass if it is not purged out. Here then is the complete REVERSAL OF A DIVINE COMMAND. Corrupt Christendom does not purge out the leaven; and the more lax an assembly becomes, the less it is inclined to lessen its numbers by purging out.

The theory of non-withdrawal in the face of evil was refuted by Robert Roberts as long ago as 1885:-

"Very lax ideas with respect to fellowship are prevalent among those who have recently submitted to the Truth, such as have not known the early struggle for purity in the basis of fellowship. Even among some of those of whom a more advanced spiritual understanding might have been expected, astonishing sentiments are entertained to the effect that error of any kind is not only not to be objected to in fellowship, but rather encouraged as a useful counterfoil and provocative of truth, and that the *only thing justifying separation is immorality of conduct*. This would be a very convenient doctrine to hold; but it is IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE IN HARMONY WITH APOSTOLIC WRITINGS TO RECEIVE IT.

The Truth is the result of ecclesial existence; and the whole spirit of apostolic precept is to be jealous of any departure from it, and to contend earnestly against the corruptions of all who creep in unawares, to the extent of turning away from the corrupters if they cannot be won over to the right way."

1933 - MOVING NEARER TO THE WORLD, UNEQUAL YOKING, UNION MEMBERSHIP, SISTERS SPEAKING

The great principle of separateness from error having been betrayed, the fall from strict adherence to the law of Christ rapidly made itself manifest to the vigilant. Partnership with aliens was allowed, and it was denied that such a relationship was a yoking with unbelievers. Partnership in Co-operative Societies and membership with Trade Unions were strongly defended. Sisters were shorn of their hair in direct defiance of the divine instruction given by the Apostle Paul. And while all these offences were condoned, the people who did rouse resentment were those who testified against the wrong.

Again under divine control these evils moved events on to a crisis, and in the year 1933 division again ensued.

On January 3rd, in response to an enquiry from 'Pemberton', the same presiding brother who had published his change of view, wrote expressing regret that the Pemberton Ecclesia should have been "disturbed over the application of 1 Cor. 14 v 34, which undoubtedly forbids sisters exhorting or lecturing" but that wisdom was profitable to direct, and that a wise sister would be justified in, say, "suggesting a postponement" and that extremists were to be given "a wide berth". In this subtle manner was the Word of God again perverted. (The man who trembles at the Word of God will not dare to alter it; and the true servant of the Lord delighted to do his Lord's Will. The "Word" was clear: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak.")

Thus encouraged, the Pemberton Ecclesia passed a resolution that sisters might "make verbal suggestions and ask verbal questions in a humble manner at ecclesial business meetings."

After appeals and admonition, division took place at "Pemberton". Seeing the danger of yet another division taking place within the Berean Fellowship, strong representations were made by the Clapham Ecclesia to the majority who had set aside the command, not with a view to bring them to repentance because of sin, but merely to withdraw the offending Resolution "for the sake of peace".

In the case of this heresy, it was later declared that all Ecclesias "NOW BELIEVED" that withdrawal ought and would take place for teaching contrary to the Apostle's command: 1 Cor. 14:34. Why then was it not accepted that the majority at Pemberton, and those who supported them, were wrong and those who took Scriptural actions in dealing with the evil were right?

The issue in 1933 briefly stated was:-

"That the Pemberton majority sinned in passing a Resolution allowing sisters to speak contrary to apostolic precept. The only way to restore the unity of the Body was for those in the wrong to acknowledge the error and to admit that they should never have passed the Resolution."

But if the Pemberton majority were to admit this, so must the Clapham presiding brother who gave the advice in the first place; hence the subtle manoeuvre to cover the evil. Division took place, and a few from various 'Berean Christadelphian' Ecclesias separated on the issue.

At the time of this controversy, as on previous occasions involving Fellowship, many who refused to face the issue excused themselves of responsibility, as do many Christadelphians today, by declaring that they must not judge and that Christ has forbidden it.

It is true that in matters which are not qualified by the doctrine and commandments of Christ, or where it is a question of censuring another's motives: the thoughts and intents of the heart, no man is permitted to judge his brother. But when the doctrine or the commandments of Christ themselves ARE called into question, and there is a refusal on the part of few or many to submit to the Word of God, the plain apostolic injunction is "from such WITHDRAW THYSELF". This cannot be carried out without forming a judgment on the matters involved. How can one person withdraw from another unless he has reached a conclusion that a state of things justifying such action exists? And how can such a conclusion be arrived at, unless perception and discernment is brought to bear upon matters relating to it?

The very position of one called to the Truth in the first place involves such a discernment whereby worldly and spiritual falsehoods are condemned, and the teaching of Christ approved. Defending his

action in connection with the Dowieite controversy when he was accused of “judging”, Robert Roberts asked:

“On what principle could they defend separation from *the churches*? Did not the Orthodox communities believe the Bible and profess the Name of Christ? Why had they come away from them? Were they not guilty of having ‘judged’ those ‘sincere’ professors of religion? They had done quite right, for they are commanded to judge themselves what is right and act accordingly. 2 Jno. 10, 11.”

My Days and My Ways page 212

RELINQUISHING THE TITLE ‘CHRISTADELPHIAN’

In 1933 a new endeavour was made to return to first principles and to uphold the apostolic doctrine of the One Faith and the One Body.

“Christadelphian” – a name which at one time was dear to all who believed and loved the /truth, was now seen to have become a misnomer. Just as the word Christian had come to stand for a multitude of religious sects all professing different creeds, and all astray from Scriptural Truth, now Christadelphians had come to stand for a multitude of religious sects all professing different creeds, and all astray from Scriptural Truth, now Christadelphians had become by their divisions a miniature Christendom, each sect refusing fellowship with the other, but nonetheless considering all members to be worthy of the name ‘brother’. What was to be done at this crisis? The advice of a prominent Christadelphian was considered and adopted:-

“I have borne the name of Christadelphian for forty years, and upon the significance of that title a few words may be useful. It came into existence when it was necessary to distinguish the brethren from other so-called Christians. Ever since, that name has stood for the One Faith and for separation from the present evil world in its Religious, Social and Political aspects.

“Brethren in Christ”, a high and noble calling, an honourable name! Has it lost its meaning since it first came into being? The Ecclesia at Sardis had a “name” that it lived, but it was dead. They called themselves Brethren in Christ, and they had a high reputation, but in Christ’s estimation they were like the Pharisees, ‘whited sepulchres’, outwardly beautiful, but inwardly full of dead men’s bones. Should the salt lose its savour; should the name Christadelphian ever become a misnomer; should it come to be borne by a people who have become false to the Truth it signifies, lax, latitudinarian and worldly, it might become necessary for a ‘few names’ who have lived up to the Name to repudiate a title which they once rightly gloried in.

Brethren! remember our proud and exalted appellation; see that it never becomes tarnished, dishonoured, meaningless. It is *the fact* that is important; not a name. If we call ourselves Christadelphians, then let us be Brethren of Christ in that we hold his Truth unimpaired, and follow his example of holiness.”

J. M. Evans. Christadelphian Treasury

Yes, the salt had lost its savour. Christadelphianism by its many sections had come to embrace many errors:

Belief in eternal torment; a supernatural devil; a Christ without a sin-stricken nature; a Bible not wholly inspired and infallible, but containing a human element liable to err; belief that those who were responsible and not baptised would never be raised; belief that the responsible will not be raised to judgment until the end of the 1,000 years; toleration of marriage with unbelievers; voting for this world’s rulers; serving in the armed forces; divorce; trade union membership; suing at law; brethren becoming freemasons, councillors and magistrates; and participating in the world’s pleasures and worshipping the dictates of fashion.

Yes, ‘Christadelphian’ was once a name which stood for the One Body holding the One Faith in purity and holiness, but now it had become a divided community. Christ is not divided; and the writings of the Apostles witness to only One Body, the Ecclesia of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth. 1 Tim. 3:15.

After much deliberation another name was chosen; "The Ecclesia of Christ". For nearly forty years this community endeavoured to uphold the original Christadelphian doctrines, the body of Apostolic Truth. Its magazine *The Master's Household*, testified against the errors of false teaching as "a witness to the falling away of the last days"; and the members of this much reduced Body reiterated their belief, in accordance with John Thomas and the early brethren, that any outside this One Body were lost; and that to be in fellowship with the One Body was indeed to be in fellowship with the Father and His Son; and that they would be found dwelling therein through the Word which is Spirit and Life.

This declaration brought forth the scorn and ridicule of those who had departed from the faith, and they took strong exception to the teaching that when a person is a recipient of *the Faith* and is truly baptized, he becomes a new creature and a member of the family of God, and that this is a *reality* recognised and rejoiced over in heaven. Matt. 18:18-20; Luke 15:7,10.

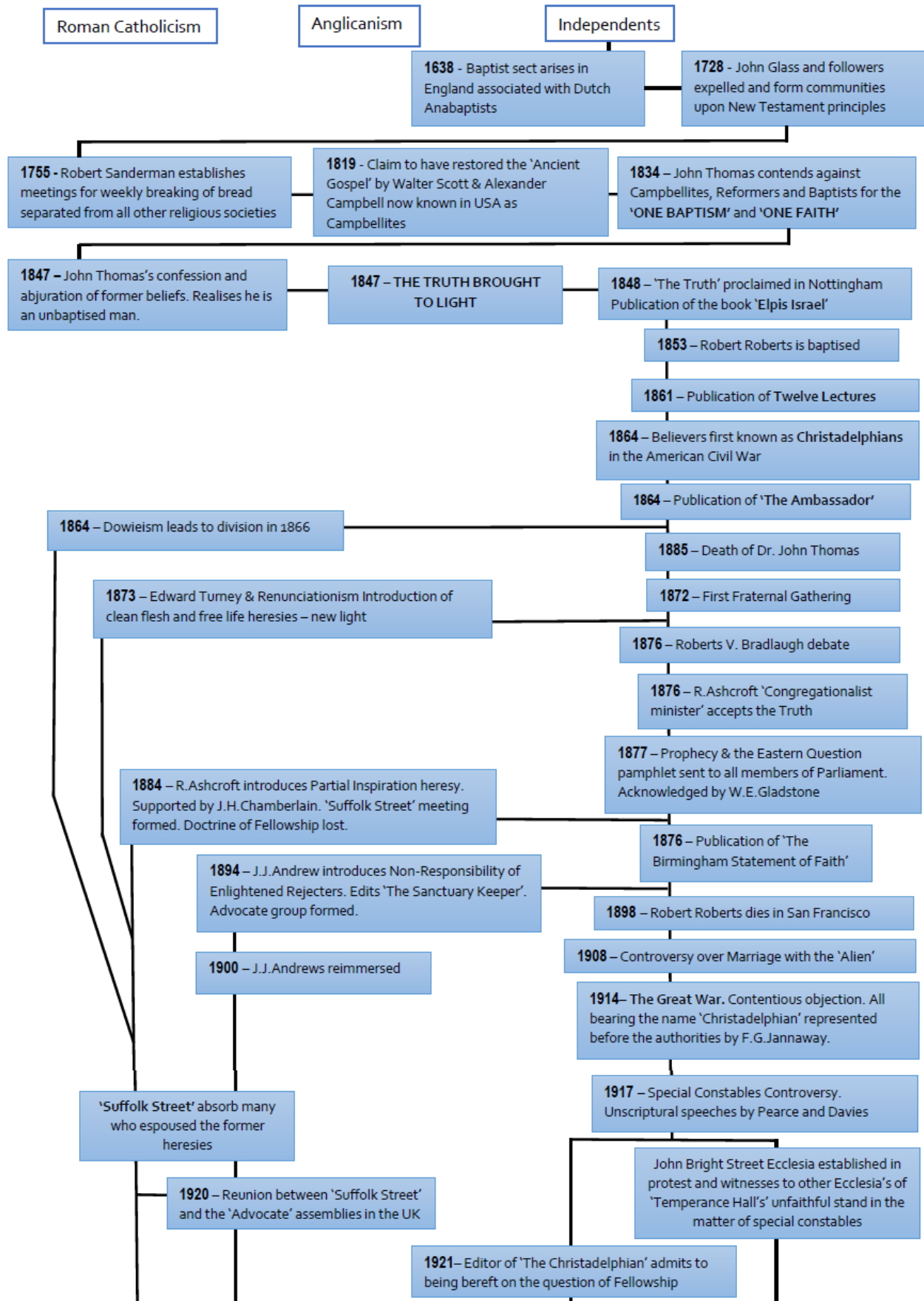
That the converse also is true, that when a person who has known the Truth afterwards becomes a transgressor of the Word of God and manifests a wilful disobedience, requiring withdrawal on the part of those holding the Truth, then that act of withdrawal, being righteous, has the approbation of heaven. Matt. 18:18; Heb. 10:26,27

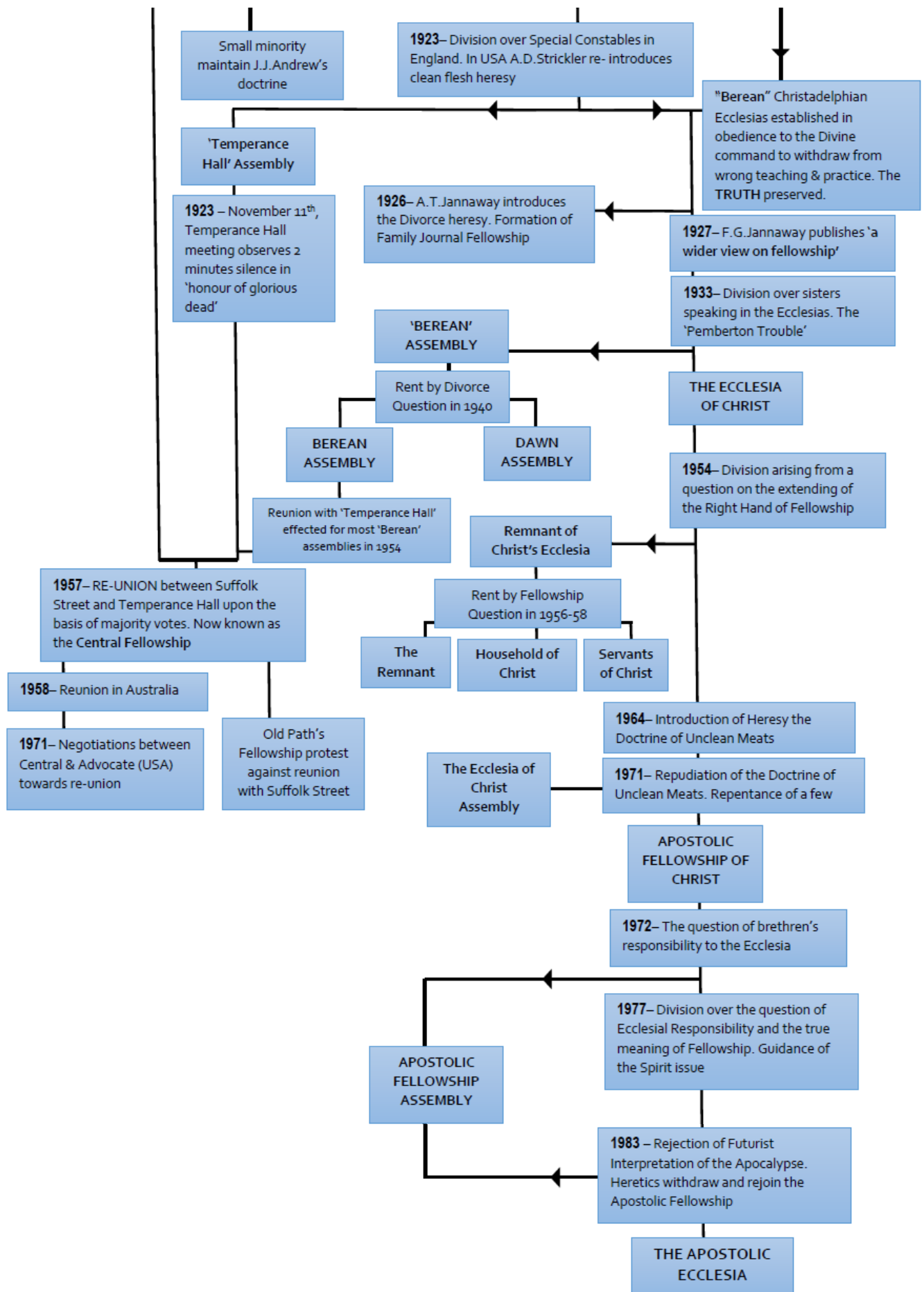
Such a belief has been stigmatised as "a misuse of Scripture" and the work of "uninspired men (who) arrogate to themselves an authority which the Spirit alone can bestow." *Light and Shade of the Truth's History*, White and Clements, page 44-45. But is it such a remarkable thing for *obedience to divine commands* to receive the approval of the One who intended that His commandments *should* be obeyed? How blind must those people be who, while contending that they have the true faith, nevertheless are opposed to the idea that 'such faith' is able to effectually bind those whom they baptize to the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven.

But again, consider carefully the words of Robert Roberts and John Thomas with regard to the binding and loosing to which Jesus refers:-

"In view of the certainty, that the world in general would assume this attitude of opposition to him and his, he enjoins it as a matter of care on all who desire to be His disciples; to be clear on this matter. "Wherefore if thy hand or foot offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire." This is connected with the exhortation to "Despise not one of these little ones," and must therefore refer to matters of attitude or relation to them. What can it mean but that we must be ready to part with anything rather than remain in a position that involves hostility to the undoubted friends of Christ? Jesus even gives it an application to brethren in the wrong. We are not to give them up without effort at reclamation in the particular way prescribed. "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast *gained thy brother*. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the ecclesia; but if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

The History and Progress of the Latter Day Revival of 'The Truth'





Nothing tends more to the keeping or restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to third persons. From them it spreads, with the result of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and told the fault "between thee and him alone". If good men, or those who consider themselves such, would adopt the rule of refusing to listen to an evil report privately conveyed, until it had been dealt with to the last stage, according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented. Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now, in the generation of hatred instead of love. Much more serious will the result be to the offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule.

Jesus indicates that any decision arrived at by an ecclesia in the proper application of this rule will be respected and confirmed by God Himself: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This is much encouragement to the brethren to be faithful in the matter. The application of the rule will often make it unnecessary to advance beyond the first stage. A brother approached privately with every opportunity of explanation will often make concessions that must remain impossible if he is made the subject of public opprobrium, however deserved. The healing of a matter will often be the result if you go and tell a man his fault "Between thee and him alone". If there be no fault, there will be explanation and understanding. If there be, there will be concession and forgiveness. And we are not to weary in the recurrence of the process."

Nazareth Revisited, Robert Roberts, page 325

"'He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.' This applies to all without distinction, and erects a barrier to fellowship with even some who hold the truth; for though they may hold the doctrine of Christ themselves, yet if they keep up a 'God speed' connection with those who don't, by John's rule, they make themselves partakers with them, and therefore *cut themselves off* from those who stand for the doctrine of Christ."

Seasons of Comfort, Robert Roberts

"No one can get into Christ without being the subject of 'the faith'; for Paul says "Ye are all the sons of the Deity in the Anointed Jesus, *through the faith*"; and he tells us that there is "one faith" and not two or more; and that without this faith "it is impossible to please God." It is evident then that those Satanists in Smyrna and in Philadelphia, "who say they are Jews," but who had either not embraced the faith, OR HAVING EMBRACED IT, had afterwards MADE IT VOID by their traditions, OR HAD DENIED IT IN ANY WAY, "are not Jews, but do lie;" THEY WERE NOT IN CHRIST JESUS, nor he in them by faith, and therefore, whatever their pretensions might be, they were not Christians."

Eureka Vol 1 page 227, John Thomas

Here is irrefutable evidence that the accusation that the Ecclesia of Christ espoused new doctrine in this matter and added to the commandments of Christ is false. It was not a new teaching, but the expression of the minds of all who loved the Truth, desired to be obedient to its requirements, and appreciated the reality of the work of God in calling out a people for His Name.

Yet, although it was the sincere desire of many to hold fast to the Truth and to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified, still the working of the flesh prevailed; even as the Apostle Paul testified, "Evil men shall wax worse and worse".

Since the name Christadelphian was dispensed with, there has been discontentment still with the simplicity (freedom from pretence) that is in Christ. Consequently, division took place in 1954 over matters which had no roots in any doctrinal dispute whatsoever but occurred as a result of the pursuing of personal objectives, to the point of dissension, in the face of many appeals to desist or to point out, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the Lord Jesus Christ, what command had been broken. A perusal of the correspondence reveals that those who separated themselves and established another table, were guilty of precisely the same thing of which they accused the Nottingham Recording Brother: failure to apply Matthew 18:15-17.

How subtle is the working of the flesh, and how blind are the adversaries of the Truth to the nature of their own evil work? It was true in the days of the Apostles and in principle it remains so today, that "whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service"; and again, "a man's foes shall be they of his own household".

Those who separated from the Household of Faith became known as the “Remnant of Christ’s Ecclesia”.

1964-1971 THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ECCLESIA OF CHRIST

One might be moved to ask: why is it that the work of maintaining the Truth in its purity is accompanied by so much strife and contention? It is not a thing to be wondered at, for the Word of God had so plainly foretold that this would be the nature of things at the time of the end. Jesus declared that:

“because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold”.

and Paul also speaks of many

“receiving not the love of the Truth; for which cause God would send them strong delusion (a working of error), that they should believe a lie”.

The prevalence of the mind of the flesh over that of the spirit would be so great as to make the last days fraught with peril for those who would be faithful servants of the Lord Jesus; a form of godliness would be apparent, but there would be no power in it to change the life; for it is only the sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth in its entirety that is able to effect such a change. The time of the end would be marked by its wickedness, comparable to the days of Noah, and the circumstances attending the destruction of Sodom. Moreover, such would be the prevalence of apostasy and the diminishing of the Truth among men, that the Lord Jesus Himself declared:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find the faith (Gr. Ten pistin) on the earth?” Luke 18:8

In view of such warnings it might have been expected that a people claiming to be witnesses of the falling away of the last days, would have been particularly alert to the express warnings of the Spirit. But such was not the case. Confident of their own righteousness, they relaxed their vigilance and became victims of the same fatal narcosis that had overtaken those from whom they had separated. Well might the Apostle have written:

“Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall”.

For in 1964 the Ecclesia of Christ adopted a resolution prohibiting their members from partaking of certain meats. The Resolution declares:

“after having examined the question with prayer and care, we find the Word of God:

‘Swine’s flesh, also such things as rabbits and mackerel, among others, are Divinely declared as unclean – they are not to be eaten but to be an abomination’.”

Could there have been a more direct rejection of the sure Word of prophecy?

“Now the Spirit speaketh EXPRESSLY, that in the latter times some shall depart from THE FAITH, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry and COMMANDING TO ABSTAIN FROM MEATS which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the Truth.” 1 Tim.4:1-3

From their own writings upon this prophecy, it is evident that at one time its significance was appreciated; but with the passing of time their ears became dull of hearing, and true spiritual love being absent, they became too drowsy to discern the Truth. Thus in their magazine *The Master’s Household*, 1947 it was observed:

"Now it is impossible to depart from that with which one has never been associated. Therefore in proportion SO VAST AS TO CONSTITUTE A SIGN, if these are the last days, there must have occurred or is occurring an apostasy from the Truth, which means: those once having the Truth have fallen from it.

Wisdom would direct that with courage and humility the question should be faced: has this apostasy occurred? Pride and stubbornness, as in the case of Israel, will harden the neck and heart.

Let there be made a comparison between the zeal of those found in the Faith sixty years ago: then note the slow and deadly decline; but the majority will act like rebellious Israel and thus fulfil the type."

A comparison between the doctrine held by the 'One Body' when the Truth was first brought to light under the hand of God in these last days, and the 1964 Resolution, shows the two positions to be diametrically opposed. The early brethren held that the teaching "That some meats are to be refused on the score of uncleanness", was a doctrine *to be rejected* and any who espoused such a belief would, on proof of the fact, cease to be in fellowship.

Indeed a deadly decline had taken place, but was the Spirit's express warning heeded? When in 1971 the error was pointed out, only a minority rallied to the cause of the Truth. Pride and stubbornness, as in the case of Israel, revealed an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Is it too much to expect that even now some might reconsider and remember from when they are fallen, and repent "while it is called today"?

1977 THE REJECTION OF ECCLESIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Word of God declares that the Ecclesia, the House of God, is the pillar and ground of the Truth. It is the organisation appointed by God, for the purpose of preparing and developing a people, separated from the world by the Gospel, to become constituent members of His Name. Those who enter the Ecclesia by means of the New Covenant, are constituted living stones of a spiritual house; a royal and holy priesthood; an holy nation; a peculiar people for the purpose of offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

This service is the antitype of the work of Aaron and his sons as they ministered in the Holy Place before the vail; and this being understood, ecclesial responsibilities of whatever nature are, in the estimation of every faithful brother and sister in Christ, elevated to the highest order of privilege and honour. No effort will be spared to preserve the sanctity of the Truth and great care taken to prevent the intrusion of the flesh, so that any tendency towards disruption of the Body of Christ and destruction of the principles of the Truth will be shunned. Where these things are appreciated, respect will be shown for Apostolic teaching in order to maintain an organisation that is both Scriptural and satisfactory to all good men.

This teaching says:

"By love serve one another."

"Submit yourselves one to another, in the fear of God."

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on things of others."

"Because he laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Observance of these precepts will lead to appointments being made in the Ecclesia for the promotion of the best interests of the Truth, and the welfare of every member; and these will be respected and upheld by every right-minded brother and sister of Christ.

Where the Ecclesia bestows any office upon a brother, it should be received in a spirit of meekness and fear, with as much regard as if it were given from the Lord Jesus himself; and examination should

be continually made to see if that work conforms to the example of the Apostles. Paul appealed to the Phillipines:

“Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample,”

How did the Apostles discharge their commission? Was it not with the highest esteem for the work of Christ? Was it not with selfless devotion and affectionate desire for the children of God? And was it not as true shepherds, being prepared to give their time, their substance, their health, even their lives for the flock of God? Undoubtedly; for when a person is truly united to the Lord Jesus, they surrender their own will in obedience to Christ. They become his servants (Gk *doulos*) his slaves, his purchased possession, his personal property. A *doulos* or slave owns nothing; neither himself, nor anything belonging to self before he became a slave; and he lives solely for the purpose of performing his master’s will. Such is the relation of brethren to Christ their Lord and Master.

But what is to be done when a brother, in whom the trust and confidence of the Ecclesia resides, reveals a mind that evidently does not appreciate the privilege of service in the house of God, by an independent decision to relinquish all offices for the sake of personal and pecuniary advantage?

Such a question did arise in 1972, causing grave anxiety to all the brethren and sisters. When such action was shown to be inconsistent with the teaching and example of Christ and the apostles, the person concerned refused to acknowledge that this was so, and withdrew, together with four others who afterwards returned.

At that time the principle of ecclesial responsibility was upheld by all the Ecclesias. Yet five years later in 1977, when another brother declared his determination to pursue an almost identical course, a minority protested and appealed to the Resolution to which all had earlier agreed as being the mind of the Spirit from the Word of God; they found themselves regarded as trouble-makers, and the principles regulating ecclesial life and conduct stigmatised as the traditions and commandments of men. Why such a change in so short a time? The answer has always been the same. For a while men and women rejoice in the hope of the Truth, but as time goes on and faith is put to the test, the requirements of God become irksome and an inconvenience to the desires of the flesh. The backslider has neither the honesty nor the courage to acknowledge his shortcomings, and so a compromise is affected and an attempt made to gloss over the difficulties. Why else should the Nottingham Recording Brother repudiate what he had previously upheld as “a basic fundamental principle of Truth”?

True followers of Christ remember in humility and fear the teaching of the Son of God:

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.”

The Nottingham Recorder maintained that he had never changed his mind over a fundamental principle of Truth, but had merely repudiated the resolution defining the principle because it no longer applied. Further that the brother concerned did not relinquish his offices for pecuniary advantage. However, he claimed his decision was determined by the “guidance of the Spirit”! What then was the reason for his action, which he declined to give to his ecclesia? It was nothing less than the Nottingham Recorder’s fears that if he remained in that ecclesia he would come under the influence of heresy, and he should therefore get out! Jesus taught that those who left the flock in times of danger were hirelings, he also taught that the wolves should be resisted unto death. Paul taught that the promulgators of heresy should be admonished twice and then rejected, and that it was the duty of faithful brethren to show those at fault, the error of their ways, in order that they might repent. He certainly did not teach that those deemed worthy by the ecclesia both to exhort and proclaim the

gospel should flee in the face of heretical influences and leave the rest of the ecclesia in ignorance of the dangers.

The individual accused of heretical tendencies had indeed been contending with the “eldership of the Apostolic Fellowship”, for the following reasons:

1. He believed a firm stand should be taken in rejecting futurism in the Apocalypse.
2. He believed that Nebuchadnezzar’s Image represented the latter day Russian Confederacy.
3. He believed in the coming of Christ in judgment on the Jews in AD 70 and that the 24th chapter of Matthew and 2nd epistle of Peter referred to that event.
4. He believed that the brethren and sisters constituted a Holy Priesthood at the present time.

On no other points did he come into collision with the “eldership” and since he is deemed heretical they have a duty to declare which of these doctrines they object to, or else acknowledge that after the way they call heresy so he strives to obey the God of the fathers of Israel in company with Dr Thomas, Robert Roberts and a host of faithful brethren before him.

But though so accused now, it did not then prevent him being propositioned a sub-editorship of a magazine the Nottingham Recorder proposed to publish, nor that his work on the Apocalypse was gratefully received. It is now evident why division was inevitable, and why six years later they willingly received back into their assembly those who espoused futurism.

The remnant who upheld the standard previously acknowledged by all, were withdrawn from, and are known as the Apostolic Ecclesia; a body of people who occupy the same position as the original Christadelphians, and as such are wholly dedicated to the HOPE OF ISRAEL, sincerely endeavouring to uphold the FAITH and PRACTICE of the original Christians, as taught by Jesus Christ and His Apostles; and who consequently not only oppose the false teachings of all sects in Papal and Protestant Christendom, but also those promulgated by men who have turned from the Truth, with the view to making ready A PEOPLE PREPARED FOR THE LORD at His promised RETURN.

THE APOCALYPSE AND FELLOWSHIP

As has been demonstrated in the foregoing account of the history of the Truth in these last days, the Providential revival of the Faith once delivered to the saints was accomplished through much earnest contention; and the subsequent history of the Truth, as faithful men sought to guard zealously that most precious pearl of great price, has been accompanied with much tribulation, dissension and strife, leading to division and separation from error.

In *The Christadelphian* for the year 1873, there is published a reference tablet No 49, entitled “A Second Apostacy”. The tablet provides a list of 28 items of doctrinal error arising from within, which had had to be combated in order to preserve the purity of the Faith. Since the revival of the Truth, this defence of the gospel and the refusal of true brethren of Christ to tolerate error in any of its multiplicity of forms, has led to division on average every 10-15 years. There has been no aspect of the Truth which has not been assaulted by those who, though professing allegiance to it as a whole, are the secret enemies of some of its requirements. The attempts to overthrow the Truth have varied according to the manner of dissent. There have been few direct assaults; generally, it has been by stealth, mounted by men “crept in unawares”, Jude 4. Sometimes the enemy has been soundly beaten; at others the enemy has retreated and taken cover in order to take advantage of different circumstances, when ardour for Divine commands has cooled and the watchmen slumber. Thus some errors once refuted reappear in more subtle guise.

AN OLD ERROR

The doctrine that the Seals, Trumpets and Vials of the book of Revelation relate to events all future to the return of Christ was an error circulating in the religious world before the revival of the Truth in 1847. In principle it was a Romish heresy. That doctrine was known and examined by John Thomas, and repudiated as utterly unworthy of a brother of Christ. In 1864 that doctrine made its appearance in Edinburgh, having its advocates among the Dowieites, from whom fellowship was withdrawn over false doctrines espoused by clericalism. In 1865 fellowship was withdrawn from those in Galashiels who failed to repudiate the erroneous view. During the period when Robert Roberts was the editor of *The Christadelphian*, the same error arose from time to time and it was firmly rebuked, with clear understanding that wrong teaching on matters relating to the interpretation of the Apocalypse would affect continuance in fellowship.

Since the death of Robert Roberts, no such firm line has been taken; and amongst Christadelphians today and those sects that have separated subsequently, the interpretation of the Apocalypse is no longer considered to be a matter important enough to affect fellowship. Indeed, the second editor of *The Christadelphian*, C.C. Walker, could assert, almost without opposition, that the period of the Seventh Vial had already commenced and was being fulfilled in the events of the First World War. This view was hinted at in *The Christadelphian* as far back as 1905, and is defended in a leading article in 1923. It is found in *The Apocalypse and History*, and also *the Apocalypse and the Gospels*. This teaching is particularly mischievous in its effects, for it ignores the fact that the coming of Christ is announced under the Sixth Vial, and thereby diminishes the anticipation that this intimation was designed to effect in those who looked for his coming; and that announcement is reduced to “mere parenthetic warning”, and the sequence in which that statement occurs has no significance. Alternatively it involves the belief that Jesus is here now; which is “Russellism” (Jehovah’s Witnesses) and not the Truth. In any event, it has led to a “reappraisal” of the book of Revelation, and this is reflected in the preface to the 8th edition of *Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse*, which freely confesses, “It must be recognised that today there are other schools and other views even among the Christadelphians”.

Those who attempted to withstand the 20th century slide to apostacy have themselves not escaped from the insidious influence of this pernicious error. Thus in 1938 an attempt to continue the “work of research” commenced by Dr Thomas resulted in later years in the promulgation of a ‘dualistic’ theory in the Ecclesia of Christ. The continuous historic principle was accepted, but it was suggested that it could be applied to the future as well. Subsequently this developed into the teaching of a futurist concept in respect of the Seals, Trumpets and Vials, not only accepted by the Ecclesia of Christ, but by those who subsequently separated from that community as “The Remnant of Christ’s Ecclesia”, “The Servants of Christ” and “The Household of Christ”.

In 1971 when, as a result of division in the Ecclesia of Christ, the “Apostolic Fellowship of Christ” came into existence, a determined effort was made by some in that newly formed community to return to the original interpretation of the Apocalypse in harmony with the “things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ”, an understanding based upon the same principles that caused Dr Thomas to boldly assert “EUREKA” – I have found it! This task was not easy. Many found the subject difficult to understand, but with patience some progress was made.

In 1977 after division occurred in the Apostolic Fellowship of Christ, the “Apostolic Ecclesia” was formed. Amongst the former were those who did not consider the question of the Apocalypse to be a doctrinal issue, and others who became entrenched in futurist views: which teaching carried to its logical conclusion is subversive of the Truth as originally elaborated from the Word. The system of the Truth was published in outline in 20 articles by John Thomas, and article 19 reads:

“That this Name exists in Two States, the present and the future, which states are separated by the resurrection. In the PRESENT STATE, the Name is APOCALYPTICALLY symbolised by the Sealed, the Golden Altar, the Holy City trampled, the Woman and the Remnant of her Seed; and in the FUTURE STATE by the Four Living Ones full of eyes, and the Four and Twenty Elders, the Rainbow Angel, the Nave, by the 144,000 on Mount Zion, by Harpists and Singers, by the Lamb’s Wife arrayed in white, by the Armies in the Heaven, and by that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem as a Bride adorned for her husband.”

Into this belief, regarded as an essential element of the Truth, John Thomas was baptised in 1847.

Although there were those who considered that their futurist view was the only correct view, all members of the Apostolic Ecclesia when challenged by those who opposed them, tacitly agreed that the works of John Thomas in regard to the Apocalypse were fundamentally sound. Furthermore the principle of prophetic interpretation he adhered to were employed in their public witness. However, in 1983 those who harboured different points of view questioned the correctness of those principles, and it now became clearly manifest that a state of disunity existed contrary to the sense of article 31 of the Statement of Faith. The matter was brought to a head in the Dartford Ecclesia. It was pointed out that the ‘futurist view’ by its very nature completely negates the truth of the continuous historic principle; the futurist dogma locks horns at every turn with the continuous history interpretation. Both views cannot be in harmony with “The Truth” and therefore after fully investigating the question, the Dartford Ecclesia unanimously resolved:

“We the brethren and sisters of the Dartford Apostolic Ecclesia, being mindful of the account to be rendered at the Judgment Seat of Christ, after careful investigation and with prayer, do wholeheartedly reject that doctrine which teaches that the book of Revelation from chapter four inclusive, is all to be understood as pertaining to events future to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ; and that the Seals, Trumpets and Vials likewise pertain to events to take place after his return from heaven. We also reject that doctrine which teaches that the Revelation found its fulfilment entirely in the past.

We uphold the Truth which teaches that the Revelation signifies in the Seals, Trumpets and Vials and the related symbols, events of the past 19 centuries; and assert our conviction that we are now living under the Sixth Vial period, in which Christ comes as a thief, Rev. 16:15, continuing in fellowship with brethren and sisters who accept this principle.”

The majority of the members of the Apostolic Ecclesia endorsed this stand, while those in sympathy with the futurist heresy, principally from the Slough Ecclesia, dissented from the Resolution, immediately withdrew fellowship and were accepted back into the Apostolic Fellowship. The heresy having been recognised, resisted and overcome as Christ commanded, the Apostolic Ecclesia have been enabled in the grace and mercy of God to return to that path of obedience to the Truth in its entirety.

Futurism is rife within Christadelphia today as witnessed by the publications: *Apocalypse for Everyman* by A.D. Norris; *Exploring the Apocalypse and the Future* by P. Watkins; and various articles appearing in *The Testimony* and other magazines. A praeterist opinion has been published by H. A. Whittaker entitled *The Revelation: a Biblical Approach*. Many Christadelphians are profoundly disturbed by the encroachment of these ideas, but are powerless to disassociate themselves from the works of these their “brethren”, because they have lost the essential doctrine of fellowship.

The brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ known as the Apostolic Ecclesia, as the remnant of the woman’s seed which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus, in striving to obey his command to be of one mind, and by the aid of his last message to his saints to watch for his coming, HAVE TAKEN ACTION, and can have NO FELLOWSHIP with the unfaithful works of the darkness of FUTURISM. See Eph. 4:3-13, 5:11; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phi. 1:27; 1 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 16:15.

DIVINE FELLOWSHIP OR SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP?

Today there is a considerable number of people who bear the name Christadelphian, yet, as has been shown, they are not united in One Body; neither do they subscribe to the One Faith in all its particulars, but are a divided community; and they hold that members within the various groups, which they describe as 'fellowships', are all equally to be regarded as brethren: and that all will have an equal opportunity of approval at the Judgment seat of Christ. Indeed, there are some Christadelphians who openly avow that some in various Churches and Chapels may be saved: and there are others who even question the Israelitish nature of the Hope of the Gospel, declaring it to be destructive of Christianity within the Movement.

Such views were not entertained by the early Christadelphians, who with Paul, rejoiced in the Hope of Israel, believing and preaching that there was only one true Body of Christ; that Christ was not divided; and that a man was either in Christ, dwelling in the Light, or he was in the world in darkness. They continually emphasised the teaching of the Word of God that there is an unmistakable dividing line between light and darkness, truth and error.

Gradually this position has been renounced and DIVINE FELLOWSHIP degraded to the position of a human arrangement. The teaching crept in that withdrawal only affected Ecclesial membership, and not the fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Fifty years ago such views were thoroughly repudiated, as the following extract shows:

"If a man who seeks immersion, is refused on the grounds that he holds false doctrine and therefore is not fit to be a brother of Christ: what is the position of a man who, after being baptised into the Truth and holding it for a while, accepts false doctrine on one of the first principles? He must be withdrawn from. Is he still a brother of Christ?"

"Him that is a heretic (i.e. one who chooses, for himself instead of accepting the teaching of the Scriptures) after the first and second admonition reject, knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Tit. 3:10.

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there came any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. 2 Jno. 5:10-11.

Shall we give the name Christadelphian to those whom the Spirit hath said are subverted and condemned?

Therefore when divisions on doctrine occur, those who maintain the Scriptural position should refuse the name "Christadelphian", and the title "brethren" to those who become separated from the "One Body" as a result of unfaithfulness. "They went out from us but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us; for if went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." 1 Jno. 2:19.

Such men should not be called brethren, because the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus has not remained in them; therefore they have not remained in Christ and in the Father.

The notion that such men are still "in Christ" is antagonistic to the teaching of the Scriptures. When Jesus said, "Abide in me," he was not giving a command that it was impossible to disobey, as the context plainly shows. A man who abides not in Christ is one in whom the words of Christ do not abide.

"If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye shall also continue in the Son and in the Father." 1 Jno. 2:24 Surely the converse is also true.

W H Trapp "Is Christ Divided" Christadelphian Exhortations

What is generally not understood nor appreciated, is that the term "Brother" in the New Testament sense, is not extended to an individual in exactly the same way as in a natural family. It is extended by an act of adoption: Gal. 4:5-6; Rom. 8:15. Adoption is a legal arrangement subject to terms and conditions, which, in relation to an entrance into the family of God, are embraced in the New Covenant. But where the terms of that covenant are deliberately set aside, which is the same as a

refusal to observe and keep the commandments of Christ, then there is a disannulling of that arrangement and a forfeiting of its privileges. Hence the words of Christ:

“Who are my brethren?” “Whoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother.” Matt. 12:48-50.

And of the Apostles:

“If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” Heb. 10:26.

“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him.” 1 Jno. 2:3

“Whatsoever things we ask, we receive of him *because we keep his commandments* and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.” 1 Jn. 3:22

Seeing that the Truth is absolute, any deviation therefrom must be error or heresy. The Truth is of God and is to be found in the Word of God. All questions should be resolved in accordance with that Word; and if there is refusal on the part of few or many to hear the Word, and a turning from the holy commandments, then the latter end is worse than the beginning; for such, the Apostle makes clear, are again entangled with the world. 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

Again, consider the words of the Apostle James:

“Brethren, if any of you *do err from the truth*, and one convert him: Let him know, that he that converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Jas. 5:19-20

What then of an assembly of such individuals? There are, for instance, those who maintain known heretics in their midst and who partake of their sins, by refusal to withdraw fellowship. What of such a community who err from the Truth and embrace false doctrine? Is their work still regarded by the Almighty and His Son as being of any value? Communities who add to or take away from the doctrine of Christ, and refuse to repent after due admonition are apostate, (Gr. Apostasion=divorced) cut off from Christ. Can they still immerse into Christ? Will such immersions really be *into* the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? Obviously not: because their candidates are led to believe that the One Body and the One Faith consists of such persons and teachings as are opposed to the mind of Christ.

This again was made quite clear by Robert Roberts in answer to the question “Can a Dowieite (Those who espoused error in 1866) become a Christadelphian without being reimmersed?”

Answer:

“There are different sorts of Dowieites, and the answer depends upon which the question applies to. A Dowieite ignorant or unbelieving in relation to any of the first principles of the Gospel, cannot be a brother of Christ on embracing those principles, without being baptized in water in the name of the Lord subsequent to that embracement however often they have been religiously dipped in water before then. But some have been known as Dowieites whose Dowieism consisted in deficient acquaintance with admitted principles of Truth; OR of association with the first class of Dowieites while themselves holding to the Truth in all its essential elements. These stand in the position of brethren erring or straying, and whose return to a right attitude is a matter for thanksgiving, but not calling for repetition of the ceremony by which they were united to Christ in the first instance.”

Christadelphian 1872, page 234

Similarly in the *Apostolic Advocate* for 1836 page 136, John Thomas had earlier come to the same conclusion:

"Can the ordinance of the Kingdom of Heaven (baptism) be administered by aliens? Where a denomination ONCE Christian has abandoned practically the testimony of the apostles and prophets (*as apostate Christadelphians have*), immersion by such administrators and in such a church, I contend, is as invalid as the Jewish sacrifice after the propitiation of the Messiah."

Let it be remembered that in 1866 the Edinburgh assembly *erred from the Truth* and maintained a separate existence from the One Body, upon the basis of unbelief of one of the first principles of the Gospel. Remember also that in 1873, those who espoused the Clean Flesh heresy departed from the faith; and in 1885 division occurred; and those who advocated a partially inspired Bible, and others who taught that individuals could fellowship error and unfaithfulness and still be acceptable to Christ, these maintained a separate existence upon this basis for more than 70 years.

Let these things be remembered, in addition to the Scriptural teaching that when men leave the Truth, they depart from the God of Truth, and are no longer associated with His Son Jesus Christ: and then the nature of "Reunion" between the Suffolk Street, Advocate and Temperance Hall communities will be seen in their true perspective.

When division occurred, those who were faithful to the doctrine of Christ would not entertain "Reunion" on any other basis than an acknowledgement of error and a repentance before God. But time has been allowed to blur the issues, so that "Reunion" took place in 1957, not upon acknowledgment of error, but on the basis of majority votes! Thus the Central Fellowship consists of "fellowships", all of whom in times past were guilty of error, but who have now arrived at a formula enabling them to come together under a cloak of convenience broad enough to cover them all; but which, from the Divine point of view is ineffectual, a mere fig leaf invention as a substitute for the righteousness which is of God.

What a contrast with the mind of one through whom the truth was brought to light in the goodness of God:

"...But in the meantime, I am at peace and in fellowship only with those who believe the Gospel of the kingdom and the Name *first*; obey it *afterwards* in immersion into the Christ, as exhibited in the formula "The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit – or the Father *manifested* in the Son *by* Holy Spirit, which is "the Christ"; and henceforth "patiently continue in well-doing, thereby seeking for glory, honour, incorruptibility and life." These are Christadelphians of Christ's Brethren; all others are illegitimate or counterfeit. This is my position in Britain and America, though I may have to stand alone: and from it, at this late day, I am not likely to swerve."

John Thomas, The Ambassador 1865

There is then, on the one hand, a large community which has broadened the way, and even co-operates with the 'religious' of the world in 'doing good'; and on the other, a few who have chosen the narrow way which leads to life eternal. "Many," says Jesus, "are called, but few are chosen". From a human point of view, the history of the Truth in the latter days presents a sad record and for the majority of those called it will ultimately end in tragedy. All who become defiled by the flesh belong to the flesh and are separated from the Spirit of Christ which binds the members of the One Body together in the fellowship of the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. All who have chosen an easier way in preference to faithfulness to Christ will experience the "weeping and gnashing of teeth", consternation and despair, when it is realised at the last what glory and honour have been forfeited in order to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season!

But for those who are chosen, those whom the Lord Jesus will not be ashamed to acknowledge as His brethren, because being sanctified through the Truth they are all of ONE – how different the earnest contention for the Faith once delivered to the Saints will appear! To these it shall be declared by their Lord:

“Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

What a glorious future awaits those who have come out of the world and have held fast to the Faith of Jesus and not denied HIS Name. They will then be a glorious Ecclesia – the Ecclesia of the First Born – all now to experience the receiving of a body like unto His glorious body, partakers of the Divine nature.

“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before my Father.”

Surely in view of such a prospect and considering the predicted ‘falling away of the last days’ having so clearly come to pass, it behoves everyone who is anxious to serve the One God and Father of all to heed the appeal of the apostle Paul:

“Examine yourselves whether ye be in THE FAITH”, 2 Corinthians 13:5.

“Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. And I will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

All enquiries to: