

## The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith

# A HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTADELPHIANS

Facts and opinion from past and present Christadelphians assembled  
for the information of many at the request of a few.

### THE B.A.S.F.

The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith has been described as the glue which holds together the disparate sections of the Christadelphian communities, the many scores of ecclesias which the Central fellowship like to call “spiritual Israel.” It is almost never mentioned to candidates before their baptism, and only later do they find out, if they ever do, ‘what they have let themselves in for:’ after which the usual practice seems to be to ignore it or pretend that it doesn’t apply, and just so long as one doesn’t question it’s validity in public then all drift on more or less hopefully.

The present writer (baptised 1938), was unaware of the existence of either the B.A.S.F. or of any other congregations calling themselves Christadelphians until called before the military service tribunal in 1940 together with some brethren from what was known as the Suffolk Street fellowship, whom he was informed were “not in fellowship.” And only in the 1950’s did he learn of the existence of other “out of fellowship” congregations such as Dawn, Berean, Shield, Logos, Advocate, Unamended, Old Paths, Wayfarers, Family Journal, Pioneer, Elect, Viner Hall, etc, etc, etc. All of whom claimed to have “The Truth,” and yet have separated, because others were either, too strict, too lax, or unfaithful to the Word, and/or disregarded the Statement of Faith. In view of the apostolic command to “be of one mind” it would appear that the glue is of doubtful quality.

John Thomas M.D. published “Elpis Israel” in 1850 following a successful preaching tour of Britain, and followed it up with the three volumes of “Eureka” between 1862 and 1869. His ‘back to the Bible’ approach was a tremendous advance on the stereotyped sermons of the established religions, particularly his understanding of Bible prophecy, which, together with his denunciations of the papacy found a ready response in the hearts and minds of Victorian England, and brought many converts, although his Calvinistic background may have contributed to his inability to ever shake off the doctrine of ‘Original Sin,’ and the consequent frequent contradictions in his writings. No mean scholar of Biblical Hebrew and Greek, he failed to notice, among others, the mistranslation in Romans 8:3 of ‘*sarkos harmartias*’ when he wrote “Elpis Israel” but corrected it later when he wrote “Eureka.” Whereas Robert Roberts, who took over “Peter’s Chair” in the community following the death of the doctor, confessed himself unable to see any material differences between “sinful flesh” and the correct “Sin’s flesh” or “Flesh of Sin” throughout his life, with dire consequences for the community as we shall discover. Nor did Dr Thomas ever share the enthusiasm of R. Roberts for the republican and democratic spirit of the age, which caused him to become what in today’s terms would be called ‘a control freak.’ Although virtually on his deathbed he admitted in the “Christadelphian” that Dr Thomas had been right and he had been wrong, and expressed regret for the “money club type” of organization he had imposed upon the community.

The doctor’s other major error was to misunderstand the importance of the three passages in Job on the subject of “unclean flesh,” where different Hebrew words for ‘clean’ are used by Job, who “spoke that which was right” and the two ‘liars’ who spoke falsely of YHWH. Job’s *tahor* refers to merely temporary ceremonial uncleanness, whilst *zakah* used by Eliphaz and Bildad means moral uncleanness. However John Thomas once wrote (after being chided for inconsistency), “Must a man never progress? If he discovers an error in his premises, must he forever hold it for the sake of consistency? May such a calamity never befall me - rather let me change every day, till I get it right as last.”

It is the belief of this writer that had he survived a few more years his esteem for Edward Turney would have enabled him to correct his blunder and deny the false doctrine of ‘Original Sin.’

## **THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN**

That belief in the innate depravity and corruption held to have been transmitted to all Adam's descendants in consequence of his sin had its origin in ancient Babylon, featured prominently in the physical aspects of human life as expounded by Plato and his successors, was introduced into Christianity in the third century by Augustine, acknowledged as having "married Christianity to Paganism" and has been firmly held by Catholic and Protestant alike ever since. Faced with the problem that Jesus was of our nature, having been made "like unto His brethren" and subject to like temptations, the Catholic church invented the "immaculate conception" whilst Christadelphians went to the other extreme and asserted that Jesus must have been as unclean as other men, because He was "born of a woman." This writer himself was fooled by it for 60 years until provoked into an examination of the evidence in 1997. John Thomas wrote, "His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom He died" and, "Sin became a fixed principle in the flesh of man" and "the Christ deity veiled Himself in flesh defiled by sin." The works of R.Roberts are saturated with it. He wrote, "Sin ran in the blood." "The sentence of death ran in the blood which He inherited from Adam through Mary." "He was as much under its power as those He came to save." J.J.Andrew followed suit, "A change took place in Adam's physical constitution and his posterity has inherited his nature after the change was effected." C.Smith wrote, "There is no if in it, He was made sin by being made of a woman and thereby cursed by the law." The doctrine of Original Sin is endemic in Christadelphia and those who reject it publicly are speedily excommunicated.

An early convert of the pioneers, who later discovered his error, quotes first from "Eureka" page 20 where Thomas had written, "Redemption means to buy back, hence it is release for a ransom. All who become God's servants are therefore released from a former Lord by purchase. The purchaser is God and the price, or ransom paid, is the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish," and then in his own inimitable style comments,

"I now know that the doctor's education forced him to transfer the pure Greek thought in that glorious proposition. Can you therefore account for the doctor's opposition to that pure truth till the day of his death? What forced him to contaminate that pure thought by reducing it to a contemptible figurative affair? Don't you know? The direct cause was his bias from infancy of an immaculate impeccable wax doll in Eden descending to a physical sin compound. And he had the honesty to draw the valid deduction from that unthinkable assumption and consequently involve the Lamb of God."

(Note: John Thomas's father ran an academy for the instruction in Biblical languages of candidates for the ministry. Ed.)

## **A BALANCED ANTITHESIS**

**Heavens verdict...** No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed.

**Christadelphian...** There is no if in it you know, He was made sin by being made of a woman and under the double curse.

**Heavens verdict...** He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

**Christadelphian...** He came under both curses and discharged them both by the shedding of His blood.

**Heavens verdict...** In Him is no sin.

**Christadelphian...** He came under the first curse being born of the same condemned stock of David's seed; He came under the second in the act of crucifixion, for the law declared the man accursed who hung on a tree.

**Jesus Christ...** Which of you convinceth me of sin

**Christadelphian...** Every soul of us.

The present writer would ask his readers :-

## **WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?**

We all know what the common people of Judea and Galilee thought of Jesus. They heard Him gladly; multitudes followed Him out into the wilderness, hungry for the gracious words from His lips. They acclaimed Him as the Messiah, the son of David; they spread their clothes before Him as He rode into Jerusalem even though as John informs us “No man spake openly of Him for fear of the Jews” who had agreed that if any man confessed Him as the Christ he should be put out of the synagogue - yet many believed on his Name when they saw the miracles which He did.

Not so the Jewish ‘establishment’ - the scribes and Pharisees and rulers, with one or two honourable exceptions, were unanimous, “He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils he casteth out devils.” All three synoptics record the particular confrontation when these assertions were made. But listen to the Lord’s reply as Mark records it: -

“Jesus called those scribes unto him and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man’s house and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man, and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, all sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men and blasphemies wherewith they shall blaspheme, but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation because they said He hath an unclean spirit.”

There can only be one way to understand the Lord’s words. Any man who declares that, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God had an unclean spirit was in danger of eternal damnation and destined to perish. He has committed the unforgivable sin. Is it possible to believe the B.A.S.F. and avoid that “unforgivable sin”? For 125 years brethren and sisters have warned the Christadelphian ‘establishment’ that the B.A.S.F. was flawed, and in return have been ignored, and in some cases abused and even reviled for their efforts.

The parallel with those to whom Jesus came is so plain. The majority of Christadelphians hear their Lord gladly; they strive to obey His precepts and instructions throughout their lives. They know and believe that having been baptised into His Name their names are written in the book of life. Yet they are committed to the belief that Robert Roberts’s statement of faith reflects Bible Truth. The trouble is that the Christadelphian ‘establishment,’ like the scribes and Pharisees are totally committed to maintaining that “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.” At all costs the ‘status quo’ must be maintained. Every magazine editor is under an obligation to refuse publication of critical views. At the 1975 Jersey City Conference the editors of the three principle magazines permitted on ecclesial bookstands, “The Christadelphian,” “The Tidings” and “The Logos.” All agreed the resolution: -

“We believe that the Birmingham Amended Statement of faith is a true definition of the first principles of the oracles of God and that these doctrines are to be believed and taught by us without reservation. (And note) Fellowship to be extended only to those who agree thereto.”

## **“LET HIM THAT IS TAUGHT IN THE WORD COMMUNICATE UNTO HIM THAT TEACHETH IN ALL GOOD THINGS.”**

The following comments and notes, almost all collected from past and present Christadelphians, are published at the suggestion of some present members who with the writer believe that Truth is more important than tradition. We are aware that there are many Christadelphians who ignore the B.A.S.F. and that some already treat it with justifiable contempt. The first century ecclesias were organisms, not organisations. They believed the gospel, which in the mercy of God, is enshrined in the scriptures to make us wise unto salvation. Yet even the apostles themselves could be “fools and

slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” We propose to examine those clauses in the B.A.S.F. which in the opinions of many brethren are destructive of Truth and if accepted will imperil entry to the Kingdom we seek.

The Statement of Faith then was designed to define, “The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Some have asked why R.Roberts felt it necessary to add to Holy Scripture. And many are of the opinion that John Thomas himself would never have approved it.

**The foundation clause reads:-**

**“That the book, currently known as the Bible, consisting of the scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge extant or available in the earth and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation.”**

Few will dispute the accuracy of this foundation clause, despite an early division termed “The Partial Inspiration Division,” which still causes occasional problems. Likewise the “things concerning the Kingdom of God” were originally accepted as a reasonably accurate summary of Bible teaching, but whereas John Thomas laid it down that the False Prophet of Revelation was the papacy, a considerable body of opinion now believes that it refers to Mahomet and the Islamic peoples of little international significance in the times of the doctor, but now numbering one third of the total world inhabitants and not only possessing a disproportionate share of the world’s wealth, but also are the largest purchasers of weaponry from the western world.

**Clauses 1,2, and 3 occasion no comment.**

**Clause 4 reads:-**

**“That the first man was Adam, whom God created out of the dust of the ground as a living soul, or natural body of life, “very good” in kind and condition, and placed him under a law through which the continuation of life was contingent on obedience.”**

**Comment:** Whilst the above wording is superficially correct and undisputed there are certain factors to be recognised which make it inadequate; firstly there are two types of life, distinguished in both Hebrew and Greek by separate words, which Christadelphian expositors never mention, as a result of which they inevitably misunderstand the facts of atonement and have fallen into confusion and contradiction. For a full understanding of the consequences we are including a treatise by Brother Douglas McKinlay of Queensland, but for the present would simply point out that for our natural animal life, or soul (as it is frequently so rendered in our English versions) the Old Testament uses the Hebrew nephesh, and the New Testament the Greek *psuche*. Whilst for the life which God gives to those who are His, the Old Testament uses the Hebrew chay and the New Testament Greek zoe. Additionally the fact that the scripture speaks of three kinds of ‘death’ which Christadelphian expositors fail to understand and constantly equate natural death with spiritual death and with judicial death, an error which has become for them a “strong delusion.” The writer would recommend his “thinking Christadelphian” readers to please read twice the following treatise before continuing with our exposition of the BASF.

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### **“Life” and “Death,” Their Meanings in Scripture**

The Scripture speaks of at least three different conceptions of death, and these express important and fundamental truths that may be overlooked if these differences are not recognized and failure to distinguish between them leads to confusion and contradiction.

For life, the Bible employs two different words in both the Old and the New Testaments. These differences are likewise lost in the English translation yet are crucial to our understanding as we seek to determine the details that surround and open up the Bible teaching of the Atonement.

In the Old Testament we have -

- a) *nephesh*, which relates to our natural life. This same word is also translated soul; and
- b) *chay*, which refers to the life of God given to those who are His.

In the New Testament we have -

- c) *psuche*, which is equivalent to the Old Testament *nephesh*, and
- d) *zoe*, which is equivalent to Old Testament *chay*.

In Genesis 2:7 we read that “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (*chay*); and man became a living soul (*chay nephesh*).” We see then that from the beginning Adam had not only his natural life but also life which God gives to his children - the *chay* life, equivalent to the New Testament *zoe* life.

All life is a gift from God as Job recognized for we read in Job 12:10 Job answered “In whose hand is the soul (*nephesh*) of every living (*chay*) thing, and the breath of all mankind.” While in the Acts of the Apostles, 17:28, Paul tells us, “For in him we live (*zao*) and move and have our being; as certain also of your prophets have said. For we are also his offspring.”

The portion of *nephesh/psuche* life that natural man has been granted is activated by the blood - “For the life (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement” (Leviticus 17:11), but *chay/zoe* life is activated by the Spirit - “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:3-5). “God hath given us eternal life (*zoe*) and this life is in his Son” (1 John 5:11).

Man can pass on *nephesh/psuche* life to his progeny, but only God grants *chay/zoe* life. Examples of this are found in Psalm 66:9, God “which holdeth our soul (*nephesh*) in life (*chay*),” and Acts 20:10, of the man who fell from the third loft and was taken up dead, “Paul... embracing him said, trouble not yourselves, for his life (*psuche*) is in him.”

However, when man’s allotted time comes both his *chay/zoe* life and his *nephesh/psuche* life expire. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

*Zoe* is that fullness of life that those in Christ have now and it is held in trust by Jesus - “He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life {*zoe*} and shall not come into condemnation” (John 5:24). “Ye are dead and your life (*zoe*) is hid with God” (Colossians 3:3). Our *zoe* life is written in the Book of Life to be revealed in all its fullness at the return and revelation of our Lord, “for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living {*zao*} for all (the quick and the dead) live unto him” Luke 20:38).

By implication this portion of life (*chay*) was made known in the promises made to the fathers and was made manifest in Jesus Christ - John 1:4, “In him was life (*zoe*); and the life (*zoe*) was the light of men.” Again, 2 Timothy 1:10, “Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death (as wages for sin) and hath brought life (*zoe*) and immortality to light.”

The principle conceptions of death used in the Bible are:

- a) Natural death which is the end of a corruptible body, as for example Ecclesiastes 3:19,20, “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath.” Again in chapter 9 verse 2, “there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.”

- b) Spiritual death. While a) above is the end of life for the natural person, many are also dead while they live as Jesus confirmed when He said, "Let the dead bury their dead" - Luke 9:60. Again, Paul in writing to Timothy (1 Timothy 5:6), said, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."
- c) Judicial death, as being put to death for law-breaking, the death by sin, as for example, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." In the Old Testament we have the example of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, of whom Moses said, "If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men: then the Lord hath not sent me" - Numbers 16:29. This typifies the second death which those who have known God and rejected Him will suffer. Again in Romans 1:32, "Who, knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, and not only do the same, but take pleasure in them that do them."

But God is merciful and we can be forgiven our sins as was David - 2 Samuel 12:13, "And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord, And Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." David did die a natural death of course, so it was Judicial death which was his due, for under the Law of Moses he ought to have been stoned to death, but this death he did not die. In God's mercy his life was spared and his fellowship with his Maker was restored.

So we come to the New Testament and read in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (zoe)"

Jesus was appointed of God to be the perfect antitypical offering - the substance to the various shadow offerings under the Law. A Lamb without spot or blemish. "For this cause came I into the world and for this cause was I born." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" - John 1:29. John says "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Peter says "He did no sin" (1 Peter 2:22). Paul says "He knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The writer to the Hebrews says "He was apart from sin." In short, Jesus was that Holy thing born of the Virgin Mary to be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Because of His Paternity He was empowered to do for us that which we, because of our paternity, were without power to do for ourselves - that was, to reconcile us to God. Romans 5:6,10, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

This was foretold in Psalm 80:17, "Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man, whom thou madest strong for thyself" and confirmed by Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:9, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that thou he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." So we see Jesus Christ dying the judicial death, the death for sin, "the Just for the unjust that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus died the wages of sin for me. Romans 6:10, "For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." For had He not died so that by the grace of God I might share in that death unto sin through the symbolism of baptism, then I would have to die the judicial death for myself. Hebrews 2:9, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." 2 Corinthians 5:14,15, "For the love of God constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead."

The fundamental difference between receiving the reward of either life or death forms the basis of and the justification for the two sovereign laws under which mankind live out their responsibility to their Creator.

- 1) The Law of Sin and Death defines the condemnation of Romans 5.
- 2) The Law of the Spirit of Life in Jesus Christ defines the justification of Romans 5.

In Jesus there was life (*zoe*). Being born by direct begetting from the Father left Him untouched by the condemnation. In that sense He was from above, while we, born of blood by the will of man were from beneath - John 8:23, "And he said unto them, ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world."

We see from Romans 5:12 that in man there was judicial death - "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that (margin - in whom) all have sinned."

In the words of the Old Testament parable - 2 Samuel 14:14, "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again; neither doth God respect any person: yet doth he devise means, that his banished be not expelled from him," we see Jesus as the means devised by God that we may be gathered to Him.

Though being physically the same as us and being subject to temptation as unto God's law yet Jesus was so very different. John 1:18, being, "the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father" He was always the beloved Son and needed not to be brought nigh and be reconciled to God. We were afar off and needed to be brought nigh and be reconciled. He was strong - Psalm 80:17, "Let they hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself," while "we were yet without strength," yet "in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Jesus was the Redeemer, we the redeemed. All of these differences and His willingness to use them to do the will of His Father allowed Jesus to do for us that which we were without strength to do for ourselves. Had there been no difference, Jesus would have had the same need as ourselves - to be reconciled to God.

Redeemed means to buy back. Jesus, by His sacrificial life bought us back from the slave-master Sin unto whom our forefather Adam had sold us - 1 Corinthians 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Again 1 Peter 1:18, "Forasmuch as ye know ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ." Again Matthew 20:28:- "Even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

We might well ask which of these death did Paul have in mind when he said "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3). The Scriptures which Paul was appealing to would be the Old Testament and the most explicit of these would have be Isaiah 53:10-12, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him... when he shall make his soul an offering for sin... he shall bear their iniquities... because he poured out his soul unto death."

Let's ask and answer the question, What life did Jesus sacrifice to buy back and so reconcile us to God? It is Jesus who supplies us with the answer - John 10:11-17, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life (*psuche*) for the sheep." This then answers another question: It has been said that if Jesus paid the debt owing by man (judicial death) - Matthew 18:27:- "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave the debt" - then He could not rise again without destroying the analogy. But Jesus rose in all the fullness of His *zoe* life, leaving the remnants of His *psuche* life in the tomb - "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life (*zoe*)" (Romans 6:4).

"...this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself..." 1 John 5:9-11.

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" Philippians 3:10.

Now if we can accept this we are able to be renewed in the Spirit of our mind and have our focus shifted from being poor weak creatures of the dust to being accepted in Jesus, the beloved - Ephesians 1:6:- “To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” “He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought of God” (John 3:21.)

“I can do all things through Jesus Christ which strengtheneth me” Philippians 4:13.

John 8:32-36:- “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free... whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin and the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Thus having our doubts and uncertainties replaced by the conviction that sustained the Apostle - 2 Timothy 4:8 - “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.”

“Fear not little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” Luke 12:32.

And be able to answer our Lord’s question, “Believest thou this? Yea Lord, T believe,” we might add, “help thou mine unbelief.”

“Look to yourselves that we lose not those things that we have gained (margin) but that we receive a full reward” 2 John 8.

Douglas McKinlay  
(Queensland. September 2000).

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The foregoing treatise greatly extends the limited perception of Christadelphian pioneers. When at the end of Day 6 YHWH God surveyed all His handiwork, He pronounced it “Very good.” John Thomas asked “In what sense was it very good” and answered correctly:-

“In an animal and physical sense, for it was a natural and animal system, not a spiritual one. Such a system is essentially one of waste and reproduction. This is implied in the placing of the earth in such a position with respect to the sun, moon and stars that there should be a diversity of seasons etc. Thus fall and winter, the seasons of decay and death, were institutions existing before the fall of Adam. And presented to Adam and Eve phenomena illustrative of the existence in the physical system of a principle of corruption, the extent of which, however, they may not have been fully apprised of.”

This perception of the doctor at the beginning of his work which acknowledges ‘death’ as a principle of creation, appears to have been forgotten when in subsequent works he reverts to an apparent axiomatic understanding that ‘death’ for all living creatures was imposed on account of Adam’s transgression. In other words he reverted to the doctrine of ‘Original Sin.’ We resume our analysis of the BASF.

Clause 5 reads:-

**“That Adam broke this law (of clause 4) and was adjudged unworthy of immortality, and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken - A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being.”**

**Comment:** This clause has been described as the source of all confusion by both Christadelphian and other writers on the atonement and our salvation. It has without question been the cause of more

dispute, defections, and disfellowships than any other subject. We shall therefore comment on it phrase by phrase.

### **Adam broke this law and was adjudged unworthy of immortality.**

Nowhere in the Bible is there the slightest intimation that God denied Adam that which He has freely offered to every other repentant sinner. To withhold the prospect of eternal life from one man who ate forbidden fruit, and yet promise it to a murderer and adulterer such as David of whom we read that God had put away his sin, and whose name is twice mentioned in the roll of the faithful in Hebrews 11 would be difficult to understand. This notion of Robert Roberts is untrue. Whilst it is true that both our first parents and subsequently Korah and company disobeyed the law of God, it is clear that Adam and Eve were permitted to live out their natural life span of 930 years, yet the latter company perished immediately when the earth opened and swallowed them all up. Why the different penalties?

The answer lies in the different circumstances of the two offences. Adam, we read, was a “figure of Christ” who died to redeem his bride from bondage to Sin. And Adam was not deceived by the serpent lies. Adam knew that God meant what He said when He commanded the man “In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.” The Hebrew B’Yom referred to an evening morning day of 24 hours. Eve had 24 hours to live. The prospect of losing that glorious creature created from his own body was too much; life without Eve was no longer worth living, and he might as well perish with her, if such was to be their destiny. His love for Eve this writer believes was why Adam partook of the fruit.

Not so Korah and company, their disobedience was motivated by envy and lust for the leadership of the children of Israel.

In the case of Adam and Eve “mercy rejoiced against judgment,” and God found a way to exercise mercy. In providing a lamb to be slain instead of the guilty pair their sin was covered, not taken away. It was a type of the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” The skins of those lamb(s) (the perquisites of the priest under the Mosaic Law), not only shielded their bodies from the sight of Deity, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but also provided a “Wedding Garment” foreshadowing the consummation of their betrothal. Up to that time Adam’s love for Eve was that of a father for his child. She was taken from his own body. Henceforth the divine command to “be fruitful and multiply” could be obeyed. Their clothing was accepted with gratitude. According to angelic testimony Adam and Eve were now “like unto the angels” in the sense of knowing good and evil. “I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.” As it is improbable that the angels when conversing with the guilty pair were unclothed and naked, Adam and Eve now recognised that their genital differences (angels neither marry nor are given in marriage), should be covered before they could appear before their Creator.

Should any Christadelphian shudder at the thought of ‘substitution’ let them remember that John Thomas clearly understood that the lamb had been a substitute. And referred to Jesus Christ as “our substitutionary testator” on page 213 of the first edition of “Elpis Israel.” Sadly, C.C.Walker, who followed R.Roberts in the editorial chair after Robert’s death in 1898, was an equally convinced believer in Original Sin and decided that the phrase was inconsistent with Robert’s theology and surreptitiously ‘corrected’ (sic) the doctor’s mss to the single word “mediator.” It was of course forgery, but every subsequent edition of “Elpis Israel” has read ‘mediator’ instead of “our substitutional testator.” All the doctor’s mss are in the possession of the Christadelphian office, but the writer has a copy of that first unamended edition.

R.Robert’s misunderstanding of the events in Eden led to the following type of exposition by Christadelphians:-

“When the parents of our race, recent from their fall and conscience smitten by the divine rebuke, were driven from their blissful seat, and filled with dismay at the threatening of death, a threatening piercing through their guilty souls, but of the nature and effects of which they could form none but the vaguest of ideas. But when directed by stern authority to apply some instrument of death to the lamb which with endearing innocence had sported around them, they heard the agonising groan, beheld the appalling sight of streaming blood, the struggling agonies of life’s last throes, they gazed upon the breathless body and were

told "This is death," how stricken must they have been with horror such as no description could ever paint! When further they had to go through the other process of the sacrifice, the putting off of their own devised covering, and the putting on of the robes of God, their hands reluctant, their hearts broken, and all their souls crushed down by the piercing consciousness that these revolting things were the fruit of their sin."

One simple question is sufficient to dispose of such rubbish. Namely, Would God have said to Adam "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" if Adam did not even know what death was? Of course not - Adam observed death every day in every flower that faded, every time he swatted the fly that landed on his nose, every time he watched the swift or swallow feeding "on the wing," every time he observed a hawk swoop upon a rabbit, or the lion bringing down the prey and dragging it to his young; for it was from the creation that God provided food for the raven and the lion as Job testifies. Clearly this first phrase in clause 5 belongs in the dustbin.

### **"and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken"**

This second phrase is likewise untrue. Adam would have returned to the ground at the end of his allotted span in any case. As John Thomas correctly said, "death and corruption, with reproduction is the fundamental law of the physical system of the six days." R.Roberts and his successor C.C.Walker both ignored this teaching of the doctor, as did John Carter until near the end of his editorship. Lou Sargent, actually printed in the March 1969 issue, "there was no need of a miraculous change to bring death, the man had merely to be left to the working of his animal nature." A rare admission indeed, ignored by both Alfred Nicholls and Michael Ashton, neither of whom appears to have noticed that the sentence cursed the ground, not the nature of Adam. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." The sentence was one of hard labour and Adam was simply being reminded that he was a corruptible animal, as John Thomas understood. Moreover that sentence of hard labour was lifted by God when Noah proved himself both obedient and righteous, for after the flood God declared, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake... neither will I smite any more every thing living, as I have done." (Genesis 8:21). Yet nothing can be printed in modern Christadelphian literature which questions Robert's puerile reasoning.

### **"A sentence which defiled"**

Untrue! It was not God's sentence which defiled the man. There is not a word in scripture to confirm that Adam had defiled, or befouled his nature. His flesh did not change as R.Roberts supposed. The only change was moral, not physical, by disobedience he had estranged and alienated himself from his Creator, for his servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey. Adam was now constitutionally the servant of 'Sin,' a bondsman, together with all in his loins, with no way of evading that legal situation.

### **"and became a physical law of his being"**

There is no record of any miracle being performed by God on all living as R.Roberts supposed. The physical principle of corruption pertained to all living creatures from creation, as in fact both Thomas and Roberts originally believed. Indeed they refused to baptise one David Handley who had requested it, but insisted that a change had taken place. As there was no change the universal law that like begets like continued and every babe is born 'very good.' We accept such things as hidden untimely births, and the occasional births of physically and mentally disabled exceptions. Yet even such unfortunates provide opportunity for others to exercise Christ like compassion and mercy in caring and ministering. "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

We believe that clause 5 is rotten from beginning to end, as one Christadelphian wrote "This definition clearly implies that because Adam sinned whilst in his 'very good' nature, then God implanted into his flesh a 'bias to sin' which made him (and us), 'very bad.' And so he was made to sin further, and punished for breaking a law which God had made impossible to keep, i.e. a devil implanted in us prompts us to sin, according to Roberts."

This then is the real reason why so many Christadelphians either ignore, or treat the BASF with contempt, or refuse to defend it publicly.

We move on to Clause 8 which reads:-

**“That these promises (to Adam and David in clause 7) had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself, and for all those who believe and obey him.”**

**Comment:** Let us first of all nail the lie that there exists such an obscenity as “the condemned line of Abraham and David: a) The gospel was preached to Abraham (Galatians 3:8), b) Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Romans 4:3), Abraham was the “friend of God” and accordingly was, by implication, “in Christ,” c) “There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (Romans 8:1) which Abraham throughout his life, and David after his repentance certainly did. Did not Jesus tell His enemies “Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, and ye yourselves thrust out”? So where is the ‘condemned line of Abraham’ that Robert Roberts even attributes to the Son of God Himself. Did God father a condemned nature in His only begotten? Perish the thought. To claim that Jesus “abrogated the law of condemnation for Himself” when there is no law of condemnation applicable to “those in Christ” is itself a sin. God condemns ‘sin,’ not the ‘very good’ nature in which man was created. “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” asked Jesus, and none could do so. Jesus was the exception to the rule that “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Men sin because they are born of the will of the flesh, and were all in Adam’s loins when he transgressed even if they did not sin after the type of Adam’s transgression, for “God hath concluded all under sin that he might have mercy upon all.” It is a legal status of a bondsman whose only wages are ‘death.’ But Jesus was never “in Adam.” God was His Father and no man ever had two fathers. He was from above, we are from beneath. We are of this world, He was never of this world, otherwise He would have been a bondsman as we were until Jesus purchased us for His Father (and when baptised into His Name no longer servants but sons). Sons of God. Alleluia!

But there is more to come in this clause occasioned by the use of the phrase

### **“Abrogate the law of condemnation for Himself”**

To abrogate is to annul. The assumption that Jesus Christ was under a ‘law of condemnation’ on account of His supposed sinful nature is a direct result of the Christadelphian belief in ‘Original Sin’ and a perverse denial of the Word of God. “Which of you convinceth me of sin?” asked Jesus, and none could do so. He was “that Holy thing born of the virgin.” “Separate from sinners.” Was He not the Son of man? claim the Christadelphian establishment? Are not all men sinners? And does not Paul say in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that “He was made sin for us, who knew no sin” ignoring the words of John Thomas (quoted in the 1880, Christadelphian, page 7), “In saying that Christ was made sin for us, Paul did not mean that He was an actual sinner, but that He was made a sin-offering for us. Our iniquities were laid on Him.” The only scriptures possessed by the gentile Corinthians would have been the Greek LXX Old Testament where the word *hamartia* which can mean either ‘sin’ or ‘sin-offering’ is used over 100 times to mean ‘sin-offering.’ Again Christadelphians have to ignore Ephesians 5:2, “Christ also hath loved us and given himself an offering and a sacrifice for a sweet smelling savour.” Had Jesus been as unclean as the BASF makes Him, the sacrifice would have been a ‘stink’ and quite unacceptable. Unlike ordinary men who derive their life from Adam, and are consequently ‘unclean’ Jesus derived His life from God and was ‘clean’ and sinless, and chose to give Himself for our sins.

Adam on the other hand chose to disobey God, of his own free will Adam became a bondsman to Sin, Satan the devil, for his servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey. It was a legal status in the same way as we are all by legal constitutionally of British nationality because we have been born in Britain. Exodus 21 makes it clear that a bondsman has no possessions or legal rights, he is the ‘money’ of his owner. As are all his progeny and his spouse. It is possible as one

perceptive sister once told the writer that the Samaritan ‘adulteress’ at the well was such a bonds slave, passed around at the whim of her owner to his other servants, or even discarded in turn by them because she was barren. The same sister pointed out that when David in the psalms said, “In sin did my mother conceive me” he was not accusing his mother of adultery or fornication, it was the legal condition of his mother, unnamed in scripture because she was a bonds slave or concubine and not a proper wife of Jesse. ‘In sin’ was a legal situation of the whole human race until delivered by the Son of God at the cost of His own life blood. “He is the propitiation (mercy seat) for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). “It is the blood that cleanseth” (1 John 1:7).

Clause 9 reads:-

**“It was this mission (the promises made to Adam, Abraham and David mentioned in clause 8) which necessitated the miraculous begetting of Christ by a human mother, enabling him to bear our condemnation, and at the same time to be a sinless bearer thereof, one who could rise after suffering the death required by the righteousness of God.”**

**Comment:** It is true that Jesus bore our sins, as we have already pointed out, and that it was according to the scriptures, but how and when was this accomplished? Remember that time when Jesus came to John Baptist who was baptising in Jordan for the remission of sins. We read in Matthew 3:13 that “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptised of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptised of thee. And comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness? Why? And how did the baptism of Jesus “fulfil all righteousness”? Mark tells us that “There went out to John all the land of Judea and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptised of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.” The people went into the water and washed away their sins. But Jesus had no sins to wash away. What happened next was an enacted parable, on the lines of the Old Testament prophets, for Jesus went down into the water sinless, and clothed Himself with those sins of the people which they had figuratively washed away. He arose the ‘sin bearer’ and carried the burden of their sins for the next three years until He nailed them to that stake on Calvary. He bore those iniquities of which Isaiah spake “God hath laid on him the iniquity of us all” (note: “on him” not “in him”) and the apostle John 1:29, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

At Calvary Jesus paid the debt which Adam could not pay, and released the whole human race from the bondage of ‘Sin,’ but redemption, i.e. deliverance from bondage, is not the same as salvation, and the only way to obtain salvation is by baptism into Christ, into His death, that our names may be written in the book of life, when, if we continue to walk in the spirit and not in the flesh, we can be assured of that first resurrection. “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power.”

Clause 10 says:-

**“That being so begotten of God, and inhabited and used by God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was Immanuel, God with us. God manifest in the flesh, yet was during his natural life of like nature with mortal man, being made of a woman of the house and lineage of David, and therefore a sufferer all the days of his flesh, from all the effects of Adam’s transgression, including the death that passed upon all men, which he shared by partaking of our physical nature”**

**Comment:** Clause 5 has already required Christadelphians to believe that after Adam’s transgression God implanted into his flesh a ‘devil,’ a ‘bias to sin,’ which caused man to commit sin and thereby come under condemnation, hence Christadelphian problems. If God was in Jesus, how was He unclean? Did God and Satan both take up residence in the flesh of Jesus? Or did the Holy Spirit, which according to this clause ‘indwelt’ our Saviour, share residence with that ‘devil’? R.Roberts was blithely unaware of his own contradictions. Was the ‘death that Jesus suffered’ that ‘common death of all men,’ or that ‘visitation of all men’ of which Moses speaks in Numbers 16? Or was it that

'judicial death' suffered by Korah and his company in the same chapter? If death has passed upon all men as this clause claims, why does the scripture inform us that we which are alive and remain when Christ returns shall be "changed in the twinkling of an eye" to incorruptibility, i.e. immortality. When do those fortunate immortals die? Or should we ask when those who are so changed at the return of Christ "in the twinkling of an eye" face a judgment? The Christadelphian who wrote to the writer to declare that the BASF has always been 'gobbledygook' certainly had a point.'

Clause 12 contains a grievous error and reads:-

**"That for delivering this message, Jesus was put to death by the Jews and Romans, who were, however, but instruments in the hands of God..."**

**Comment:** Show this clause to an unbeliever and he will say that the message on the Pentecostal church notice board is also believed by Christadelphians, for it reads, "God murdered his own Son for us". And he would be justified in that belief. Did God murder His Son? Is that which Christadelphians must believe on pain of disfellowship? "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son" and then murdered Him? "For when we were without strength; in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

"For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed (repurchased) with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish." So who was responsible?

I quote: -

"Was Jesus responsible for His own demise? Could we say He committed suicide? Not if we ask why he acted in such a way, for we will realise that what He did He did for us, that we might share eternal life with Him. So who then was responsible? Why, we sinners, of course, Adam and all in his loins. All are the purchase of His blood. The result of Jesus going to the cross was that the human race now belongs to Him. It was His purchase and He has been given all power and authority over it. He is in the position to forgive and save whomsoever He will.

Jesus Christ gives the lie to the notion that His own Father killed Him, for when the chief priests demanded of Him by what authority He did these things, one of the stories He told them was the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-42), "A certain householder planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen... and he sent servants... that they might receive the fruits of it... and the husbandmen took his servants and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another... Last of all he sent them his son, saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir, come let us kill him and seize his inheritance... When the lord thereof of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" The parable hardly needs explaining to us, but when the chief priests answered Jesus they said "He will miserably destroy those wicked men," then they condemned themselves, for they were the wicked men who were about to kill the son of the lord of the vineyard.

How can anyone therefore say, as do the Christadelphians and Pentecostals, that the Lord of the Vineyard killed his own Son? It will be seen that the Son entered the vineyard knowing full well that the husbandmen would kill Him. Proof, if proof were needed that Jesus offered Himself as a willing sacrifice. "For the joy that was set before him of bringing many sons unto glory."

We move to clause 24 which reads:-

**"That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely) those who knew the revealed will of God and have been called upon to submit to it, dead and living, obedient and disobedient, will be summoned**

**before his judgment seat “to be judged according to their works” and receive in body according to what they have done, whether good or bad.”**

**Comment:** Wrong! This clause is yet another of R.Roberts’ extrapolation from suppositions arising from his blind acceptance of Original Sin. And incidentally, the reader has only to compare Clause 5 of the BASF with article 9 of the Anglican 39 Articles to realise that they are saying the same thing.

It is true that 2 Timothy 4:1 precedes the command to preach the Word by the words “I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom,” but before we come to the hasty conclusion that the return of Jesus coincides with that assembly of righteous and unrighteous before the great white throne of Revelation 20:11-15, let us remember that Revelation 20:11-15 comes at the end of the 1000 years, not at the beginning when Christ returns, of which the previous chapter speaks of the marriage of the Lamb having come and His bride has made herself ready and after describing the slaughter subsequent to that coming the apostle sees in vision the righteous sitting upon the promised thrones (20:4) and judgment being given to them (in the kingdom) namely those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God who “lived and reigned with Christ a 1000 years followed by the statement that “the rest of the dead (the ungodly) lived not again until the end of the 1000 years for “this”, namely, the elevation of the righteous “is the first resurrection” and “blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” But why no mention in this detailed account of the events at the ‘return’ of a judgment assize for the righteous before they ascend those thrones? Surely the judgment spoken of in 2 Timothy at His appearing is the assessment by Christ of His own and for that no assize or court of justice is needed. The quick who receive authority at His coming are those found walking in spirit rather than flesh when He comes, and will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye” to celestial bodies, and the dead are the dead in Christ who are also the subjects of that first resurrection and raised incorruptible. Why? Because YHWH knoweth who are His as Moses said in Numbers 16:5, and the exact Hebrew words are repeated in Greek in 2 Timothy 2:19 as comfort for those workmen who “rightly divide the word of truth” (verse 15). No assize was necessary to consign Korah and company to the second death, nor is there any assize for the righteous when Jesus returns. The living will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead raised as was Jesus “to meet their Lord in the air.” To be gathered by Him to Armageddon (Revelation 16:16), from whence they “go with singing unto Zion to eat the marriage supper of the Lamb” prior to their Kingdom tasks of ruling with the iron rod whilst they lift the veil of ignorance from the very good earth created for “those who are his” throughout eternity. It is only at the end of the 1000 years that the great white throne of Jesus is set up “from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away,” metonymy for the ruled and the rulers of men according to Deuteronomy 31:30; 32:1, which teaches of the Israel earth and heavens which Moses was about to address. It is at that time that the wicked are raised to find Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets standing on the right hand of that great white throne and they on his left. The time when the sea gives up the dead which were in it, and the death and the grave give up their dead to be judged according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

It is astonishing that the whole sequence of events at the time of Christ’s return as outlined also by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 does even warrant a mention in R.Roberts’ so called ‘proof texts’ for this clause. But then, as one of his contemporaries commented, “His rhetoric could dazzle the eyes of an owl.” No wonder he shied away from 1 Corinthians 15 which is so contradictory of Christadelphian suppositions that the dead are raised in corruptible bodies for judgment; listen to what Paul says:-

“But some will say, how are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die: and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be, but bare grain... but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body... There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial, but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another... so also is the resurrection of the dead... It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body... Behold I show you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be

changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality... then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death shall be swallowed up in victory.”

I defy anyone to equate those words of Holy writ with the insistence in R.Roberts’ B.A.S.F. that we are raised at the first resurrection as mortal beings about to face a judgment assize. I repeat, the message of Holy writ is that only the righteous, “those who are His” will be raised at the resurrection to live and reign with Him for 1000 years. Let me relate a story from a Jewish Christian:-

“It is Jewish tradition, going back before knives and forks were obligatory at meals to provide each participant with a napkin to wipe hands and mouth after eating. If after the meal a guest used the napkin and then left it crumpled on the table, then all was well, the hospitality provided had been appreciated and satisfactory, but if after using the napkin a guest folded it up and left it elsewhere, then the hospitality was unsatisfactory, the guest would never again darken the doors of the host. Now turn to John 20:4, “So they ran both together and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he stooping down saw the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed.”

The Greek word rendered “lie” and “lying” is *keimai* which means to ‘lie stretched out’ (according to Strong), i.e. stretched out as they had been wound around the body in this verse, evidence that Jesus left those vestments a celestial body, which later that same day appeared through a locked door to the disciples in the upper room, but the napkin folded in another place was a message to His murderers. Remember how the temple watch went into Jerusalem to show the chief priests what had occurred, and received ‘large money’ to bear false witness. The whole Jewish establishment perished in AD 70. But when death and hell deliver up the dead that are in them and they stand before the great white throne about to be cast into the lake of fire, then the words of their victim will be fulfilled, “Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them bring hither and slay them before my face.”

Finally, The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, as published by the Christadelphian office includes a list of 35 “Doctrines to be rejected” comprising those doctrines that R.Roberts considered unsuitable for his flock. They require some comments even though they are not apparently sufficiently serious to necessitate excommunication.

No. 4 requires Christadelphians to reject the belief  
**“That Christ was born with a free life.**

**Comment:** No definitions are supplied to identify what R.Roberts terms “free life” or why we should deny the statement. Paul says, “Am I not an apostle? Am I not free?” And the writer to the Hebrews exhorts us to “Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” Paul claims to be “free,” it would be rather strange if Paul’s Master was in bondage. Again Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 7:22, “He that is called in the Lord being a servant, is the Lord’s free man; likewise he that is called being free is Christ’s servant” and to the Galatians (5:1), “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free,” and again in that same chapter at verse 18, “But if ye be led of the Spirit (as Christ certainly was) then ye are not under the law” - Which law? Obviously the Law of Sinai which gendereth to bondage (Galatians 4:24). We conclude that R.Roberts perverted logic is simply another denial of Bible teaching for Christadelphians to ponder.

No. 15 requires rejection of any claim that,  
**“The tribunal of Christ, when he comes, is not for the judgment of saints, but merely to divide among them differing degrees of reward,” and**

No. 16 requires that we reject any claim that

**“the resurrection is confined to the faithful.”**

**Comment:** Both of the above doctrines to be rejected are meaningless unless we know which resurrection is in question. The first resurrection at the beginning of the thousand years, or the one at the end of the thousand year period when “the sea gives up the dead which were in it, and death and hell (the grave) deliver up the dead which are in them” (Revelation 20:13) and “they are judged every man according to their works.” Neither 1 Corinthians 15, or Revelation 20 teach of any tribunal (court of law) at the return of Christ, we are simply told that those who are raised at His coming “lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, this is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:4-6). And surely this sequence of events is confirmed in 1 Corinthians when Paul tells the saints at Corinth that if they are alive and remain at the coming of their Lord they will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye.” No tribunal, court, or assize is necessary when both Father and Son know the identity of those who are Theirs; those who have “walked in spirit and not in flesh, and are not subject to condemnation. Again that damnable doctrine of ‘Original Sin’ compelled its author to deny the Word in favour of tradition.

No. 17 requires Christadelphians to deny the truth demonstrated above that at the return of Christ the saints do rise in an immortal state.

No. 22 reads that

**“heathens, idiots, pagans, and the very young children will be saved”**

**Comment:** Whilst the writer knows of no scriptural passage which speaks of the destiny of the three first classes of humanity, there are at least two which bear upon “very young children.” Firstly, Jesus said, “Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,” and Paul in 1 Corinthians 7 asserts that, “the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now they are holy.” We leave our readers to decide whether R.Roberts assertions are scriptural or not.

No. 27 requires denial of the statement

**“that there is no sin in the flesh.”**

**Comment:** Hundreds of thinking Christadelphians have been excommunicated or have resigned for expressing the above truth. Hundreds, possibly thousands, refuse to consider the subject. Did R.Roberts write of literal flesh, i.e. blood, skin, tissue and bone? Or did he mean figurative flesh? The ‘establishment’ is unsure and ignores the subject, merely trotting out the old conception that all are born with a “bias to sin” derived as we have demonstrated from the ancient delusions of ‘Original Sin.’

## **Finally**

The writer would close with a passage published 50 years ago by a highly esteemed brother who now sleeps in Christ:

“The writings of Robert Roberts and the Statement of Faith which he drew up have committed the community to the belief that the condemnation of man in Eden changed human nature from the “very good” of Genesis 1:31 to the very bad “flesh full of sin” which it is now said to be. Their explanation of the death of Christ, unique monstrosity, is that as a condition of forgiving men their sins, God required, in Robert Roberts’ words, the ritual destruction of sinful human nature in a morally sinless bearer thereof.

How there could be a “morally sinless bearer” of the nature which it is affirmed makes sinlessness in us an impossibility we shall never know, nor how it could serve the ends of mercy, justice or truth to require the destruction of one who succeeded in living sinlessly is

equally mysterious. The method of dealing with these and similar questions is to assume an air of profound reverence and tack together an assortment of texts, generally related to other subjects, with a quotation or two from the doctor or Robert Roberts. We never find an explanation in plain simple English because it would be seen to be obviously outrageous. If as we suspect their inner minds are often more than a little uneasy, they conceal the fact and comfort themselves with verbiage.”

May all into whose hands this essay may fall, “search the scriptures” and find the plain simple truths about human nature and the way in which Jesus has purchased mankind from their bondage to Sin by His own precious blood, and thereafter by the obedience of baptism ensure their part in that first resurrection, by “walking in spirit and not in the flesh.”

Assembled for the honour of God, His Son and His Word, for the benefit of those of whom the writer testifies have a zeal for God, but not according to Truth.

C.E.Cave  
April 2001