

Ernest Brady

To

Clifford Pryde.

1971

Dear Clifford Pryde,

Bro. A. W. Hold has sent me your recent letter to him, but it is minus the first page so I do not know what that contained or the precise date but I don't think I have missed much. You mention however that I did not reply to your letter of the 10.6.68 and you have concluded that this was because I could not answer your arguments. On the contrary, there was nothing more in it than I had already answered in mine of 6.3.68 and so much of it was nothing more than intemperate abuse of myself that I decided I could use my time to better advantage. Moreover Bro. Hold himself had replied quite adequately and with more patience than I would have done. I have no objection to plain speaking and I don't much mind what people call me when they are angry, more particularly if what they say is backed up by some reasoned argument but I won't waste my effort just exchanging insults with you or anyone else. I do not think that anything I wrote to you warranted the charges you made in your reply, that I "stoop to trickery, dishonesty, mutilation, deception and fraud; I slander Christadelphians and ridicule them; I am a coward on the run; I make superficial quotations and love to pervert the Spirit's injunctions in order to bolster up a theory; I use screwy logic and am so conceited that I blunder headlong into ridiculous statements and refuse to believe anything but the God-dishonouring tenets of my teaching." Well, well, well! If I succeeded in committing all these crimes and insults in a single letter I am not surprised you tell Bro. Hold that you have finished with me! But I am rather intrigued that in the same letter you say to him "Should you have any recent booklets of Ernest Brady similar to "The Norris Confession" and "Christadelphian Crisis" I would like to read them." You really must be a glutton for punishment. Or perhaps the truth is that all your wild and angry accusations are nothing more than the projection of your own mind; you have some sort of a realisation that you are in a hopelessly anomalous position, brought home to you by the honest action of Bro. Hold and the others who have resigned from the Toowoomba Ecclesia, but you are too full of pride to confess that you are really a Christadelphian who cannot harmonise sinful flesh with holiness.

I don't want to put you in the pillory, but as you appear to make rather much of the fact that I did not reply and as I can do with some material for a Circular Letter I think I will include the letter which has made you so cross and then everybody will be able to read it and see what a devil I really am. If you want some extra copies to send to your friends in Australia I will let you have them - they ought to have an opportunity to judge for themselves to what extent the things you say about The Nazarene Fellowship and the late Edward Turney and myself are justified.

Here it is then:

6.3.68.

Dear Clifford Pryde,

Your letter of 1st December 1967 has been sent on to me by Bro. Hold and while I am satisfied that every point you raise has been adequately dealt with in the literature of the Nazarene Fellowship you have obviously gone to considerable trouble in writing it and I therefore feel I ought to add something to what Bro. Hold has already said to you.

I credit you with being sincere and am surprised that several times you make the suggestion that our views are akin to those of Jehovah's Witnesses, yet you have read our literature and must be well aware that the only thing in common is that they and we claim the Bible as our teacher, but as you yourself make the same claim I think you would have done better not to waste your time writing what is a slander and no help to your argument. My estimation of that body is probably no higher than your own but as it is a fact that they stem from the same roots as Christadelphians and as you are I suppose nominally a Christadelphian your position is probably nearer to them than ours. The only specific point of doctrine which you mention in evidence to support your assertion is that they believe that the ransom price was paid to the Devil and we also believe that Jesus paid a ransom but you admit that we deny that there is a personal devil. So where is the similarity between us and them? On your own showing our teaching is completely different and it is wrong of you to make unfounded statements in order to arouse prejudice. You yourself believe that Jesus gave His life as a ransom, and how could you deny it seeing He said so Himself, but I should think it a bit stupid to waste my time telling my friends that Cliff Pryde's view "resembles J.W.'s trash." I have found that if one has got sound scriptural reasoning to call on one does not need to write like that.

On page 2, paragraph 1, you say that in contending against sin-in-the-flesh we are outstanding and to the point but that we go astray concerning the Atonement. Now you must surely realise that the sole explanation which Christadelphians have (and this includes you, as I will show) for the death of Christ is that He inherited condemnation which they define as sin in the flesh or mortality. Once you admit that there is no sin in the flesh you have no explanation for or understanding of the death of Christ and you will find yourself denying its efficacy, proving yourself devoid of the only thing which can save us - faith in His atoning sacrifice - and therefore without hope. And this is actually the position you are in. By your own declaration, you reject what we are required to accept as the condition of salvation and when someone tells you "the sins of the world were laid upon Him and He bore them to the Cross" what do you answer? "Wrong! Entirely wrong; blasphemously wrong!" Read your own words - page 7, paragraph 2, are these the words of Scripture? Then why are you denying them? I'll tell you why - it is because your theory has driven you into a position in which you can only see His death as a martyrdom and not as a sacrifice. In the same paragraph you say "The Bible never and nowhere represents the death of Christ as effecting any change in the mind of God. Its doctrine is one of free forgiveness." We of the Nazarene Fellowship have certainly never argued that the death of Christ was necessary in order to effect a change in the mind of God. What we do say is that it was necessary in order to effect a change in man's position in the sight of God, which is a very different thing. But when you assert that the Bible doctrine is a doctrine of free forgiveness you are saying that the death of Christ was unnecessary - without purpose. How can you possibly regard yourself as a believer, accepting the Word of God as truth, when you make such a preposterous statement? You do not seem to have any conception of the gravity of the things you say - you are denying the whole basis upon which the Gospel is built. At the bottom of page 6 you write "All ways of representing the suffering of the innocent as accepted in lieu of the punishment of the guilty... fail to satisfy us." So be it - but your blood be on your own head. Peter says

that Christ suffered for us, the just for the unjust. But it does not satisfy you. Isaiah says “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; with his stripes we are healed.” But neither does that satisfy you. Would you prefer to bear your own iniquity – to suffer the punishment of your own guilt? Because if you reject the testimony of the Prophets and Apostles and the Saviour Himself this is what will happen to you. You say it’s a question of free forgiveness; I say you are wrong - there is no forgiveness for you or anyone else who does not first accept that Christ died to buy us back to God at the price of His own life. This is the faith that is required before we can even exist, in the sight of God, let alone have our sins forgiven. You are still dead in trespasses and sins.

At the top of page 7 you ask, “Tell me, is my relation to God and God’s relation to me changed by Christ’s death on the cross? And if so, how? Did God accept the sufferings of the innocent Christ in place of mine? How could it be just to put to death a sinless man?” Really, Cliff Pryde, I am utterly astonished that you, making the boast (I understand how you mean it) that you and your sister wife represent the third generation of those holding the Truth in what is known as the “Shield” Fellowship should ask such a question. If your relation to God is not changed by Christ’s death you are perishing with the world. If you do not know how it is changed you simply prove the futility of your three generation holding of what you call the truth. Have you never read that “God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now Justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

That, my friend, is how your relation to God is changed by Christ’s death, if indeed you believe that that death was for us and this, in view of what you write appears to be a matter of considerable doubt. As far as you and those who share your view are concerned, the Apostle Paul might as well have saved himself the trouble of explaining why Christ died for sinners as the great sacrifice to purchase us back to God from the state of alienation because of sin. In paragraph 4, page 7, you write “Obedience to the will of God is the one sacrifice acceptable to God” and in this statement you expose yourself as an unbeliever. You reject belief in the only thing which can give any man any hope; the ransom made for us by our Saviour and put your trust in obedience to the will of God. This is exactly the position of modernist so-called Christians and it is sad in the extreme to see a man like you fall into the same pitiful error. I will just ask you one question. Are you obedient to the will of God or do you like the rest of us far too often fall into sin? If you do where is your acceptable sacrifice to God, seeing you reject the one Christ made for you and put your trust in your own obedience? I fear you have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge and being ignorant of God’s righteousness are going about to establish your own. You do not realise it but you Christadelphians are the latter-day Israel and you are stumbling at the same rock of offence as they did - they were children of Abraham and loved their law and thought that should commend them to God and you are third generation Shield Christadelphians who think the same, but neither you nor they can see what Jesus meant when he said “except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood you have no life in you.”

In your statement quoted at the top of the previous page you trot out the old objection “How could it be Just to put to death a sinless man?” Very well then. Now you tell me how it could be just on your theory, which I quote from your penultimate paragraph, that “Despite his righteous-ness, he was not exempted from the condemned state into which he was born by inheritance and would sooner or later have to die. In his innocence of sin he was certainly

free from legal blame, but not from natural inheritance.” If you think this is what God purposed how is it any more palatable than the idea of putting to death a sinless man? Do you think it would show Divine justice for Jesus or any other man to inherit a state of physical condemnation?

In the same paragraph you ask “Could it be just to allow one to die who perfectly kept the Law of God, which said “This do and thou shalt live.”” Very well - I ask you again, how do you justify your contention that Jesus had to die because He inherited condemnation? You go on, “In the whole record of God's dealings in the Bible, the same principle of absolute impartial justice is written broad and clear, that “every man shall die for his own sins.” All right, now I ask you again, Whose sins did Christ die for? On your own showing He had none and if impartial justice is written so broad and clear, He ought not to have died. You see how utterly and hopelessly you stultify and contradict yourself.

The fact of the matter is that although you think you have renounced sin-in-the-flesh you still believe very largely the same as Christadelphians have always done, that the imposition of physical corruptibility was the penalty of sin. A few now recognise that this is wrong and the Editor of The Christadelphian has publicly admitted it, but the majority still think we owe natural death to the fact that Adam and Eve ate the apple, just as does Christendom in general, and like yourself they still regard themselves as followers of Dr. Thomas, blissfully unaware or careless of the fact that he himself said that man was corruptible when he was created and before the Fall!

Granted that you and many others now reject sin-in-the-flesh and that even Mansfield and the Logos are gradually transmuting what used to be sinful flesh into mortality and the lusts which lead to sin and even, forsooth affirming that it was never taught that sin was literally an element in human flesh; yet unfortunately none of you yet realise that you have thrown the baby away with the bath-water. The fundamental doctrine of Christadelphianism was that Jesus had to be nailed to the Cross as a ritual exhibition of what was due to sinful flesh and for the destruction of sin in His own flesh. Now that it is realised that this is blasphemy what are you to put in its place? The answer is, nothing. You have literally no explanation or understanding of The Atonement and that is why you no longer believe in it. I expect you will say “Oh but I do.” In fact you do not. Let me show you.

Jesus said, “I lay down my life for my sheep.” This is as clear and unmistakable a reference to His dying as one could have, yet you want to make it mean a reference to his living - His daily life, His good works, His patience and gentleness. You say, “It was the life of Christ that redeems us or was given in ransom for us - He poured out His life unto (until) death.” Now you may not think it but I can have considerable sympathy and patience with someone who may be slow to grasp a point, but I must say I find it very difficult to extend this to you, for I do not see how anyone, without studied and calculated perversity could convert the statement of Jesus that He died for His sheep, giving the life which was in His blood as a ransom, into your statement that it was His living which redeems us. All the Apostles speak of Him dying for us. Do any of them speak of Him as having been tempted in the wilderness “for us,” as having been homeless “for us?” as having agonised “for us” in Gethsemane? Are we anywhere told that He worked miracles “for us” or delivered His discourses or spoke His parables “for us”? I do not contend that there is not a sense in which these statements may be true. But they never occur, even when the context, e.g. 1 Peter 2:20-24 would make them appropriate. The Apostle says He left us an example; when He was reviled He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not but committed Himself to

Him that judgeth righteously. But Peter does not say that this was how He saved us or that by following His example we can save ourselves. He says Christ “suffered for us” not by faithfully living and enduring all the tribulations and temptations of His daily life but because “His own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” The association of bloodshedding with the forgiveness of sins proves your contention utterly wrong and I suspect that you realise this, because you say on page 3, paragraph 2, “Bloodshedding typifies life given in service, not a punishment of sin.” If this is not stupidity it is something worse; try and make it agree with what you read in the Mosaic Law, e.g. Leviticus 20 and in Hebrews, “For without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins.” On page 2 you approve of A.L.Wilson’s statement that Jesus voluntarily went through the jaws of death for doomed mankind, but you add, “but it must be remembered that it was Christ’s obedient life that redeems us - his obedience unto death.” If this was so, why could not Jesus have lived His normal span and died a natural death? He would then have had perhaps 70 years in which to live for our redemption instead of only 33. Surely, if as you say His death was no more than the culmination of a life of probation it would have been better this way and would have avoided all the suffering and unpleasantness of crucifixion!

You have read our literature and Bro. Hold has gone to great trouble to explain our views to you and I therefore find it hard to excuse you for asking on page 7, “How could it be ‘just’ to put to death a sinless man?” It was not just. It was the greatest act of injustice in history. But it was not God that did it; it was wicked men. God foresaw from the beginning that it would happen and incorporated it in His purpose, making the salvation of man depend upon it. Obviously God could have saved Jesus from death, but He could not have saved Him from death and saved mankind from perishing, because His own Law and principles of Justice are the supreme manifestations of Himself and had to be upheld and vindicated. Jesus knowing and sharing the mind of God knew these things and knew that the whole scheme of salvation rested upon Him and His willingness to go to an undeserved death, laying down His own free and unforfeited life for the life which was lost by sin in Eden but never exacted.

It astonished me beyond measure that people like yourself find it so hard to accept what appears to me to be so simple and satisfying, and can go to such lengths of perverse argument to avoid the obvious. You quote on page 2, paragraph 4 the words of Dr. Thomas, “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.” You comment that this statement of the Doctor’s suited A.L.Wilson but then he rejects The Doctor’s version of sin-in-the-flesh. Of course he does, because on sin-in-the-flesh the Doctor was wrong. But so do you. Why therefore do you reject what the Doctor says about redemption, seeing you make the claim on page 6, top line, that you are the only Christadelphians who hold in its entirety the Truth developed from the Scriptures by our Bro. J. Thomas?

I have already referred to your complaint on page 2 that we deny a personal devil but “have substituted him with a “sin lord” - a mystical conception of a power in contest with God which is equally as unscriptural as the devil.” When you wrote this did it not occur to you to ask yourself who was the “former Lord” to whom Dr. Thomas referred above and from whom he says we are released by purchase? And again did it not occur to you when you wrote yourself on page 4, paragraph 2, “Sin is personified in the Scriptures as the owner of all flesh. He is called “The god of this world,”” that you were saying exactly the same thing yourself? If it is unscriptural when we say sin is personified why is it not unscriptural when you say it or when Dr. Thomas says it? I am afraid this is typical of the way you write. Another example is on page 2 where you write “Now we will state and then prove that the

‘life’ Christ gave as a ransom was His living to God, not expiring on the cross.” Well, you duly made the statement but as I have shown above, you forgot to produce the proof; and of course you could not do so because it would require you to turn upside-down practically every mention of the death of Christ in the Bible. I do not blame you wholly as I know it is not your invention but has been elaborated by various writers in the past who thought as you do, that the only sense in which Christ could have died as a substitute was that the punishment due to the guilty was inflicted on the innocent. But you have not as much excuse as some, because you have been shown that it was a case of Jesus choosing of His own will to give His life to pay our debt. When you say, page 2, “First, which is it to be - a price paid or a debt forgiven?” it seems to me that this is just a ‘smart-alec’ question and that you are being ungrateful and perverse. It is both. The price that was paid belonged to the One who forgave the debt, therefore it was both an act of purchase (by Jesus) and an act of forgiveness (by God) for it was God who gave His Son. John 3:16.

The inspired writers present the same transaction (if I may use the term) under several other analogies drawn from human experience and concepts; a propitiation; a release from bondage; a reconciliation; an escape from deserved chastisement. All of them serve to throw light on the great central fact which they variously illustrate, but none of them is a complete and perfect analogy of the Atonement and indeed no comparison with other things could be, for the Atonement is unique in human history and so far as we know, unique in the Divine purposes of all or any ages. It has never happened before that a perfectly righteous man was unjustly put to death in the face of the declaration of His judge that “I find no fault in this man;” who was declared to be the King of the Jews; who was in fact the Son of God; of whom His enemies said “Never man spake like this man” and taunted Him with the words “He saved others; himself he cannot save.” It is therefore foolish in the extreme to make difficulties about accepting that it happened as a sacrifice for us because none of the analogies and symbolisms by which it is explained to us perfectly and adequately reveal its every facet. Why cannot we accept the fact and the mercy and love that it reveals instead of making obstacles to our faith by looking for discrepancies amongst the types and figures which are necessarily limited and imperfect?

If I am sued in a Court of Law for a tremendous debt which I could only pay with my life, and the Judge, being wealthy and compassionate, puts his hand in his pocket and counts out the bank notes required to clear my indebtedness, am I going to quibble about whether it is a case of payment or of forgiveness? Not on your life. I shall take the deliverance offered with a heart full of gratitude and a thankfulness which I cannot find words to express and go on my way rejoicing. You may object that there is no Court in which we may be sued for our life and this is quite true, but we stand before God and in His sight we are bankrupt. In my view, any man in such circumstances who prefers to stay in Court and argue with the Judge about whether he ought to be held responsible for debts incurred because he inherited a predisposition to overspend himself in riotous living and that in strict Justice he ought to be allowed to pay them off himself in weekly instalments for the rest of his natural life, is, to say the least, not acting in his own best interests. Most people would regard such a man as a crackpot. Yet is not this exactly what you as Christadelphians are doing, when you denigrate the Sacrifice of Christ and trust in your own obedience to the will of God?

It happens occasionally that a bird falls down the chimney and finds itself trapped in my room. It lacks the sense to find its way out again and even though I leave the door open the poor wild thing will fly madly about dashing its head against the walls and windows until finally it drops exhausted and I can catch it and put it outside. You remind me of such a bird.

You are trapped in Christadelphianism. The chimney you fell down is the belief that natural death was the penalty of sin and you cannot bring yourself to creep back up it and start again from the beginning. You are fluttering frantically round the room mistaking the windows that imprison you for the open air, with your wings broken and your head bloody and battered and you cannot see that the door is wide open through which you could fly away into freedom and light - the door which only requires you to recognise that physical condemnation never happened, since man was corruptible when created, and that what really happened was that by sin Adam incurred death as a penalty, involving his execution there and then, a debt which he could not pay himself without perishing, but that in the merciful plan of redemption he was allowed to live his natural span and beget children, but the debt hung over him until it was paid for him by One who could offer the exact equivalent life to meet and uphold law and justice and not perish because His life had come fresh from the Source and was not part of the condemned life.

Just one other point before I close this; in your letter you reproach Bro. Hold for accepting the teaching of the Nazarene Fellowship and, as you term it, "leaving the sinking ship." This is an odd expression to use and one would have thought that if the Christadelphian ship is sinking you would want to abandon it yourself, but I must confess I do not understand the position about fellowship in Australia. It seems to us that if we disagree with the teaching of the community to which we belong the honest thing to do is to leave it and not compromise ourselves and what we believe by a nominal acceptance of a creed which actually we reject. It is certainly evident that like C.S. Rasmussen of Caloundra, you make no secret of the fact that you do not accept the B.A.S.F. and I can only commend you in this, but from his letters to me and from this present letter of yours to which I am replying, I do not think there are in fact as great differences between that community and yourselves as you think.

I have come to the conclusion - from your own words to which I have referred, that you have not really renounced sin-in-the-flesh, as we have done, having learned from Edward Turney and A.L. Wilson and others, but as I have shown, you still believe the same or much the same thing but you define it in other terms. This I think is the reason why they do not throw you out - and it would be better for you if they did!

I have replied to your letter as frankly as you have written to Bro. Hold and I hope that what I have said may help you to a better understanding. Whether or not, if in anything I have misunderstood you or you feel I have been unjust or unkind, I do not mean to be and I apologise here and now. If there are not many things in your letter I can wholly agree with, it is a matter for thankfulness that on one point at least you are as convinced as we are - that A.D. Norris is a blasphemer. As long as you see this and are not afraid to say it I shall not be without hope of you. But I feel bound to remind you that you are in the same ship with him. He is highly esteemed as a Christadelphian authority and leader both in Britain and abroad and as the man who wrote that when Jesus died upon the Cross the devil hung there dead, he was defining what is after all what his community stands for. I feel that anyone who sails with him will deserve to drown with him, if he is responsible for what he says.

Yours sincerely in Jesus Name.

Ernest Brady.

I gather from your reply that the two points that principally angered you were my omission of part of the words you quoted from John Bell and what I said in my last paragraph but one; regarding the latter may I say at once that I fully accept that you do not believe in inherited sin-in-the-flesh and I said so, but I still think you are confused and self-contradictory about the nature of man, as I will show when I deal with the other point. You affirm that the Shield Fellowship never believed it either, until the visit of John Carter and the imposition of what is known as the Carter-Cooper Addendum, and while I have no direct evidence to refute what you say I find it very difficult to accept it.

I never knew John Bell or his writings, but as a Christadelphian I met and listened to C.P. Wauchop when he came over years ago and others, like Jas. Mansfield Sen., Freeman and several I forget were entertained in my home and I have no doubt that they were orthodox Christadelphians who accepted the B.A.S.F., unless they gave us a deliberately false impression of their belief, and they defended John Bell although it was not denied that he had certain (as they were then to us) peculiar views. If he believed in what you call clean flesh, all honour to him and I would not wish in any way to traduce him, but my doubts are based upon the very passage you quoted as proof that he rejected inherited sin.

The passage in full reads:

“Despite Jesus righteousness, he was not exempted from the condemned state into which he was born by inheritance, whose issue is death. Despite his righteousness, he would sooner or later have to die, unless his nature had been changed from human to Divine. In his innocence of sin certainly he was 'free' from legal blame, but not from natural inheritance.”

In my reply referring to this, I omitted the phrase “unless his nature had been changed from human to Divine” and it was for this that you charge me with fraud, trickery and mutilation. I can assure you that I had no ulterior motive whatsoever, and as I see it, left in or left out the phrase makes not an atom of difference. Anybody would recognise that if God should choose to change a man's nature he would cease to be what he had been and become something else. The point at issue is, what did John Bell say was the nature of Jesus apart from any such change? He said - and it is your own quotation - he was born, by inheritance into a condemned state. We believe this is absolutely and completely untrue and that it is in fact, pure Christadelphianism. You say “This statement can be totally supported from scripture” and since therefore you believe it I feel I was fully justified in saying that you believe the same or much the same but try to put it another way. I am not being unkind when I say that you do not really believe what you think you do and this is the proof, that you agree that Jesus was not exempted from the condemned state into which He was born.

If John Bell had said - as we do and as Edward Turney did - that Jesus was born with, or if you like, inherited, a corruptible nature and that apart from a Divine intervention would ultimately have died from natural causes, that would be different. But on your own showing He did not. He said Jesus was born in a condemned state whose issue is death and I honestly cannot see how you can distinguish this from what you say Christadelphians call the mortality which was a physical condemnation inflicted as the punishment of sin. If you can see a difference or can explain how John Bell's view was different from what has since been defined in the C.C. Addendum and would care to put it down with reasonable conciseness I will reproduce it in the next Circular Letter.

Meanwhile, you make your own position abundantly clear when you write, “the condition Jesus was born into was outside the garden, debarred from the tree of life – a condition from which he had to save himself.” If you really believe these things you need have no scruples about your association with Christadelphians. Outside the garden? Yes, since the garden long ago disappeared - but not outside what the garden of Eden symbolised, namely a harmonious relationship with the Creator. Debarred from the Tree of Life? Never. The Tree of Life was a symbol of the Source of Life, the Father, and Jesus was never debarred from His Father, except perhaps in the final moments of His agony on the Cross, when it seems likely that He had to experience the bitterness of being cut off as sinners deserve to be cut off. A condition from which He had to save Himself? If He had been in any such condition He could not have saved Himself, even by His own death, any more than could we, who are in that condition, save ourselves. If you were meaning to say, that by living a life of perfect obedience He proved Himself worthy to live for ever, why not say exactly that? If you mean that He was born in a condemned state but saved Himself, either by living a perfect life or by dying an obedient death, how is this any different from what most Christadelphians say? I do not charge you with believing the same as H.P.Mansfield, simply because on this aspect of your belief you are the same as him, and by the same token you might do us the justice of ceasing to identify us with the Church and other sects simply because we believe, as they do, that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice made for us, when you know full well that our views regarding Jesus Himself, as a man who was the Son of God and not a Divine god-man are totally different. But I am bound to agree with Bro. Hold - if you really do reject the Christadelphian Creed you are doing wrong both to your own conscience and to them, by calling yourself a Christadelphian. You reproach him for refusing to fellowship with Toowoomba and say that you are “persuading the brethren to return to the Shield fellowship where the truth is to be found,” yet in your letter to him of the 23.6.68 you said “I am in full agreement with you concerning the policy of the modern Shield Committee. This magazine is worse than useless as far as doctrinal matter is concerned, since the death of C.P.Wauchope who was editor after Bro. Bell.” Don’t you think you ought to make up your mind whether the truth is there or whether it is worse than useless, before you scold your brethren for acting upon what their conscience tells them is right?

Having gone so far, I do not feel I should leave the matter now without dealing with the aspects of your understanding of the significance of the sacrifice of Christ which you say I have “eluded” - I think you mean evaded. You reject the view that there is any sense in which Jesus bore our sins. You do not, and of course could not deny that He was a sin-offering, since the Bible says so, but you deny that there is any Justification for the view that in the Mosaic Law the sin-offerings bore the sins of the offerers or were in any sense substitutionary or expiatory. I did not evade this issue, but perhaps I did not deal with it as fully as I might have done, frankly because it seems to me so extraordinary and incredible a view that hardly anybody but - forgive me - a crank or a crackpot would entertain it for a second.

You say you have challenged us to give you the chapter and verse in Scripture where any sin or sins were placed upon any animal which was then slain. I certainly did not bother to trace the whole ceremonial of sacrifice from Eden onwards, because I took it for granted that any Bible reader would accept that a sin offering was an offering for sin. There are indeed other types of offering which were primarily propitiatory in character, but it is fundamental reason that a sin offering was to make an atonement for sin and there could be no propitiation or acceptable peace offering not proceeded by it. I agree that it does not say, whenever a sin offering is mentioned, that sin was ceremonially transferred from the sinner to

the offering, but surely, it is not said only because the inference is so obvious and easily understood. I think the Spirit expects us to have the sense to apply our reasoning and recognise that when a sinner laid his hand upon the head of his offering he was identifying himself with the victim, and since, by means of the sacrifice his sin was expiated, therefore there certainly was a ceremonial transfer of sin.

No-one is suggesting that actual guilt could be transferred; sin cannot be taken off one head and put on another like a sun-bonnet. But when the offerer recognises the sacrificial principle, confesses his guilt and repents, the penalty is transferred and the sinner forgiven. It is a question of faith and what is in the mind of the individual. You say you “have proved without a shadow of a doubt that nowhere in the ritual is sin placed upon the offering.” I should have thought that it was clear enough in Leviticus 4:28,29, “Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering... and the priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him.” Similarly in the next chapter - I do not see how anyone could want plainer evidence than this that sin was (symbolically, of course) placed upon the offering and when you go on to say “Never in all God’s dealings with man has he allowed man to substitute an innocent animal to die in his stead, whether it be symbolical or otherwise,” it is quite an understatement to add that it would no doubt sound strange in my ears - I think it would have sounded stranger still in the ears of Moses. If you want some chapter and verse, I suggest you read what he said after the burning of the sons of Aaron, when he diligently sought to see that the ritual had been obediently carried out. Leviticus 10:17.

“Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord.”

This was the goat of the sin-offering, “given to you to bear the iniquity of the congregation,” and you have the audacity to assert that nowhere in the ritual is sin placed upon the offering. If sin was not placed upon the offering how did it bear the iniquity? The only thing that you have proved without a shadow of a doubt is that you are a man for whom words mean what you say they mean. I quoted from Isaiah 53, and where could you wish for a clearer proof of sins being ceremonially put upon the sin-bearer. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” I quoted the Apostle Peter, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” and I ask you again, if our sins were not ceremonially placed on Jesus when He was condemned by His own nation, and the penalty for them suffered by Him in His death, how did He bare them in His own body to the tree? You declare you do not believe in sin-in-the-flesh, so you do not believe that He bore them by being born with them already in His flesh, like Christadelphians, nor do you believe that sins can be ceremonially transferred to a sin-bearer; what is there left? Nothing, as far as I can see. That is why I say you are a man without a hope.

I quoted Jesus own words, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep,” and said that this was as clear a proof as anyone could ask that in His sacrifice Jesus gave His life for us. You practically scoff at this - and they are Jesus’ own words! “Is it? So the good shepherd threw himself to the wolves, saying, here, eat me instead of the sheep. This the wolves would gladly have done, for then the sheep would later become an

easy prey.” Then you recommend me to read the 23rd Psalm and ask, “Is this the words of a dead shepherd; one who gave his life instead of the sheep, or of a living prudent all-caring shepherd who spent his entire life to bring blessings to the sheep.” You really are an astonishing man; you seem to be on the verge of convincing yourself that Jesus did not die at all!

When I bring these passages to your notice, you say “these are superficial quotations” and you tell me that I hastily quote what Peter said (He bare our sins in his own body to the tree) “to blunt some of the glaring discrepancies in these assertions.” Let me tell you, these are not superficial quotations - they are the categorical statements of Jesus Himself, of the Prophets and of the Apostles; and there are no glaring discrepancies - they all testify to the one same eternal and unshakeable fact that the Son of God loved us and gave Himself for us.

I am afraid there are far too many superficial quotations in your Bible. You say, “One fact stands out indisputably and irrefutably clear, “He did not put away sin,” (Your underlining). But Hebrews 9:26 says the opposite, “but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (My underlining). Again you say, “Prove to me from the scriptures that bloodshedding represents a punishment for sin and I’ll admit gross stupidity.” Alright; Genesis 9:6, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” Leviticus 20:9, “Every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be put to death; his blood shall be upon him.” How do these texts agree with your silly statement that bloodshedding typifies life given in service or that blood represents a life of obedience?

If we had not one word more than I Peter 2:24 it would be quite enough to prove the lunacy of your declaration that nowhere in Scripture ritual is sin placed upon the offering. The very term “sin offering” is conclusive. Why are they consistently called sin offerings if they had only a propitiatory purpose as you assert?

You pour scorn on Edward Turney’s statement, “You will observe that as soon as the sins were transferred to the head of the bullock or the goat, death followed” and say we advance this to pervert the ordinance of the atoning sacrifice to suit our blasphemous dogma of substitution. Yet you cannot deny the facts of the ritual laid down in Leviticus 4:4, when the priest offered a sacrifice for his sins and the victim was then slain and if this does not imply that the life of the victim was a substitute for the life of the sinner I don’t know what you make of it. You appear to think you have a strong argument in favour of your view that a sin offering did not bear sin in the ritual of the Day of Atonement, when all the sins of the people were confessed and laid upon the scapegoat, which was not killed but released into the wilderness. You consider this supports your claim that our sins are forgiven and therefore were not borne by Jesus; actually it is the best passage you could have chosen to refute your own reasoning and to prove the truth of our view of the Atonement.

You overlook - or choose not to mention - that on the Day of Atonement there were two animals taken for the sin offering. Leviticus 16:5-10 -

“He shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin offering. And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron

shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to make an atonement for him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness."

I have quoted this in full because of its vital significance. Two goats (plural) for a sin offering (singular). You will be aware of the fact that in our relationship with God there are sin and sins. There is the sin of the world (John 1:29) and there are the sins which we all commit. When the first sin was committed there was no provision for forgiveness – it brought death into the world - not natural death, not corruptibility, but death as a penalty - the wages of sin. Sinners who suffer this death perish. But the sentence has been remitted in the case of those who form the spiritual body of Christ, because He has suffered in their stead. He did not die for our personal sins - these are forgiven for His sake and this is what is symbolised in the other part of the sin offering, the scapegoat. You wish to give principal importance to the latter and would like to shrug off the lamb upon which the Lord's lot fell, yet obviously, until this had been chosen and offered, the ceremony of freeing the scapegoat would have been useless. The sin of the world was the one act of disobedience by which the many were made, or constituted, sinners - or as Paul says, people under the bondage of sin, and this was the condemnation or sentence which was taken away by the Lamb of God.

You say "the true basis of salvation is a sinless life after the pattern of Jesus. Thus both sin and sin-offering are avoided - no sin, no sin-offering needed." Even if it were true that salvation is obtainable by living a sinless life, which of us does so? But it is not so, for on the federal principle and under the law of sin and death we are dead in the sight of God irrespective of our works, bad or good. That is the fact of the Gospel whether you like it or not and this is why salvation is only by faith in Christ as our Saviour. You think we can save ourselves - you say "Obedience to the will of God is the one and only sacrifice acceptable to God." This is so after a person has been redeemed. It is applied to Israel, who had been nationally the subject of redemption, but it does not apply to a Gentile or one who is still alienated from God. The only sacrifice which will be acceptable for one such is the blood of Christ.

One other point I ought to refer to is your contention that the offering of flour which could be made by a person not able to provide a lamb is a proof that a sin offering did not bear sin and was not necessarily killed. The normal requirement was a perfect lamb, and where this was available and within the means, nothing else would do; but if a person was too poor to have a lamb, or even two pigeons, the priest could accept the tenth part of an ephah of flour. It is quite true that a measure of flour could not be put to death, but it could bear sin because it is recognised as a sin offering. It is the exception which proves the rule. It was a provision made by a compassionate and understanding God to meet the special case of one whose poverty might otherwise have prevented him obtaining forgiveness or only at the cost of hardship.

Perhaps I may mention here for the benefit of others who may read this, an aspect of the Law of Sacrifice which is often overlooked. To us today bloodshedding and sacrifice is in a way repugnant and I think this feeling may possibly lie behind your rejection of an innocent creature being put to death as a sin bearer. We ought not to overlook that a large proportion of the offerings which were made under the Mosaic Law - and in this respect the turtledoves or the flour of a poor man had the same value as the lamb or the kid provided the food of the priesthood. The lives of the animals slain were not taken wantonly or wastefully, any more than the lives of those which provide us with a lamb-chop or a steak for our dinner. It is one

of the stark realities of natural life that, unless we are vegetarians, we are all indirectly taking the lives of God's innocent creatures to maintain and enjoy our own life. We should probably think more seriously of this aspect if we had to do our own butchering before we could eat our dinner, instead of leaving it to others, but it disposes of any ground for complaint against the scriptural principle of sacrifice. God has no pleasure in bloodshedding as such and when Israel forgot the principle and purpose that lay behind them, their multitude of sacrifices stank in His nostrils. But when a man led up to the priest the lamb which would afterward provide necessary meals for him and his family, and in killing it recognised that this summary execution was what he as a sinner deserved, this was a confession of faith and an acceptable sacrifice.

Similar reasoning on a different level apply to the sacrifice of Christ which they foreshadowed. God did not require His death, in the sense that it gave Him any satisfaction or supplied any need of His, any more than God required the food provided by the sin offerings made under the Law. It was us that needed what that sacrifice alone could provide, it was to supply our need that it was made, but it happened in what we call the natural course of events. The crucifixion was not brought about or organised from heaven - it was the work of evil men who determined to destroy Him to secure themselves - as Caiaphas said, "Ye know nothing at all (He might almost have been talking to you C.P.!) nor consider that it is expedient that one man should die and not the whole nation perish." His Father knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus and He could have prevented it as He could prevent any other event in human history, whether an act of man or a natural catastrophe. Justice to Jesus demanded that He should be delivered from the hands of His murderers and He had only to ask and it would have been done. He knew this - and if we don't we are robbing Him of honour due - but He deliberately chose to let them take His life, because He had learned from the Scriptures that only a perfect sin offering would validate the forbearance of God in passing over the sins of humanity, and he voluntarily sacrificed Himself.

Although I have done so at some length, it is hardly necessary to quote texts to show the utter wrongness of your view of the Sacrifice of Christ. Your own words summing it up are more than a refutation, they are an indictment. You say:

"God gave His Son, not as a payment of a debt, but to show and vindicate His declaration that obedience would be rewarded with life; also that disobedience should be justly rewarded with death."

Cannot you see how both aspects you see show exactly the opposite of what you infer. If God's purpose was to vindicate His declaration that obedience would be rewarded with life, Jesus should have been saved from death, not subjected to it, for He was perfectly obedient. It is true that He was afterwards raised, but He still suffered death. Why? There is no law of God which says that a man must die to be obedient - in fact he can only be obedient while he is alive. So how did His death vindicate a declaration that obedience would be rewarded? In fact it denied it. Your statement that He had to be put to death because if God had intervened in His final sufferings at any moment prior to His last breath being yielded up, no-one except God and Christ would have known that He was submissive to the end, must be one of the stupidest things ever written on the subject. Is not what God knows sufficient for Him to act on - or does judgment rest on how things appear to us? And if it was also to show that disobedience should be justly rewarded with death, should not Jesus have been a sinner? For whose disobedience then was Jesus rewarded with death. I leave you to think up the answer.

Surely it must become clear to you that to believe that His death was anything but the voluntary sacrifice of Himself, the just for the unjust, is to declare that God Himself was guilty of the heinous crime committed by those wicked men who clamoured for His life. I would think again if I were you.

You do not realise it but your doctrine makes you a child of Cain. You have chosen to offer to God, instead of a sin offering which recognises His principle that without the shedding of blood is no remission, the offering which you think He ought to be pleased with; in your own words, "The basis of our salvation is revealed throughout the Book as strive, agonize, work and of self-denial." Very well; you may continue to strive and agonize and work and self-deny, but I will tell you this - you will never succeed in doing it well enough to earn yourself eternal life. Because it is not to be earned - it is the gift of God for those who have been purchased back to Him at the price of the life of His Son. Rather you will find yourself - as you are in effect already doing, praying thus with yourself, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

It would be better to say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," for He has provided one easy way for the sinner's redemption, whereas the righteous will be turned away.

Your sincerely, Ernest Brady.