

The Berean

A Christadelphian Magazine devoted to the exposition and defense of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints; and opposed to the dogmas of the Papal and Protestant Churches!

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.—Psa. 19:7

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...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Editorial

Clause XVI is the clause that defines the Christadelphian fellowship position. Of all positions held by the foundation brethren, certainly this is the one that has suffered the most among modern Christadelphians. And that suffering began quite early in ecclesial history. Many of the articles which were written to address the doctrine of fellowship, were written around 1885. This was the time when the movement was experiencing great growth. The meeting at Temperance Hall in Birmingham had grown to almost 500 members.

At that time, (November 1884), a very popular and well respected man, a former preacher who had become quite influential among the ecclesias, began to teach the doctrine we call “Partial Inspiration,” which we addressed in January of 2019. It was actually a disease afflicting the entire religious world in general at that time, as a study called “Textual Criticism” began to be used as a tool to question the authenticity of the Bible. Just a few months into the controversy, bro. Roberts came to realize that among Christadelphians, the problem was not really “Partial Inspiration.” There were a few who had embraced this theory, but not many. The real problem was the doctrine of fellowship, as so many brethren had come to believe that they were not responsible for the new error which was plaguing a few ecclesias.

At that time, bro. Roberts wrote an article called “Fellowship, Its Nature and Conditions” which follows this editorial. It is simple, and directly to the point. It laid out the Christadelphian position, which was maintained by the foundation brethren in 1885, and which was continued to be maintained till 1923, when Temperance Hall abandoned this position. It was at that time that the Berean Christadelphians were formed by those brethren who could not go along with Birmingham’s corruption of this principle.

A curious thing to come out of this division was a comment bro. Roberts made as regards subscriptions to the Christadelphian Magazine. In 1885, as he considered how many brethren might remain faithful to the truth, and how many would be carried away with the “Open Door” theory of fellowship advanced by many, he projected that he could only order 1500 subscriptions for the following year. I suggest that if we consider the Christadelphians who still maintain the truth concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, though they might be separated on walk and conduct issues (mostly around issues pertaining to divorce and remarriage), there are still around 1500 families who hold onto the truth.

The Berean Christadelphians were formed in April of 1923. At that time, two separate issues on two different continents were coming to a head. In Britain, during World War I, several brethren had joined a British Police Force called the "Special Constabulary" as cooks. While this was generally condemned by the Temperance Hall ecclesia, two Arranging Brethren defended this action. Since the idea of taking part in any legal force in any capacity was contrary to our faith, it was insisted that Temperance Hall take action against those who now defended that position. They refused, and those brethren who objected left Temperance Hall and formed the John Bright Street meeting.

Temperance Hall then disfellowshipped the brethren of the John Bright Street meeting, for lack of attendance at Temperance Hall. This action caused the Clapham meeting of London to examine the matter to determine who they were in fellowship with, and they came down on the side of John Bright Street. This decision formed the Berean Christadelphians.

At the same time in America, the ecclesias were in disarray. The divergent teachings of A. D. Strickler of Buffalo on the nature and sacrifice of Christ published in 1919, had created discord among virtually all the American ecclesias. The formation of the Berean Christadelphians in Britain finally convinced them that Temperance Hall did not intend to take any action against the new and apostate teaching, and so most of the American ecclesias joined with the newly formed Bereans, who immediately took a very strong stand against A. D. Strickler and his teachings.

That the action of Bereans had been correct was finally admitted nearly 20 years later, after the death of A. D. Strickler. In an article, the editor of the Christadelphian, John Carter, admitted that A. D. Strickler had in fact, been an errorist. He wrote in the Christadelphian Magazine of 1939, pg. 84:

"A criticism by brother Strickler of a pamphlet published by this Office led to a correspondence for about eighteen months, now terminated by his death. This, with original letters and copies of letters which have passed through our hands written to other brethren (brother Strickler was an indefatigable and voluminous letter writer) led us to the conclusion that at the end of his life he did not accept without reserve some of the clauses in The Statement of Faith concerning the nature of man and the sacrifice of Christ."

Of course, it was not merely at the end of his life, but from 1911 forward that A. D. Strickler taught his error. The proof of the leavening of A. D. Strickler's position was also recognized by John Carter. In 1940 John Carter printed the Ten Point Statement, which had been drawn up by an

American Central ecclesia as the basis for a reunion between Central and the Bereans, and which concerned the Nature and Sacrifice of Christ under the title, "A Time to Heal." This statement was unanimously agreed to by all Berean ecclesias, but not by those in Central.

In 1944 the 10 Point Statement was circulated among Berean and Central ecclesias in the United States to receive approval. It was quickly accepted by all Berean ecclesias. Among the Central ecclesias, it was accepted by 10, rejected by 1 (Philadelphia), and two ecclesias (including A. D. Strickler's former ecclesia, Buffalo) refused to respond.

An effort was made by all to get unanimous approval to the 10 Point statement till it was clear that this would not happen. In 1947, John Carter wrote of the two Central ecclesias where the Strickler teaching was the most prevalent:

"(The Philadelphia and Buffalo Central meetings) "attached a meaning to his [Robert Roberts] words that he did not intend."...

"The interpretation which is being imposed upon the BASF (the Christadelphian Statement of Faith) by the Philadelphia Circular is contrary to that understood by others, and contrary to all other statements on the subject in all the writings of Dr. Thomas and bro. Roberts." From an editorial by John Carter, Chdn. 1947, pg. 156).

It would be impossible for this not to be the case. It is one of God's sure prophesies that error grows into more error.

1 Cor. 5:6-7 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

It was God's prophesy that error, if not purged, would lead to more error. And John Carter found out the truth of God's word. Central failed to purge the error in 1923, and so found the situation had deteriorated even more by 1947, as the leaven continued its leavening of the lump.

Still John Carter took no action to correct the error in the Central assemblies after 1947. In fact, he did just the opposite. He brought into the Central assemblies those errorists of the Suffolk Street Assemblies (who had left in 1885 over Partial Inspiration, and who also had been joined by those who had embraced the errors of bro. J. J. Andrew.) Then he brought back into the Central Assemblies the Shield Assemblies of Australia, who had been withdrawn from through the faithful work of bro. Henry Sulley, over the "Clean Flesh" teachings of John Bell.

Whom I Love in the Truth

"For the Truth's sake that dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever" (2 John 2)

By Robert Roberts

John's second epistle brings out a few things about "love," which it is important to recognize. "Love," in the world, is one thing; "love" according to the ideal of the sects, another; and the "love" of apostolic discourse, yet another. The two former we may dismiss. The world's "love" is an ephemeral affair, having its foundation in the instincts, dying with use and age, and passing away in death. Orthodox "love" is a sickly distortion, lacking the elements that give strength and comeliness to the "love" of the Scriptures. It works spiritual mischief now and is destined hereafter to vanish like smoke.

The "love" of John's epistles has foundations, without which it cannot exist. This partly comes out in the very first sentence of this second epistle: "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the Truth."

Outside the Truth, a brother's love is not operative. He loves not the world, nor the things in the world, remembering that—"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him".

His friendships are bounded by the Truth, as regards both men and things. In Christ, he is a "new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). After the flesh he knows no man. The friendship of the world is enmity with God (James 4:4). Therefore, he cultivates no friendship with those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. *His love is bounded by the Truth.*

Does he, therefore, shut up his bowels of compassion against those who are without God? By no means. He recognizes the obligation put upon him by the same law, to salute not his brethren only, but to *do good unto all men*, as he has opportunity, *even to his enemies*. But there is a difference between *doing good* to unbelievers and *cultivating friendship* with them; and the saint is careful to observe this difference, lest he come under the rebuke that greeted the ears of Jehoshaphat, on his return from friendly co-operation with Ahab:

“Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love them who hate the Lord? Therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord.”

We can have our conversation towards the world in all courtesy and benevolence, without going on to their ground, and joining affinity in the schemes of pleasure, profit, or friendship.

The "love" that belongs to the Household of Faith is—"For the Truth's sake that dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (2 John 2).

This is John's definition of its source and scope. Everyone that is truly of the Household responds instinctively to it. To the carnal mind it appears very "narrow," but this is an illusion of ignorance. It is the true breadth, for it relates to that which shall be for ever, while the world which would have us unequally yoked, passeth away. The Truth connects us with "the shoreless ocean of eternity," while the friendship of the world is confined to "a narrow neck of land"—the brief existence of this animal probation.

The at present "narrow" operation of apostolic "love" is also founded in wisdom; for unrestricted friendship with the world is full of danger: it draws away from the fear of God, the hope of the calling, and the holiness of the Master's house,

"Whose house are we, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

It is, therefore, a snare; pleasant and advantageous meantime, but having the suction of the maelstrom with it, drawing us to death; for when the Lord of Light stands on earth, to set in order destiny, according to the Father's purpose, the world will have from HIS presence "fled away."

John rejoiced concerning those to whom he wrote that he had found them "walking in the Truth." *Saints walk not otherwise*. Their actions, plans of life, friendships, aims, enterprises, *hopes*—*everything* connected with them, in some way or other comes from, originates in, and is conformed to the Truth. The Truth is their inspiration—the controlling energy.

2 Cor. 5:17 "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Not that all answer to this. There are professors who serve not the Lord Jesus, but themselves; but such are not the children of God. None but the sons will be gathered in the day of the 144,000. They are few now, as they have always been, and the world "knoweth" them not in many senses; but *they know what they are about*.

They are not dreaming; they are not fanatics. They are the children of wisdom; and wisdom is justified of them all, though the world understands them not. *They* understand the world too well to be entrapped into its fellowship. They are known of God, and will be publicly revealed in due time, in glory, honor and immortality. Meanwhile, they "walk in the Truth." On this ground they are to be met and understood.

Approached on any other ground, they will seem not what they are. They are not to be comprehended "after the flesh." "This is love, that we walk after His commandments."

No man loves after the Spirit's fashion who disobeys. Apostolic "love" is that *state of enlightenment and appreciation in relation to the things of God that impels a man to be a "doer of the Word."* John gives this an application that was special to his day; and yet is at all times appropriate wherever the same need and the same danger manifest themselves. He says—

"This is the commandment that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (2 John 6).

We wonder what he means, then presently the light dawns—

"For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus is come in the flesh" (v. 7).

He means that they should *hold fast to the doctrine of Christ as originally delivered*, because many were drawing the disciples away therefrom. The obedience of the commandment is the evidence of New Testament "love," and it is also necessary for our acceptable standing before the presence of the Lord's glory at his coming. This is John's view, as evident from the words immediately following:

"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought; but that we receive a full reward" (v. 8).

There would have been no need for these words if the things that had been "wrought" were not imperiled by the doctrine of the deceivers of which he is speaking. He indicates, in strong language, the consequences to the individual thus ensnared—

"Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God" (v. 9).

This may seem a strange saying in view of the fact that the "deceivers" referred to *believed in one God*, the Creator of heaven and earth: and also in Christ, after their own fashion. But the apparent strangeness disappears when we look closely at the matter John is writing about. To "have" God in the sense of John's words, is to *stand in His favor, now and hereafter*.

All things are "in" His goodness. As David says, "Thy goodness is over all Thy works": but the goodness of God in the common benefits that come upon all alike, is a different thing from that personal "*favor*" which guides, attends, and prospers (even if by chastisement), with a view to a perpetual sonship in the spirit-nature. The enjoyment of this favor is a thing of

conditions. One of those conditions is a *recognition of the channel in which He offers it.*

Out of Christ, sinners cannot come near. They have the goodness of God as creatures, like the sparrows, not one of which can fall to the earth without the Father's knowledge; but they are not in the privilege of children. They have not the Father's favor and purpose concerning the ages to come. This is only to be enjoyed in Christ; but even here, it must be the Christ of God's appointing. Any other than this is presumption and a mockery of His wisdom: and *they who teach otherwise than the truth concerning Christ, preach another Christ, though it be intended to refer to the Christ of Nazareth.*

This is evident from the case of those to whom John is referring. They believed that the person known as Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ; but in their reasonings upon him, they *reasoned away the truth about him*, and consequently believed and preached another Jesus than the Son of the Father.

There were different sorts of the class, but all their heresies had a common origin in an attempt to bring the mystery of godliness within the rules of human reason, instead of accepting the testimony with humble and childlike simplicity.

One set argued that such a character as Jesus was a moral impossibility in flesh and blood, and that, therefore, his whole life was a mere accommodation on the part of a spiritual being to the senses of mortals. Another believing him to be flesh and blood philosophized in a contrary direction, concluding that as such, he must, from the nature of things, have been a "mere man," and that the idea of his being God in flesh-manifestation, was preposterous. The Papacy blended the two and taught that though flesh, his flesh was not the corrupt and mortal flesh of men, but a superior, clean, "immaculate" sort.

In our own day, as recent painful experience has made us aware, a class of believers are treading the same dangerous ground, in *teaching that the flesh of Jesus was destitute of that which, in the flesh of his brethren, constitutes the cause or source of mortality.* In relation to all of them, John's declaration reveals the mind of the Spirit:

“Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (v. 9).

The "doctrine of Christ" is that he is God made and manifested in the mortal flesh of Abraham's race for the deliverance thereof—on His own

principles—from "that having the power of death." Those who hold fast to this have both the Father and the Son; for in Jesus they have the Son, and the Father manifest in Him. As to those who "bring not this doctrine," John's commandment is (v. 10): "Receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed"!

This command we can no more evade than any other commandment delivered unto us. The obedience of it may cost us something. It is crucifying to the flesh to refuse friends—some of them excellent people as human nature goes—who in one way or other have been seduced from their allegiance to the doctrine of Christ; but there is no alternative. *Friends are but for a moment; the Truth is for ever;* and if we sacrifice our duty to the latter from regard to the former, the latter will sacrifice us in the day of its glory, and hand us over to the destiny of the flesh, which, as the grass, will pass away. "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

This applies to all without distinction, and erects a barrier to fellowship with even some who hold the Truth; for though they may hold the doctrine of Christ themselves, yet, if they keep up a "God speed" connection with those who do not, by John's rule, *they make themselves partakers with them,* and, therefore, cut themselves off from those who stand for the doctrine of Christ.

The epistle, as a whole, is singularly applicable to the situation in which we find ourselves this morning. We have been obliged to stand aside for the doctrine of Christ from some we love. The Epistle of John justifies us in our course, both as regards those who have departed from the doctrine of Christ, and those, who, while holding on to it themselves, see not their way to break connection with those who have departed.

It is a painful situation, but we must not falter, nor need we fear or be discouraged. God is with us in the course of obedience, and we shall see HIS blessing in the increase in our midst of zeal and holiness, and love and preparedness for the great day of the Lord, which is at hand.

FELLOWSHIP

Its Nature and Conditions

"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds,"—2 John 10-11

By Bro. Robert Roberts, September 1885

The Truth is professedly and confessedly a "narrow" thing. Jesus declares this in saying—"Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." This "Way" he afterwards speaks of as the "Truth," saying—

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

"Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice," (John 18:37).

The narrowness of the Truth is one of the obstacles to its general adoption. People do not like to be fettered either in doctrine or practice. It is also one of the causes of the active tendency to corruption which has manifested itself among those embracing the Truth from the very day it was apostolically established at Jerusalem.

It is inconvenient to be under restrictions in our dealings with fellow men, in the Truth or out of it. If it were a question of choice, we should all prefer absolute freedom. But no one recognizing Christ as the supreme Teacher can think of freedom in this matter. If we make freedom our rule we can only have the freedom of those who set Christ aside altogether, saying in the words of the wicked—"Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?" (Psa. 12:4).

None who truly knows Christ would desire this freedom. All who sincerely accept Christ will recognize his law as paramount, however irksomely it may work in some of its present relations.

It is one of the narrownesses of the Truth that it demands of those who receive it that they "contend earnestly for it" (Jude 3), even if an angel from heaven oppose or corrupt it (Gal. 1:8-9); and that they maintain it intact and unsullied among themselves as the basis and association among those who profess it—refusing to walk with a brother who either disobeys its precepts—

"If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him" (2 Thess. 3:14).

"Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

—Or refuses consent to its teachings in vital matters—

"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness...from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

This policy is so contrary to natural friendliness that it is easy to drift away from it, and to invent theories that will relieve us from its unpleasant obligations.

The controversy on Inspiration has forced the reconsideration of this question upon us. We say re-consideration, for it was considered and debated in the beginnings of things connected with the Truth in this generation, and satisfactorily disposed of for a time.

The principle cause of our trouble in the present situation has been the divergence of view that has prevailed at the bottom on this fundamental question (see footnote at the end of this section). Many who have allowed the entirely inspired character of the Scriptures have not been able to see the necessity of insisting upon that truth in our basis of fellowship. They have been inclined to leave it as an "open question."

This is the result of a dim or faulty perception of the apostolic doctrine of fellowship (a common-sense doctrine) which requires agreement on fundamentals as the first condition of walking together, or co-operating, associating or fellowshiping together in the prosecution of the objects of the Truth. As a brother writing on this question says—

"There is prevalent at the present time a lamentable looseness in regard to what must constitute the basis of fellowship. It arises partly from ignorance, and partly from over-anxiety to increase numbers and keep together divergent elements. This must inevitably result in serious trouble or general declension.

"The Truth's interest is at stake, and no doubt much depends upon our action, as to whether it is yet to be maintained in its purity and simplicity, or lapse into Laodiceanism. The crisis is, doubtless, the most acute that has taken place since it was brought to light in these latter days. It has been brewing for past years. You were reluctant to believe it, and labored to stave it off.

"A too long course of loose discipline and slackness in dealing with wrong principles in doctrine and practice has, no doubt, intensified the evil and made it all the more bitter and grievous and hard to bear.

"I am persuaded that good will result in the case of those many or few who will outride the storm by keeping a firm grasp of the anchor of the soul, by coming out of this ocean of suffering as gold tried in the fire."

With a view to the thorough ventilation and effectual exhibition of the scriptural principles of fellowship, we append a double series of propositions in which there is some attempt to formulate them in their bearing upon the question which has been troubling the ecclesias.

THE FIRST SERIES

1. "Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" consists in walking in the Light, as God is in the Light (1 John 1:3-7).
2. "Fellowship with one another" depends entirely upon our conformity to this first and necessary principle of all fellowship, which John so emphatically lays down in 1 John 1:6-7.
3. "Light" is a figure of speech—a metaphor for Divine wisdom, true knowledge, and accurate understanding.
4. God is the Fountain-head of these incomparable powers. Hence "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).
5. His Light is manifested to us in three ways: first, in Christ; second, in the Scriptures; and third, in His saints.
6. In Christ: "I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness" (John 12:46).

In the Scriptures: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a Light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105).

In His Saints: "For ye were sometimes in darkness, but now are ye Light in the Lord: walk as Children of Light" (Eph. 5:8).

7. These points being hereby established, they constitute a chain connecting God and man, not one link of which can be removed, or in any respect impaired, without endangering the whole sequence, and breaking the harmony of the Divine relations to us individually.

Take away Christ, and you destroy all possibility of fellowship with God. Tamper with that Bible which he approved, and you equally render Divine recognition of you hopeless, while you remove the only means in visible existence among men which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified. You destroy the foundation of the righteous, and dissolve in so doing the Household of Christ.

8. "Walking in the Light," therefore, means "Believing ALL things that are written in the Law and in the Prophets," as Paul affirms he did (Acts 24:14), as well as the subsequent writings in the New Testament; exercising "hope toward God" as embodied in "Christ our hope," and "Following righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).

9. Without the patient and faithful observance of these things, fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is impossible, and in consequence fellowship one with another is likewise impracticable.

AGAIN

Is it not a commandment of God that we should receive His Word—His Oracles, the Scriptures—as supreme? Does not Christ enforce it in his "Search the Scriptures" (John 5:39) and elsewhere? Does not Paul teach it in many ways, in regard to both Old and New Testaments?

Admitting this unavoidable conclusion, and reading it in the light which 1 John 2:3, etc., throws upon the conditions of true fellowship—

"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:3-6).

—must we not exact Christ's estimate of the Old Testament, and Paul's of both the Old Testament and his own writings, as a necessary condition to be recognized in our "fellowship one with another," if we wish to secure the end for which we are working, namely—"Fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

THE SECOND SERIES

1. In the accomplishment of its mission among men, the Truth acts by separation and association—

a. It separates men from the world: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. 6:17).

b. It associates those so separated: "Ye are all one...forsake not the assembling of yourselves together" (Gal. 3:28; Heb. 10:25).

It produces these results by the creation of scripturally derived ideas in the minds of those operated upon. By these ideas they are dominated and controlled. They become mentally "new creatures," and manifest the change in their altered relations to men and things around them.

2. But the association of those separated by the Truth is governed by conditions that sometimes interrupt that association. Hence, "Have no company," "Withdraw," "Turn away" are apostolic commands concerning some who have been actually separated by the Truth.

3. The conditions of association relate to two departments of our standing in Christ, which may be expressed as conviction and character. Unity of conviction and mutuality of conformity to a certain standard of action, are the two conditions out of which association and fellowship grow, and by rupture of which, it is necessarily interfered with.

4. This rupture may be only partial in either department, and yet be sufficient to cause suspension of association in fellowship. Apostolic examples—

a. Refusal to recognize that Christ had come in the flesh was made a reason for not receiving men who believed in God and the Kingdom and a number of other elements of truth (2 John 7-11).

b. Idleness was declared a ground of disfellowship where men had otherwise submitted to the commandments of Christ (2 Thess. 3).

5. That the first condition of association is the belief of the Truth, apart from the perception and reception of which, there is no basis of fellowship.

6. That the Truth forming this basis is made up of a number of items or elements that are each essential to its integrity as a whole.

7. That it is a matter of duty to require the recognition of these at the hands of those claiming association with us in the Truth.

8. That we are not at liberty to receive any one who denies or refuses to believe any of them, because the receiving of such would open the way for the currency of their principles among us, with the tendency of leavening

the whole community. The elements of the Truth are so mutually related that the displacement of one undermines the foundation of the whole.

9. A man himself believing the Truth, but willing to wink at its denial among those in fellowship in any of its essential elements, becomes, by this willingness, an offender against the law of Christ, which requires the faithful maintenance of the whole.

Faithful servants of Christ cannot unite with such, on the ground that though he hold the Truth himself, such a man is responsible for the error of those he would admit, and therefore becomes the channel of a similar responsibility to those who may endorse him in fellowship—"He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 11).

10. That it is the duty of the friends of the Truth to uphold it as a basis of union among themselves by refusing to receive either those who deny any part of it, or those who would receive those so denying.

11. Paul commands withdrawal from "any man" who "obeys not his word...delivered by epistle" (2 Thess. 3:14). He commands the brethren to hold fast the traditions taught by him "whether by word or epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15).

12. Paul teaches by epistle that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

13. We are bound to hold fast by this, and refuse association with any man refusing submission to this apostolic tradition.

14. The doctrine of partial inspiration is a nullification of this apostolic tradition; and a doctrine, consequently, from the holders of which we are bound apostolically to withdraw.

15. That the highest sanction of reason supports this apostolic obligation, since logically, the doctrine of partial inspiration, when worked out, deprives us of confidence in the only access we have to the Divine mind in our age.

Footnote: It will be noted that, according to Bro. Roberts, the basic root cause of the Partial Inspiration division was not the Partial Inspiration theory itself, but a fundamental divergence of view on the vital doctrine of Fellowship, which allowed many—while not believing the theory themselves—to fellowship those who did. This is one of the facts that makes majority-vote reunion merely a return to the former unsound condition that required the division—Bro. G.V. Growcott.

Principles of Fellowship

**Withdrawal Not Judging,
But Protection of Self and Truth**

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness"—Eph. 5:11

By Bro. Robert Roberts, April 1891

God has been pleased to subject those who desire to conform to His word to what sometimes amounts to painful embarrassment, by having required of them things that at first sight are incompatible with one another. They are to do good to all men, and yet to be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. They are to be "in the world" and yet to "come out from among them and be separate." They are to love their enemies and yet to love not the world. They are to be patient with the erring and yet to abhor that which is evil, and not to bear with men that are evil. They are to think no evil and yet to try professors. They are to submit to wrong and yet to refuse even to eat with men called brethren who espouse wrong doing, or error. They are to show hospitality and yet to receive not into their houses those who bring not the doctrine of Christ.

There is, doubtless, an object in prescribing these apparently conflicting duties. It sets up contrary mental currents that at last bring about a fine equilibrium of character which would not be attainable if duty lay all in one direction. But often the effort to conform brings distress, and it is impossible not to feel pity for men sacrificing one duty in their endeavour to conform to another.

These thoughts are suggested by an effort in Lincoln, which may be well meant enough in some directions, but which cannot receive favour from a complete enlightenment. It is an effort that tacitly invites us to repudiate the policy of insisting upon a wholly-inspired and infallible Bible as the basis of fellowship, by adopting a "basis of fellowship" that omits it. This document is most plausible in its wording, as all efforts in a wrong direction are; but in its meanings and implications, it is far worse than its promulgators probably intend or have any idea of.

It formulates an impossible rule of withdrawal, which turns the ecclesia into a judgment seat of the Papistical order. The apostolic rule is to "withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly," and from those who teach heresy, without reference to the question of what the Lord may finally think of them. And this rule is defensive in its bearing, not offensive. It means that we are not to be partakers of other men's sins. John lays down the axiom that he that receives the holder of wrong doctrine or practices partakes of their evil deeds.

In withdrawing, we wash our own hands. We leave to God those whom we withdraw from. We are not authorized to judge or condemn them. But this document lays it down that we must not withdraw, unless we are prepared to maintain that the cause of withdrawal will make salvation impossible. This would erect an ecclesia into a spiritual judicature, deciding questions which the Lord has reserved for himself.

The document proposes “union with all who have not forfeited their right to the fully assured salvation.” How can such rule be carried out? How can we know who have and who have not forfeited the said right? It is calling upon us to pronounce on a matter beyond our jurisdiction, and that has been placed beyond it by the express command to “judge not,” “condemn not.”

The time for withdrawal is when men drift into unscriptural attitudes of faith or practice. These we note and separate ourselves from, without reference to the question of whether the offenders can be saved, which we cannot decide. And the withdrawal is not *putting them out* but *going out ourselves*, as the term implies. We simply go away, saying we cannot be responsible. The attitude prescribed by this “basis” would place the ecclesia in a chair of authority, with power of excommunication, arrogating the right to “cut off” or say the excommunicated cannot be saved.

Faithful men are more truly modest, while more uncompromising towards departure from the faith than the sentiments that inspire this basis. Faithful men say, “we have no power to cut off: Christ will do that. But we have power to withdraw; and this we will do with however much reluctance and pain, when the Word of God and its obligations are tampered with by whomsoever.” We will exercise this liberty unhampered by any assumptions as to the position of those who have technically “responded to the Gospel call.” The basis declares that all such are “in union and fellowship with the Father.” This is not true. There were many in the apostolic age who had “obeyed the Gospel call,” whom the Apostles repudiated as “enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3:18)—spots in their feasts of charity (Jude 12); who claimed to be Jews but were not, but lied (Rev. 3:9).

It is a fundamental principle as to the operations of the gospel, that “many are called but few are chosen,” and that “all are not Israel that are of Israel.” This is a principle which we cannot apply, and which we are not called upon to apply. We do not know who will be chosen of those who have been called. We have nothing to do with saying who will and who will not be saved, as regards profession of the truth. The thing we have to

do is to take care of our own standing in relation to the prevailing corruptions. We refuse to be implicated in these, while entertaining the very best wishes concerning all men. We mingle with Bible charity the most decisive resolution not to be compromised by any class of men, whether they have gone through “the waters of baptism” or no.

Unless we observed this apostolically prescribed scrupulosity, the truth would soon be suffocated and disappear. Men who decline it are the enemies of the truth without intending it perhaps—all which will appear in a very plain light when the expedencies of the passing mortal hour are at an end in the manifested presence of the author of the seven messages to the ecclesias.

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

When we are told that it is not necessary to withdraw from error in the ecclesia, we immediately point out the countless verses which directly contradict that idea, such as have been apparent in bro. Roberts’ article preceding this. Having established the clear scriptural teaching on the toleration of error, we then ask, can anyone find a single verse which states clearly that we are either commanded or permitted in any way, to fellowship error?

In recent years, Jesus’ parable of the wheat and the tares has been advanced to justify the continuing of tares or errorists in the ecclesia. You see, we are told, the wheat and the tares are to grow together until the harvest, and that is when the separation takes place, but not before.

Why then, we have asked several, do you not attend the Catholic church? Indeed, it is the Catholic teaching from a fourth century pope named Augustine, based upon this parable, that it is a capital offense to separate from the Catholic Church. If you take this parable to its logical conclusion, this would be the case. For it is the “angels” who separate the tares from the wheat, and no one else.

As bro. Thomas pointed out in the second volume of Eureka, the Catholics intensely persecuted those who like the Donatists, separated from the Catholic Church due to error taking place in it, following the legalization of Christianity in the fourth Century. If the parable of the tares teaches that the wheat and the tares must grow together until the angels separate them, what can be the possible justification for ever withdrawing from error? John Carter commented on this in his book, Parables of the Messiah.

“The Donatists were exclusive, and one of the arguments used against them was based upon the interpretation of the parable of the Tares, that Jesus taught that the wheat and tares had to grow together until the harvest, and that the discipline which the Donatists called for was not scriptural. The Donatist reply was a denial of the application made by the Augustinians. The latter taught that the field "was the church where wheat and tares" should remain together; the Donatists insisted that in the interpretation given by Jesus the field was "the world" and the lesson of the parable had nothing to do with the question whether spurious and heretical Christians should be excluded from the Church”—pg. 93.

Indeed the Catholics themselves struggled with this great contradiction, when they found it necessary to persecute to death those they called “heretics,” even accomplishing their extinction for 105 years between the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685 (which had guaranteed certain freedoms for those who opposed Catholicism) and the French Revolution in 1790 (Rev. 11: 8-11).

We observe a very strange effort by a modern member of the Central assemblies to explain how anyone could ever be withdrawn from, in the face of the clear limitations this parable would place.

“Of course there are some brethren whose errors in doctrine or conduct clearly place them beyond the boundary of traditional Christadelphian ‘fellowship’, and faithful ecclesias will deal with these brethren in accordance with Matthew 18 and related passages—always remembering, of course, that every opportunity must be given for repentance and reinstatement. It would seem that, in practical terms, this parable is designed to teach us that most of our time should be spent in sowing the good seed instead of rooting out those who may or may not be unacceptable to Christ at his judgment. If there is ever any doubt, Christ says, as to a brother’s ‘fellowship’ standing, then let him grow until the harvest (v. 30), when the infallible Reaper will decide his case.” Biblical Fellowship, chapter four.

“Of course,” there is no way this parable can be understood to permit withdrawal under any circumstances, if the field is the ecclesia. It is the duty of the “angels” to perform the separation. What mortal man would presume to assume the role Jesus designates to the angels?

Especially can Matthew 18 not be used, according to this author, as he claims it refers primarily to personal offenses. The conclusion from his work on Matthew 18 is that we might insist on withdrawal when we are sinned against, but if God is sinned against, we just tolerate that.

Further, Jesus said the sower was the “son of man.” The author claims that workers in the ecclesia are the sowers. And the author says the parable means we should spend more time on sowing the seed and less time protecting the ecclesia from error. “Of course,” none of this is even a part of the subject or Jesus’ explanation of this parable.

John Carter, certainly no friend of the Bereans, set out a good rule for the understanding of parables in general. He wrote specifically of this parable:

“It is a safe rule in the interpretation of a parable that no meaning shall be attached to it that conflicts with the plain teaching of the Scripture. Judged by this, Augustine was as erroneous in his views on church discipline as on the nature of man. The teaching of Jesus lays down the method to be employed in reclaiming any in error. If recovery was not achieved the offender had to be ‘as an heathen man’ (Matt. 18: 17).

“Fuller instruction on this matter is naturally to be found in the epistles and particularly those dealing with ecclesial organization. Paul's counsel concerning the rejection of a heretic after the second admonition (Tit. 3 : 10) appears to have the words of Jesus in mind. In other epistles he is quite explicit about the duty of ecclesias ‘to avoid’, ‘have no company with,’ ‘put away,’ ‘reject,’ those that were teachers of errors or who were persistently evil in their ways (2 Thess. 3:6; 1 Cor. 5:11; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 John 8-10). It is quite clear from these commandments given by the apostles who were authorized to teach by their Lord, that it would be a wrong interpretation of the parable to attempt to deduce from it rules of men's duty when there is laxity in a community of professing believers. It cannot mean that false teachers should be allowed to retain their place in ecclesial life” Parables of the Messiah pg. 93-94

What was supposedly “quite clear” to John Carter in 1947 some 70 years ago, is totally obliterated among the Central Assemblies today. 1947 was the year of the “Detroit Conference,” (a conference to explore reunion between Bereans and Central which took place five years later) where John Carter was anxious to show that the Central Assemblies held the foundation position of the Christadelphians on fellowship. There exists no such façade today. Instead we find this false teaching sung among the Hymns in a Central Hymn Book.

Central Hymn 424

<p>Come, ye thankful people, come, Raise the song of harvest home! All is safely gathered in Ere the winter storms begin; God our Maker doth provide for our wants to be supplied; Come to God, before Him come; Raise the song of harvest home!</p>	<p>We ourselves are God's own field, Fruit unto His praise to yield; Wheat and tares together sown, Unto joy or sorrow grown; First the blade and then the ear, Then the full corn shall appear: Grant, O harvest Lord, that we Wholesome grain and pure may be.</p>
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For the Son of Man shall come,
 And shall take his harvest home;
 From his field shall purge away
 All that doth offend, that day;
 Give his angels charge at last
 In the fire the tares to cast,
 But the fruitful ears to store
 In his garner evermore.

The correct understanding of the parable hinges upon the question of what Jesus meant, when he said:

Matt. 13:38 “The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*;”

The field is the world. The word used for world is the Greek word, “Kosmos” and it means “the order of things.” Jesus was specifically referring to the Jewish order of things, which were about to be consumed in the fiery torments of the Roman invasion, 40 years following his death. Jesus was the sower.

Matt. 13:37 “He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;”

His work was to sow the gospel among the Jewish world, which he did. But the diabolos or devil came behind and sowed tares, or another gospel. Who was the diabolos? Jesus explains it to us when he addresses the Jewish leadership of his time. He told them:

John 8:44 “Ye are of *your* father the diabolos, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

Those who sowed tares into the field behind the teaching of Jesus were the Jewish leadership. We see the diabolos in action, in the last few days of Jesus' life. They send men out to capture Jesus, but they come back empty. When asked why, we read this:

John 7:45-49 “Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed.”

The work of these diabolos was such that they polluted those who would hear the words of Jesus, and ultimately crucified their savior, bringing the complete destruction of Jerusalem upon their heads from the Roman army. They were burned up, while the faithful still wait to be gathered into the barns.

The interpretation by the Donatists, and of all early Christadelphians is the only possible explanation. The idea that the field is the ecclesia is fraught with contradictions. Most notably, and perhaps most importantly, is the contradiction that lies in the first line of the parable. As Jesus prepared to deliver this parable, he said:

Matt. 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

So, the parable that Jesus is delivering pertains to the kingdom of heaven. If the field is the ecclesia, instead of the Jewish order of things, then the kingdom must be the ecclesia, for the parable is about the Kingdom. It is notable that Augustine who first used this parable to insist that no division from the Catholic Church should occur, is also credited with fostering the heresy that the Church is the Kingdom. Looking back at John Carter’s comments on this in *Parables of the Messiah*, he wrote of Augustine:

“The Donatists opposed the corruptions which had grown up in Christendom and denied that many who claimed to be Christians were entitled to be so described. They particularly opposed the growing association of Church and State, and consequently by the decrees of Constantine suffered the loss of their buildings used for worship, banishment, and in some cases death. They were opposed by the leaders of the corrupt church, particularly by Augustine, who has the distinction, more than any other of the ‘fathers’ of establishing the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and that the Church was the Kingdom of God as accepted tenets of the Church” pg. 92.

And there is also a Scriptural conflict pertaining to the judgement. The apostle Peter taught that judgement begins with the house of God.

1 Pet. 4:16-18 “Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if *it first begin* at

us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

If judgement begins with the house of God, how are we to understand a parable which, if understood to refer to the judgment, the judgment begins with the wicked? This would be completely backwards.

But it has always appeared that those who insist that the ecclesia is the field, do not follow the parable closely enough, or they would never reach the conclusions they do. The tare is a plant called the bearded darnel. In its earliest stage, it appears identical to wheat, so close that even experienced farmers will miss it. But as it grows into a seed head, the differences become quite apparent. The spikes of the darnel are more slender than those of wheat. The spikelets are oriented edgewise to the rachis and have only a single glume, while those of wheat are oriented with the flat side to the rachis and have two glumes. Wheat will appear brown when ripe, whereas the darnel is black.

Just a little darnel renders the wheat crop unusable, sickening, or even killing those who try to use it. In ancient times, it was necessary to send people into the fields as the seed head formed, carefully gathering the tares out of the field. The workers would wrap their hands around the seed head, and pull it out, careful not to let any seeds drop that could pollute next years crop. Then they would gather the wheat to the barns.

If that practice was in place for fellowship, we can see that while a tare in the ecclesia is immature, mimicking the behavior of faithful brothers and sisters, no action can be taken. They must be permitted to grow in the ecclesia until the seed head forms. This would mean we must not judge one another until the error clearly displays itself as error. Then when the error is apparent, the tare is carefully but completely removed from the ecclesia. This is necessary, for just a little of the tare corrupts the crop.

This is what bro. Thomas meant when commenting on the corruption of the ecclesia at Pergamos:

Eureka 1:270 "The name *christian* comprehended all the adherents of Balaam and Jezebel, whether Ebionites, Gnostics, or by whatever name or denomination of heresy they might be known. The 'real christians' had no fellowship with such; though among them, as in Pergamos, the poison of the serpent might be detected. The *ecclesia* and 'the synagogue of the Satan' were institutions as distinct as they are now; for in the nineteenth century a true believer of the gospel of the kingdom is *against* all who have not obeyed the same; yet a congregation of 'real christians' may have in it some who are not true,

as at Pergamos; these will sooner or later show themselves, for their sympathies are fleshly, and they become impatient of principles which they regard as ‘harsh, uncharitable, and severe.’”

In a faithful ecclesia, the poison of the tare may be detected, but until the seed head is formed—until they show themselves—they are allowed to grow, praying that the influences of the truth will straighten out all things. But if that seed head develops, and begins to pollute the crop, it must be removed. Such would be the proper understanding of the parable, even if Jesus words that the field is the world, is ignored.

During the partial inspiration division of 1886, the parable of the wheat and tares was closely examined. Those leaving fellowship with bro. Roberts insisted upon a false understanding, teaching that the world meant the ecclesia. The following is from bro. Gerdes who was a member of the Mason, TX. ecclesia.

“Brother F. A. Gerdes, of Mason, Tex., U.S.A., writes also concerning the parable of the wheat and the tares. He says: ‘It has no reference to fellowship and withdrawal whatever. If it had, then such a thing as withdrawal would be positively forbidden by Christ in this place, while in another place he, with equal emphasis, enjoins it (Matt. 18:17). The substance of the parable is this: A man sowed good seed in a field, and afterwards another man sowed tares on the same ground. Then the servants of the former desired to pull up the tares. The master forbids this, and his reason for it is: ‘Lest while ye gather up the tares ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I shall say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.’”

“The common interpretation of the whole is as follows: Christ is the man who sowed the wheat; the flesh sows the tares. The wheat are the faithful brethren, while the tares are the unfaithful ones. The faithful want to separate from the unfaithful; but Christ says: Let all remain together until the judgment of the last day.

“Where would this explanation lead us to? The legitimate, in fact the only reasonable conclusion, is that the ‘field’ is the ecclesia, for it is contended that we have no right to exclude from the ecclesia, or, in other more Scriptural words, to withdraw, although the idea is the same; which, of course, destroys Christ’s and the apostles’ command to ‘withdraw,’ to be ‘separate,’ &c., &c. We should in this case have to fellowship any and all who desired us to do so, if they only *professed* to be in the ‘field,’ or ecclesia, although they might, at the same time, admit themselves that they were ‘tares.’ What brother or sister would be prepared to stand by such a

result? It would effectually nullify the entire truth, without the possibility of a remedy. Obviously, this is not the interpretation of the parable, and why men, *brethren*, should give such an interpretation, when the author of the parable has himself given us one of his own, I am at a loss to understand, unless fleshly affections blind and overbalance their better judgment.

“Let us hear the author’s own interpretation: ‘He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. The field is *the world*. The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world’—viz.: ‘The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his Kingdom all things that offend and those who do iniquity.’

“This gives the parable an entirely different aspect. Instead of the ecclesia being the field, it is the *world* that is the field, and the time has not come yet for the world to be cleared of the offenders, and those that do iniquity; but when that time shall come, then the Lord will send forth his angels, and will ‘break in pieces the oppressor,’ in order that the *world*, the territory of his Kingdom may be so purified of all present pollution as to be fit to become the basis of an eternal dominion, for the Creator has said, ‘He that ruleth over men must be just,’ and he will not allow unjust rule to be perpetuated for ever.

“Another feature of the false interpretation is that it makes the ecclesia the kingdom. ‘The son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of *this kingdom* all things that offend.’ They say: Let it all stand together in the ecclesia until the Lord shall separate the tares from the wheat. They are both in the *kingdom*, for from it Jesus says his angels shall gather the offending, or the tares. It is impossible now to do away with the tares out of +the *future* kingdom without disturbing the wheat, which is not yet ripe, it being not quite harvest time yet; but when this golden autumn shall come then the work of separation will be done very effectually.

“I should not have written anything on so simple a point only I know by experience how widespread the misconception on it is, and if it be passed over, it must certainly produce the conclusion that there is a contradiction.”
The Christadelphian, July 1886, p. 318

Bro. Roberts’ explanation is almost identical to bro. Gerdes, though they treat the wicked slightly differently. The following is the work of bro. Roberts in Nazareth Revisited.

The Parable of the Tares

The Parable of the Tares. -- The parable of the tares deals with a larger matter. It deals with "the kingdom of heaven" in a history extending to the rectification of all things. The kingdom of heaven is a phrase interchangeable with the kingdom of God as we saw on page 115. We must have in view the truth concerning the kingdom of God before we can understand parables that illustrate it. The kingdom of God is not exclusively an affair of futurity, though it mostly belongs to the future. The foundation of it has been laid in what God has already done upon the earth. His work with Israel by Moses -- his work by Christ -- have both contributed important and powerful elements; and even his work in Providence among the Gentile nations is doing something towards it in the way of preparing the earth and mankind. When the kingdom is finally and fully established, it will have been "prepared from the foundation of the world." The parable of the tares represents that phrase of it that embraced the personal work of Christ. This appears from Christ's explanation. We will look at that explanation item by item:

"A man sowed good seed in the field."

Explanation -- The sower, Christ: the field, the (Jewish) world: the good seed, the truth, as embodied in its true believers.

"While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat."

Explanation -- The enemy, the devil, consisting of the authorities of the nation, who everywhere stealthily neutralised the teaching of Christ, disseminating evil doctrines, and scattering wide their sympathisers and disciples, who drew away the people, and multiplied their own number greatly by the energy of their operations and the popularity of their influence.

"When the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared forth tares also."

Explanation -- When Christ's teaching began to take effect in the development of earnest disciples, the result was not so general as might have been expected, for the Scribes and Pharisees had meanwhile been very busy on the quiet, and out of the sight of Christ, and the people sided with them in larger numbers than would have been the case if they had been let alone to consider the works and words of Christ for themselves.

"So the servants of the householder came and said unto him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?"

Explanation -- The surprise of the Apostles that the people did not submit to the word of Christ, and their proposal (as on one occasion) that they should command that fire should come down from heaven and destroy them.

"But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them."

Explanation -- The destruction of the wicked would have interfered with the development of the righteous, which requires that the wicked prosper for a while in their disobedience.

"Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

Explanation -- Both the wheat-class and the tare-class in Israel to be left unmolested till the arrival of their respective times, to be dealt with "according to their deeds." The tare-class to be harvested "first": the wheat-class afterwards -- the one a long time after the other, as the event has proved. The harvesting to be performed by the angels in both cases, under Christ's command, but the harvesting of the tares to be done in the way of Providence, in which the angels work by influencing natural circumstances, while the harvest of the wheat would be done by them in an open and visible manner.

The parable has been nearly all fulfilled, except the glorious part which is still future. "First" as the parable required, at the end of the Jewish world, the tare-class were gathered into Jerusalem, as into a furnace of fire, where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth, where they were destroyed with every circumstance of suffering and horror, as a study of the details of Josephus' account of the devastation of Judea, and the destruction of Jerusalem, nearly forty years after Christ's ascent to "all power in heaven and earth," will abundantly shew to the reader. Thus were retributively "gathered out of his kingdom all things that offended" during his personal ministry, and "them who did iniquity."

The kingdom of the Holy Land is his kingdom which enables us to understand the interpretation. If we supposed with modern theologians that "his kingdom" was "heaven" or the "church," it would be difficult to apply the statement that he is to gather the workers of iniquity out of his kingdom. But with an understanding of the kingdom, there is no such difficulty. The destruction of the whole generation of Jews that were honoured by his presence and wonderful works, and proved themselves so utterly unworthy by rejecting and crucifying him, enables us to recognise

the historic application of a parable which was at the same time a prophecy.

The gathering of the wheat is next in order -- tares "first," -- wheat afterwards. The wheat-class will be gathered openly by the angels at Christ's return.

"He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven even to the other" (Matt. xxiv. 31).

The "gathering of the wheat into the barn" will have its fulfilment in the entrance of the righteous into the Kingdom of God. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." It reads as if the shining forth of the righteous in the Kingdom would be immediately after the gathering out of the Kingdom of all that do iniquity, but the scope of the parable compels us to attach the larger meaning of "then" to its use in this case. When we say, "first this, then that," we do not define time, but order. "First the tares, then the wheat" gives no indication of the length of the interval. As a matter of history, it has already run into more than 1800 years. The righteous will shine forth in the kingdom when the angels come forth to gather them for an entrance therein. It is a long time since the tares were burnt up on the same spot with fire unquenchable. It does not follow from this that there is no judgment and rejection of the unfaithful at the second coming of Christ. There is a place for every part of truth: and one part of the truth is that the tares of Christ's own day were cast into a furnace of fire for consumption within forty years or so of the utterance of the parable.

Bro. Growcott observed:

THIS parable has always been misapplied by the advocates of loose fellowship, totally disregarding Christ's own interpretation of the field as the WORLD. In fact, a misinterpretation of it is usually a sure sign of an attempt to introduce unsound views of fellowship. April 1981

The Good Shepherd and the Hireling

Just as in the parable of the Wheat and Tares, the application of this parable to fellowship is dependent upon altering the labels which Jesus himself applies to the understanding of this parable. Jesus clearly identifies the good shepherd as himself.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

Those who wish to apply this parable to fellowship presume themselves to be the shepherd. They call themselves "ecclesial shepherds," of which the parable is silent, and which the proper meaning even excludes. As in the parable of the wheat and tares, where they coopt the role of Jesus to make themselves the sower, here they again try to supplant the work of Jesus to make themselves the shepherd.

Scripturally speaking, there is no such thing as an "ecclesial shepherd." No one in the apostolic era, other than Christ, is ever called a "shepherd." There is one good shepherd. That was Jesus. All the rest of us are sheep.

Our role is to always follow the shepherd to the safety of the sheepfold, so that we are not consumed by the wolves that surround us. The apostle Paul warned us in tears, of the danger of the wolves.

Acts 20:29-31 "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

The choices we make are whether we will find protection in the sheepfold through the words of our Savior, or if we will run with wolves. The true good shepherd said, "The sheep follow him: for they know his voice." Note this action. The sheep merely follow the voice of the Shepherd. That is the protection from the wolves.

The apostle Paul commended those who desired the work of a Bishop. But if we genuinely love the brethren, our action as leaders will be that of the model sheep, holding fast to the words of the shepherd and leading by example.

Note the contrast between the Good Shepherd of John 10, and the imaginary ecclesial shepherd. The ecclesial shepherd, we are told, must fight and cajole and plead with sheep that cannot discern the shepherd from the wolves. Clearly, this is not the shepherd of John 10. And this is not the sheep of John 10 who knew the Shepherd's voice and followed him.

If the shepherd is someone other than Jesus, then how would we know who are the sheep, and who are the shepherds? Do shepherds self appoint themselves such? Or does the flock take a majority vote? What if we guess wrong, and send an ecclesial shepherd out to do battle with the wolf, and he is consumed in the process? Further, how do we even know who

the sheep are, if they are not the ones hearing the master's voice and following him?

The truth is that we know who the shepherd is (Christ) and we do know who the Sheep are (us). We also know according to Jesus' explanation of this parable, that anyone pretending to be the shepherd is a "thief" and a "robber" and a "stranger." They are those who the true sheep will not listen to or obey regardless of their cajoling. Jesus said:

John 10:7-8 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

John 10:4-5 "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

I know from too much experience that this constant battling with the errorists is far more pleasing to the flesh than those involved are willing to admit. I understand why this is so appealing to so many notable brethren. The flesh loves controversy. It thrives on it. It is exciting. But the patient, continual loving care of the true sheep will appear mundane and boring to the flesh, yet that is where the true sheep will find themselves, and, by example lead the other sheep. Exhortations and repetitive lectures on first principles are what we as sheep need constantly, but the flesh loves the itching ears of sermons and high-sounding exegesis, and the combatting with those who dare to disagree with us.

One of the earliest problems in the ecclesia was men setting themselves up to be shepherds, and then leading the brethren astray. This is why James said, be not "many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation." I think if brethren truly grasped their relationship in this, if brethren who desired to be leaders disciplined themselves to only leading by example; there would be far less problems in the ecclesia.

Bro. Roberts wrote: The ecclesia [sheepfold—jp] is not a place for argument. When a man requires to be argued with, his proper place is outside...".

Who then is the hireling? The hirelings were individuals specifically hired by the Master to work with the sheep. It is clear from the Mosaic Law, that this was the role of the Levitical Priesthood, who from the beginning of the Law, were ordained by God and paid with tithes to work with the sheep. These were the men who, by their own testimony, failed to teach

the law, and fled when confronted by the rich and powerful whose desire was to corrupt the divine ways of God.

Matthew 18

I want you to have a look with me at the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 18. A passage of the word regrettably, not always understood in its full implication. It is said that Mt. 18:15-17 relates to the question of anyone having a personal fault against another brother. That is not so. If it were so, then we would have a most peculiar passage of Scripture, because in verses 15-17 when dealing with a matter, the Lord says you may be reduced to the point where after three applications to the brother, of treating him as a heathen and a publican.

Whereas in the same chapter at verse 22, the Lord says if anyone offends against you, you keep forgiving him until seventy times seven. Now if both sections of that chapter are dealing with the same thing, we've got the Lord giving two different answers, but that's not the point.

Look at verse 15. "Moreover, the Lord said, If thy brother trespass against thee." Now those words "against thee" do not belong in the text. They are not there. In the Sinaitic, and the Vatican manuscripts, they are not to be found. You will not find those words in the Diaglott, in the Nestle's text, in Rotherham, in the Jerusalem Bible, or in numerous other translations.

And the word "trespass" is not a very good translation. The Greek word is hamartia, and it means to sin, to miss the mark. Now the question concerns divine principles. It concerns the doctrine of fellowship. So the Lord is saying "if thy brother shall sin, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, and if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witness, every word may be established. But if he shall refuse to hear them, then tell it unto the ecclesia. But if he neglects to hear the ecclesia then let him be unto thee as an heathen, (and that word means Gentile) and a publican, (and that word means a tax gatherer)." People that were hated by the Jews. Not rejected, hated.

Now we are not suggesting that the Lord is telling us that when we reject a brother, we're to hate him. But that is the extent of the extremity of the language. That is the extent of extremity. Now here we have a case revolving around the question of fellowship and here is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now look at the contrast in verse 21-22. Peter then says, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me" (and the words do belong in the text there). And it's as though Peter is saying now look, if we have to adopt this attitude when the commandments of Christ, when the principles of divine wisdom are at stake, then what do we do when someone sins against us, personally? And the Lord gives him an answer. What shall I do when my brother sins against me, and I forgive him?

Verse 22 the Lord says, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." Now look at the contrast, and really, it's very beautiful, because the Lord is teaching Peter in verses 21-22, that he must be prepared to do for his brother what he expects the Father to do for him. How many times do we sin against the Father and what do we do? We don't expect that the Father will forgive us, maybe twenty times and no more after that. We ask him to go on forgiving, and forgiving, and forgiving. And Peter says that is what we do when we become involved with our own brethren and they sin against us. And we must do that, because that is what we ask the Father to do for us.

But when it comes to the issue of verses 15-17, it is entirely different. There is the question of a former sin which contravenes the commandments of Christ, and the principles of divine wisdom. And the Lord says if needs be, in that case that man must be dispensed with altogether out of the body.

Epistles To Corinth Do Not Justify Fellowship of Error

By Robert Roberts

Every spiritually-minded brother and sister will cordially respond to the definition of the ecclesial institution as a divine Tabernacle, pitched "in the midst of a waste howling wilderness of unenlightened humanity"; and

all such will cry a hearty "Amen!" at the suggestion of "almost inexhaustible patience and carefulness" in our dealing with such an institution.

Yet some care is needed in the deductions we draw from Paul's attitude to the Corinthian ecclesia. Some have argued on that attitude in a way to nullify his *express directions* in other cases.

Paul had authority as an apostle which he could use with decisive effect in case of need. It was authority he had received—"For edification, and not for your destruction" (2 Cor. 10:8)—as he said: but still it was authority *which he was prepared to use*—"Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me" (2 Cor. 13:2-3). He could say—"If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him" (2 Thess. 3:14).

We all know that men having authority in any matter to fall back on are naturally patient and gentle to a degree not so easy where there is nothing but argument and equal influence to set against the teaching of the opposition. This has to be considered in judging of Paul's tone and attitude towards an ecclesia in so corrupt a state as the Corinthians. But as to the right attitude towards such corruptions in the abstract, we must gather them where *that is* the subject in hand.

Paul recognized the original character of the Corinthian ecclesia as "God's building," and argued against the various corruptions in doctrine and practice that prevailed at the time of his writing. *But he did not mean that these corruptions were to be disregarded in fellowship.* On the contrary, in the case of fornication referred to, he said—"Put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Cor. 5:18).

He found fault with them at their indifference, and that they had not—"Rather mourned that he that hath done this deed *might be taken away from you*" (v. 2). His argument goes powerfully *against* retaining such—"Know ye not that a *little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?* PURGE OUT THEREFORE THE OLD LEAVEN" (v. 6).

When he says—"Judge nothing before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5),—he is speaking of the brethren's personal judgment of himself—a thing forbidden concerning all brethren, and a thing that cannot accurately be done. He is not speaking of ecclesial attitude to wrong doing. He does not mean that we are to shut our eyes to manifest disobedience or denial of the Truth in our own midst. On the contrary, he makes the enquiry as if to something well understood and notorious—"Do ye not judge them that are

within?" (1 Cor. 5:12),—that is, in the cognizance of manifest evil-doing, to the extent of refusing to eat with any called a brother who is a fornicator, etc. (v. 11).

So, though he argues with some who denied the resurrection, we are not to conclude that he regarded such a denial as compatible with a continuance in fellowship if persisted in. We must judge on this point by expressions directed expressly to the question of how error persisted in is to be dealt with.

On this, he does not speak ambiguously. Even to the Corinthians, referring to an approaching third visit, he expresses the fear that he should be found such as they would not like. He only writes in the tenor of apparent toleration "lest," says he (2 Cor. 13:10)—"Being present, I SHOULD USE SHARPNESS *according to the power which the Lord hath given me* to edification and not to destruction." "Shall I," enquires he "Come unto you with a ROD, or in love and the spirit of meekness?" (1 Cor. 4:21).

And—"Being absent now, I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that if I come again, *I will not spare*" (2 Cor. 13:2).

In other epistles, the indications are quite explicit. (Can it be that he contemplated our ignoring what he says in one epistle because of what he has said in another?) To Timothy he plainly says, "Withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. 6:4) from a class whom he describes as—"Proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words"—who—"Consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus."

He also says—"Avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the Faith" (v. 20).

He also advises him to shun certain "babblings" personated by Hymenaeus and Philetus—"Who concerning the Truth have erred, saying the resurrection is past already" (2 Tim. 2:18).

To Titus he says—"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject" (3:10).

To the Romans—"Mark them who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid them*" (16:17).

John speaks plainly to the same effect (2 John 9-10)—"If any man bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house."

And the messages of Jesus to the seven Asian ecclesias are all more or less in the same strain.

It is all according to reason; for if we were at liberty to ignore departure from the Faith and practice of the Gospel, it would certainly happen in the long run that both must vanish from our midst. Friendliness would indispose a man to be critical; decay would set in as the result of the indifference. Thus, the ecclesia would prove the reverse of the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. No community can ever hold together that winks at the denial of its own principles.

But we perpetrate a wrong against Christ if we separate ourselves from his brethren on the ground of some *personal* grievance against one or more in their midst. There is a right remedy for this; and if from any cause we cannot apply it, let us forbear. In such cases we are to practice almost inexhaustible patience and care.

And even in matters of error, we must be quite sure the wrong is espoused, and give every one an opportunity of repudiating the wrong, before we resort to the extreme and irrevocable remedy of separation, by which we throw the issue entirely on the final judgment of Christ. There may be cases in which we have no alternative, but it is far better if we can settle differences before we meet him.—*May, 1890*

"The Doctrine of Fellowship"

"Receive him not into the house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker (fellowshipper) of his evil deeds"—2 John 10-11

This dialog appeared in the Christadelphian of 1892. It's in answer to an unsound pamphlet, called "The Open Door," taken sentence by sentence. The pamphlet's statements are prefixed by "F:" for "False". The scriptural replies are prefixed by "T:" for "True." The pamphlet argues that breaking of bread is not "fellowship," that breaking bread with and/or fellowshipping errorists is not unscriptural, and that "fellowship" is actually something beyond our control (if we're in agreement, we're "in fellowship"; if we're not, we're not; we can't control it, and need not worry about it.) It is not consistent, admitting some things it elsewhere denies. Though it disagrees violently with it, it clearly recognizes and concedes what was the established Christadelphian position on fellowship up to that time, and herein it is a valuable testimony. It is quite clear, both from the admissions in the pamphlet, and the answers for the Truth, that the accepted Christadelphian belief then was, and regularly had been—

1. It is wrong to fellowship those who fellowship error.
2. Breaking of bread is inseparable from fellowship, and is the "highest act of fellowship possible" (Bro. Roberts), involving "God speed" to those participated with.
3. Breaking bread with known errorists involves us in responsibility for their errors.

This is what is being objected to. This is what is being defended as established Bible truth.

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

A DEFENSE OF THE HISTORIC CHRISTADELPHIAN POSITION

By Bro. F. G. Jannaway __ *Christadelphian, February-March 1892*

T: In many cases we have to refuse fellowship to those we hope to see accepted by-and-by through the mercy of God. But it would not be scriptural to allow this hope to be the ground of fellowship.

F: I cannot agree. I only hope to see men in the Kingdom when I believe there is some possibility of them being there. When I could see NO reason for hoping, THERE I should refuse fellowship, but NOWHERE ELSE.

T: Your contention that in fellowshipping others we incur no responsibility for their actions or beliefs is quite opposed to Bible teaching, and some of your admissions will help make such manifest. We shall confine our remarks to points on which you are at issue with us, as there are many statements in your pamphlet which we do not question. Now for your first complaint.

F: I believe fellowship is a subject that has really received very little consideration, and consequently is but imperfectly understood.

T: Speaking of the ecclesias with which we have been connected for 17 years, we can truly say that "fellowship" has repeatedly been most thoroughly discussed—as much if not more so—than any other doctrine.

F: Among the voluminous literature dealing with almost every phase of the Truth, the doctrine of fellowship has been given little or no place.

T: That is not true. The doctrine of fellowship has been given a large place in the Christadelphian, especially when false brethren have introduced heresy.

F: I have come to the conclusion that our understanding of the doctrine of fellowship is radically unsound. First of all, and in order that its bearings may be fully appreciated, it will be better to give some sort of a definition of fellowship as it is generally understood by us. It is usually believed to consist of the act of breaking bread and drinking wine in memory of the death of our Lord, and in recognition of our adoption into the family of God.

T: Nonsense! That "fellowship consists of this act" is not usually believed by us. In fact, you are the only person we ever heard had such an idea and a moment's reflection will make manifest your error. For if fellowship "consists of this act," then fellowship only exists between those who have actually met together, and thus we should have no fellowship with our brethren abroad.

You must know we do not so believe or teach! We also have fellowship with God and with Christ without the act of breaking bread (see 1 John 1-3).

F: It is usually believed that in this act of fellowship we bid God speed to all with whom we partake of the sacrificial emblems.

T: True. WE DO SO BELIEVE. And when you give reason for believing otherwise, we will deal with such, and give you testimony to support our belief. We shall also have something to say of our belief that breaking of bread is simply an act of fellowship, and not its sum total. But go on.

F: It is usually believed that we involve ourselves in the responsibility of errors of belief that may be held by them, or unrighteous conduct that they may practice.

T: True also: provided 1) that the errors affect first principles; 2) that the unrighteous conduct has not been repented of; and 3) that we are aware of such errors of belief and conduct.

F: And we have refused to break bread with brethren whose faith we know to be identically our own, because they are not prepared to disconnect themselves from others who hold an error of belief upon some point or other.

T: If by "some point or other" you mean such errors as just referred to, we are justified in so refusing, and the grounds for such refusal will be manifest as we proceed with our arguments.

F: Our fear has been that the responsibility of error would be transmitted to us through the medium of someone who had himself become subject to that responsibility through the act of fellowship.

T: What do you mean by "responsibility transmitted"?

F: That evil, either of faith or practice, is conveyed from one to another by the act of breaking bread, much in the same way as uncleanness was conveyed from the leper through another who came into personal contact with him, to a third person, a fourth, and so on.

T: Your understanding of the matter is not correct. As to responsibility being "transmitted" through mediums, we have never held any such idea. A man is only responsible for his own errors (and quite enough, too). We believe that if he knowingly fellowships false teachers, he is responsible for so doing. But that is a very different thing from having the particular evil of such teachers "transmitted" to him.

F: Now, if this principle be a true one, it...

T: But we have not contended it is; and therefore there is no need to speculate as to where it leads, or what the results may be of applying such a principle.

F: It has led to the severing of the Brotherhood.

T: As the principle has no existence with us, it cannot lead us to anything. What has led to the severance of the Brotherhood is the fact of certain ones bringing into its midst ideas contrary to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:10), thus causing division—which has been ended by the earnest contenders of the Faith withdrawing themselves (2 Thess. 3:6), marking those who have caused the division (Rom. 16:17).

F: It is continually troubling us with questions of an aggravating character that prevent us occupying our whole time in building ourselves up in the Faith.

T: Surely you fail to recognize what's included in that "building up". A scamping builder is not particular as to what material he uses. A wise builder uses only that which will meet with the architect's approval. So a faithful workman in assisting to build up the spiritual Temple (2 Cor. 6:16) will scrupulously avoid compromising the work by using what he believes the Divine Architect does not approve of. The work is not ours but His. It must be done according to His specifications: wind—and water-proof (Matt. 7:24-29). As to the disastrous effect a little bad material will have on even a large building, you will do well to read 1 Cor. 5:1-11, and such like testimony.

F: We spend too much time in considering whom we ought to admit to be in faithful service to Christ.

T: In view of your circumscribed ideas of "building up," doubtless you think so.

F: And leave too little time to do our own faithfully and well.

T: We have already seen that to be faithful needs our doing what you condemn.

F: The way out of this difficulty we believe to be through an acknowledgment that this doctrine of fellowship just mentioned (which is responsible for such a lamentable state of things) is a false doctrine.

T: In your desire to avoid unpleasantness, you would purchase peace at the expense of purity. Christ will not countenance this. He would prefer that sword separate father from son, than that such a price should be paid. Yea, he predicted that such would be the case (Matt. 10:34-35). When trouble arises through faithfulness to the doctrines of Christ, it would be an easy "way out of the difficulty" to conclude that those doctrines were false, and thus (but only for the present) avoid a "lamentable state of things." But "in all things consider the end." Wise men will do so, always bearing in mind that "through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom."

F: Actions which have been done upon its basis are steps in the wrong direction which have brought us into a position that is altogether unjustifiable, and must be displeasing in God's sight. But it is not

enough that we should say this. We must show that this doctrine of fellowship is unscriptural, and also what the Bible really does teach upon the subject.

T: That is true; to "say" is not enough.

F: The word "fellowship" occurs 17 times in the Bible, but not in one instance is it used as meaning the act of breaking bread.

T: That is denying what isn't affirmed. The converse is what we believe; that breaking of bread is fellowship, one of the highest forms of it, in fact. But this is a very different thing from what you are opposing. If you said an oak was a noble tree, and we began in opposition to show you that all noble trees were not oaks, you would conclude we were ignorant of the most elementary logic. Your denial is on a par with this illustration.

F: The original word translated "fellowship" is given in a lexicon as "companionship, agreement, or communion."

T: That's just how we understand it, provided the idea of "distribution" is combined therewith. The Greek word is so rendered in 2 Cor. 9:13. This goes to show the permeating character of fellowship.

F: We are told in Acts 2:41-42, "There were added unto the church about 3000 souls, and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, AND in breaking of bread, and in prayers." This of itself is sufficient to show that fellowship is not breaking of bread, for the two things are separately spoken of.

T: Quite so. The converse of your statement is what we impugn.

F: And are as distinct as the two others mentioned: the apostles' doctrine and prayers.

T: In a sense, yes. But from the Bible point of view, they cannot be separated. They stand or fall together. True fellowship, like true charity, comprises many items, but consists in no individual one.

F: In 1 Cor. 10, we are taught the true distinction between breaking of bread and fellowship, for the apostle plainly declares that the one is the representation or acknowledgment of the other.

T: Quite true! And you will do well to note and bear in mind the two admissions involved in your statement: 1) that we must not separate the

breaking of bread from the fellowship which it "represents"; and 2) that when we break bread it is "an acknowledgment" that fellowship exists.

F: Verse 20 confirms this idea, for he wrote that "the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils."

T: That completely overthrows your contention that we do not involve ourselves in the errors (of belief or practice) of those with whom we partake of the sacrificial emblems. Here Paul distinctly counsels them NOT to "fellowship devils" BY eating and drinking to them.

F: But they could not break bread and drink wine with devils.

T: Just so! And therefore the way in which these Corinthians could "fellowship devils" was by breaking bread and drinking wine with those who BELIEVED in the devils, and in that manner they would involve themselves in the errors of devil worshipers. Thus it is plain from Paul that to "fellowship" anything does not necessitate personal communion. A profession of agreement with their votaries is all-sufficient, and such profession you have already admitted is found in breaking bread with them. Moreover, Paul in this chapter (1 Cor. 10:18) plainly declares that those who eat DO thereby "fellowship." (The AV reads "partakes," but the original word is the same as is translated "fellowship" in verse 20.)

F: In 2 Cor. 8:4 we have the word "fellowship" used with apparently a still different meaning. Writing of the churches of Macedonia, Paul said, "To their power I bear record—yea, and beyond their power—they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints." Here a certain office or capacity appears to be spoken of. It is manifest that the ordinance of breaking of bread can have no reference to Paul's words here.

T: If you would but recognize that breaking of bread is but ONE of many forms of fellowship, these passages would all become plain to you. The word in the text you quote is, as we have already said, rendered in v. 13 of the next chapter, "distribution," which is another form of "fellowship" among the saints.

F: We have probably adduced sufficient passages to prove our point: that the word "fellowship," as used in the Scriptures, is not an equivalent of the act of breaking bread.

T: You have not adduced a single passage that proves we are wrong in maintaining that to "break bread and drink wine" in remembrance of Christ is a form of fellowship, by reason of being the "acknowledgment" of such.

F: We admit that the ordinance instituted by Christ is an acknowledgment, or an outward sign, of fellowship but it is not the thing itself.

T: True, the ordinance of breaking bread is not the sum total of fellowship. But, nevertheless, it is "an act of fellowship," as you (no doubt unwittingly) have admitted. Paul's reasoning with regards to the body and its many members forcibly applies to your mode of argument (1 Cor. 12:14). Although the whole body be not simply the eye or the ear, yet both form portions of the body. So, the fellowship be not simply "breaking of bread" or "prayers," yet both form important elements of it.

F: Fellowship is a matter entirely beyond our control; and there is NO MEANING in our words when we say we will "fellowship" this brother, and we will not "fellowship" another.

T: If your statement is true, then we must deprive the early Christians of any merit in continuing "steadfastly in fellowship" (Acts 2:42), for according to you, to do otherwise was "beyond their control." Paul says, "To do good and communicate (original: fellowship) forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Your statement teaches that we need no reminding to fellowship, as to do otherwise is "beyond our control." And for the same reason, there can be no "sacrifice" in the matter, and therefore God is simply well pleased with our doing a thing we cannot help doing, as it is "beyond our control" to do otherwise.

F: Brethren who believe the same Gospel and are working in the service of Christ ARE in fellowship with each other.

T: True.

F: Their common faith and common labor constitute that fellowship, and it cannot exist without them.

T: True—always remembering that such common labor includes "assembling together" and "eating" of the sacrificial emblems when circumstances admit of it.

F: We cannot be in agreement with any upon the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ without being in fellowship with them.

T: It would be more scriptural if you used the expression "things" concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12), AND "continue in well-doing" (Rom. 11:7). But perhaps you mean this: if so, your statement is true.

F: Neither can we be in disagreement upon the essentials of that Gospel, and yet be in fellowship.

T: That follows as the logical sequence.

F: We cannot "fellowship" false doctrine without being in agreement with it, and therefore believing it.

T: That is NOT true. The Scriptures declare we can fellowship without believing it. One illustration will suffice. In the chapter referred to (1 Cor. 10:18) we have seen that Paul tells his brethren that those who eat of the sacrifices offered to idols are "partakers" (original: fellowshippers) of the altar, and therefore fellowship ALL represented thereby, which in this case were "demons" or idols. Now, you have admitted that they did not eat with the idols themselves, but with their worshipers. The Corinthian believers knew with Paul that an "idol is nothing in the world" (1 Cor. 8:4). Therefore it is clear from Paul's counsel to them that they could "fellowship" false doctrine without believing in it themselves.

F: We cannot fellowship the evil deeds of another without being in agreement with them and doing the same things.

T: We have just shown we can. But further: John in his second epistle calls false teaching concerning Christ an "evil deed." And he says if we bid the man with this false doctrine God speed, we become partakers (original: fellowshippers) of his evil deeds. It is quite clear he is not referring to those who believed or were doing the same things, for he says it is the bidding him God speed that creates the participation. Now, what is meant by "God speed"? The original word occurs 74 times. It is only rendered "God speed" twice. The rest of the time it is rendered "hail, rejoice, rejoicing, greeting, joy, glad, and farewell." So the primary meaning is evidently "welcome." We are not to welcome a holder of false doctrine. Not to welcome him where? At our homes, or at the Table? Why, at the Table of the Lord—for surely you cannot contend that we ought to welcome a person there when we cannot welcome him at our house.

F: The idea of responsibility for the beliefs and doings of others being transferred to us by the breaking of bread is a false idea.

T: Your ideas on this "transference of responsibility" are entirely without foundation. We believe no such thing.

F: The principle taught throughout the Bible is that declared in Ezekiel: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (18:20).

T: Yes, and every true Christadelphian heartily endorses that testimony. In no way does it militate against their belief that God will not hold him guiltless who presumes to "hail" or bid "God speed" to those who fail to respect the holy, separate, peculiar position to which He calls them.

F: This was said by God in reply to a statement made by the Israelites to the effect that His way is not equal, because they believed that the evil doings of an individual would be visited upon another. Let us be careful how we make this same accusation against God.

T: The accusation is certainly not to be found in the Christadelphian doctrine of fellowship, one of the principles of which is that each member is responsible to God for the company HE keeps.

F: It is as true in the 19th century after Christ as it was five centuries before him that "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked upon him."

T: Yes, quite as true. And that man who bids erroneous teachers and evildoers "God speed" or "joy" by partaking of the emblems with them will not suffer for the evil deeds of his companions, but for his own unfaithfulness in holding fellowship where God has forbidden it.

F: There are many other considerations that plainly show the fallacy of the idea that the breaking of bread is a medium for the transference of evil.

T: No doubt. But such a thing as "transference of evil" is not believed by the Christadelphians, hence there is no need to go into "other considerations." But while the breaking of bread cannot be the medium for the "transference of evil," it can be the means of making a man an evil-doer by partaking with evil-doers, as we have most clearly proved from the epistles of Paul and John.

F: We constantly see brethren and sisters do things of which we disapprove, and would not do ourselves. We constantly hear of some item of belief that we consider out of harmony with Scripture teaching. But do you think for a moment that we become responsible for those actions and beliefs because we partake of the emblems with those that practice them?

T: God has allowed liberty in many matters in which conscience must guide us. Hence, what is sin to one may not be to another. You yourself have introduced the word "essentials." By that, we presume you mean "first principles." Only errors which involve those "essentials" or "first principles" should bar our fellowship.

F: If we break bread with a brother whose idea upon some doctrinal subject is different from our own, does that act make us believe the same as he?

T: Of course not! The question is too ridiculous to seriously ask.

F: Then we have no agreement with such a belief, consequently we do not fellowship it.

T: You have made that statement before, and we have shown its unscripturalness.

F: If evil be thus transferred, then upon the same principle, the good would be also.

T: Certainly. But as evil is not transferred, on the same principle, good is not. It would be better if you kept to the words "partake" or "fellowship" instead of coining the word "transfer" for us.

F: Why should we become partakers of a brother's sin by breaking bread with him, and not be partakers in another brother's well-doing by the same means?

T: Just as we "partake" of sin in bidding "God speed" to evil-doers, so we "partake" of good in doing likewise with "well-doers" (Mal. 3:16).

F: If every time we break bread in the same company with a righteous brother and a wicked brother, we have fellowship with their righteousness and their iniquity respectively, then both righteousness and wickedness would be imputed to us as a consequence?

T: With regard to the typical uncleanness under the Law of Moses, created by contact with unclean persons (to which you have referred), it distinctly states—"When he knoweth of it, THEN he shall be guilty" (Lev. 5:3). In like manner, under Christ's law, iniquity is not imputed where we unwittingly "sacrifice" or "break bread" with a "wicked brother." WE only (knowingly) fellowship righteous brethren, and therefore only righteousness is "imputed" (your word) to us.

F: John wrote: "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). Now we read in the same chapter (v. 8) that "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us," for "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But, although we are all sinners, yet "we have fellowship with the Father and the Son." Does our fellowship of them involve them in our wickedness?

T: If we are "walking in the Light" [required for fellowship: v. 7], then the "sin" which we have is not imputed to us, but we are covered by the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 4:6-8; Rev. 7:14). Clothed with this garment, we have the fellowship of the Father and the Son. Without this garment, they will not permit us to have their fellowship. While we have fellowship with them, we are "clean every whit" (John 13:10), and thus there is no wickedness for them to be "involved" in.

F: If responsibility for evil is incurred in the case of our brethren, it is also incurred in the cases of the Father and the Son.

T: Are you not reducing God and Christ to your own level? Have you never read that the One forgives through the mediumship of the other? Have you omitted to read the next verse to the one you quote: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9). Bearing this in mind, can you not see that we have fellowship with the Father and Son not as sinners but as children "cleansed from ALL unrighteousness" (same verse), and that therefore there is no sin for the Father and Son to be "involved" in. WITHOUT THIS FORGIVENESS, THERE IS NO FELLOWSHIP. That man is not forgiven who unrepentantly continues in sin, and whose fellowship therefore we cannot knowingly entertain without separating ourselves from the fellowship of the Father and Son.

F: If the Father and Son are not involved in our wrong-doings by the fellowship we are permitted to have with them, then our brethren are not made responsible for our sins by means of that same fellowship they have with us.

T: Firstly, we have shown that there is no wrong-doing for the Father and Son to be involved in. Secondly, we do not believe or teach responsibility for other men's sins; but that it is for our OWN sins in knowingly partaking with unrepentant wrong doers that we are held responsible.

F: These few points, if carefully reflected upon (especially bearing in mind that not a tittle of Scripture evidence arrays itself against them) are sufficient to destroy the idea hitherto held by most of us. (Let us note well this testimony that "most" had till then held the views he is repudiating.)

T: It ill becomes you to talk about "Scripture evidence." From beginning to end, you quote but seven texts in a long, written address in which you profess to have demonstrated the unscriptural nature of what we contend is a Bulwark of the Unity of the Household of Christ. Your quotations are: Lev. 6:2; Psa. 94:20; Acts 2:41; 1 Cor. 10:15-20; 2 Cor. 8:4; Eze. 18:4; 1 John 1. We have shown that these do not help you but us. And we have amply supported them with other quotations. Your assertion about "not a tittle of evidence" against you is on a par with your statement about the "subject being imperfectly understood."

F: The idea has gained a place in our minds by being handed from one to another and accepted without examination. Thus it has operated for a considerable time without anyone feeling called upon to give a reason for it.

T: If the "our minds" consists of your own, we do not object to your assertion, but if you mean the brethren generally, we impugn it. And we have already given our reason for so doing.

F: This doctrine has been responsible for most of the awful divisions that have taken place among the Brotherhood.

T: But that is no reason, to a student of the Word, for rejecting the doctrine. The beloved apostle alone informs us of three divisions on account of Christ in the short space of one year (John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19). Christ himself tells us that obedience to him would result in division (Luke 12:51). Peter and Paul both speak of Christ as "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense" (1 Peter 2:8; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 1:23). And on one occasion Christ said even "all" his disciples would be "offended" because of him (Matt. 26:31). But shall we reject him, because he was the reason for all these divisions? Nay, is it not rather to be expected that as Christ was himself the "source" of so many divisions, so his doctrine would also be, if faithfully contended for?

F: If we are in agreement on the subject matter of "The One Faith," and mutually strive to walk in harmony with Christ's commands, our fellowship remains—even though we may not "break bread together" till Christ comes.

T: That is true—provided it is not our fault that we do not break bread with others: such as inability to get to the meetings, etc. But if we refuse to break bread when opportunity occurs, then we are willfully disobedient, and cannot expect the fellowship of God and of His faithful children.

F: Do not let me be misunderstood. We ought not to acknowledge fellowship where there is no agreement upon fundamental elements of the Gospel of Christ. That is the basis of our fellowship—of our communion.

T: And a scriptural basis it is, too. But in the statements you have made, you decline to confine your acknowledgment of this fellowship to those who are in agreement on this question. You are willing to extend fellowship to those who do not see the need for such agreement on those fundamental elements, and who thereby destroy unity of mind on this highly important doctrine of fellowship.

F: If there be agreement among ourselves and others upon the ground of our Faith, and companionship in our efforts to conform to the spirit of God's commands, then we ought to be glad and willing to acknowledge the fellowship.

T: Yes, "if"! But there is no such agreement, if you acknowledge fellowship with those who—while believing with you on the "essentials"—are nevertheless willing to fellowship with others who do not see the need for having the same mind.

F: Do not let us think that perfection of agreement is requisite upon all sorts of recondite matters in connection with the Truth, in order to establish the fellowship of the Gospel.

T: You must know we have never so believed, and therefore such a remark is not creditable to you.

F: Those things that God has plainly declared to be necessary before a man can be truly baptized into Christ, are the only essentials of fellowship, and there can be no fellowship without them.

T: True. And that must be the gauge or test to be applied, not only to those with whom we personally acknowledge fellowship, but also to those who are acknowledged by them, and so on.

F: Where they are believed and observed, fellowship is established, whether we recognize it or not.

T: "Believed AND observed"! True.

F: It behooves us to act toward each other as we would have Yahweh act toward us.

T: Yes, provided no command of God is thereby violated—for in some cases faithfulness prohibits us so acting.

F: God admits men into His fellowship who are not perfect.

T: That is not true. Only those clothed in His Son's righteousness (and therefore perfect in him) are so admitted.

F: Not one of us dare say that many brethren who are denied the privilege of sitting with us at the Lord's table are not the adopted children of God, even as we.

T: And neither do we so say. But there are faithful and unfaithful children. Connivance at, or condonation of, unfaithfulness is not permissible.

F: Not one of us dare assert that they are less worthy of the divine approval, or that they are not admitted into the fellowship of the Father and Son.

T: And we have no desire to make such assertions. We leave Christ to do the asserting. We simply say we believe you are dishonoring God and His Son by partaking with those who do not maintain the Unity of the Faith. We decline to participate in unfaithfulness by receiving your fellowship.

F: I say again that there is only one way in which we can fellowship iniquitous conduct, and that is by practicing the same things, or conniving at their practice.

T: You have simply given us such "say," while we have clearly proved from the Bible that this "say" is unscriptural.

F: Let us require no more on the part of others before we will recognize the fellowship that actually DOES exist between us—whether we consent or not. Let us require no more of them than we are ready to render ourselves.

T: If that means anything at all, it means that you believe we are those "who say, and do not" (Matt. 23:3). In making such grave charges (by implication), it would be well if you kept your remark to a pronoun of the first person singular.

F: On the other hand, let us continue to refuse to break bread with all who hold not the Truth as it is in Jesus.

T: Good! But then you decline to insist on like conditions throughout the brotherhood generally with whom you are in fellowship. You maintain that you are in no way involved in the errors of those whom you may so recognize in fellowship. The logical result can be but one: you will be compelled to throw in your lot with a community that permits fellowship with those who do not admit the absolute essentiality of those doctrines you believe to be fundamental. Your alleged "unity of faith" will go to the winds and be destroyed by unsound principles.

F: Let us cease to think so much of responsibility for the actions of others that cannot belong to us.

T: It would be more scriptural to cease to talk in that way, and begin to remember that "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker (fellowshipper) of his evil deeds" (2 John 11). To remember also that Christ threatened the early churches for KEEPING IN the church evil thinkers and evil doers (Rev. 2:14-15, 20)—while not charging them personally with believing or doing the same things.

F: Let us spend less time in the unnecessary carefulness to keep ourselves immaculate from the blemishes of others by reason of touching but the border of their garments.

T: A smart sentence: but sad to hear from one who has known the Truth. In reply, we will simply give you a few texts to think over, and which some day you may see inculcate the carefulness you now condemn—

Rom. 16:17 "Mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them."

1 Cor. 5:6-13 "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out the old leaven...put away...that wicked person".

1 Cor. 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners".

2 Cor. 6:14-17 "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...Come out from among them and be ye separate...and I will receive you".

Eph. 6:7-11 "Be not ye therefore partakers with them...Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness".

2 Thess. 3:6-14 "We command you in the Name of our Lord Jesus: withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition he received of us...If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him".

1 Tim. 5:22 "Be not partakers (fellowshippers) of other men's sins".

Rev. 18:4 "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers (fellowshippers) of her sins".

F: Let us take greater care to keep our OWN garments unspotted from the world.

T: To do this effectually, we must attend the counsel in the texts just quoted.

F: Christ came into direct contact with worldly filth enough, but it did not adhere to his own robe of righteousness.

T: Aye! But though "in the world," he was not "of the world" (John 17:11-16). He had "no fellowship with the works of darkness, but rather reproveth them" (Eph. 5:11). We are counseled to "follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Brisbane Baptism Question Booklet

9. THE FORMULA FOR FELLOWSHIP

There is at present [1960] a movement for a realignment and a new form of reunion on the basis of an acceptance of the "B.A.S.F. without reservation, enforced in fellowship." This is all very well as far as it goes,

but we believe that recent events in Christadelphia have clearly shown that just a bare affirmation to this effect is not a sufficient basis for a lasting unity.

Reason, Scripture and experience teach that in each case there must be sufficient investigation to give assurance of oneness of mind. More care will be required in some cases than others, and no simple password can be set down as the only requirement. Certainly, MASS AMALGAMATION ON A MAJORITY VOTE is utterly inadequate to preserve the Truth, for the dissenting minority that comes along with the majority may bring every form of error. A majority vote is, as Clause 5 of the Constitution specifies, the brotherly way to determine "order and arrangement," but FELLOWSHIP is an INDIVIDUAL matter.

The only generalization that can be made is that in any consideration of a unity in fellowship, sufficient mutual investigation must be made in each individual case to maintain the Truth among us to the best of our ability.

To avoid any appearance of harshness, or the erection of any unnecessary barriers, we would like to make it clear that we desire it to be as easy and pleasant as possible—in faithfulness to the Truth—for any to join or to return to us, who have come to a full unity of mind with us on the problems confronting the Brotherhood.

We recognize that it would be the prerogative of each ecclesia to determine the amount of personal interviewing necessary in each particular case. We believe it is a basic principle that the Truth is an INDIVIDUAL matter. Each individual must be considered as an individual; but we are anxious that it be done as gently and inofficiously and briefly as is consistent with the Truth. We have no thought of interrogation just for interrogation's sake, but rather speedy and joyful reception as soon as UNITY OF MIND is established.

However, it is the mind of the Berean Fellowship—particularly in light of the insufficiently-considered mass movements in "fellowship" of the past few years—that this scriptural aspect of INDIVIDUAL consideration should be mutually accepted in any discussion of resumption of fellowship, and should be honoured in principle, though applied in humbleness, kindness, and wisdom.

The events of the past few years have deeply impressed us with the wisdom and truth of the words of bro. Roberts in 1896, speaking concerning fellowship problems near the end of a life of conflict and struggle for the Truth (Christadelphian, Nov. 1896, page 428):

"Our circulation would have been a large one, after 32 years' publication, if we had chosen to broaden out to the diluted forms of truth that are current in sundry quarters...We would rather walk with an afflicted few in the scriptural purity of the Hope of Israel (with all that involves), than run with a prosperous multitude in the loose and polluted ways of the natural man. The looseness may be convenient for the time being, but there hastens a time when it will be highly inconvenient.

"When God speaks again by Christ returned, the inconvenience of this adhesion to His holy, narrow ways will turn to felicitation, joy and gladness...

"Experience over a wide and constantly fermenting field shows that unless there is a resolute adhesion to the position of Divine wisdom, recovered with much difficulty during the last two generations, there is danger of easily losing it all: NOT ALL AT ONCE, BUT POINT BY POINT—ONE POINT AT A TIME TILL ALL IS GONE."

* * *

In conclusion, we cannot too often or too strongly emphasize our deep conviction that there can be no true, sound, strong, spiritual fellowship on any basis other than eager, mutual yearning toward the Divine Beauty of Holiness. There is no other power that can truly unite us spiritually, and mark us out from the rest of the perishing world.

There can be but one True Bride of Christ, and she will be marked by an all-consuming love for her Lord, manifested in a constant striving toward the beautiful ideal of spiritual perfection described in the words of the Spirit through Paul (Eph. 5:27):

"...a glorious Ecclesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Without the eager, mutual acceptance of dedication to this divine ideal, all else is meaningless and dead. This must be the heart and power of any true fellowship. The Berean Fellowship is deeply conscious of its many human weaknesses and imperfections, but it is lovingly united in a realization of, and strong desire toward, the great beauty of this pattern of the chosen Bride of Christ.

The Truth Concerning Christ's Offering For Himself First Made a Matter of Fellowship in 1898

The following ecclesial news of May, 1898 is very much to the point. Bro. Roberts, though traveling, was very much in charge of the magazine. Bro. Walker says he did not publish controversial fellowship matters without Bro. Roberts' approval. This happened to be at the height of the

Resurrectional Responsibility controversy, though not directly related. It is clear that neither R. Roberts nor C.C Walker considered that the truth concerning Christ offering for himself was Andrewism. They totally opposed Andrewism: they totally approved this fellowship stand. The item is from Bournemouth, and is by G.S. Sherry, whom those familiar with the history of the events of these times will recognize as a prominent and sound brother. —G.V. Growcott

Additional Note: Bro. Growcott published this article in the Berean Magazine without the name of the brother who was withdrawn. We place it back in, not for purposes of embarrassment, but because bro. Fry later, after having been reaccepted at a different Central meeting, published a booklet during the Strickler division. The booklet was called "Echos of Past Controversies", and it was a defense of Central's decision to fellowship A. D. Strickler, a decision that even John Carter later admitted was wrong. ("A Time to Heal", Christadelphian Magazine, 1940) This booklet was circulated in 1978 by Richard Stone, Los Angeles California, Central, to show that his position was consistent with the previous Christadelphian stand. Instead, his using H. Fry's works showed that his views likewise, in Robert Roberts days, would not have been tolerated in fellowship.—JPP

BOURNEMOUTH: "We have had trouble in our midst, which has resulted in division. Bro. H. Fry publicly proclaimed the doctrine that **Jesus was not in a position requiring to offer himself as a sacrifice to secure his own redemption**; that the sacrifice of Christ was required only to effect the salvation of actual transgressors. Jesus being no transgressor, for himself his sacrifice was not needed.

"This teaching **strikes at the root** of the Scripture teaching of the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and also at the doctrinal basis upon which our ecclesia has been founded.

"It was necessary to meet this error in order to maintain the purity of the Truth. After private and collective effort, which proved fruitless, it was decided to re-affirm and define our doctrinal basis of faith upon this subject; and as to those who refuse to acknowledge and accept it, we feel duty bound from such to stand aside. The following propositions were submitted to every member of the ecclesia for acceptance

"1. That the Scriptures teach: That Adam was created capable of dying, but free from the power of death; and when he disobeyed in Eden, he was condemned to death for that disobedience; and that he came under the power of death solely on account of this sin. That in consequence of this offense, all his descendants have been condemned to death, but without the moral guilt of his transgression attaching to them; and that those who

are not actual transgressors die under the condemnation they inherit from their first parents.

"2. That the Scriptures teach: That Adam was created very good, and was then utterly devoid of that which the Scriptures style 'sin in the flesh'; that from the time of his disobedience, and in consequence thereof, **he had sin in his flesh**; that sin in the flesh of his descendants, although not involving them in the moral guilt of Adam, has the power of death in them; that Jesus Christ, who was sinless as to character, by his sacrificial death and resurrection put away his sin nature (which was the only appointed means for the condemnation of sin in the flesh; that is, as a basis upon which it, the flesh, could be redeemed), and by which he destroyed the devil and death in relation to himself. That this destruction of sin and death by Jesus Christ has been made the basis of their future abolition in relation to all the righteous.

"3. That inasmuch as the foregoing scriptural truths substantially form part of our doctrinal basis of fellowship, and are **essential** to 'the things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ,' we hereby resolve from this time **to discontinue fellowshiping** all who believe that the descendants of Adam were not condemned to death on account of Adam's sin, or that **Jesus Christ's sacrificial death was not necessary to REDEEM HIMSELF** as well as others from that condemnation, until such time as they repudiate these anti-scriptural doctrines."

It was the same issue in 1923 with Stricklerism, but with R. Roberts gone, action was not so sound.

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

The True Christadelphian Ecclesia

By Brother Robert Roberts

The Christadelphian Ecclesia must have Love.

- "This is MY COMMANDMENT" (says Jesus) "that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12 and 13:34).
- "We know that we have passed from death into life—because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14-16).
- "ABOVE ALL THINGS, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).
- "ABOVE ALL put on love, the bond of PERFECTNESS."
- "Let us not love in word, but in DEED and in truth".

It may be objected that we cannot force love; but it should be remembered that love is a spiritual principle required by the Law of Christ, and it should be our pleasure to obey that law. If we cannot do this, we cannot please him.

The Christadelphian Ecclesia must have the Spirit of Christ.

- "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is NONE OF HIS
- ... as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are Sons of God."
- "Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts: IF ye are Sons, then are ye heirs of God!"
- "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Spirit of Christ is a gentle Spirit—

- "When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pt. 2:23).

The Christadelphian Ecclesia must have a living Faith.

- "Without Faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

The Faith that pleases God is a Faith that works—

- "works by Love" (Gal. 5:6) "purifieth the heart" (Acts 15:9)
- ... "overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4).
- "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

Works of the Flesh not tolerated.

The Christadelphian Ecclesia, having CRUCIFIED the flesh with its affections and lusts, does not tolerate the works of the flesh as enumerated in Gal. 5:18-21, of which we appropriately mention—

- "Enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension" (RV).

It will be observed that the apostle says with great emphasis that—

- "They that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom."

Fellowship in Christ.

The Christadelphian Ecclesia knows that—

- "If we SAY we have fellowship with Christ, and walk in darkness, we LIE ... IF we walk in the Light, **as he is in the Light**, we have fellowship with one another . . . and truly our fellowship is with the Father and Son" (1 John 1).

She knows that righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, no concord of Christ and Belial, no communion of light and darkness. She knows

that she walks in the light by keeping the commandments of Christ, who says—

- "IF ye love me, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS" (John 14:15).
- "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you"
- "Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things I say?"
- Christ's brethren have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The tares and the wheat cannot grow together in Christ. They can, and do, in the world.

"A Spiritual House."

The Ecclesia, having a LIVING Faith, is made up of—

- "lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."
- It is the—
- "Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in it, and if any man defile the Temple of God, **him shall God destroy.**"
- Christadelphians are—
- "A people taken OUT of the Gentiles for the Name of the Lord."
- They are, therefore—
- "A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people—that they might SHOW FORTH the praises of Him Who hath called them OUT OF darkness into His marvelous light."

The Christadelphian Ecclesia is the Bride of Christ—

—and knows that when her Bridegroom comes, she must have on the wedding garment, if she would be presented to him as—

- "A GLORIOUS Ecclesia, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but should be HOLY, and WITHOUT BLEMISH"

The "spots and wrinkles" CAN BE OBLITERATED by the righteousness of Christ, who is always our Advocate with the Father: provided—that we confess AND FORSAKE our sins and pray earnestly for mercy and forgiveness.

Her Work and Purity.

The Christadelphian Ecclesia is engaged in the work of "making READY a People PREPARED for the Lord." And having a glorious Hope—based on great and precious promises—she will purify herself by—

- "PURGING OUT the old leaven of malice and wickedness, keeping the Feast with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Her work is not a work of ignorance and indifference, which says,

- "Christ fellowshipped Judas"
- "Let the tares and the wheat grow together..."
- "Everyone must give an account for himself..."
- "I have nothing to do with what another says or does..."

- "Let us have peace ..."
- "You must not judge etc..."

—and this (to be said by) the Ecclesia, or Body of Christ, the "pillar and ground of the Truth," and the "Temple of God" in which His Spirit dwells!!

Her Warfare

The Christadelphian Ecclesia knows she has a great conflict with foes within and without—the world, the flesh, and the devil—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

And if she can be the victor in the warfare, through Christ who strengtheneth her, she will receive an eternity of blessed life for her reward. And this the gracious gift of God through Christ.

She knows the gate is strait and the way narrow that leads to life, and though there be few who find it, she is not discouraged. She strives to the end with an honest, sincere, and pure motive. And what she lacks, through the weakness of the flesh, her Redeemer—in whom she trusts—will supply by his all-prevailing righteousness to her unspeakable joy and everlasting blessedness.—*Christadelphian 1887*

"Heresy Hunting" A Duty

Christadelphian, July 1886

"All heresy-hunting is of diabolos," says the Flesh.

"TRY THE SPIRITS whether they are of God," writes the Spirit; and the reason given is "because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

The "false prophets" were teachers of heresy, but professed to teach that which is true. There was a difficulty in identifying them, and therefore all teachers of divine things were to be tried to ascertain whose teaching was genuine and whose adulterated. The object of the test was that the heresy teachers might be repudiated.

The Spirit in Peter, writing of Israel, says—"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them" (2 Peter 2:1).

How were such false prophets to be treated? Moses says—"They shall be PUT TO DEATH" (Deut. 13:5).

Even a "brother," "son," "daughter," "wife," or a "friend" who attempted to introduce idolatry was not to be spared (v. 6-11). The object was that Israel might be purged of evil.

COMMUNITIES were to be dealt with on the same principle as individuals. If it were reported that any one city had commenced to "serve other gods" (vs. 12-13), "Then," said Moses (vs. 14-15)—"...shall thou enquire and make search, and ask diligently; and behold, if it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought among you, thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly and all that is therein."

The comparison drawn in Peter's epistle between false teachers in fleshly Israel and spiritual Israel is evidence that this Mosaic enactment contains a lesson for us.

The use of the sword or anything destructive is out of the question; a practical protest by refusing to fellowship is the full extent of permitted action. The command to "enquire" is not at variance with New Testament injunction; it is in harmony with it.

When, therefore, it is reported that any brother or ecclesia is following false doctrine, it is not only permitted, but it is obligatory on other brethren and ecclesias to "enquire and make search, and ask diligently" to see whether it be true and the thing certain.

If it is, the responsibility of their position leaves no option but that of repudiating complicity with the evil.

It is on this principle that ecclesial action has been taken on the Inspiration Question. It was reported that false teaching existed in spiritual Israel concerning the authorship of divine writings, and on enquiring, making search, and asking diligently, many have found the thing "certain."

Some, it will be said, have enquired without finding its existence; but it is necessary to remember that there are different ways of enquiring, and that none are so blind as those who do not wish to see. The evidence of its existence is undisputable, and there are no excuses to justify its being ignored.

The repudiation of responsibility for the false teaching of those at a distance shows a defective appreciation of the unity which should exist between all members of the One Body—"The members should have the same care one for another, and whether one member suffer, ALL THE MEMBERS suffer with it" (1 Cor. 12:25-26).

Heresy searching among national Israel was not of diabolos, but of God; therefore heresy searching among spiritual Israel, can have no other origin.

And what is its results? It tends to preserve the purity of revealed Truth. If a heresy test were of diabolos, it would be difficult to justify the repudiation of heresy; and thus the One Body would gradually become so defiled that pure doctrine would wholly disappear.

Hints For Bible Markers

The Psalms

Psalm 12:5

“For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.”

In this verse we can again see the spirit of prophecy of Christ in the Psalms. Certainly he was oppressed by the rulers of his nation. And he did sigh or groan (see Strong’s). Sighs are indications of grief—Mr. Webster’s Dictionary. He sighed because of the world around him and its lack of love and understanding of his Heavenly Father. For the thoughts on *“puffeth at him”* please see the October/November issues of last year (2019).

Psalm 12:6

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

God’s law is perfect, His testimonies sure, they make the simple wise, and there is no other book about which these statements can be proclaimed. All writings that originate in the human mind are more or less impure. It is only individuals, who do not know the Scriptures of truth, who do not understand the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, who imagine the Bible to contain doctrines and concepts which are untrue, antiquated, undesirable, or useless. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16).

God’s word, our Bible, has gone through many trials, attempts to hide, alter, or destroy that which has come through the *“furnace of earth, purified seven times.”* Here seven is used to show the complete purity and perfection of God’s word. Seven is used throughout Scriptures to represent perfection, realization, completion. *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple”* (Psalms 19:7).

Therefore, we must be good stewards, as described by Peter where he declares, *“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen”* (1 Peter 4:11). And Jesus declares *“If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own”* (Luke 16:12). He also said that the Pharisees, *“who were covetous, heard all these things and they derided him”* (Luke 16:14). This is precisely the treatment which the Bible and its doctrine is given by the world and its false prophets today.

Continued next month should the Lord will.

bro. Beryl Snyder