

# **Carterdelphia**

## **PREFACE**

In an earlier work, "Too True To Be New," this writer has shown how in its origin Christadelphianism was an outstanding advance upon the confused mixture of truth and superstition which characterised the so-called Christian religion as it had existed throughout the centuries. It was shown how Dr. Thomas, while succeeding wonderfully in dragging out of the oblivion to which apostate tradition had consigned it, the real meaning of the Gospel, yet was not himself completely delivered from one of the worst errors of what he once termed "Churchianity," the doctrine of original sin.

It is the tragedy of the community he founded, that alone among the Christian sects with a true understanding of the Hope of Israel, they have never been able to deliver themselves from the palpable error that Sin became a fixed principle in human flesh and the ultimate cause of a death-stricken and defiled condition which involved the Saviour Himself. In a legacy of riches beyond price this one spurious element has cankered the whole and will finally reduce its adherents to spiritual poverty.

Those for whom this work is primarily intended will find the term Carterdelphia self-explanatory. For the benefit of others, it is used to designate that particular view of the Christian religion finding expression in "The Christadelphian" in recent years under the editorship of John Carter.

From the name of that periodical one might suppose that it propagates the teaching of Dr. Thomas, who invented the term, but our purpose is to show how the effect of that false element has been to undermine and destroy the truths with which it was so unhappily mingled, so that to-day aspects of truth which were clear and vital in the early days are now vague or forgotten, while opinions and expositions which formerly would have been examined and rejected with scorn now appear to pass unquestioned.

We hear from individuals in many places who reject or have never held the belief in physical defilement, and we know that there are substantial groups in Australia who have been testifying against it for years; we honour their courage and their endurance of the odium heaped upon them by those who ignorantly put the writings of fallible men in front of the Scriptures, but we do not understand how they can continue to regard themselves as Christadelphians, since whatever the prominence of the doctrine in Dr. Thomas's day, it has now become their chief mark of distinction.

Few people realise that the doctrine of sinful flesh formed no part of the confession of faith upon which Dr. Thomas was baptized. It appears first in Elpis Israel, where it seems clear that its author accepted it almost axiomatically and had neither examined the Scripture upon which it is supposedly based, nor worked out its implications. Its elaboration was largely the work of Robert Roberts, and it is to him and the controversies in which he sought to defend it that its prominence is due.

The falseness of the doctrine itself has been, we believe, amply demonstrated by both Christadelphian and ex-Christadelphian writers, and most people have by now heard what is to be said on both sides and had the opportunity either to accept or reject it. Our purpose here



therefore is not to reiterate, but to show what is the result upon the Christadelphian faith of the failure to exorcise the evil spirit lying behind Clause V of the Statement of Faith.

Hitherto we have felt that many Christadelphians have ignored the issue as strife about words, and to no profit, but the situation which will be revealed is so appalling, the statements to which we shall draw attention so utterly incredible and the contradiction and suppression so staggering that he will be complacent indeed who can shrug it off.

Although we describe the present day version of their faith as Carterdelphia, it must not be thought that we regard John Carter as solely responsible. We shall refer to articles also by L.G.Sargent, A.D.Norris and others, but as all these have been published by him, and principally during the past year (1952-3) we think our title will not be thought inappropriate. To justify it, and also our sub-title, will necessitate quotations for comparison from both past and present, and while we shall make these as brief as possible they must be sufficiently complete to be fair to both parties. To spare the reader, we shall avoid repetition of references but shall give the page and date of issue of whatever is quoted so that these can be verified.

We make no apology for constant reminders by name of the authors, of the fact that we are dealing with their actual words and not with some lying rumour or invention. This should not be taken as indicating any personal feeling on our part, but in our view we owe it to our readers, whether friends or enemies, to let them know who are responsible for the astounding declension which is taking place. We do not feel under any obligation to conceal 1 our abhorrence of their arguments and on occasions of their methods. We do not know these people personally but being thoroughly convinced from their own words that they are spiritually blinded because of their own conceit, we should be failing in our duty if we treated them otherwise than as enemies of the truth.

## **BAPTISM**

### **John Carter Astray**

Perhaps the most amazing feature of Carterdelphia is the current teaching regarding the significance of baptism. The most important aspect of the ceremony has been now almost completely lost sight of, and a secondary and incidental significance given first place.

The matter has come into prominence as a result of John Carter's visit to U.S.A. In December 1952 (Page 377) he writes of a meeting with certain "Advocate" brethren whom, he says,

*"we found emphatic in declaring that they were not baptized for their own sins but for Adam's sin."*

Having read something of Thos. Williams' works we rather felt that this was probably somewhat garbled, and it subsequently appeared from August 1953 (Page 245) that the Editor had received a letter expressly denying some part of the views he had attributed to them. He prints a lengthy reply to this and asks that it be given publicity in "The Advocate." Oddly enough he himself has no scruples about suppressing both the letter itself and the name and



address of the writer, so that we have only his version of the matter presented. Such one-sidedness in controversy is unfortunately a characteristic of "the Christadelphian" which we have come to expect and from which we have suffered ourselves; nevertheless a useful purpose is served in that we can discover from the ground on which John Carter develops his argument against the Advocate brethren, the present position of Carterdelphia.

Commenting upon the view attributed to Thos. Williams, the Editor says:

*"This strange and unscriptural position is reached by first saying that where there is no law there is no transgression; and men are not under law until they are in Christ and therefore have no sins for which they are accountable. The only sin for which baptism is required therefore, is Adamic sin."*

Actually this does not fairly represent the "Advocate" argument though it is probably as nearly as John Carter dares to state it, in case his readers might perceive it to be more in accord with what Paul says in 5th and 6th Romans than his own. And although we believe and shall show how and why their argument is defective, there is more than a grain of truth in what they say; they are in fact infinitely nearer to the truth than Carterdelphians are ever now likely to be.

It is also our purpose to show that both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts gave expression to these same views which John Carter describes as strange and unscriptural. We shall thus prove Carterdelphia to be apostate not only to Scripture but also to the men who founded their religion.

It will be agreed that of the two steps of reasoning by which they reach their conclusion that baptism is not primarily for personal sins, the first is a plain scriptural principle laid down in so many words by Paul in Romans 4:15, "Where there is no law there is no transgression," and in Romans 5:13, "But sin is not imputed where there is no law." These statements are conclusive and admit of no ambiguity; if they mean what they say they write "Finis" to the doctrine that sin is literally in the flesh. Only those who are under law are scripturally sinners, and it is the damnable doctrine of physical condemnation which Christadelphianism inherited from Roman Catholicism which has robbed them of this clear, just and scriptural principle. As we shall prove, a sound and well-established realisation that condemnation in Adam is a matter of Law and Divine Constitution was an integral part of Christadelphian teaching in its early days; the rot set in when Robert Roberts was forced off the rails by his jealous opposition to Edward Turney and his obsession that sin had become a physical property of human flesh. Having come down on the side of the false premise that being in Adam was a matter of physical corruptibility and therefore a condition only to be altered by a resurrectional change, it was merely a matter of time and logical process till the present position was reached where baptism has no significance beyond that of washing away of personal sins and the vital and saving truth is lost.

The "Advocate" brethren are undoubtedly right in their view that it is law which constitutes men sinners but they are wrong in their belief that men are not responsible until they have been baptized. The question is, how do men come under law? and Scripture clearly answers "by enlightenment." Jesus says; "Except I had come and spoken unto them they had not had sin. But now they say we see; therefore their sin remaineth." And again, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men love darkness rather than light." If sin is in the flesh how could Jesus say they would not have had it at all except He had come



and spoken to them? If the condemnation is physical the coming of light into the world could neither add it nor remove it. But if condemnation is, as Paul defines it, a legal enactment passed upon or hanging over the human race and becoming operative upon those, and only those amenable to it because they know of it, then it opens up a conception of God's purpose at once meeting the facts and satisfying the mind.

The call of the Gospel, whether obeyed or not; the realisation that God has a purpose, is what makes a person responsible and determines his relationship to his Creator and finally to life or death. Paul makes this abundantly clear in Romans: "For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." We are not able nor do we expect to be able to say what degree of understanding constitutes a man responsible, but it is reasonable to believe that as soon as a person becomes aware that the Bible reveals a purpose he is under some obligation to seek to know and do the will of God or suffer the consequences. As for the rest, their deeds may be utterly evil and depraved, yet they are like the beasts that perish, not under law and therefore not accountable.

Thus, apart from their mistake regarding responsibility, the "Advocate" brethren base their view upon the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles and are correct in their conclusion that baptism Into Christ is not primarily for the remission of the sins of the individual, but signifies the believer's deliverance from a state of bondage under Adam into a state of freedom in Christ. Had they been as clear sighted and scriptural in regard to the nature of man and sloughed off the encumbrance of sin-in-the-flesh, they would have been able to reason more logically about responsibility and its implications. The consequence of their failure has been that they have largely died out; the last remnant known to the writer in this country was the Watford ecclesia and one or two in London, who have now become submerged into the Suffolk St. fellowship, and their distinctive teaching originated by J.J.Andrew, a highlight in Christadelphian history, largely lost.

It appears that "The Advocate" is still published in U.S.A. So presumably their somewhat smoky light still shines, but in view of the doctrine of sinful flesh which it shares with "the Christadelphian" there is no point in our going further into the issues between them. We can, however, protest against John Carter's manifest unjustness to the Advocate position and what we can only regard as his wilful misrepresentation to his readers. He gives the impression that they teach that baptism has nothing to do with personal sins, whereas Thos. Williams says in "Rectification,"

*"That baptism is for the remission of personal sins... we accept as heartily as he does... The issue is Does baptism have anything to do with the effects of Adamic sin? The claim we are contending for is, that in baptism there is a transition from condemnation inherited from Adam to reconciliation in Christ and this is what our opponents deny."*

Apart from his use of the word "inherited," which requires qualification, Thos. Williams is right here and if John Carter had quoted him fairly, probably many of his readers would have realised it. It is evident from an anonymous letter quoted on page 295 (October) that everyone is not stupid even if occasionally ungrammatical. Another example of John Carter's unethical methods is seen on page 248 (August) where he paraphrases some words of Thos. Williams, and implies that he argued that Jesus was alienated from God, whereas on the identical page from which the words are taken he emphatically rejects the conclusion. The Editor says Thos. Williams dealt in abstractions; it may be so; these at any rate are facts and they reflect no credit on John Carter.



Now he affirms that the sole purpose of baptism into Christ is for the forgiveness of personal sins; this and no more. He says, "*Baptism is into Christ for the remission of sins,*" and he quotes Robert Roberts' words,

*"Men were baptised in the apostolic age for the remission of their individual sins - always."*

Remember, no one has denied that remission of sins is an object of baptism, but it is one incidental to a much more vital significance, a legal death and rebirth, which Christadelphians now deny. In support John Carter again quotes Robert Roberts' words,

*"the evil springing from our connection with Adam will not be cured till death is swallowed up in victory,"*

and he adds the comment,

*"Robert Roberts never wrote anything different from this."*

Perhaps he really believes this; if so we must refresh his memory.

On many occasions Robert Roberts gave expression to the precise view defined by "The Advocate" and now scorned by John Carter. For example, in 1878 ("The Christadelphian" page 225) he wrote,

*"Legally a man is freed from Adamic condemnation at the time he obeys the truth and receives remission of sins, but actually its physical effects remain until this mortal (that is the Adamic condemned nature) is swallowed up in the life Christ will bestow upon His brethren at His coming."*

So that ignoring for the moment what he terms the physical effects, at that date he believed that Adamic condemnation was a law from which baptism frees a man at the same time as his sins are forgiven, he says, "*Legally a man is freed.*" Robert Roberts may have changed his mind later, but it is still untrue to say he never said anything different from what John Carter reproduces above.

Certainly, however, he had not changed his mind during the next 16 years for in 1894, in the course of the debate with J.J.Andrew, he was asked,

*"Do you adhere to this statement that he is legally freed from Adamic condemnation?"*

Robert Roberts replied, "I understand God gives the obedient believer a clean slate." J.J.Andrew asked,

*"What is wiped out?"*

Robert Roberts replied,

*"Everything that stands against us in any way, whether from Adam or ourselves."*



J.J.Andrew then asked,

*“Then there is a passing out of Adam into Christ at baptism?”*

Robert Roberts replied,

*“Certainly.”*

It should not be thought that we deny anyone the right to change his mind; we had to change our own radically some years ago, and have often thought how some of his admirers might have profited more by those words from Dr. Thomas,

*“Must a man never progress? If he discover an error in his premises, must he for ever hold to it for the sake of consistency? May such a calamity never befall me. Rather let me change every day, till I get right at last.”*

What we criticize is the dishonesty of changing one's mind and one's teaching, and claiming that it is the same as it has always been. Worse still is the practice of suppressing and misquoting the dead to lend colour to a faked picture.

Carterdelphians have gone so far in literary dishonesty as to interfere with what has been written. Examples of this are the portions excised from “The Slain Lamb,” as it was originally published. The Declaration used to contain the statement: “Baptism is the means of the present (legal) union with Christ.” The bracketed ‘legal,’ vital in its context, is now omitted. Another example is the suppression of a work highly valued even now by some: “Phanerosis,” by Dr. Thomas. Writing about this C.C.Walker said:

*“Though in the main very excellent, it contained certain misstatements and errors... and we could not conscientiously go on reproducing these, knowing that Dr. Thomas would not wish us to do so were he in the land of the living.”*

As it is unlikely that C.C.Walker had a private line to the grave his knowledge of what the Doctor would have wished seems to have been assumption. Another editor, Jas.M.Brown, of “The Herald,” from Australia, comments very reasonably.

*“Regardless of whether Dr. Thomas was correct or not, to the student of Truth his errors are just as important as his correct exposition. Those who have proved their inability to correct the pamphlet “Anastasis,” which is found to be, not an exposition of Anastasis at all, but rather an exposition of a Latin term which is not found in the Bible; these are certainly unable to deal with “Phanerosis.””*

In view of what we shall have to say later the time must be fast approaching when Elpis Israel will require what might be termed a “face-lifting” operation.

Returning now to John Carter's reply to the “Advocate” brethren. On page 246 he quotes J.J.Andrew's statement,

*“The Edenic law is subsequently termed the Law of Sin and Death, and the Abrahamic is called the Law of the Spirit of life.”*



In our view this is perfectly true and excellently expressed; these are two laws operating over humanity and by means of which God is separating the wheat from the tares and determining the eternal destiny of both. It depends which of these two laws we are under when our probation ends whether we rise incorruptible or come forth for Judgment and the second death. But this will not do for John Carter. He says, "This application of Paul's words not only attaches a meaning to "law" he did not intend, but it also perverts his meaning." Doubtless John Carter is highly regarded as an exponent of Scripture, but he surely displays a certain arrogance in thus laying down what an Apostle did or did not intend. He is entitled as we all are to advance his interpretation, but having regard to the shifts he has used to defend it he might well be a little more diffident in doing so.

He tells us,

*"Clearly by the law of sin he means the impulses towards sin which mark human nature."*

If Paul meant this how was he able to say he had been made free from the law of sin? He had not been made free from his impulses, nor from his supposed defiled flesh. The suggestion is too ridiculous for words.

It is a very remarkable thing that we have only to turn back a year or two to find him printing an article entitled "Made A Curse For Us," in which W.F.Barling attaches precisely the meaning to these two laws which he says Paul did not intended. This is what Barling wrote,

*"Thus while by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, both the Jew and Gentile were made free from the law of sin and death pronounced in Eden, the Jew in addition needed emancipation from the curse of death which the Law of Moses placed upon him as distinct from the Gentile."*

The question arises, was W.F.Barling here perverting Paul's meaning, and if so why did John Carter print it? Or has John Carter been forced, by the logic of his own false premise that natural corruptibility is the Adamic condemnation, not only to propose an utterly inadmissible distortion of Scripture, but also to give the lie direct to the most prominent Christadelphians, starting with Dr.Thomas and in diminishing order down to the last named.

An even more astounding example of fast and loose adaptation of facts to suit his arguments is in his use of the passage which he quotes on page 295 (October 1953) to prove that Dr. Thomas taught, like Carterdelphia, that the only thing we inherit from Adam is a mortal and sinful nature. He wrote, "Dr. Thomas says in Elpis Israel,

*"Having attained the maturity of their nature men become accountable and responsible creatures. At this crisis, they may be placed by the divine arrangement in a relation to his word, etc."*

This certainly seemed to support the Carterdelphian affirmation that the only thing which stands against men before God is the personal guilt resulting from the weakness of our supposed sinful nature. We knew or felt fairly sure from what we remembered that Dr. Thomas had an infinitely better understanding than this, and we turned up what he actually



wrote in Elpis Israel. We found that John Carter had selected his passage with some care, from page 117, commencing in the middle of a paragraph and finishing before the end of it, and that the sentences both before and after the portion he has picked out are in exact accord with the view John Carter is combating and express the truth which he denies.

Here is the context of the passage he has quoted, showing that Dr Thomas recognized the legal aspects of Adamic condemnation. He wrote, "But men are not only made, or constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam, but they become sinners even as he by actual transgression." Then follows the extract quoted by the Editor, which is, of course, an enlargement upon the last phrase, dealing with actual transgression, and this is followed by the conclusion, again containing the two aspects but which, for obvious reasons, John Carter does not quote, "Thus men are sinners in a twofold sense, first by natural birth, and next by transgression."

Thus contrary to what the Editor affirms, the Doctor clearly taught the same two aspects as the Advocate and all honest expositors must recognize. If as he says, it is only for our personal sins (i.e. actual transgressions) that baptism is required why did Dr. Thomas introduce first the fact that men are constituted sinners by the disobedience of Adam? The answer is because he had a better understanding of the matter than those who falsely claim to follow him and who prostitute his writings in a vain effort to conceal the cracks in their facade.

On the opposite page (116) to that from which John Carter's extract is taken, Dr. Thomas lays down the foundation of his argument in a statement which utterly confounds what John Carter has said on pages 245-9 and 295-6 and which convicts him personally of the most flagrant dishonesty in claiming that Dr. Thomas supports it. Here are his words,

*"By the constitution of the economy into which they were introduced by the will of the flesh, they were constituted transgressors (note that) before they were able to discern between right and wrong."*

The character in "Alice in Wonderland" who said, "When I use a word it means what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less," was a model of literary propriety beside John Carter, who can make his authorities prove just what he chooses - neither more nor less - irrespective of what they actually say. Surely in all conscience the time has come for Carterdelphians to honestly confess that they have long since ceased to accept the Doctor in these matters and to discontinue to call themselves, by the name he invented. Or perhaps they will choose rather to expurgate or suppress Elpis Israel as they have done other works of his.

So far we have confined the issue to a comparison between what the early Christadelphians held to be the significance of baptism and what Carterdelphians say to-day. It is affirmed that the only thing which stands between man and God is the fact of our personal sins; that baptism is for the purpose of getting forgiveness for these, and then, provided our good works outweigh our evil at the day of judgment, Adamic condemnation will be removed by the change to immortality.

It is truly amazing that such a view can be seriously put forward to-day by Carterdelphia as the Gospel as we have shown it is in complete conflict with Dr. Thomas, who recognized that man's need of salvation arose quite irrespective of either his sinfulness or his



righteousness. One might expect, and forgive, such half-baked nonsense in an ignorant missionary, but in a community who regard the Bible as inspired it is unforgivable. Have Carterdelphians never heard the word “alienation”? Has justification by faith no more a meaning for them? If baptism is, as John Carter says, necessary solely on account of our personal sins, what are we to make of the fact that Christ submitted to it? If it is as he says, “for the remission of sins - always,” why were those who had been baptised by John the Baptist for repentance and remission of sins baptized again? Why did Jesus say to Nicodemus, “Ye must be born again”?

The answer to these questions can only be found by recognizing that the reign of sin is a matter of law, not of physical nature, and that the ceremony of baptism marks the liberation of a person from a state of legal condemnation. So long as he is in that state, what Paul terms “bondage to sin,” he is without hope; his deeds, whether good or bad, matter not one iota. He is neither guilty nor not guilty, but in a legal position in which he will ultimately perish. The primary purpose of baptism is to bring him scripturally to life so that his probation may begin.

We can here prove and illustrate this now by showing that John Carter is wrong in his facts in saying

*“Baptism is into Christ for the remission of sins - always.”*

For example we can turn up a number of Scripture references to baptism where no mention is made of remission of sins. Instances are Mark 16:15,16, Acts 16:33, Romans 6:3-6, Galatians 3:27, 1 Peter 3:20,21. Its absence in these cases does not, of course, prove the contrary but it certainly proves John Carter’s assertion false.

What should carry more weight for Christadelphians are the facts of Dr. Thomas’s own baptism. It is fairly generally known that he was originally a Campbellite and baptised by Walter Scott, but later he came to realise that because of his defective understanding, that baptism was invalid. It is instructive to turn up and read what he has to say on the point.

On page 152 of “His Life” we read,

*“We have heretofore supposed that if a man believed that Jesus was the Son of God, that He died for sins, was buried, and rose again, according to the Scriptures, and was sorry for sin, and ceased to do evil and was baptised, etc., for the remission of sins, he was in Christ.”*

This definition of the requisites of acceptable faith and of baptism covers all that Carterdelphia regards as involved in the baptismal rite. Dr. Thomas had been duly baptised “for the remission of sins.” Yet here is the marvel and the problem which John Carter has set himself –

“Dr. Thomas came to the conclusion that he was an unbaptised man.”

Why?

We are all well aware that at this time the Doctor was occupied with the realisation that the true hope was of a future Kingdom on earth and he was unaware that his beliefs were defective in other directions as well; that does not in any way alter the effect of the facts - that



he had been immersed for remission of sins and suddenly realised that he was yet unbaptised. We present the problem to the Editor of "The Christadelphian."

The case against him is still further strengthened when we consider the circumstances of Dr. Thomas's rebaptism;

*"Accordingly the Doctor asked a friend to accompany him to the water, and there addressed him in the following terms: I desire you to immerse me. All I ask of you is to put me under the water, and pronounce the following words over me, "Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, I baptize you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." I don't ask you for any prayer or any ceremony, etc."*

And the observant reader will note that he did not ask for any mention of remission of sins either. A curious set of coincidences altogether, if John Carter is to be believed. His first baptism specifically for remission of sins - invalid. His second, the baptism in which Dr. Thomas placed his faith, no mention of sins at all.

It will be easy to say that the fact was taken for granted, and as we have said we accept that remission of sins is involved. What we affirm, and what Dr. Thomas proves by both his words and his practice, is that what really matters in baptism is the legal aspect. It is an act of faith recognizing a Divinely appointed order in which man is disqualified from approaching God because of sin. This sin was Adam's - the sin of the world. No one is held guilty because of it but - for the purposes of Salvation - note that - for Salvation not for punishment or any evil purpose whatever, but for salvation, all men are included under Adam, and his one sin as the type and representative of theirs.

The effect is that all men in the natural order are excluded from the Tree of Life, cut off from God, and only to be restored to the relationship enjoyed by Adam before he sinned by dying in symbol, in baptism, the death he incurred.

We may perhaps clinch the point and again show the conflict between current Carterdelphianism and the former teaching with a quotation from "Christendom Astray," by Robert Roberts (page 286).

*"They (the Apostles) recognized in it (baptism) a constitutional transition from one relationship to another - a representative putting off of the old man, or Adamic nature, and a putting on of the new man, or Christ, Who is the covering name, in which, when the naked son of Adam is invested, he stands clothed before Jehovah, and is approved in His sight."*

This is another Christadelphian work which will need expurgation in the light (?) of the new apostasy. Can the reader find any reference to remission of sins in this extract as the sole or even one of the significances of baptism? Indeed the whole of Lecture 17, from which this comes, is as complete and conclusive a contradiction of John Carter as will ever be written.

The explanation is that "Christendom Astray" was written - or rather the lectures given - while Robert Roberts was a youth in his 20's and under the early influence of the Doctor's teaching. In his book "Echoes of Past Controversies" H. Fry suggests that as the years passed the roles were reversed and Robert Roberts influenced Dr. Thomas. It seems very likely that



this might account for the prominence of the doctrine of sinful flesh in his later works, whereas it is hardly found in his early writing.

In this connection it is worth recording that the book just mentioned is a painstaking (but vain) effort to iron out the many contradictions in and between various Christadelphian works. Its author was a personal friend of our beloved Brother Bayliss, who was rebaptised at over 70 years of age after confessing to the writer that “he realised that he had been for over 50 years a Robertsite.” He asked Brother Fry, shortly before he died, if he had changed his ideas at all in the years since writing “Echoes of Past Controversies” and he replied that he had come to realise that the so-called Clean Flesh Heretics were right and Christadelphians wrong in their respective views on the nature of man; but he asked Brother Bayliss to respect his confidence “as he was too old and tired for controversy.”

Quoting further from “Christendom Astray,” Robert Roberts says (page 287): “God has required all believers of this truth to be immersed, as a means of transferring them from the dominion of the old mortal Adam to the life giving connection with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven.”

How foolish is the illustration given by John Carter on page 296 in view of this. He says Bible teaching would be accurately illustrated by a large circle representing all mankind in Adam, with a smaller circle inside it representing those in Christ, but still in Adam. Both Dr. Thomas and Robert Roberts knew better than this; that people cannot be under two federal heads at the same time, hence he says believers are transferred from one to the other when they are baptised. Thos. Williams was nearer the truth in his idea of two circles side by side, one containing all in Adam and the other all in Christ, but such a figure makes no allowance for the fact that the vast majority of mankind have no relationship one way or the other because of their ignorance. The truth is that if we take a large circle to represent the whole of mankind then in it must be two smaller circles, one representing those in Adam by enlightenment and the other those who have transferred themselves into Christ by belief and obedience. All in the big circle are descended from Adam and are natural corruptible creatures but they are irresponsible and will eventually perish like the animal creation. All in that big circle who hear the word are placed by it in the Adamic circle and come under the law of the sin and the death (not natural death but death as the wages of sin). If they remain in Adam, instead of accepting the gracious invitation of God, they will eventually be brought forth to suffer the penalty in the second death. If they accept the offer of Salvation they acknowledge the fact and pass through that death in the symbol of baptism, thereby transferring themselves into Christ, whence if they remain faithful, asking for and receiving forgiveness for their sins day by day, they are assured of an incorruptible resurrection.

If a renegade may venture to proffer advice to one in the position of John Carter, it would be that he should carefully consider the wisdom of ceasing to use in the baptismal formula the words “for remission of sins” and reverting to that used by Dr. Thomas and early Christadelphians wherein the emphasis is on the rebirth in Christ. The introduction of those words is a recent innovation which reflects the trend of thought and the gradual loss of the truth. Many young people who are baptised are not conscious of - and probably not guilty of - a load of personal sins; and therefore baptism for remission of sins is unlikely to evoke any very strong mental impression. On the other hand, the realisation of the fact of legal alienation which can only be reversed by an act of faith is a matter of practical appeal to everyone. If the words “for remission of sins” were omitted and attention concentrated on the



entrance into Christ it might be that those involved would be more impressed with the importance of living a life in conformity with their changed status.

Ernest Brady