

“My Life For The Sheep”

The members of the Nazarene Fellowship welcomed the publication of this series of articles on the Atonement, as evidence, contrary to appearances, that the leaders of the Christadelphian world are alive to the vital importance of the subject and to the anxiety in the minds of their followers.

As former members of that community and as lovers of truth who hope to share the honours which will belong to those found worthy of the Gift of Life at the return of Jesus Christ, we believe we have nothing that can be lost by a full and frank discussion upon a scriptural basis, of this or any phase of truth. Our only regret is that the rather one-sided procedure which has made Fred Barling both prosecuting counsel and judge in the case, and not allowed the defendant inside the court, has made it difficult for the jury to know what can be said for the defence.

In spite, however, of the inevitably biased and slightly garbled version of our teaching which the writer has given and which, in the course of this reply we shall try to correct, without either mincing words or, we hope, transgressing the rules of fair advocacy, we are able to record that he has so far succeeded in making the Christadelphian position clear that some of his readers have seen the wisdom of renouncing it. In so far as it has been a courageous and spirited attempt to deal with a real problem, it has been for many a relief from the genteel insipidity with which “The Christadelphian” fails to distinguish itself, except in name and format, from a dozen other denominational journals; if that courage had been matched with an equal weight of judgment and sincerity, the gravity of the errors to which we shall direct attention in the following pages might have been perceived, when we think both writer and editor would have decided to stick to their pedestrian moralising.

PART ONE

The articles commence with a series of statements comparing the opposing teachings, and while we give the writer credit for an attempt at a fairness we have not hitherto been shown, there are a number of points we could not pass without correction or amendment, so that we hope anyone who wants to know what we teach will go to our own writings and not accept hearsay. For example, Fred Barling concludes with a summary, under three heads, of what Nazarene views imply; the first and second of these will be dealt with at the appropriate point in our reply; the third says *“That there exists a personal devil.”* The writer says this is indignantly denied, and that being the case - and we emphasize that we do not, nor ever have held such a belief - we cannot see what purpose is served by attributing it to us. Surely, having been cast out as heretics, there are sufficient crimes against us already; why attribute to us a foolish idea which he knows and admits we do not hold? Perhaps it is just an Aunt Sally prepared in advance so that we can see how straight he can throw!

He states at the commencement that in certain essential respects the beliefs of the Nazarene Fellowship are no different from those of Christadelphians and several examples of this agreement are given. This is not altogether surprising when it is understood that our teachings are based on the Bible, which we accept as the inspired revelation of those things concerning the Kingdom and the Name. The points upon which we differ are those where Christadelphians have strayed from the Bible and followed man-made constitutions and statements of faith. It is a strange fact that we can produce from the writings of Christadelphian statements which prove that every one of the basic doctrines which we hold and which they reject, were originally or have at some time been held or advanced *(See end note 1). Fred Barling says both parties believe that God deals with men on the Federal Principle, i.e. including all in one. It is true that we hold this to be a fundamental truth essential to an understanding of the Gospel; but prominent Christadelphians, including John Carter, deny it.

The Federal Principle has to do with Law and applies only in the legal and doctrinal sphere; it determines whether a man is IN Adam or IN Christ and has nothing to do with nature, heredity, or the physical law of reproduction, and while it is over all mankind, it is not operative on all. The one sin of Adam introduced this Law of The Sin and The Death and it becomes operative upon all those who are

responsible by reason of enlightenment. If a child dies, it is the result of natural causes or misfortune, and not because of Adam's sin nor because of the Federal Principle, since where there is no law there is no transgression and sin is not imputed (John 15:22). The Gospel is concerned with people who have attained to years of discretion and reason, and once the Law is known a person is responsible and comes under the Law of Sin and Death.

The application and the importance of this principle can be seen from the fact that by repentance and obedience, men are removed from the Federal Condemnation in Adam into the Federal Redemption in Christ, and after baptism, as a symbolic suffering of The Death, they are no longer under condemnation (Romans 8:1) or in bondage, but free (John 8:36) and uncondemned and able to rejoice in the certainty of their salvation if they endure faithfully (John 5:24). Christadelphians ignore the legal, and only application of the Federal Principle, and make it the basis of the sinful flesh heresy, applying it to the physical state of corruptibility which includes responsible and irresponsible alike. So that we have to enter an objection against the claim that we are agreed on this question.

The second point on which it is said we are in agreement is that all men inherit and are redeemed from Adamic condemnation. Here again we are obliged to demur and point out that although all are descended from Adam, Adamic condemnation is a legal matter depending upon individual responsibility and knowledge of Law. In article 6 (page 106) he says of us again, "*inherited bondage is accepted without a murmur.*" We challenge him to produce any argument or statement of ours to justify this. The term "inherit" implies the receiving of something by birth: we do not "inherit" the Law of Sin and Death; we are born under it but we are not amenable to it until by enlightenment we become responsible. This is known as being "called."

Similar objections will have to be made against other misleading assertions concerning our teaching, which indicate that Fred Barling has not properly grasped the arguments he is opposing. He has quoted us extensively, but we feel we have a legitimate cause for complaint in that he has not given a single reference to his sources and some are so obviously misquoted or paraphrased as to give a completely false picture. Truth and error have been so subtly blended that a line by line analysis alone would do justice to it and separate the wheat from the chaff, but we think it will be possible to demonstrate the truth quite adequately in a less exhaustive examination. For the benefit of readers who may not have the articles at hand, or who may be unfamiliar with the questions at issue, we will set out in tabular form the opposing views :-

Christadelphian	Nazarene Fellowship
1. Disobedience defiled human flesh and caused man to become a dying creature, sinfully inclined.	1. Disobedience alienated man from God and brought him under legal sentence of death
2. This was the penalty of sin which Adam incurred and finally suffered when he died, aged 930.	2. This sentence was remitted and man allowed to live his natural span of life
3. All descended from Adam inherit this wholly evil nature, making them inevitable sinners and doomed to death in Consequence	3. The sentence passes upon all those who come to knowledge, but is remitted individually upon repentance and faith.
4. This Sin-in-the-flesh, which makes obedience impossible and the punishment of death just.	4. there is no such thing as Sin-in-the-flesh, and therefore obedience is possible.
5. Jesus, being the Son of God, was specially strengthened to enable Him to overcome His evil Nature.	5. Jesus received no special power. He was made and tempted in all points like we are.
6. His death was an exhibition of what was	6. His death was the actual penalty

due to sinful flesh.

incurred by sin.

7. It was necessary for Himself, as a son of Adam and under the same condemnation,

7. It was for us alone. As Son of God He was free from Adamic condemnation.

8. Redemption is future, a prospect only to be realized after resurrection

8. Redemption is a present reality. "Now are we the sons of God."

It will be readily seen from this comparison that there are wide and fundamental differences between us. We reject completely the theory that the flesh which God created very good was changed to what is called sinful flesh; we reject completely the theory that Jesus needed redemption and that God punishes with death every individual of the human race on account of Adam's sin; we believe that these ideas are traceable back to the apostate doctrine of Original Sin and that they are destructive of truth and inimical to true holiness.

Before commencing our examination of Fred Barling's arguments we will point out some of the leading problems which he would have to dispose of in order to establish his case:-

- (a) If men are born with sin in their flesh, on what just principle can God punish them for being sinners?
- (b) If human flesh is inherently sinful, how did Jesus manage to live a perfect life?
- (c) If the object of the crucifixion was to destroy sinful flesh, what was the purpose of the virgin birth?
- (d) If Jesus' death was necessary for His own salvation, how can it be termed a sacrifice for us?

As we proceed it will be interesting to see how he builds up a facade of plausible verbosity, while at the same time very skilfully avoiding plain answers to these simple questions. We know that many Christadelphians have studied his work carefully in the hope of finding solutions to doubts in their minds, but have found their perplexities increased rather than lessened. This is because he has not given, and dare not give, straight answers, for if he did the terrible implications of his theory would become obvious to "the rank and file" and they would turn from it as from poison.

But even supposing he could have removed these difficulties, before his task was complete, he would need to give a reasoned and coherent explanation of why the violent death of an innocent man was necessary for salvation. If he had succeeded in doing so, he would have been the first Christadelphian who has, and we, like his own brothers and sisters, would have welcomed it, and, supposing it met the facts we could then weigh it against our present view and choose the one which in our judgment most clearly and effectively exhibited the love, mercy and justice of the Eternal God.

It turns out, however, that he has no explanation, and the only justification for the title chosen is his concern to prove that Jesus Himself needed redemption and that His death was inevitable for that reason. So far as explaining the principles underlying the Atonement goes, he succeeds no better than those in whose steps he is content to tread. More serious, however, than his failure in this respect, is the character of the statements with which he seeks to sustain his case. It is our considered opinion that they do not fall far short of blasphemy.

At the end of this first section we are promised "*an authoritative interpretation of Genesis 2:17*" but this never materializes and it is only in the last section that any attempt is made to meet our arguments. We think it more than likely that Fred Barling found that to give such an interpretation would have finished him off almost before he had begun; but his method is rather clever. He has developed his theory in the first four sections, but has kept back all the difficulties and dealt with them as isolated subjects in his last five sections. If he had dealt with them as he should have done, in their proper context, the reader would have spotted obvious flat contradictions, but his cunning device of keeping the knotty points well separated has enabled him to make mutually hostile statements without much danger of being challenged.

He avers that the Old Testament evidence regarding the meaning of the threat of Genesis 2:17, "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,*" is compressed into the third chapter of Genesis, verses 14-19. Now this is a very important subject, in fact, since it deals with the basis upon which all God's subsequent operations are based, it may truly be said to be the most important matter in the Bible. Are we to believe that all the evidence as to what it means is compressed into six verses? It would be very remarkable if it were true, and might account for the wide diversity of the views that prevail as to the nature of man and the meaning of redemption. But we shall show that it is not true, but utterly false, as a few simple facts will prove.

There is an abundance of evidence in the Old Testament bearing on the subject, all consistent with our teaching, and most of it quite against Fred Barling's theory. We can only conclude that such cursory dismissal of the whole of the Old Testament and the almost indecent haste to get to the New is an indication of his suspicion that the less said the soonest mended. He has made the mistake common among orthodox religious teachers, of passing over the Old Testament after having selected his text and jumping directly into the deep end of the Pauline epistles. This is like starting school amongst the infants with alphabet and slate, and moving straight into the senior class. We shall repair the omission and gently escort him through the intervening standards, so that, with a grounding in the elementary principles his mind will be prepared to cope with the mathematics and sciences of the upper forms.

It is affirmed that our contention that the penalty of sin is a judicial death is unreasonable; that what Adam incurred was a process of physical corruption destined to end in natural death; and that all the evidence on the question is contained in Genesis 3. We shall consider his treatment of these six verses later; here, we would ask whether the following is not material evidence:

(1) The actual wording of Genesis 2:17; "*in the day... thou shalt surely die.*" Of them selves, these words do not point to a gradual process. They might possibly carry the meaning alleged and if, as Fred Barling asserts, there is no other information given us except that in Genesis 3:14-19, we might agree to differ. But we will do what our critic has not done - look a little further afield and compare Scripture with Scripture.

There are some ten other passages where the same Hebrew expression occurs and in every one a judicial or summary death is indicated. If the meaning he wants to attach to the words is legitimate, we might expect to find say half of them capable of bearing it, but if the reader will look at the examples he quotes on page 146 he will find there is not one where a natural death by age or decay is intended. He says there that we affirm that "*surely die*" always signifies "*a suddenly inflicted death,*" but this is untrue; we affirm that "*thou shalt surely die*" indicates the threat of a judicial death, by whatever means it is carried into effect, and cannot mean natural death. But the addition of the words, "*in the day that thou eatest thereof,*" is definitive and rules out completely the possibility that a gradual process of corruption can have been intended.

For the sake of brevity, we will examine only his strongest proof, the one passage which he says is in no sense a threat of violent death. Numbers 26:65; "*The Lord said. They shall surely die in the wilderness.*" Fred Barling's comment is, "*We are left in no doubt as to how the sentence was put into effect. This was a threat of certain death, but in no sense of violent death.*" Was it not? Yet twenty and four thousand died violently following the Moabite idolatry (Numbers 25:9), fourteen thousand and seven hundred in the plague after Koran's rebellion (Numbers 16:49), not to speak of the two hundred and fifty whom the earth swallowed up (Numbers 16:35). Were these natural deaths? But even if it could be shown that the majority died of old age the passage still proves our case and defeats Fred Barling. There is a perfect parallel between the certainty of the death intended here and the death intended in the Edenic Law. Here it is, "Thou shalt surely die in the wilderness," and there it was, "Thou shalt surely die in the day thou eatest." For the former to be carried out literally they could be left to the operation of natural laws; in the latter case it could only have been carried out by the infliction of a violent death. In each case, the words, "*Thou shalt surely die,*" carry the implication of the certainty of death, and as surely as the one was executed by them perishing "*in the wilderness*" so surely, had not a way of deliverance been provided, must the death in Eden have been executed "*in the day they disobeyed.*" But that would have been another story.

(2) The significant fact that after the transgression a violent death was in fact inflicted, not upon Adam, but upon the animal, with whose skin he was clothed. If one chooses to see no more significance in this than that the skin was required as a covering, there is an end to it; though if that was all that was involved, why did not fig-leaves serve the purpose? Surely the more important fact is the death which necessarily preceded the use of the skin as a covering; we shall show from his failure to observe the importance of this fact that W.F.B. has not grasped one of the fundamental facts of the Gospel – that Redemption from Sin and forgiveness of sin are two separate and distinct matters and the one must precede the other. Our insistence on the legal aspect is made the occasion of a constantly recurring reproach and complaint, but because we are obliged to emphasize the legal aspect as opposed to the orthodox and mistaken idea of physical condemnation, we do not as he implies overlook the moral aspect. It is simply that it is not necessary to the pursuit of our case against Christadelphian doctrine. In proof of this we reproduce the following extract from the pamphlet, “Jesus my Substitute”:- *“justification is typical and anti-typical, and it has a legal and a moral aspect. The legal is represented by the expression “made righteous” (Romans 5:19) and the moral aspect by the statement that by works a man is justified, and not by faith alone. Neither legal nor moral justification can exist without bloodshedding; the legal must precede the moral, and both legal and moral must precede the bestowal of eternal life.”*

Thus it is untrue and misleading to call our view a purely legalistic interpretation, since we recognize as fully - and perhaps more fully than our opponent, since we believe it to be possible of achievement - that a high moral standard is required in one who hopes to attain to eternal life. But the issue between ourselves and the Christadelphians is concerning the purpose and reasons for the sacrificial death of Christ; we maintain that there is an all-embracing answer on just, legal principles which exhibits the mercy and kindness of the Almighty and the Love of Jesus Christ; they assert that there is no explanation possible apart from the destruction of filthy flesh. To introduce the moral issue is to confuse things that differ and put the cart before the horse, for redemption, the legal aspect, took place before the individual had any moral standing whatsoever. “For God commendeth His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for the ungodly.” To return to Adam, the simple and obvious purpose of the slaying which preceded the covering was to be an object lesson designed to show Adam what he had incurred, and the clothing with the skin was to be a constant reminder to him that he had forfeited his right to live and that apart from the love and mercy of his Creator he must have perished.

(3) The institution of the rite of sacrifice under the Law as the means whereby acts of disobedience or infractions of the law could be atoned for, must surely have some foundation in reason; there must be some purpose or principle underlying the detailed provisions made; unless we are prepared to regard it as the purely arbitrary choice of God having no specific meaning or lesson to convey. Those who hold this view are faced with the difficulty of explaining why God should have chosen to associate forgiveness with sacrifice and bloodshed, and, seeing they are incapable of advancing a plausible reason they must surely feel that it would have been a better demonstration of His loving kindness to have chosen some method which involved none of the cruelty and violence of sacrifice. But when it is understood that in making his offering, the repentant sinner was confessing the fact that in strict justice his own life was forfeit, but that because He is merciful and not willing that any should perish, God will accept the life of the animal instead of the sinner's, there is something the mind can grasp. It was not that God had any delight in the slaughter of a dumb and innocent creature (*“obedience is better than sacrifice”*), but the life of a man as a reasoning and intelligent being was infinitely more valuable, and if it could be saved, and be brought nearer to God and a fuller conception and appreciation of His attributes, then the suffering involved was justified.

On the contrary view, if it is held that the penalty incurred was a process of gradual decay and that that penalty was actually suffered by the sinner, there can be nothing more pointless than the association of sacrifice with forgiveness. The same applies with even greater force when the sacrifice of the great anti-type is considered; if Adam, as a sinner, suffered his own penalty, what was the point in Jesus suffering for sinners? This is where and why Christadelphianism fails in its appeal to true emotion and sentiment, for not only do they deny any real sense in which Jesus did suffer for sinners, but in their abhorrence of the idea that He suffered in our stead as a substitute, they go to the length of spending their strength to prove that His death was for Himself and thus remove from His sacrifice that very altruism and selflessness which it was designed to demonstrate and which is its sole justification.

(4) There is the cognate fact which ties up the preceding facts and clinches the argument; that it is laid down (Hebrews 9:22) that without bloodshedding there can be no remission of sins. As with (3) if we conclude that this is a meaningless and pointless dictum, it does not indicate a very high appreciation of the wisdom of the One who made it, nor upon the intelligence of those who can see no further than that they must accept it blindly and unquestioningly. Blood is the life fluid, the link between the raw materials of life - the chemical elements of the air, the soil, food and so on - and the physical organism which manifests mind and personality. The life is in the blood and life belongs to God, a fact which had to be recognized in that blood was not to be eaten or shed wantonly; but God said, "I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls."

Here again, if we will allow our minds to work at all we are taken back to Eden and the incurrance of a judicial death, involving bloodshed, which could only be escaped by an acceptance of that principle and faith in a substitutionary animal sacrifice pointing to the final expiation by the perfect equivalent. For if Adam, as a sinner, deserved in strict justice to suffer death by execution, but in the mercy of God was spared the infliction of that penalty, there is every reason, for the upholding of justice, why Jesus his brother should voluntarily suffer it in his stead.

This then, very briefly, is the evidence which is not confined to Genesis 3, but which is of the very pith and marrow of the Old Testament and very much to the point; it would be very interesting to see how it is disposed of on the theory that the penalty of sin is the gradual decay we term natural death, and it is an illuminating commentary on Fred Barling's extensive treatise that he does not so much as refer to its existence. There are other arguments; for example, never once is natural death referred to as a punishment. On the contrary, it is often a rest, a deliverance or a sleep. Was Moses' death a punishment? Or Daniel's? "*Thou shalt rest and shall stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*" When Balaam cried, "*Let me die the death of the righteous, let my last end be like his,*" was he looking at death as a punishment? Whereas, whenever death was prescribed or inflicted as a punishment, it was a judicial death involving bloodshed or violence.

We can now turn to an examination of the proposition advanced that Genesis 3:17-19, condemned and punished Adam by causing him to become a dying creature; we are told (page 39) that the curse "*affected Adam and Eve physically;*" (page 82) "*their nature was vitiated*" and given a bias to evil" (page 40) which "*takes a man inevitably to the grave.*"

Now it is admitted that Adam was a living soul or animal creation; that he worked in the Garden and required food and rest and was told to be fruitful and multiply before the transgression, so that he can have been neither more or less than a natural corruptible creature like all the other forms of animal life; in short, the same as we are to-day. Neither Genesis 2:17 nor 3:19 proves that his nature was changed in order to cause man to "*become a dying creature.*" Fred Barling uses the word "mortal" as if it were synonymous with "corruptible," but there is good evidence and the fact is acknowledged by Dr Thomas that primarily it has a legal meaning, i.e., subject to death by law, legally dead or under sentence of death. Thus a man might be corruptible (capable of dying) but not mortal (destined to die) or he might be both. When man was created he was just the same as he is now from a physical standpoint; a natural living being with a natural span of life, and apart from some intervention he would ultimately have died. Whether, supposing he had been obedient, God would have intervened and given him an incorruptible nature, we do not know. He might have done; He might not.

Beyond this, the fact that man was designed as a reproductive organism with a blood circulation, depending upon natural resources for the maintenance of life, seems obvious proof enough that the natural order of Creation is not the result of an unexpected physical degeneration consequent upon, or the punishment of, sin, but the basis or material out of which the spiritual order is to be developed. On this understanding there is perfect accord and integration between the facts of the Old and the New Testaments, as also between the facts of Science and Scripture. Whereas the physical condemnation theory which has its origin in the Original Sin doctrine of the Roman Church, leads to the impossible conclusion that something went wrong with the purpose of God, necessitating a miracle to reduce to "very bad" what God had already created "very good," producing confusion and contradiction and making the Plan of God a "mystery" which no one can understand.

It is not denied that there were consequences which followed the sin of Adam; what we affirm is that these were *not* “*the implantation of a physical law of decay*” or of “*sin-in-the-flesh,*” but were designed to show how mercy commenced to operate even in Eden and that if it had not been so all flesh would have perished.

There is a parallel in David’s case; his sin was forgiven and his life was spared, but God told him He would bring evil upon him. In a similar way, the typical redemption delivered Adam (and in him the whole race) from perishing as a result of disobedience, but the exclusion from the Garden and bringing forth children in sorrow (under the law of sin and death) were evil results of the sin. The ground (“Dust thou art”) cursed for Adam’s sake has a far more poignant application in the mental and moral sphere than in the purely literal. We are the last to deny the latter, but if we limit our view to the literal and natural and overlook the spiritual which is behind it and which it is designed to illustrate and typify, we shall have a very feeble conception and be obliged to swallow a lot that we can neither understand nor account for.

PART TWO

In dealing with Genesis 3:18 we are told that the curses pronounced upon the serpent, Eve and Adam were the means by which God carried the sentence of Genesis 2:17 into effect, and it is necessary (for W.F.B.) to prove that these curses physically affected the parties concerned.

The serpent is first dealt with, and though an important factor and, in the record quite as prominent as Eve or Adam, it is dismissed in four lines, while in the development of the curse as it affected Adam and Eve, four columns are scarcely sufficient! These four lines, however, contain the significant admission that “*the words addressed to the serpent may be metaphorical.*” He realizes that there are several very serious objections to the literal physical application of the curse upon the serpent; dust is not literally the food of serpents; they probably never did walk upright and discuss the pros and cons of Divine law; hence he will admit that the words may be metaphor. Yet in the same context, when he comes to Adam and Eve, there is in his mind, no question of a metaphorical application; a physical change is essential to his theory and a physical change there must be. The fact is that there are things in the words spoken to Adam and Eve quite as obviously incapable of universal physical application as anything said to the serpent.

Then we are told that Eve was physiologically affected by the curse so that she suffered the anguish of travail and agony in child-birth. This calls for a little closer examination than W.F.B. appears to have given it. Before it could be regarded as established, it would have to be shown that there are good grounds for believing that apart from Original Sin, childbirth would have either been painless or non-existent, and, if the pangs of travail are to be regarded as a part of the punishment which Eve brought upon her sex, it would have to be shown that such pains are universally experienced and are also an unmitigated evil.

The first cannot be proved of course, since in the primal state no children were born, but presumably man was capable of feeling pain or it would not have been necessary to put Adam to sleep in order to operate upon him; and the fact that they were told to be fruitful and multiply proves that they were physically constituted the same as men and women are to-day. So that the process of bringing to birth would involve the same muscular and physiological changes in Eve as it does now, though we can fairly assume that it would be normally as easy and natural a process as it still is for some women in many parts of the world.

Whether the pains attendant on the process are wholly good or wholly evil, we should prefer to leave to the judgment of those who have experienced them; we can say, however, that if, as we suspect, mother love is rooted in the pangs of travail, they must be good in some degree; we incline to the view that they are to be regarded neither as wholly good nor wholly bad, but as natural. They are evil to the woman who is suffering them, though they are forgotten in the joy of motherhood, but they are part of the organization of nature as a whole, which is, for its purpose, very good. The effect of many of the laws of nature, which in their operation may produce sorrow, suffering, and calamity, and thus appear evil and harsh to the individual, can be seen to be serving a good purpose for creation as a whole and providing very effectively for the progress and development of life and character.

So that the supposed physical change in Eve must be regarded as unproved and having weighty objections against it; and when it is noted that the Bible speaks of bringing forth, not like W.F.Barling, "*in agony and anguish*," but "in sorrow;" and when it is recognized that even God cannot "*multiply*" something which did not already exist, it seems sensible to reject the facile and shallow view which satisfies the Roman Catholics who uphold it consistently by enforcing an unnatural celibacy upon their priests, and look for something more in harmony with the conception of an all-wise and all-loving Creator.

In dealing with the effect of the sentence upon Adam, the writer fails completely, and the entire lack of foundation for the theory of a physical change is apparent. He says the earth was cursed: did this change Adam's nature? He says it was to bring forth thorns and thistles; did this defile his flesh? He says man was henceforth to eat bread in the sweat of his face; are we to imagine that he never perspired before? He says that for the first time his return to the ground was mentioned; what is the evidence that this "mention" changed his flesh from very good to very bad?

After this masterly marshalling of the facts, not a single one of which has a bearing on the point he is trying to establish, he coolly concludes, "*Thus in his case also the sentence was physiological in its effects.*" He has not produced, nor is there in Scripture, a shred of evidence that there was introduced into human flesh "*a sin principle which works out dissolution and decay*" and "*gives man a bias in the direction of evil.*" And at the same time as he is making these gratuitous assertions and failing to produce a word of proof, he has the cheek to talk about "*the precise testimony of Scripture.*" In all that was said to Adam there is nothing to justify these assumptions and the facts ail go to prove the truth of our contention that sin is transgression of law and that its consequences so far as man is concerned are of a legal and moral character.

The author quite rightly says that our conception of what is entailed in Genesis 3: IP- 19 determines our interpretation of several N.T. passages. It does more; it determines our whole conception of the Plan of God and our appreciation of the love and mercy shown therein, and if, as we have indicated, he had allowed the O.T. to guide him in his interpretation of the New instead of forcing his sinful flesh theory on both, he would have arrived at a better understanding. He says that our first parents "*becoming aware of good and evil, their sin was of permanent moral effect;*" we can agree here. He says it also had permanent legal consequences; we can agree here also. But when he says the curses affected Adam and Eve physically, we ask him why he has produced no proof. It is essential to his theory that it should be so, but it is not essential as we have shown to a proper understanding and appreciation of the purpose of God, and as the weight of Scripture and reason is against it, the theory should be rejected.

If, starting with the serpent, it is considered that the literal things in Eden were types and symbols, the natural things which illustrate and prefigure the spiritual, no one would be led to the foolish conclusion that "*it was their physical nudity of which Adam and Eve were ashamed.*" The record tells us that they were "afraid" because they were "naked" not ashamed of their nudity. The N.T. gives us the key - nakedness is figurative language implying a consciousness of sin, while clothing is a type of forgiveness. In the same way it gives us the key to who and what the serpent was when it tells of that "generation of vipers" and of "your father the devil, a murderer from the beginning."

The serpent typified the subtle mental processes of minds working in opposition to the will of God, which proceed on the lower instincts (the belly) and feed on the dust (devouring men, creatures of the dust). The words addressed to Eve did not speak, as does W.F.Barling, of "*the agony of childbirth,*" but of "*sorrow*" consequent upon the knowledge that as a result of disobedience her children were brought forth under the law of sin and death. In the case of Adam, the only objection he can advance against our teaching that sin resulted, not in a physical change, but in a changed relationship to God, is the fact that he was excluded from the Garden. It is said that if, as we maintain, Adam was forgiven and the sentence was not inflicted, he ought to have been restored to his former position in Eden. This is to overlook the fact that while the redemption was complete in a legal sense, it had first to be ratified by the actual payment by Jesus Christ of the price, of which the life of the Edenic sacrifice was only a token, and the re-entry of man into the Paradise of God is the glorious and still future event for which the whole creation groans and waits. To construe the fact that Adam was not instantly restored to the communion he enjoyed in the primal state into an argument that God must therefore have exacted the uttermost farthing of the penalty is to ignore the obvious facts of the doctrine of redemption. There is no conflict between the facts that Adam

as a repentant sinner was forgiven and reconciled to his Father, but that he had to experience a period of probation to fit him for eternity and await the time when his debt would be paid for him by one who could spare the price.

The same thing is true of those who are brought into relationship with Christ to-day. We have been purchased by His blood, without money and without price; it was done for us by our Saviour "while we were yet sinners;" we could not by any means redeem ourselves. Yet we have to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. To show how unfair W.F.B. is to charge us with seeing only a legal aspect, we quote a further extract from "Jesus my Substitute;" "*man is legally justified when he is baptized into the sacrificial death of Christ; but he will not be morally Justified at the tribunal of Christ unless his actions shall have conformed to the will of God.*" (A.L.W.).

The further matters in the second section are designed to prove that Adam and all his posterity suffer the penalty of death on his account, but that the effects of the penalty are nullified by the resurrection. This is a very serious misstatement but it is very easily shown to be utterly false. He quotes 1 Corinthians 15:21 and says that here "*resurrection is the antithesis of death.*" This is absurd; the true antithesis of death is life; the correct antithesis of resurrection is non-resurrection. He is confusing the means with the end, and as he makes this point the basis of a lot of his argument, we must show in some detail why and how he is off the lines.

In the passage quoted, "By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead," the Apostle is proving the fact of the resurrection and simply states that as THE Death came by one man (Adam), so THE Resurrection came by one man (Christ). The greater truth is that Christ brought Life and Incorruptibility to light and made it possible to man by His sacrifice, and this includes the lesser truth that Life, for those who die, is to be through resurrection. He is dealing with resurrection as the means of salvation and Christ's own raising as the proof or seal set by God upon the fact of who and what He was.

W.F.Barling's reasoning can be proved wrong both positively and negatively, thus; resurrection cannot be the antithesis of death because (a) some will escape death who do not have a resurrection; (1 Thessalonians 4:14), (b) some will have a resurrection but will not escape death (Revelation 20:6).

An attempt is next made to prove that it is natural death which is the great enemy and not, as we maintain, the judicial death which will be inflicted upon sinners (Isaiah 66:24, Revelation 20:14). We have reasoned that natural death should not be regarded as our worst enemy, but rather as a wise and merciful provision whereby multitudes of people could pass through a span of living experience and suitable characters be qualified for an eternal existence in a perfected creation. The requisite conditions for such a scheme are that the individual life should have a beginning, a period of growth and development to maturity, and an end. No one so far has succeeded in drafting a better plan for this purpose than that designed by the Almighty when He established the natural order of creation and made man in His own image. Nor has anyone yet succeeded in proving that, if we except the evil which has resulted from man's own greed, selfishness and ignorant interference with the balance of nature, the natural order is for its purpose anything else but the same very good arrangement that God made it in the beginning.

Unless they are prepared to maintain that it would have been wiser and better to have made man incorruptible in the first place, those who hold that natural death is our worst enemy, should be prepared to suggest a better or more humane way of terminating the individual life than the imperceptible decline and final slipping away which is normally, and far more commonly than is generally supposed, the experience of death. It is a shame that religious teachers should implant in the minds of people a dread of their natural end; it is worse that they should teach that it is a punishment due to Adam's sin. Fear is man's worst enemy; death is often a happy release (Job 7:15). Jesus says (Matthew 10:28), that we should not fear him that is able to destroy the body, but we should fear him (the adversary - Diabolos), who is able to destroy us utterly, since if we remain in his power we shall perish.

A most extraordinary piece of reasoning is the statement that if Adam was corruptible before he sinned there could have been no point in laying him under the threat of a penalty of instant violent death. On this hypothesis, W.F.Barling says, "*an experience which would have befallen him in any case became*

an enemy to him only because he was due to undergo it violently some 900 years earlier than if he had remained obedient.” When we read this we puzzled over it for some time, wondering how anyone could make such a strange statement. As we write, the former leaders of Germany are lying under sentence to death by hanging at Nuremberg; what would they give for the bare chance to live out their natural life and be delivered from a dreaded execution? The occupant of a condemned cell would see a vast difference between the infliction of the penalty and his freedom; one is certain and summary death, the other is LIFE - even though for a definitely limited (but uncertain) span. It is only necessary for the reader to imagine himself in Adam’s place, ashamed and afraid and realizing the penalty he had incurred to understand the vast difference between being put to death and continuing to live until he returned by natural laws to the ground. And beyond this, did he not know that if he were put to death as a sinner he would perish; whereas in life he had HOPE, being redeemed and having in the promised Seed the assurance of Everlasting Life if he was faithful?

When it is considered how vastly relieved was Hezekiah when his life was extended only fifteen years, it is really strange that Fred Barling asks us to believe that there was no particular difference in Adam’s case between living his natural life of 930 years and suffering the penalty on the day he disobeyed. But leaving aside altogether the question of years or life-span, is there no difference between natural death and summary execution? Would our Saviour have sweat as it were great drops of blood if the prospect before him had been the death which is common to humanity? Surely it was the mental anguish of seeing the awful hour approaching, the anticipation of the physical suffering, the violent cutting off in health and strength which a penal death involved, which was so dreaded and so dreadful. This was the death incurred by sin which our Redeemer suffered for us.

This section concludes with the statement *“the death which all humans die is assuredly that over which God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* This is so small a part of the truth as to be almost a falsehood. Jesus did not die to prevent us dying, but to prevent us perishing. If the purpose of Christ’s sacrifice was to give us the victory over the death which all humans die, then it has failed, for we still die. The real victory and the triumph of the Cross is that we should not be hurt of the second death - the death for sin - in other words that we should not perish. Natural death will not prevent anyone having eternal life; it is not a punishment; it is not the great enemy. Death the last enemy is that death which came into the world by sin and those who are under its sentence have not perished yet, even though they be dead; for they are to be raised and judged and rewarded, like the righteous, according as their works have been.

PART THREE

The third section commences with a quotation of Romans 7:18, “I know that in my flesh dwelleth no good thing,” which the writer says means for Christadelphians *“that human flesh is wholly evil.”* Before proceeding to show why this meaning which they choose to put upon it is wrong, we would ask, “Is it true that human flesh is wholly evil?”

Even supposing the verse were actually referring to the physical flesh, should we be justified in going beyond what it actually states, that no good thing dwelleth in my flesh and use it as if Paul said, “I know that in my flesh dwelleth every evil thing,” which is the implication of the statement that human flesh is wholly evil? If that is the meaning of the verse we should expect it to be borne out by other statements of Scripture, which we do not.

Instead we find no justification whatever for the assertion that human flesh is wholly evil. It was created very good and there is no record of its having been changed; as the medium through which life is manifested it is neither worse nor better than the Creator made it; it is quite unscriptural to speak of flesh as being either good or evil in a moral sense. It can be healthy or unhealthy, but it cannot be sinful or righteous. A man can be good or evil, but his flesh is no different. If a man’s body can be holy, the Temple of God, clean, undefiled, etc., how can his flesh be wholly evil? We are justified then in looking for an alternative explanation of what Paul means when he says that “In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;” and we commend to the reader expositions of Romans 7 by ourselves and others, and

admissions of their own leaders from time to time, showing that here Paul was speaking not of his literal flesh but of his unredeemed state.

To support his case the writer makes much of the terms “the outward” and “the inward man” and seeks to show that “the outward man” is the supposed physical sinful flesh while “the inward man” is the spiritual part which hungers and thirsts after righteousness and he asserts that it is the conflict between these two opposing forces which Paul is depicting in Romans 7.

Let us see, however, if these terms are always used in the way suggested. Psalm 5:9, “Their inward part is very wickedness;” Psalm 62:4 “They bless with their mouth but they curse inwardly.” Matthew 7:15 “...but inwardly they are ravening wolves;” Matthew 23:27, “But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which outwardly” appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.” These do not bear out the assertion that the inward man means that part of him which hungers and thirsts after righteousness or that the outward man means the flesh or physical body. Anyone with eyes can see that the distinction is between the actions and the professions. The truth is that the inward man is the mind or disposition of the out-ward man; we see the outward man, which can be handsome and noble or mean and ugly, but such outward appearance is no guide to the inward man, or disposition, which can only be judged by actual behaviour and may often be the exact reverse of what we should expect from outward indications. As the Apostle says in 2 Corinthians 5:16, the outward man may be perishing - or wasting from disease or privation, but the inward man can be renewed by imbibing the spirit day by day; but this does not prove that the inward is always good or spiritual: the inward man of an evil man is evil, though by his pious mien we might think he was good; it depends on what is in the mind.

Thus even when Paul was a Pharisee and unredeemed and as he came to realize afterwards, an enemy of Christ, he could as he says in Romans 7, delight in the law of God after the inward man (in his mind) while at the same time, in doing things which were contrary to the spirit of that law (e.g. persecuting Christians) he made his members instruments of unrighteousness and found that in spite of all his Pharisaical professions he was still in bondage to THE Sin and THE Death. Dr.A.Clarke has a high reputation for textual accuracy and sensible exposition and says, “To say that the inward man means the regenerated part of the soul (mind) is supported by no argument. If it be said that it is impossible for an unregenerate man to delight in the law of God, the experience of millions contradict the assertion... The inward man always signifies the mind.”

Next we have some play on the word ‘good’ in order to prove that Paul meant that his literal flesh was full of evil. “*Jesus the sinless similarly declined the title Good.*” In reply we simply ask what is the connection between the title taken to themselves by the hypocritical Jewish leaders and declined by Jesus and the filthy flesh He is alleged to have had? In the ultimate sense God is the source of all good and the only good and this was the truth Jesus was laying down. God dwelt in him and he went about doing “good” (Acts 10:38). The record of Creation tells us that everything that God made was very good. The writer’s argument is that the very good thing which God created sinned, while Jesus, in whom like Paul (according to W.F.B.) dwelled no good thing was sinless. A strange reversal of logic and reason.

According to the writer’s reasoning there is nothing good. Yet we are told “Every creature of God is good” - 1 Timothy 4:4. “There is nothing unclean of itself” – Romans 14:14. The truth is that the word good in its underived sense can only apply to God; but that does not mean to say that everything else is evil. A thing can be good of its kind, like the ‘good’ sheep and oxen that Saul spared, though they were accursed in the sight of God. We cannot admire the intelligence which can produce such arguments with the object of proving that Jesus was defiled and that Paul can be transformed in personality and still be carnal and the servant of sin. If his reasoning were sound it would be impossible to explain the uselessness and foolishness of Paul’s exhortation in Romans 6. Jesus said no man can serve two masters. W.F.Barling says he can and gives the Apostle as an example saying, “*Physically Paul remained sold under sin, since with the flesh he continued to serve the law of sin.*” We wonder how he would succeed in defining his charge against the Apostle under the heading of “disorderly walk” and whether ecclesial action ought not to have been taken against him; for remember he exhorted his brethren: “Be ye followers of me” - and all the time he was sowing to the flesh!

It is stated that the “outward,” the physical man can be carnal, sold under sin and serve sin, while the other part of man, “the inward,” the personality, has been bought and cannot do what it would. We have no hesitation in saying that a more unwarranted and wilder misrepresentation of the truth as taught by Paul and every other Scripture writer could hardly be imagined, and the argument advanced in its support leads directly to the orthodox idea of a regenerated “soul” temporarily tenanted a sinful and defiled body over which it has only partial control!

Do we need then to preach a sermon to Christadelphians on the text “By their fruits ye shall know them”? A man can only be Judged by his actions; however pious or noble his ideals, unless they are applied they are worth nothing. Of what use is good faith without good works? If a man does evil he is evil, whatever his thoughts. The truth is of course that if a man has a good mind (inward man), he will do good, for “as a man thinketh in his heart so is he.” It is utter nonsense, not to say unscriptural, to argue that a man can be at the same time both evil and good and no attempt by W.F.B. to introduce an artificial division between the body and the personality will succeed with those who read their own Bible. “Can a fountain send forth sweet water and bitter?” “His servant ye are whom ye obey.” It is true that Paul had both members and mind but it is a wicked libel to say that he served the devil with the one and God with the other. “Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness.” Romans 6 proves that the same members can either serve sin or righteousness, but they cannot serve both at the same time. It is an impossibility. Jesus Himself tells us “Ye cannot serve two masters,” while Romans 7:6 shows that Paul belonged to Christ and that he served Christ in newness of spirit. He had put off the old man and his deeds and put on the new man. But he had not put off his literal flesh otherwise he was a dead man when he wrote it! What he had put off was a legal relationship to sin which manifested itself in his members as wrath, anger, malice, blasphemy, etc., and he had put on a new relationship which was likewise manifested in his members as love, kindness, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering (Colossians 3:8-12).

We are told that it is ludicrous to imagine that we can substitute “unredeemed state” for “the flesh.” Let us try it in the passage he cites and see how comical it looks, Romans 7:25. “So then, with the MIND (as a Pharisee, blameless, Philippians 3:5,6) I myself served the Law of God, but with the flesh (in the unredeemed state UNDER the Law of Sin and Death) the Law of Sin.” There is not much to make fun of after all; and the verse is very certainly more in harmony with Scripture teaching and commonsense in this form than as construed by W.F.B.

Let us turn the tables for a moment and read his ideas into a couple of texts from the same chapters. He says (page 52) “Clearly therefore Paul is talking in Romans 7 of his literal flesh.” Romans 7:5 would read then, “*For when we were (note, past tense) in the literal flesh, the passions of sins...*” This would mean then that Paul was no longer a man but a spirit. Or take the parallel passage in Romans 8:9, “*But ye are not in the literal flesh but in the spirit.*” Obviously nonsense.

If “the flesh” means, as Fred Barling affirms, the literal body, then when Paul says they were not in the flesh he must have meant they were disembodied spirits - if there are such objects. It is quite clear that the true sense is “*But ye are not in fleshly bondage (the Adamic or unredeemed state) but in spiritual freedom (in Christ and thus redeemed).*” The conditional phrase “If so be the spirit of Christ dwell in you,” supplies the evidence of redemption, not as he affirms, the cause of it; if the spirit of Christ does not dwell in a person and manifest itself in his character, it is evidence that his redemption is an illusion.

Acts 8:23 Paul is reiterating the truth which he lays down in Romans 8:1, that those who are in Christ are no longer under condemnation or in bondage to sin, which has no meaning for those who hold that bondage is an inherent physical principle which cannot be removed this side the grave. When he tells the saints “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit,” our friend replies, “*Nonsense, Paul; we are still in the flesh and we still serve sin; we cannot help it and neither could you.*”

Let us take a further example of this wonderful reasoning and see to whose view the term “ludicrous” is the more applicable. He has told us on page 52 “*Clearly therefore Paul is speaking of his literal flesh,*” this is a precise statement and leaves no doubt about the matter. Yet if it is so clear, why on the very next page, when dealing with the very same term in the same passage, is it necessary to say, “*Believers at Rome were yet described as being no longer ‘in the flesh;’ such a statement clearly refers to*

their moral state.” This is a good example of Fred Barling’s double-tongued speaking; if it is so clear that Paul is speaking of literal flesh in the one place, how can it be equally clear that he is talking of a moral state in the other when he uses the identical words?

We can sympathize with him and understand the necessity for him in his present dilemma to be able to shift his ground rapidly from the moral to the physical, but we must point out to him that he is wrong in both cases. Paul is referring neither to their physical nor to their moral state, but to their LEGAL position; as he might have suspected had he paid less attention to the Statement of Faith and more to the announcement with which Paul opens his argument in Romans 7:1-4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become DEAD TO THE LAW by the BODY OF CHRIST.”

PART FOUR

Under the heading “The Death of the Cross,” the writer approaches the heart of the subject. The skill with which the essential ugliness of the doctrine of Sinful Flesh has been thus far concealed and its crudities and contradictions glossed over had prepared us for a cunningly contrived defence of its impact upon the Sacrifice of Christ. We expected to find an explanation of its purpose which superficially at least would not violently offend against reason and revealed truth, even though we knew it was foredoomed to failure like every other Christadelphian attempt in the same direction. Instead we find ourselves witnesses of the most amazing and disgusting exhibition of Scripture twisting and subtle misconstruction we have hitherto encountered.

The object of course, is to prove that Christ was Himself under condemnation and personally deserving of death and destruction. This is no surprise to us, who have long realized the implications of Christadelphian teaching, though it is seldom expressed in the unequivocal terms W.F.B. has used, but we know that it has been something of a shock to many of his brothers to learn some of the things the Statement of Faith commits them to.

He cites for his purpose five passages from Paul’s epistles; four of these are exhortations to the recipients, by the example of Christ’s obedient life and sacrifice, to change their behaviour and develop characters befitting those who have been redeemed at such terrible cost. It would have been little use exhorting them to change their physical nature; and Paul did not do so. But observe! Since Jesus never at any time needed a moral change it is an outrage to apply these passages to Jesus and argue that because the Romans and the Galatians, who were sinners, were exhorted in figure, to crucify the flesh with its lusts and affections, therefore Jesus had to do it literally. A child could see the fallacy here; and not many children would write anything so silly.

That leaves us with one passage which has any bearing whatever, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and here, attention to the construction of the verse will enable anyone to see that W.F.B.’s use of it to prove that Christ had defiled flesh is quite indefensible. The employment of the past tense in the phrase “*Who knew no sin*” and the present tense in “*hath made him to be sin for us*” proves that before he was made sin he knew no sin. So that if, as he asserts, being made sin refers to His being born with sinful flesh, then He must have pre-existed, because He knew no sin before He was made sin. One has only to ask the question how, in the same verse, we are made righteous and note that it is by the imputation to us of someone else’s righteousness (Romans 5:19) to recognize that it is in exactly the same way that Christ was made Sin, i.e., by the imputation to Him of our sinfulness. In other words, at 33 years of age, after a life which knew no sin, He was made a sin-offering for us.

Before proceeding to answer in detail the staggering assertions he makes in this section we must answer two specific charges which he makes against us.

(1) He says that the theory we hold (briefly, that Jesus, by suffering in Adam’s stead the Judicial death which he incurred by sin, died as a substitutionary sacrifice, literally for the Sin of the world, and thus delivered in principle the whole race and, in fact, all those who deliberately accept Him as their Saviour), is inadequate because it omits to indicate why crucifixion was the particular form of violent death which Jesus suffered.

This is an omission we gladly rectify, while at the same time feeling that we were justified in leaving so simple a matter to the commonsense of our readers. Jesus was put to death by crucifixion (a) because it involved bloodshedding; (b) because that was the particular form of penal death employed at that time; (c) to fulfil certain prophecies, e.g., “not a bone shall be broken;” (d) because it was a prolonged, public and particularly agonizing form of execution. There may be other reasons, but of one thing we are sure, and that is that the one advanced by Fred Barling is not among them. We wonder just where in Scripture he finds that Christ’s death signified “*a cutting off of fleshly desires*” or “*a renunciation of his body prone by nature to sin*”?

(2) He says our theory does not recognize “*the moral principles operative in the crucifixion.*” He well knows that our chief complaint against the Christadelphian conception of the Atonement is that when it is analysed, it violates every principle of morality and justice and attributes to the Almighty an arbitrary and unreasonable procedure which we should despise and rightly resist in even a human judge or ruler. He also knows that the sole purpose of our work is to show those amongst them who are open to learn, that The Atonement can be understood and that when the right principles are applied there is to be seen not only a wonderful demonstration of law and justice, but the very highest moral principle conceivable, self-sacrificing love. So, knowing this, and feeling probably not entirely unconscious of the truth of our contention, in his smart lawyer-like style, Fred Barling turns the charge back on us. Well, we are very ready to put the matter to the test at any time and under any fair and equal conditions, to decide whose view recognizes moral principles and whose is utterly immoral and iniquitous.

Before we follow his argument, we will set out a selection of the phrases (from pages 65-66) which he applies to Jesus and upon which he bases his case.

“He bore our sinful condemned nature.”

“He was a sinless bearer of our serpent nature.”

“He had to submit to a ceremonial condemnation of his nature.”

“Human flesh... is a body of sin in the case both of sinners and sinless.”

“God accepted Christ’s body of sin.”

“Death dissolved Christ’s association with the cause of iniquity.”

Whatever justification Fred Barling fancies he has for these statements, we cannot complain that they are hazy or indefinite, and the writer leaves us in no doubt whatever about his conviction that Jesus was actually and literally of a defiled sinful nature and was deserving personally of death and destruction. He recognizes and says that Jesus was morally without sin, but in his view that fact in no way affects the fact that He was under condemnation. We do not admit that even if it were true it would provide an adequate or even partial explanation of the Cross; on the face of it, if Jesus had a defiled nature and succeeded in overcoming it and living a perfect life, justice and morality would seem to suggest that it was a case for glory and reward, not public condemnation and degradation.

At this point we must remind the reader and emphasize again that we do not argue or imply that Jesus was in any way different as to His nature from any other human being. He was the same in every respect and experienced the same kind of weakness and temptation as is common to mankind. What we affirm is that neither Jesus nor any other man was or is “sinful flesh” or “serpent nature” and that a just God will not and could not punish anyone for their nature or require the death of any man because of his ancestry.

If Fred Barling’s premise, “*That human flesh is wholly evil*” were sound, then his conclusion that Jesus’ flesh was wholly evil would be correct; for there is no dispute that Jesus’ flesh was the same as all other human flesh. But in that case how could it be true that He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners?

The true facts are as we have shown, that there is no such thing as an inherent principle of sin in the flesh, and that it is never the flesh but the character and legal standing of a man that matters. Even supposing, for the sake of argument, that there was an inherent evil principle, surely it would provide no acceptable explanation of the Atonement to say that God determined to put Jesus to death as a public

demonstration of what was justly due to sinful flesh. Fred Barling can talk about ceremonial condemnation and ritual destruction till he is black in the face, but simple souls will still ask the question, "Was such a death justly due to Jesus, seeing He was morally guiltless?" and they will still feel that for one who represents God as acting in so unjust and cruel a fashion to talk about moral principles is hypocritical humbug.

But Fred Barling goes even further in his determination to bring Christ under the wrath of God. Some 40 years ago it was written by one Nazarene author now asleep, that Christadelphian doctrine made God and the Devil equal partners in the man Jesus Christ and we have hitherto regarded the charge as perhaps an overstatement. It appears however that the writer knew what he was about, for here we are presented in the leading article in "The Christadelphian" for May 1946, page 66, with the astounding teaching that the Diabolos was literally and actively in Jesus. However incredible this may sound, the reader should not jump to the conclusion that we are making a polemical misrepresentation of the writer, as he has done of us in imputing to us a belief in a personal devil well knowing we do not hold it. He should refer to the actual article where he will find our charge amply Justified.

But the matter is of such far reaching importance that we think it advisable to substantiate the charge immediately with verbatim quotations since copies of the magazine in which they appear are likely to become scarce.

Page 84 "*The Scripture leaves us in no doubt where the true Diabolos resides and operates. In order that by His death He might destroy Diabolos Jesus partook of flesh and blood.*"

This says, if words have any meaning, that Diabolos (or the Devil) was in Jesus. It could not be more explicitly stated, but to drive home the horrid nature of the suggestion we set it out in the form of a syllogism, thus:-

W.F.Barling affirms:

- (1) The Diabolos resides and operates in flesh and blood.
- (2) Jesus was flesh and blood, therefore
- (3) The Diabolos resides and operates in Jesus.

This must be startling enough to W.F.Barling's brothers and sisters, but the matter is made worse yet, for we are told, page 84, "*Ephesians 2:2 can only mean that Diabolos is, in Scripture, an active spirit of disobedience, hostile to God's law.*"

Again, no words of ours should be needed to convince right-minded people that there is something fundamentally wrong with any theory or interpretation which can produce the conclusion which inevitably follows from this premise. We again put this argument in the form of a syllogism:-

W.F.Barling affirms:

- (1) Diabolos is in Scripture an active spirit of disobedience hostile to God's Law.
- (2) Diabolos was in Jesus, therefore
- (3) An active spirit of disobedience hostile to God's law was in Jesus.

One only needs to recall the fact that not even the envy, the jealousy and the hatred of His contemporaries could convict Jesus of sin and that He did always those things which pleased His Father, to see what arrant nonsense this is. However clever a man may be at building up a plausible case by stringing together like onions unrelated facts and isolated texts - and we acknowledge the writer's pre-eminence in this respect - it is impossible to play fast and loose with the laws of logic and reasoning, and thus with a couple of selections from his own statements we have proved that his fundamental conceptions are, to say the least hopelessly wide of the mark. It is questionable whether they are not in the nature of blasphemy.

As we have faithfully followed his argument and quoted his own words with the strictest regard for accuracy, we cannot have misrepresented him. Have we then perhaps carried his argument further than he intended it to go? Let us see. This theory of the Diabolos being an active principle of evil at work in the

constitution of Jesus is advanced with complete confidence as the explanation and mark you the only explanation - of why His death was necessary. His flesh had to be destroyed because the Devil was in it. We complete our case against W.F.B. on this head by quoting from page 66 the following statement:-

“The crucifixion... demonstrated conspicuously that ‘the prince of this world’ was ‘cast out,’ that is that sin, in the flesh was being publicly condemned and nullified.”

This is conclusive proof that it is believed and taught that the devil was in Jesus and that the purpose of the crucifixion was to destroy the devil by destroying the body in which it dwelt. This is what Fred Barling, and presumably also John Carter who published these incredible articles, expect people to believe.

As has been already shown, there is no sin inherent in human flesh; Jesus was in no sense unclean or defiled nor does the Scripture justify or ever apply the terms to Jesus. Was there then any sense whatsoever in which it can be said that Diabolos, “the prince of this world,” was in Jesus. Perish the thought. Our Saviour Himself gives these traducers their answer when He says “The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me” (John 14:30); directly the reverse of what Fred Barling says. Who shall we believe?

How are we to understand then that the prince of this world was cast out, or the devil destroyed, by the death of Jesus on the Cross? It is perfectly simple when it is understood that the devil is the personification of sinful thought or deed and in particular of the first sin, which has the power of death over the race. This sin was taken away or atoned for by Jesus and thus its power destroyed. “Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away The Sin of the world.” (John 1:29). “He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26). The devil was thus cast out of power by the appearance of One mightier, who first overcame him Himself by a perfect obedience, and then delivered those who were in his bondage by paying what they owed. As Jesus said when the disciples returned from preaching the Gospel of Salvation, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

We have still not plumbed the depths of this truly Satanic exposition, for pursuing the same line of argument we are treated to this extraordinary statement:- “Death dissolved Christ’s association with the cause of iniquity.” How far aside from the simplicity of the Gospel has the initial fallacy of physical condemnation taken its exponent now! It would have been interesting had he dealt rather more fully with this theory of death dissolving a man’s association with his body! If this is not immortal soulism we wonder what new name it bears. One wants to ask, “*Where was Christ when death had dissolved His association with His body?*” And in view of Dr Thomas’s declaration that “*passing through the grave cleanses no one,*” why does Fred Barling tell us, “*Jesus rose from the dead exempt from all association with sin.*” Has he renounced the Christadelphian view that Jesus rose mortal and that the body which is raised is the same sinful body that went into the grave? Does he hold that Jesus rose mortal; and if so, was His body still “*the cause of iniquity,*” the “*wholly evil flesh*” which had been “*publicly condemned and nullified*”? Our own conviction, which we give for the reader’s benefit and ask him to consider in the light of Scripture and in contrast to that advanced by “The Christadelphian” magazine is that Jesus was a corruptible body before death, but a spiritual and incorruptible body when He rose; at no time was He a sinful body and His sole association with sin was that our sin was laid upon Him when He died as a sin-offering, bearing for us the penalty of sin. It is also our conviction that to talk of dissolving the association between a man and his body is mere clap-trap, especially from one who professes not to believe in immortal souls and who affirms that Jesus was raised with the same corruptible body which He had before.

Observing however, the direction of the writer’s mind, we can understand how happily he appropriates to his purpose the passage, “As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” We readily agree that there is a purpose in the analogy Jesus uses, but the only parallel specifically drawn is between the “lifting up” of the brazen serpent and the “lifting up” of Jesus. Analogy is useful and instructive used sensibly, but misused it can become a snare; we must not make the mistake of carrying this one so far as to identify Jesus with the venomous reptile, whose poisonous bite brought death, instead of with the image or likeness which Moses erected which brought

life. Jesus likens Himself to this image; W.F.Barling makes Him to be one of the serpent tribe being ceremonially destroyed!

The important fact arising is the same as that given by the Apostle Paul; in Romans 8:3, i.e., that while Jesus was human flesh like all other men, there was this vital difference, that He, being begotten of God, was not born in Adamic bondage like all of human paternity. "God, sending HIS OWN SON in the LIKENESS of Sin's flesh (flesh belonging to Sin) condemned sin (while He was) in the flesh." That is to say, that it was in order that there should be identity of nature and experience and also kinship with His brothers, that Jesus was raised up of the virgin Mary; but there had to be the distinction of origin or we may say, ownership, otherwise He would have been in the same bondage as all the human race and incapable of redeeming anyone. This is why He was begotten by God. The verse just quoted is a key text to the subject of the Atonement, as is the fact of the virgin birth; one who understands these can truly claim to have the wisdom which cometh from above. It is a very significant comment upon W.F.Barling's treatise that while he expends a multitude of words which could have been omitted with advantage to his readers' patience and to clarity, he scarcely mentions these basic matters. He might, for example, have told us what Jesus meant when He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above;" "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin;" "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" "I proceeded forth and came from God... ye are of your father the Devil." (John 8).

These and many passages of a similar kind would have been to the point and more valuable than all the unscriptural philosophising W.F.B. has produced. We have no objection to any writer using his own terms to explain his ideas, but when one applies the terms "*serpent-nature*," "*ceremonial condemnation*," "*ritual destruction*," and other phrases reminiscent of heathen hocus pocus, to Christ, and seeks to explain His death by making Him the habitation of Diabolos, he must not be surprised when we classify him with the Jews, who said "Thou hast a Devil;" Jesus answered, "I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me."

After this diabolical attempt to prove that because Jesus was human nature He was therefore of the Devil, it is with sadness, but not surprise, that we reach his equally misbegotten but long planned goal when he says, "*it follows that Christ's death possessed an efficacy for Himself also.*" In proof of this he directs attention to Hebrews 9:19-23, and asks for the parallelism to be noted:-

- (a) The patterns of things in the heavens were purified with animal blood;
- (b) The Heavenly things themselves had likewise to be purified, but with better sacrifices.

We are of the opinion that had W.F.Barling himself noted the parallelism with the precision it deserves, instead of jumbling up things which differ, he would have sat down and considered before assuming his self-appointed role as prosecuting counsel against Jesus. His comment upon the parallel reads as follows: "*In the case of 'the heavenly things themselves' (i.e., the person of Jesus) such uncleanness was removed when He 'put away sin' by the sacrifice of Himself.*" If his parenthetical definition of "the heavenly things" as "the person of Jesus" is correct, we should be bound to agree that the person of Jesus needed sprinkling because it says the heavenly things must be purified. But if we are going to set up as lawyers we must be accurate as to our facts and correct in their application or the Judge will soon make us look very foolish indeed. One moment's thought might have prevented his uttering such shocking nonsense. There seem to be a number of factors in this parallelism which have escaped his notice completely: (1) In (a) the patterns which were purified were distinct from the sacrifices with whose blood they were sprinkled; never in the Mosaic law were the victims sprinkled with their own blood. (2) In any case, the sacrifice had to be physically and legally clean and sound before it could be offered. (3) But according to W.F.Barling's interpretation in (b) the things purified were identical with the things offered, while (4) the sacrifice in (b) instead of being better than that in (a) was inferior, being itself defiled, unclean and legally condemned. The repeated use of the negative and comparative "but," "not as," "nor yet" and "but now," make it evident that the parallelism is not one of similarity but of contrast, and if he had noted one or two simple matters he would not have made the silly statement that the heavenly things is (or should we say, are) the person of Jesus, nor concluded that the better sacrifices is (or should we say, are) the blood of Jesus.

Presumably even W.F.Barling would agree that there was only one Jesus. Then why does he interpret “the heavenly things” (plural) as “the person of Jesus” (singular). He would also agree we presume that Jesus was only offered once. Then why does he tell us that the “better sacrifices” (plural) refers to Jesus’ death?

One feels justified in expecting from the writer chosen to put forward the case for “The Christadelphian” on a matter of such moment, that he should observe such simple laws of grammatical construction as tense and number, even if as we know in regard to Romans 8:3 most Christadelphians are unable to distinguish between an adjective and a noun in the genitive case (flesh of or belonging to sin NOT sinful flesh). But to bolster up his case, W.F.Barling can make present tense precede past tense and transpose singular to plural, and vice-versa, at his own pleasure; if merely his own pleasure depended upon it, we could allow him to play with his syntax as freely as a child with his bricks, but this man is dealing with matters involving the honour of God and His Son and the “eternal verities,” and he is being read and quoted as an authority. Those who play with such fire are like to get worse than burns! The fact of the matter is he is talking through his hat and has never properly digested the passage.

It should be obvious that it is impossible for Jesus to be at the same time the sacrifice which purifies and the things which are purified. What, then, are “the heavenly things them-selves”? We can identify them from the patterns mentioned in verses 19-21; they were “the book, the people, the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry.” Which of these docs W.F.Barling identify as “*the person of Jesus*”? It is blatant and unscriptural nonsense. The book points to the Law written, not on stones, but on the fleshly tablets of the heart; the people represent the children of the Kingdom to whom that Law is given; the tabernacle of Moses prefigures that Tabernacle Eternal in the Heavens built of Living Stones, while the vessels of the ministry are those chosen vessels who delight to do His Will.

The Sacrifice of Christ has made possible this anti-typical fulfilment of the Mosaic types and figures, and it is His shed blood which has provided the overall Atonement for the Spiritual Israel, and “Hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” These are the heavenly things - primarily we may say the saints in Christ. What a parody of exposition it is which makes “the heavenly things” “*the person of Jesus.*”

And what shall we say of “the better sacrifices” which he says means Christ’s death, and from which “*it follows possessed an efficacy for Himself also.*” If he had gone a little further in the same epistle he might have discovered that there are sacrifices other than that made by Christ and which are “better” than the Mosaic in a very real sense; for example, “but to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” (Hebrews 13:16). Also in verses 12-15 we have both the literal sacrifice of Christ which redeemed and the sacrifices of a broken and contrite spirit (Psalm 51:17) which morally purify. “Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify (not Himself) the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate... By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.” We put the finishing strokes to his exposure of a Christadelphian wresting the Scriptures to his own destruction by quoting Peter’s reference both to the “heavenly things themselves” and “the better sacrifices;” 1 Peter 2:5, “Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” And this be it noted, refers to men and women of flesh and blood, “*wholly evil in their nature and incapable of pleasing God*” according to W.F.Barling. Surely one must be both literally and mentally blind to use this passage in 9th Hebrews to prove that Christ was sinful flesh and overlook the passage in the next chapter, which proves that the only things necessary to make a man clean in every sense of the word, are repentance and baptism. Hebrews 10:22, “And having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

From whatever viewpoint we examine the Christadelphian arguments, objectionable features appear. Some, however, are more obviously untenable and unscriptural than others, and it is by these that we can best judge the seriousness of the errors involved. It is when W.F.Barling attempts to explain how on his theory the justice of God is declared that one sees its real profanity. A man is known by the company he keeps and when we find him constantly on the side of the enemies of Christ, he can hardly blame us if we attach the same value to his opinions as we do to those of Caiaphas.

He asks the question “*How did the crucifixion declare God’s righteousness?*” And overlooking the fact that this is not God’s personal righteousness, for that is axiomatic, but the righteousness which God requires in us and which is declared by our faith in his shed blood, he answers as follows: “*In that Christ possessed a nature under condemnation of death, so that there was no violation of justice in his death. It was not wrong for him to die.*” A more patently false and anti-Christian statement has probably never been penned; it surpasses even John Carter’s infamous “*Jesus merely suffered death.*”

“No violation of justice in His death.” Oh, wise young man! What a pity it is that the Apostle Peter was not so well informed upon “the moral principles which were operative,” for in his mistaken zeal he charged the Jews that they “by wicked hands had taken and crucified and slain a man approved of God among you;” and again that they “denied the holy one and the just and desired a murderer to be granted unto them and killed the Prince of Life.”

Why did God allow it? Was it as W.F.Barling affirms, because such suffering and death was justly due to Him personally? Certainly not! His death was utterly unjust and unmerited from every point of view, but God allowed it to take place because above and beyond the immediate injustice and illegality there was His plan to magnify the law and demonstrate love by a great redeeming sacrifice. The deed was done by the agents of the sin-power acting upon their own volition and from their own interests and was intrinsically a wicked and bloody murder, without justification or excuse. This was Sin, exacting its penalty, Life, from One who was sinless. Why? Because one who was guilty (Adam) had gone free. This was an innocent man receiving the wages of sin - death. Why? Because the one who had earned them would have perished (and us with him) if he had received them, himself.

This is why He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God into their hands, to do to him whatever they listed. God foreknew that those wicked and envious men would put Him to death, but that does not make His death just and right from any point of view and unless we recognize the principle of redemption and sacrifice we shall fall into the same awful sophistries as W.F.Barling. However can he have thought out this one: “*If the death which Jesus experienced were one to which He was not related... God would have connived at the unrequired death of an innocent man.*” That is to say, if God was not a judge legally executing His Own Son, He must have shared the guilt for the murder of an innocent man. Is it any use pointing out to him that there is a third possibility - that the murdering and executing was the work of “wicked hands” and that God was Himself a sufferer in the tragedy of the Cross, that He surrendered His Own Son to the power of the enemy with reluctance and pain and sorrow; that it pleased the Lord to bruise Him not for any pleasure He had in His undeserved punishment, but because only at such a cost and by such self-denial could Eternal Love and pity be shown to man.

The incredible statement, that “*God could lawfully require Him to die*” shows that there is no real conception whatever of the meaning of Christ’s sacrifice as a manifestation of the Love of God, who gave His only begotten Son that we might have life more abundantly, and we have to confess that where the events themselves have made no more impression, no words of ours are likely to have any effect. We can point out the true facts and the errors and contradictions, but where the facts themselves make no more appeal than that he can conclude that it was Just and right and lawful for Christ to die, then we must give up in sorrowful despair.

Even supposing, for the sake of argument, that Christ had sinful flesh and was born under Adamic condemnation, on what “moral principle” could this be held against Him so that “*it was not wrong for Him to die*”? If we were talking of natural death, perhaps, yes, though even so, from the fact that one righteous man was translated that he should not see death because he pleased God, it does not follow. But, surely, he forgets the thing at issue is Crucifixion, the most awful, painful, agonizing death, which even the worst criminal hardly merits. And W.F.Barling is so wrapped up, in his own verbosity that he can tell us “*There was no violation of justice; it was not wrong for him to die.*” No; it was so right, so just, so lawful that we are like to have no lack of modern Judases ready to deliver Jesus into the hands of His enemies. “The Son of Man indeed goeth as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.”

“Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ. For of a truth, against thy holy child, Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, including Fred Barling, John Carter, and many Christadelphians and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.” - Acts 4:25-28 (with an interpolation).

PART FIVE

We have now covered the main features of these articles and all that is now necessary is to deal with some points of detail in the remaining sections. We shall do this as briefly as possible, since although superficially there is an appearance of profundity and any amount of quotations there is a singular absence of ordinary simple common sense and no apparent facility in putting two and two together to make four. We have shown how under critical, but quite simple, tests, the foundations of W.F.Barling’s case crumble to dust and the structure he has reared upon it falls to pieces.

In the fifth section, he deals with what he calls three implications of Nazarene teaching. The first of these is that man’s nature is not constitutionally sinful. This is more than a mere implication of our teaching; we make it as a categorical affirmation of fact and we put it down as a challenge to Christadelphians to prove otherwise.

After quoting Luke 21:34, “Take heed unto yourselves lest... that day come upon you unawares,” he makes the remarkable statement “*From the use of such language one must infer that man is initially disposed to do wrong.*” A better example of non-sequitur would be hard to find. Why ever should we draw such an illogical and unwarranted inference? We will agree that it is easy to do wrong and often more pleasant to the natural man than to do right. But lots of people habitually do good purely for the love of good and without any religious impulse whatsoever. Furthermore, when the mind is enlightened by the Word and influenced by the Love of God, it becomes in time easier and more natural to do good than to do evil. Surely the true inference from this and similar Scriptures containing exhortations to righteousness, holiness and even perfection, is that obedience is possible and that, directly contrary to the inference W.F.B. wants us to draw, there is nothing in man which makes it intrinsically impossible.

There is not the least justification for the statement “there is thus a bias to evil within man,” but having begged the question he proceeds to ask whence this bias originated. “*It must,*” he says, “*either have been implanted at Creation or be the direct consequence of Adam’s transgression. The first proposition is inconceivable; the second states the facts.*” To proceed from such a premise (Luke 21:34, “Take heed...” etc.) to the totally unreasonable conclusion that Adam’s transgression resulted in the implantation of a bias to evil and say that it states the facts is a piece of impudent humbug. Supposing for a moment that such a bias existed and that it came as a result of sin, who but God could have worked the necessary change in human nature?

If it is unthinkable that God could have created man in the beginning with a bias towards evil, is it not equally unthinkable that He would work a miraculous change in man afterwards in order to produce one? If Adam was created without such a bias towards evil and yet sinned, is it not even more unthinkable that God should implant, or cause to be implanted in every other human being an evil principle in their flesh to make it impossible for them to be anything else but sinners? Why make Adam the sole exception? And why suppose a bias at all?

The phrase Fred Barling uses to describe the supposed change is worthy of a little examination; he says (page 82), “*By their voluntary belief in and consequent obedience to the first lie, their nature was vitiated... ever since, this moral corruption has persisted as an evil property of human nature.*” This is certainly a new definition, but we cannot see that it clarifies or improves upon previous Christadelphian explanations. The Oxford Dictionary gives us the meaning; “vitate, v.t. Impair the quality of, corrupt, debase, contaminate.” We are unable to see how belief of a lie or an act of disobedience could impair the quality of or contaminate human nature. But he speaks of “this moral corruption.” Again, the Dictionary gives us “Moral, a. & n. Concerned with character or disposition, or with the distinction between right and

wrong.” How can such an abstract moral quality, having to do with character, become a property of human nature? One should be ashamed to publish such muddled reasoning.

The only propensities there are within man are the natural desires and appetites which are essential for the preservation of life and so long as these are exercised within the bounds of Law they are good and right. When they are allowed to operate beyond what is lawful they become evil lusts leading to sin. It is certainly necessary for the man of God to acquire and develop “a tendency to do good,” but this is not for the purpose of offsetting an inherent bias to evil, but to produce in the natural man a reverence for and obedience to Law. As we know from the record of His temptation, Jesus experienced these natural urges produced by His own mind but they were neither sin nor sinful, for He resisted and overcame them by calling up from the same mind other considerations. Did not Eve find it fatally easy to do wrong - yet according to Fred Barling, the initial bias or moral corruption had not yet “*become an evil property of human nature.*”

It is not a question of whether it is easy to do wrong or hard to do right, but of Divine Law. Ought not Adam to have taken heed, and had he not done so could he not have been obedient? And if we “take heed” cannot we be obedient? The proof of the matter is of course that Jesus, who was tempted in all points like we are, was obedient in all things and without sin, because He did “take heed.” Fred Barling’s own language (“*one must infer*”) shows that this idea of a physical evil principle is a delusion. We have no objection to inferential argument, provided it is based upon logic and takes account of all the factors: but this inference is without foundation, contradicts all the facts and is based upon a complete misconception,

The second implication to which Fred Barling raises objection (page 83) is our conclusion that Christ’s resurrection was not the means of man’s redemption. We have already referred to this matter on page 14 and have dealt with it adequately in our reply to John Carter. Briefly our position is this:- the fact of Christ’s resurrection is the ground of our Hope and the seal set by God upon its certainty. No one has suggested that it is a matter of indifference whether Christ rose or not; it is a fact of equal importance to His death but it has a different purpose. If Christ had remained dead it would have meant that death had justly claimed Him, in which case His death could not have been a sacrifice and our faith would have been vain. If Fred Barling’s assertion that *His death was just and right* is correct, truly He ought never to have risen. But the symmetry and surpassing beauty of the Divine Plan lies in the fact that as a child of God His life came direct from the source and not via the condemned Adamic line; and because by His perfect obedience He ever retained His personal right to that life, death had no claim on Him; He thus had it within His own power to pay our debt; He was able to suffer the penalty in our stead and yet rise again. So that, while Christ’s resurrection is a glorious fact of vital importance to the believer we must not make the mistake of supposing that it lessens or in any way modifies the importance of the fact that it was His death alone which was the price of our redemption. The significance of His own last words, “It is finished” and the rending of the Veil emphasize this truth.

His third point (page 83) is that our view implies the existence of a Personal Devil. He admits that we deny both the belief and the implication, so that we cannot see that the charge materially strengthens the case against us. It remains for the reader to decide whether the view advanced by Fred Barling is more scriptural or to be preferred to ours. He tells us that “*Diabolos must be located in man’s physical constitution*” (page 84), that it is sinful flesh, with its corollary that it was also in Christ (page 66) and in the saints (page 65), where it must remain not only until death but even after they are raised and until the final Judgment.

We believe that the Devil is a scriptural personification of anyone or anything which opposes God; that is primarily of Sin, since all such opposition is sin; and thus it represents the working of the natural mind, either individual or collective, thinking in opposition to the Divine Law, which produces sin. It is our claim that this view meets and harmonizes every use of the terms Devil, Satan, that old Serpent etc., in Scripture and disposes of all the problems associated with the subject. By way of illustration we will emulate Fred Barling and try inserting the alternative ideas in a few representative passages:

Matthew 13:19 “Then cometh the sinful flesh and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart.”
“Then cometh the evil thought and catcheth away...”

John 13:2 “The sinful flesh having now put into the heart of Judas...” “The evil thought having now put into...”

James 4:7 “Resist the sinful flesh and he will flee from you.” “Resist evil thinking and it will flee from you.”

1 John 3:8 “He that committeth sin is of the sinful flesh, for the sinful flesh sinneth from the beginning.”
“He that committeth sin is of the evil thinking, for the evil thinkers sinneth from the beginning.”

PART SIX

In the sixth section (page 104) the meaning of “there is none good” is dealt with and this we have already referred to in Part Three. It is noteworthy that when Fred Barling dealt with the term “good” as declined by Jesus, he gives it a physical application, while when applied to others, he gives it a moral application. He truly says that to discuss one theory in terms of another leads to misunderstanding; how much worse to discuss the same term “good” and in the same theory apply it to the body in one case and to the moral character in another.

If it can be said of even Jesus alone that “He did no sin” then his statement that all are under sin in a moral sense is proved false, for was not Jesus a man? But where is any moral sin recorded against Abel, Enoch, Joseph, Joshua, Caleb and Nathaniel? This is proof that Romans 3:12 does not mean what Fred Barling thinks it does, and that it is he who is wresting Scripture and not rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

He says that if others were righteous they shared Christ’s honour. That is perfectly true; some do share His honour (2 Timothy 2:21, Psalms 149:9), but no man can share the honour due to Him for His sacrifice nor rob Him of the glory which is His as the Son of God who gave His life for the life of the world. If anyone is guilty of the crime of robbing Christ of His honour it is Fred Barling and his friends who teach that His death was for Himself; that if He had not died upon the Cross He would have perished as a sinner, thus denying any real sense in which his death was a sacrifice and making our salvation merely incidental to His own.

What he fails to see - and it is a thing we marvel at - is that moral goodness cannot bring legal justification or redemption to those who are UNDER SIN, (e.g. Cornelius, who was morally virtuous before God by his deeds but who needed something more, i.e., legal justification by knowledge and acceptance of Christ) and unless Christ had been willing to suffer voluntarily the penalty which He alone of the human race neither incurred by sin nor came under federally, He, Christ, would have been the sole exception to the complete victory over the human race of sin and death (John 12:24).

His second ‘touchstone’ (page 105) is the question of whether our redemption is literal or figurative. Here again, to save repetition we would direct attention to what we have written in reply to Islip Collyer’s incredible assertions “*Jesus did not suffer the penalty of sin; His death was not the payment of a debt and it was not on behalf of others.*” (The Christadelphian, August 1945), and here will as briefly as possible point out how the matter appears to us and the more glaring errors and inconsistencies in Fred Barling’s argument.

Our explanation of the matter in scriptural terms is, that by disobedience Adam chose to serve sin (Romans 6:16) instead of God and thus entered into a state of bondage under the power of Sin (Romans 5:21) personified as the Devil (John 8:44) and that the wages of that servitude is death (Romans 6:23) inflicted as a penalty (Matthew 10:28). Law and justice require that before the race can be delivered from that bondage the penalty or debt must be paid. But if it is paid by the sinner himself, he perishes, because his punishment is just and any rights or claims he might have had as an innocent man, forfeited. Thus, unless some means of redemption can be found the position of man is hopeless. This is the situation

(Matthew 18:23-25) in which God Himself comes to the rescue and ransoms the sinner, buying him back by giving His own Son to take his place and suffer the penalty in his stead and for his sake.

The trial of Abraham is the sublime dual object-lesson of the ages by which this literal truth is driven home. When in faith he offered up Isaac and received him in a figure from the dead, we are shown a picture of God giving His beloved Son for the life of the world. When in actual fact Isaac was saved and a ram caught in a thicket killed instead we have defined for us the principle upon which the Lamb of God would literally die as a sacrifice.

We instantly agree with Fred Barling that God alone devised and originated the whole scheme and that it is His decree which gives it effect; we agree that there is no actual third party, a personal Devil, and that bondage is not a literal slavery. The only thing which is not of God in the scheme is The Sin and it is this fact which makes the alienation or bondage a reality and gives the key to the scriptural metaphor of the powers of darkness (sin) battling against the powers of light (righteousness). But to conclude as he does, in the face of all the literal facts in the case, by claiming to have established that “*redemption is a figurative expression for the forgiveness of sins*” is too utterly absurd, were it not so serious, to be considered. Is it not a literal fact that death was incurred by sin? Is it not a fact that apart from redemption sinners will literally perish? Is it not a fact that Jesus suffered a literal death? Is there not a real literal sense in which that death was for us? We know that Islip Collyer has categorically denied this, but as we have shown in our reply to him, one who argues that Redemption is a figure of speech is in effect denying the Lord that bought them and trampling under foot the Blood of the Covenant.

Redemption then, that is, the legal reconciliation between man and God, which was accomplished by the death of Christ, is a condition of forgiveness; it is not a figure of speech meaning the same thing; it is a pre-requisite condition, and until a person has been the subject of redemption he cannot receive forgiveness. This is the significance of the coats of skins, the rite of circumcision, the redemptive shekel under the law, and baptism now. It is emphasized by the history of Cain and Abel, Naaman the Syrian, Cornelius, the rich young man and in fact by every other of the many examples in Scripture of God requiring a recognition of the precise legal principle by the obedient observance of a prescribed mode of approach. One wonders what is being taught now in Christadelphian Sunday Schools, that one who presumably has been through them can write as if he had been reared on the moral pap served up in a C.of E. crèche.

What Fred Barling overlooks in his contemptuous analogy to pawn broking, is that Law is supreme; that even God subjects Himself to the principles of His own Law, for He will not violate Law even to exercise mercy. “For thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy Name.” (Psalm 138:2). Thus when man breaks the Law, he places himself in a position where even God Himself cannot deliver him by an arbitrary act of forgiveness. To do so would vitiate Law and introduce a doubt as to the supremacy and sanctity of the Word which has gone forth and would leave room for doubt as to whether God is in all things faithful and unchanging. Thus, although there is no literal third party, no personal devil, not even a pawnbroker, there is a legal principle of relationship and allegiance involved which derives its force and strength from the ultimate principles of justice and equity. To say therefore that redemption is merely a figurative way of saying our sins are forgiven amounts to a confession that Christ’s death as a manifestation of these principles has no meaning for us; in short that we are without hope and God in the world.

PART SEVEN

In the next two short sections it is the expressed intention to answer some of our reasoned objections against Christadelphian teaching, but we shall show from his own words that they are so well founded as to be unanswerable. There is only one means of dealing with such an “hold of unclean spirits!” and that is to sweep it clean and make room for wisdom to build her house.

We have pointed out that if God by His own action in changing their nature, made men sinful flesh, in fact “wholly evil” it would be unjust to punish them for being what they are made. Fred Barling counters this with the argument (!! page 114) “*that it would be equally unjust for God to forgive men for*

sinning when they could avoid doing so.” Well, well!! He can see no difference between punishing the innocent (his view) and forgiving the guilty (our view); the one he says would be as unjust as the other. We can see now that it was unreasonable to expect him to be able to perceive the subtle distinctions between legal and moral, holy and defiled, right and wrong. We shall have to leave the point with the reader and content ourselves with saying that we would prefer to suffer the second injustice than the first.

We are simply amazed at this suggestion that God will only forgive us for those sins which we cannot help committing; we are expected to accept the view that if it were possible for us to refrain from sin then *“provision for pardon would be the worst discouragement of effort,”* or in other words God would be unjust if He forgave us a sin which we could have avoided. Let the readers ponder this carefully and ask themselves where they stand. Who is able to search his heart and say that he has never committed a sin when he need not have done? For ourselves we are bound to confess that the only sins we have ever committed are such as we could and ought to have avoided, for there are no others; but we believe that the love and mercy of God is such that He will forgive us if - and it is a big “if” - we apply for it in true repentance and in the appointed way, accepting Christ’s death as our covering, and not after the fashion of Fred Barling, who has gone the way of Cain, denying in effect that he has any sins to be forgiven because he rejects the essential pre-requisite.

It appears to us, and we should think also to any ordinary mind, unjust in any circumstances to punish people for something they cannot help; but that is the implication of the Christadelphian view; men are punished with death because they are born with sinful flesh. Fred Barling is quite conscious of the problem; indeed he says it is one any *“rationally minded person”* might raise. How does he answer it - in this treatise which has lasted nine months and consumed 40 columns of the Christadelphian? Simple! Listen! (Page 114) *“It is man’s duty to accept the facts as they are revealed, and not to question their justice, even when those facts are beyond his comprehension.”* We are growing more accustomed to this kind of exposition now; it is the habitual refuge of Christadelphians who find themselves strangling with the knots they have tied themselves. “Peace, brothers! I cannot explain it and you could not understand anyway, because it is quite beyond human comprehension, but we must accept it, because it is in Clause 3.”

It would of course be a bit too raw to leave it at that, so he fills us a couple of columns of texts and tells us, at great length, that the problem is examined by Paul. But even so he can make no headway, for he says, *“In the absolute sense he leaves it unsolved, but... where His ways seem arbitrary or inscrutable. His servants must never challenge or impugn the justice of His actions.”* This is pious piffle. What can God think of people who are content to believe lying counsels which make His ways appear arbitrary and unjust rather than ask themselves if it is not their own boneheaded obtuseness which introduces the injustice and inscrutability?

The particular point he cannot comprehend is how God can justly punish vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, whom He has raised up for the very purpose of making His power known. If it was true that men are born sinful and cannot help themselves it would indeed be incomprehensible. But they are not; the simple point is that the “raising up” as in the case of Pharaoh does not refer to their birth but to their advancement to positions of eminence and authority where the purpose in view can be served. It is not that God creates men evil and compels them like automatons to resist Him in order to punish them, but He chooses for His purpose men who are already willingly sinners or whom He foreknows will develop a sinful disposition, and raises them up into positions where they can be used to further His purpose. God does not need to create wicked men; there are plenty doing it for themselves. *“What if God, willing to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction; and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory”* (Romans 9:22,23). That is to say, they were vessels of wrath and fitted for destruction, but God, instead of wiping them out instantly, endured them with much long-suffering, and in the process gave them extended opportunities for reform.

As evidence of the complete incoherence of the arguments and to show the entire failure of the writer to resolve the problems raised by his own reasoning, we will set out side by side the more obvious contradictions in this single section 7, which consists of less than two pages (114-115):

“He imposes laws which fallen man cannot observe perfectly.”

“But since perfection is only attainable after repeated failure.”

If fallen man cannot observe them perfectly, then perfection is not attainable by any means.

“Adam’s offence rendered his posterity inevitable sinners.”

“All are punished who of unfettered choice love darkness.”

If men are inevitable sinners, where is their unfettered choice?

“Every man is sinfully inclined by nature.”

“God bids men be perfect as Himself.”

If men are sinful by nature, of what use to bid men be perfect? Is it possible or impossible?

“God, in subjecting man to commandments which he inevitably breaks.”

“A person can conquer every weakness.”

If every weakness can be conquered, quote ONE command which he inevitably breaks.

“Men are by nature sinners...for that reason no one fails to offend.”

“God’s punishment of sin is always just.”

It is beyond the wit of any writer to harmonize statements such as these; they simply cancel each other out and leave their author high and dry gasping like a stranded whale. We have never seen such a really exhaustive exhibition of mental confusion in a comparatively limited area of paper.

The answer to our second objection (page 115) we commend to the reader, who, if he will read the passages adduced will have no difficulty in assigning to their proper place the conclusions Fred Barling draws from them. We have pointed out that if Christ was endowed with extra power to overcome His sinful nature, there was no virtue in His obedience and no parallel between His probation and ours. The writer says *“This is not argument but assertion unsupported by facts.”* We do not agree. It is the very essence of argument and it will stand firm as pure logic. If there were any fact or statement in Scripture which proved that the purpose of Jesus being begotten by God was to give Him a special power to resist sin, our conclusion would be correct, there would be neither virtue nor parallel in His obedience. The *“assertion unsupported by facts”* is made by Fred Barling, for he asserts that Jesus had such extra power yet neither he nor any other has succeeded in producing one passage which says so. We on the contrary can produce a number which prove He had no extra power, for we are told He was made in all points like us and tempted like us, that He had the same weakness and the same strength as His brethren.

He pays lip service to this basic truth, but he denies it by asserting *“Christ possessed unique powers;”* *“He was, in important respects different from us. He was made in the likeness of men, but was also in the form of God;”* *“In Him it was not the flesh, but the word made flesh, that dwelt among us. Only of one born miraculously could these things be said,”* *“Clearly, therefore, it required much more in Jesus than ‘natural powers’ to ensure that He did always those things that pleased God.”*

We affirm that it is impossible to hold these views and at the same time to believe that Jesus’ temptation was anything but a farce. We find a remarkable unanimity between these statements and those in which the Apostate Church explains the same things. The Student’s Catholic Doctrine says: *“The Catholic Church believes and teaches that in Jesus Christ there are two natures, the nature of God and the nature of Man... all that He does, all that He possesses, whether as God or Man, must be attributed to the Person of the Word made flesh; for it is God the Son who acts.”* There are such striking agreements between these words and those Fred Barling uses that no one can fail to recognize them as cast in the same mould.

The terms in which he explains Jesus' triumph over temptation completely justify rather than refute our objection, and, if the explanation were correct it would remove Jesus from the realm of common humanity completely and make Him into some kind of hybrid God-man actuated like a puppet on strings. He says "*Thus Christ at birth inherited on the one hand the human urge to disobey God's Laws, and on the other the power to maintain a sinlessness to which His brethren can only hope in measure to attain.*" We repeat, if this unproved statement were true, there would be neither justice nor equity in putting Him forward as our example; He could not have been "touched with the feelings of our infirmities" and it would be open to any poor sinner to reply against God and say that if they had been given the same advantage they could have maintained the same sinlessness; and even God could not disprove it. He has, however, left no chance of anyone making such complaint by making even His Son learn obedience "by the things which he suffered" and pass through a similar probation to that of the one who may be least in the Kingdom.

It is because the early church left these simple truths and involved themselves in unscriptural theorisings that we find the R.C.Church compelled to resort to obscurantism. Here is another sentence from the book just quoted: "*Our finite minds can never grasp this most sublime and profound of all mysteries... it is enough for us to know that it has been revealed.*" Fred Barling does not yet realize that he is taking the same road; all he knows is that he finds himself in the same predicament - and he adopts the same policy:- "*The manner and extent of impingement by the divine will upon the human will which such divine strengthening involved... are beyond man's power to define or comprehend, but they cannot for that reason be left out of account.*" (page 115). It looks as if the woman on the beast has a young daughter riding tandem.

Our view is that Jesus was on the same physical and mental plane as ourselves, made in very fact like unto His brethren, and that His only source of help and power was the same as is open to us, namely, His own mental processes conditioned by prayer and study of the Word. We believe that He succeeded in overcoming sin by a supreme effort of His will to please God battling against the natural inclinations to take easier and pleasanter ways. No doubt the knowledge of who and what He was and of how much hung upon His success was a factor in the case, but while these considerations would, no doubt, increase His sense of the responsibility which was resting upon Him, they would intensify rather than weaken, the temptations to which He was subject and make His humiliation and suffering the more appalling.

The only objection which Fred Barling has been able to produce against this view is that, if Jesus, because He was the Son of God, was the only man in a legal position to redeem, and was also, by virtue of living a perfect life, the only man having the necessary moral qualification, "*then our redemption is in large measure the outcome of a sheer coincidence.*" No, we should not say that it was a sheer coincidence; rather that it hung upon the outcome of a struggle fought by our Saviour daily and hourly and ending in victory on Calvary; it hung upon the slender thread, not of coincidence, but of whether, with the knowledge of who and what He was, He could meet and overcome every temptation and then, of His own free choice, make the supreme sacrifice. We should prefer to concentrate our thought upon the fact that God's love for us was so deep and yearning that He was willing to Give, and Jesus' desire to serve and reveal His Father so earnest and all-compelling, that there is found in the coincidence of the essential qualifications a demonstration of affection and self-sacrifice which is unique in time and space, rather than to reason that their improbability is an argument against their acceptance.

PART EIGHT

The third objection dealt with (page 137) is our contention that if Jesus was Himself under condemnation He would have been unable to redeem even Himself, much less anyone else, and we maintain that the three conditions of its validity which Fred Barling lays down, are in fact, fulfilled and required by the Scriptures. (1) All descended from Adam are under The Sin and are alienated (a legal term) by it from God as shown in Romans 5, and thus all are under bondage. (2) Every man is in literal need of a literal redemption from bondage to sin and death. As we have shown, the literal nature of the act of redemption is proved by the literal death which Christ died. This is past history and no one can deny its literality. The other side of the picture, the literal nature of the bondage will be made evident by future history, when those who are in that bondage will literally receive its punishment, death, and those who

have been delivered from it a literal reward, eternal life. (3) Christ did indeed possess a legally free life and was not in Adam because He was begotten of God (Matthew 17:26. John 8:36). No one has denied that Jesus was Son of Man, i.e., He was flesh and blood and related to the human race, “a root out of a dry ground.” The title has a significance which Christadelphians have not yet learned. Why does Genesis 3:24, referring to the man and the woman say, “So he drove out The Man,” and again in Genesis 2:5, why did God call their name Adam?

We simply ask Fred Barling the question, “Why was Jesus begotten of God?” If He had to be under Adamic condemnation and sinful flesh why was He not Joseph’s son? He could just as well have been strengthened specially and there would have been no question then either of His humanity or His bondage. He cannot see that the whole principle of sacrifice was that the victim had to be the property of the offerer, in this case, God, and in every sense clean and undefiled, so that if Jesus was polluted and under condemnation it would be the only such sacrifice on record and would violate every principle of reason, justice and sense. For a masterly exposition of this phase we recommend a reading of Edward Turney’s lecture “The Sacrifice of Christ” and for comparison, R.Roberts’ “The Slain Lamb.”

The fourth objection (page 137) is that if natural death is the punishment of sin then Jesus’ sacrifice has failed, for we still die. We ask Fred Barling for a single proof that Adam became corruptible because of sin. It is one thing to slip in a reference like Genesis 3:17, but quite another to show what it proves, and we direct attention to what we have written on pages 7-9, also to the words of Dr. Thomas, “The change was moral not physical,” and a similar statement by R.Roberts (These, with other similar passages from Christadelphian works which prove that once upon a time they were a good deal nearer to the truth than they are to-day have been put together in a leaflet, “Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver,” which can be had on request).

The fifth and last objection he professes to answer (page 138) is our argument that if Jesus was personally under the same condemnation as those He came to redeem, then His death could not have been in any true sense a sacrifice or act of voluntary obedience. We have pointed out that if, supposing that Jesus had been unwilling to submit to the death of the Cross, He would have been a sinner and therefore would have perished, then His own eternal existence depended upon His obedience. In that case His own salvation must have been His first concern and we have no means of knowing or indeed any reason to conclude that there is anything in His claim that it was for us. There is no contradiction between Nazarene explanations of a generation ago and to-day, although we do not claim yet to be past the investigating stage; it is simply that in one pamphlet quoted the question is dealt with from the point of view of the price paid, i.e., the life in the blood, while in the other the point of view is the penalty incurred, i.e., a Judicial death. These are two distinct and legitimate phases of the one subject, which fall naturally into their appropriate places and as they are both scriptural we make no apology for them.

When He suffered the penalty which Adam incurred, Jesus paid the price of His life. He was not delivered from the penalty, because the death He had endured could not be undone, nor did He receive back the life which he had laid down for that life was in the blood which was poured out. When He was raised the life He received was the life of the Spirit. This in no way conflicts with John 10:17 that He laid down His (psuche) life (animal life, or breath) that He might take it again. If Fred Barling had taken up his concordance and looked up the uses of Zoe and Psuche he could have saved himself the trouble of writing the last column on page 138. The apostle Peter tells us (1 Peter 3:18) that He was “Put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the Spirit,”

PART NINE

It would appear that by the time Fred Barling reached this stage he had either lost interest or lost heart, for a more perfunctory conclusion would be hard to imagine. He produces a list of eight passages which, he affirms, we wrest in order to prove our case. We have gone carefully through these and in the cases of the 3rd and the 8th we have failed to find evidence in any of our publications of the use of the passage in the way he suggests and as he produces no evidence or reference, we disclaim their use in that way. Regarding the other six, there is not an atom of evidence of wresting; it is a question of whose

application or interpretation is correct and we are quite happy for the matter to be judged by an impartial examination. Fred Barling has a queer idea of what does and does not constitute “wresting.”

Take No. 1. Genesis 2:17, “In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.” If we say this means that in the very day they ate they would surely be put to death and produce ten passages of Scripture where the same phrase is used and means a judicial death, this is wresting Scripture. Fred Barling takes the same passage and without producing a single proof says it means *there shall be implanted in their flesh a physical principle of evil which will bring about their death within 1,000 years* - this is rightly dividing the Word. We have dealt fully with this text on pages 2-4 and here will only reply to his statement, “*Sin made Adam a dying creature*” with Dr. Thomas’s “*We believe that the change was moral not physical.*”

No. 2. Malachi 1:12-14. “But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted...” This again has been fully covered and our application of the text completely justified in pages 16 - 20 and here we will deal with his statement, “*It was never intended that the physical nature of the Saviour would also be without spot*” by quoting from “Eureka,” volume 1, page 278. “*Jesus was an unblemished man, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; for he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.*”

No. 3. John 5:26. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” We do not expect anyone to deduce from this verse that Jesus had a free life; we rely for that fact upon God being His Father and passages like Matthew 17:26 and John 8:36, and have given ample evidence supporting our contention that He was not under condemnation. If free life is purely fictitious the attempt to prove it so from this verse is purely ridiculous, for the life referred to is the Zoe, which was in Jesus and which He wanted us to have more abundantly.

No. 4. Psalm 49:7. “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” It does not take Fred Barling long to prove that we wrest this passage. Dr. Thomas tells us why the blood of Jesus was more precious. See Eureka and Elpis Israel, page 167, where the Dr. uses this verse exactly as we do. So if we have wrested it, so did he.

No. 5, 1 Corinthians 12:3. “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” Even supposing our charge against Christadelphians was unjustified, does that constitute wresting? A gross libel, if it be such, is a different thing altogether. We understand by wresting Scripture, the use of a text in a deceitful or unwarranted way to make it prove or support something it does not. A classic example is Fred Barling’s use of Hebrews 9:23, examined on pages 18 & 19 where a meaning is put upon certain words which not only abuses all scriptural principles, but mangles the context and violates the rules of grammar in the process. We could point to a dozen other examples in the course of these articles, but prefer to leave the reader to use his own judgment on them. So far as the specific charge against us here is concerned, whether it be libel, misrepresentation or wresting of Scripture, we are fully prepared to stand by our former expressed conviction, that to affirm, as has been repeatedly done by Fred Barling as a spokesman for the Christadelphian community, that *Jesus was a bearer of serpent-nature, of sinful condemned nature, as a body of sin, that Diabolos was in His flesh, that His uncleanness was removed and that His death was just and right*, is to call Jesus “accursed” and is the very practice of the idolaters and apostates of the 1st century against whom the apostolic warning was given. And we are now prepared to add this further; that whereas there may formerly have been some excuse on the score of ignorance, now there is none, and that henceforth those Christadelphians who claim to speak by the spirit of God and call Jesus accursed after this manner are reserving for themselves certain judgment.

No. 6. Acts 10:28. “...but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.” We risk the charge of wresting and take the verse to mean exactly what it says. If Peter was not to call any man common or unclean, by what authority does Fred Barling call all men unclean? It is perfectly true that cleansing presupposes defilement, but if that which was unclean can be cleansed by a legal process, or as he says, “annulled,” what becomes of his supposed sinful flesh?

No. 7. 1 Corinthians 10:13. “There hath no temptation take you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation

also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Again we are quite content to be judged on our use of this verse. If it is true that God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear are we wresting Scripture when we say that there is nothing either within or without man which makes obedience impossible? If there were, as Fred Barling asserts, sinful impulses inside us which it is beyond our power to control, would not God be suffering us to be tempted above what we are able to bear? If there is always provided - and that is the promise – “a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it,” what becomes of his “*inevitable sinners*” and his other nonsense quoted on pages 28?

No. 8. 1 Peter 3:21. “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” If he will give us the location of our interpretation of the word filth here to mean “alleged sinfulness” we shall be very interested. We have objected to its use by a Christadelphian in this way and are pleased to be able to express our full and unqualified agreement with the exposition given by Fred Barling; we think he will need to produce some better examples of our evil deeds before his charge of wresting the Scriptures will meet with general approval.

* Note page 1. See our booklet “Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver” by F.J.Pearce.

By way of conclusion, we reprint, by permission, the following letter and a notice from the January Intelligence of The Christadelphian:-

December 4th 1946

Dear Brother John Carter,

Greetings in the Master’s Name.

It is with a feeling of revulsion, not unmixed with a sense of shame, that, as a Christadelphian of over ten years’ standing, I am expected to acquiesce in the unscriptural theorising’s expounded in the series of articles you publish under the title of “Redemption in Christ Jesus.”

I am not at all acquainted with the editorial responsibilities of your magazine, that boasts for its purpose “The preparing of a people for the name of the Lord;” I only know that having a little to do with editorial matters in another direction, I have learned how vital it is to uphold verity to retain confidence and respect for a cause, hence it passes my comprehension how these articles could ever appear in cold print - a lasting testimony to a “creed” which has degenerated into a hopeless and lifeless philosophy.

I am asked to believe, for instance, that “human flesh is wholly evil” (article 3) in flat defiance of Elohim’s statement of Genesis 3:22. “Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know GOOD and evil” and the parable of the Sower (Matthew 13); nowhere has the writer produced a scrap of scriptural evidence to prove his God-dishonouring theory; I am asked to believe that the Master crucified His own “body of sin” (article 4), the Holy One of God in whom was no sin: I am asked to believe that, having once been crucified with Christ in baptism (made a new creature, adopted into the family of God) that I have to go on crucifying myself (article 3), I am to believe that having put off the “old man” and his deeds (page 86, column 1) that the said old man is still battered on me; that I still have “sinful flesh,” despite the fact that I have been made clean through the Word and baptism; that though I have left Adam and am now in Christ, constituted righteous, I cannot be righteous; that I am to believe that Christ inherited a sinful nature akin to the thieves on the Cross (article 4), yet He was without spot and blemish (the writer, by the way, inserting the word “moral” which anyone will challenge him does not appear in the text he quotes); that Jesus had to cleanse Himself before He could cleanse us (page 66, column 2) and unless He did “His entry into His Father’s presence would have been impossible.” But the crowning blunder of the writer has been his wearisome insistence on the two-in-one character of the Redeemer, reminiscent of the Apostate Trinity - a defiled sin-stricken Christ one minute, the next a spotless Lamb.

All this and much more in a similar vein characterizes this hotch-potch of truth and error; it is little wonder then (as I have reason to know) earnest Christadelphians are feeling a trifle uneasy as to where such twaddle will lead them, and in your editorial responsibility for its publication, my dear John, your position is one of gravity in sharing such a partnership.

Under these circumstances I feel I can no longer walk with the Christ of your contributor; I owe my allegiance to a pure and undefiled Redeemer, the Christ of the Scriptures, not the fabrication of a lawyeresque philosophy and a gross underrating by the writer of the intelligence of the reader.

In proof of my sincere belief and entire dissociation from what amounts to unscriptural trash, I have resigned from West Hendon ecclesia, and can only hope that before the Master returns the author of the articles in question will make amends for his sad lapse from the Law and the Testimony.

It would be grand, my dear John, if you would wield your pen, which can be mightier than the sword, for the defence of the Truth; at the moment, it seems like a broken reed, lying impotent and useless while error stains the pages of your magazine.

In a week or two Christendom will try to forget for a brief spell the troubles that beset it, in remembering, however ignorantly the birth of Him who alone can save it from destruction. Is it too much to ask, my dear brother, that as you reflect on the “why” of it all, that you will not in future tolerate in your editorial sanctum, anything but the truth concerning Him?

If you need further evidence of where your contributor of “Redemption in Christ Jesus” has blundered, I will be happy to supply it; in the meantime I sign myself

Your sincere contender for the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus,

Fred C. Maycock.

* * *

- extract from the Intelligence, page 22 “The Christadelphian” January 1947: -

LONDON (West Hendon), Bro.F.C.Maycock, having renounced vital elements of the Faith, ceases to be in fellowship.

W.F.Barling.