

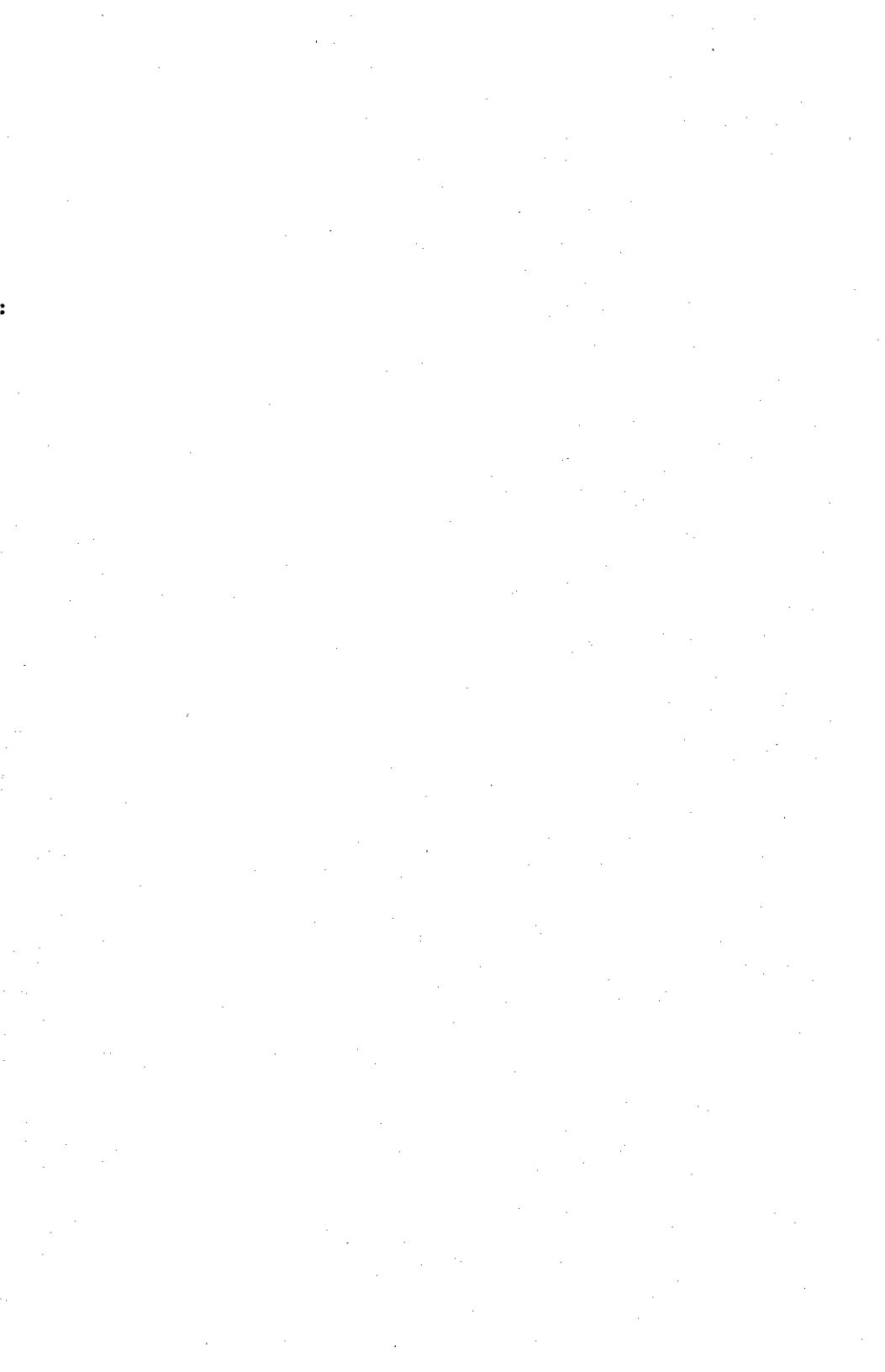
THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

1864 - 1885

THE EMERGENCE OF A DENOMINATION

Andrew R. Wilson B.A., M.A., A.R. Hist. S.

Stoke-on Trent, 1985



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM	3
(a) Definition of the Parameters of this Study	3
(b) John Thomas, Physician and Campbellite - The Early Years, 1805-34	4
(c) Dissension amongst the Campbellites, 1834-47	8
(d) The Birth of a New Sect - 1847	13
(e) John Thomas's first tour of Britain: May 1848-October 1850	15
(f) British Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, 1850-62	23
(g) John Thomas's second British tour - May 1862-February 1863	33
(h) British 'Baptised Believers', February 1863-July 1864	35
II. THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN THOMAS	42
(a) The Development of John Thomas's Theology	42
(b) Biblical Inspiration	44
(c) The Nature of God	50
(d) The Nature of Man, the Nature of Sin, and the Devil	58
(e) Baptism by the Immersion of Adult Believers	67
(f) Ecclesial Organisation	70
(g) The Kingdom of God	73
(h) Thomas's Theology contrasted with Contemporary Baptist Views	77
III. THE HISTORY OF THE CHRISTADELPHIANS, 1864-84	83
(a) 1864-8: Robert Roberts's Authority began to become Apparent	83
(b) 1869-71: The Swansong of John Thomas	87
(c) 1871-74: Roberts and the Renunciationists	92
(d) 1875: A Year of Middle-Eastern Encouragement for the Christadelphians	103
(e) 1876: A Christadelphian <u>Annus Mirabilis</u>	106
(f) 1877: Gladstone, the Eastern Question and the Christadelphians	107
(g) 1877-8: Gladstone, the Christadelphians and Military Service	109
(h) 1879: Christadelphianism Triumphant	112
(i) 1880-4: The Emergence of a Denomination:	118
I Statistics Indicating a Growing Interest in the Views of Christadelphians	118
II Proliferation and Diversification of Christadelphian Publishing	120
III Guarded Ecumenism shown by Christadelphians	123
IV Guardedly Ecumenical Christadelphianism Proved Increasingly Acceptable	127
V Denominational Organisation	135
VI Denominational Headquarters: Birmingham	136

IV.	THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM OF ROBERT ROBERTS (1839-1898)	138
	(a) Robert Roberts's Early Background in Christadelphianism (1839-1864)	138
	(b) Roberts's Organisational Writings (1853-1897)	144
	(c) Roberts's Exhortational Writings (1867-1898)	151
	(d) Roberts's Studies in Prophetic Fulfilment (1877-1895)	154
	(e) Roberts's Skills in Debate (1866-1894)	161
	(f) Roberts's Biblical Exegesis (1871-1898)	171
	(g) Roberts's Contribution as a Journalist (1864-1898)	178
	(h) Biographical Studies by Roberts (1864-1894)	179
	(i) Roberts's Clash with Socialism (1895)	181
	(j) Roberts's Views on Theology:	187
	I The Atonement	187
	II The Inspiration of the Bible	192
V.	1885 - WHAT WENT WRONG?	197
VI.	SCHISMS WITHIN THE CHRISTADELPHIAN MOVEMENT, 1847-85	228
	(a) Introduction	228
	(b) Baptised Believers, or Dowieites (1848-1895)	229
	(c) Dealtryism or 'Josephism' (1866-1868)	242
	(d) Proto 'No-Willism' (1866-1876)	247
	(e) The 'Clean-Flesh' Theory or 'Renunciationism' (1873-1881)	249
	(f) No-Willism (1877-1885)	252
	(g) Ecclesiastical Polity (1885)	254
VII.	A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GROWTH OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM, 1864-1885	261
	(a) Introduction	261
	(b) A Geographical Analysis of Christadelphian Achievements, as Measured by Adult Immersions (1864-85)	263
	(c) A Denominational Analysis of Christadelphian Conversions (1864-85)	282
	(d) An Analysis by Profession of Christadelphian Conversions (1864-85)	287
	CONCLUSION	292
	APPENDICES	298
	A. John Thomas's 34 Questions of 1835	298
	B. John Thomas's 30 Points of 1846	302
	C. John Thomas's Confession, Abjuration and Declaration of 1847	306
	D. John Thomas's 20 Propositions of 1847	316
	E. Correspondence between John Thomas and Alexander Campbell, 1847	318
	F. Thomian Christology	331
	G. Academic Assessments of John Thomas's Linguistic Skills	334
	H. Letter from Robert Roberts, then aged 17, to John Thomas in October 1856	335

I.	A Summary of Ecclesial Management Rules from <u>The Guide</u>	337
J.	(1) Debates Planned to have involved Robert Roberts, from which his Opponent(s) Withdrew	339
	(2) Debates and other Disputes involving Christadelphians other than Robert Roberts, including Debates Cancelled because of the Withdrawal of one of the Parties	340
K.	Extracts from Robert Roberts's Debates with Charles Bradlaugh M.P., June 13-22 1876, and J.J. Andrew, a Christadelphian, April 3-4 1894.	343
	(1) The Bradlaugh Debate	343
	(2) The J.J. Andrew Debate	346
L.	Dr. Thomas's Eight Rules	350
M.	The Christadelphian Technique of Interpreting the Original Bible Languages as Exemplified in the Exposition of Isaiah vii	351
N.	The Decline in Ecclesial Membership in the Aftermath of the 1885 Division	352
O.	Matters of Debate in the Edinburgh Ecclesia, during the Secretaryship of George Dowie	354
P.	The Peculiar People	356
Q.	Baptisms of Christadelphians in England by County (1864-85)	357
GLOSSARY		358
BIBLIOGRAPHY		361

INTRODUCTION

Christadelphianism dates, in one way, from 1847, when Dr. John Thomas, who founded the movement, severed his links with the radical Baptist followers of Alexander Campbell. In some respects, the group could be said to have had its intellectual birth in 1848, when Thomas's Elpis Israel acted both as an early statement of his own faith and as a rallying-standard for potential followers. As a given title 'Christadelphianism' owed its beginning to the needs of the American faithful - who were all conscientious objectors - of avoiding military service in the American Civil War, and took its origin from September 1864,¹ when permission to avoid the draft was granted to them on the basis of their belonging to the denomination known as 'Christadelphians'. However, this present study takes as the starting point of the movement a different date: July 1864. That was the point at which the British de facto leader of the movement, Robert Roberts, became editor of The Ambassador, and when his distinctive and tightly-organised mode of leadership commenced. This leadership, which began with Thomas's blessing, was to last until Roberts's death in 1898, and was to influence the ecclesiastical style of the movement throughout the world.

1885 was selected as an end-point for this study because that year marked the end of a plateau of success for Christadelphianism reached in 1880, because it was the time of the biggest schism in the movement's history, and because Roberts's position, and to some degree that of his immediate successors C.C. Walker and John Carter, was increased at that date from being primus inter pares to being primus.

Between 1864 and 1885, the development of the Christadelphian movement was remarkable. Numerically, it increased from a few

1. TC, i (1865), 105.

hundred¹ to over 5,000 brethren, with an eventual annual rate of about 400 adult baptisms; intellectually, it increased to the point where it had interested a number of notables and academics such as W.E. Gladstone, and had baptised others such as Professor David Evans; polemically, leaders of the movement had challenged or actually engaged in debate not only prominent figures in rival religious groups - ranging from Edward Hine of the British Israelites to the Archbishop of Canterbury - but also non-religious leaders of thought such as Charles Bradlaugh, and non-Christians like Louis Stern the Jew. After 1885, nothing like the same degree of interest or success, as measured in annual baptismal numbers, was registered by Christadelphians.

The reasons why a small group should attract such interest and support within a twenty year period without one major denomination from which to draw its membership, and why its effervescence should evaporate so quickly after 1885, are the major puzzles which this study sets out to solve.

1. The figure of 264 members in 1864 was given by B.R. Wilson in Sects and Society (London 1961), p. 239. This present research, based on figures emerging from a study of William Norrie's Early History of Baptised Believers, to which Dr. Wilson did not have access, would suggest a figure of perhaps 400. See Table 2, ch. I of this thesis.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL ROOTS OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM

(a) A DEFINITION OF THE PARAMETERS OF THIS STUDY

At Ogle County, Illinois, in 1864, during the course of the American Civil War, Dr. John Thomas invented the name 'Christadelphian' from the Greek christou and adelphoi, to mean 'brethren in Christ'. He did this, not for novelty's sake - he was himself preaching to a variety of different Christian assemblies at this time¹ and was far from exclusive in intent² - but, in compliance with the requests of contemporary U.S.A. authorities, to provide a label for those who were his followers to apply to themselves so they could avoid military service in that war.³ Thus 'Christadelphianism' relates to the period after 1864, on this definition. However, British believers continued to call themselves by divergent, vaguer terms for some time afterwards.⁴ The use of

-
1. These groups included Campbellites, Millerites, 'The Christian Association', 'Christian Jews', Adventists, Storrites, Mormons, Universalists, as well as more orthodox Christian assemblies.
 2. See his correspondence with the London Campbellites over the exclusivity of fellowship in R. Roberts, Dr. Thomas: His Life and work (3rd edn., Birmingham 1954), (hereafter Life Dr. T.), pp. 157-177.
 3. A precise record of Thomas's requests for exemption from military service on conscience grounds is in E.N. Wright, Conscientious Objectors in the Civil War (Philadelphia 1931), pp. 31-32.
 4. Many of them, for instance, used the term 'Baptised Believer of the Kingdom of God' - see C. Evans, 'One Hundred Years Ago' (hereafter '100 Yrs. '), The Christadelphian (hereafter TC), xciii (1956), 414-5.

the label 'Christadelphian' became much more a standard term for the group after the name of these believers' main periodical was changed, in 1869, from The Ambassador of the Coming Age to The Christadelphian.¹

From 1864, this monthly periodical The Ambassador began to be published in Britain, and statistics relating to membership and conversion became available for historical scrutiny for the first time on a national basis.²

Because so very much in the development of Christadelphianism was due to the impetus provided by Dr. Thomas, it is with his biographical history that this root-analysis starts. Thus the 'roots' referred to in the title concern the period beginning with the birth of John Thomas in 1805 and ending with the birth of the term 'Christadelphian' in 1864.

(b) JOHN THOMAS, PHYSICIAN AND CAMPBELLITE - THE EARLY YEARS,
1805 - 1834

John Thomas, born in Hoxton Square, London, on 12 April 1805, was not particularly interested in religion in early life. His upbringing was respectably religious - his father, indeed, worked

1. This post-1869 distinction was also significant in that the 'Baptised Believers' after that date were no longer 'in fellowship' (see Glossary) with the Christadelphians. After this point, 'Baptised Believer' became a technical term for a follower of George Dowie, one of the early leaders of the sect; 'Christadelphian' distinguished a follower of Robert Roberts, a much younger Scot, who was Thomas's successor as leader of the movement in Britain initially and, ultimately, worldwide.
2. This relates particularly to the 'Intelligence' section of the magazine. In The Christadelphian for April 1870, p. 112, ecclesial secretaries were requested that 'in reporting immersions, as much information as possible should be given respecting the individuals, so that brethren everywhere may feel introduced.' Dowie's magazine The Messenger of the Churches published under a variety of titles and formats was produced from May 1858 onwards. This also had an 'Intelligence' section. With the demise of Dowie, it became a magazine relating to the minority 'Dowieite' splinter group only.

for part of his life as pastor to a number of different types of denomination.¹

John's education was varied - the family followed Mr. Thomas's lead in and out of professions and from area to area. Besides schools, John was educated by the various doctors and surgeons for whom he worked. Eventually, he studied at Guy's Hospital, from where he emerged a qualified surgeon.² For some time, the distinct impression was given that medicine was a 'vocation' in the mind of John Thomas: he wrote frequently in The Lancet,³ produced a course of lectures on obstetrics and, as a professor among his detractors later sardonically remarked: 'What a fool Dr. Thomas is. If he would only devote himself to his profession he might ride in the best carriage in Richmond.'⁴

His interest in religion seems to have been kindled by an essay in The Lancet entitled 'The Materiality of Man, The Immortality of the Soul and the Vital Principle'. This purported to demonstrate that man contained part of God's essence. The article caused Thomas to brood about the nature of man's physique, the nature of immortality and the purpose of resurrection.

A major spiritual conflagration occurred in John Thomas's being, ignited by his very near shipwreck in the Marquis of Wellesley on its way to America in May 1832. Robert Roberts was later to describe the episode in these words: 'He determined that if ever he got ashore again, he would never rest till he found out the truth of the matter [of religion], that he might no more be found in such an uncertain state of mind.'⁵

-
1. These pastorates included Founder Hall, London; Huntley in Aberdeenshire; and Chorley in Lancashire. His father, described by Roberts as 'aristocratically descended', had also worked in the East India Civil Service, and as a schoolteacher. It was his father's initiative in wishing to emigrate to the U.S.A. which produced the fateful voyage on the Marquis of Wellesley in 1832. See Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 4.
 2. Thomas's M.D. was awarded in 1848 in the U.S.A. He achieved the distinction M.B.C.S., in England, along with a number of other awards in 1830.
 3. For example, The Lancet, May 23, 1829, pp. 238-240; July 23, 1831, pp. 522-3; March 3, 1832, pp. 799-800.
 4. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 241.
 5. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 8.

John Thomas's father, having been an Independent minister, changed his allegiance to the Baptist cause just prior to the journey to America.¹ Thus it came about that, on the ill-fated voyage on the Marquis of Wellesley in 1832, John carried with him letters of introduction to the Baptist fraternity in the U.S.A. These included letters to the President of the Baptist Bible Society of New York, and another Baptist preacher.

Professionally, John Thomas intended to take up the recommendations to the professor of surgery at Ohio Medical College, which he had obtained along with a letter of introduction to a Baptist preacher at Cincinnati. He was not too disturbed by New York Baptists' worry that their western brethren had 'very much infection with Reformation'.²

Thus it happened that Dr. John Thomas found himself in the company of such Campbellites as Major Daniel Gano and Walter Scott.³ Scott, indeed, on his first meeting with Thomas, cornered him in argument into admitting the essentiality of the total immersion of believing adults, and, whilst Thomas believed himself to be only seeking truth⁴, he was, there and then, at 10 p.m. in the moonlight, obliged to be immersed in the Miami Canal.

Soon after this event, Thomas met Alexander Campbell himself, who 'pressed [him] into speaking duties'.⁵ Campbell was, evidently, well pleased by the performance of his protégé. In 1833 he wrote:

'We have just received a pamphlet of 22 octavo pages, small type, containing a very able philippic against the Ismatic religions of Messrs. Hughes and

-
1. The Faith in the Last Days, (hereafter TFILD), ed. J. Carter, (Birmingham 1949), p. 15.
 2. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 9. This phrase refers to Alexander Campbell. For further details see Glossary.
 3. Scott is reputed to have founded the movement which later took the name of the more dynamic Alexander Campbell. John Thomas, for this reason, often referred to these believers as 'Scotto-Campbellites'. See, for example, the citation from Eureka on p. 8 of this chapter.
 4. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 10.
 5. TFILD, ed. Carter, p. 17.

Breckenridge, the celebrated disputants on the claims of the Pope and John Calvin. This pamphlet, from the pen of our much esteemed brother J. Thomas, M.D., presents a very lucid and forcible view of the true Church of Christ and the Christian Institution and exhibits in bold relief the real merits of the Papal and Protestant controversy. It is a document worthy of a very general circulation for its own sake, and is a striking proof of the irradiating, emancipating and emboldening influence of the original Gospel and order of things on the minds of all who cordially embrace the Apostles' doctrine. Brother Thomas is but an infant of one year old in the Christian Church, and here we find him in the very Temple of Apostate Christianity, successfully grappling with the Doctors of the two great parties in the apostasy; and certainly while contending with them, he proves himself, when panoplied with the armour of Light, more than a match for the rulers of darkness of this world, with all their Holy Orders and traditions of the See of Papal Rome.¹

John Thomas allowed himself to be encouraged by this support, and not only spoke publicly and studied the Bible extensively, but also decided to become editor of a small monthly magazine. This produced its first issue in May 1834, being known as The Apostolic Advocate. It was to run until 1839.

In 1834, Thomas's tours of Campbellite church circuits involved frequent and lengthy addresses. Despite a professed disinclination towards public oratory and a desire to present to congregations Biblical exegesis rather than emotive rhetoric, Thomas was in increasing demand amongst Campbellite congregations.² Such was the support of those who had come to know and love Thomas through his exposition of the Bible that, in the troubled waters that lay ahead of him in his relations with the Campbellite hierarchy, congregational petitions came to his aid on several occasions.³

-
1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, c (1963), 26-7, cited from Campbell's Millennial Harbinger for September 1833.
 2. TFILD, ed. Carter, p. 28.
 3. For example in 1836, 1837 and 1844. See Roberts, Life Dr. T., pp. 47, 67-9 and 103-4.

(c) DISSENSION AMONGST THE CAMPBELLITES, 1834 - 1847

The editing of The Apostolic Advocate was a decisive move for John Thomas. He himself summed up his position in a book written thirty years later:

'In those days, the author of this exposition of the apocalypse, then a young man of about thirty years of age, found himself among them, before he understood their theory in detail. He applied himself diligently to the thorough understanding of it by the study of the writings current among them. This he acquired; so that he needeth not that any should testify of Scotto-Campbellism; for he knows what is in it, and that it falls infinitely short of its pretension to be the "restoration of the ancient gospel and order of things."

'The author adopted with great zest and zeal the sentiment of their legend. He proceeded to "prove all things," and to "hold fast what" he believed to be "good;" and to call no man father, teacher, or leader, but Christ, THE TRUTH - John xiv. 6. In doing this, he devoted himself to the study of the prophetic and apostolic writings, under the impression that he was engaged in a good work; and, as he was then publishing a periodical entitled The Apostolic Advocate, he would from time to time report to his brethren for their benefit, what he found taught therein. In pursuing this study, he found many of their principles to be at variance with "the word," which was made void by them. Perceiving this, and supposing that the spirit of their legend was the spirit of their body, he did not hesitate to lay his convictions before them that they might prove them, and hold them, or reject them, according to the testimony. This raised quite a storm among them, the thunderbolts of which were aimed at him by the thunderer of their sect. This uproar caused the author to discover that he had made a mistake in his reading of their legends; and that their reading of Paul's words was, "Prove all things which we have proved; and hold fast what we believe to be good;" and of Jesus, "Call no man father, teacher, or leader, but Alexander Campbell." These were readings that he had never agreed to; and, therefore, he continued to read and publish according to the old method, very much to the indignation and disgust of the Simon Pures who misled the multitude.'¹

1. J. Thomas, Eureka (2nd edn., New Jersey, 1869), ii. 663-4.

Elsewhere, speaking retrospectively of his views as a young man on the main tenets of Campbellism, Thomas said 'He was not quite clear upon these topics himself'.¹

In an extremely ingenuous way, then, John Thomas was simply attempting to assess a creed, into which he had been hastily enrolled, as to its logical consistency. He was not so much certain that he had found it wanting as certain that he needed answers. Equally certainly, the community - at least as represented by some of its leaders - of which he was asking these questions was rather panicked at their very searching nature and, instead of interpreting the thrusts of his queries as the probings of disinterested inquiry, assessed them as wounds rendered by a wolf in sheep's clothing. This vicious circle of antipathy accelerated during the years to come - mutual suspicion breeding mutual suspicion. The doctor's arguments were unanswered; he came to believe they were unanswerable; to justify his suspicions, he probed further but - silence came the stern reply! For their part, the Campbellite leaders were astounded at the virility of his questioning mind and assumed the worst; in turn, when further questionings probed deeper, their worst suspicions seemed confirmed... until a break came.

In detail, this logic worked out as follows. In the October 1834 edition of The Apostolic Advocate (number 6), an article was published which provoked a furor in the correspondence column of the magazine over the following months. Thomas, along with others, reassessed his position and, in December 1835, produced a list of 34 questions under the heading 'Information Wanted'. These 34 questions² were regarded by his critics as representative of opinions already held rather than open-ended queries. The emphatic way in which the points behind the questions were put made this interpretation easy to understand. Perhaps, subconsciously, Thomas's mind had already changed; but, in his own estimation,

1. J. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 667.

2. See Appendix A.

he still felt undecided. It was, he said, 'their violent attacks [which] threw him upon the defensive and compelled him to fortify'.¹

A whole avalanche of consequences followed from the 34 questions, in this way. Alexander Campbell, in his magazine The Millennial Harbinger, began to attack John Thomas. These attacks were not only of a courteous, expositional or theoretical nature, but also contained ad hominem verbal assaults. In The Apostolic Advocate, Thomas reprinted Campbell's articles, together with detailed analyses and refutations. The effect was, not unnaturally, to annoy Campbell even more. On 1 August 1837, Thomas took on in debate a Presbyterian minister, Revd. John Watt, on the issue of the immortality of the soul. By November 1837, Campbell had disfellowshipped² Thomas because of views put forward in this debate. On 20 November 1837, Thomas analysed the situation in a 3,700 word letter, challenging Campbell to justify his decision; Campbell replied in early December. Thomas again challenged Campbell's reasoning on 20 December 1837 in another lengthy letter.

However, this explosive situation was temporarily defused in two respects. Firstly, two congregations - Paineville, Virginia and that of Bethel, Jetersville, Amelia County, Virginia - wrote letters of commendation of Dr. Thomas, challenging Campbell's assessment (at some length!) that Thomas was 'fit only for such society as Tom Paine, Voltaire and that herd.'³ Secondly, in October 1838, after a vituperative sermon from Campbell attacking Thomas's position, the two men actually met at Richmond, in the middle of a railroad bridge, with no hearers present. Meanwhile, a debate was arranged⁴, after which 23 brethren signed a motion, the nub of which was:

'Whereas certain things believed and propagated by Dr. Thomas, in relation to the mortality of man, the resurrection of the dead, and the final destiny

1. J. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 667.

2. See Glossary

3. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 82.

4. No known verbatim record of this debate exists.

of the wicked, having given offence to many brethren, and being likely to produce a division amongst us; and believing the said views to be of no practical benefit, we recommend to brother Thomas to discontinue the same, unless in his defence when misrepresented.¹

For the next three or four years, a lull in polemics occurred. John Thomas disappeared from the debating scene - he tried farming, in Virginia, with not much success; newspaper work in the town of St. Charles; and the appointment of president and lecturer in chemistry at Franklin Medical College.

In 1842, Thomas attempted to introduce a replacement to The Apostolic Advocate in the shape of The Investigator. However, this only continued for ten numbers, when financial troubles ended its run. A more long-lived periodical was begun in 1844. This was The Herald of the Future Age.²

In between The Investigator's end and the birth of The Herald of the Future Age, Thomas was yet again involved in a number of debates - not with Campbell, nor with the Campbellites, nor even of his own seeking. What happened was that certain Universalist congregations, to which he had become attached in the role of stand-in preacher, also invited others to help fill the place of absent pastors. A distinct divergence having been perceived between Thomas's position and those of alternative preachers in the circuit, debates were arranged - in one case with a Mormon elder, and, later, with a Universalist preacher. Whatever else was the outcome of these encounters, one point became supremely evident, that is the growing clarity, distinctness and self-consistency of Thomas's position.

At about the time of the delivery of Thomas's 'Ten Lectures' in New York City in October 1846, there was a growing awareness amongst Campbellites of the power of his exegetical talents.

1. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 85.

2. This magazine ran from 1844 to 1849. It should not be confused with The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, which was published by Thomas from 1857 to 1861.

Consequently, he was invited by the Campbellites to become the regular minister of one of their congregations. His reply was clear and very definite:

'With many thanks to our brother for his kind disposition, we answer emphatically No! We cannot afford to sell our independence for a mess of pottage. How could we teach the rich faithfully the unpalatable doctrine of Christ concerning the proper use of the mammon of unrighteousness, and be dependent upon them for the perishable pittance of a few hundreds per annum? We must be free if we would be faithful to the truth. We object not to receive contributions in aid of the cause we advocate; but they must be spontaneous, not extorted. We cannot preach for hire.'¹

Once again, with the start of a new magazine, Thomas's latent energies and thought-processes were activated and galvanised. From the start of The Herald of the Future Age in 1844 to Thomas's final break with the Campbellites (in the shape of the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration'²) was a step occupying only three years. Indeed, even before 1847, traits of a distinct independence movement were discernible. For instance, during 1844, in the first year of The Herald of the Future Age, Thomas removed to Richmond, Virginia and stayed with a friend called Malone. Together, they visited the Campbellite church of which Malone was a member, in a neighbouring town. Dr. Thomas, who was known to the locals, was invited to speak, and responded. Once again, the assembled congregation was polarised by the message of a Thomian sermon. One section was so bitterly in opposition that Malone was expelled from the church; another group, however, was so impressed by Thomas that they broke off relations with the Campbellites and started a small church group run totally independently of the Campbellite assemblies. This, it seems, was the very first glimmer of organisation in what were, by 1848, to be known as 'Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God'³ and, by 1864, as 'Christadelphian ecclesias'.⁴

1. TFILD, ed. Carter, p. 28.

2. This first appeared in The Herald of the Future Age, iii (1847), 73.

3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957). See also Glossary.

4. These followers could, perhaps, be labelled 'Thomasites'. No-one was baptised into the faith Thomas came to himself in 1847 until 1848 at Lincoln in Great Britain (see p. 18 below). For details of the varied terminologies employed by and about Christadelphians see the Glossary.

(d) THE BIRTH OF A NEW SECT - 1847

In October 1846, Thomas visited New York for the first time for fourteen years. As ever, he was invited to speak in the local Campbellite church. This occasion marked the delivery of the 'Ten Lectures', later transformed in the pages of The Herald of the Future Age into a series of thirty points.¹ In this course of addresses, Thomas set out to establish the earthly literality of the kingdom of God. He concluded, later, concerning the effect of his preaching then:

'They no longer revel in the fancy sketches of wild and vain imaginings; they look for the realisation of the promises made to the fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David... They can no longer sing
 "With thee we'll reign,
 With thee we'll rise,
 And kingdoms gain
 Beyond the skies!"

But... they hope to sing the new song, saying "Thou, Lamb of God... hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign ON EARTH." (Rev. 5:9).'²

Despite the obviously radical nature of his message, some brethren clung to Thomas. He was, indeed, invited after these lectures to become permanent preacher to a New York congregation, but, again, declined the offer.

A variety of commentators³, including Thomas himself⁴, have recognised the importance of the year 1847 in the development of both Thomian theology and the organisation of believers which he himself began. The vital occasion was a day in February, when an article in The Protestant Unionist by Reverend J.H. Jones attracted John Thomas's attention. This article, written by a Campbellite, attacked the fundamentals which Thomas had been

1. See Appendix B.

2. Roberts, Life Dr. T., pp. 117-8.

3. For example, The Herald Press, which reprinted volumes i and ii of The Apostolic Advocate in 1971. They state, in the preface, that 'Dr. John Thomas... didn't come to a full knowledge of the Truth until 1847.'

4. In Eureka ii. 671, Thomas said: 'In 1847, the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name was once more proclaimed for the obedience of faith.'

seeking to propound. What startled Thomas was not that he had been attacked, or that new scriptures had been brought to bear of which he had been unaware - it was, rather, that he saw, clearly, for the first time that he had, in fact, become separate from the foundation on which the Campbellite creed was grounded. Following logically from this, the baptism with which he had been baptised so hurriedly in the Miami Canal was, he now believed, an inadequate one, since the knowledge-base upon which he had accepted the need for this rite was equal to that of the Campbellites - those from whose views he now so fundamentally differed. Thus it was that Thomas asked a New York friend of his to rebaptise him. He said:

'All I ask of you is to put me under the water, and pronounce the words over me, "Upon confession of your faith in the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, I baptize you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." I don't ask you for any prayer or any ceremony. All that is necessary I will do for myself, except the mechanical part of putting me under the water, and your utterance of these words.'¹

1847 saw the production by Thomas of the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' - a full and clear statement of a new and different basis of faith from that on which Campbellism stood.² It was dated 3 March 1847. In the same year, Thomas produced his 'Twenty Propositions', along similar lines. In his own words, he had 'illustrated and proved the... propositions to the conviction of increasing numbers.'³ In the same year, again, he proposed a debate with Alexander Campbell. This was to take the shape of counterpoised analyses on the issue of the nature of man and the immortality of the soul, written, alternately, in Campbell's Millennial Harbinger and in Thomas's Herald of the Future Age.⁴

1. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 123.

2. The publication of this had been preceded by articles along similar lines in The Herald of the Future Age entitled 'The Hope of Israel' and 'The Hope of the World' - see TFILD ed. Carter, pp. 143-152. See Appendix C for the full text of the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration'.

3. J. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 668. See Appendix D.

4. See Appendix E.

For the first time, Thomas now felt sure enough in his own mind of the security of the grounds of his belief that he set out actively to evangelise those who were, in his view, still in darkness. He was not, now, questioning or querulous; now he was fired by the zeal of certain conviction. He made a tour of the U.S.A., visiting places where he knew there were Campbellites disposed favourably towards him - places such as Baltimore, New York and Buffalo. In these places, he gave addresses on the kingdom of God, prophetic subjects and the return of the Jews to Palestine. In addition to touring Campbellite strongholds, Dr. Thomas visited Millerite assemblies.¹ These, however, were still at this point predisposed to the view that the earth's history was likely to be brought to a sudden end, and so found distasteful the long-drawn-out time-table suggested by the idea of the regathering of Jews from all over the world to the land of Palestine, prior to the setting up of the kingdom of God.

(e) JOHN THOMAS'S FIRST TOUR OF BRITAIN: MAY 1848 - OCTOBER 1850

By May 1848, Thomas had decided to return to British pastures to seek an entrance for the gospel. On 1 June, he embarked on the De Witt Clinton, docking in England twenty-one days later.

His visit to Britain was of crucial importance in the development of British Christadelphianism. Through his visits and his magazines, Thomas had influence over a large number of Campbellite and Millerite individuals, (some of his meetings were attended by several thousand people), principally in two areas - the North and East Midlands and Scotland.² In tracing the history of this visit, one is in touch with the very early stages - ecclesias of single figure numbers, or even those in total isolation from others of the same faith. The pattern of his visit seems to have been that Dr. Thomas had a certain few planned places of

1. See Glossary.

2. In Scotland his influence was in two areas - the industrial regions of Southern Scotland, and the North-East around Aberdeen and Cumnock.

visitation in mind when he left the U.S.A. - he had letters of introduction from Campbellite congregations in the United States to others in this country - that these visits were notified by Campbellites receiving these letters to others in surrounding areas; that these people attended Thomas's lectures, became interested and invited him to their town, too; finally, having been attacked by some of the leading London Campbellites in the pages of one of their national magazines, Thomas turned to the Millerites in Nottingham and found there a more understanding response. There were those Campbellite congregations, also, in the Midlands area, who did not take kindly to dictatorial treatment by the London leadership, and who became more sympathetic with Thomas as a result of his ostracism by London. Indeed, divisions within the Campbellite church plumbed such depths of schism that one of their three national magazines, The Gospel Banner, offered itself to Thomas as his mouthpiece, for a time.¹

Piecing together the visit, we now know that Thomas visited Nottingham first, to which town he had letters of introduction. He arrived there on 29 July 1848,² delivering lectures on 1-3 August; from there to Derby, again delivering lectures on 9-12 August; thence to a Unitarian minister at Lincoln on 13 August. Interested visitors from Newark heard Thomas lecture and invited him to speak in their town. Thomas's next move was to Glasgow, where he stayed from 15 September to 13 October; then to Dundee, having been heard by interested Dundee Campbellites when lecturing in Glasgow; and last to Edinburgh on 27 October. Into this itinerary, Thomas inserted visits to Aberdeen, Lanark, Plymouth and Birmingham.³

Thomas's visit to Nottingham was interesting. It grew out of

-
1. See W. Norrie, The Early History of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in Britain with Historical, Critical and Social Reminiscences of Persons, Places and Events, (hereafter Early History), (Edinburgh, three volumes 1904-1906), iii. 319-323.
 2. This date was given by Roberts; C. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 175, had Thomas giving lectures in Nottingham as early as 2 July.
 3. No visit to Birmingham was mentioned by Roberts. However, reference to one lecture given by Thomas in Birmingham has been detected by Evans in '100 Yrs.', TC, xcv (1958), 163.

controversy amongst the Campbellites.¹ In three days during his stay there, he spoke thirteen times, in the Assembly Rooms, to packed congregations, including reporters 'from several journals published in the town'.² These papers included The Nottingham Review and The Nottingham Mercury, in which extensive reviews of Thomas's talks were printed.³ Notwithstanding being in receipt of an invitation from the Millerites, Thomas had the temerity to lay bare what he felt were the weaknesses of the Millerite faith before his audiences, lecturing, ultimately, on the restoration of Israel (their bête noire) and the coming conflict between Russia and Britain over the Middle East. Nottingham, which had been the headquarters of Campbellism in Britain, became, for many years, the town with the largest number of 'Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God' in England. Not only was its size greatest - until a dispute in the 1870s⁴ - but also the growth rate of the Nottingham ecclesia of Baptised Believers outstripped all others, including Birmingham.

At Derby, Thomas spoke in the Mechanics' Institute, (the local Bench having opposed the use of the Town Hall for the occasion) and, on successive nights, was listened to by audiences of about a thousand. Further talks were given by Dr. Thomas in the Assembly Rooms, the Mechanics' Institute Committee having decided to follow in the wake of the magistrates and to refuse Thomas's supporters further lettings.

At Lincoln, Thomas gave lectures in the Council Chamber and in the house of his friends. Two interesting consequences followed from the delivery of his talks at Lincoln. One was that the town's Unitarian minister urged Thomas to publish the subject matter of his lectures. This type of request was to be made again later, in Edinburgh, and was the basis of Thomas lengthening his stay in Britain to write and publish his first major work, Elpis Israel

1. See chapter VII, p. 281, of this thesis.

2. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 162.

3. See Evans, '100 Yrs.', FC, xcvi (1959), 175-6.

4. See chapter VI, p. 246-8, of this thesis.

(The Hope of Israel). The second consequence was that, before Thomas left Lincoln, two individuals were baptised into the faith he was propounding. Whilst congregations had previously been known to side with him in disputes and to follow his teachings, this was the first record of someone, besides John Thomas himself, being baptised into a baptism extra to the Campbellite one. Thus, this 1848 visit to Lincoln was a crucial turning point.

Thomas's lectures were heard by members of the Newark Bethanian (Campbellite) Congregation. They so enjoyed what they heard that they canvassed the influential members of their church to invite Dr. Thomas officially to speak to them. Although it proved impossible for them to organise an official visit without the knowledge of the 'Evangelists' Committee' in the U.S.A., one of the Newark elders - a Mr. John Bell, who was a bank manager - was prepared to invite Thomas unofficially, cover his expenses, prepare for his comfort and offer him a platform. These arrangements were left in abeyance for a few months, because of Thomas's pending tour of Scotland.¹

Thomas visited Glasgow first on 15 September. His trip was very eventful in several respects. Firstly, he was listened to by large audiences - two hundred to begin with, then five hundred. Eventually, a Campbellite rose at the end of one talk and lamented the fact that many of Glasgow's 400,000 inhabitants had had no opportunity to hear these wonderful things. He suggested that a committee be formed to facilitate promulgation of 'The Doctor's' ideas to the widest possible audience. A committee of fourteen was formed; placards, sandwich boards, leaflets and posters were printed; and the City Hall was hired for 24 September, on which occasion Dr. John Thomas spoke to no less than 6,000 people. This talk was followed by two other mammoth addresses in the City Hall and, on the last evening, pressure on entry was so great that many were turned away. Secondly, violent opposition was provoked from some clerics. For example, Revd. Pollock said 'a villain had come

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC xcvi (1960), 314.

among them from America with his mouth full of lies.'¹ Thirdly, some clerics came into open support of Thomas - Revd. William Anderson,² for instance. Dr. Anderson, making a speech about the substance of Thomas's lectures at a Grande Soirée on 12 October, said of himself:

'He was once as blind and ignorant as [the assembled company] not knowing the prophets though profess- edly a teacher of the truth. His investigation of the prophetic writings had led him to see that the purpose of God was to establish a kingdom in the land of Israel under Jesus Christ which should have rule over the whole earth.'³

From Glasgow Dr. Thomas visited Paisley, where there was a group of Christians who, reputedly,⁴ were 'Scotch Baptists' and 'accepted some part of Mr. Campbell's teaching, but refused to be identified with "the Reformation".'⁵

From Glasgow, at this point, as from Edinburgh previously, came a request that the Doctor should not merely disappear to America, having lit the torch of truth, but should stay awhile and make permanent the effects of his teaching by codifying them in a book. This further encouragement brought about the production of Elpis Israel. Before he would allow himself opportunity to write, however, John Thomas felt obliged to complete his speaking tour of Scotland and the Midlands, after holidaying in the West of Scotland because of the pressures of speaking very frequently. Despite his holiday, when he returned to his duties in Edinburgh on 27 October 1848, the tensions of speaking soon began to tell on him again. Of his visit to Edinburgh, Thomas wrote:

'Our audiences were drawn neither from the high nor low, but from the odds and ends of Edinburgh, who in every city are the most independent and Berean of the population. We addressed them some ten or a dozen times, mostly at the Waterloo Assembly Room, in Princes Street, a spacious and elegant apartment, and capable of seating some thousand to fifteen hundred people. The impression made upon them was strong, and, for the time, caused many to rejoice that providence had ever directed our steps to Edinburgh. Our expositions of the

-
1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957), 98.
 2. William Anderson (1799-1873) was a member of the 'Relief Church', which later merged in the United Presbyterian movement. According to W.G. Blaikie, Anderson 'encouraged independence of thought and action... He was a strenuous opponent of the Church of Rome. He was a strong millenarian.' - DNB, i. 394-5.
 3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957), 98. Dr. Anderson was, however, one of the very few clergymen to support John Thomas.
 4. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 173.
 5. See the Glossary for further details of these terms.

sure word of prophecy interested them greatly, causing our company to be sought for at the domestic hearth incessantly, to hear us talk of the things of the kingdom and name of Jesus, and to solve whatever doubts and difficulties previous indoctrination might originate in regard to the things we teach.

'Our new friends had but little mercy upon us in their demands upon our time. They seemed to think that premeditation was unnecessary, and that we had nothing to do but to open our mouth, and out would fly a speech! Of our two hundred and fifty addresses in Britain, all were extemporised as delivered. There was no help for it, seeing that we had to go oftener than otherwise from parlour conversation to the work before us in the lecture room. Indeed, our nervous system was so wearied by unrest that we could not have studied a discourse. Present necessity was indispensable to set our brain to work. Certain subjects were advertised, and had to be expounded. We knew, therefore, what was to be treated of; and, happily, understanding "the word of the kingdom", we had but to tell the people what it taught, and to sustain it by reason and testimony. In this way we got along independently of stationery and sermon studying, which would have broken us down completely, and would have absorbed more time than our friends allowed us.'

Indeed, Thomas was so much in need of rest that, right at the end of his tour, he spent a month on the Continent, mainly in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium.

For six weeks in January and February 1849, Thomas laboured to produce this first book. He said, 'For six weeks the world without was a mere blank... for during that period I had no use for hat, boots or shoes, oscillating, as it were, like a pendulum between two points - the couch above, and the desk below.'² Whilst he busied himself in producing this volume, he entrusted to those who had requested it the task of collecting a list of subscribers. However, despite his business, Thomas found time to deliver 'two discourses at Camden Town, and two at a small lecture room near my residence, and an opposition speech at a Peace Society meeting.'³

-
1. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 175.
 2. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 176.
 3. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 176.

With Elpis Israel safely in the printer's hands, Thomas undertook, in 1849, another tour of Britain, which took in some places he had been unable to visit in 1848. His itinerary included such towns as Dundee, Aberdeen, Newark, Plymouth and Liverpool.

The visit to Dundee, like those to many other towns, was born out of interest stirred by locals having heard Thomas speak elsewhere and, then, inviting him to their home town. The visit began amicably enough. However, this changed when one of the Campbellite bishops was converted to Thomas's way of thinking. At once, the atmosphere became electric! Thomas's Campbellite friend, Mr. Lamb, who had entertained him with affection, became very hostile. A bitter atmosphere remained to be savoured by the new converts Thomas left in his wake. A friend wrote to him about the nascent Dundee Ecclesia:

'Persecution has now assumed a very formidable appearance against us in Dundee. The first step was the deposing of him you baptised from what they term "the bishop's office", and strange to tell this has been done while as yet he has not opened his mouth upon any subject in the meeting since you were here. James Ainslie and company have become determined to check "the New Light" in the bud; but contrary to their expectation, the blade has made its appearance, and a stalk of no inconsiderable size has already sprung up. Since I last wrote, five have been baptised. Two of these have delivered addresses to the brethren upon the subjects of the "New Light" which have thrown the people into complete consternation. On Sunday week the deposed bishop is advertised to give a trial discourse before the Church on the "new doctrines" before he can be again elevated to the bishopric, which he says he will do in earnest.'

In Aberdeen, a number of subscribers to The Herald of the Future Age were visited by Dr. Thomas. Several of them were baptised while Thomas was in the town, and attended a breaking of bread service with him that same week. Even where Thomas's visits did not reach, his influence was pervasive. For example, at Cumnock, in Ayrshire, Thomas's followers, isolated from other 'Bible Christians', made their existence known by writing to

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC xcv (1958), 267.

Thomas's Herald of the Future Age magazine in May 1850.¹ In other places which he did visit his influence had a delayed effect, causing James Murray of Lanark, for instance, to be baptised four years after Thomas's visit. On his return visit to Newark, Thomas's efforts were effective and, again, the effects were delayed for some time. He spoke in the town on 7 July 1849, but the first indication of any success did not occur until the Nottingham Fraternal Gathering received delegates from the Newark Ecclesia a decade later.² By that point, the Newark Ecclesia was sixteen members strong.³ Thomas's arrival in Devonport and Plymouth was due to contacts provided by friends in Nottingham - possibly Millerites. Thomas's initial contact was a man called Wood, who was pastor at the Plymouth Millerite assembly of seventy. The Mechanics' Institutes at Plymouth and Devonport were hired for lectures, which were delivered at intervals over a three week period. At Devonport, the audiences rose to several hundred; the hearers were interested; forty-six copies of Elpis Israel were sold and an ecclesia of seventeen members was started as a result. Over the next decade, the ecclesia in this naval town had problems with the immoral living of some of its members and, by 1859, it had shrunk to only nine members. Although Thomas visited Liverpool and handbills were distributed, attendance at the meetings was disappointing and no ecclesia was started. No mention was made of brethren until the publication of the Church Roll in August 1859.⁴

John Thomas sailed for New York on 11 October 1850, well satisfied with the effects of his labours in Britain to that date.

-
1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC,xcv (1958), 224, isolated a sequence of movement in this area between the denominations involving Congregationalists converting to Baptists, then moving into isolation and finally converting to Bible Christians.
 2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC,xcvii (1960), 314. See Glossary for a definition of 'Fraternal Gathering'.
 3. Norrie, Early History, iii. 41.
 4. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), 18.

(f) BRITISH BAPTISED BELIEVERS IN THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD,
1850 - 1862

From 1848, it is necessary to make a division in the narrative between the history of the Baptised Believers in Britain and that of the Bible Christians in the U.S.A. This is because, after the lecture tour of 1848, a spiritual momentum continued in this country amongst Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God despite the absence in the U.S.A. of John Thomas. These two accounts are only brought together again in the person of John Thomas on the occasions of his remaining two visits to Britain - that is, in 1862 and 1869. They would have merged permanently from 1871 had not premature death prevented him from retiring to a country house to the south of Birmingham.

Whilst it is true that Thomas, in his original visit, had paid approximately equal attention to the North and East Midlands on the one hand and to Scotland on the other, it is also the case that, in his absence, the momenta of the two places developed at very different rates, with Scotland much more vigorous. Table 1 below¹ shows the number of ecclesias developed in the period 1848-1864.

TABLE 1

COUNTRY	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	1856	SUB-TOTAL
England	5	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	7
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
Scotland	4	-	-	-	-	7	-	3	-	14
Wales	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

COUNTRY	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	TOTAL
England	-	1	-	1	3	1	-	-	13
Ireland	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Scotland	2	5	2	-	4	3	2	-	32
Wales	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	2

1. The source of this information is a compilation from Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, and Norrie, Early History iii.

Thus it is clear that two thirds of the ecclesias in Britain before 1864 were located in Scotland. The membership was divided in approximately similar proportions.¹ C. Evans, in his series in The Christadelphian magazine, written over the period 1956-1963, noticed this phenomenon, too. He stated:

'It would appear that Scotland was at first the home of the Truth in Great Britain, seeing that it sounded out more from there than from any other part of the British Isles. This may be largely due to the energies of such men as brethren George Dowie, John Forman, James and Richard Cameron, Tait, Laing, Mitchell, Ellis, Duncan, and of course the Norrie family and the well-remembered Robert Roberts.'²

William Norrie, in his history, indicated that England's Christadelphians were in such a state of ecclesial chaos in the 1850s that visits from Scots brethren, especially from Edinburgh, were required to stabilise the situation.³

The spiritual development of the 'Bible Christians' was not just limited to the work of settled ecclesias in the towns. Isolated brethren were visited by itinerants from ecclesias in the 1850s in Scotland. Sometimes this would result in the strengthening of the numbers in isolation sufficient to warrant the formation of a new ecclesia; on other occasions, very small groups would agree to meet together as a sizeable congregation - sometimes meeting in more than one place to share the burden of transport. Evans wrote:

'In the Summer of 1860, it was agreed that the brethren from Wishaw, Airdrie, Chappenhall and Motherwell form the Hamilton Church where they would ordinarily meet, but that once a month on the first Sunday they would congregate at Motherwell.'⁴

By these methods, then - The Herald of the Future Age magazine from America; personal visits from 'the Doctor'; the labours of strong-minded brethren; the sustaining of tiny flickers of isolated interest, along with the care of established ecclesias -

1. See Table 2, p. 29, below.

2. See Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30.

3. Norrie, Early History, ii. 192, indicated how much the Halifax ecclesia owed to Robert Roberts's organisational skill. When Roberts arrived from Scotland one of the brethren in the Halifax ecclesia was a soldier, not having realised, nor having had it pointed out to him by the brethren, that his profession was incompatible with his religion.

4. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 31.

Bible Christians flourished in Scotland, so that by 1864 they had more than double the number of ecclesias in England.

England, however, was not inactive. Writing in 1857 of events in Halifax five years previously, George Dean Wilson, an original member of the Halifax ecclesia, said:

'Through the instrumentality of my excellent relations in this place, by means of letters, Elpis Israel and The Gospel Banner, which all found their way to Halifax, myself and bro[ther] J. Whitehead became convinced of the truth of Israel's hope. Indeed his attention was drawn to it during his visit to this place in 1852, and he bought Elpis on his return. By its means we became acquainted with the prophetic declarations and indications of their fulfilment in these last days, so that we have taken the keenest interest therein ever since, down to the time of Menachikoff's mission till now; and we have frequently pointed the attention of our audiences to the splendid accomplishment of prophecy now transpiring... For a few months we pursued our investigations, whilst in communion with the sects, but on the 18th March, 1854, six of us immersed one another into the Name of Jesus, making a solemn confession of faith and renunciation of former things. We had all previously withdrawn from Babylon's daughters. One is since dead, and self and another removed, but we feel to be present with them still. They have since increased to sixteen, having had one immersion recently, and more expected. Of our present number, three are from General Baptists, one from the Episcopalians, one from the Unitarians, two from the Campbellites (who have become extinct there), six from the Wesleyans, and four who were not connected anywhere; and six of our number have been re-immersed. They are scripturally organised as a Church with two elders, two deacons and a scribe, and have adopted no name, but that of the Master's, nor do they intend doing. This has sorely puzzled the people, who have laboured hard to put some sectarian cognomen upon us, but all in vain, as they hit upon any save the right one. They meet in a room in the Temperance Hall, Albion Street, capable of holding about 120 persons, and which has several times been filled; but the audiences vary much, sometimes upwards of sixty, but often below thirty. We have given many public discourses, and the good work is still going on.'

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 76-7.

Once again, work was undertaken on a peripatetic basis, in towns such as Dewsbury and Heckmondwike, as well as in Halifax itself. Once interest had been kindled, great care was exercised to keep the flame of interest alive. For example, Isaac Clissett of Heckmondwike, whose education was so limited that he could hardly read or write grammatically,^{1a} was able enthusiastically to prosecute his interest in the Scriptures by calling on brethren from Halifax, Leeds and Huddersfield to deliver lectures on his behalf. Where means were not available to hire large halls, as in this Heckmondwike ecclesia of one brother, more natural surroundings were sought, as advertised on a handbill from 1859, in these words:

'THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD. Those who want to know the future Political History of the World, and the future destiny of man are requested to attend a MEETING that will be held in the Open Air, Market Place, HECKMONDWIKE, on Sunday, July 17, at six o' clock in the evening, when an Address will be delivered by R. ROBERTS, a young man from HUDDERSFIELD. N.B. All who attend are requested to bring their Bibles with them. Questions allowed after the Address.'^{1b}

By March 1853 an ecclesia had been set up in Edinburgh.² It was said to number twenty.³ This figure was an impression, rather

1a. and 1b. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 392.

2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 392.

3. Difficulty is experienced in recording numbers from these early days with anything approaching accuracy. This is because there was little or no codification of a creed or 'statement of faith' then, and because 'interested friends' were not always distinguished clearly from 'baptised brethren and sisters'. At a meeting in Edinburgh on 27 September 1853, this very point was considered and it was resolved that fellowship of the Church should not be open to those who remained also members of churches in which baptism upon belief in the gospel of the kingdom of God was not recognised as the basis of union. But, even here, an exception was made where believers were so situated as to be prevented from meeting regularly with a church constituted on such principles. Despite this resolution, lack of clarity persisted in the qualifications for membership of an ecclesia - and not just in Edinburgh, either - and therefore in the exact size. A further difficulty arises out of the fact that most ecclesial minute books relating to the 1850s, if ever kept, have now been lost. TC, which is the main repository of membership statistics, was not launched until July 1864. Norrie, however, in his Early History, makes good these deficiencies. His work recorded membership figures from 1854 - 1861. See Table 2, p. 29, below.

than a statistic. The first actual statistic available is for 1855, which credits Edinburgh with forty-two members.¹ The Edinburgh ecclesia continued to grow - one estimate gave its size in 1862 as being ninety-seven members.² However, the membership for 1863 was stated as being fifty-nine only. Evans explained this drastic decline in terms of unemployment,³ and a desire to find new work elsewhere.⁴ Whatever happened, an interesting means by which the message of the Bible Christians was disseminated is laid bare. It is certainly true that the original members of the London ecclesia were expatriate Scots who had gone south to seek work.⁵

The Edinburgh Meeting⁶ held fraternal gatherings as early as their first year, 1853, and were greatly excited by the visit of four brothers from other places. They unanimously decided on another gathering the following year. This was attended by fifty or so brothers and sisters from seven different Scots ecclesias.⁷

Even before the establishment of the Edinburgh meeting in March 1853, special efforts⁸ had been held at Leith, on the premises of Leith Hall, loaned free of charge by a Leith Campbellite. These preaching efforts, and those in 1856, did not result in the formation of an ecclesia, until the Dowieite heresy⁹ of 1866 caused some brethren to secede from the Edinburgh ecclesia to Leith.

By 1855 an ecclesia had been formed at Airdrie. Its congregation of seven had increased to eight by 1862. In the same year, the Halifax Ecclesia could count eight members, two of whom were elders (president and secretary alternately) and two deacons. The emphasis of the Halifax church was on unanimity and the demonstration of mutual affection by frequent meetings, some of which were of a social character. The ecclesia was concerned that in all the

1. Norrie, Early History, i. 11.

2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957), 255.

3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957), 255.

4. It is also clear from Norrie that the pioneering Edinburgh brethren had founded two new ecclesias by 1861. These would doubtless be a drain on their manpower resources.

5. Norrie, Early History, ii. 253.

6. See Glossary.

7. For details see Table 2, p. 29, below.

8. See Glossary.

9. See ch. VI below.

churches too great an emphasis was laid on intellectuality to the exclusion of affection and heart.¹ By 1858, its membership had risen to twenty, although average attendances were low because of the infirmity of the members.

Because of the efforts of two energetic brethren, Andrew Tait² and William Wilson, an ecclesia of one was established at Berwick in the shape of a Mrs. John Nesbit. Shortly afterwards, the Berwick station-master, John Yule, was immersed by Tait. The following May, Tait, along with George Dowie, visited a village near Berwick called Paxton South Mains and baptised John Nesbit, John Brown and Thomas Jackson. On 23 May, a breaking of bread was held by the new Berwick ecclesia of five, led by the two visiting brethren. Unfortunately, this tale of industry and enthusiasm had a sad end because the ecclesia soon fell into decay, mainly through removals.³

A further three small ecclesias struggled to eke out an existence in Scotland in 1858. Firstly, Crossgates, where a very small number met, some of whom travelled the ten miles from

-
1. There was considerable credal flexibility amongst the Baptised Believers, especially in the period before Roberts became editor of The Ambassador of the Coming Age, diminishingly between 1864 and the death of Thomas, much less between 1871 and the Inspiration Division (see ch. V below), hardly at all after 1885. In the earliest period, this credal flexibility concerned doctrine as well as ecclesiastical procedures. William Norrie's Early History is replete with references to a wide variety in liturgical practices, ecclesial officers' titles and functions, the organisation of services, the titles by which the 'churches' were known, the credal formulae they accepted, the use to which such creeds were put, the practice of reimmersion upon a deeper understanding of the gospel, the attitude to practical matters such as politics and insurance policies. Local minutes, ecclesial record books, ecclesial rule books, letters and other surviving documents fully support the picture as presented by Norrie. This picture of diversity was not included in the several works of Roberts on the history of the Christadelphians. These publications tended to present the Christadelphian past rather in the manner of the Whig historians.
 2. Referred to by Evans in the series '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30-31.
 3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1958), 162.

TABLE 2

BAPTISMS AMONGST 'BAPTISED BELIEVERS' IN BRITAIN, 1854 - 1861.¹

	1854	1855	1857	1858	1859	1861
Edinburgh	X ²	42		48	65	76+3+6 ³
Aberdeen	X ²	27		28	26	35
Dundee	X ²	10		12	22	30
Glasgow	X ²	23		33	33+5 ³	68
Gourock	X ²	X ²				
Kirkcaldy	X ²	X ²				
Moffat	X ²	X ²				
Newburgh	X ²	X ²				
Arbroath		2		4		
Fifehire		9		10		
Greenock		5				
Halifax		8		20	24	12
Lanark		6		4		14
Airdrie		7		5		9
Derby		4		13 ⁴		
Birmingham		13				15
Devonport		17		9	7	
Paisley		X ²		33		26+11 ³
Wishaw			X ²	7		7
Cupar			X ²		6	
Ayton				X ²		
Crossgates				X ²		8
Dunfermline				X ²		
Berwick				5	9	5
Nottingham				30 ⁴		25
Cumnock					5	7
Dunkeld					12	
Leeds					8	
London					8	
Newark					16	
Lewes						X ²
Lincoln						X ²
Manchester						X ²
Beith						X ²
Belfast						7
Douglas						4
Huddersfield						6
Hamilton						8
Insch						5
TOTALS	-	173	-	261	246	394

1. Source: Norrie, *Early History*, iii. 3, 11, 25, 28-32, 41, 45, 57-8.
2. Norrie's statistics indicate the existence of an ecclesia, but provide no membership figures
3. There was more than one ecclesia in these towns.
4. These totals included a small number then counted as 'brethren', who had not at that point been immersed as 'Baptised Believers'.

Kirkcaldy. Meetings ceased from the summer of 1858 for two years because of the very small attendances; but, by 1860, the addition of three believers by baptism and one by removal from Edinburgh revived flagging spirits.¹ Secondly, a brother in the Edinburgh ecclesia was actively preaching at Dunkeld. By 1858 his efforts were rewarded by five immersions; more were to follow. However, the church soon languished and was eventually wound up.² Thirdly, the removal of brother and sister John Hodgson³ from Glasgow to Falkirk, because of brother Hodgeon's job in the Inland Revenue, resulted in the creation of a tiny ecclesia of two persons in Stirlingshire.

Activity south of the border was limited. Only at Halifax, in Yorkshire, where, by 1858, there was a strong ecclesia of twenty, was the peripatetic preaching by the brethren over a wide area successful, resulting in the baptism of brother Isaac Clissett of Heckmondwike.⁴

From 1859 to 1861 few notable achievements, such as the formation of any new ecclesias, were recorded north of the border. Only five new meetings were set up in the whole of the British Isles during this three year period. However, brethren in isolation continued to be nurtured with care. 1859 was the year when the Nottingham believers learned of the existence of the sixteen-strong Newark ecclesia.⁵ No known preaching had taken place in Newark since that carried out by John Thomas over a decade previously, causing one commentator to conclude that 'evidently a number of Campbellites fell in with the views expressed by Dr. Thomas.'⁶ 1859, too, saw the foundation of the Belfast meeting, the only Irish ecclesia to be set up in the entire pre-1864 period. It resulted from a visit, in the autumn, of James M'Kinley, a brother from Wishaw. In Belfast he found five women prepared, there and then, to make a good confession of faith, and he baptised them at that time. One of these

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcv (1958), 224.

2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30.

3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30.

4. See p. 26 above.

5. See p. 22 above.

6. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), 314.

women was the wife of a former brother in the Glasgow ecclesia named John Mulholland, and three of the rest were her sisters. However, it was not until the following year that this small group organised regular breaking of bread services.

The relationship between the Edinburgh and Tranent ecclesias in 1859 was very instructive about the looseness of relations between ecclesias in those days and the lack of information about, and even awareness of, each other's existence. Edinburgh happened to discover that there were individuals at Tranent (which was only ten miles away) who were Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and incorporated the names of six of them into the Edinburgh Church roll for August 1859. Evans said that this small Tranent group 'later became a church in its own'.¹

The following year, two persons at Haddington were baptised by the Edinburgh brethren. In 1861 this number increased to three, and in 1862 to four. However, the ecclesia, which met at the home of the village postmaster, brother Robert Armstrong, only lasted a few years.

The removal from Edinburgh to Jarrow of brother and sister Henry Wilson and brother Archibald Gilmour, in the autumn of 1861, caused the establishment of a tiny ecclesia south of the border. This was strengthened by the arrival from Edinburgh of brother Andrew Hart. However, the death of brother Wilson and consequent return to Edinburgh of his widow, along with the removal of brother Gilmour, quenched this tiny spark on the banks of the Tyne.

Evans reported the enthusiastic preaching, from 1861, of an enterprising Scots Believer who was a shoemaker:

'James Robertson, a shoemaker of Aberdeen, removed to Inch in 1861 and to Turriff in 1862. Taking this as a centre, he went to various towns and villages which included Balfaton, Crimond, Cumiston, Fetterangus, Lomnay, Mintlaw, Pitsligo and Whitehills, talking, lecturing and delivering pamphlets, and was instrumental in leading many to obey the Truth. Although not robust, he benefitted physically by these repeated outings, but financially they crippled him. There was no Auxiliary Lecturing Society in those days, but it was reported in The Messenger that funds were raised to meet his rent and other oblig-

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1958), 162.

ations. The Aberdeen Free Press on May 15, 1863, reported:

NEW BLYTH.- Lectures on the Second Advent.- A Turriff shoemaker has been amongst us lecturing on the above subject; on the evening of the Sabbath week, he lectured on "The Personal Return of Christ to the Earth". On Monday night he laboured hard to prove the necessity of His Coming to dwell on Mount Zion and Judge the twelve tribes of Israel, etc. On the whole we would advise Ne sutor ultra crepidum (Let not the shoemaker go beyond his last).'¹

Others in isolation were visited by William Ellis of Leith, James Cameron of Edinburgh and brethren Ellis and Steele also from Edinburgh. In 1862, on his second visit to this country as a preacher, John Thomas, too, visited these isolates. William Ellis was additionally involved in preaching in south-eastern Scotland, as outlined in the following quotation from Evans.

'GALASHIELS.- Bro[ther] William Ellis, of Leith, in August, 1861, paid a visit to the South Eastern district of Scotland, having heard there were people there who had an understanding of the Truth, but wanted to be stirred up to a decision to embrace the Faith. Galashiels principally engaged his attention, although he found some who were interested in Selkirk, Melrose, Hawick, Kelso and Stow.

On Sept[ember] 1, 1861, two men were immersed in the River Tweed, William Miles, a tailor, of Galashiels, and William Dew, a mill-worker, of Innerleithen. In company with bro[ther] Richard Pearson they commenced to meet for the Breaking of Bread. In the autumn bro[ther] James Cameron, of Edinburgh, visited Galashiels and gave lectures. Dr. Thomas, in company with bro[ther] John Nesbit, of Paxton, paid a visit to this town on the last Sunday of 1862 and delivered two lectures on "The Great Salvation". This must have been thrilling to the few brethren.

It was in 1865 that disruption took place in Galashiels, chiefly on the question of the Revelation given to John on Patmos. One or two brethren took the view that (excepting the first three chapters) the book related entirely to the future, whilst others maintained that they relate to events chiefly in the past. The difference grew to such an issue that disruption was inevitable. Brethren Ellis and Steele from Edinburgh visited them, and those who contended for the futurist theory were caused to withdraw. It was then the "Christadelphian" Ecclesia commenced in

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcv (1958), 162.

contradistinction to the church of Baptised Believers. Those who withdrew, although they continued to meet, were sadly affected again in 1878.¹

The events outlined above indicate two important features in the Christian living of the British Baptised Believers in the period between 1850 and 1862. First, they were not 'Thomasites' - limited to following the dictates of the strong-minded leader of a sect: the Believers themselves were of a strong-minded individualistic ilk, able to act independently in the most dour circumstance. Second, and linked into the first point, meetings of Believers in this period were characterised by the smallness of the groups, witnessing to their faith during long periods of isolation.

(g) JOHN THOMAS'S SECOND BRITISH TOUR - MAY 1862 - FEBRUARY 1863

By 1862, Dr. Thomas, who had received a number of requests from Britain to pay a second visit for a lecturing tour², was contemplating doing just that, since, with his house on the Unionist side of the battle lines, and many of his followers living on the Confederate side, the continuance of his pastoral and didactic duties in America was proving impossible.

He landed in Liverpool in May 1862, and undertook what he described as 'a very arduous tour'³, visiting Huddersfield, Halifax, Leeds, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Nottingham, London and other places. Herald of the Future Age readers visited these centres from a great distance to hear Thomas, their magazine's editor, speak; a certain John Richards visited Birmingham from Montgomery for that purpose. Despite baptising a number of his hearers, including, on 20 July, the said John Richards, Thomas was reputedly disappointed with the results of his efforts.

However, two very notable changes took place as a direct consequence of his visit. Thomas, later, summarised these events as follows:

-
1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 76.
 2. Two of these - from Robert and Jane Roberts and from the Edinburgh Ecclesia - were printed in the last number of The Herald of the Future Age (which had to cease publication because of the Civil War).
 3. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 222.

'When I was in Nottingham I saw brother Roberts who had come from Huddersfield on a visit to meet me there. I suggested to brother Roberts that it would be much better for him to come to Birmingham than to waste his sweetness on the desert air of Huddersfield ... I also suggested he should commence a periodical. You know the rest.'¹

This advice was followed out. By July 1864 Roberts had not only moved himself to Birmingham, but had also published the first edition of The Ambassador of the Coming Age magazine (later renamed The Christadelphian). It was, from the first, Roberts's magazine; indeed, he wrote the whole of volume one, number one, himself, (apart from the 'Intelligence' reports section), and the bulk of succeeding numbers, too. This periodical became, at once, the organisational pivot of the 'Bible Christians' in Britain. Roberts was good at organisation - he was a sharp, accurate, thorough newspaper reporter by profession. As a staff member of the Birmingham Post, he was highly commended by John Bright M.P., who always asked for his Birmingham speeches to be covered by Roberts.² Thus, whereas the 'Bible Christians' had been bedevilled by disorganisation, muddle, lack of information about each other and lack of definition about their very status vis-à-vis each other³, Roberts produced, from the chaos, a neat, well-oiled machine that ticked over nicely.⁴ In this development lay some of the seeds both of sweet success during the period 1864-1885, and of a more bitter harvest, reaped from 1885.

-
1. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 222
 2. I. Collyer, Robert Roberts, (B'ham 1977), commented 'Bright regarded ... Roberts as the best reporter he had met' - p.51. Also p.35.
 3. See p. 26 above.
 4. Roberts requested that 'Correspondents would confer a favour by observing the following rules, particularly when they write anything intended for The Christadelphian: 1, write plainly, especially when the names of persons or places are dealt with; 2, leave liberal space between the lines; 3, avoid cross writing; and 4, use really black ink. Communications for the Intelligence department should be in the hands of the Editor by the 20th of the month at the latest; and as much earlier as as possible. ~~They~~ They should be written on ONE side of the paper only.' TC, vii (1870), 112.

(h) BRITISH 'BAPTISED BELIEVERS', FEBRUARY 1863 - JULY 1864

Little is known about the detail of events in 1863, and in 1864 prior to the first Ambassador of the Coming Age in July. Roberts, in his biography of John Thomas, was terse about this period; and, in any case, was writing solely about the U.S.A. Evans was sparse in details too; he recorded one baptism at Fraserburgh, in 1863, and two in Govan. These were additions to existing tiny numbers of Bible Christians in these places and, with their added support, minute ecclesias were formed, the one at Fraserburgh fading out quite quickly. The main source for this period is William Norrie's Early History.

However, at least one major breakthrough did occur for the Bible Christians in this period. It took place at Mumbles, near Swansea, in South Wales, and was unrelated to the preaching of John Thomas, in any direct sense, but, rather, owed its origins to the coming together of two individuals from quite different backgrounds, as follows. There had been an efflux of Bible Christians from Edinburgh in late 1862 and early 1863 because of employment difficulties. One of the fringe members of this Edinburgh group of Bible Christians was Richard Goldie¹, who had moved to Swansea. The other element in the Mumbles 'breakthrough' was William Clement. Clement, of Mumbles, was a builder by trade and a Methodist preacher by vocation. He broke with the Wesleyan Methodists at the time of the 1849 rupture in that denomination, on the grounds of the despotic authority of the Conference, which he himself had attended several times as a delegate.² Thus 'freed' from alignment, Clement decided, along with his congregation, to build a chapel. The subscriptions were collected and an independent chapel begun. However, Clement's mind was to go through various revolutions (and his congregation through various traumas) before he was to meet Richard Goldie. The first of these changes was

-
1. One hesitates to identify Goldie as not belonging to the Edinburgh ecclesia at this point, because of the difficulties they were having defining the criteria of membership.
 2. Interestingly, the Mumbles Ecclesia, over this type of issue, sided with the 'Suffolk Street' fellowship in the split originated by the Ashcroft affair in 1885. See ch. VI below p. 235-6.

Clement's absorption of some Baptist teachings, particularly regarding adult immersion. William Clement and his son Daniel were immersed in Swansea Bay as a result of this conviction, and some of the congregation followed suit. The second change was in the direction of the Plymouth Brethren. Clement 'embraced their leading doctrines without joining their body'.¹ Finally, on a Temperance excursion to Neath, Clement met Goldie and was 'so struck by the cogency of the arguments urged by Richard Goldie that he was completely disarmed'.² The exchange of names and addresses; the loan of a copy of Elpis Israel; a further revolution in Clement's preaching; the loss of some of his congregation; and his own baptism as a Bible Christian, all followed in short order. As the builder and pastor of the congregation, and the builder of the chapel, Clement's influence with his congregation was great.³ Evans noted some twenty immersions at Mumbles in the period 17 September 1863 to 29 January 1865, and added 'in the succeeding months there were many baptisms'.⁴

(i) HISTORY OF THE 'BIBLE CHRISTIANS' IN U.S.A., 1848 - 1864

Throughout this entire period, Thomas's routine was full of travelling to build up the American ecclesias, even when he was ill, as well as writing, editing, corresponding lengthily and debating. The recording of his itinerary is, in itself, an exhausting experience. Many of his lecture tours extended over periods of weeks. On Sundays, he would give two two-and-a-half-hour addresses, and he would give talks of equal length each week night. In The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come for 1851, he described an experience he had had when, having been ill, he ventured out, rather early in convalescence, to a three day meeting, at which other speakers were expected:

1. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), p. 118.

2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), p. 118.

3. Previously, during his Baptist phase, the Trustees tried to persuade Clement to resign his pastorate, but the congregation were overwhelmingly behind him.

4. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), p. 119.

'We expected to meet two or three brethren at the meeting who would take upon themselves the labour of formally addressing the people, while we should have nothing else to do but to prove by our presence willingness to speak to them, but our inability from extreme weakness to do it. Our dismay was considerable, however, when we found that they had not arrived, and that the work of faith and labour of love must be performed by us alone. Our principle is that difficulties which cannot be avoided must be met and overcome. It is bad policy to make appointments and not fulfil them. We therefore determined to do what we could, and to try to discourse even if we had to come to an abrupt and speedy conclusion. The first appointment was a three days meeting at Acquinton. A brother who accompanied us from Richmond attended to the preliminaries, after which, we, following the example of Jesus (not being able to stand) sat down and taught the people. At first our friends did not think we should be able to hold out fifteen minutes; but though weak in body the subject was itself an inspiration, and to our own surprise we spoke with comparative ease on the Representative Men of the prophetic word for upwards of two hours.

'Encouraged by our success in this effort we did not doubt but that we should be able to get along from day to day as the appointed times came round. We were strengthened by the consideration that sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; so that it was quite unnecessary to assume the evil of many days and lay it all upon one. We experienced, however, some relief from the fact that one of the brethren announced to take part in the meetings arrived at Acquinton on Lord's day; so that had we proved unable to occupy the time there was help at hand to supply our place and to make up our deficiencies. He remained with us all the week, and was of no little assistance to us in conducting the worship, and leaving us only the pleasant labour of persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God, and of declaring all His counsel to the people. We spoke at Acquinton on three successive days; two days after at a school house; and on Saturday and Sunday at the old state-church house called West Point. At all these meetings put together we spoke about twelve hours and a half on things pertaining to the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ; and instead of increasing our debility, we recruited our physical energy every day. In our own person then we have proved that the truth is an inspiration which gives health to the soul, through which it operates nothing but good to the outward man' ¹

1. TFILD, ed. Carter, pp. 28-29.

In The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come for March 1851, Thomas published an article written by himself which, in Roberts's words, 'illustrate[d] him in a new character'.¹ In this, he set out to define a Bible Christian, the kind of life he ought to lead, the faith he should believe. What is more, the duties and privileges of an 'Association of Bible Christians' were clarified. Thus, four years after the 'Confession', Dr. Thomas saw himself as the moulder of a new denomination, and busied himself to make the image true to the ideal.

In 1853, a correspondent in The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come wrote asking for an account of Thomas's journeys and a review of his activities as a whole through the year. Thomas listed amongst his efforts writing enough articles to keep the printers busy in his absence; delivering sixty lectures in New York in the six months from December 1852 to June 1853; subsequent journeys of about three thousand miles to give Bible talks; the production of one hundred and thirty addresses; and visits, after the lectures, to the homes of brethren who lived up to twenty miles from the venue.

Of 1854, Thomas said, 'Thus was brought to a close my visit to the South for 1854 after an absence of six weeks. I addressed the people some twenty-five times, and when I arrived in New York concluded my journeyings for the year, having travelled since the 1st June a distance of 5,500 miles.' 1855 told a similar tale, journeys being accomplished at such speeds as 1,100 miles in fifty-three hours. Roberts, in his history, which was written rather hurriedly, omits reference to much of John Thomas's missionary activities, leaving blank the period between 1852 and 1860.

Meanwhile, Thomas was involved in debate in New York with a Jew named Dr. de Lara, who had been contending with the Christian Jews, who, themselves, had been holding meetings in New York in 1857, in an attempt to convert Jews to Christianity. This brush

-
1. Roberts, Life Dr. T., (3rd edn. 1954), p. 190.
 2. TFILD, ed. Carter, p. 31.
 3. See, for example, information in C.C. Walker's 'Preface' to Roberts's Life Dr. T., (2nd edn. 1925).

with Judaism bore fruit for Thomas in the greater depth to which he studied the concept of the nature of God, resulting, in 1869, in the appearance of his book Phanerosis, which summarised his views on the issue of God manifestation.¹

From 1859-60 until the end of the Civil War in 1865, restrictions were placed upon Dr. Thomas's movements, although, at first, he was able to visit subscribers to The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come in the South, which he did in 1860. In 1861, he again travelled South, crossing through the actual war zones, in order to visit believers. War also brought certain other difficulties - it forced Thomas to consider carefully the attitude of the Christian to war. In The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come for September 1861, an amended version of an article by Dr. Grattan Guinness appeared entitled 'The Duty of Christians in the Present Crisis'. The amendments, by Thomas, clearly indicated that a Bible Christian's duty was not to fight literal battles.² Various consequences flowed from the serious limitations on John Thomas's travel. One was a second visit to Britain³; another was increasing concentration on a Christian duty which could be carried out from his home base, namely writing. It was in this period that the labours of twelve years' digging were allowed to bear fruit in the shape of Eureka, Thomas's mammoth exposition of the Apocalypse. Volume one was produced in 1862, and volumes two and three in the period 1863-1868. Despite the war, and despite his work as an author, Thomas found that he was still able to do some travelling in the Northern States of America. In 1864, for example, he covered 3,000 miles in these Northern States and in Canada. The American Civil War was also important in that it wrung out of the 'Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God' a more terse, if less pronounceable, label, by which they, in almost all of their different permutations, have been known ever since - the name

-
1. The substance of this discussion is detailed on pp. 50-58 below.
 2. This article is cited in Roberts, Life Dr. T., pp. 216-221. It was not in support of pacifism, but against the defence of human governments.
 3. Referred to on pp. 33-34 above.

'Christadelphians'. In 1864, on visiting Illinois, Thomas encountered a great degree of anxiety amongst the brethren there about the forthcoming draft. In calming their fears, the term Christadelphian was formulated. Thomas himself described the birth of this new name in the following extracts from a long letter detailing the events of his 1864 tour.

'... I told [the Illinois brethren] that the Federal law exempted all who belonged to a Denomination conscientiously opposed to bearing arms on condition of paying 300 dollars, finding a substitute, or serving in the hospitals. This excluded all the known denominations except the Quakers; for besides this denomination, they not only proclaimed the fighting for country a christian virtue; but were all commingled in the unhallowed and sanguinary conflict. There was, however, a Denomination not known to the ignorance of legislative wisdom. It was relatively very small, but nevertheless a Denomination and a Name, contrary to, and distinct from, all others upon earth... It would be necessary to give the Name a denominational appellation, that being so denominated, they might have wherewith to answer the Inquisitors... I did not know a better denomination that would be given to such a class of believers than 'Brethren in Christ'. This declares that true status; and, as officials prefer words to phrases, the same fact is expressed in another form by the word Christadelphians, or Χριστου αδελφοι Christ's Brethren. This matter settled to their satisfaction, I wrote for them the following certificate:-

'This is to certify, that S.W. Coffman (the names of the ten male members in full here) and others constitute a Religious Association denominated herein for the sake of distinguishing them from all other 'Names and Denominations', Brethren in Christ, or in one word, Christadelphians; and that said brethren are in fellowship with similar associations in England, Scotland, the British Provinces, New York and other cities of the North and South - New York being for the time present the Radiating Centre of their testimony to the people of the current age and generation of the world...

'This is also further to certify that the undersigned is the personal instrumentality by which the Christian Association aforesaid in Britain and America have been developed within the last fifteen years, and that therefore he knows assuredly that a conscientious, determined and uncompromising opposition to serving in the armies of 'the Powers that be' is their denominational characteristic. In confirmation of this, he appeals to the definition of its position in respect to war on p. 13 of a pamphlet entitled 'Yahweh Elohim', issued by the Antipas Association of Christadelphians assembling at 24, Cooper Institute, New York, and with

which he ordinarily convenes. Advocates of war and desolation are not in fellowship with them or with the undersigned.¹

In July 1864, the export of Dr. Thomas's Heralds having ceased three years previously, Robert Roberts commenced production of The Ambassador and a new chapter began in the history of the Baptised Believers.

John Thomas's conversion from the Campbellites to what became the Christadelphians was no 'Damascus Road' affair: his views matured slowly during the period 1832 to 1847. By 1847, he had sympathisers; by 1848, he was the de facto leader of a new sect, having himself baptised the first converts to it; yet, still, he was unclear on certain matters - especially, though not only, regarding fellowship. The baptism of individuals into a faith with lots of vigour, enthusiasm and spirituality, but with no fixed creed, was not a recipe for tranquillity. This state of affairs largely explained why Thomas's converts were spiritually diverse. The subsequent concentration of power in the hands of Robert Roberts, and Roberts's penchant for clarity of thought, not to say casuistry, in matters spiritual, accounted for much of the turbulence in the years following 1864, when Roberts became editor of The Ambassador. The strong-minded individualism of some of these early pre-1864 converts constitutes part of the explanation of how the post-1864 turbulence created schism early in the sect's existence: two splinter-groups emerging within a decade of 1864.

1. The Ambassador, i (1864-5), 105-106.

CHAPTER II

THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN THOMAS

(a) THE DEVELOPMENT OF JOHN THOMAS'S THEOLOGY

It has been shown in chapter one that there was no monolithic consistency about the theological writings of John Thomas, set against the backcloth of his life as a whole. Viewing the findings of chapter one succinctly, it is clear that, during the period up to 1832, Thomas was only mildly interested in religion. From 1832 to 1847, he was very interested in religion; during this time, he was decidedly a member of the Baptist tradition, albeit of the radical Campbellite offshoot of the 'Scotch Baptist' branch of the Baptist Church. Even after the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' in 1847, Thomas was accepted into the fellowship of a number of Campbellite and Millerite assemblies, both in the U.S.A., where he lived at that time, and in Great Britain, which he visited shortly afterwards.¹ Despite Thomas's acceptability to these groups after 1847, that date marked a watershed in his theological thinking. From 1847, Thomas made a clean organisational break with the Campbellites: his was no longer a disgruntled minority voice within, but a voice in the spiritual wilderness without. This did not, however, prevent Thomas from meeting with Campbellite congregations and attempting to evangelise them to the new views, whenever the opportunity to do so presented itself. In Thomas's new view, the Campbellites' error was not in the theory

1. The Campbellites themselves were far from united. Whilst there were certainly those who would accept Thomas even after 1847, there were many others who were fundamentally opposed to him and wrote to their brethren to beware of his deceptions. For the details see Norrie, Early History, iii. 319-323, and Roberts, Life Dr. T., ch. XXXI.

of their attitude to the Bible, but in translating this theory into practice. In his magnum opus, Eureka, he wrote of himself as representing the resurrection of one of Revelation chapter eleven's Two Witnesses, dead since the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He had come to see Alexander Campbell in a different light, classifying him with the 'Simon Pures who misled the multitude'.

In short, the theology of John Thomas can only be viewed in two sections: first, the period up to 1847; second, the period after that date. The first of these is the more difficult; during it he wrote no major work and his views were evolving constantly and can only be traced by examining the periodicals which he himself edited, and those to which he contributed.¹ In the second period, John Thomas wrote a prolific amount. Having taken fifteen years, from 1832, to make up his mind about religion, his mind, thus unshackled, drove in many directions - prophecy, history, theology, linguistics, controversy. The problem is not, in the 1847-71 period, one of finding enough consistent information to depict clearly anything approaching a 'theology of John Thomas'; the problem is rather one of condensing a plethora of divergent departures into categories easily assimilable into the contemporary definition of theology. In this period he wrote over thirty books and pamphlets, ranging from a theological work Elpis Israel in 1848, through Eureka, to his last work on the issue of God-manifestation.² During the twenty-four year period from 1847 to his death in 1871, Thomas's doctrinal position did not waver³ - he had taken a long

-
1. The Apostolic Advocate, The Gospel Banner, The Investigator, The Herald of the Future Age, The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come and The Millennial Harbinger.
 2. Thomas's Pictorial Illustration of Deity Manifested in the Flesh was published by C.C. Walker in 1901 with the subscription 'Designed by the late John Thomas M.D. of Hoboken, New Jersey, U.S., of whose many works this is the last.'
 3. His interpretation of it did, however, in terms of his views on fellowship. For example, in 1865 George Dowie of Edinburgh was castigated by a leading British Christadelphian, after pressure from Thomas, because of Dowie's views on a personal devil. However, it was the view of Norrie (Early History, ii. 93) that such views had been well-known to exist from the 1850s, and had been combatted, although, until 1864-5, it had never been suggested 'that such a helief invalidated the faith of the person who held it'. (Norrie, op. cit., ii. 93).

look at his situation, but, having decided, the die was cast.

Whilst it is true that 1847 was a watershed for Thomas when viewed overall, his spiritual evolution between 1832 and 1847 was not synchronised throughout the gamut of doctrines, but developed piecemeal doctrine by doctrine. In the case of, for example, the mortality of man as against the immortality of the soul, his mind began to be made up from a very early date - soon after 1830.¹ In the case of God manifestation, on the other hand, his mind was still being made up well after 1847, after, indeed, his meeting with Dr. de Lara and the Christian Jews a decade later. A whole spectrum of other doctrines was clarified at dates ranging over the period 1832-1847.

1847 galvanised Thomas into doctrinal, if not social, isolation from the Campbellites because, as a result of the J.E. Jones criticism², his growing doctrinal independence and his notion of the invalidity of immersion not based on a 'good confession' were forced together starkly, so that he felt himself not on the same doctrinal foundation as most Campbellites and, hence, not 'in fellowship' with them.

(b) BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Higher Criticism had, in general, influenced religious belief concerning the inspiration of the Bible much more on the Continent than it had in Britain, by the mid-nineteenth century.³ Where such views had taken root in Britain they had been ably attacked

1. See p. 58 below.

2. See pp. 13-14 above.

3. Owen Chadwick made the point in his The Victorian Church, (London 1970), p. 530 'Germany entered the phase... [of] lax doctrines of inspiration... in the history of ideas nearly half a century earlier than England.' W. Neil, in The Cambridge History of the Bible, ed. S.L. Greenslade (Cambridge 1963), p. 280, commented 'in a strict sense higher criticism did not become a live issue in England until the second half of the nineteenth century.'

by churchmen such as Bishop J.J. Blunt.¹ In his Undesigned Coincidences he set out to show that a variety of Biblical conundra and apparent contradictions could be resolved in such a way as to demonstrate the guiding hand of God working behind the scenes to produce a fundamentally united story in the writings of different people living in different places and at different times. Blunt summarised his views in these words:

'On the whole, it is surely a striking fact, and one that could scarcely happen in any continuous fable, however cunningly devised, that annals written by so many hands, embracing so many generations of men, relating to so many different states of society, abounding in supernatural incidents throughout, when brought to this same touchstone of truth, undesignedness, should still not flinch from it; and surely the character of a history, like the character of an individual, when attested by vouchers, not of one family, or of one place, or of one date only, but by such as speak to it under various relations, in different situations, and at divers periods of time, can scarcely deceive us.'²

John Thomas was a fervent believer in the Word of God as a totally inspired phenomenon. Using the same touchstone as Blunt of 'undesignedness' as the indicator of truth, Thomas's confidence in the veracity of verbal inspiration was so great that he used the technique of 'comparing Scripture with Scripture' to produce an overall doctrinal pattern, believing that the selectivity of approach of the Reformation from Luther to Campbell, in their interpretation of the Scriptures, was the origin of their doctrinal downfall. Thomas came to feel that I Thessalonians v. 2¹ and Matthew xxiii. 9 had been significantly amended by Campbell,³ whilst Luther's dismissal of the Epistle of James as a 'Gospel of straw' was anathema to Thomas's approach of reverent and whole-hearted

-
1. John James Blunt (1794-1855) studied at St. John's College, Cambridge from 1812, becoming a fellow in 1816, a Wort's travelling bachelor in 1818 and Lady Margaret professor of divinity in May 1839. Blunt's ideas about what he called 'undesigned coincidences' were applied in various series of lectures and sermons at the University of Cambridge in 1827, 1831 and 1832, each of which was subsequently published. These were ultimately encapsulated in a combined volume of 365 pages simply entitled Undesigned Coincidences, (London 1847), in which his view of Biblical inerrancy was examined as applied to most of the books of the Bible.
 2. Blunt, Undesigned Coincidences, pp. 3-4.
 3. See p. 8 above.

respect for Bible inspiration. His criticisms of the practice of these clerics were the more biting because, he felt, their initial theory had been so good:

'The legends of this new sect [Scotch Baptistism]...were "Prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good;" and, on the obverse of its medal, "Style no man on earth your Father; for he alone is your Father who is in heaven, and all ye are brethren. Assume not the title of Rabbi; for ye have only one Teacher; neither assume the title of Leader; for ye have only one Leader, the Messiah." The sentiment of these precepts is admirable and... would have led the disciples of these reformers into the very Holy City itself.'¹

The Reformers, however, had fallen short: 'Scotch Baptistism... afterwards refused to practise [its principles].'² Thomas determined that he was not going to make the same mistakes himself. His labours in the effort of 'proving all things' involved familiarising himself with large segments of history. He was well versed in the early Christian Fathers and in Revd. E.B. Elliott³ and Gibbon, as well as in much ancient history - and modern history, too, where it seemed to him relevant to Bible prophecy. The mastery of the Bible in its original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic⁴, and Greek was also on Thomas's list of priorities, as was the acquisition of the knowledge of the means whereby, he believed, the Church had

-
1. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 663.
 2. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 663.
 3. Edward Bishop Elliott (1793-1875) graduated from Trinity College, Cambridge, 1816, being elected to a fellowship in 1817. He was the incumbent of Tuxford, Notts., from 1824, and of St. Mark's, Brighton, from 1849-75. He was a member of the evangelical school, active in the discharge of his clerical duties, and was an advocate of missionary enterprise. He was especially interested in the study of prophecy. His main work, Horae Apocalypticae or a Commentary on the Apocalypse Critical and Historical, appeared in 1844. Sir James Stephen, in his essay on the 'Clapham Sect', referred to Elliott's three volume study as a 'book of profound learning, singular ingenuity, and almost bewitching interest.' It went through five editions, and was abridged more than once. Elliott's interpretation agreed generally with protestant commentators who identified the Papal power with Antichrist, and expected the establishment of the Millennium before the end of the nineteenth century. Its publication led to controversies with Dr. R.S. Candlish, Dr. Keith and others. Most of Elliott's works bore upon the interpretation of prophecy. They included The Question 'What is the Beast?' Answered (1838) and Vindiciae Horariae (1848), which were letters written to Dr. Keith, and a study of Dean Alford's views on the Apocalypse called Apocalypsis Alfordiana (1865).
 4. Dan. ii.4 - vii.28; Ezra iv.8 - vi.18 and Jer. x.11 are in Aramaic.

polluted the sense of the original concepts from the Old and New Testaments by overlaying them with pagan ideas from Gentile languages. His views on the meaning of 'the Church' were illuminating in this regard:

'In the rendering of the original before us I have not translated the word ἐκκλησίαι, ekklesiai, but simply transferred it. It is generally rendered churches; but this word does not express the idea of ecclesia. Church is a corruption of κυριακή kuriakē, which signifies "pertaining to a lord". The Anglo-Saxons took the first and last syllables of the Greek word, as kur-ke, which they spelled Circe, but which is more obviously shown in the Scotch kirke; both of which are equivalent to the modern English Chur-ch. "Something pertaining to a lord" is the etymological signification of the word; and, although, in a certain sense, an ecclesia is something pertaining to a lord, and that lord the Lord of heaven and earth, yet the ideas of property and lordship are not contained in the word ecclesia. This is one reason why in this exposition of the Apocalypse we reject the word church as the representative of ecclesia.'¹

In this, Thomas appears to have been correct. The Oxford English Dictionary in its etymology of 'Church', whilst commenting that 'the ulterior derivation has been keenly disputed', adds that 'there is now a general agreement among scholars in referring it to the Greek word ΚΥΡΙΑΚΩΝ, properly ad[jective] "of the lord, dominicum, dominical" (f[rom] κυριος lord)...'²

With this punctilious approach in mind, Thomas was going to 'search the Scriptures with the teachableness of a little child' sure that his 'labour would not be in vain'; after all, 'all scripture given by inspiration of God is also profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'³ Not only so, but any other person who came to the Scriptures must have this attitude, if they were to learn anything: 'to the Bible, then, all must come at last if they would be truly wise in spiritual things.'⁴ Even a professional training in theology was no

1. Thomas, Eureka, 1. 119.

2. The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, (Oxford 1971), p. 411.

3. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 5.

4. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 2.

substitute for genuine learning acquired by this child-like humility obtained by meditation on the Word:

'This is a great truth which few of the sons of men have learned to appreciate according to its importance. A man may be a theologian profoundly skilled in all questions of "divinity"...: he may be able to speak all the languages of the nations... and be able to solve all mysteries, - but... if he know not the true meaning of the Bible, he seemeth only to be wise, while he is, in fact, a fool.'¹

There was no such thing in Christianity as a 'mystery': 'an intelligible mystery characterises the once hidden wisdom of God, and becomes the subject matter of an enlightened faith.'² Thus, there were no esoteric barriers to 'true knowledge'. It was simply a question of developing a sufficiently humble attitude to absorb as a babe at its mother's breast, and of finding the time to suckle. In the world around, 'unintelligible mystery [was] the ultima ratio for all difficulties which [were] insoluble by the symbols of ecclesiastical communities.' However, this was foolishness because 'no one has any right to set up his own ignorance as the limit of what God has revealed.'³

Catholics were regarded as very low on the scale of aptitude for Biblical instruction: 'The bible and popery are as mutually hostile as the light of the sun and the thick darkness of Egypt that might be felt.'⁴ However, Protestantism, which prided itself on the 'Bible alone' as its slogan⁵, made a nonsense of these claims by human constructs like the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles. In short, 'the word of man has silenced the word of God in their midst; and religion has degenerated into a professional commodity sold for cash according to the taste which most prevails in the soul markets of the world.'⁶

The only alternative to this spiritual squalor was to turn to the Bible 'as to "a light shining in a dark place" ', because 'if they speak not according to THIS WORD, it is because there is no

-
1. Thomas, Elpis Israel, pp. 2-3.
 2. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 3.
 3. Thomas, Elpis Israel, pp. 3-4.
 4. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 5.
 5. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 6.
 6. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 7.

light in them.'¹ The Bereans were commended when they subjected even the teaching of the apostles to the detailed scrutiny of the Word. 'If then not even the preaching of an apostle was credited unaccompanied by scriptural investigation, is it not infinitely more incumbent on us that we should bring to a like test the opinions and precepts of the uninspired and fallible theologians of our day?'²

Thomas was, of course, incorrect in assessing all Protestants as claiming the 'Bible alone' as their touchstone. Many of them regarded the Holy Spirit guiding church leaders, individually or in conclave, as being equally important. However, Thomas's views on the efficacy of Bible study pure and simple became a legacy to Christadelphians throughout their history: despite the academic prowess of some, worldly education in general and theological training in particular have been regarded with suspicion as being of doubtful value. Nevertheless, it ought to be stressed that Thomas was not adopting a Unitarian type of rationalism. In his view, both the Word and the Spirit were contained in the Bible - after all, Scripture was given by inspiration of God. The Spirit was mediated through the Word of God taken as a whole, interpreting the individual words; thus the Bible was a huge, interlocking mechanism, itself excluding wrong interpretations because, taken whole, it interpreted itself. Where Protestant denominations erred was to be partitive in their acceptance of the Bible: faiths developed from partiality - the faith was a derivative of full acceptance of the Word of God. This view of the nature of the Bible, the Holy Spirit's working and the method of interpreting the Scriptures resulted in Christadelphians eschewing development into a purely rationalistic literary and philosophical society; their devotions and emotions were very much tied in to the Bible, but they were present, even if very evidently not sentimentality.

1. Isaiah viii. 20, cited Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 5.
 2. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 5.

(c) THE NATURE OF GOD

Thomas's understanding of the nature of God did not, in the first place, seem in any way unorthodox; nor was it, initially at least, central to his religious radicalism. His understanding of the Gospel centred on God's covenant with Abraham¹ and the full inspiration of the Bible; but these concepts led him, at a tangent, to the issue of the Godhead, because the Abrahamic covenant obliged him to consider the nature of the 'seed' who was promised and the Hope set before mankind (namely of being 'partakers of the divine nature'²), and his views on inspiration caused him to consider with punctilious awe passages from the Old Testament which, in his view, orthodoxy simply ignored.³ However, by 1848, all this had led him to devote a mere six out of 410 pages of his Elpis Israel to a consideration of God-manifestation. Later, in response to stimuli in his environment, he was to devote over sixty pages of Eureka to this subject and, later still, to write an entire book, Phanerosis,⁴ on the topic.

In 1857, in New York, a series of meetings was arranged by a group known as the 'Christian Jews', who were seeking to bring their fellow Jews to Christian belief. Some of the Jews in the audience were capable protagonists of Judaism. One of these, a Dr. de Lara, scornfully enquired which of the sects really represented the Christians - was it Roman Catholics, Protestants, Unitarians or Trinitarians? He was, evidently, sufficiently formidable to carry the audience with him by asking a series of pointed questions. However, Dr. Thomas, who had been invited to the meetings, was allowed to interpose remarks in the questions' session and, to the annoyance of the organisers, was listened to, by the Jews, with respect. Thomas was used to speaking for an hour or more, and the Christian Jews felt that the only way to rid themselves of this troublesome man was to introduce a rule that speakers, in the discussion session, should limit speeches to five

1. Referred to in detail on p. 52 below.

2. II Peter i. 3-4.

3. Some of these passages are referred to in Appendix F.

4. The subject matter of Phanerosis originally appeared as a series of articles in The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come (1857-1859), and first appeared in book form on 15 Oct. 1869.

minutes. This muzzled Thomas only to the extent of encouraging him to organise meetings of his own with the Jews. Exact details of this controversy were recorded by Roberts¹, who concluded, significantly, that these events led Thomas 'to study the Scriptural teaching about God more deeply than before. His ideas on the subject became more developed and his teaching more definite, as a comparison of what is said in Elpis Israel and in his later works shows clearly.'²

Put simply, Thomas's post-1857 views on theology were that God's name - the tetragrammaton YHWH - meant 'I will be whom (or what) I will be' and that, implicit in this name, was the concept of God-manifestation. Thus, Jesus Christ was 'very God', 'the fellow and equal of the deity' and 'God made flesh', but so also, in particular circumstances, were angels, and even human beings. It was not, therefore, the diversity of the concepts involved in 'The Trinity' which worried Thomas, but rather their restriction. In his view God either had been or would be manifest through more than Jesus Christ - 'one Deity in a countless multitude revealed in the memorial name'; 'the Godhead is the homogeneous fountain of the Deity; these other gods are the many streams which form this fountain flow. The springhead of Deity is one, not many; the streams as numerous as the orbs of the universe, in which a manifestation of Deity may have hitherto occurred.'³

Such a radical departure from conventional Christianity needs setting in its proper theological framework. The name of God, said Thomas, was based on two uses of the future tense of the Hebrew verb 'to be', eyeh, and a utility relative pronoun, asher. The latter could mean 'who' in both masculine and feminine, singular and plural contexts. Thus, Yahweh was a contraction from eyeh asher eyeh and this phrase meant 'I will be whom I will be'. The conventional King James translation of Exodus iii. 14, 'I am that I am',

1. See Roberts, Life Dr. T., pp. 206-7.

2. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 207.

3. Thomas, Phanerosis, (centenary edn., S. Australia 1969), p. 77.

Thomas regarded as simply wrong; and the translation, in the 1611 version, of Yahweh Elohim ('I who will be mighty ones', in his view) as scandalous.¹ The understanding of this would, he thought, be helpful with a whole series of Bible passages such as I Corinthians xv. 28; Ephesians iv. 6; John xvii. 6,20-23; Psalm lxxxii. 6, in all of which God had manifested or would manifest himself through human beings other than Jesus Christ.

However, despite the strength of his views about God being manifest through a variety of means, a special place was still reserved to Jesus as God's son via the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the virgin Mary. He was 'the Eloah in chief', 'the Head of the Body', 'the fellow and equal of the Deity', 'God made flesh'. 'The Father', said Dr. Thomas, 'was one Eloah, and Jesus was another; so that in this unity there were developed two, who, in the Hebrew plural are termed Elohim.' Jesus was a unique combination of flesh and spirit. It was necessary that Jesus should be divine, said Thomas, so as to condemn flesh. Because Jesus was morally perfect, he should not die. Yet, because he was clothed upon with 'filthy flesh', he had to die. This showed up the flesh for the weak, poor material it was - 'his flesh was like our flesh, in all its points, - weak, emotional, and unclean.'² A further reason for the importance of spirit in Jesus Christ's make-up was Psalm xlix. 6-9 - for no flesh was able, of itself, to ransom other flesh. This, for Thomas, imported none of the dualism of Plato: Jesus was wholly good. Yet, because he was a fleshly being, he bore in his nature the potential to sin which all men carried. This potential was discarded when, after the resurrection, Jesus's body was immortalised. It was also necessary that Jesus should be flesh because, firstly, in the promises made to Abraham, Abraham's own 'seed' was described as conferring blessings upon all. In these statements in Genesis xii. 3, xviii. 18, xx. 18, and the like, God's Spirit, in Thomas's view, 'in effect said, I shall become flesh and blood.'³

-
1. This is usually translated in the King James version as 'LORD God'.
 2. Thomas, Eureka, i. 106.
 3. Thomas, Eureka, i. 276.

Secondly, Jesus Christ's life was designed as an exemplar for Christians. It had, therefore, to be lived out within all the limitations of the human frame. 'A Captain [of Salvation]... whose nature was primarily consubstantial with the Deity, could not be touched with the feeling of their infirmities.'¹ Thirdly, divine sanction had decreed that propitiation - the offering of acceptable sacrifices to God - must be sealed with blood, to indicate an attitude, on the part of the supplicant offerer, of empathy with the victim: what was really required was the individual's blood to be shed for his own sin. This principle could only be given effect in Christ if Christ's life really was bound up in, and could be ended by the loss of, human blood. Thomas said:

'The sin-covering efficacy of the Yahweh-Name depended upon the person bearing it being a flesh and blood Messiah; for "without the shedding of blood there is no remission." The Spirit plainly testifies this in the prophets and apostles. In Leviticus xvii.11, he saith, "I have given the blood to you upon the altar for a covering upon your souls, for the blood itself shall cover the soul." The reason given for blood being thus used is "because the soul of the flesh is in the very blood." The soul, nepshesh, or life is in the blood ... Hence, a bloodless man could not, upon the principles of the divine law, be a covering for sin. He must have real blood in his veins containing life, as in redeeming flesh and blood nature from death, he had to give the same sort of life for the life to be redeemed.'²

The means by which Jesus Christ was created as an amalgam of flesh and spirit did not pose problems for Thomas on the spiritual plane - it was only one part of a whole scheme of events by which all faithful Christians would be 'partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.'³ On the biological level, Thomas was rather less definite. He said, 'Spirit acted upon the nervous system of Mary... it operated

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 107.

2. Thomas, Eureka, i. 278.

3. II Peter i.4, as expounded in Thomas, Eureka, pp. 105-6.

germinatively upon the contents of Mary's ovarium; and caused an ovum, or "seed of the woman" to be deposited in her womb.¹ If Thomas's medical training led him to explore further the biological possibilities for Christology of, for instance, Sir Richard Owen's recent discovery of parthenogenesis, he gave no indication in his writings.

The concept of Jesus being flesh and yet being the manifestation of God helped Thomas with various knotty Biblical conundra.² For example, he concluded that his view explained the following problems of identification:

'The prophetic YAHWEH ELOHIM styles himself "the First and the Last", so doth the symbolical Son of man; YAHWEH says he is the only Rock, Paul speaking of the Rock terms it Christ; YAHWEH styles himself King of Israel, Christ Jesus calls himself the same; YAHWEH declares that he is a saviour, and that there is none beside him: the Word made flesh was called Jesus, because he should save his people, or be their saviour - "I, I, YAHWEH, and there is no saviour beside me." Isaiah xliii.11.'³

Another problem which the close identification between 'the Name', Jesus and God explained was in a sequence of parallel passages in the Gospels, where those who give up all were described as doing so 'for my name's sake', Matthew xix.29; 'for my sake and the gospel's', Mark x.29; 'for the kingdom of God's sake', Luke xviii. 29. Further examples included John iii.11, where Jesus had said 'I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.' Of this Thomas said 'Here was plural manifestation in UNITY. This is abundantly evinced in all the New Testament. Hence, on another occasion, Jesus said to the Jews, "I and the Father are one" - one what? We are, in the words of Moses, "One Yahweh".'⁴

In Phanerosis, Thomas, having summarised his views, made the following conclusion:

-
1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 276.
 2. Four of the most substantial exegetical problems for which Thomas offered solutions are referred to in Appendix F.
 3. Thomas, Eureka, i. 112-3.
 4. Thomas, Eureka, i. 102.

'These things have been demonstrated: much rubbish has been cleared away. Trinitarianism and Unitarianism have both received a quietus. There are not three Gods in the Godhead; nor are there but three in manifestation: nevertheless, the Father is God, and Jesus is God; and we may add, so are all the brethren of Jesus gods; and "a multitude which no man can number."¹

These views threw up a whole range of questions - how could Christians be 'sons' of God, as compared with Jesus Christ? how could Jesus Christ, as a finite manifestation of God, be the 'beginning of the creation of God'? how were passages such as 'a body hast thou prepared me' to be understood? but, perhaps above all, if the concept of God enshrined in the Trinity formulation was so wrong, how did it become established initially?

In tackling the last of these issues, Thomas left his readers in no doubt as to where he stood on the rectitude of the Trinity as a Bible doctrine.² He said:

'The Deity, then, in a multitude is a conspicuous element of apostolic, as well as of Old Testament teaching... one Deity in a countless multitude revealed in the memorial name, and expounded in the mystery of godliness... Holy Spirit is an emanation from God's substance, intensely radiating and all pervading; and that, when focalized under the fiat of his will, things and persons without limit, as to number or nature, are produced.

'This multitudinous manifestation of the one Deity - one in many and many in one, by his spirit - was proclaimed to the Hebrew nation in the formula of Deuteronomy vi.4, "Hear, O Israel, YAHWEH our ELOHIM is the ONE YAHWEH;" that is "He who shall be our Mighty Ones is the One who shall be."³

In contrast, he believed, the Quicumque Vult, or Athanasian Creed, was entirely misguided on this issue:

'It is not "One God in three Gods," and "Three Gods in One". The knowledge of the mystery of godliness was lost sight of by the Babel-builders of the third and fourth centuries; who, as a substitute, invented the Athanasian conceit of three persons in the Divine Essence, co^eternal and co^equal. They bound up the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons, into one person, or body; and called the fiction "the Triune God." They

-
1. Thomas, Phanerosis, p. 77.
 2. He described both Trinitarians and Arians as 'apostates... of corrupt minds.' See Eureka, ii. 326.
 3. Thomas, Eureka, i. 100.

did not perceive that the Deity was but one person, and one substance, peculiar to himself. One Deity and not three.¹

He cited a pronouncement of the Catholic Church against those who disbelieved in the Trinity:

'But the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say, that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that he was not before he was begotten; and that he was made from that which did not exist; or who assert that he is of other substance or essence than the Father; or that he was created, or is susceptible of change.'²

He described this as the utterance of 'the rattling skeleton enthroned in the temple of the Imperial Mother of the Man of Sin.'³

There could be no doubt of Thomas's hostility to the concept of the Trinity. He assessed the entrance of this erroneous view as being due to the desire for 'court favour', 'philosophy and vain deceit', 'the inspiration of what the Greeks called wisdom and logic.' He went on to instance historical occasions when, he felt, political pressures had bent theological principles, quoting from Dr. G. Campbell⁴, Edward Gibbon and Ammianus Marcellinus⁵, amongst others. In this welter of corruption, Thomas found instances where, to him, the doctrine of the Trinity was directly involved. In 366 A.D., he said, there was a contest over the succession to the Papal See (or 'throne of blasphemy', as he described it). This was

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. p. 100.

2. Thomas, Eureka, ii. p. 326.

3. Thomas, Eureka, ii. p. 326.

4. George Campbell (1719-1796) was professor of divinity in Marischal College, Aberdeen from 1771. His Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, published posthumously in 1800, which was largely a defence of Presbyterianism, was the main work of his on the issue Thomas was raising at this point.

5. Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 325-391) was a Greek whose history of the Roman empire Rerum Gestarum Libri XXXI, originally in thirty-one books, was rediscovered by the Renaissance scholar Poggio in 1414. The first thirteen volumes of Marcellinus's history, covering the period 96 A.D. to 353 A.D. were not found by Poggio. The last eighteen volumes provided a detailed study of Rome from 353-378 A.D. Marcellinus's analysis of the weaknesses of the Roman empire anticipated and explained its fall which occurred twenty years after his death. Whilst Marcellinus's rhetorical style is to the distaste of subsequent scholars, his completeness and objectivity have been generally applauded.

between Damasus¹ and Ursicinus², and was unresolved for some while - each 'protagonist' being supported by a group within the Church. Their quarrel was taken to such lengths 'that great numbers on either side were killed... no fewer than a hundred and thirty-seven persons having been put to death in the very "temple of God" itself!'³ With the ascent to the Imperial throne of Theodosius the Great (379-395), the Damasus-faction received great support. Theodosius, first, addressed a letter to the divided Catholics of Constantinople, and told them that:

" it was his pleasure that all his subjects should be of the same profession as Damasus, Bishop of Rome, and Peter, bishop of Alexandria; that their church alone should be denominated "Catholic" who worshipped the divine Trinity as equal in honour, and that those who were of another opinion should be deemed heretics, be regarded as infamous, and subject to other punishments."⁴

Other instances of pressure on non-Trinitarians about this time included the 'expulsion of all from Constantinople who would not subscribe to the Nicene confession of faith';⁵ the issue of edicts against these heretics, preventing them from assembling indoors, then 'in fields or villages';⁶ the forbidding of heretics to worship, preach, ordain bishops, or presbyters; the banishment of heretics; the rendering infamous of some heretics and the removal of common citizens' rights from others - whilst the burning of copies of the Scriptures simply restricted access to the truth of those ignorant but child-like believers who remained.

Thus, in Thomas's view, the sole reason for the establishment of the Trinity as a Christian doctrine was political manipulation within the Church hierarchy, coupled with the savage repression of recalcitrant congregations. This led him, in expounding Revelation xiii.3, to describe the Trinity as 'the theology of the Satan...

-
1. St. Damasus I, 366-384 A.D.
 2. Antipope, 366-7 A.D.
 3. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 225.
 4. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 225.
 5. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 226.
 6. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 226.

their father, the Devil, his Son Antichrist, and the Ghost of the Flesh. These are their "Holy Trinity" in whom they delight, and after whom they go wondering.¹

Thomas's notion of the nature of God, which had been only tangential to his understanding of the Gospel in 1848, became, by the time his views had matured fully, a central plank in his concept of Christianity. It was, perhaps, the most distinctive of all his views, and was largely responsible for the separation of Christadelphians from mainstream Christianity.

(d) THE NATURE OF MAN, THE NATURE OF SIN, AND THE DEVIL

The mortality of man and the nature of sin were early heterodoxies in John Thomas's catalogue of beliefs. In 1830 an article had appeared in The Lancet entitled 'The Materiality of Man, the Immortality of the Soul, and the Vital Principle'.² The contention of this essay had been that, in addition to differences of degree of mental prowess, man also differed from the animal kingdom in that he had attached to him 'a principle termed the soul' which started into consciousness at death. Dr. Thomas wrote a reply which appeared in The Lancet in 1830. Here, he argued, from I Corinthians xv, that human animal matter lay dormant after death awaiting, like a seed hoping for the Spring, the germination Resurrection would provide when new living beings would arise. He concluded that the existence in man of part of God's essence seemed a 'very fallacious notion'.³

Dr. Thomas was an eclectic of historical data and a piecemeal theoretician and his views on this issue, as on many others, later developed a fully-fledged plumage that the nascent chick belied.⁴ Nevertheless, this view was distinct from those of many of his contemporaries who would certainly have considered their views orthodox, and who would have agreed with Laurence Sterne that 'I

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 238.

2. This information is only in the 1st edn. of Life Dr. T., p. 6.

3. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 5.

4. Dr. Thomas himself made this point in Roberts, Life Dr. T. p. 6.

am positive I have a soul; nor can all the books with which materialists have pestered the world ever convince me of the contrary.'

Four years later, Thomas was in America and editing The Apostolic Advocate. In the number for October 1834, he issued his 34 poignant questions to the Campbellite Establishment.¹ Of the points he raised, a sizeable proportion related to this very issue. The whole gamut of topics under this rubric was covered in his questions. These topics included: What distinguished Man's nature within the Animal Kingdom? What was the nature of Man before The Fall? Was Man 'naturally' immortal? Could Platonism be squared with the Gospel? At what point was immortality conferred by God? How did the instant-translation-to-heaven (or hell) -at-death idea fit in with that of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement?

In 1837, Thomas debated the issue 'The popular doctrines of immortality, heaven, hell, election and kindred topics: are they scriptural?'² with a Presbyterian clergyman, John S. Watt, at 'The Fork' meeting house in Lunenburg, Virginia. The debate lasted from 1-5 August and, despite bad weather, was said to be heard by 'a most exemplary, patient, and listening multitude'.³ The length of the debate (the edited version ran to some 150 pages) indicated the number and profundity of inter-related divergences from orthodoxy which Thomas had, by this point, developed on this topic. The Sunday after the debate, Dr. Thomas spoke at the same venue 'for between three and four hours'⁴ on an exposition of John iii regarding 'Eternal Life'.

The fact that Thomas's pronouncements on the issues of the mortality of man and hamartiology occupied a less prominent position in subsequent controversial documentation - such as the 'Thirty questions' of 1846 and the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' of 1847 - could not be attributed to the fact that he

1. For details see Appendix A.

2. Edited by Roberts, the debate appeared in print in 1872 under the title The Apostacy Unveiled, (Birmingham 1872).

3. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 147.

4. Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 147.

had come to regard these issues as either otiose or dubious, because later works such as Elpis Israel (1848-9) and Eureka (1861-1869) contain statements which were emphatic both to the importance and clarity of these matters. It was rather that, by the late 1830s, Thomas's mind had become so assured on these topics that, from a controversial point of view, they then constituted what to him was a 'dead letter' - and he turned his attention to other areas of thought where certitude was still a slippery object.

In 1837, Thomas wrote a pamphlet,¹ which provided a précis of the lecture on 'Eternal Life' delivered after the J.S. Watt debate in Virginia. This, in turn, he summarised into six clear statements:

'1. In relation to life and death there are three classes of mankind; first the true believers or heirs of eternal life; second, the unbelievers or rejecters of the truth, who are the heirs of the resurrection to suffer a fiery punishment which will end in eternal death, and therefore, be an eternal punishment; and, third, the descendants of Adam, not yet placed under law, together with those who are physically incompetent of belief or obedience, and whose lot is consummated in death eternal, and undisturbed by future life or suffering.

2. Eternal life being a matter of promise, it is bestowed only on those who can prove that the promise was made to them: in other words, a man to become immortal, must establish his identity as one of the heirs of the will concerning the Christ.

3. Jesus must come again; and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others, must rise from the dead in order to realize the things promised to them in the will.

4. Immortality is not an hereditary constituent of human nature, but a free and gracious gift of God superadded thereto; and laid up with Jesus Christ, as treasure in heaven, to be bestowed at his appearing.

5. Eternal life is conferred only on those who conform to certain fixed conditions, namely, obedience to the Gospel preached by the Apostles, and a continuance in well-doing.

6. Salvation, as a whole, is deliverance from sin and eternal death.'²

-
1. This was reprinted in Phanerosis and Other Writings, ed. J. Carter, and published by The Christadelphian (Birmingham 1954), pp. 125-139.
 2. Phanerosis and Other Writings, ed. J. Carter, pp. 138-9.

Nineteen years later, Thomas produced volume two of Eureka. This contained a statement of his views on this issue which diverged only in its more lyrical format from the Virginia lecture of 1837. He said:

'Immortality is neither innate nor disembodied. "The Deity only hath it," Paul says; and he only bestows it upon obedient believers of the truth as it is in the Jesus he preached; and that bestowal is upon men and women bodily existing; and by clothing their bodies with incorruptibility and deathlessness after resurrection from among the dead. This is what the scripture teaches in opposition to the mythologies of the ancient and modern worlds. If "the simplicity which is in Christ" had not been departed from, there would have been no catholic and protestant daemonialism.'¹

Thomas spent more time on expounding his understanding of the Biblical concept of 'the soul' than on any other in the theological area adjacent to sin and mortality. In his exegesis regarding the fifth seal in the Apocalypse², he devoted ten pages to the elucidation of the 'souls under the altar' in verse nine, most of which was concentrated upon the theological clarification of the concept of souls in general rather than to the historical analysis of those particular souls. He began by explaining that the Hebrew נפש (Nephesh), which was used in Genesis chapter one to describe the 'living creatures' that the waters brought forth abundantly (v.20), the fish (v.21), the land creatures (v.24) and every creature (v.30)³, was the very same word translated by King James I's translators as 'soul' when it related to mankind, as in, for example, Genesis ii.7, xii.13. Thomas bolstered up this postulated equivalence in mortality between mankind and animalkind by an array of Scriptural citations such as Psalm xlix.12,20, Ecclesiastes iii.18, Psalm lxxviii.39, as well as by detailed linguistic and contextual arguments from the early chapters of Genesis. Analysing I Corinthians xv.44-45 brought him to the conclusion that the 'Spiritual end' to which man was called involved the bestowal of a further 'spiritual'

1. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 496.

2. Revelation vi.9-11.

3. The phrase 'every beast of the earth... wherein there is life' (v.30) was, according to Thomas, literally 'soul of life'.

body.¹ A number of Biblical passages led Thomas to the conclusion that immortality came not only as a bestowal² upon the undeserving but also as a reward for 'patient continuance in well doing'.³ Thus, immortality was highly conditional and not at all inherent in man, in Thomas's view. The rest of this section on the fifth seal was taken up with three points. First of all, in the exposition of a dozen or so passages from the New Testament, he strove to explain that, whilst the Resurrection-Body was certainly a different sort of body from its mortal predecessor, it would still be recognisably that of the individual who had died, both in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ and in that of his followers. Responsible followers of Jesus, such as Judas Iscariot, who had 'sowed to his flesh' would, after the Judgement,

"reap corruption of the flesh" - to "receive through the body according to what he had done"; and as this was bad he will, through the body he acquires in the future, receive "bad", or, corruption. The body of life, then, named Judas, as a type of his class, remains perishable, and "when cast into outer darkness", reaps all the evil of which it is susceptible.'⁴

Secondly, Thomas summarised his conclusions about souls. Thirdly, he argued that 'soul' was a very suitable description for the part of a Christian offered in sacrifice upon an altar⁵, and brought historical examples from Paul, Ignatius and Polycarp, where they chose this very metaphor in pre-execution speeches.

In so far as sin was concerned, Thomas was clear that man produced sin, and that God, in response, produced evil.⁶ One of the evils God brought upon man was mortality. He believed that the words translated 'sin' were used in various senses in the Bible.

1. This was 'spiritual' only in terms of its energy-source. It was material in substance, on the pattern of Jesus Christ's 'handle me and see.'
2. Citing II Peter i.4.
3. A.V. translation of Romans ii.7.
4. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 241.
5. Since, from his linguistic argument about 'Nepheesh', 'soul' was a shorthand term for 'life-principle'; since the 'life is in the blood' (Lev. xvii.11); and since blood was poured beneath the altar (Exodus xxix.12); 'soul' was a suitable term to use in Rev. vi.9.
6. In Elpis Israel p. 113, Thomas quoted from Isaiah xlv.7 and Amos iii.6 to illustrate this point. He was using 'evil' in the sense of 'punishment'; he was not imputing a Platonic-style dualism to God's nature.

First, they meant 'the transgression of law'; second, they referred to the evil which God brought upon man's nature, because of man's transgression, and which brings disease, death and decay; third, they connoted man himself: 'Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled "sinful flesh", that is, flesh full of sin; so that sin, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man.'¹ Again, later, he states, 'Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature.'² The connecting link in Thomas's mind between the first of these definitions of 'sin' on the one hand, and the second and third definitions on the other, he made overt when he said: 'Sin in the flesh is hereditary; and entailed upon mankind as the consequence of Adam's violation of the Eden law... Adam and Eve committed it; and their posterity are suffering the consequence of it.'³ In view of these beliefs, Thomas was content to explain the 'filthy garments' worn by Joshua, the son of Josedech, in Zechariah iii.3-5, as being 'the Human Nature, which the Word of the Deity was clothed with in His flesh-manifestation.'⁴

Thomas rejected alternative notions of the after-life which were introduced by the Ecclesiastical Establishment as being 'the philosophizings of Sin's flesh', 'the unenlightened thinking of Sin's flesh', 'the conceit of an inborn ghost', the product of a 'serpentine philosopher, whose pious lucubrations "deceive the whole world"', and concluded 'the life purchased by Jesus for his brethren has no affinity with such a fiction. He purchased life for dead bodies; not happiness for immortal ghosts.'⁵

He discountenanced the Immortality of the Soul not only on the grounds that it represented a corruption of the first century truth, brought into the church by compromises with pagan philosophers, but also because it led to a misconception about the nature of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice. It led Gnostics, in his view,

-
1. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 113. At this point, Thomas cited Rom. vii.17-18 in support of his belief.
 2. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 114.
 3. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 115.
 4. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 648.
 5. Thomas, Eureka, i. 367-8.

'to affirm... that the real Son of the Deity was the "Immortal Soul" that tabernacled in the body, which body was nothing else than the son of Joseph and Mary, consequently, that the Son of the Deity had no real humanity. That it was the son of Joseph who died on the cross, was buried, and rose again, while the Son of God being immortal, did not, and could not, die upon the cross, but only appeared to die.'¹

The idea of the immortality of the soul had led the Gnostics into further trouble, he contended, when they tried to account for the Resurrection. Gnostics, of either branch (ascetic or self-indulgent), minimised the significance of material objects. Knowledge per se was exalted - and a mystical form of it at that. Consequently, the Resurrection of a material body was an irritant to Gnostic theologians. They therefore limited the Resurrection to that of the 'dead saints' after the Lord Jesus Christ arose on the third day.² This, said Thomas, was the background to statements by the Apostle Paul, such as those contained in I Corinthians xv.12, and II Timothy ii.18, where Paul disputed the notions that 'there is no resurrection of dead ones' and 'the resurrection is past already.'³

Thus, in relation to the mortality of man, Thomas's viewpoint was not merely that the idea of the immortality of the soul was wrong in itself but that to embrace it was to require modification of all other adjacent doctrines, thereby breaking out of the clear Biblical mould provided by the ipsissima verba of Scripture into a complex alternative of idea-shapes which would be more acceptable to the pliability requirements of the philosophers.

Similarly, with the notion of 'Original sin'. This idea led to the view that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh - 'the germ which in after ages was fully developed into the Antichrist'⁴ - but via a non-Biblical 'immaculate conception':

'The immaculate nature of Jesus, however, involved "the Fathers" and their "Father of the Fathers" - πατήρ πατέρων in the necessity of transforming the mother of Jesus into an immaculate virgin-goddess - immaculate in her conception, and therefore not of the common flesh of Jewish nature.

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 202.

2. Matthew xxvii.52-3.

3. Thomas's translation of these two passages, from Eureka i. 201.

4. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 624.

The Deity of the Apostacy was bound to decree this to avoid the inconvenient questions, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" - Job xiv.4; and "How can he be clean that is born of woman?" - xxv.4. Job says, "Not one" can do this. But this paragon of patience knew nothing of the Pope! He undertook to accomplish Job's impossibility; for nothing is impossible with the Great Blasphemer of the Deity of the Heaven!!... His magic wand, "thus I decree", transforms all lies into divine truths, and the grossest absurdities into the sublimest and most adorable mysteries.¹

Thomas, for his part, did not intend to be snared by such traps. Instead of modifying each inconvenient Biblical teaching in terms of philosophy, common sense, received ecclesiastical opinion, western culture or any other principle, Thomas intended to discard not only every doctrine, but every idea, phrase, word, habit or precept, no matter how dearly held or deeply cherished, which did not correspond in toto with verbatim cross-checking against a gamut of Scriptural passages. In consequence of this, adopting what were to him pristine Biblical views on the nature of man involved him in the discarding of received ideas on other issues - sin, hell, the grave, the Devil, the nature of Jesus Christ, the baptism of infants.

Expositions of many Biblical passages were adduced to demonstrate that the Hades of the New Testament was a 'concealed or unseen place'², and Sheol in the Old Testament a place where the body was, for the time prior to the Judgement, destroyed. Ideas of torture and torment were 'the old mythology of the heathen.'³ These views rang true with the views on the nature of man he had unearthed from Psalm xlix and Ecclesiastes ix, and, on the principle of 'comparing Scripture with Scripture' were mutually corroborative.

The orthodox devil, similarly, was discarded, along with 'an eternal hell of fire and brimstone' as being an 'old heathen' concept.⁴ A major argument he used was that from Hebrews ii.14, of the destruction of the devil via the crucifixion. He said:

1. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 624-5.
2. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 188.
3. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 189.
4. Thomas, Eureka, i. 245.

'How comes it that the Spirit laid hold upon death-stricken and corruptible flesh and blood, which is so weak and frail, called "the Seed of Abraham", that through its death he might destroy so mighty and powerful a Devil?...

'The Spirit clothed himself with weakness and corruption - in other words, "Sin's flesh's identity" - that he might destroy the Diabolos. It is manifest from this the diabolos must be of the same nature as that which the Spirit assumed; for the supposition that he assumed human nature to destroy a being of angelic nature, or of some other more powerful, is palpably absurd. The Diabolos is something, then, pertaining to flesh and blood; and the Spirit or Logos became flesh and blood to destroy it...

'In Romans v.12 he says "Death by sin"... [but] there was a time after the creation was finished when there was nothing in the world but what was "very good"... Man is, therefore, older than sin, and, consequently, older than the Diabolos. Man introduced it into the world; and not an immortal devil, nor God. Neither God, then, nor such a devil was the author of sin; but the authorship was constituted of the sophistry of the serpent believed and experimented by the Man, male and female...

'But why doth Paul style Sin $\delta\iota\alpha\beta\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma$? The answer to this question will be found in the definition of the word. Diabolos is derived from $\delta\iota\alpha\beta\alpha\lambda\lambda\omega$, diaballo ... that which crosses, or causes to cross over, or falls over. DIABOLOS is therefore a very fit and proper word by which to designate the law of sin and death, or sin's flesh... To obey, was to maintain the position in which he was originally placed; to disobey, to cross over the line forbidden. But "he was drawn away, and enticed by his own lusts."¹ The narrative of Moses² proves this. The man was enticed of his own lust to cross over the line, or to disobey the law; so that his own lust is the Diabolos. Thus, etymology and doctrine agreeing, our definition must be correct.³

Other arguments were set out, relating to both the term 'Devil' and its mainly Old Testament equivalent 'Satan', where linguistic, inter-text expositional and contextual criteria were used to derive similar conclusions. Interesting examples Thomas referred to⁴ included those where $\gamma\omega\omega\pi$ (Satan) was used to describe an angel

-
1. He was alluding here to James 1.14.
 2. He was referring here to Genesis iii.
 3. Thomas, Eureka, i. 246-249.
 4. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 63-67.

acting under instructions from God and even of YHWH himself.¹

Thus, to Thomas, man was responsible for sin. Men inherited sin-stricken bodies from Adam, and were 'sinners' in that sense; they committed additional sins of their own. The 'devil' was a Biblical metaphor describing this. The punishments for sin were evils sent from God - disease, decline and ultimately decay in 'hell' or the grave. The exact punishment the grave involved was total unconsciousness for ever and the disintegration of the body - the total and permanent obliteration of the person and personality of sinners. 'Souls' were simply 'lives'. Immortality was available to man, but not inherently or as of right; it was made available to individuals who pleased God, by resurrection to a new spirit-body after the Judgement at the return of Jesus Christ to set up the Kingdom of God on the earth.

(e) BAPTISM BY THE IMMERSION OF ADULT BELIEVERS

As with the mortality of man, the total immersion of believing adults was a principle which had been with Thomas for a very long time. His conversion to the idea took place in 1832, and resulted in his own immersion the same night in the Miami Canal.² 'Infant sprinkling', Thomas felt, was foolish. The idea of an 'original sin' which could be negated by an early christening was totally misconceived because:

'if original sin, which is in fact sin in the flesh, were neutralised, then all "baptismally regenerated" babes ought to live for ever, as Adam would have done had he eaten of the Tree of Life after he had sinned. But they die; which is a proof that the "regeneration" does not "cure their souls"; and is, therefore, mere theological quackery.'³

Thomas, by 1834, had come to the conclusion that, of itself, adult immersion was no better than infant sprinkling:

-
1. The relevant passages were II Sam. xxiv.1 compared with the parallel record in I Chron. xxi.1.
 2. See p. 6 above.
 3. Thomas, Elpis Israel, p. 115.

'the subjects of any baptism not predicated upon the "good confession", are not entitled to the spiritual blessings consequent on the "one baptism"... every immersed person who is not immersed on "the good confession" is not founded upon THE ROCK; and consequently forms no part of the Church of Christ.'¹

The 'good confession' referred to above was the statement of faith by a suppliant: 'before immersion can be scripturally recognized as the "one baptism", the subject thereof must be possessed of the "one faith".'² The complexity of such a statement of faith acceptable to Dr. Thomas ensured that the band of Christians who would follow Christ with him, would be a very small one, because the path he pointed out was a very narrow one.

Much of Thomas's writing on this subject is taken up with the historical analysis of how, why and when the rite of adult baptism of the first century came to be replaced by the christening of infants. He took great pleasure, apparently, in quoting from Revd. E.B. Elliott's views about the introduction of christening, which were themselves intended to censure the Roman Catholic Church, and then adding that Elliott was 'himself a baby sprinkler and signer of the cross upon their unsealed and unsealable foreheads.'³ He brought quotations from Ignatius' epistles to illustrate that even during Trajan's rule, around 107 A.D., adult immersion was still the rule in the church.⁴

As far as infant fatalities were concerned, Dr. Thomas was prepared to concede that such babies were beyond the hope of the Gospel, as, indeed, were imbeciles and pagans, such as Hindus and Chinese.⁵ This point of view was not accepted by all Thomas's followers. Roberts, for example, took an agnostic view about what God would or would not do with those who, for one reason or another, had not come within the ambit of the Gospel during this life.

In the wake of the Gorham Judgement of 1850⁶, Thomas, in

1. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 666.

2. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 666.

3. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 294.

4. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 225.

5. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 296.

6. George C. Gorham (1787-1857) disputed with Bishop Phillpotts in 1847 over the appointment of a curate. The disagreement, concerning the curate's views on the timing of an individual's spiritual regeneration, was ultimately referred to the judicial committee of the privy council, who found for Gorham, to the annoyance of the bishop. This celebrated spiritual-cum-legal wrangle was labelled 'the Gorham Controversy'.

response to what he understood to be local interest in Plymouth, (then in the Exeter diocese), produced a leaflet entitled 'Clerical Theology Unscriptural or the Wisdom of the Clergy Proved to be Folly'. This took the form of a Socratic dialogue between Boanerges (the representative of 'The Truth') and Heresian (an example of a bemused nominal member of the ecclesiastical establishment). The conversation ranged over the definition of 'Church' (both Biblical and contemporary), the nature of faith and the nature of baptism. It was written after a train journey from Devonport on which Dr. Thomas had struck up a conversation with a clergyman on these issues. In terms of the doctrine of adult immersion, this pamphlet, without adding substantially to the main principles outlined above, added a lot of detail, because of the nature of its format. For instance, Thomas explained both the reference to 'born of water' and 'born of the spirit' in John chapter three, and the reason why one type of rebirth preceded the other. His explanation of the first point involved the citation of James i.18 and I Peter i.22-25 and concluded that the spirit begets children of God by the word of God. This was his 'good confession' required of believers prior to baptism.¹ However, he was then faced with the difficulty that, in conversation with Nicodemus in John chapter three, the Lord Jesus Christ had prescribed baptism by water first, before baptism by the spirit - whereas, in Thomas's view, the chronology of these two events was reversed. He explained this difficulty in the following way: 'In the word no one is recognised as born of the Spirit of God until he is born of water, seeing that no child can be born of its father until it is born of its mother.'² Thomas, then, entered the lists neither for the 'prevenient grace' of Gorham³ nor the baptismal regeneration' of Bishop Phillpotts,⁴ but as being against both of these and for the regeneration of a particular type of individual (namely, one whose mind was 'born of the Spirit') by a particular type of baptism (namely, adult immersion, or 'birth of water').

1. Thomas, *Eureka*, ii. 666.

2. Thomas, *Clerical Theology Unscriptural*, p. 41.

3. Gorham's high Calvinistic view was that divine grace was not of necessity given in baptism, nor in conversion, but that it might be conferred before baptism, in baptism, or at a later period of life.

4. Phillpotts took the view, shared by the high church, that divine grace was contingent upon baptism.

Therefore, his conclusion was not for the clerical establishment or the radical Gorham, but against both: 'In conclusion, then, O Reader, fear not the clergy, neither regard them, but turn thou from their darkness to the light that shines forth from the Word of God.'¹

(f) ECCLESIAL ORGANISATION

In terms of ecclesiastical polity, Thomas was a spiritual anarchist - he was for no organisation at all except in so far as common submission to an agreed code of existence (in the shape of the Scriptures) would produce a harmonious working together along parallel lines towards a common goal (the preaching of the Gospel now and the Kingdom of God ultimately). Indeed, this was what was wrong, he believed, with the followers of Alexander Campbell. He, himself, on more than one occasion, declined the offer of security as resident pastor of a sizeable congregation.² To become tied spiritually because of the need to make a living would, in his view, have been to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage.³ He was not even interested in the degree of organisation required in bestowing upon 'his' followers a name at all - let alone that they should take his own name.⁴ In Clerical Theology Unscriptural, Heresian (the Churchman) asks Boanerges 'If then you be neither Greek, Roman, Protestant, churchman, nor dissenter, pray what are you, Boanerges, for I should like to know?' The reply Boanerges makes well expresses Thomas's viewpoint 'Ask those men and women, whose names you will find in the sixteenth of Romans, what they were; and whatever answer they give I am willing to abide by.'⁵ In the Preface to Clerical Theology Unscriptural he added a further

1. Thomas, Clerical Theology Unscriptural, Preface p. v.

2. See p.12 above.

3. See p.12 above.

4. They were, despite his feelings, referred to as Thomasites at times. It was only under the duress of war, and to relieve needless anguish, that the term 'Christadelphians' was coined. See p.39-40 above.

5. Romans xvi is replete with greetings from the Apostle Paul to small 'church groups' meeting, apparently, within domestic households. This, Thomas felt, was the New Testament pattern of Christian living and worship. It was, therefore the right pattern for all time. Cathedrals and other trappings were tinsel - and dangerous tinsel at that.

point. 'Fear not the Clergy', he admonished his readers, 'and deliver yourself from the power of Satan incarnate in the hierarchies of the world.' Hierarchies as such, then, were unhealthy, in Thomas's view. In shunning such he became an anarchist. Ironically, in his choice of Robert Roberts as the brother to lead the dissemination of information between ecclesias in Britain, Thomas selected an individual who was an adept organiser and whose very flair in that regard was to add fuel to the fires of controversy in the decades following 1864.¹

In a pamphlet written in 1851, entitled How to Search the Scriptures, Thomas devoted two passages to church organisation - section VIII entitled 'Fellowship' and a further passage called 'Assembly'.² There was no mention in these pages of the desirability of any human organisation at all. The first paragraph consisted in an exhortation to sanctification and separation from the world, and its churches; the second was a call to edify the body of believers. Implicit in this was the notion that, if doctrinal and expositional standards were up to a desirable level, church politics would take care of themselves as a matter of mere course. There were hints in scattered surviving records that John Thomas agreed, in the cases of certain British ecclesias, to the establishment of ecclesial officers. It was not clear in these cases whether Thomas felt that particular ecclesial problems obliged specific remedies, or, even, whether the initiative in these cases was his. There was no suggestion, in his own writings, of any desire to prescribe the establishment of hierarchies, however few the levels in the hierarchy and however apparently innocuous the powers of the officers.³

Remarks suggestive of total antipathy towards a numerical analysis of conversions occurred in Thomas's correspondence with Alexander Campbell from 1847. In this he said:

-
1. The year Roberts began editing The Ambassador.
 2. Thomas, How to Search the Scriptures, (Birmingham 1931), pp. 12-14.
 3. Evans in '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv. (1958), 162, stated that the Aberdeen ecclesia appointed elders and deacons (but not, apparently, bishops). Evans added that 'they were not encouraged in this idea.' Neither, however, did it appear that they were censured.

'Do you not know, my dear sir, that at "the completion of the appointed times," the ancient gospel will have very few believers, and that because of this unbelief, the Gentiles will be broken off and Israel grafted in again? You and your co-labourers, like David, are numbering your forces, and vaunting yourselves in your 250,000; you are planning enterprises and forming schemes, by which you promise yourselves vast results... the Lord is coming upon you as a thief; and if he finds you... building up colleges for generations to come, and are yourself not rich toward God, you need not expect "a portion of the inheritance of the saints in light."'¹

Christadelphians have not been traditionally, and still tend not to be, keepers of statistics about themselves²; in the 1850s Baptised Believers avoided Friendly and Assurance Societies³, and interest in investing in schemes with a distant date of maturity has never been intense.

With this theological backcloth, Thomas was very scathing about bishops. Whereas, in New Testament times, any saints in the ecclesia could have been bishops 'which means "overseers"'⁴, Ignatius and his contemporaries had elevated 'one man in each congregation... above all the other elders of the presbytery, who, in proportion as as he was aggrandized, were diminished, and caused to assume the position of his inferiors.'⁵ This, Thomas said, 'laid the foundation of martyrology, episcopal usurpation and lordship, the invalidity of ordinances ministered by an unofficial brother, and of matrimony as a "sacrament of the church."'⁶ Thomas regarded bishops as being guilty of 'luxury', 'voluptuousness', 'vanity', 'arrogance', 'ambition', 'contention', 'discord' and 'many other vices that cast an undeserved reproach upon the holy religion of which they were the unworthy professors and ministers.'⁷ Moreover, he felt that these views spread like a corrupting cancer through the hierarchy.

-
1. See Appendix E, paragraph 3.
 2. The only national statistics for the Christadelphian community are those which individuals with an interest in the subject have painstakingly compiled.
 3. See Norrie, Early History, i. 256-7.
 4. Thomas, Eureka, i. 433.
 5. Thomas, Eureka, i. 433.
 6. Thomas, Eureka, i. 433.
 7. J.L. Mosheim, cited in Thomas, Eureka, iii. 211.

Bishops lined their pockets, became tainted by political power and developed into materialists:

'Presbyters followed the bishops' example, neglected their duties, and abandoned themselves to the indolence and delicacy of an effeminate and luxurious life. Deacons imitated their superiors, and the effects of a corrupt ambition were spread through every rank of the Sacred Order.'

Thus, both because it clashed with Old Testament and New Testament theory, and because in practice it had evil consequences in the Early Church and in the 'Scotto-Campbellite' denomination, Thomas shunned hierarchies of even the mildest sort, avoided even the establishment of a bureaucracy or secretariat and would have dispensed with the adoption of a name for his 'Baptised Believers', 'Bible Christians' or 'Thomasites', hut for the coming of the American Civil War.

(g) THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Thomas's views on this issue are subdivisible into five inter-related subsections:

- (i) In a series of promises to the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob², and to David³, God contracted to provide good things which were extensible to all mankind, the ultimate fulfilment of which was still future to Thomas's day.
- (ii) These promises were linked together in the person of, and, in the ultimate sense were triggered off by, Jesus Christ.⁴
- (iii) The same promises were made available to those baptised into Christ.⁵
- (iv) The most large-scale of these future promises was the establishment upon earth of a political kingdom - a theocracy - presided over by Jesus Christ, centred on Zion, worldwide as to its hinterland, peopled by a ruling class of immortal saints from all ages of history and by a ruled class of mortals to be judged at the end of

1. Thomas, Eureka, iii. 211.
 2. Genesis xiii.14-17 et seq.
 3. II Samuel vii.
 4. Luke i.30-33.
 5. Galatians iii.9,14,16,27-29.

the Millenium.

(v) The political cataclysms involved in producing this Kingdom of God would be preceded and foreshadowed by political earthquakes, the nature of which was revealed to Bible students through the medium of Bible prophecy - the most notable of all being the restoration to Israel of the Jewish people after an exile of almost 2,000 years, begun by Hadrian's Decree in A.D. 135.¹

Despite the radical differences between Christadelphians and other Christian groups on a wide variety of doctrinal topics, this issue certainly contributed to the distinctive Judaeo-Christian flavour of the beliefs of John Thomas. Some of the early Bible Christian or Thomasite groups, indeed, described their earliest meeting places not as churches or ecclesias at all, but as 'synagogues'; a part of the early Ambassador and Christadelphian magazines was given over to a section entitled 'The Jews and their Affairs'; schemes were begun for collections of finances and clothing for Jewish poor - particularly those wishing, under the Montefiore and other schemes, to settle in Israel; the very Thomian concept of Biblical inspiration turned the understanding of Hebrew (and Greek) into a prerequisite for the Bible student; and, thus, the pages of Thomas's publications, as those of the Ambassador and Christadelphian, became as littered with Hebrew script as one could have expected of a magazine intended mainly for English speaking Jews.² All this, coupled with a non-Trinitarian theology, combined together to give a very Jewish tint to the theological complexion of Thomas's writings and, later, of Christadelphia.³

There was a noticeable development over the period 1835-1847 in Thomas's views about the Salvation offered in the New Testament being rooted in the promises God made to the Old Testament worthies - little existed in the '34 Questions' of 1835,⁴ a considerable amount was present in the 'Thirty Points' of 1846,⁵ and a plethora

-
1. Thomas's first reference to this new Kingdom of Israel was in his book Elpis Israel, first published in 1848.
 2. The Jerusalem Post, Israel's current leading English language newspaper, has about the same proportion of Hebrew and English as Thomas's products.
 3. Assessments of Thomas's linguistic skills can be found in Appendix G.
 4. See Appendix A.
 5. See Appendix B.

had developed by the time of the 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' in 1847.¹

In all, Thomas counted divine promises made not only to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, but also to Noah, Israel in Egypt, Moses, Israel in Canaan under Joshua, the Prophets, and John the Baptist. This selfsame sequence of promises, under New Testament terminology, was referred to, said Thomas, as the Gospel. Thus, promises made, through Christ, to the Apostles and the Infant Ecclesia were exactly congruent with promises made to the Early (Jewish) Fathers. In corroboration, Thomas referred to the argument of the Apostle Paul in Galatians iii.8 where he spoke of the 'gospel preached before unto Abraham' and Galatians iii.29 where he added 'if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'

In detail, the promises to Abraham (and his 'seed') included that he would father a nation²; the universality of blessings via Abraham³; the resurrection of Abraham to inherit the national territory of Israel⁴. The promises to the Israelites in Egypt included a Messiah from the house of Judah.⁵ The promises to Moses included a repeat of the promise to Abraham of territory⁶; the resurrection of the dead.⁷ This again, Thomas believed, was described in the Bible as 'The Gospel', and cited Hebrews iv.2 as his supporting text. Promises to Joshua involved a repetition of the territorial promise (originally made to Abraham) in Deuteronomy and Joshua.⁸ That the promises to Abraham were to have greater fulfilment than that initially provided by the conquest of Canaan by Israel under Joshua was made clear in a further series of promises to David, said Thomas. Paraphrasing Hebrews iii and iv⁹, he stated 'Paul says Joshua did not give them rest, therefore there remains a Sabbatism to Joshua, Caleb etc. Where is this rest? In the Holy Land, when

-
1. See Appendix C.
 2. Genesis xiii.16.
 3. Genesis xxvi.4.
 4. Genesis xiii.14-17 and Acts vii.5.
 5. Genesis xlix.10.
 6. Exodus iii.6-8 and vi.4.
 7. Exodus iii.6 as interpreted in Luke xx.37 by Jesus Christ.
 8. Deuteronomy xxxi.23 and Joshua i.11 and xxi.43.
 9. Original source Psalm xcv.7-11.

it shall be constituted a heavenly country or paradise.'¹ Having referred to a whole array of Biblical quotations, Thomas concluded:

'This same gospel of the Rest which was preached to Abraham is amplified throughout all the prophets... [it] was preached by John the Baptist, by Jesus, and by his apostles, before the day of Pentecost... [and it] was preached by the Twelve, and by Paul, after the day of Pentecost.'²

Part of the distinctiveness of Thomas's view of theology was his interpretation of prophecy in relation to the Kingdom of God. Thomas saw a continuity between the history of the past, as an enactment of God's will revealed through prophets such as Daniel and the Apostle John, and the events in contemporary history, which were also spoken about in detail in Bible prophecies.

Whilst theologians have always examined the outworkings of Bible prophecy, and whilst, in the nineteenth century, a group of theologians like Dr. Grattan Guinness³, Revd. E.B. Elliott⁴ and Dr. Faber⁵ had made their mark as expounders of latter-day prophecy, Thomas's contribution was that he linked together a number of items of prophetic interpretation which others at best had only considered as discreet items. These were, first, that the future of Bible prophecy's fulfilment was neither vague nor distant in his exposition⁶; second, that he pointed out, as early as 1848, the need, according to Bible prophecy, for the establishment in Palestine of

1. The 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' - see Appendix C.
2. The 'Confession, Abjuration and Declaration' - see Appendix C.
3. Author of The Approaching End of the Age, (1879) and Light for the Last Days, (1886).
4. Author of Horae Apocalypticae, (1844) - see footnote on p. 46.
5. Author of A Dissertation on the Prophecies, (1807).
6. Thomas produced Anatolia (analysing the position of Turkey, Russia and the European powers from the Bible prophecy standpoint) at the time of the Crimean War in July 1854; The Destiny of the United States, (1860); The Roman Question or The Fall of the Papacy in 1867; and The Destiny of the British Empire as Revealed in the Scriptures in 1871.

a latter-day state of Israel¹; and, third, that each of these elements was linked to the setting of the stage for the return of Jesus Christ to set up the Kingdom of God on earth.

(h) THOMAS'S THEOLOGY CONTRASTED WITH CONTEMPORARY BAPTIST VIEWS

In an attempt to devise a yardstick by which to measure the degree of variance of Thomas's beliefs from those of the ecclesiastical establishment, a credal formulation has been selected, made by a group as near as possible within Christendom to ex-Campbellite Thomas and at a time as near as possible to the maturation period of Thomas's views. This is the 'Declaratory Statement' adopted by the Baptist Union Assembly on 23 April 1888.

About this same time, within the Baptist Church, there had been the expression of some doubt as to whether the churches were answering the theological challenge of the contemporary spirit of inquiry. The most thoughtful Baptists of the day, men like Alexander McLaren and Hugh Stowell Brown, believed that rationalism, by its textual criticism 'which assumes a variety of forms each of which is a subtle intellectual enemy of Christianity', belittled and degraded orthodox doctrines of God and man, when the real 'province of reason [was] to inquire into the authenticity of Revelation, and when this [had been] established, the same faculty [dictated] implicit submission to its contents. Thus to believe [was] the perfection of

1. See Thomas, Elpis Israel, ch. VI. Michael J. Pragai, now Director of the Israel Universities Study Group for Middle Eastern Affairs and sometime Israeli Special Counsellor on Christian Affairs in the U.S.A., is the author of an unpublished MS. on the Christian approach to the restoration of Jews to Israel. He commented in a letter to the author of this thesis that 'I have been able to trace the Christian approach to the Restoration... back to the sixteenth century.' Whilst Pragai wrote nothing to detract from Thomas's own significance as a signpost to the direction of Israel in Bible prophecy, he added 'There were... numerous Christian groups, let alone individuals, who precede John Thomas by several generations and whose activities regarding the Restoration of the Jews to their former fatherland is well documented.'

reason.'¹ 'The result', it has been contended, 'was an essentially empirical religion, governed in all aspects by the need to win converts. This preoccupation... swept aside the distracting problems of contemporary scholarship, secular or religious, and it insisted on total submission to the Bible and its gospel.'² It was this background which produced the 'Declaratory Statement' below.

DECLARATORY STATEMENT

ADOPTED BY THE BAPTIST UNION ASSEMBLY
23 April 1888

'Whilst expressly disavowing and disallowing any power to control belief or restrict inquiry, yet in view of the uneasiness produced in the churches by recent discussions, and to show our agreement with one another, and with our fellow Christians on the great truths of the Gospel, the Council deem it right to say that:

(a) Baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we have avowed repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ - the very elements of a new life; as in the Lord's Supper we avow our union with one another, while partaking of the symbol of the Body of our Lord, broken for us, and of the Blood shed for the remission of sins. The Union, therefore, is an association of churches and ministers, professing not only to believe the facts and doctrines of the Gospel, but to have undergone the spiritual change expressed or implied in them. This change is the fundamental principle of our church life.

(b) The following facts and doctrines are commonly believed by the Churches of the Union:

1. The Divine Inspiration and Authority of the Holy Scriptures as the supreme and sufficient rule of our faith and practice: and the right and duty of individual judgment in the interpretation of it.

2. The fallen and sinful state of man.

3. The Deity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His Sacrificial and Mediatorial Work.

4. Justification by Faith - a faith that works by love and produces holiness.

5. The Work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners, and in the sanctification of all who

1. C.L., L. & C.A. 1878, p.16, cited J. Lea, 'The Baptists in Lancs. 1837-87', (Liverpool Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1970) p. 58.
2. J. Lea, op. cit., p. 67.

believe.

6. The Resurrection; the Judgment at the Last Day, according to the words of our Lord in Matthew xxv, 46.¹

1. It should be stated, as an historical fact, that there have been brethren in the Union, working cordially with it, who, whilst reverently bowing to the authority of Holy Scripture, and rejecting dogmas of Purgatory and Universalism, have not held the common interpretation of these words of our Lord.¹

A whole range of radical differences between this 'Declaratory Statement' and the views of John Thomas is at once apparent. These divergences resolve themselves into two types - differences of direction and differences of substantive detail.

In terms of direction, the 'Declaratory Statement' is far simpler than anything Thomas would have felt ready to agree to. It may be that the main thrust of Baptist policy was to keep together a body of believers, as cohesively as possible, and with the maximum of sanctification which the cohering of a large number of different individuals allowed. Thus, the simplicity of the 'Declaratory Statement' could derive from the desire to fix as high a common factor of belief as possible upon a situation where only a low threshold of unanimity was possible. One commentator noted that the desire to evangelise 'produced a toleration of differences in an attempt to remove obstacles to co-operation in proselytism.'² Thomas, on the other hand, had, as a result of his experiences as a Bible student, made up his mind, by 1847, that controversy, dissension, strife and division were unpleasant inevitabilities of life 'in the truth', and that the urgent direction to take was that of Truth. Such unanimity as was possible, in given historical circumstances, would follow, without the attempt by ecclesiastical politicians to engineer its existence artificially. If there was a distinction, for Thomas, between essential and discretionary doctrines, he showed no predilection for seeking it out and developing a casuistry based

1. E.A. Payne, The Baptist Union, A Short History, (London 1959), p. 271.

2. J. Lea, 'The Baptists in Lancs. 1837-87', p. 67.

upon its finer points.¹

Detailed differences between Thomas and the Baptists were enormous. First, Thomas held that the key to the correct conveyance to the individual of the benefits of the inspiration of the Bible was not 'individual judgement in the interpretation of it', but rather that the Scriptures themselves contained their own infallible cross-checking dialectic, or, as he put it in How to Search the Scriptures, 'the interpretation of spiritual things by spiritual words.'² Sensitivity about the Bible's own divine self-consistency and against any judicious analysis of the Bible by any human commentator remained a hallmark of Christadelphian thinking.³ Second, whilst reference was made to the Resurrection and the 'Judgment at the Last Day', there was no allusion in the 'Declaratory Statement' to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Thomas, by contrast, had such detailed and definite views on this topic that he felt prepared to offer evidence to show that the site for the Final Judgement would be in Sinai!⁴ To Thomas, the 'things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ'⁵ were the core of the Gospel. Third, and related to the previous difference, no mention was made in the 'Declaratory Statement' of Biblical prophecy - in particular in so far as it related to the establishment of a latter-day Israel, prior to Messiah's return. Thomas, on the other hand, felt that these things were an 'earnest' of the fact that the Kingdom was at the very door. Fourth, no definition of baptism was offered. On this point, Thomas was ultra-thorough. Immersion was essential - but, of itself, inadequate. Even 'intelligent immersion' was to be hedged about very particularly with the closest of

-
1. Thomas conceded in theory that some limitation on expositional nicety was necessary: 'Some may be prompted to inquire, "Is it necessary to understand all the details of resurrection and judgment to possess the faith which justifies?" In reply, I would say, if it were necessary, there would scarcely be found in this generation a corporal's guard of justified believers.' W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 103. In practice, Thomas was disinclined towards the adoption of any credal formulation. See p. 147 below.
 2. Thomas, How to Search the Scriptures, p. 15.
 3. It was one of the two central planks in the so-called 'Jot and Tittle' controversy which split the movement in 1885. See p. 258.
 4. Thomas's evidence was cited from Isaiah lxiii.
 5. Acts viii.12.

definitions to avoid error - since that would lead to an abortive rebirth, to unforgiven sins, to an unavailing sacrificial Lamb of God. Fifth, besides baptism there was reference in the Statement to a new life and to spiritual change. Such terms would have been far too loose for Thomas's liking, since he was extremely emphatic about the order and nature of events surrounding the rebirth of the Christian child of God, and would have been distrustful of anything less than a full exposition. Sixth, the term 'church' was employed in the Statement, with no attempt at definition in terms either of New Testament usage, or the Reformation. Thomas felt this was a matter involving a great need for punctiliousness and scruple. Seventh, whilst the Declaratory Statement, by citing Matthew xxv.46, alluded to the punishment of the wicked, no definition was suggested as to what 'everlasting punishment' might mean in terms of length, nature or location. For Thomas, the need to involve Bible linguistics at such a point, in definition of 'Sheol', 'Gehenna', 'Hades' and 'Tartarus', and carefully to compare passages together, was paramount. Eighth, apart from one reference to the 'Deity and the Incarnation... of the Lord Jesus Christ' no detailed reference to the nature of the Godhead was made in the Statement - no reference to coeternity or coequality of the Persons of the Trinity. John Thomas's criticism would have been that many people of different theological persuasions would have found this Statement acceptable, as far as it went. He himself referred to the deity of Christ.¹ Thomas, in contradistinction to what his opponents contended, did not object to the Trinity because it was complicated. He objected to it because it was not, in his view, Biblical. Indeed, his own view of God-manifestation in a multitude was, itself, rather complex.

It would, no doubt, have been contended by proponents of the Declaratory Statement that such a brief document was not the place for thorough exegesis. That would have been Thomas's objection to the very existence of such a document. He himself fought against

1. Thomas, Eureka, vol. i. Here Thomas used phrases such as 'Since his ascension, he is consubstantial with Deity' (p. 105), and 'the Deity and the name of Jesus Anointed' (p. 109).

any distillation of Biblical teaching.¹ When, after his death, Christadelphians did produce a Statement of Faith it was, by comparison with the Baptist Declaratory Statement, very detailed. It contained forty-six general principles, encapsulated into a 'System of Rules', incorporating thirty-eight rules.²

John Thomas was a pioneer, a discoverer. Whilst, in later life, he did involve himself in polemics within the Christadelphian community, these were distasteful to him. What appealed to him was to wriggle free of what he considered the mental shackles imposed by orthodoxy, so he could soar high in the spiritual etherea and see vistas, within the Bible, of God's past, present and future plans. The end-product of all this effort was the development of a theology which, whilst it overlapped at various points with elements of received theological opinion, was not eclectically derived, claimed a self-consistency developed purely from Bible study and was in its main thrusts radically different from contemporary Christian thought.

-
1. See p. 147, ch. IV, below.
 2. See Roberts, Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias, (Birmingham 1883). The general principles were outlined on pp. 3-38; the system of rules drawn up on pp. 39-44. Appendix I of this thesis gives details of Roberts's system of rules.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTADELPHIANS, 1864-1884

(a) 1864-1868: ROBERT ROBERTS'S AUTHORITY BEGAN TO BECOME APPARENT

Robert Roberts set about his task of editorship with zeal and fervour. The whole of the first edition and much of the subsequent Ambassador and Christadelphian magazines during the next decade were written by him. The first Ambassador, issued in July 1864, contained Roberts's first instalment of the first biography of John Thomas. Further instalments of this work appeared erratically over the next few years. The project was reshaped later, so that, by 1873, the first edition of Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work had been completed. Roberts was noted by his brethren for his vigour;¹ his application to ecclesial arrangements in Birmingham was immediate upon his arrival and energetic;² simultaneously, he was engaged in controversy with the Aberdeen Campbellites. Nevertheless, Roberts's efficiency and zeal appeared to have an abrasive aspect to it;³ in 1864, he wrote of his 'strained relations with

-
1. W. Norrie, in his Early History, ii. 62, praised Roberts for his organisational skills as displayed in Birmingham, and, p. 193, in Halifax. On p. 65, Norrie cited laudatory words of George Dowie from The Messenger regarding Roberts's impact on Birmingham.
 2. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 255.
 3. J.H. Chamberlin, who was later to become an antagonist of Roberts, described Roberts's performance in a debate saying 'Brother Roberts succeeded in checking his characteristic ardour just in time.' TC, xxi (1884), 308.

Dr. Thomas';¹ on other occasions, members of his family expressed reservations about his temperament.²

During 1865 Roberts poured, if anything, more energy than ever into The Ambassador, which included the most outstanding items of local and national news, such as the discovery of a Rabbi in Sheffield who believed that Jesus Christ was the Messiah,³ and reports from overseas, too, resulting from a scouring of news agency material and international editions of journals. As a result, it was decided by Roberts, in October, to enlarge the size of the magazine. One of the items in the new, larger magazine was the disappointing news that, in order to meet printers' deadlines with volume two of Eureka, Dr. Thomas was to delay his promised third visit. This news did not, however, disappoint everyone. Amongst the brethren not disappointed was George Dowie of Edinburgh.⁴ It was with Dowie and his followers that Roberts's energies were chiefly concerned from 1866 for several years. Possibly the Dowieites would have been happy with an editor who was less pro-Thomas than Robert Roberts proved to be.

Much of 1866 was taken up by controversy for Robert Roberts, mostly in Scotland and Wales. In April, discussions were arranged with the Edinburgh ecclesia, where George Dowie's supporters were strong, on the issue of the immortality of the soul. These discussions took place on 8 and 15 April and on 6 May. The outcome was that the Birmingham ecclesia withdrew⁵ from those who taught heresy in Scotland. In the meantime, Roberts was busy elsewhere debating, on 10 and 11 April with Revd. R.C. Nightingale, a

1. These words formed the title of ch. XXI, pp. 158-166, of Roberts's autobiography. The 1917 edition, with an appendix by C.C. Walker, was entitled Robert Roberts - An Autobiography, (Birmingham, 1917), (hereafter MDAMW). The original edition was entitled My Days and My Ways.

2. W. Norrie, who was Roberts's brother-in-law, described, in his Early History, ii. 184-5, Roberts's relationship with John Wilson of Halifax as follows: 'he was one of many brethren who were victimised because of their "disagreement in important principles" with Robert Roberts. In the particular "principle" in which the two differed, I was convinced that Robert was in the right, but I was equally confident that this disagreement did not warrant the cruel treatment to which he was subjected on that account.'

3. The Ambassador, ii. (1865), 243.

4. For details of Dowie's views see ch. VI below.

5. See Glossary.

minister of the Free Church, on the subject 'Has man an immortal soul?' In July, Roberts organised a national fraternal, one predictable outcome of which was a clash with Dowie. Later, in November 1866, Roberts toured Scotland, visiting Aberdeen, Beith and Edinburgh, and countering the message being propounded by the Dowieites. Meanwhile, in Swansea and Mumbles, a furore had been stirred up by the departure from the nonconformist fold of the Revd. Clement¹ and by a series of lectures delivered by Roberts himself. This so incensed the local ministry that seven counter-lectures were delivered by a number of reverend gentlemen², principally Baptists and Independents. However, a challenge to Mr. D. Evans to debate the issues involved in the pages of either The Ambassador or The Baptist Magazine was turned down.³

In Birmingham, the Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingites) had been busy. Lectures had been given in the Town Hall warning the 'Christian men of Birmingham' to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. So many thousands of people turned up for the first of these meetings that even the overflow rooms were quite insufficient. Roberts, who was present, seized the opportunity and, procuring a chair, began to address those disappointed crowds unable to get into the Town Hall on the topic of the Second Coming. Towards the end of his talk, opponents caused crowd pressure to unseat him from his chair. Unabashed, Roberts resolved to hire the Town Hall himself, and between '1,500 and 1,800'⁴ people who had been unable to listen to the Irvingites heard Roberts in March

-
1. See ch. I above, pp. 35-36.
 2. The wording of the original advertisement was a little unclear, but those involved seemed to include Revd. C. Short, M.A., Revd. S. Davies of Swansea, Revd. R. Warner 'late of Bristol College', Revd. J. Evans of Newton, Mr. W. Evans, and Mr. D. Evans 'late of Mumbles' but currently a student at the Baptist college, Pontypool. TC, iii. (1866), 21-25, 47-51, 148-153.
 3. For details see The Ambassador, iii. (1866), pp. 21ff, 47ff, 148ff.
 4. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 228.

1866.¹ It is clear from this episode that the issue of the Second Coming was of such interest that even a small and relatively unknown group such as Christadelphians could attract attention with it.

In 1867, the Dowieites made forays southwards effective enough to cause some brethren at Huddersfield to leave the ranks of the orthodox and join George Dowie! There were demands for a fourth edition of the Twelve Lectures², but funds were lacking. The number of ecclesias was increasing rapidly, but there was no commonly accepted credal formulation³ - the Twelve Lectures were used as a basis for interviewing baptismal candidates in some, but not all, areas.⁴ The Dealtry heresy⁵ continued to rumble on.⁶ Pressures of material upon the limited space within The Ambassador occurred again.

Against this backcloth of discontent and difficulty, Roberts's efforts were prodigious in taking the battle to the enemy: a tour of Scotland was undertaken by the editor in January and February, striking at the main trouble-spots of Dowieism;⁷ with the help of J.J. Andrew's appeals in The Ambassador⁸, money was raised and a fourth edition of the Twelve Lectures published; A Declaration of the First Principles of the Oracles of the Deity⁹, published at

1. A transcript of Roberts's talk appeared in The Ambassador, iii (1866), 68-72, 110-113, 141-148, 165-171.
2. The first edition of Roberts's Twelve Lectures was published in 1862 in Huddersfield. It was eventually extended, in a sixth edition, to eighteen lectures and retitled Christendom Astray, (Birmingham 1883), (hereafter referred to as CA).
3. A small number of ecclesial rules had been produced by Dr. Thomas, but these remained unpublished until their posthumous production in TC, ix (1872), 150-151. See Appendix I.
4. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30-31.
5. See ch. VI below.
6. See The Ambassador, v (1868), 44-52 and 80-85.
7. The tour included the towns of Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Beith, Galashiels, Edinburgh (again), Turriff and Wishaw. See The Ambassador, iv (1867), 4-7, 42, 312-314.
8. See The Ambassador, iv (1867), 131-132.
9. The Declaration was produced anonymously at the beginning of 1862. For details of its rather unusual history see Roberts, MDAMW ch. XXXIV.

the beginning of the year, put an end to credal speculations; Mr. Dealtry's views were countered by articles from the editor in The Ambassador; and, in October, the magazine was again enlarged. What is more, towards the end of the year, Roberts undertook a second tour of ecclesias, this time in north-eastern England.

1868 could be said to be the year of integration within the Christadelphian movement. Roberts himself made tours - one at Easter to the South-West, and another in August and September which included the Midlands, London, the West Riding and Scotland.¹ Other stalwarts made tours, too, and wrote up reports of their journeyings which appeared in The Ambassador, as had the notes of the editor, previously.² By 1868, Roberts was the clear, de facto leader of Christadelphians in Britain, because of his position as editor of the widest circulation magazine within Christadelphia, his pastoral care of his brethren throughout the land and his efforts to defend the Gospel, as he understood it, both within and without his brotherhood.

(b) 1869-1871: THE SWANSONG OF JOHN THOMAS

Despite Roberts's growing ascendancy in practical matters, Christadelphianism in 1869 was still very much the bearer of Dr. Thomas's intellectual stamp - previous articles of his were reprinted in The Christadelphian³; letters from 'The Doctor' to Roberts were printed in full⁴; earlier exchanges between Thomas and leaders of other British denominations were reminisced over⁵; his tours of America were reported in detail for the benefit of

-
1. This was followed by a third and final tour by Roberts at the turn of the year, when London, Scarborough, Whitby and Leeds were among the places visited. See TC, vi (1869), 52-57.
 2. For example, Brother Ellis whose reported tour appeared in The Ambassador, v (1868), 292-294.
 3. They formed leading articles in this magazine in the months of March, April, May, June, August, September, October, November and December in 1869.
 4. TC, vi (1869), 40-52, 65-78, 93-109.
 5. TC, vi (1869), 155-7, regarding a printed debate dating from 1862 between Thomas and a clergyman in the Daily Express; op. cit. pp. 188-195, concerning Thomas and the Campbellite leader Walter Scott, dating from 1841 and 1847.

British members¹; several lectures of his were written up by members of the congregations who heard them²; his final (1869) visit to Britain - including his reply to The Cambrian newspaper which had criticised his lecture in Swansea³ - was written up in considerable detail⁴; his proposed removal to reside near Birmingham in his last years was dwelt upon thoughtfully⁵; whilst Eureka was already being paraphrased for those members who found the original hard going.⁶

However, it would be incorrect to conclude that other brethren were idle or ineffective. Roberts engaged in a series of debates throughout the year⁷, and endeavoured to tempt into confrontation with him the Revd. David King, leader of the Campbellites in Britain⁸, and Mr. Bowes of Wishaw, editor of The Promoter⁹, who had actually issued the challenge initially, but developed diffidence as time went by. F.R. Shuttleworth replied, by lecture, to

-
1. TC, vi (1869), 195-9.
 2. TC, vi (1869), 217-24, 319-25, 355-62.
 3. TC, vi (1869), 283-9, 369-76. Thomas's lecture, at Brother Clement's (former) chapel was advertised on the 'chapel' noticeboard and by leaflet as follows: 'Zion Chapel, Mumbles, THE PEOPLE DECEIVED BY THE CLERGY! A warning from the Word of God by the Christadelphians. "Why will ye die?" lectures by DR. THOMAS, of the United States, Author of Elpis Israel & and ROBERT ROBERTS of Birmingham, Editor of The Ambassador &c.' See TC, vi (1869), 269.
 4. TC, vi (1869), 199-203, 236-40, 265-75, 307-10, 338-43.
 5. TC, vi (1869), 343-5.
 6. This project was undertaken by Brother J.J. Andrew. Details were recorded in TC, vi (1869), 252-5.
 7. Revd. J Campbell (TC vi (1869), 122-3, six nights during 9-19 March, 1869); Mr. T. Knight (TC, vi (1869), 346-7, 382-3, 1-3 November, 1869).
 8. Although Roberts referred to David King in this way, there was no such official position within Campbellism. However, it was the case that Mr. King was editor of The Bible Advocate magazine from 1847 and of The British Millennial Harbinger from 1862, that he was president of the Campbellites on three occasions - 1870-71, 1874-75 and 1878-79, and that he produced five conference papers, in 1873, 1876, 1877, 1883 and 1892 - which was more than any other Campbellite in the period 1872-1969. See D.M. Thompson, Let Sects and Parties Fall, (Birmingham 1980), Appendices I and II. Mr. King could, therefore, have been regarded as a major leader of Campbellite opinion. See p. 131 below.
 9. TC, vi (1869), 86-88, 144-147, 205-208.

the Quakers of Whitby, who had opposed the views of Christadelphians.¹ J.J. Andrew, besides paraphrasing Eureka, engaged in a two-night debate on 13 and 14 January 1869 with Revd. John Campbell M.A., in Camden Town, on the immortality of the soul², and in written polemics with another preacher on the same issue.³ Other efforts of pen and vocal chord were made by J.J. Bishop, Edward Turney⁴ and other young men, later to become notables in Christadelphian circles.

A statistical survey, published in The Christadelphian in July 1869,⁵ indicated that, in the whole five year period since The Ambassador had begun in July 1864, only thirty-two individuals had left the movement because of self-exclusion, ejection or death. In that period, the report continued, 647 adults had been baptised.

One possible indication from these statistics - particularly the low figure for deaths - is that a large percentage of the baptisms were of younger people. Roberts himself was only just thirty years of age by July 1869. This picture would certainly correspond with that presented by the brethren in their magazine - a generation-gap appearing to exist between Roberts and his peers on the one hand, and Dr. Thomas on the other, Thomas being sixty-four in 1869 and only a year or so away from a severe attack of peritonitis from which he never properly recovered.⁶ In the late 1860s, perhaps partly because of this age difference, Dr. Thomas commanded a unique degree of respect, even reverence, within Christadelphianism. Energetic strides towards maturity were being made by a number of younger brethren, led by Roberts. One of these young men, Edward Turney, made sufficient strides to attract the excitement and complaint of Dr. Wordsworth, the Bishop of Lincoln. However, in an exchange of views in the pages of The

1. TC, vi (1869), 14-18, 78-82.

2. TC, vi (1869), 141-3, 174-9.

3. TC, vi (1869), 165-70. The 'preacher' in question maintained his anonymity because soon afterwards he became a Christadelphian.

4. See pp. 92-103 below for details of Turney's career.

5. TC, vi (1869), 214.

6. He died on 5 March 1871, but he was never a well man from the autumn of 1870.

Nottingham Journal, Turney gained the support of a number of correspondents, including the Journal's editor.¹

John Thomas visited Britain for the third, and last, of his tours in August 1869, staying until May 1870. His itinerary was exhaustive, as his spiritual travels in the U.S.A. were wont to be.² Roberts was a great admirer of Thomas's exegesis, witness the fact that not a month went by whilst Roberts was editor of The Christadelphian, except in very exceptional circumstances, when an essay by Thomas was not the leading article, but he was also buoyed up by Thomas's evident enthusiasm. Thus Roberts devoted even more of his time to playing the part of visiting lecturer than he had in 1868 - four months of the year being given over to lecture-tours.³

For all this, Roberts did not relax his vigilant scrutiny of the religious press, or the diligence of his defence of the Christadelphian understanding of Christianity. Recent controversy with George Dowie may have made him even more careful to scrutinise such recondite literature as The Rainbow.⁴ In the midst of Thomas's visit, in November 1869, Roberts found time to deal with a misapprehension of the Christadelphian view of the nature of man by The Rainbow's W. Maude, writing to the editor of The Rainbow⁵ to correct this mistake immediately. On 14, 15 and 16 June, Robert Roberts gave three lectures on a range of Christadelphian doctrines to several hundred people, including 'several clergymen'⁶ in the then 'principal public building'⁶ of Derby, the Lecture Hall, Wardwick.

-
1. TC, vi (1869), 335-8.
 2. See ch. I, pp. 15,36-39. On his return to the U.S.A. in the summer of 1870, Thomas at once launched himself on a five-week lecture-tour of the northern states of the Union. For a report of this see TC, vii (1870), 299-301.
 3. In his 'Midsummer tour' in July and August, Roberts visited Nottingham, Grantham, Birmingham, Leicester, Weston-super-Mare, Mumbles, Devonport, Droitwich, Tewkesbury and Bridgnorth. In his 'Autumn tour' in October and November, he visited London, Dorchester, Scarborough, Whitby, Liverpool, Leeds, Huddersfield, Halifax, Elland, Sowerby Bridge, Manchester, Sale and Altrincham. Details are given in TC, vii (1870), 275-81, 302-5, 340-4 and 369-74.
 4. For details of this magazine's activities see ch. VI, p. 239.
 5. William Leask D.D. - see p. 240n below.
 6. From the report in TC, vii (1870), 218-9.

Much excitement was generated in Christadelphian circles by a correspondence between Dr. Thomas and a number of correspondents in The Rock¹ on the scriptural basis of Christadelphian beliefs; by the baptism, reported in February, of Mr. James Martin:

'a young man (27 years of age) who, for several years, has taken a leading part in connection with the Circus (Baptist) Chapel, Bradford Street, Birmingham, and who occasionally filled pulpits in various parts of Birmingham, and being zealous, preached nearly every Sunday somewhere - if not in a pulpit, then in the market place. When the truth found him, Mr. Martin had nearly decided to enter the ministry, and, with this view, had disposed of a thriving business, and commenced the preliminary studies which were to fit him for entering Mr. Spurgeon's college, London.'²

and by the reported existence of some Jews believing in certain parts of the Gospel as understood by Christadelphians.³

1871 was another busy year for Roberts. Although the winter tour of Nottingham, Dorchester, Edinburgh, Dalkeith, Ayton, Leith and Cupar in January and February was not as lengthy as the tours of other years, it was made up for by the expenditure of energy in many different directions. The death of John Thomas in March involved a hastily rearranged programme to incorporate a journey to the U.S.A. for Thomas's official burial in Greenwood Cemetery⁴, on 30 April.

Thomas's death spurred Roberts's zeal in certain respects - only he, of the old team of consultants, remained. Thomas's status within the movement was perpetuated by the decision of Roberts to expand The Christadelphian magazine yet again for the specific, stated purpose⁵ of reprinting articles written by Thomas in previous publications such as The Apostolic Advocate, The Investigator, The Herald of the Future Age and The Herald of the Kingdom and Age.

-
1. The exchange of correspondence involving Dr. Thomas in The Rock was reproduced in TC, vii (1870), 72-76.
 2. TC, vii (1870), 47-53, was devoted to this young man's biography.
 3. TC, vii (1870), 151, where an article entitled 'The Jews not Entirely Faithless' reported the existence of Jews who believed 'Israel Restored' prophecies.
 4. Thomas was temporarily buried in the Jersey City Cemetery, until brethren Roberts and Bosher were able to arrive from England. Roberts himself, 27 years later, was buried in the very same grave as his mentor.
 5. TC, viii (1871), 263-4.

to Come. Roberts issued a prospectus for a completely new magazine, for children.¹ He continued to act as a monitor and collector of ecclesial information from all parts of Britain - reports of Christadelphian activities mentioned in The Bristol Daily Post², The Baptist Record³, The Cambrian⁴, The Dundee Advertiser⁵, the People's Journal⁶, were all carefully recorded in The Christadelphian, as were reports from overseas such as the stated agreement with the views of Dr. Thomas of a U.S. rabbi on the issues of the return of the Jews to Zion and of a Messiah to the Jews⁷, and a review by an Australian newspaper, The St. Kilda Advertiser, of Dr. Thomas's Odology.⁸ Roberts also wrote a 36 page booklet called Everlasting Punishment, not Eternal Torments as a reply to three letters by the Revd. Dr. J. Angus, president of the Baptist College, London, in The Christian World; and, following an encounter between a brother who had been a Jew by religion - a certain Segfried Gratz - and a practising Jew called Joel Monaet, Roberts engaged in his longest debate so far - a three-night exchange in October with Mr. Louis Stern on the issue of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ.⁹

(c) 1871-1874: ROBERTS AND THE RENUNCIATIONISTS

Following the conversion in 1870 of the Baptist local preacher James Martin, further excitement was generated by the printing in The Christadelphian by Roberts of correspondence between an ex-

-
1. TC, viii (1871), 264.
 2. TC, viii (1871), 285-6.
 3. TC, viii (1871), 287.
 4. TC, viii (1871), 385-6.
 5. TC, viii (1871), 91-4.
 6. TC, viii (1871), 91-4.
 7. TC, viii (1871), 226-7.
 8. TC, viii (1871), 392.
 9. This debate, entitled 'Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?', was written up in a booklet of 61 pages. Roberts's opinion of debating was high - for example, although he doubted Thomas's rhetorical skill (see MDANW pp 154-7), he serialised in TC, viii (1871), the whole of a debate between Dr. Thomas and a Presbyterian minister which had taken place thirty-four years previously.

Methodist lay preacher and Edward Turney, who lived in Nottingham.¹ Turney, in years to come, proved a formidable opponent in debate and was, for a time, a great asset to the Christadelphian movement. In the early 1870s, Turney was lecturing enthusiastically on behalf of the Christadelphians, in South Wales, on the hope of Christians, and offering £50 reward to anyone who could prove from the Bible that Christians went to heaven. A lively correspondence ensued, in part of which Turney complained: "An Observer" again manifests a lively concern about the £50. Some of your readers may begin to think he is more concerned about the cash than about the logic of his statements."² Much of these exchanges of view was written up in The Christadelphian.

Towards the end of 1871, the main ecclesia (by size, and by the fact that that the magazine editor was one of its arranging brothers³ and leading lights) moved from the Athenaeum rooms to the Temperance Hall in Birmingham.⁴ It was Roberts who delivered the exhortation at the breaking of bread and the lecture at the evening service on the first Sunday in the new room.

In the winter of 1871 and on into 1872, Roberts's mixture was much as before - lengthy tours from October to December 1871 including Liverpool, Sale, Barrow, Cumnock, Beith, Paisley, Glasgow, Wishaw, Grantham, Banff, New Pitsligo, Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Manchester, Halifax, Keighley, Manchester (again), Stretford, Liverpool (again); detailed reports of matters of spiritual concern from Britain and around the world including The Daily Telegraph⁵, The Boston Traveller⁶, The Dunedin Times⁷, The English Independent⁸, and The New York Herald⁹. Reports were

-
1. TC, viii (1871), 313ff., 342ff. The date of Edward Turney's baptism is not known, but he was referred to in the very first issue of The Ambaassador, (July 1864), as a brother giving lectures in the Nottingham ecclesia.
 2. TC, viii (1871), 389.
 3. See Glossary.
 4. It remained there for many years.
 5. TC, ix (1872), 22-8.
 6. TC, ix (1872), 63.
 7. TC, ix (1872), 46-7.
 8. TC, ix (1872), 558-9.
 9. TC, ix (1872), 25-6.

printed, too, of a number of controversies - a vicar who, having slanged Christadelphianism publicly from the pulpit, avoided a public debate with Edward Turney¹; a Dundee schoolteacher who was thrown out of her job simply on the grounds of her religion, and who suffered similar religious discrimination from the Stoke-upon-Trent School Board, and the bigoted publicity accorded to Christadelphians by 'a London correspondent of The Dundee Advertiser' as a result of this². A large number of citations from Dr. Thomas's writings continued to be made, including previously published, unpublished and private papers.

Further 'tea-meetings' and fraternal meetings were arranged, for Roberts was keen on these, including a national fraternal gathering in the Athenaeum to which 34 British and one American ecclesia sent

1. TC, ix (1872), 74-5.

2. In the Spring of 1872, a lady named Fraser, who held the post of principal teacher at a Dundee school, made application to the Stoke-upon-Trent School Board for a previously advertised vacant teaching post in a British school. Her motives for doing this were that her appointment in Scotland had been made on the basis of her attendance at the Independent Chapel and that, after her appointment, she had become a Christadelphian and therefore felt obliged in conscience to resign her post. Her application to Stoke caused the Clerk of the Board to send her a letter enquiring for more detail concerning her religious status. On receipt of her answer, her application to the British school was turned down. Further correspondence in The Dundee Advertiser ensued. An anonymous correspondent wrote: 'This said lady, the public are aware, holds the important situation of principal teacher in the female department of the Industrial Schools. What I want to say is, Why have the directors of these schools appointed and given sole religious charge of children to one who can neither teach them to seek heaven nor admonish them to avoid hell? believing, as she does, that there is no celestial abode for our spirits when they leave their present tabernacles, and no eternal punishment... I am, Sir, A LIBERAL SUBSCRIBER TO THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.' Roberts, in his editorial in TC, ix (1872), commented: 'This letter has produced its intended fruit. Lord Kinnaird, who takes the leading part in connection with the institution, called upon Sister Fraser, and told her she must resign. She was afterwards called on by other members of the directorate, who expressed their regret at the necessity for her resignation... She is a sufferer for conscience sake.' The source of both these quotations is TC, ix (1872), 227.

delegates.¹ As with the previous national fraternal in 1866², an occasion was provided for the sowing of tares amongst the wheat seeds. On this occasion, it was a heresy to which all ecclesias gave a lot of attention over the next few years - Renunciationism.³

Towards the end of the year, on 22 November, Roberts's four year old son, John Thomas Roberts, died. Understanding sympathy was natural enough amongst a closely-knit spiritual community even in those days of relatively high infant mortality rates. This empathy was compounded into sorrow by the news, later in the same month, that Roberts's two year old daughter had died of the same disease. However, one obituary⁴, one article and thirteen letters of sorrow⁵, in a community which was largely agreed that effort on behalf of the dead was wasted, indicated the prominence of Roberts and the esteem in which the Christadelphian community held him after Thomas's death.

As early as 1866 Roberts had felt orthodox Christadelphia had the intellectual heating of the Dowieites:

'As to the Dowieites, it is not to be wondered at that they should be full of bad feeling and evil speaking. They have no answer to our case against them on the merits, and so they indulge in personal disparagements.'⁶

By 1873, Roberts could interpret his seven-week tour of Scotland as follows:

'We go about because we are asked to do so, and because we are thus furnished with a larger field for the scattering of the good seed. The pleasure of the brethren is not to be disregarded.'⁷

In an extensive report of this tour⁸, on which Roberts visited Portobello, Edinburgh, Galashiels, Paxton South Mains, Ayton

1. An account of the proceedings was published in TC, viii (1871), 385-459.
2. When George Dowie had confronted Roberts.
3. This name was developed because, in an exhortation in Nottingham, Turney, one of its main protagonists, 'renounced' the doctrines regarding the nature of Christ which he had previously believed in.
4. TC, ix (1872), 574.
5. TC, x (1873), 11-19.
6. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 288.
7. TC, x (1873), 164.
8. See TC, x (1873), 164-170, 206-213.

and Eyemouth, Newburgh, Tranent, Cupar, Dundee, Aberdeen, Turriff, Balfaton, New Pitsligo, Wishaw, Glasgow, Paisley, Beith and Galston, the name of George Dowie was hardly mentioned at all, except for a number of occasions at Tranent in February where Dowie turned up in person to lectures by Roberts on the nature of the after-life. Thus this extensive tour could be seen as confirming the control of Christadelphian orthodoxy, as vested in Roberts's person, over the Scots ecclesias, despite Dowie's attempts to rock the boat.

However, this leak in the plumbing had only just been plugged when Renunciationism, based in Nottingham and piloted by Edward Turney and David Handley, began to burst forth. In his book The Sacrifice of Christ¹, written in 1873, Turney quoted from a letter written by Handley to Roberts in 1871 which, he said, was 'clearly accepted by the Editor (R.R.) after he had six months to consider the matter.'² In this letter Handley summarised his position as follows:

'Here, I think, we see the Wisdom of God in Redemption, a Body in OUR NATURE; a LIFE INDEPENDENT of our Race; The LIFE of the Flesh is GIVEN for the Life of the World; here is what men of business call twenty shillings in the pound. But again I say, there could be No Virtue in the GIVING up of His LIFE if He was a MERE man, or if He had DERIVED His Life in any way from the SEED of Adam, for All who DERIVED Life from Adam, LOST it, for in him All Sinned. But Christ in Our Flesh could suffer the Penalty, and then REDEEM His brethren, for He had never Forfeited His Life by personal transgression; and His Life being independent of the Race, He could GIVE it for a RANSOM. To me this appears Clear, while No man could GIVE to God a Ransom for his BROTHER, the Son of God, who was Bone of Our Bone, and Flesh of Our Flesh, could, having the Price of REDEMPTION in His own POWER.

'You will see from these few lines, what I wish to convey to the brethren. If you think the matter worthy of insertion in the CHRISTADELPHIAN,

-
1. This book was transcribed from a very long lecture delivered on Thursday 28 August 1873 in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham.
 2. E. Turney, The Sacrifice of Christ, (Halesowen, 1873), p. 2 of the cover.

use it, if not, refuse it. My house all join in
love to thee, and to thy house, and the household
of faith.

Farewell,
D. HANDLEY,
Maldon.¹

Whether or not Robert Roberts accepted or even tolerated this view in 1871, he acted against it with speed and resolution in 1873. He delivered a sixteen thousand word lecture in reply to it the evening following Turney's lecture, and, during the five months July to November 1873, reprinted in The Christadelphian² many letters from ecclesias throughout the country supporting his position. In the August issue of the magazine, remarks made on this subject by Dr. Thomas in nine separate publications³ were cited by Roberts to bolster his own position; in October, he published a series of 85 objections to the Renunciationists' views⁴; in the 48-page long October issue there was scarcely a page which did not allude to the folly of Edward Turney's views - even Dr. Thomas was not given space in print in that issue - a fact for which Robert Roberts apologised:

'For the first time since the death of Dr. Thomas, we appear without a contribution from his pen. This is not the result of intention, but of a demand upon our space, which six months ago we little anticipated could arise... We continue in this number of the Christadelphian the fight for the truth, inaugurated in previous numbers. Thanks be to God, necessity will not call for much further exertion. The battle, at first a treacherous and successful surprise from within the camp, is fast turning into the rout of the cover-loving foe, whose overthrow will more than ever strengthen the standard of King Truth, though attended with present pain and disadvantage. We deplore the mischief to them and to the truth; but the bitterness of death is past. We have learnt that evil is sometimes the most powerful agency of good...'⁵

-
1. Turney, The Sacrifice of Christ, p. 3 of the cover.
 2. See TC, x (1873), 331, 358-9, 392-7, 454-60, 468, 476-7, 526-7.
 3. See TC, x (1873), 360-365. This list included information from correspondence between Dr. Thomas and various individuals.
 4. See TC, x (1873), 460-468.
 5. TC, x (1873), 433-4.

How speedy this rout would be Turney had no means of knowing, but Roberts had clearly decided, after seven years of combatting Dowieism, that the long grind of national tours, persuading ecclesias at the individual member level was too exhausting. He now appealed over the heads of the 'managing brethren' to the members by post:

'I find it necessary to address you from the retirement forced on me by the weakness of this sin-stricken body... This is no matter for the managing brethren, whose duties are confined to the superintendence of the working affairs of the ecclesia as established on the truth. They have no jurisdiction in questions affecting the constitution of the ecclesia itself... Nor is this a matter to be dealt with under the law of offences between brother and brother... My request is, that if you agree with me, you will sign and return the declaration which you will find at the end of this letter. Addressed to me at the Athenaeum Rooms it will reach me in my retirement: and on my return, I will ask you to meet me at the Athenaeum Rooms, on Thursday night, October 30th, that our united declaration may be promulgated, and that we may take such further steps as the new situation will call for; after which it will be necessary to redraw ecclesia roll, that we may know, who thereafter constitute the Birmingham ecclesia on the basis unadulterated truth.'²

Roberts's 'declaration' on the 'Clean Flesh' or Renunciationist heresy was as follows:

'Those who do not join in this act will remain in fellowship with those who deny the truth, and will disconnect themselves from those who may unite in stepping aside from a connection which has become a fountain of every evil work. Please then, if you think well so to do, sign and return (not later than Sunday, October 26th, addressed to me at the Athenaeum Rooms, Temple Row), the Declaration on the back of this sheet. ROBERT ROBERTS.
Tuesday, Oct. 14th, 1873.

-
1. While the letter quoted above was addressed to 'the Brethren and Sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ (collectively and individually) assembling in Temperance Hall, Temple St., Birmingham', it was printed in its entirety in The Christadelphian, and thus circulated nationally so that the ecclesias would know the new basis of fellowship and be able to write agreeing resolutions for printing in The Christadelphian at a later date - a course of action which many ecclesias undertook in time for insertion in the December magazine.
 2. TC, x (1873), 526.

DECLARATION

'I do not agree with the doctrine concerning Christ which has emanated from Nottingham, in the Tract entitled "Thirty-two Questions" and otherwise, within the last three months. On the contrary, I believe that Jesus, in the days of his flesh, was a manifestation of God, in the mortal nature of David, and, therefore, inheriting, in his flesh, equally with ourselves, the mortal effects of descent from Adam, from which, by the Father's power, he was himself delivered by obedience, death, and resurrection; and is now the deliverer of all who truly come to God by him. I hereby withdraw from all who do not believe this.'¹

By this action, Roberts established a precedent for dealing with doctrinal dissidence. As he indicated at the beginning of his letter in the November Christadelphian, it was a course of action forced upon him by pressure of work on a mortal frame. These pressures built up on future occasions - notably in 1885, when he adopted a similar tactic in dealing with Robert Ashcroft and the 'Partial Inspiration' controversy.² However, stirring deep in the sensitivities of Roberts's brethren was the impression that this type of action was altogether too summary and abrupt amongst a congregation of brethren. In 1885, many Christadelphians reacted to a repetition of Roberts's conduct of 1873 by forming an entirely new sub-sect, known as the 'Suffolk Street fellowship'. By 1931, a new Christadelphian magazine, known as The Testimony, was started, with a number of items of editorial policy differentiating it from contemporary Christadelphian practice. Amongst these was a distaste for personality issues and the like:

'The Character of the Magazine. All the articles will bear upon the Bible, although viewed from different angles. All useless controversy and matters of doubtful import will be excluded, but assistance of a constructive character will at all times be welcomed.'³

-
1. TC, x (1873), 526.
 2. See ch. V below.
 3. The Testimony, i (1931), Foreword.

At the same time, The Testimony shunned the system developed by The Christadelphian of a single editor and established an editorial board of six¹, with a decidedly democratic flavour to their composition:

'The Editorial side. It has not been found desirable to entrust the work to a single editor... Each sectional editor, in addition to his own contribution, will exercise oversight over those submitted by other contributors.'²

By 1931, readers of The Christadelphian had become used to an entrenched, conservative hierarchy - for Roberts (Editor 1864-1898) was replaced by C.C. Walker, whose editorship continued until 1937, and who remained as an assistant editor until September 1939. By 1931, the editor of The Christadelphian, although officially in support of the new Testimony magazine, was, as an open secret, quite against it. The rumour spread that this new magazine was far too 'liberal'.

In the perspective of their own history, Christadelphians came to regard the powers of the magazine editor as too enormous for comfort. Hindsight makes easy fools of earnest endeavours: Roberts had been given a co-ordinating job to do, and had done it well. Like many able and conscientious men, he found it hard to delegate. Under enormous pressure, he had responded not by letting go of the reins, but by gripping them so tightly that the horse's mouth felt chafed.

Despite all the theological altercations whirlpooling around him, Roberts maintained a remarkably high standard of quality and activity in The Christadelphian: information on the 'signs of the times' was collated from newspapers all over the world; interesting archaeological information regarding the veracity of the Bible was reported from the latest 'digs' in the Middle East;³

-
1. The Christadelphian, in 1937, adopted a committee system, too. The committee consisted of nine members, who were appointees of the editor. This was extended to twelve after the reunion between the Suffolk St. and Temperance Hall fellowships in 1957. Inside back cover of The Testimony, vol. i, no. 1 (Jan. 1931).
 2. One example was the reported existence amongst Assyrian documents, found in Iraq by George Smith, secretary of the British Museum, of an account of the Flood. See TC, x (1873), 74-5.

interesting material was culled from non-Christadelphian theologians¹; debates and newspaper correspondence took place on an active scale and were carefully reported.² However, this variety of information in the magazine was mainly produced in the first half of the year, before the Turney affair broke; it is much less true that the magazine provided diverse fare after July or August.

1874 was a quiet, reflective year at the Christadelphian Office. Roberts, himself, appeared to ruminate: he wrote no books, engaged in no debates. When, in February, the North British Daily Mail³, in its series 'Orthodox Glasgow', examined Christadelphianism and found it teaching 'many doctrines which are common to every Christian church, such, for instance, as the Inspiration of Old and New Testaments, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the necessity of faith and virtue, and many others',⁴ neither Roberts nor any other of the brethren challenged this analysis - as they did on a number of other such occasions.⁵ The Editor merely contented himself with reprinting the article in The Christadelphian and adding a few corrective comments in parentheses, even though, in Roberts's view, 'there is a mixture of truth and error, having a grotesque appearance to those who know the matter attempted to be written about.'⁶

Roberts withdrew, in fact, into a defensive posture to be repeated at other occasions of internal crisis⁷ - he reprinted many articles by Dr. Thomas, a large number of which had a bearing upon the fundamental bone of current contention - namely, the nature of Jesus Christ. Outright he said: 'to the charge of holding "that the knowledge of Scripture in the writings of Dr. Thomas has reached a finality" we plead guilty.'⁸ Thus, whilst it is true

1. For example, Dr. Arnold, of Illinois, writing in the Baptist Examiner and Chronicle, in the series 'The Main Currents of Modern Scepticism', TC, x (1873), 107-112.
2. For example, TC, x (1873), 119-125, 158-60, 160-164.
3. Cited TC, xi (1874), 58-60.
4. TC, xi (1874), 59.
5. See especially section (i) entitled '1880-1884: the emergence of a denomination', part IV, pp. 127-135 below.
6. TC, xi (1874), 58.
7. Notably in 1885 - see ch. V below.
8. TC, xi (1874), 408.

that 'Roberts never ceased to invoke the Doctor's name or to defend it. For Roberts, Thomas was the mouthpiece of God's will',¹ it was also true that at certain junctures this truth was held tacitly by Roberts and at others given extremely overt and emphatic expression.² What is more, many of the other articles in the 1874 Christadelphian concerned the nature of Jesus Christ. Ecclesial resolutions, supporting the editor's policy, were reprinted in the magazine. There was, reflected in the pages of The Christadelphian, an anxiety which went far deeper than such a situation would normally create. Christadelphianism in the 1840s and 1850s had proved itself able to sustain a breadth of debate - not so by the 1870s. Whether at least some of the apparent confidence and adept defensiveness of the Gospel they had found resulted from a feeling of unease and uncertainty amongst some early brethren, so that when a notable brother placed his finger on a weak spot, this uncertainty was transformed into a frenzy of self-justification, or whether much of the sharpness was simply a reaction to Roberts's organisational methods, is a matter of some doubt.

It has been estimated that 118 ecclesias in Britain survived the fracture over Renunciationism.³ Whatever the effects of

-
1. B.R. Wilson, 'Social Aspects of Religious Sects: A Study of some Contemporary Groups in Great Britain, with special reference to a Midland City', (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1955), ii. 979.
 2. For example, in July 1873, when Renunciationism was first being tackled by Roberts in TC, x (1873), 314-23, in an article 'The Sacrifice of Christ', he immediately added 'Dr. Thomas's mind on the subject' to his own comments (TC, x (1873), 323-4). The fact that the quotation from Thomas which Roberts cited came from 'a private letter to a friend' illustrates his anxiety to have Thomas's authority behind him. It is also true that for all his protestations of support for Thomas, Roberts went into much more detail credally than Thomas was happy to do.
 3. Norrie, in his Early History, ii, (see Table 2 p.29 above), indicated that the number of ecclesias in Britain before 1861 was 39. The official records from The Ambassador and TC, 1-x (1864-73), referred to the establishment of 55 further ecclesias by 1873, giving a total of 94 ecclesias by 1873. If 118 survived Renunciationism, there is clearly a shortfall in the figures. Whether this was the result of the gap in the records between 1861 and 1864, or because of the incompleteness of the records kept, is unclear. TC, vi (1869), 214, did indicate that the Intelligence figures were incomplete. However, it is very likely indeed that the 118 surviving ecclesias represented an overwhelming majority.

Renunciationism measured nationally, its effect on the Nottingham ecclesia, where Turney was best known, was devastating.¹

The crisis raised by Turney and Handley was such a conscience-searcher for Christadelphia that Roberts reprinted extracts from an article written in The Rainbow², by Revd. W. Penrose, in October 1871, in order to expose what he believed were the worst excesses of 'high Calvinism'³ regarding the fleshly nature of Jesus Christ.⁴

(d) 1875: A YEAR OF MIDDLE-EASTERN ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

If 1874 seemed a negative and gloomily introspective year for Christadelphia, as reflected in the magazine, 1875 portended worse - not only did the Renunciationist heresy rumble on threateningly,⁵ a number of writers⁶ attempt to demolish the teachings of the Christadelphians, and Dowieism rear its head against orthodox Christadelphianism⁷, but also conscription became a serious issue

1. Up until 1873, the Nottingham Ecclesia's record of immersions was second to no other ecclesia in Britain, including Birmingham. In 1872, Nottingham baptised 53 individuals into the Christadelphian faith - over a quarter of the national total. In 1873, the number had sunk to 23 baptisms (under ten per cent of the total); in 1874, it was ten (under five per cent); and it never recovered its former eminence.
2. This was a unique citation for either The Ambassador or TC.
3. Roberts's term for Penrose's views, see TC, xi (1874), 497.
4. See TC, xi (1874), 497-504.
5. A number of private letters were printed in the April 1875 Christadelphian (xii), 169-73, all anti-Renunciationist, whilst substantial extracts were printed, in the July issue, pp. 301-4, from a pamphlet written by Brother Hawkins in answer to a 'Clean Flesh' circular.
6. These included a monthly periodical, The Antimaterialist; a 160 page work, Life and Immortality: the Scripture Doctrine briefly considered in relation to the Current Errors of the Annihilationists, by F.W. Grant (TC, ix (1872), 78-80); and a 62 page tract by Mr. Govett entitled Christadelphians not Christians (see TC, xii (1875), 19-21) from British Writers; and Certain Christadelphian Doctrines compared with Scripture by the American A.B. McGruder (Baltimore, Ind., U.S.A.). The last was considered the best by the Dowieites who circulated copies in Edinburgh and Nottingham in particular. They were particularly keen on this pamphlet because it was directed towards establishing the vulnerability of Dr. Thomas - a favourite play of the Dowieite community.
7. See TC, xii (1875), 251-62.

for Christadelphians in Britain for the first time.¹ What is more, despite a concerted use of Roberts's journalistic skill in producing a racy article on prophecy and the Palestine issue, the Daily Telegraph proved unwilling to print even one of the 4,000 words he sent them on the subject.

However, despite all this, and despite the distaste over Renunciationism and its aftermath, the skies began to brighten because of events in the Middle East - and the Moses Montefiore scheme to fund Jewish settlement in Palestine. At a time when the British national subscription to the Montefiore 'Testimonial' fund amounted to only £5,000, the fiscally poor, small Christadelphian community donated over £100. Roberts's letter, setting out the reasons why such a small denomination should provide such a relatively large sum, was eventually published by the Jewish Chronicle, in a shorter version, and with the last sentence² excised.

Throughout 1875, there was an average of more than two articles per month on the establishment of 'Israel' in the Middle East. Roberts's full journalistic skill was brought to bear, as the media were combed for the slightest scrap of information on the topic - quotations were printed from a lecture by George St. Clair,³ the Jewish Chronicle, the Morning Post, the Volks Zeitung (a Berlin journal), the Israelite, the Vessillo Israelitico (a Buenos Aires paper), the Pall Mall Gazette, the World, the Akhbar, Journal de l'Algerie, the Allgemeine Zeitung, the Educatore Israelita, the Times, the Israelit, the Liverpool Daily Post, the Liverpool Daily Albion, the minutes of the Board of Jewish Deputies, Habazeleth,

-
1. This had been a central problem for the Baptised Believers in the American Civil War, which led to the adoption of the name Christadelphian (see p. 40 above). The legality of conscientious objection was not a settled issue for Christadelphians in Britain for a very long time. As late as World War I, it led to ugly scenes - one man, Robert Fox, of Heckmondwike, was flogged on a parade ground for his views; another, Walter Lord, of Elland, was marched through the streets of Halifax before a military band, because of his objections to fighting in the armed forces.
 2. This read, 'Need I add that they (the contributors) believe that Jesus of Nazareth is he (the Messiah)?' Roberts commented, 'The Jews persevere in their stubborn cry, "We will not have this man to reign over us."' TC, xii (1875), 423.
 3. Sir George St. Clair, M.P., (1790-1868), was a noted traveller and writer who produced voluminous copy, both for the press and in pamphlets.

Notes and Queries, the Quarterly Statement, the Univers Israelite, the Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums, the Kolnische Zeitung, the Jewish Messenger, the Echo, the Boston Independent, the Tithe, the Echo de l'Orient, the Daily Telegraph, the Judische Presse, the Sydney Empire, the Daily News, Birmingham Morning News, the Journal de Bucarest, the Standard, the Bohemia, Fraser's Magazine, Pictorial World, the Athenaeum, the Moscow Gazette, the Golos, the American Israelite, Heine's Recollections of Boerne, the Famille de Jacob, the Morning Advertiser, the Liverpool Mercury, the Rock, the Jewish Record, Corriere Israelitico, Sunday Times, the Levant Herald, the European Review, the Handbook for Palestine, the Atlanta News, the Hebrew Leader, the Telegraph of New Russia, the Inquirer, the Gardener's Chronicle, the Magid and the Lebanon. Besides indicating the tremendous industry and dedication of Roberts as an editor, this analysis of the Middle Eastern scene from such a range of sources registered the fervour of Christadelphians for Israel re-established, which, to them, entailed the speedy return of their Lord from heaven, the establishment of the Kingdom in Zion, and, in time, the end of all their toils - most notably, at that moment, the problem of internecine strife.

Thus, in 1877, an entirely happier atmosphere pervaded The Christadelphian, and enthusiasm and joy spilled over into various associated fields of activity - and new series of articles began entitled 'The Bible True' and 'Bible-marking; and Hints to Bible Markers'. The first of these indicated positive reasons why Christadelphians could be assured that the source of their faith was infallible, quoting from archaeology, the internal consistency of the Bible, history and prophecy, along with attacks on the 'vain and absurd and ruinous' notions of Darwin, Huxley and their followers.¹ The second showed how the individual believer could best achieve a proficient use of these intellectual weapons - both for attack

1. TC, xii (1875), 312-3. TC conceived of the attack on the Christian religion as being broadly-based, and so took to task not only the Darwinians but also such people as John Tyndall (1820-93), professor of natural philosophy at the Royal Institute from 1853 (TC, xii (1875), 411-12).

and defence. There was about this truculence, a joviality, coupled with determination, almost entirely lacking from the previous year's jaundiced assessment of 'life in the truth'.

(e) 1876: A CHRISTADELPHIAN ANNUS MIRABILIS

1876 was a veritable annus mirabilis for Christadelphians - with many minor triumphs, and two major ones. The first major triumph was the series of debates which Robert Roberts contrived to stage-manage in June between himself and Charles Bradlaugh, the leading humanist in Britain and editor of The National Reformer. The correspondence between the two men¹ seemed to imply that Bradlaugh was avoiding the confrontation. However, this apparent evasiveness must be mollified by the fact that he had at this time been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine of £200 for his part in republishing, along with Mrs. Annie Besant, the pamphlet The Fruits of Philosophy, advocating birth control.² The six nights' marathon debate was conducted in two centres - Leicester and Birmingham, on 13-15 and 20-22 June. One writer has said of Roberts that 'Despite the limited nature of his formal education, Roberts cannot be considered as anything other than an educated man.'³ However, it was Charles Bradlaugh, on this occasion, who won the debating points, although he himself later paid tribute to Roberts's skill and conviction in debate.⁴ All this raised the issue of the worth of the cut and thrust of debate to the resolution of religious difficulties. Such debates, from 1876, tended to crop up in Roberts's diary less often. The second major triumph occurred the following month. Robert Ashcroft, a Congregationalist minister at Rock Ferry, near Birkenhead, along with his wife Clara, was baptised

-
1. This was printed in, for example, Is the Bible Divine?, (London 1876), a 161 page transcript of the debate, pp. i-viii of the Preface. See ch. IV below, p. 164, and Appendix K.
 2. Bradlaugh won his case, on appeal.
 3. B.R. Wilson, 'Social Aspects of Religious Sects...', ii. 978.
 4. TC, xx (1883), 28.

into the Christadelphian faith.¹ This meant a lot to the Christadelphians at the time² - it was another indication that the hair-splitting of Renunciationism was really behind them at last, and that the Truth was once again victorious. As a result, almost half of the July issue of The Christadelphian was devoted to the detailed reporting of this encouraging news, which, in the form of the 'Extracts from the Diary of a Congregationalist Minister' series, was still thrilling Christadelphians two and a half years later, when the final article was printed in the issue of the magazine for December 1878. Spiritual buoyancy was maintained by further successes at home and abroad. The discovery that Presbyterians in the Troy district of New York had a faith very similar to the Christadelphians' own³, and a prolonged discussion of the details of Christadelphian views in the pages of the Peterborough and Huntingdonshire Standard and Peterborough Advertiser⁴ formed two examples of contemporary excitement.

(f) 1877: GLADSTONE, THE EASTERN QUESTION AND THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

1877 began with the thrill of the news that the Christadelphian faith had been brought to the attention of Mr. Gladstone, then leader of the Opposition. By this time, Christadelphians responded to spiritual stimuli rather like a fast bowler on a hat-trick reacts to the sight of an incoming lower order batsman. Thus, when

-
1. A number of other Congregationalists in this church followed Revd. Ashcroft, in addition to six members of his family. On the death of W.R. Yearsley in 1916, the following obituary was recorded: 'Our late Brother W.R. Yearsley, Birkenhead. Bro. W.R. Yearsley... was one of the deacons in the Congregationalist Church at Rock Ferry, of which brother R. Ashcroft was pastor, prior to his being baptised as a Christadelphian. He was led to the light of the Truth through his "pastor" finding it; he was one of the most rigidly faithful brethren we ever met.' Christadelphian Year Book, ed. G.H. Denney and F.G. Newnham, (Bristol 1916), p. 126.
 2. It also meant a lot to Ashcroft, who lost a living of £400 a year. In this personal discomfiture, the seeds of later trouble were, in part, stored up.
 3. TC, xiii (1876), 64ff.
 4. TC, xiii (1876), 142-3.

Gladstone produced a moderately favourable response¹ to Robert Roberts's Prophecy and the Eastern Question, J.J. Hadley, chief reporter on the Birmingham Post and a brother in whose conversion Roberts had been instrumental, used the Central News Agency at Birmingham to telegraph the news of Gladstone's comments to the leading papers in the country.² The information, that a leading intellectual of the day and leader of Her Majesty's Opposition thought favourably of a little-known and apparently eccentric Christian denomination, was carried next day by, amongst others, the Birmingham Daily Post, the Standard, the Weekly Dispatch, the Liverpool Post, the Leeds Mercury, the Manchester Exchange, all the Glasgow newspapers, the Edinburgh Evening News and the Times. Further successes were scored when, as a result of the 12-14,000 copies of Roberts's Prophecy and the Eastern Question circulated both as gifts and over bookstalls³, several newspaper reviews appeared. These included the Jewish World, the Christian, the Christian Age, the Islington Gazette, the Rainbow and the Peterborough Advertiser. A favourable review appeared in the Staffordshire Sentinel, too, because 'the writer is a brother, employed in the literary department of the paper in which it appeared.'⁴

-
1. TC, xiv (1877), 336.
 2. The following was the text of Mr. Gladstone's reply: 'Dunster, 24th Jan., 1877. Sir, Allow me to thank you for your tract, which I shall read with great interest; for I have been struck with the apparent ground for belief that the state of the East may be treated of in that field where you have been labouring. Your faithful servant, W.E. Gladstone.' For this, additional replies, and their use by Roberts, see TC, xiv (1877), 121ff.
 3. See TC, xiv (1877), 336, for detailed figures about the manner of circulation of this pamphlet. Also TC, xiv (1877), 430.
 4. TC, xiv (1877), 510. The writer of this piece was J.W. Thirtle, who, according to Christadelphian records, had edited the Sentinel under previous management. The editorial staff at the Sentinel searched in their own archives, and published a piece in the Evening Sentinel on 12 July 1980 entitled 'Sentinel Mystery Man', to try and attract further information about Thirtle, but, according to Mr. Bernard Sandall, the editor, could 'find nothing... about Mr. Thirtle.' The only reference, outside Christadelphian sources, to Thirtle's tenure in office, is found in The Sentinel Story 1873-1973, (Stoke-on-Trent, 1973), pp. 37-38, which referred to Thirtle ultimately attaining 'national eminence as a scholar and divine', but mentioned him only as a sub-editor at the Sentinel. For the significance of the role of brethren who were journalists to early Christadelphian history, see below pp. 143-4.

"We have been favoured with a copy of this little book, the character of which is well expressed in the title. The author, who is not unknown among students of the prophetic Scriptures, seeks to show that the climax of the war now raging will be the conquest of Turkey by Russia. He argues that the clue to the whole theme, from a prophetic point of view, is the fact that the Holy Land, the geographical basis of divine work in the earth, is in the possession of the Turk, and anything affecting the Ottoman Empire must affect Palestine as part of its dominion. He argues that the Land of Promise, which has had a past history, has a future also, as is clear from the numerous settlements of Jews there of late years. He interprets the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, and other Hebrew prophets as setting forth the speedy conquest of Turkey by Russia; the approaching revival of Jewish prosperity; an attempted aggression on the returned Jews by 'Gog' or Russia; and the stepping in of 'Tarskish' or Britain, who, for the protection of Jewish interests, goes to war with Russia. The scene is then changed by the reappearance on earth of the rejected king of the Jews, to whom not only Russia, but Britain and every other power, will have to yield. The Jews will then be gathered from all nations, and the Millennium will be inaugurated. The author believes that we are living in the time of the sixth vial of the Revelations. For particulars as to the price of the book, and the place whence it may be obtained, we refer our readers to an advertisement in another column. The hook, which is nicely got up, is worth reading, and is clearly the production of one who knows what he is writing about, and who treats a subject of all-absorbing interest in a sober and reasonable manner." -
Staffordshire Sentinel.¹

(g) 1877-78: GLADSTONE, THE CHRISTADELPHIANS AND MILITARY SERVICE

In the same year as Gladstone's review of Roberts's booklet made the news columns of many local and some national newspapers, the former Premier described British Israelism as 'not only an error but "almost a delusion".'² In the following year Gladstone agreed to present a petition to Parliament, on behalf of the Christadelphians,

-
1. TC, xiv (1877), 510.
 2. TC, xiv (1877), 367.

requesting their exemption from military service on grounds of conscience.¹

By now, orthodox Christadelphia had shaken off its chrysalis of bitterness and distaste caused by internal strife with Dowieites and Renunciationists and used its new wings to soar to spiritual heights. This metamorphosis generated a change of heart on the part of the Renunciationists who, in December 1877, requested to be reunited with the central Christadelphian fellowship.² The only meteorological phenomenon looking remotely like a cloud in 1877 was the quasi-professional cleric status accorded to Robert Ashcroft.³ However, in 1877, there was only the faintest suggestion that all this portended anything other than a minor difficulty, and so orthodox Christadelphia was not only able to attract back the Renunciationists, but also shrugged off the challenge of another heresy without too much difficulty.⁴

After the zeal and excitement of the previous few years, the decrease of external stimuli and satiation of internal spiritual drives provided a quiet, meditative backwater for the Christadelphian movement in 1878. Only two events of any note occurred. One of these was the establishment of Young Men's Mutual Improvement Classes.⁵ These were invaluable in providing training for young men at public speaking, which, because of the limitations of state educational provision in the 1870s, included the correction of language, grammar and pronunciation. The implementation of the other change - the registration of Christadelphians as conscientious ob-

-
1. See the 'Petition to the Imperial Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland', p. 111-112 below.
 2. TC, xiv (1877), 538-41.
 3. Regarding Ashcroft's parson-like status only one year after his baptism, see the special arrangements made to finance his speaking engagements by the Birmingham and other ecclesias. TC, xiv (1877), 381. See ch. V below, pp. 199-204.
 4. This was the No-Will heresy - see TC, xiv (1877), 130-7. The issues involved are examined in ch. VI below, pp. 252-4.
 5. A very few Mutual Improvement Classes had existed in the period prior to 1864, before Roberts's tenure in office as editor of TC. See Norrie, Early History, i. 256-271. Roberts's Mutual Improvement Classes of 1877-8 were organised on a national scale.

jectors - was deferred, although the preparatory spadework was completed. Roberts decided not to sign the petition or hand it over to Gladstone for presentation in Parliament until a circumstance arose in which the brethren were actually directed to fight.¹ For this reason, British Christadelphians were not granted official exemption from military service until World War I was upon them. The prepared text of this petition ran as follows:

'PETITION TO THE IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND,

Praying the exemption of the Petitioners (the Christadelphians) from Conscription for Military Service.

SHEWETH,

1.-That your petitioners are a body of religious people known as the Christadelphians; who are looking for the early personal advent of Christ to set up a divine government over all the earth and to give an immortal nature to his friends who will be associated with him in the government.

2.-That they are conscientiously opposed to the bearing of arms, on the ground that the Bible, which they believe to be the word of God, commands them not to kill, nor even to be angry with their fellow men without a cause; not to resist evil; to love their enemies; to bless them that curse them; to do good to them that hate them; to pray for those who despitefully use them and persecute them; and to do to men as they would that men should do to them. Consequently, your petitioners entertain the conviction that they are debarred from taking any part in the conflicts that arise between nations. They recognise and discharge the duty of submitting to the laws enacted by the governments, where these laws do not conflict with the laws delivered by the Deity to His servants in His Word; but where human laws conflict with those that are divine, they feel themselves compelled to follow the example of their brother Peter, who, before a judicial tribunal in such a case, declared he must obey God rather than men.

3.-That in view of the troubled state of foreign affairs, your petitioners apprehend a possible resort to conscription for military service in the country, subject to the jurisdiction of your Honourable House.

4.- That they, therefore, pray your Honourable House to grant them a legal exemption from military service, subject to such conditions as your Honourable House may think fit to impose.

1. TC, xv (1878), 179.

5.-That conscientious objection to military service has been a peculiarity of your petitioners since the beginning of their existence as a body, and is not an opinion professed to suit an apprehended emergency.

6.-That your petitioners have proof of this last allegation in their possession in the shape of writings current among them for many years, advocating these principles; and, further, in the shape of documents, going to show that a similar petition was granted to their brethren in Richmond, Lunenburg and King William Cos., Va., and Jefferson County, Miss., by the Confederate Congress during the American Civil War of 1860-64, and was also presented by their brethren in the Northern States to the United States Congress at the close of that struggle, when conscription came into force.

7.-That your petitioners are few in number, and for various reasons, are not likely to be rapidly increased. That the granting of their petition will, therefore, in no degree, embarrass the military measures which your Honourable House may be called upon to take.

8.-That your petitioners humbly beseech your Honourable House to grant their prayer, that they may live quiet and peaceable lives, in obedience to God, to whom they will pray for the guidance of your Honourable House in the conduct of public affairs.¹

(h) 1879: CHRISTADELPHIANISM TRIUMPHANT

1879, like 1876, was a year of notable successes for the Christadelphian movement. In April 1879, Roberts clashed in debate with Edward Hine, leader of the British Israelites, in a three nights' debate at the Exeter Hall, London, on the subject 'Are Englishmen Israelites?' Previous to this, Hine had made capital out of Roberts's alleged refusal to debate with him. However, brethren of Roberts, again using newspapers, mainly local, to harry Hine with a variety of offers to take him at his word, stirred an amount of interest in this contest.² Finally, Roberts attended one of Hine's lectures and,

1. TC, xv (1878), 128-9.

2. See TC, xv (1878), 310ff., 409ff., 457ff., and TC, xvi (1879), 10ff., and 26ff. Mr Hine was 'pursued' by Christadelphians (keen to engage him in debate with Robert Roberts) both in person and in the columns of the Stockport Advertiser, the Warwickshire Observer, the Huddersfield Examiner, the Scarborough Weekly Post, the Halifax Courier and the Halifax Times. Wherever Hine spoke and claimed that Roberts refused to debate with him, he was presented with the prompt offer of satisfaction on this point by a Christadelphian.

grasping the bull by the horns, stood up at the germane moment and declared himself ready to answer Hine's challenge positively.¹ The debate, on 21-23 April, was chaired by Lord William Lennox², and was followed up by Roberts on the succeeding Sunday in a lecture with an extremely long title³, delivered at the Islington ecclesia's hall. The Banner of Israel, Jewish Chronicle, General Baptist Magazine, Staffordshire Advertiser, Walsall Free Press, Christian News, Sheffield News, West Central News, Gravesend Reporter and National Church were amongst the newspapers which reviewed either the debate or the lecture, or both. Without exception these credited Roberts with routing Hine. The General Baptist Magazine, commenting on Roberts's lecture, said: 'its reasoning is masculine, its exegesis sound and reliable in the main, and its effect on Mr. Hine's positions sublimely destructive.'⁴ Even the British Israelite organ, Banner of Israel, commented sadly:

'It is a great pity that Mr. Hine undertook the matter at all. However he may be grounded in his subject, he is no match for so perfect a debater as Mr. Roberts, who, much to his honour be it said, with his powers of argument, possesses also so wonderful a knowledge of his Bible.'⁵

A series of three successful lectures was held in the Birmingham Town Hall at the very end of 1878 - with Roberts lecturing and Ashcroft presiding on all three occasions. The smallest audience

-
1. TC, xvi (1879), 170-3.
 2. Lord William Pitt Lennox (1799-1881). Lennox was the fourth son of Charles Lennox, the fourth duke of Richmond, and was educated at Westminster. After an army career, he became an M.P., representing King's Lynn from 1832-4. However, his main interests were in sport and literature. In 1858, he became editor of the Review newspaper. His third and final marriage was to the daughter of a clerical gentleman, Revd. Capel Molyneux. In later life, he often acted as a paid lecturer and was a fund of personal recollections concerning anecdotes about court and other celebrities.
 3. 'The true position of Britain in relation to Israel's coming Restoration, and the re-establishment of the Kingdom of David, in the hands of Christ, the Son of David (as well as the Son of God), in ascendancy over all nations for their blessedness and wellbeing.'
 4. Cited in TC, xvi (1879), 319.
 5. TC, xvi (1879), 318.

numbered 3,500, of which only about one tenth were Christadelphians. A large amount of free literature was provided by the Christadelphians for the visitors on this occasion, including the special reprint of an article on the Christadelphians from a Dundee newspaper. Such was the interest stirred up in Birmingham by these events that Lord Cecil¹, a prominent Plymouth Brother, protested at the use of the Town Hall by 'blasphemers of the Word of God'² by means of placards displayed in Birmingham. The Christadelphian response, far from being abashed at the eminence of their opponent, was to print and distribute four hundred posters and 20,000 leaflets answering Lord Cecil's points in great detail. The text of their leaflet read as follows:

'TO THE INHABITANTS OF BIRMINGHAM.

- Lord Cecil and Another have extensively placarded Birmingham to the effect that the Christadelphians, to whom the Mayor has accorded the use of the Town Hall for three Sundays, are "Blasphemers of God's Word."

This is to certify that Lord Cecil and his Friend are wrong in their allegations. The Christadelphians do not blaspheme the Word of God on any point. On the contrary, they believe the Bible to be the Word of God throughout, and show their conviction by reading it daily, and constantly labouring in a variety of ways to exhibit and commend its teachings to the confidence of men. Those who attend their meetings (held every Sunday in the Temperance Hall, at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.), are well aware that the Christadelphians love and revere the Bible, and appeal to it constantly as the only access to the mind of God at present on earth.

Lord Cecil and his Friend mistake opposition to their opinions on the five points set forth, for opposition to the Word of God itself. It is this opposition to human dogma, crystalized in the formularies of a bygone age of ecclesiastical mystification, that Lord Cecil and his Friend miscall "Blasphemy of the Word of God."

The Christadelphians believe what the Scriptures teach on the five points categorised in the placard;

-
1. Insufficient information was provided in The Christadelphian to identify the particular member of the Cecil family involved.
 2. TC, xvi (1879), 42.

but this teaching differs from the definitions of Lord Cecil and his Friend.

1st.-The Bible does not speak about "The Eternal Sonship of Christ." 2nd.-The Personality of the Holy Spirit. 3rd.-The Personality of the Devil. 4th.-The Immortality of the Soul. 5th.-The Eternity of Punishment.

These are all forms of speech borrowed from the metaphysico-ecclesiasticism of an unscriptural age, and represent ideas of an equally unscriptural origin.

The Christadelphians believe in:-

1ST. - THE BIBLE SON OF GOD.

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary), and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." - (Luke i. 35.) "Unto us a child is born: unto us a Son is given." - (Isaiah ix. 6.)

This Son is God manifested in the flesh: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." - (John i. 14.) "God was manifested in the flesh." - (II Tim. iii. 16) "Of my own self, I can do nothing: the Father who dwelleth in me, he doeth the work." - (John v. 30; xiv. 10.)

2ND. - THE BIBLE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Thou (the Father) sendest forth Thy Spirit." - (Psalms civ. 30.) "It is not ye but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." - (Matthew x. 20.)

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from Thy presence." - (Psa. cxxxix.7.) "Thou (the Father) testified against them by Thy Spirit in Thy prophets." - (Neh. ix. 30.) "There is but one God the Father, of whom are all things." - (I Cor. viii. 6; Eph. iv. 6.) "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power." - (Acts x. 38.)

3RD. - THE BIBLE DEVIL.

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." - (James i. 15.) "Jesus took part of flesh and blood that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." - (Heb. ii. 14.) "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." - (Heb. ix. 26.) "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Spirit?... Why have ye agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?" - (Acts v. 3,9.) "Christ said unto Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan." - (Matthew xvi. 23.) "Jesus said to the disciples, "One of you is a devil." - (John vi. 70.)

4TH. - THE BIBLE IMMORTALITY.

"God only hath immortality." - (I Tim. vi. 15.)
 "By patient continuance in well doing, we must seek for glory, honour and immortality." - (Romans ii. 7.)
 "Jesus who hath abolished death and hath brought life and immortality to life through the gospel." - (II Tim. i. 10.) "This mortal must put on immortality." - (I Cor. xv. 53.) "Now unto the king immortal, invisible, the only wise God." - (I Tim. i. 17.) "This is the promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life." - (John ii. 25.) "They who are accounted worthy to obtain that world, shall not die any more." - (Luke xx. 35,36.)

5TH. - THE BIBLE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

"The wages of sin is death." - (Romans vi. 23.)
 "The wicked shall perish - into smoke shall they consume away." - (Psalms xxxvii. 20.) "They shall be as though they had not been." - (Obad. xvi.) "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be." - (Psa. xxxvii. 10.)
 "The transgressors shall be destroyed together." - (Psalms xxxvii. 34.) "They shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord." - (II Thess. i. 8.) "He shall perish for ever like his own dung: He shall fly away as a dream." "The wicked is reserved for the day of destruction." - (Job xxi. 30.)
 "The day that cometh shall burn them up, and it shall leave them neither root nor branch." - (Mal. iv. 1.)

Lord Cecil and his Friend have quoted passages that are not, when rightly understood, inconsistent with the foregoing quotations. They think otherwise, and doubtless imagine they are doing God service. The better plan would be for them, with the courage of their opinions, to come forward in public controversy, or put forward a competent Representative, in debate with whom Mr. Roberts will undertake to show that the opposition to the Word of God is (ignorantly we allow) on the part of Lord Cecil and his Friend; and not on the part of the Christadelphians, whose sole aim, at such personal disadvantage, is to exalt the Bible as God's Teacher and Imparter of life to the people, all of which is submitted with best wishes by

THE CHRISTADELPHIANS. '1

1. TC, xvi (1879), 42-3.

In answering correspondents to The Christadelphian in September 1879, Roberts dealt with problems raised by one Joseph Chamberlin, 'a Birmingham man and a Methodist minister'.¹ This same Revd. J.H. Chamberlin was baptised a Christadelphian in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham on 7 October 1882.² In future and less happy times for the Christadelphian body, Chamberlin was to link up with Ashcroft in The Expositor's attack on Inspiration. For the moment, the Christadelphian evangelising machine's cylinders were purring smoothly: Ashcroft was writing a series on 'pulpit perplexities' (in which he explained why he and other ministers were so blind to the Truth as Christadelphians saw it); Thirtle³ was writing technical comments on points of Hebrew and Greek; Shuttleworth's series 'Things New and Old' was going well, if sporadically; both A. Andrew and J.J. Andrew were adding useful contributions; Hine and Cecil lay vanquished; other reverends seemed interested in 'the Truth'; and the death of Edward Turney on 18 March, by robbing Renunciationists of their greatest champion, only served to move more of them nearer to Christadelphian orthodoxy again.⁴ In fact, by 1879, Christadelphians were baptising twice as many converts a year as they had been in the early seventies and almost ten times as many as when The Ambassador began in July 1864. Baptism figures in excess of three hundred were recorded each year until the Suffolk Street separation from Temperance Hall in 1885.⁵

-
1. TC, xvi (1879), 424, 472.
 2. The correspondence relating to the history of Chamberlin's conversion is gathered together in 'Another Reverend Surrenders to the Truth, Resigns the Pulpit and its Emoluments and Embraces the Profession of the Faith', TC, xix (1882), 509-12.
 3. J.W. Thirtle, sometime editor of the Staffordshire Sentinel daily newspaper, gave up his position over an issue of conscience. He remained a Christadelphian from his baptism in the 1870s to c. 1885. For further details of Thirtle's career see below, pp. 127, 133, 223n. In Feb. 1885, Thirtle removed from Staffordshire to Torquay. From August 1885, Thirtle took over the running of The Truth from Robert Ashcroft. From that date, The Truth became much more critical than previously of Christadelphian orthodoxy. No further mention was made of Thirtle in the 'Intelligence' section of The Christadelphian.
 4. By 1881 David Handley was writing to Roberts expressing his desire 'to do what he can to repair the mischief' of Turney and himself in 1873. TC, xviii (1881), 329-30.
 5. The peak figure, in 1884, was of 460 baptisms.

(1) 1880-1884: THE EMERGENCE OF A DENOMINATIONI STATISTICS INDICATING A GROWING INTEREST IN THE VIEWS OF
CHRISTADELPHIANS

1880-1884, the period after Robert Roberts's verbal obliteration of Mr. Hine and before September - October 1884, was the period of greatest Christadelphian success. At the end of this period, in autumn 1884, Roberts launched a scathing attack on J.H. Chamberlin, his doubts about Robert Ashcroft began to surface and 'Christadelphia' splintered into schismatic slivers.

The success in the 1880-1884 period can be measured by various criteria - total number of adult immersions when set against deaths, withdrawals and resignations,¹ non-Christadelphian attendances at public lectures, the numbers of books and booklets written, new periodicals and organisations started, the openness of The Christadelphian to discuss the most controversial issues in detail,² the growth of a large number of able brethren to share in the work, (including, on 1 January 1883, the appointment of Robert Ashcroft as assistant editor of The Christadelphian), and the great amount of interest in all things Christadelphian demonstrated by other churchmen and by newspapers.

A detailed analysis of baptismal figures is provided elsewhere;³ it is sufficient here to reproduce the figures for the period 1876-84 to illustrate the explosive growth in the Christadelphian body - see Table 3 below. Details of deaths, withdrawals, resignations and returns to Christadelphianism from outside the organisation are given separately in Table 4 below.⁴

-
1. See Glossary under 'withdrawal'.
 2. Later, when less sure of itself, the magazine became much less happy about the frank debating of the rights and wrongs of such matters within its pages.
 3. See ch. VII below.
 4. Source of figures for Tables 3 and 4: the 'Intelligence' sections in The Christadelphian magazine, volumes xiii-xxi. A detailed consideration of the reliability of these statistics is provided in ch. VII below, pp. 261-263.

TABLE 3

YEAR	TOTAL NO. OF BAPTISMS IN CHRIST-ADELPHIAN ECCLESIAS IN BRITAIN	AS % OF TOTAL MEMBERSHIP
1876	226	14%
1877	272	15.4%
1878	293	14.4%
1879	325	13.9%
1880	321	12.1%
1881	347	11.6%
1882	383	11.5%
1883	422	11.4%
1884	460	11.15%

TABLE 4

YEAR	DEATHS	WITHDRAWALS	RESIGNATIONS	RETURNS	TOTAL
1876	12	9	3	6	-18
1877	14	9	3	16	-10
1878	9	9	2	7	-13
1879	22	8	2	6	-26
1880	16	6	0	0	-22
1881	11	8	1	40	+20
1882	22	22	6	28	-22
1883	24	10	3	13	-24
1884	24	12	3	8	-31
OVERALL TOTAL					-146

At Radstock, in August 1880, a Christadelphian of very average esteem amongst his brethren as a speaker, a Mr. Chandler, was listened to by audiences estimated as being between 400 and 500.¹ The nuisance value to local orthodoxy was sufficient for the local incumbent, Revd. Robert Lawson, to produce an article attacking Christadelphianism.² A series of lectures given in Edinburgh by Robert Ashcroft attracted 600, 270, 250 and 500 visitors on four nights in the period 12-19 September 1880.³ Robert Roberts lectured for 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ hours in November in Nottingham to an audience which was swelled by good advertising to slightly over 2,000 in number.⁴

In April 1881 The Christadelphian reprinted the text of that year's series of four Birmingham Town Hall lectures, delivered by Robert Ashcroft to an audience of four hundred brethren and sisters, seated in the orchestra seats and forming a choir and 3,000 visitors each night (not counting the 'many standing in the passages' and forming an overflow meeting outside). Indeed, The Christadelphian commented rather ruefully that, in the case of a political speech by John Bright, the central seats were removed so that 7,000-8,000 people could crowd into the Town Hall.

II PROLIFERATION AND DIVERSIFICATION OF CHRISTADELPHIAN PUBLISHING

Books and booklets written in the period 1880-1884 were quite numerous. Roberts himself wrote more books in the five years 1880-85 than in the previous twenty-seven since producing the Bible Companion in 1853 at the age of fourteen. This was partly due to Ashcroft becoming assistant editor of The Christadelphian on 1 January 1883, so lightening the burden of magazine work on Roberts who had previously done all the editorial work himself.⁵

-
1. See TC, xvii (1880), 380.
 2. See p. 130 below.
 3. TC, xvii (1880), 523.
 4. TC, xvii (1880), 571-2.
 5. This explanation for his greater freedom of time was put forward by Roberts himself - see TC, xx (1883), 45.

F.R. Shuttleworth, F.G. Jannaway, J.W. Thirtle, J.J. Andrew, R. Ashcroft and A. Andrew were writing fairly prolifically and a number of other brethren, amongst them A.T. Jannaway, G.F. Thirtle, William Grant, J.J. Bishop, J.J. Hadley, Henry Sulley, Professor D. Evans, Dr. S.G. Hayes and Joseph Bland, were writing an appreciable number of magazine articles, leaflets and tracts of a minor length.¹

By February 1880, Ashcroft's contributions had become so regular and welcome in The Christadelphian that both he and Roberts felt obliged to offer an apology if a month went by with no word from him: 'Brother Ashcroft, of Birkenhead, intimating his inability to make the usual contribution to this number of the Christadelphian, explains that it is due to [a proposed change].'²

Young Men's Mutual Improvement Classes were taken very seriously, the example of the original Birmingham one being copied with the setting up of others in various towns throughout Britain, and the 'top' speakers - J.J. Andrews, Robert Ashcroft and F.R. Shuttleworth - would go and deliver 'model' addresses to the assembled young men, the proceedings being written up in the subsequent month's Christadelphian.

Having expanded both the format and number of pages in The Christadelphian on many occasions during the previous sixteen years, Roberts did not seek to meet the requests, recorded in the September 1880 issue of the magazine, for further private and ecclesial information by providing an even larger magazine. Instead, he proposed the establishment of a new, additional magazine to be known as The Visitor.³ Although this particular project never developed, additional magazines both before and in the aftermath of the 1885 Schism were produced - such as The Bible Lightstand (run by Shuttleworth) from 1884, The Investigator, The Expositor, The Aeon, The Truth, The Glad Tidings, The Restitution, The Good News, Good Company, The Bible Exegetist and The Christadelphian 'Mutual'

-
1. It is difficult to avoid the impression that B.R. Wilson underestimated the general educational level of Christadelphians, particularly during the early days of the movement.
 2. This 'change' involved Robert Ashcroft's professional and financial circumstances. For details see TC, xvii (1880), 81.
 3. This discussion was reported in TC, xvii (1880), 404-5.

Magazine. Ironically, it was the group of Christadelphians who separated from Roberts who produced a magazine with more pastoral information in it. They even adopted a title very similar to the one suggested, calling it The Fraternal Visitor.¹ Thus, pent up in the period 1880-1885 was a deal of enthusiasm for additional magazines coupled with not a little journalistic skill. These, in turn, were symptoms of the confidence and spiritual positiveness then abundant.

A new organisation, projected in April 1882, was 'The Fellowship League of Christadelphian Literature'. In sum, 'the plan would be the formation of a league consisting first of those able to provide, and, secondly, of those able to use Christadelphian literature in the service of the truth.'²

The baptism, on 7 October 1882, of the former clergyman J.H. Chamberlin, and his subsequent series in The Christadelphian entitled 'A Pulpit Besieged and Conquered by the Truth' were regarded by Roberts as 'thrilling and interesting'.³ Chamberlin's energies and abilities - he was a man of 35 years at the time of his baptism - were soon enlisted within the galaxy of talented and articulate brothers within Christadelphia at this time.

Roberts associated his plans to restart The Children's Magazine, which had lain dormant since 1872, with the arrival in Birmingham of Robert Ashcroft.⁴ Roberts was indeed very busy. In October 1882, statistics became available regarding the speaking appointments of the editor of The Christadelphian. These revealed that, besides speaking every other week in Birmingham, Roberts spoke in some ecclesia every week on a variety of subjects, some, such as 'The Apostle Paul as a Writer', 'Paul in Court', 'Paul's Address to the Elders of Ephesus', being fairly advanced as vehicles for the presentation of the Gospel. Because the assistance from Ashcroft had not taken full effect by January 1883, Roberts

-
1. Vol. 1, no. 1, of the monthly Fraternal Visitor was published in October 1885, after it became evident that The Truth, under Thirtle's direction, was being hyper-critical of Christadelphian tradition. This was in addition to the much shorter, but weekly, periodical, with a similar pastoral intention, which had been issued from August 1883, entitled The Ecclesial Visitor. Reviews of the latter were published in TC, xx (1883), 371-3.
 2. TC, xix (1882), 168-70.
 3. TC, xix (1882), 493.
 4. TC, xix (1882), 518.

wrote to a correspondent who complained that he'd written to the editor 'some time ago' and received no reply, 'The enquiry referred to has been lying in a pile of other letters, waiting leisure for notice - leisure difficult to get at in the ceaseless routine of imperative duties.'¹

III GUARDED ECUMENISM SHOWN BY CHRISTADELPHIANS

Roberts was so confident and relaxed that he felt able, in this period, to open the pages of The Christadelphian to frank discussions of sensitive and potentially controversial issues. For example, a Christadelphian from Australia wrote to Roberts in 1881 about 'Ecclesial Organisation in the nineteenth century' suggesting that, instead of arranging brethren, presiding brethren and secretaries, Christadelphians, if they were to simulate the first century ecclesias, ought to have elders, presbyters, deacons and bishops. Roberts took this brother's reply point by point explaining painstakingly the differences between the first and nineteenth centuries in terms of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.² Another Christadelphian wrote to Roberts in the following month, June 1881, claiming that Roberts's analysis was wrong and that brethren did possess the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the nineteenth century, so that the Australian brother's inferences about the organisation of ecclesial offices were correct. Again, Roberts responded by neither denouncing the heresy or declaiming pontifically, but by reasoning, point by point, that the Scriptural foundation of the argument was mistaken. When, in September, the brother (whose identity Roberts concealed 'under the last letters of his name L.M. not wishing to be in public collision')³ wrote again, Roberts preserved his calmness in answering the points, whilst refusing the proffered compromise: 'You believe in what you call "Ways of Providence", I would call it being "led of the Spirit". That being so, you would see that there is practical harmony between us. I prefer Scripture terms'⁴ with

1. TC, xx (1883), 33.

2. However, early Baptised Believers had used New Testament nomenclature in their naming of ecclesial offices. See Norrie, Early History, ii. 179-80; Aberdeen Ecclesial Minutes, 1844-74, sheets 28, 108. Robert Roberts was fully cognisant of these facts.

3. TC, xviii (1881), 269.

4. TC, xviii (1881), 422.

this rejoinder:

"The "Ways of Providence" and being "led of the Spirit" are totally distinct things. In the ways of his providence God brought Shishak, King of Egypt, and many other barbarians at different times, against Israel; if we are to say they were led of the Spirit, then we prove them "sons of God", for, "as many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Rom. xiii.14)."

A similar issue was discussed, in equal detail, two years later, in November 1883, under the heading 'The Possession of the Holy Spirit - would it be a Guarantee of Salvation?'² This was an important topic for Christadelphians, hearing directly as did on the nature and extent of Biblical Inspiration and the sympathy, directness and detail of the approaches made to the issue were indicative of great confidence on these matters.

By this stage, euphoria within the Christadelphian body was such that Christadelphians were moving back almost to their status in the 1840s and 1850s where there had been a considerable overlap between the brethren and the sects around them. Demanding intellectual topics were rigorously examined, non-Christadelphian authors were listened to, cited where it was considered useful, criticised where it was felt they were misguided. Instances of citation included: 'What the Bible Really Teaches' by Professor F.W. Newman.³ In the

1. TC, xviii (1881), 423.

2. TC, xx (1883), 497-504.

3. TC, xvii (1880), 8-11. Francis William Newman, 1805-1897, was the younger brother of Cardinal J.H. Newman. After a distinguished career at Oxford, he became a fellow of Balliol in 1826. When he graduated, the whole assembly rose to greet him - an almost unique distinction. He became a tutor in Dublin, where his religious experience was extended by meeting J.N. Darby and attending nonconformist worship. He became an apostle of intercommunion with all Protestants, and classics tutor in the Unitarian Bristol College, 1834-41. He became a professor at Manchester New College in 1840, and professor of Latin at University College, London, from 1846-69. He was later made emeritus professor. His great reputation was partly contributed to by his History of Hebrew Monarchy (1847) and The Soul (1849). He was a controversial figure whose autobiographical account of the changes in his religious faith, entitled Phases of Faith (1850), excited much debate. In 1876, he joined the British and Foreign Unitarian Association - an organisation of which he became vice-president three years later. From a Christadelphian viewpoint, Newman was suited academically and controversially for citation.

February 1880 issue of The Christadelphian, Thirtle reported on a 'Prophetical Conference on the Coming of Christ' held in Liverpool.¹ In March 1880, F.G. Jannaway² examined Mother Shipton's prophecies from a Bible standpoint.³ In June, an article on prophecy by Dr. Keith⁴ entitled 'Russia in the Latter Years' was reprinted from Sunday at Home.⁵ In August 1880, an extract from Professor Humphry's⁶ 'Bede lecture' at Cambridge, on the limitations of human knowledge was published.⁷ Many Christadelphians were

-
1. TC, xvii (1880), 73-4.
 2. Frank G. Jannaway (1860-1935), from a large Christadelphian family, was one of the leading members of his brotherhood in the later nineteenth century. Although siding with Roberts in 1885, he had himself been a contributor to Ashcroft's The Truth. However, Jannaway, then only 25, may not have fully appreciated the 'political' implications of that action.
 3. TC, xvii (1880), 126-32.
 4. Dr. Alexander Keith (1791-1880) was the son of Dr. George Skene Keith (1752-1823) the distinguished scientist, historian and divine. Alexander, like his father, took his doctorate in divinity at Marischal College, Aberdeen. In 1844, after almost thirty years' work for the Scots church in administrative and pastoral roles, he joined the free church secession in Scotland. His works on the fulfilment of prophecy were Sketch of the Evidence of Prophecy (1823); Evidence of the Truth of the Christian Religion from the Fulfilment of Prophecy (1828) of which Dr. Chalmers said 'It is recognised in our halls of theology as holding a high place in sacred literature, and it is found in almost every home and known as a household word throughout the land' (DNB, x. 1204); The Signs of the Times, Illustrated by the Fulfilment of Historical Predictions (1832); The Land of Israel according to the Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob (1843); The Harmony of Prophecy (1851); The History and Destiny of the World and of the Church according to Scripture (1861). He repeatedly turned down the moderatorship of the Free Church of Scotland for health reasons.
 5. Reprinted in TC, xvii (1880), 256-62.
 6. George Murray Humphry (1820-1896) studied at St. Bartholemew's, being made M.R.C.S. in 1841. He was a surgeon, and then, from 1847 to 1866, deputy-professor of anatomy at Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge. His many academic honours and distinctions included M.D., F.R.C.S., F.R.S., a knighthood, two professorships and a professorial fellowship. In the opinion of D'Arcy Power, he 'became the most influential man in the University of Cambridge, and converted its insignificant medical school into one which is world-renowned.' - DNB, xxii. 884.
 7. TC, xvii (1880), 369.

excited by the reprinting in October of an advertisement from The Jewish Chronicle offering a salary of £200 per annum for a 'clergyman required to preach throughout the United Kingdom on the subject of the return of Israel to Palestine.'¹

In 1881 an article was reprinted from the Newark Daily Advertiser on 'The Number of the Beast'.² Starting in 1881 and throughout this period, a large number of articles appeared in The Christadelphian written by Mr. Laurence Oliphant³ on the subject of the Jewish settlement of Palestine. At Thirtle's instigation, the magazine reprinted in March 1881 an extract from a textbook written by Mrs. Montefiore,⁴ and intended for Jewish youth, on the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.⁵ Professor Maclaren's⁶ inaugural address on 'The Inspired Character of the Bible' was reproduced in the April 1881 issue of the magazine.⁷ T. Walker's⁸ speech calling for a second Reformation was reproduced in detail in August 1882.⁹

-
1. TC, xvii (1880), 462.
 2. TC, xviii (1881), 7-9.
 3. Laurence Oliphant (1829-1888) was a colourful character whose major occupations involved travelling the world and acting as secretary or advisor to such aristocrats as Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and Lord Elgin when on foreign tour of duty and acting as war correspondent for The Times. He also plotted with Garibaldi. In the early 1880s he set up a community for Jewish immigrants at Haifa, where he spent most of the rest of his life.
 4. Mrs. Montefiore was the wife of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885), the well-known nineteenth century Jewish philanthropist, who visited Palestine on several occasions and obtained liberty of conscience for Jews in the Ottoman Empire (1840), Russia (1846), Morocco (1864) and Moldavia (1867).
 5. TC, xviii (1881), 122-5.
 6. Insufficient information was provided in TC, xviii (1881), to identify Professor Maclaren. Dr. Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910), the Baptist divine, who wrote on similar topics and who might easily have been considered the individual referred to, could not qualify for identity, since he never became professor.
 7. TC, xviii (1881), 177-9, 230-2.
 8. Thomas Walker (1822-1898) was apprenticed as a carpenter in Oxford. He was self-taught and worked his way up the hierarchy of journalism, becoming a reporter in 1846, sub-editor of the Daily News (1851-8), editor of the Daily News (1858-1869) and editor of the London Gazette (1869-1889).
 9. TC, xix (1882), 350-2.

J. Boyd Kinear's entry in the Encyclopaedia Britannica was reviewed in December 1882.¹

Besides delivering lectures on rather esoteric subjects,² Robert Roberts was writing articles in The Christadelphian for 1883 such as 'The Authenticity of the First Two Chapters of Matthew and Luke'.³ Similar conclusions could be drawn from Ashcroft's series in 1883 entitled 'Bible Difficulties and their Solution'.⁴

The 'open-door' policy to non-Christadelphian works was closed after 1885 and not re-opened until 1931.⁵

IV GUARDEDLY ECUMENICAL CHRISTADELPHIANISM PROVED INCREASINGLY ACCEPTABLE

Churchmen and newspaper reporters were relatively active in relationship to Christadelphianism in the period 1880-1884. This lent credence to the large estimates the brethren themselves made of attendances at various lecture meetings.

In March 1880, Revd. S.J. Hulme, M.A., Rector of Bourton-on-the-Water, having previously written a small pamphlet on Christadelphianism, preached a sermon to a large congregation in the parish church at Kidderminster on the 'Special Errors of the Christadelphians'. This, along with the subsequent actions taken by the Christadelphians to defend themselves, was widely reported in two local newspapers, known as The Shuttle and The Sun.⁶ J.W. Thirtle was himself engaged, in March and April 1880, in what he described as 'a somewhat exciting newspaper controversy' in The Sentinel:

'HANLEY. - Brother J.W. Thirtle writes "We continue to proclaim the truth here and are glad to see indications of some being interested. We have not been allowed to smoothly pursue our work. The troublesome fellow referred to in my last report - a Mormon, who has belonged to no fewer than seventeen denominations - has continued his work of annoyance and disturbance with untiring regularity, and repeated rebukes and exposures of his mischievous motive having been unavailing, we have been compelled to refuse him

-
1. TC, xix (1882), 546-7.
 2. See p. 122 above.
 3. TC, xx (1883), 264-8.
 4. TC, xx (1883), 481-5.
 5. See chapter three p. 99-100 above.
 6. TC, xvii (1880), 141-2.

and one of his supporters admission to our lectures. Now those who are desirous of listening are able to do so without molestation. We have been engaged in a somewhat exciting newspaper controversy, and orthodoxy has manifested very little of its much-talked-of charity and toleration. A letter setting forth various points of Bible doctrine, written to a local religious newspaper, aroused widespread indignation, and a number of epistles appeared against us, the writers, for the most part, showing considerable capacity for abuse, denunciation, and misrepresentation. Several of them were content to "leave it to those better up in theology to thrash out the lame arguments of the Christadelphians," who were described as "a mere handful of people from nobody knows where" intent upon "schism and mischief." "A Methodist" contributed a long essay on "Conditional Immortality" to the columns of the same newspaper, and two sermons against the truth concerning the soul and future punishment preached by a Presbyterian minister, were fully reported. To reply to the attacks, and to deal with the many misleading statements which gained currency, were out of the question, so we briefly met the most relevant, and stinking objections raised, and challenged our opponents to publicly defend their position. Our first letter was about two columns long, and although some eighteen or twenty columns have appeared against us, we have had to be content with three columns and a half in which to defend ourselves, for, saith the guiding spirit of the organ, "it won't do for me to fill my paper with this stuff which is giving great offence everywhere." The performance of the Presbyterian minister is not looked upon with unqualified favour by his brethren of the cloth, for they seem to think that he has not sufficiently rounded his points to secure himself against very damaging criticism. Yet, of course, the predominant belief is that the Christadelphians are wrong. It is to be hoped that the present effort will result in some manifesting a preference for truth above error, and making up their minds to wait for him whom we are expecting from heaven. Brother R. Judd, lately of New Zealand, but a native of these parts, has come to live at Stoke-on-Trent, and is meeting with us - making our number six."¹

1. TC, xvii (1880), 189.

The Weekly Despatch, in the Spring of 1880, contained an article by 'Prester John' on the Christadelphians, in the magazine's series 'Byways of Faith'.¹ The Christian Press of Glasgow, in the early Spring, carried two articles written by Thomas Mitchell of the Protestant Layman's Association against the views of Christadelphians. This resulted in a debate in that city on the subject of the Immortality of the Soul, in April.² The Swansea and Glamorgan Herald actually sent their 'Special Commissioner' to listen to Christadelphian lectures on two Sunday evenings in May. His impressions were recorded in his newspaper and reprinted in The Christadelphian:

"AMONG THE CHRISTADELPHIANS OF SWANSEA. - By our Special Commissioner. - I have, for the last two Sundays looked in at the Christadelphian assemblage in the Agricultural Hall, Swansea. I hope I have learned the lesson of toleration, after considerable intercourse with religionists of different types, but I found nothing to apologise for in the simple services of the Christadelphians. There is no pretension, no pietistic turning up of the whites of the eyes, no affectation of superior sanctity on the part of the leaders. Everything was done quietly, in a temperate and devotional spirit, for, although the new sect has a hymnology of its own, of ritual it has none. A matronly lady sits at a modestly-proportioned harmonium, and looking at her sedate and earnest face, I say to myself that this unpretentious but zealous Christadelphian lady might sit in the studio of Deflett Francis - when he is holy minded and not in sibylant vein - as the modern type of Paul's Phebe, "our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea." The leaders are quiet, but earnest-minded men, with a conviction that they are right, and with but scant reverence for confessions of faith or paper formularies. In this respect, the Christadelphians are the ecclesiastical Uhlans of the time, advancing, I must say, in a reverent spirit, before the body of inquirers and expositors, who have made the Scriptures practically a new book. The opening hymn is given out in a measured and emphatic voice by a gentleman

1. It was reprinted in TC, xvii (1880), 222-3.

2. The proceedings were reported in TC, xvii (1880), 236.

on the shady side of fifty, who is whispered of as Mr. Randles, and whose whole air is that of a man much in earnest, who has so interwoven the Christian humanities with his life, that he sees the verities in everything. I was agreeably impressed with Mr. Randles' reading of the hymns, and of the first sermon I heard. I was pleased with the ingenious way in which the lecturer emphasised the Christadelphian view of the resurrection, involving the annihilation of the wicked, the resurrection and abiding with Christ, on the earth, of the just, made perfect, and endowed with immortality. On the evening of Sunday last, I went to the Agricultural Hall, expecting to hear a lecture on "'The Bible made easy'", by Mr. Shuttleworth, of Birmingham, who was unable to appear, as was indicated in a telegram, owing to sudden and severe illness." - [Brother Shuttleworth has since recovered his usual state of health].¹

In August 1880, Revd. Robert Lawson, vicar of Radstock, Somerset, attacked local Christadelphians, following lectures given by brother Chandler, which attracted an attendance estimated as 400-500. In the Somerset evangelical magazine Gospeller, Mr. Lawson stated:

'The Christadelphians have been rather busy of late, and I hear that some of you have expressed your surprise that I have not been to their meetings, to contradict the false statements they make about the Bible. I think it therefore as well to tell you why I have not been - simply because I consider them too contemptible to notice. I looked into their publications, and came to the conclusion that no one who was not either a lunatic or an idiot could possibly be led astray by their barefaced contradictions of Bible truths. I was glad to see by one of their advertisements, that they don't call themselves Dissenters. I suppose the reason is they feel that what they teach is not worthy the name of religion at all. If they do not feel that I do, and trust and pray that all who hear the nonsense they talk, or read the nonsense they publish, will feel the same thing. I feel that this short account of the Christadelphians is really too complimentary to them, but I hope it won't make them conceited. ROBERT LAWSON, Incumbent.'²

1. Cited from TC, xvii (1880), 284-5.
 2. TC, xvii (1880), 380.

In October 1880, the Campbellite magazine the Ecclesiastical Observer reported on the activities of Christadelphians in Huddersfield in the summer of 1880 during a Campbellite convention when Revd. David King¹ was challenged to debate with Robert Roberts. The report ran as follows:

'CHRISTADELPHIANISM.- A paper printed for the occasion, was distributed at our recent annual meeting in Huddersfield, by some zealous Christadelphian, proposing discussion, if preferred by us, in the form of articles in the Ecclesiastical Observer and in the organ of Christadelphianism, and offering to find a competent person for that purpose. We are willing to correspond with any such person, with a view to arranging topics and regulations for discussion in the periodicals, provided only that the aforesaid competent person be appointed by the Christadelphian body, and is one that does not stand charged with wilfully seeking to deceive his brethren and the public, in reference to former proposals for discussion, refusing to submit his conduct to the decision of a perfectly disinterested jury. The importance of Christadelphianism, in itself, might not justify this consent, but its discussion could bring out points useful in a wider field, as for instance, the Deity of the Saviour.'²

Roberts commented wryly:

'Mr. King's tactics evidence either a fear to encounter the truth in debate or a susceptibility to personal offence which is inconsistent with his professed discipleship to him who commands his disciples to rejoice when all manner of evil is said against them falsely. Why does he gloomily boggle at the mote which he thinks he sees?'³

David King eventually followed up his rejection of a debate with Roberts with a written attack on Christadelphianism entitled The History and Mystery of Thomasism.⁴

In March 1881, The Christadelphian had reproduced an article from The Dudley Herald which had recounted their reporter's visit to the 'smallest congregation in Dudley' and had contrasted Christadel-

-
1. Mr. King had opposed Dr. Thomas's invitation to speak at Campbellite meetings, during his first British visit in 1848, fearing the contamination of Campbellite teachings by Thomas's new views. See p. 88, footnote 8, above.
 2. TC, xvii (1880), 460.
 3. TC, xvii (1880), 461.
 4. Cited in TC, xviii (1881), 185-6.

the Leeds Mercury, the Guardian, the Birmingham Daily Post, the Western Morning News, The Microcosm, Nonconformist, The Christian, The Literary Churchman, the Churchman's Shilling Magazine, The Rainbow, The Baptist and The Bacup Times.¹ Meanwhile, Thirtle used his position on The Sentinel in Staffordshire to include items he felt would be spiritually constructive.²

Not all newspapers were well disposed to the Christadelphians. The local journal in Brighton, in October 1882, took only 'scornful notice'³ of Dr. S.G. Hayes's lecture. However, fewer of the newspapers were finding it easy to ignore totally the sayings and doings of this energetic and vociferous minority group by the 1880s.

Any parson or minister who failed to maintain a low profile at this period was adopted by the Christadelphians as a target. The Revd. J.S. Drummond, a Congregationalist minister at Ormskirk, produced in December 1881, a leaflet for public circulation on the Immortality of the Soul. This was attacked by Robert Ashcroft, himself an ex-Congregationalist minister, who wrote a 50 page Reply to a Sermon on the Immortality of the Soul. Revd. Drummond's politically unwise response of sending a solicitor's letter in an attempt to suppress Ashcroft's Reply only forced the tempo up.

By 1882, Roberts, at the magazine's office, was receiving approximately three hundred letters a month, including about one hundred from overseas. A number of these were letters, some of a friendly complexion, from ministers of religion. One vicar, at Peasedown, offered to teach Christadelphians a lesson: 'I will most gladly receive any of my parishioners who are Christadelphians, at my house, when I come home, and give them instruction if they will come for it - a little plain Bible teaching, and they would soon renounce the errors they have adopted.'⁴ When brother Young of

-
1. See TC, xix (1882), 272-4, 324-5, 462-5 and 495-6.
 2. For example, see an article published on 17 May 1882, reprinted in TC, xix (1882), 296-7.
 3. TC, xix (1882), 527.
 4. TC, xx (1883), 27.

phian theology with those of the Baptists and Unitarians.¹

Christadelphians appeared in the news with great regularity and for a variety of reasons! A long correspondence followed naturally in the Leicester Daily Post after a Christadelphian butcher - brother Viccars Collyer² had been convicted of using bad meat, and sent to prison. Interest in the case scarcely lessened when a Leicester businessman, who had been impressed by Collyer (who had conducted his own defence), drew up a leaflet on the topic and circulated this in the town. Fuel was added to the fires of interest when Justice W. Napier Reeve, one of the convicting magistrates, wrote to the editor of the Post, stating that, in his view, Viccars Collyer was entirely innocent.³

Revd. W. Briscombe delivered a series of three lectures against Christadelphianism in Barrow-in-Furness during January 1882. These were replied to at the time by Christadelphians in the audience in the question-session which followed each lecture, and also by the hire of Barrow Town Hall for the delivery of two of the three reply lectures.⁴

Revd. David King continued to attack Christadelphian views in 1882. In the 15 February issue of his Ecclesiastical Observer, he wrote an article attacking the traditional Christadelphian interpretation of Daniel chapter ii under the heading 'Christadelphian Toe Kingdoms'.

By 1882, Roberts's skill as a circulator of information and his fame as a Christian apologist had reached a level sufficient for the publication of his latest book, The Trial, to be reviewed by The Christian Globe, The Leamington Spa Courier, The Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, The Bookseller, Eddowe's Shrewsbury Journal, Oxford University Herald, The Metropolitan, The Literary World (twice), The Ecclesiastical Gazette, The Methodist, Public Opinion,

1. TC, xviii (1881), 140-1.

2. Viccars Collyer was the father of the later prominent Christadelphian, and biographer of Robert Roberts, Islip Collyer.

3. Most of the relevant documents appeared reprinted in TC, xix (1882), 46-8.

4. TC, xix (1882), 138-9.

Peasedown took up the clergyman's offer, the vicar seemed very impressed by his skills. It was reported of the incumbent of Peasedown that: 'He... said we must have laboured hard to have collected these arguments together, and he said he only wished he had 50 such men in his church.'¹

One very successful ploy was the double-billing of Ashcroft and Chamberlin, as 'ex-reverends' speaking against their former convictions - this invariably attracted press attention, as, for example, at Shipston-on-Stour in March 1883,² and in the leaflet Three Lectures by Three Lecturers, first published 29 May 1883. Chamberlin had an exchange of views with Revd. William Morley of the Congregational Church in June and July 1883, the contents of which were reported in extenso in The Christadelphian.³

A 'London Journalist', quoted in The Christadelphian in September 1883,⁴ in surveying the Christadelphians, commented: 'Mr. Bradlaugh considered Christadelphians the best representative of Christianity, and the most reasonable mode of interpreting the Scriptures that had ever come across his path.'

In 1884, so many reverend gentlemen addressed themselves to the subject of Christadelphian theology that The Christadelphian ran a series (called 'The Clerical Adversary Belligerent') which detailed the words and actions of Revd. W. Stone, a Baptist minister at Todmorden in Yorkshire; Revd. R. Evans, also Baptist, of Kidderminster; an anonymous Baptist minister at Abergavenny; an anonymous Anglican missionary and Revd. S.L. Joshua, an 'evangelist', of Neath.⁵ Some of these attacks were of quite a private nature, though others, such as that of Revd. Stone, consisted of a special sermon against Christadelphians in the Vale Baptist Chapel, Todmorden, and then a running battle in the columns of the Todmorden Advertiser and Todmorden and District News.

1. TC, xx (1883), 28.

2. TC, xx (1883), 143.

3. TC, xx (1883), 319-23 and 348-57.

4. TC, xx (1883), 391.

5. TC, xxi (1884), 113-23, 163-70 and 207-11.

In May 1834, Revd. S. Jackson, a Campbellite from Derby, and Robert Roberts clashed in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham, on the subject of the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham. Although there was 'a large audience and much interest'¹, no arrangements were made to publicise the encounter - possibly because the likely audience for a well publicised debate would have been too considerable for the available hall.

V DENOMINATIONAL ORGANISATION

During the period 1880-1884, a number of moves were made to tighten up the organisation of the ecclesias. For example, the London ecclesias decided by January 1880 to present each newly baptised member with a copy of Roberts's Bible Companion, along with The Rules of the Ecclesia and The Statement of the First Principles of the Truth.² An anonymous article in The Christadelphian in February 1880 argued against the idea 'that it matters not what a man believes if his conduct be but right'.³ By 1881, the number of references to ecclesias giving away large numbers of Declarations seemed to have increased. The suggestion was made in September 1881 that a book of prayers be assembled to assist the usual practice of spontaneous prayer, thus helping inarticulate brethren. Roberts sat on the fence regarding the wisdom of this idea: 'Such a book might be compiled from the Scriptures. It would, doubtless, be useful. We shall see what the future may bring forth, if the Lord continue his tarrying.'⁴ On 1 June 1883, The Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias was first published. Although the Guide was comprehensive,⁵ its propositions were described in the Prospectus only as 'suggestions'.⁶

Thus, although the organisational element in the Christadelphian ecclesias was increased in this period, it was done in a

-
1. TC, xxi (1884), 282.
 2. See TC, xvii (1880), 46.
 3. TC, xvii (1880), 72.
 4. TC, xviii (1881), 417.
 5. For details, see pp. 145-148 below.
 6. TC, xx (1883), 274.

'Broad Church' manner - some ecclesias¹ having brought out their own regulatory documents prior to 1883, some having dispensed with any but the briefest code, some volunteering to be guided closely by Roberts's Guide. However, the level at which this organisational rationalisation went on was not dictatorial or restrictive of spiritual growth. It merely had the air of a rather tidier approach to the running of affairs Christadelphian.

VI DENOMINATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: BIRMINGHAM

So well-oiled were the wheels and cogs of the British Christadelphian machine that its humming attracted the attention of the brethren across the Atlantic. In fact, the situation, compared with the days of Dr. Thomas, with brethren anxiously awaiting news of his next article, book or visit, was exactly reversed - with American brethren inviting such as Ashcroft, Sulley and Roberts to visit them, and sending many letters to the editor of the British Christadelphian magazine, many of which expressed dependence on the periodical as some kind of dynamo. Thus, brother W.G. Burd of Kentucky wrote, in July 1880: 'Through the kindness of brother S.C. Burd, of Omega, this State, I have just received the April number of the Christadelphian, which is full of interesting matter. Indeed I know not how we who are so isolated could do without it.'²

The belief that Christadelphian views had a ubiquitous audience was such that a brother wrote in all seriousness to Roberts in 1882 suggesting a change in the movement's name from 'The Christadelphians' to 'The Holy Catholic Church'!³ Roberts himself began

-
1. The earliest extant of these is that adopted by the 'Christadelphian Synagogue, Temperance Hall, Temple Street' on Thursday, Nov. 13th 1873. Others soon followed. For example, the Westminster ecclesia in London adopted its Rules in Oct. 1882. The ecclesia meeting at 69 Upper Street, Islington, produced Rules, which were evidently arrived at independently of Birmingham's influence, in 1887.
 2. TC, xix (1882), 221. It is interesting to note how the centre of gravity of British Christadelphianism transferred from Scotland to England and, specifically, to Birmingham - although vested in a Scot, Robert Roberts; and how the focus of world Christadelphianism had moved, after the death of John Thomas, from the U.S.A. to Britain.
 3. TC, xix (1882), 221.

to feel that his office as editor of The Christadelphian was not without its influence even at national level after his success, in 1883, in attempting to modify British government policy towards Turkish violence against Jewish settlements in Palestine.¹

Underlying these symptoms of a shift of emphasis first from the U.S.A. to Britain and then from Scotland to Birmingham lay not only the death of Thomas, the rise of Roberts's star and the move of Roberts south from Edinburgh to Birmingham, but also the assumption by Roberts of control over the spiritual reins of Christadelphia. This control was not evidenced by any sudden seizure of power; nor was its existence ever openly debated, or even made explicit, before 1885. Little by little, however, Roberts came to assert control through his editorship of The Christadelphian, commenting on matters affecting individuals and mediating in ecclesial or inter-ecclesial disputes. By 1885, therefore, to be a non-traditional Christadelphian was to make a personal affront on Robert Roberts.

Thus, the period 1864-84 witnessed a whole range of achievements in Christadelphia: numerical success in conversions; success in maturity in dealing with the churches and intellectuals around them, amounting to selective ecumenicism; success in the streamlining of organisation - Birmingham clearly becoming the epicentre of worldwide activity by Christadelphians. Only in Church government was Christadelphianism lacking in development. On the rock of failures in that area, the ship of success foundered in 1884-5, and much of the precious cargo was lost.

1. The Government's statement, made by Lord Fitzmaurice, was effected through Roberts's influence with John Bright, M.P., whom he had known since his days as a young reporter on the Birmingham Daily Post, with Laurence Oliphant, who was well aware of Christadelphian sympathies for Judaism, and Joseph Chamberlain, Liberal M.P. for Birmingham, 1876-85, and as Liberal Unionist until 1914. Bright was a member of Gladstone's government until July 1882, and Chamberlain President of the board of trade until the government's demise in 1885. See TC, xx (1883), 185-6.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM OF ROBERT ROBERTS (1839-1898)

(a) ROBERT ROBERTS'S EARLY BACKGROUND IN CHRISTADELPHIANISM (1839-1864)

In understanding the thinking of Robert Roberts, it is essential to know some of the biographical details of his life, for his views were not beaten out on the Anvil of Truth in vacuo, but in circumscribed historical circumstances - sometimes extremely precipitous ones - which wrenched a reaction from him. However, much of Roberts's personal history, because it was so very bound up with the history of the organisation of the Christadelphian movement, is mentioned elsewhere in this thesis.¹ It is important here to consider the details of his life from his birth to his assumption of the editorship of The Ambassador in July 1864.

Robert Roberts was born on 8 April 1839 in Aberdeen. The son of a sailor, later to captain his own ship, he was one of a family of six boys and one girl. Religiously, his mother was a zealous Baptist, but of his father's piety no written account exists.²

-
1. The period 1864-1884 is dealt with in chapter III above; 1885 and its aftermath in chapter V below.
 2. Except, very conjecturally, that one of Roberts's brothers, Ebenezer, later became a Plymouth brother for a time, before converting to Christadelphianism. This, taken together with his father's seagoing craft, the fact that north-eastern Scotland is a stronghold of Plymouth Brethren, (seamen forming a significant proportion of that number), might indicate that Mr. Roberts Sr. was a Plymouth Brother. In verbal evidence to the author, Miss Edith Ladsen of Solihull, Roberts's granddaughter, said this was a reasonable conjecture, but that there was no information on this point known to her, and that Mr. Roberts could even have been an atheist.

At the age of ten, Robert Roberts was taken, by his mother, to hear Doctor Thomas, over on his first British tour, in a little chapel opposite the Baptist Chapel in John Street, Aberdeen. The following year Robert Roberts left school. He was engaged by a variety of employers during the next six years. These involved him working as clerk, printer, photographer, chemist and newspaper editor.¹ In 1852, at the tender age of thirteen, Roberts read Thomas's Elpis Israel. This event was followed, in 1853, by his baptism in the River Dee. Three years later, on 8 October 1856, Roberts, then aged seventeen, wrote to Thomas in America. This letter was considered important enough by its recipient to be printed in full in the Herald the following year.² It indicated verbal dexterity, a sureness of conviction belying Roberts's years and, if not obsequiousness, certainly overt enthusiasm for the author of Elpis Israel.

By 1857, Roberts had opted for the profession which, apart from the editorship of The Christadelphian magazine, was to comprise his life's work, namely journalism. Within the space of twelve months he was employed by The Aberdeen Daily Telegraph, The Edinburgh Caledonian Mercury and The Huddersfield Examiner. The move to the West Riding to work for the Examiner, then a newspaper with strongly Liberal sympathies, was a comparatively lasting one, because, with the exception of a few months in 1860, Roberts worked on the Examiner for over five years.³

Although Robert Roberts's talents had been recognised early by the Scots brethren, so at the age of eighteen he had been selected along with John Barker as one of the Aberdeen ecclesis's two representatives to the annual meeting of the Scots brethren at Edinburgh, his southwards move led to a much fuller appreciation of his worth. By July of the following year, 1859, Roberts was delivering open-air addresses in the Market Place at Heckmondwike, which other, much older, brethren were employed in advertising by means of bill

1. These details can be found in Roberts, MDAKW, pp. 5-19.

2. See Appendix H.

3. Roberts also worked for a time for the Halifax Courier.

distribution.¹ Although employed in and living at Huddersfield, Roberts attended the meetings of the Halifax ecclesia. From April 1859 he, along with his newly-wed Scots wife Jane walked the intervening seven miles via Elland ('regarding the place as a sort of barbarian village') twice each week.² He was selected by the ecclesia to represent their views at the first and second national conferences of English Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, which were both at Nottingham, in 1859 and in 1860.

In the Spring of 1860, a baby daughter, Agnes, was born to the young couple. Her death in infancy was a determining factor in Roberts's decision to work for a travelling phrenology company called 'Fowler and Wells', at twice the salary he received as a journalist. Roberts worked for them from February 1861 until 15 July of the same year. The peripatetic nature of his job in those months brought him into contact with Christadelphians in a wide variety of English cities - Birmingham, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Wolverhampton, Sheffield and York, amongst others. The nascent Christadelphian Body had barely become organised by this point in time³ and the inter-ecclesial knowledge Roberts gained by dint of his job made him uniquely suited, amongst English Christadelphians, for selection by Thomas as editor of The Ambassador of the Coming Age - a suggestion he put to Roberts less than one year later, during his second British tour in 1862.

Roberts had made such a name for himself both within and without the ecclesias that Baptised Believers were being described, as early as 1860, as 'Robertites'.⁴ By October 1861 he felt important enough to write again to Thomas in the U.S.A. encouraging him to visit Britain, despite the fact, as he recognised in his letter, that Thomas would not be universally welcomed amongst the

1. For the text of one such bill see p. 26 above.

2. Roberts, MDAMW, pp. 76-77.

3. See ch. I, pp. 26, 31 above for details of the problems caused by this ignorance. See also Roberts, MDAMW, pp. 160-162, where even Roberts found communication a problem at times.

4. See Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1960), 18-20.

ecclesias.¹ Indeed, Roberts's description of the welcoming proportion of believers - 'However... among the really hearty and intelligent believers of the glorious gospel you are held in reputation'² - indicated self-assurance of a high order. Late in 1860 a small ecclesia was formed in Huddersfield following the immersion of three individuals by Roberts in public swimming baths in the Lockwood district of Huddersfield.³ Within this new ecclesia, Roberts was even more pre-eminent than previously. According to the minute book⁴ of the Huddersfield ecclesia he occupied the office, in 1861, of 'general and corresponding secretary'⁵. He undertook the role of main ecclesial preacher in both in- and out-door oratory. Late in 1861, it was decided by the ecclesia to produce 'a complete course of lectures in exhibition of the whole system of the truth.'⁶ This course of lectures, numbering twelve in all, was designed and delivered by Roberts himself - the first on Sunday 1 December 1861, the last on 16 February 1862. Later in 1862, at a 'tea-meeting', at The Roberts's lodgings, of those who had heard this course of lectures, the suggestion was put forward that the lectures should be published. As a result of nationwide correspondence to 'all the friends we knew in sundry parts' carried out by Jane Roberts, a first edition of 1,000 copies of the Twelve Lectures was produced by G. and J. Brooke of Westgate, Huddersfield. An immediate need was registered, and a second edition produced within 1862!

This book of Twelve Lectures on the Teaching of the Bible in relation to the Faiths of Christendom was later⁷ amended ... to which are added Five Additional Lectures, on The Devil, Judgment to Come, The Promises to the Fathers, The Covenant with David and The Signs of the Times. Finally, it was developed into eighteen lectures

-
1. Roberts, MDAMW, pp. 143-4. This especially related to George Dowie's followers and those Scots ecclesias which sympathised with them. For details on the scant attention paid to Thomas's second visit to Britain in 1862 see Norrie, Early History, ii. 63.
 2. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 144.
 3. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 135ff.
 4. Cited in Roberts, MDAMW, p. 136.
 5. See Glossary.
 6. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 138.
 7. By the fifth edition (1869).

and retitled Christendom Astray: or, Popular Theology (both in Faith and Practice) shown to be Unscriptural; and the True Nature of the Ancient Apostolic Faith Exhibited in Eighteen Lectures. As such, Christendom Astray, as it became known, acted as 'an ecclesiastical bombshell',¹ became a standard Christadelphian doctrinal reference book, rivalling Elpis Israel itself, and was later attacked with vigour by A.J. Pollock in his pamphlet produced after Roberts's death, entitled Christadelphianism Astray from the Bible.² Christmas Evans reported that the Twelve Lectures were being used as a 'statement of faith' by ecclesias in north-eastern England, such as Jarrow and Newcastle, in the absence of any other generally accepted credal formulation, as early as 1866.³

Viewed against the perspective of these events, Thomas's suggestion of 1862 that an inter-ecclesial magazine be started, that it be based in Birmingham, and that its editor be Robert Roberts,⁴ seemed obviously likely to succeed. Thomas acknowledged that he was impressed by the Twelve Lectures.⁵ Moreover, at Roberts's recommendation⁶ Thomas stayed at the Roberts's house at the start of his tour of Britain in 1862. By that point, his opinion of Roberts was set. It is likely, and Collyer and others recorded it as a fact,⁷ that Thomas, on his tour, advised the brethren in

1. See I. Collyer, Robert Roberts, p. 29.
2. Pollock's attack (1930) on Christendom Astray was only one of many on Roberts, and only one of several on that particular work. Others criticising it included Revd. J.P. Barnett of Swansea, John Blann's Christadelphianism Astray (London, 1898) and Revd. C. Clemance's Christadelphianism Exposed (Nottingham, 1872). Pollock's pamphlet was, in turn, attacked by C.C. Walker in Christadelphianism Briefly Defended by Scripture, (1934).
3. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 30-31. Evans in fact referred to Christendom Astray being published as early as 1866. It was not so published until seventeen years later. Whilst the Twelve Lectures had been rewritten and renamed Christendom Astray by 1883, the Twelve Lectures, issued in pamphlet form in 1862, 1863, 1865 and 1867, had, by 1869, been issued in book form. All these processes witnessed a growing desire for credal rectitude on the part of Roberts, whose Christendom Astray was eventually a virtual textbook for the movement.
4. See I. Collyer, Robert Roberts, pp. 30-32, 52.
5. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 31.
6. Roberts, MDAMW, p. 144: 'Halifax would naturally be first on the list of places to be visited, as it is nearer to Liverpool (your place of landing) by 100 miles than any other place where there is an ecclesia.'
7. I. Collyer, Robert Roberts, p. 31. Also in TC, vii (1870), 186-191. Thomas himself, reviewing his three visits, made comments along similar lines - see p.34, chapter I, above.

Britain of his views concerning a British Christadelphian magazine, and the name of the most outstanding candidate for the editorship. Considering the esteem in which Thomas was held at that juncture by the majority¹ of Baptised Believers, it is unlikely that many would have dissented from his opinion.

It is interesting that, in the first generation of Christadelphians after Thomas, there was a number of journalists of an able, if not distinguished ilk. Besides Roberts, there were J.J. Hadley,² chief reporter of the Birmingham Post, destined to become a leader of the Suffolk Street (or New Street) faction after 1885, Dr. James Hastie Stoddart, editor in succession to Professor Jack, of The Glasgow Herald from 1875 to 1887, William Norrie, chief reporter on the Caledonian Mercury in the 1860s, Alick Mowatt, chief reporter of The Glasgow Herald, Charles Mackley of Burslem, a reporter on the Staffordsbire Sentinel³ and J.W. Thirtle, also of the Staffordsbire Sentinel,⁴ later to splinter off over the Inspiration controversy towards Ashcroft and The Expositor group. All these,⁵ pre-1885, stood square on the Thomas tradition; all were capable popularisera of Thomasite views; all were men of some means - able to find time to prepare talks and travel nationwide to deliver them; all were young, enthusiastic men in this early post-disorganisation, pre-schizoidly internecine period stretching from 1864 to 1885, when the Christadelphian Body was small, keen, organised, cohesive, fresh and pungent.

Both Thomas and Roberts were men of ability, besides drive, and they pushed themselves unsparingly in pursuance of their evangelism. In one very important respect, however, Thomas and Roberts differed markedly. Thomas had come to the view that unanimity had to be real if it was to be at all worthwhile - contrived ecumenism was anathema to him. Thus, he concentrated on persuasion rather than cajolery

1. The Dowieites were the only real exception.
2. J.J. Hadley (1842-1912) - see ch. V below, p. 213ff, for more detailed biographical information on Hadley.
3. The report of Mackley's conversion by Thirtle occurred in TC, xix (1882) in the April issue.
4. The report of Thirtle's conversion was in TC, xii (1875), June.
5. W. Norrie would certainly have excepted Stoddart and Mowatt. His view was that they only gained promotion as journalists upon lapsing as Christadelphians, referring to them as having 'bartered away their spiritual birthright', Early History, ii, 174-175.

to win converts to his views. Roberts, on the other hand, possibly because of his journalist's organising skill, tended to think of the Christadelphian movement as a unit of organisation. Thus, if it were threatened from within, his reaction, under pressure, would be instinctive - to preserve the organisation at all costs, by whatever means. This distinction goes some way towards explaining how the Christadelphian movement came to be founded under John Thomas and how it came to be split under Robert Roberts, within fourteen years of Thomas's death.

(b) ROBERTS'S ORGANISATIONAL WRITINGS (1853-1897)

In 1853, the year of his baptism, when he was aged only fourteen, Roberts produced a booklet which was to influence the minds and habits of Christadelphians for generations,¹ namely The Bible Companion, or Bible Readings Table, by following which the Old Testament was read once and the New Testament twice a year. The Bible Companion was a practical concomitant of the Christadelphian view of the full inspiration of the Scriptures and a means whereby they hoped to be able 'to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.'² The influence of this booklet indicated not only the massive dominance which Roberts and his views came to exercise over the organisation of the Christadelphian Body, but also the maturity of this fourteen year old boy - for the idea he then had for reading the Bible has never been superceded within the community, despite the mooted of alternative methods of regularly reading the Scriptures.³

Pre-eminent amongst Roberts's organisational writings stood the Twelve Lectures and the Ambassador. The details of these works

-
1. One writer, W. Moseley in The Sin of my Soul (Vancouver 1942), commented that Christadelphians exalted the Bible Companion system of reading the Bible to a religious rite in itself.
 2. I Peter iii. 15.
 3. The Bible Companion system is incorporated in the ALS Diary which most Christadelphian households possess. The Testimony magazine's readings table, which appeared in vol. xlv (1974) to vol. xlv (1975), was never taken up on any scale by Christadelphians.

have been considered elsewhere.¹ Apart from the considerable, indeed overwhelming, organisational sway Roberts held over the Christadelphian body because of his strong position as editor of The Christadelphian magazine, Roberts contributed to the organisation of the brotherhood by the production of a series of rule books: The Declaration, the Ecclesial Guide, the Constitution of the Birmingham Ecclesia and, finally, A Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Christadelphian Ecclesias², written in 1883. The Guide was the most important of these documents in that it came last, and represented Roberts's most mature views on the issues relating to ecclesial organisation and in that it was circulated, not simply within Birmingham, but throughout the brotherhood as a whole. Because it was written in 1883, and therefore preceded the Temperance Hall - Suffolk Street division, its concepts formed the basis of ecclesial operations for both fellowships in the period of division (1885-1957).

The Guide was an interesting document about which three important observations ought to be made. First, it set out the ground-rules for ecclesial practice.³ Second, it made a disclaimer about being anything other than an advisory document. On page 39, Roberts, in summarising his system of ecclesial management, described it as a 'system of rules embodying the foregoing suggestions.' On page 19, Brother F.R. Shuttleworth, then assistant editor of The Christadelphian, was the author of rules concerning the conduct of meetings of the ecclesia. These, again, were described as 'suggestions' and were couched in terms of alternative procedures to be adopted in certain contingencies - 'unwise way' and 'wise way' - rather than blunt 'rights' and 'wrongs'. Thirdly, a number of aspects of The Guide

-
1. The significance of the Twelve Lectures is considered on pp. 141-2 above; and the importance of Roberts's editorship of the Ambassador and Christadelphian in ch. III above and ch. V below seriatim.
 2. Indications exist, for example, in section 30 of the Guide, that Brother F.R. Shuttleworth, then assistant editor to Roberts, contributed to the planning of the Guide.
 3. See Appendix I for a summary of these ground-rules. Even the 'System of Rules' summarising the philosophy behind the Guide ran to 38 points and embodied minutiae such as the exact order of service to be followed and the length of time to be taken over its various parts.

were punctilious to the point of being fussy - for example, the length of the exhortations at the Breaking of Bread was 'not to exceed half an hour'¹ in one case and a quarter of an hour in the other; praying 'immediately after the first singing', without an intervening Bible reading, was described as 'unwise';² it was considered unwise to make fraternal announcements 'towards the end of the meeting',³ as it was to pray 'in the morning for the success of the evening meeting' because it was necessary that 'prayer refer to its own occasion. Ask in the evening that the evening meeting have a blessing.'⁴ All these details in a work which claimed only to be suggestions about how even the important aspects of the ecclesia should be managed carried with them the implication that, despite the disclaimer, the author of the work intended to be taken very seriously indeed, if not obeyed implicitly. This move potentially altered the organisational basis of Christadelphianism from what it had been in William Norrie's youth in the late 1840s, and for a considerable period beyond, in terms of the introduction of all the paraphernalia of a Western mixed-economy democracy;⁵ ecclesial officers had a nineteenth century nomenclature applied to them, not a first century one;⁶ a detailed credal formulation had been

1. Roberts, Guide, p. 41.

2. Roberts, Guide, p. 20.

3. Roberts, Guide, p. 21.

4. Roberts, Guide, p. 23.

5. For example, elections, majority votes, political constitutions and procedural rules, trustees, extraordinary meetings, quorums and methods of dealing with dissent within one ecclesia and between several ecclesias. For details see the Guide, sections 8, 13, 16, 20-24, 32, 35-38, 40-42.

6. William Norrie, Early History, ii. 9-10, 179-80, referred to Biblical nomenclature, such as bishops, elders, deacons, evangelists and scribes, being proposed and sometimes adopted by ecclesial officers. See also chapter III above, p. 123, and the Aberdeen Ecclesial Minutes (1844-74), pp. 28, 108. The old-style officers were renamed recording brethren (or secretaries), treasurers, arranging brethren and presidents.

adopted;¹ certain spiritual misdemeanours were made statutory offences, involving fixed penalties;² all religious activities were subsumed within the ecclesial umbrella.³ All that was required, for

-
1. Thomas had disliked such notions. Whilst, towards the end of his life, he developed a certain degree of ambivalence on the subject, saying in moderate welcome of one summary of Christadelphian beliefs 'We need no creed aside from the Bible, nor do I understand you as offering the "Synopsis" as one, but you give it as a synopsis only.' (TC, iv (1867), 161), at the same time he felt 'I should object decidedly even to a Scriptural creed being made a substitute for the Word. This would be a wrong use of a synopsis or creed and very much to be reprobated.' (TC, iv (1867), 160). During Thomas's lifetime any 'creeds' which were produced were either brief, recitations of Scriptural passages, anonymous, or a combination of all three. Although, after his death, Roberts was quick to publish in the 'Scraps from Dr. Thomas's Papers' series an item entitled 'Certain Rules, Non-conformity to which Makes Salvation Impossible', it is clear that these rules were brief (there were eight in all), were purely citations from the Bible, and were not considered by Thomas himself as worthy of publication in his lifetime. (TC, ix (1872), 150-151). See Appendix L. The non-existence of an official creed in the 1860s led to Roberts's Twelve Lectures being used as a substitute creed - see p. 142 above, footnote 3.
 2. Such matters included absence from the Breaking of Bread meeting and marriage with a non-Christadelphian. Whilst such matters had never been regarded favourably, under the jurisdiction of the Guide the rules became sharply focused: 'None shall, even for a legitimate cause, absent themselves from the assembly, without first stating, in writing, to be addressed to the Recording Brother, the cause or causes of impending separation; and asking the same to be considered, with a view to their removal, at a special meeting, at which they consent to be present and take part.' (Rule 33 in the 'System of Rules' from the Guide, p. 43). 'Marriage with the alien is an offence... When offence takes place in the matter, the ecclesia shall signify their disapproval ... after which the brother or sister shall only retail their places among the brethren by admitting their offence.' (Rule 36 in the 'System of Rules' from the Guide, p. 43-44.)
 3. First generation Christadelphians worked in small groups at best, often in personal isolation. In these circumstances procedural rules were an unnecessary luxury and a dispensable disposer of precious time. As numbers grew, the circumstances altered. Perhaps tighter regulation was necessary. It certainly made organisation easier, but at the cost of stultifying individual effort.

the organisational potential of the 1883 Guide to be realised, was the issue of a dictat to the effect that what had previously been 'suggestions' were transformed into inflexible legislation. This change occurred after only two years, following the Inspiration controversy.

In 1897, Roberts produced a booklet of 35 pages called the Help to the Memory of History. This, he said, was 'not so much an attempt to convey a knowledge of history, as to afford a ready means of recalling it to memory.'¹ As such, it was clearly connected to two principal Christadelphian concepts dating from the late 1830s - that the Bible was the Word of God and that the Book of the Revelation was to be understood in a continuous historical sense, as expounded in Eureka.² The first of these concepts led to the view that Biblical chronology, right from the earliest chapters of Genesis was a divinely inspired record of authentic history. Thus, the first of Roberts's historical tables began in 4,000 B.C. with Adam and Eve and proceeded to record events as far on in time as 3,100 B.C. when Adam died aged 930, and Enoch, aged 365, was 'translated'. For the same reason many other characters, then largely regarded by the Christian world as mythological, were documented by Roberts as real people, requiring the record of their dates of birth and decease. Dr. Thomas's exposition of the Apocalypse led Christadelphians to be interested in historical dates after the completion of the New Testament, too, and Roberts's tables documented the 2,000 years of the Common Era, ending with the twenty-eighth table of events in the nineteenth century, reproduced in Table 5 below.

However, this short leaflet of Roberts's did more than underpin the Christadelphian ideas of inspiration and interpretation, it illustrated the whole philosophical mode of thought which the

-
1. Roberts, Help to the Memory of History, (Birmingham, 1897), Preface, p. v.
 2. Those Christadelphians who challenged this view - George Dowie and, later, S.P. Clementson, Harry Whittaker and Peter Watkins - did not command as huge a following as traditionalists who followed John Thomas.

AFTER CHRIST.

THE OLD FADING AWAY—PREPARATION FOR THE NEW.

Napoleon proclaimed French Emperor	1804
German Emperor elects to emperor of Austria	1804
England acquires Cape Town	1804
Napoleon's retreat from Moscow	1812
Napoleon deposed and banished to St. Helena, from which he escapes	1815
Napoleon's overthrow at Waterloo	1815
England acquires Ceylon and loses Hanover	1815
Greece becomes independent of Turkey	1830
Russia makes successful war on Turkey	1828
The hope of Israel re-discovered by Dr. Thomas	1847
Revolution in many European countries	1848
Election of Napoleon's nephew as Emperor of the French (Napoleon III., as the political incarnation of the "three frogs" — man of the French people)—excites three wars: Crimean war, 1854; Austro-Sardinian war, 1859; and the Pagan war, 1867, resulting in armistice of the nations	1854
Commencement of Paley's colonization by Jews	1846
Seizure of Sicily and Naples by Garibaldi and their annexation to the Italian crown	1861
Civil War in the United States (Federal-Confederate)	1861
Danish war, 1864; Prusso-Austrian war	1867
Downfall of the Temporal power of the Pope	1867
Overthrow of France by Prussia, and re-establishment of the German empire under Prussia	1870
Russia makes war on Turkey and still further reduces her domain	1877
The English fleet bombards Alexandria, and England commences the occupation of Egypt	1882
Great extension of English empire in South Africa	1870
Outbreak of Turkish atrocities against the Armenians	1895
War between Greece and Turkey, and re-opening of the Eastern Question	1897
Great celebration in England on Queen Victoria completing the 60th year of her reign	1897

TABLE 5¹

CELEBRATION—Byron, Scott, Tennyson, Carlyle, Wordsworth, Darwin, Gladstone, Harriet, Huxley, and many others.

IMPROVEMENTS—Railways, telegraphs, steamboats, the telephane, penicillin, passenger elevators, electric lighting and electric fans, photography, great extension of the newspaper press and general literature, sewing-machine, and countless applications of machinery to manufactures.

PROPHETIC—The six vials (Rev. xvi.): Euphrates drying: the world preparing for "war of the great day of God Almighty"; Log and the lions of Turahiah getting into position.

Sixth Thousand Years of the World's History.

NINETEENTH CENTURY A.D.

movement adopted. Thomas, Roberts and their brethren wholly rejected Platonism in all its ramifications² - the immortality of the soul, esoteric priesthoods, gnosticism, cabalism, the Trinity - none of these had any appeal for the Christadelphian. Everything had to be demonstrable, clear, real, tangible, actual history, and revealed - not mysterious - truth. In all these ways, they stood foursquare

1. Roberts, Help to the Memory of History, p. 35, Table 28.
2. See Eureka, i. 798-9, where Thomas equated the Christian Gnostic 'admirers of Plato' with those who were 'commingling the speculations, or fables, of heathenism with the doctrine of the apostles'. Of them he said 'The Gnostics commenced their department of the Nikolaitan University, with the dogma first enunciated by the serpent in the Eden-Paradise... "Ye shall die no death", said he...'

with rationalists and empiricists. In all these ways, too, they reversed the trends of their times, when beliefs which had once seemed clear-cut were being questioned. Much of the state of shock in British theology in the second half of the nineteenth century was due to the late, sudden impact of continental Higher Criticism on its teachings.¹ To those Christians who felt most disturbed and upset by these events, Christadelphian definiteness had a real appeal.

Those names and events Roberts felt were 'epochal' were printed in bold type in the Historical Help. The sources of Roberts's facts, and his selection of 'epochal' events, were somewhat idiosyncratic. Table 5 above illustrates the unusualness of Roberts's assortment of historically significant events. The sources were Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Gibbon, Ancient History by Rollin, History of the Jews by Millman, Ecclesiastical History by Milner, Modern Europe by Russell, Essays and History of England by McCaulay, Frederick and French Revolution by Thomas Carlyle, History of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Empire by M. Thiers. Whilst this bibliographic list was impressive, it was less full than Thomas's sources, used in the analysis of the historical past and its interpretation in prophecy. In addition to writers such as Gibbon and Rollin cited by Roberts, Thomas referred to the Early Christian Fathers from Justin Martyr to Augustine, to Roman writers, and to theologians, historians and proto-archaeologists from the Reformation to the nineteenth century, including Luther, Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, Mosheim, Vitringa, Whiston, Layard and Tregelles.²

-
1. See Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, p. 530, who cited examples of travellers, such as Thackeray, being shocked by the theological liberalism and criticism of the Continent.
 2. See chapter II above, pp. 46, 55, 56 and 57, for example.

(c) ROBERTS'S EXHORTATIONAL WRITINGS (1867-1898)

Roberts's written output was prolific;¹ and a good deal of his writing was of an exhortational² nature. It is not, therefore, surprising that, in the five year period 1879-1884, Roberts produced two volumes of collected exhortations. These two volumes, known as Seasons of Comfort³ and Further Seasons of Comfort⁴, contained one hundred and four separate exhortational addresses. Whilst the sociological profile of Christadelphia sometimes presented⁵ is inappropriate to the period currently under study in that it underestimates the community's educational prowess, it is true that there were many brethren in the 1870s and 1880s who found the written products of more educated brethren an invaluable aid. There are, indeed, indications that, just as Roberts's Twelve Lectures had been used as a creed in north-eastern England at an early stage,⁶ so his exhortations were used as an intellectual crutch. Roberts himself said of them: 'These addresses have principally been found useful by brethren and sisters in isolation, or meeting in small companies, where no one has been able to speak to the edification of the rest.'⁷ A leading Christadelphian commented⁸ that a number of exhortations he had heard, even in the period after World War II, were précis of Roberts's writings.

On examining the exhortations, the facet which is most prominent is the wide range of their subject matter. A degree of this would have been predictable, given Christadelphian principles. For example, the fact that whole exhortations should be devoted to Baruch and to the Rechabites from the prophecy of Jeremiah, and that

1. Chapter III above, p. 122, contains details of Roberts's engagements which show that, because he had to speak frequently at the same venues, he was obliged to produce a prodigious amount of new material throughout his term as editor of The Ambassador and The Christadelphian (1864-1898).

2. See Glossary.

3. Published on 31 October 1879.

4. Published on 10 December 1884, in Birmingham.

5. For example, B.R. Wilson's view in Sects and Society (London 1961), pp. 300-305.

6. See above p. 142.

7. Roberts, Further Seasons of Comfort, p. iv.

8. In verbal evidence to the author of this thesis.

mention should be made as readily of Solomon or Enoch or Abel or Habakkuk or Zechariah as of Christ or the Apostles, is easy to comprehend, given Christadelphian views on the inspiration of the whole of the Scriptures. However, Roberts went further and dug exhortational material out of the most unpromising of spiritual quarries. For example, he used 'types'¹ from the Law of Moses², prophecy in the Book of Daniel, the history of the Roman Catholic Church, a survey of astronomy³, rather technical aspects of theology, such as the precise definition of inspiration and 'Election versus Calvinism'⁴, and polemics on the Immortality of the Soul, the Trinity and Hell⁵ as bases upon which to found exhortation. It was not only the range of Roberts's source material that was diverse, but also the objects to which he applied those moral principles. These included the treatment of women in Victorian society, metaphysics, the established clergy, success in business, the payment of church rates and a general assessment of both British and American society. Nineteenth century evangelical usage of Biblical texts provided many examples of Biblical material being made to bear a message which in fact arose from another source. The suggestion that this was true of his own work would have been anathema to Roberts; he was, he believed, simply giving due weight to every inspired particle of the Scriptures, many of which were glossed over by Christendom at large.

By 1884,⁶ if not before, it was clear that Roberts was aware of the efficacy of his remarks in plucking Christadelphian heart-strings. It may have been a conscious decision of his to play on these strings a tune to his liking. Whatever the explanation, his exhortations did include references to ecclesiastical polity such as the wisdom of the formation of large ecclesias, the rules of

1. See Glossary.

2. See Roberts, Further Seasons of Comfort, p. 130.

3. 'The logic of the Stars' formed address LXI in Further Seasons of Comfort, pp. 37-42.

4. This was the title of exhortation LXXXVII in Further Seasons of Comfort, pp. 162-167.

5. See exhortation III in Seasons of Comfort, pp. 10-14.

6. See p. 151 above.

fellowship, the need to abide by his own Bible Companion, the position of sisters in the ecclesia and the strategically-placed¹ exhortation against partial inspiration.

Of over six hundred exhortations prepared for delivery and over three hundred reprinted in The Christadelphian, few remain in print apart from the more than one hundred which were preserved in Seasons of Comfort and Further Seasons of Comfort. A Call to Arms, Roberts's exhortation from Ephesians vi, was deemed so powerful by Brother Viner Hall of Sutton Coldfield that it was resuscitated and reprinted by him in 1922, complete with illustration. The Letters to the Elect of God reappeared via a similar route in 1970, thanks to Brother H.P. Mansfield of Australia, editor of Logos Publications. Logos's reason for reprinting this leaflet would stem, in part, from the Letters' departure from the purely pastoral exhortation into the more expositional pastures of the exegesis of Ezekiel xl-xlviii, the division of the Holy Land under the Messiah and the examination of the architecture of Ezekiel's Temple, along with publication of the Temple plans by the architect brother, Henry Sulley.² The original purpose in Roberts's Letters and the 'time of trouble' he had in mind is easy to discern when one discovers that the dates of their writing were between January and May 1885. In the fifth of these letters, 'A Letter to My Enemies', Roberts left no-one in any doubt who these were. Just as there had been hard-line followers of Alexander Campbell who would not forgive Dr. Thomas in the 1830s for differing from Campbell, so there had been camp-followers of George Dowie and Edward Turney in the 1860s and 1870s who had not forgiven Roberts for opposing them and so, in May 1885, there were followers of Chamberlin and Ashcroft who would not forgive the line he must take against his erring brethren. Roberts answered his

1. This was published in December 1884, in Further Seasons of Comfort.

2. Henry Sulley's book The Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy was in preparation in 1885; Brother Sulley and Brother Kirkland were very pro-Roberts and urged Ashcroft to sort things out with the editor; Nottingham, where Sulley lived, was a hotbed of dissention, and support for Sulley from Roberts would, no doubt, be welcome. These are possible reasons for Roberts's excursus into Ezekiel.

enemies:

'You blame me for breaking with them... the "thin end of the wedge" is proverbially the thing to be resisted. They promulgated principles with respect to the character of the Scriptures of truth that logically took away the basis of our co-operation... The judgement seat will presently settle the matter.'¹

(d) ROBERTS'S STUDIES IN PROPHECIC FULFILMENT (1877-1895)

Roberts wrote many titles which could be subsumed under this heading,² but none of them had either the length or originality of Thomas's magnum opus Eureka, and some of them were simply rewritings of ideas originated by Dr. Thomas.³ Although Roberts researched for some prophetic studies, possibly his main value within the Christadelphian body in terms of facilitating its understanding of prophecy was to act as populariser of Thomas's lengthy and complex views for those who found the originals beyond their grasp. Thomas himself had been familiar with a wide range of historians. He quoted freely and lengthily from them, producing, in Eureka, a three-volume study of the book of the Revelation, extending to 2,000 pages. Early Baptised Believers such as Isaac Clissett of Heckmondwike⁴ must have found such writings difficult to comprehend. Roberts's much shorter and simpler summary would have been a relief to such men.⁵ Indeed, in the preface to the first edition of the Thirteen Lectures, a summary in one tenth of the number of words, of Eureka, Roberts stated that:

'the publication of this volume of lectures may serve to draw attention to that work, and to prepare the general reader for the understanding of it. In fact, it

-
1. Roberts, Letters to the Elect of God in a Time of Trouble, (Thornbury, Victoria, Australia n.d.; originally published in 1885), pp. 86-7.
 2. Prophecy and the Eastern Question (1877); Apocalyptic Lectures (1880); England and Egypt (1882); Daniel (1897); Coming Events in the East (n.d.).
 3. Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse and Daniel fall readily into this category, owing much to Eureka and The Exposition of Daniel respectively.
 4. See ch. I, p. 26, above.
 5. This is not to underestimate Roberts's own academic knowledge of Early Church history (see below, pp. 156-7 and 164-5).

may prove a stepping-stone to Eureka. Some find Eureka too deep and diffuse to allow of their grasping it with the limited time for study at their disposal. It was to meet the wants of this class in Birmingham that this course of lectures was delivered.¹

The most famous of Roberts's prophetic studies, both within the Christadelphian movement and beyond, was his fifty-four page Prophecy and the Eastern Question. However, the fame of this work was due to its contemporary interest - it was written in 1877 - and in the notice ex-Prime Minister Gladstone took of it, rather than to its intrinsic merit.² Roberts's Daniel is very brief and consists of an eleven page justification for considering Daniel's prophecy as authentic, and a further eleven pages in which Roberts expounded the eleventh chapter of Daniel on a verse-by-verse basis. In this second section, Roberts's views were almost identical with those set out by Thomas over twenty years earlier. The Thirteen Lectures was 190 pages long, and was an exposition of the Apocalypse on a chapter-by-chapter basis adopting, as did Thomas in Eureka, a 'Continuous Historical' or 'Chronological' approach to the analysis of the Revelation. Roberts's dependence on Thomas's earlier work was overtly recognised by the author in the quotation from the preface to the Thirteen Lectures referred to above. From time to time Roberts felt obliged to remind his readers of this fact. For example, in expounding Revelation xi, Roberts said:

'The very development of the truth³ itself is traceable to the forces set in motion by [the effects of the French Revolution]: but I won't go into that. If you desire to comprehend these things in their details, I would advise you to read Eureka, in which there is a great mine of instruction.'⁴

Again, in his exposition of chapter i of Revelation, Roberts said:

'If you have never read Eureka, I advise you to do it, at least once. I know it is a large book. It is inaccessible to most of you as regards price, and its bulk is beyond the leisure allowed you from your

1. Roberts, Thirteen Lectures, p. iii

2. For details of this episode, see ch. III above, pp. 107-109.

3. See Glossary.

4. Roberts, Thirteen Lectures, p. 108.

various occupations... Such cases I hope in some measure to benefit by an attempt at simple exposition in the course of lectures now commenced.¹

In the second group of prophetic studies - that is, those where Roberts produced his own research - a number of general observations can be made. Firstly, the subjects Roberts chose were designed to attract readers from a non-Christadelphian, as well as a Christadelphian, readership, because all his themes were of topical concern to his contemporaries. His topics were the Eastern Question, which he dealt with in 1877 at the time of the Bulgarian Massacre by the Turks; England and Egypt, written in 1882, when Britain occupied Egypt and the Sudan; and Coming Events in the East. In all this, Roberts's penchant for a good journalistic story was revealed. Also, whilst it is true that he did range over a number of prophetic books in studies for which he himself did research, there was still a preponderance of references to the Apocryphical books of Daniel and the Revelation so dear to John Thomas.² However, there were other aspects to Roberts's writings. For example, the belief in the complete inspiration of the Bible, and the persistent reading of its pages, according to the Bible Companion, and the consequent comparison of its books together into an expositional pastiche inevitably produced a style of exposition in a Christadelphian writer like Roberts such that, even where he was writing on a specifically prophetic theme, and in a short booklet only fifty-four pages in length, he made 200 Biblical references to 31 different Bible books.³ A further aspect was Roberts's genuine erudition and wide reading in ancient history, which was illustrated in Prophecy and the Eastern

-
1. Roberts, Thirteen Lectures, p. 12.
 2. For example, in Prophecy and the Eastern Question, Roberts made 28 references to the book of Daniel, 28 to Revelation, 9 to Zechariah, 21 to Ezekiel, 34 to Isaiah, 9 to Jeremiah. In addition, considerable sections of the booklet were actual expositions of parts of Daniel's prophecy and the Revelation.
 3. This was Prophecy and the Eastern Question, (London and Birmingham 1897; originally published in 1877).

Question by references to Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, to the archaeology of south-west England and to writers about ancient history such as the Revd. Dr. Vincent¹, Lysons², M. Moore, and a report to the Royal Dublin Society.

In the three leaflets The Return of Christ to the Earth³, Is Christ Very Near?⁴ and Christ on Earth Again⁵, Roberts expressed a degree of independence from Thomas, and a deal of blunt literalism. His independence from Thomas was expressed in the idea that events in Italy in 1866-8, involving the termination of the temporal power of the Papacy, were equatable with the prediction of Daniel vii of the ending of the power of the 'little horn' to make war and oppress, and were an evident sign of the nearness of the return of Christ⁶; in his interpretation of international war preparations in the period 1848-81 as fulfilments of Ezekiel xxxviii, Daniel xi, Joel iii and Revelation xi, and as portents of the Second Coming; and, in at least one place, in an overt statement: 'Dr. Thomas... though mistaken (as he allowed might be the case) in the date of their commencement' was right, he felt, in principle.⁷ His literalism was expressed by his

-
1. William Vincent (1739-1815) studied at Cambridge from 1757, gaining a doctorate in divinity in 1776. He was headmaster of Westminster School from 1788-1802, and was dean of Westminster (1802-1815). He was a noted educationalist and the author of poetry, sermons and treatises on ancient geography, such as Voyage of Nearchus (1797) and The Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients in the Indian Ocean (1807). He was co-author of the latter with Carsten Niebuhr and, also, a contributor to some of Gibbon's works.
 2. Samuel Lysons (1806-1877) studied at Exeter College, Oxford, becoming M.A. and F.S.A. He was a philanthropist who founded schools at his own expense. He was eventually made rural dean of Gloucester. He was the author of both historical and Biblical works, including Conjectures concerning the Identity of the Patriarch Job, his Family, the Time in which he Lived and the Locality of the Land of Uz (Oxford 1832).
 3. Published in 1881 in Birmingham.
 4. Published in 1895 in Birmingham.
 5. Published in 1892 in Birmingham.
 6. Roberts, Is Christ Very Near?, p.30, referring to Daniel vii.8, 21.
 7. Roberts, The Town Hall Lectures, (Birmingham 1881), pp. 17-28.

interpretation of Ezekiel xl-xlvi as involving the restoration of a mortal line of priests, side by side with a saintly genre, to pre-
side over the reintroduction of the law of Moses in the Kingdom of
God.¹ Roberts would have none of nebulosity, none of metaphor, all
his eggs were in literalism's basket.

In detail, the Return of Christ was a forty-page write-up of
a series of four lectures delivered by Roberts in Birmingham Town
Hall in 1881. In the first, second and fourth of these talks,
Roberts introduced no new element: he trod well-worn Thomasite argu-
ments in contending that Christ would return, that he would return
to establish a political world empire, and that material to this
was a plan of personal salvation available in his own day. The third
lecture, entitled 'The Signs that He is Near', was the longest of
the four, and saw Roberts chancing his arm with a mixture of jour-
nalism and prophecy in putting current events into an overall proph-
etic scheme. Many of his arguments were taken from Apocalyptic
literature, notably Daniel vii and xi and Revelation xi, with some
details from Ezekiel xxxvii and xxxviii, Jeremiah xxx and Joel iii.

Is Christ Very Near? was the last prophetic work Roberts wrote.
In 1895, Roberts had enough confidence to subtitle his booklet
'Reasons for expecting "the day of his coming" before the close of
the nineteenth century'. The 68-page booklet was wholly devoted to
an analysis of Daniel vii-xii and the 1260, 1290 and 1335 'day'²
timetables of prophetic parameter contained therein. Roberts con-
sidered the plausibility of a variety of starting dates to calcu-
late from, and came down in favour of a starting date in the early
sixth century A.D., and for a double-barrelled fulfilment of the
three time-periods. The end product of this reasoning he summarised
as follows:

-
1. Roberts, Christ on Earth Again, pp. 32-33.
 2. In common with Dr. Thomas and most other Christadelphian writers,
Roberts adopted a general day-for-a-year interpretation of proph-
etic time-periods. He made this overtly plain in The Return
of Christ to the Earth, part 3, pp. 17-29.

'We should then have the following progressive series of developments leading like a slow sunrise from the darkness of Papal night to the brightness of eternal day:-

1. (First ending of the 1260.) A.D. 1790-3. The overturn of dominant ecclesiasticism in Europe, and the rousing of human life in all departments from the lethargy of ages.
2. (Thirty years further on, or the first ending of the 1290.) A.D. 1820-23. The commencement of the process of sapping and mining the Ottoman incubus which lay hugely and obstructively on the Eastern countries and the Holy Land, barring the way to the re-appearance of the Kingdom of David, for which the time had now come near.
3. (Forty-five years further on: First ending of the 1335, and second of the 1260.) A.D. 1866-8. The suppression of the last vestige of Papal coercive power in the taking away of the temporal sovereignty of the so-called "Head of the Church", reducing the Destroyer of the Saints to the dimensions of a mere ecclesiastic, dependent on the goodwill of his votaries for continued existence.
4. (Second ending of the 1290.) A.D. 1896-8. Appearing of "the Prophet like unto Moses" to enter into conflict with the spiritual Egypt of the latter day: first meeting his brother Aaron (or gathering the Saints), and then making demands upon the governments which are never withdrawn or reduced till the power of Heaven lays low the haughtiness of the earth in the destruction of all their armies.
5. (Second ending of the 1335.) A.D. 1941-3. The end of all opposition and the full commencement of the reign of Christ and Saints over all the earth.¹

In Christ on Earth Again, his penultimate prophetic study written in 1892, Roberts went into detail about the nature of the kingdom as re-established and the effect of the Return on the Land of Promise, the Constitution, the Priesthood, the Kingship, the Jews, the New Temple, the New Worship and the sacrificial sacrament in the New Era. In all this, his bluff literalism and realism were made abundantly clear. The citation from Christ on Earth Again below makes plain Roberts's mode of reconciling exegetical difficulties and the reality which divine things in general, and the Kingdom of God not least, had for him:

1. Roberts, Is Christ Very Near?, p. 30.

'The idea that Ezekiel's statements concerning the sons of Zadok are inconsistent with the fact of their being immortal, is based upon a misleading appearance in the wording of this part of the vision. It is supposed that they are referred to in the regulations concerning marriage (44:22), which are rightly held to be inapplicable to those who shall "neither marry nor be given in marriage" (Luke 20:35). The supposition appears to be favoured by the absence of a distinctly marked transition from one order to the other in the discourse concerning the priests, after the introduction of the parenthetic allusion to the sons of Zadok. Verse 17, by the use of the pronoun "they", appears to speak of the sons of Zadok, who are spoken of in verse 17; but that it is not the sons of Zadok but the Levites that are spoken of in verse 17 and after, is manifest from verse 19, that they shall "go forth into the outer court to the people", which is the office of the Levites, and not of the sons of Zadok, as is plainly stated in verse 11. "They (the Levites) shall slay the burnt offering, and the sacrifice for the people and they shall stand before them to minister unto them, because they ministered unto them before their idols." But as for the sons of Zadok, "They shall come near to me to minister unto me" (verse 15).

'Consequently, we are compelled to understand the Levites to be spoken of in the verses in question, which describe duties applicable only to them. That these verses should appear to apply to the sons of Zadok is due to the introduction of a parenthesis at verse 15, which is not formally indicated. Verses 14 and 17 must be read consecutively to get the true sense: "But I will make them (the Levites) keepers of the charge of the house for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein... And it shall come to pass that when they enter in at the gates of the inner court (for they shall have charge at the gates of the house, see verse 11) they shall be clothed with linen garments... They shall not gird themselves with anything causing sweat, ... neither shall they take for wives a widow," etc.

'The second (mortal) grade of priests being in question in these verses, there is none of the difficulty of sweat and marriage that many naturally feel on the first reading. If the question be asked why the distinction was not more clearly indicated, we can only say it is not the only case where the pronoun is employed with reference to sense merely, and not as the equivalent of a grammatical antecedent. In a similar case in Matthew, Mr. Stern, the Jew,¹ contended it was Simon the

1. This was a reference to Roberts's debate 'Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?' with Louis Stern in October 1871.

Cyrenian that was crucified and not Jesus (see Matt. 27:32,36). This was, of course, a perverse contention, because the context entirely excludes such an absurdity. Still it had the same ground - the absence of a clear association of the pronoun. In this other case, the context shows the right application of the pronoun, and relieves the subject of a difficulty that is only seeming.¹

As the above illustrations indicate, Roberts spared his readers nothing in terms of the thoroughness of his Biblical citations and the closeness of his reasoning. Yet, the vast number of works he produced, and the number of reprintings and new editions published, indicated a readership hungry for what might appear to a modern reader turgid material.

(e) ROBERTS'S SKILLS IN DEBATE (1866-1894)

Roberts's defence of the Thomasite interpretation of the Bible, was very wide-ranging, involving a non-Christian group,² churches of different Christian persuasions³ and people, like Charles Bradlaugh, of no religious persuasion at all.⁴

It was in this field that Roberts shone. Thomas, too, was involved in controversy, but much of his was of the written sort and occupied protracted periods of time.⁵ Little is extant of the small amount of debating in which Thomas became involved. Such as is available today exists because Roberts saw fit to edit and reprint it. For example, the debate between Thomas and John S. Watt on the existence of an inherently immortal soul in 1834 was reprinted and edited by Roberts, after Thomas's death in 1871.⁶ Roberts, however, was the Christadelphian's David who felt he could take on and vanquish the Goliaths of Establishment Religion and Irreligion.

1. Roberts, Christ on Earth Again, pp. 32-33.

2. Mr. Louis Stern, a Jew.

3. These included Free Church ministers and laymen, British Israelites, the Protestant Layman's Association and Campbellites.

4. The 'Bradlaugh Debate' of 1876 on the issue 'Is the Bible Divine?' was a mammoth affair, even by Roberts's standards, involving six nights in all, three at Leicester and three in Birmingham.

5. See Appendix E.

6. It was known as The Apostacy Unveiled.

Roberts first represented the Christadelphians as a debater in April 1866 when opposing Revd. R.C. Nightingale over the issue of the immortality of the soul. He was then at the tender age of twenty-seven. Almost thirty years later he was still involved in debate, although a tired man and close to the end of his life.

Some of the debates in which Roberts took part included other Christadelphians - particularly in later years. Approximately half a dozen of Roberts's debates - with Nightingale, Stern, Bradlaugh, Hine and Brother J.J. Andrew are quite well known in Christadelphian circles because written records of them were produced at the time, because of the relative eminence of some Roberts's antagonists and the unusualness of others. However, Roberts actually engaged in very many more debates than this and only because his most earnest endeavours to solicit an opponent failed is it true that he was not involved in even more than the records show. Overleaf, in Table 5, is a timetable of the debates in which Roberts took part between when he began to edit the Ambassador in July 1864 and his death in September 1898. Roberts's involvement in debate also encouraged many of his less astute brethren to follow his example - for example, R.R. Stainforth in 1885 and J.J. Andrew in 1889.

Roberts possessed three sorts of qualities which marked him as an outstanding polemicist - doggedness, patience and thorough acquaintance with the material with which he was dealing. These qualities were true of his entire debating career, but can best be illustrated from the three debates he undertook at the height of his powers in the 1870s against Stern, Bradlaugh and Hine. His doggedness in terms of the Hine debate was shown by virtue of the fact that there was a debate at all!¹ Similarly, against Bradlaugh,² a vast correspondence of 23 letters, occupying February, March and April 1876, was required before the debate, its time, subject, date, place and other details were settled. Doggedness inside the debating chamber is perhaps illustrated by Roberts's debates which

-
1. For details of the way in which Roberts contrived to trap Hine into debate see p. 112-3, above.
 2. For an evaluation of the differing tactics employed by the antagonists in this debate see chapter III, p. 106, above; chapter IV, p. 164, below and Appendix K.

TABLE 6

RELIGIOUS DEBATES INVOLVING ROBERT ROBERTS¹

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME OF OPPONENT</u>	<u>OPPONENT'S RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE</u>	<u>TOPIC(S) OF DEBATE(S)</u>
1866	April 10-11	Revd. R.C. Nightingale	Minister of Free Church	Has Man an Immortal Soul?
1869	March 9-19	Revd. J. Campbell	Congregationalist	Immortality of the Soul; Nature of Hell; Nature of the Millenium; Justification of Christadelphianism; Nature of God; Sin and the Devil.
1869	Nov. 1-3	Mr. T. Knight	Christian Layman	Immortality of the Soul; The Devil.
1871	Oct. 17-19	Mr. L. Stern	Orthodox Jew	Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?
1874	March 17-18 24-25	Mr. H.A. Long	Orange Order Missionary	The Nature of Man; and The Locality of the Future Reward.
1875	Feb.	Revd. C. Clemanace	Congregationalist	Issues raised in <u>Christadelphianism Exposed.</u>
1876	June 13-22	Mr. C. Bradlaugh, M.P.	Humanist	Is the <u>Bible</u> Divine?
1879	April 21-23	Mr. E. Hine	British Israelite	Are Englishmen Israelites?
1880	April	Mr. T. Mitchell	Protestant Layman's Association	Immortality of the Soul.
1884	May 21-22	Mr. S. Jackson	Campbellite	Nature of the Fulfilment of the Promises to Abraham.
1894	April 3-4	Bro. J.J. Andrew	Christadelphian	Resurrectional Responsibility.

1. These figures conceal a wide range of debates which Roberts attempted to arrange - including one with Archbishop Tait, the then Archbishop of Canterbury in 1876 - which were called off by his opponents, and also a wide range of religious debates in which Christadelphians other than Roberts participated in the period 1864-1885. For details of this information, see Appendix J.

adopted the Socratic method. The examples in Appendix K concerning the validity of the New Testament documents, taken from Roberts's debates with Bradlaugh and J.J. Andrew, are good illustrations of this quality. Roberts's patience was exemplified in these same debates too - for example, in the 1871 debate with the Birmingham Orthodox Jew, Louis Stern. Some of Stern's comments were apparently designed to outrage his opponent. Perhaps the choicest of these was in reply to a question from Roberts about the Holy Spirit. Stern replied: 'My friend asked me if I believed in ruacha kodush? Of course. The word ruach is "wind", and kodush is "holy"; and if a holy wind sometimes causes virgins to conceive, I should advise all respectable ladies to keep out of the draught.'¹ These remarks appear, from the extant record of the debate², to have left Roberts unruffled. Stern's observations did not have the same absence of effect on the audience listening to the debate - one gentleman, a Jew converted to orthodox Christianity, objected that Stern was blaspheming and, rising from his seat, 'attempted to obtain a hearing for himself, repeatedly exclaiming, in an excited manner, that he would not allow blasphemy in his presence. The Chairman refused to hear him, and after some minutes' confusion the gentleman was prevailed upon to sit down.'³ In the Bradlaugh debate, although Roberts was faced by a very keen mind, and lost many debating points to his opponent, his erudition and frustration with Bradlaugh's nit-picking style won Roberts the admiration of many - including, as he confessed in later years,⁴ that of Bradlaugh himself. During the course of the debate, which was entitled 'Is the Bible Divine?', both in set-speeches and during the course of extempore replies to off-the-cuff questions Roberts revealed an intimate acquaintance with Josephus, Tertullian, Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Origen, Eusebius, Pliny (the Younger), Tacitus, Tatianus, Theophilus of Antioch, Athenagoras, Papias of Hieropolis, Polycarp, Ignatius, Hermas, Irenaeus, Mileto

-
1. Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? A Three Nights' Discussion, pp. 60-61.
 2. Since the transcript was published jointly by the antagonists, according to its preface, there is a likelihood that the record it presented was not over-partisan.
 3. Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah? A Three Nights' Discussion, p. 60.
 4. TC, xx (1883), 28.

and Barnabas, as well as of contemporary writers on apostolic documents such as William Hone,¹ Joseph² and Isaac Milner, Johann Mosheim,³ J.S. Reid⁴ and Dr. E.C. Brewer.⁵ In the Hine debate of 1879, Roberts's performance was so convincing that some of his opponent's supporters openly conceded defeat.⁶

A number of Roberts's works took the shape of written debates. Amongst these can be mentioned A Defence of the Faith Proclaimed in Ancient Times⁷ and Everlasting Punishments not Eternal Torments.⁸ The first of these was a rejoinder to the criticisms made of Roberts's book Twelve Lectures by the Revd. J.P. Barnett. Roberts's booklet ran to more than ninety pages and consisted of charging Revd. Barnett with failing to read the fourth of Roberts's lectures completely, although Mr. Barnett had commented on it,⁹ with failure

1. William Hone (1780-1842). Although Hone's wide range of writings mainly included works of satire and of general historical interest, he did have a very strict fundamental upbringing. Of the few overtly theological titles attributed to him, the best known were Sermons to Asses, to Doctors of Divinity etc. (1819), The Form of Prayer (1820) and The Apochryphal New Testament (1820).
2. Joseph Milner (1744-1797). From a background of poverty in West Yorkshire, Milner proceeded, with difficulty, via Leeds Grammar School to Catharine Hall, Cambridge and then on to a career as schoolteacher, Headmaster of Hull Grammar School and evangelical. He is mainly noted, as a writer, for his The History of the Church of Christ in five volumes (1794-7), with volumes 4 and 5 published posthumously.
3. Johann Mosheim wrote a Church History, the translation of which Reid edited in 1848.
4. James Seaton Reid (1798-1851). Reid was educated in Ireland and at Glasgow University, being appointed honorary D.D. in 1833, and professor of church history at Glasgow from 1841. He was famous as a Church historian, producing the History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. G.W. Sprott wrote of his history that its chief merits were 'acuteness, painstaking research, impartiality, and a clearness of statement... his work has taken a permanent place in literature.'
5. Ebenezer C. Brewer (1810-1897), LL.D. (Cambridge 1840), was a man of wide reading whose works could best be described as 'miscellaneous'. His two main works from a religious viewpoint were his Dictionary of Phrase and Fable (London 1870) and A Dictionary of Miracles (London 1884). Other writings included A Guide to the Scientific Knowledge of Things Familiar (1848), A Political, Social, and Literary History of France (1863) and Etymological and Pronouncing Dictionary of Difficult Words (1882).
6. See ch. III above, p. 113, for the assessments in a variety of periodicals of Roberts's performance in this debate.
7. This was published in 1874.
8. This was written in 1871 as a reply to three letters written by Revd. Dr. J. Angus - see p. 92 above.
9. Roberts, A Defence, p. 88.

of counter-argument¹ and with falling prey to heresy himself. Surveying Revd. Barnett's main reasons for objecting to the teachings of Christadelphianism, Roberts made the following observations, which formed a representative illustration of the style he used, which mixed respect with truculence, and in which he charged Barnett with neo-gnosticism:

'Mr. Barnett opens the battle with a great but perfectly harmless boom. He declares the Christadelphian system to be "unmitigated materialism". This is intended for a staggering blow, and with orthodox readers, it will have a good whacking sound with it; but in truth, the detonation is in the cracking arm that delivers the blow, and does not proceed from the object aimed at, which, in truth, is never struck. Why does Mr. Barnett speak of "unmitigated materialism?" Because the Christadelphians believe in a real God, a real spirit of God, and real men, and because they expect a real immortality by a reconstruction of the real body from the grave; a real return of Christ from heaven, a real restoration of the Jews, a real kingdom on earth. If this is "unmitigated materialism", what does Mr. Barnett make of the events that have already transpired in relation to God's purpose in the earth? Are they not, one and all, by Mr. Barnett's rule, "unmitigated materialism?" Was not man formed of substance from the ground? Did not the condemnation passed upon him for his disobedience, have reference to that substance? ("Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.") Did not the plan of salvation take the form of sending a real Saviour with flesh and blood? Was not Jesus born in Bethlehem a real baby? Did he not grow, as other children grow, to a real manhood? Was he not baptised with real water by John in the Jordan? Did he not, with "unmitigated materialism" eat and drink with publicans and sinners, and ride in fulfilment of the prophecy, on the back of a real ass? Was he not podily taken by the emissaries of Jewish authority, and ignominiously arrayed in a real purple robe, and subjected to the indignity of a real mock crown of thorns? Was he

1. "'This doctrine", he says, which limits the resurrection to the responsible, and immortality to the righteous, "proclaims humanity to be a gigantic failure, utterly discreditable to its author!"... On which side, we ask, in the name of eternal goodness, does the greatest failure of beneficence lie?... on the side of that view which represents the wicked as a vapour of the moment, destined to disappear before the rising of the Sun of righteousness... or that which teaches their destiny to be an endless existence of agony and infamy?' Roberts, A Defence (2nd edn.), p. 89.

not impaled on a materialistic cross? Did he not have real nails driven through his blessed hands and feet? Was there not a convulsion of real nature at his decease? a rending of rocks, a darkening of the atmosphere, a dividing of the veil of the temple? Did not Joseph of Arimathea, with a spirit of "unmitigated materialism", beg the body from Pilate, wrap it in clean linen, and lay it in a rock-hewn sepulchre, sealing the door of the sepulchre with a huge stone? Did not angels descend, and with "unmitigated materialism" roll the stone away, bring the captive to life, and strike terror into the Roman guard? Did not Jesus actually reappear to his disciples, and again with "unmitigated materialism", eat fish and honeycomb, and submit to be handled in proof of his reality, and, finally, did he not bodily ascend to heaven after leaving a promise that he would return?

The fact is, all that God has ever done has been what Mr. Barnett derides as "unmitigated materialism;" and, as we shall see, all that He ever will do, will be of the same character: for there is no change with God. It would indeed be strange if it were otherwise. Mr. Barnett asks us to believe that all He has done so far has been "unmitigated materialism", but that all that is to come is to be - what? It would be difficult to find words to describe it - immaterial, shadowy, ghostly, unreal, nothingistic: and, for this, we have merely Mr. Barnett's ipse dixit. Of course, Mr. Barnett has plenty of company, but a myriad-belief of a lie will not turn it into the truth. God has promised all the things that Christadelphians are looking for, and for that reason, guided by the light of the past, we expect them, and will never be frightened from our belief of them by shouts of "unmitigated materialism".

For what does this cry mean? It means nothing to the point, nothing that can determine the question, but a mere shout to create prejudice and drive the reader off the scent. "Materialism!" Whence comes the cry, and whence the idea it contains? From the schools. It is an invention of the speculator, a figment of metaphysics, a grimace of learning by which Mr. Barnett seeks to frown down the "foolishness" which it was the glory of Paul to proclaim. Conventionally, it represents the theory that denies the existence of God, disbelieves in anything not palpable to the senses, declares resurrection impossible, and inculcates sensuousness. But Mr. Barnett cannot use it in this sense in applying to a system which believes in God, puts faith in the Spirit and things unseen, teaches a resurrection, and maintains the connection between present action and future destiny. He, therefore, ought not to use it at all. It is misleading. Materialism is not the synonym of Christadelphianism. Materialism is one of the half-

winged systems of the age which imperfect study has given birth to; it recognises a part of truth, but does not take all things into account. Christadelphianism is not pledged to any system. It takes a view as broad as the sweep of inspiration, believing all things that are true whether represented in scientific systems or not. Doing this, it regards man as a creature of the ground and all things as real, but ignores not the subtle and invisible relations of things disclosed by revelation and experience.'

The second written debate was a reply to three letters written in the Christian World by Revd. Dr. J. Angus, President of the Baptist College, London, and dealing with the nature of divine sanctions against the wicked. Dr. Angus's letters were eventually published in pamphlet form for circulation. For these reasons of wide circulation, plus the fact that many Christadelphian converts came from the Baptist field, Roberts decided to deal with the issue thoroughly. His dissection and analysis of Dr. Angus's material from the three letters ran to 36 pages of about octavo size and to at least five editions. His reply could be termed an effective answer to Dr. Angus. In considering the second letter, Roberts examined the Biblical teaching concerning the life in men and in beasts and found it to diverge from that of Dr. Angus.

THE LIFE OF MAN AND BEAST

'Passing over his sensible remarks on the fallacy of attempting to settle the controversy by preconceived generalisation, we come to his remarks on the term psyche, the Greek term most commonly translated "life" and "soul" in the New Testament; and here are observable a randomness and inaccuracy somewhat surprising in a man of Dr. Angus's scholarly reputation, yet not surprising, when his task in hand is considered - that of proving the unprovable - nay, worse - establishing the explodable - giving the colour of truth to falsehood. "The notion", says he, "that the life (psyche) of the brutes is the same as the life (psyche) in man, is not so much humbling as degrading." This, as a matter of sentiment, is not worth much notice; but it may not be beside the question to ask why the notion should be considered degrading, that man exists by the power that upholds the brute creation? Has not one God made all? Are not "in His hand the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind"? (Job xii. 10). Has He not "sent forth His

1. Roberts, A Defence (2nd edn.), pp. 7-9.

spirit" to create "things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts" (Ps. civ. 30, 25) equally with man, who shares the same breath with them? (Eccles. iii. 20). Is there not one pervading spirit-presence in creation, from which we cannot flee? (Ps. cxxxix. 7-8). One universal God, in whom all things live and move and have their being? (Acts xvii. 28). These questions cannot be answered in the negative, even by Dr. Angus. They are the testimony of revelation; the declaration of experience. In one atmosphere do man and beast exist. By a common law of respiration and nutrition is their being maintained, and in the interruption of either, they die together. Indeed, one is as much a marvel of creative power, as the other. The unpalatableness of their generic identity is due, not to reason or Scripture, but to the abnormal sentiments of superiority created by the pagan doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

"But", says Dr. Angus, "it is largely contradicted by all nations." Little stress can be laid on this fact. All nations would have contradicted the rotundity of the earth a few centuries back. "All nations" are the aggregation of much ignorance in relation to things divine and "scientific", especially the former. Paul pronounced them ignorant in his day (Acts xvii. 30; xiv. 16; Eph. iv. 17-18), and they have not much improved since. Their verdict, therefore, on such a question is of little consequence, except as indicating the direction in which the truth is probably not to be found.

"Then", says Dr. Angus, "it is contradicted by Scripture itself." This is more to the point, but not true. Dr. Angus does not produce a single proof that it is contradicted by Scripture. We will produce indubitable evidence that it is not only not contradicted by Scripture, but expressly taught by Scripture. The evidence is in a nutshell. Thus every term employed in the Hebrew original to define the element of life or spirit in man, is similarly employed with respect to the animals.

Nephesh chayiah, the breath of life (or lives), is said to have been breathed into Adam (Gen. iii. 7). The same Nephesh chayiah is also said to have been in the animals that went with Noah into the ark (Gen. vii. 15), and in the nostrils of the cattle, &c., drowned by the flood (verses 21-22).

Nephesh, separately spoken of in connection with man (Gen. ix. 5. - "I will require the life [nephesh] of man"), is also recognised in connection with animals - "Every creature wherein is life" (nephesh) - (Gen. i. 30).

Chayiah also occurs similarly in connection with both. As to man, Gen. ii. 7, already quoted, is an example. As to the animals, the term occurs eight times in the following six verses: Gen. i. 20, 21, 24, 25, 28, 30, and more than

a hundred times throughout the Scriptures.

'Ruach (spirit), declared to be in man (Job xxxii. 8), is also imputed to the beasts (Ps. civ. 29), translated "breath". On this point, it is expressly affirmed that they all have ONE ruach (Eccles. iii. 19), a statement confirmed by an observation in Job xxxiv. 14: "If He (God) gather unto Himself His ruach (spirit) and His neshamah (breath), ALL FLESH shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust."

'Neshamah (spirit or breath): Applied to man - "My breath (neshamah) is in me" (Job xxvii. 3); applied to animals - "All (cattle, beasts, creeping things), in whose nostrils was the breath (neshamah) of life, died."

'These comprehend all the terms in Hebrew translated spirit, soul, life, &c., and occur, as we have seen, in connection with both man and animals - a circumstance not unintelligible in view of the fact that both exist by means of the process (breathing) expressed by the roots from which, with one exception, these terms are derived. A circumstance, too, which constitutes the proof we promised to produce.

'As to the New Testament - being a record of operations and sayings exclusively related to men dealing with one relation only - there was not the same scope for illustrating (incidentally) the common relation of man and beast to the nephesh, neshamah, ruach, &c., of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the psyche, zoe, and pneuma of the Greek. There is, however, some indication even here. In Rev. viii. 9, psyche is directly attributed to the fishes of the sea; and by implication, Paul (in I Cor. xiv. 7) makes the distinction between inanimate and living things to consist in the latter having psyche. Zoe is employed in I Pet. iii. 10, as the translation of the Hebrew word chayah, and as chayah is about as often employed in the Old Testament, in connection with beasts, as with men, it follows that zoe, its Greek equivalent, might be so used when the subject demands it. In the same way is a parallel established between the Greek pneuma and the Hebrew ruach. In all New Testament quotations from the Hebrew, ruach is rendered by pneuma; so that whatever is affirmable of the one is affirmable of the other.

'Dr. Angus denies that psyche is ever used in the New Testament, "of the life of brutes". This is a mistake, as we have seen, and as he virtually acknowledges in the pamphlet edition of his letters, in which "never in the New" is changed to "only once in the New". He, however, admits that its Hebrew equivalent is sometimes so used in the Old Testament, but treats the fact very lightly, which is surprising where an important controversy is made to turn on the meaning of words, as determined by their use. It naturally occurs to common sense, to think that if the term can be applied to brutes with-

out carrying the idea of immortality with it, it need not necessarily carry that idea with it when applied to man; and that if the doctrine contended for by Dr. Angus, is to be established, it must be proved by something more convincing than the mere use of a doubtful term. But Dr. Angus disregards this self-evident reflection, and takes the whole matter for granted. This, no doubt, simplifies his task, but so far as thinking men are concerned, it deprives the argument of any value.¹

Whatever the views of theologians or linguists on the detailed semantics, it is clear to the lay observer that Roberts's remarks give the appearance of being clear, incisive and thoroughly researched. He obviously deserved John Bright's assessment of him as being a writer of no mean ability.

(f) ROBERTS'S BIBLICAL EXEGESIS (1871-1898)

With the exception of prophetic works, where Roberts largely followed in Thomas's footsteps,² there were surprisingly few expositional studies by Roberts, when one considers the impact he had upon Christadelphianism in Britain. Perhaps here Roberts's dependence upon Thomas is clearest and his meaning when referring to Thomas as the 'apple of his eye' most evident.³

Of the Robertsian exegetical forays which did take place, quite a number were intended as defences of the ramparts of Christadelphia against insurgent ideas, rather than as the positive, out-going exegesis of Bible teaching. For example, Everlasting Punishment, not Eternal Torments, written in 1871, was a reply to Revd. Dr. Angus,⁴ Man Mortal⁵ was a reply to F.W. Grant's Life and Immortality,⁶ The Evil One⁷ attacked the Revised Version translation of Matthew vi. 13, and both The Inspiration of the Bible and Christ on Earth Again, written in 1885 and 1892 respectively, were produced at times when controversy within Christadelphia on closely related issues had

1. Roberts, Everlasting Punishment, not Eternal Torments, pp. 25-6.

2. See pp. 154-156 above.

3. See ch. V below, p. 210.

4. Revd. Dr. J. Angus was president of the Baptist College, London. See p. 92 above.

5. Published in 1875, in Birmingham.

6. This work is discussed in detail on pp. 176-177 below.

7. Published in 1881, in Birmingham.

raised its head.

Of the few exceptions to this rule, three works were written in the early 1880s, two of which were composed on adjacent themes. In The Sect Everywhere Spoken Against, written in about 1880, Roberts explained in a nutshell what differentiated Christadelphianism from the rest of Christendom. He began his sixteen page booklet by explaining the nature of the Christadelphian faith, and that its beliefs were not those of a new sect but of Apostolic faith, now restored. He went on to explain that Christadelphianism had its opponents in the same way that Truth had always been evil spoken of, and that the true grounds of this opposition were two-fold:

'They affirm two things which the Old Testament and the New Testament separately sustain... the Christadelphians affirm that mankind is separated from God... that is, they are all under one condemnation... the second thing which... if possible, gives more offence than the first, is this, that God has appointed a way by which man may return from his alienated position ... this "way"... may be considered narrow; it may be stigmatised unpharitable; but it cannot be proved unscriptural...'

Roberts then proceeded to outline his reasons for believing in the Christadelphian view of fallen man, and in the exclusiveness of the Gospel as he understood it. The two adjacent works were The Ways of Providence² and The Visible Hand of God.³ These works were not, as their titles might have suggested, evangelical tracts on the moral goodness of God, despite a world of illness, pain and death. They were detailed analyses of the history of Israel indicating that, in the long run, God's judgements proved correct, irrespective of the superficial appearance of circumstances during the time before the dénouement of the stories concerned. Although these works were not evangelical tracts in the sense outlined, Roberts did wish moral implications to be drawn from these history lessons: 'The ways of God are not confined to the age of miracle... They are extant today in the sphere both of politics and private

1. Roberts, The Sect Everywhere Spoken Against, pp. 4-5.
 2. Published in 1881, in Birmingham.
 3. Published in 1883, in Birmingham.

life. It is a great help in the battle of life to be able to discern them aright.¹ However, the crutch of reassurance Roberts sought to provide was one using the objective examination of the facts of Israel's history - tangible, analysable, dependable - not the heart-warming emotionalisms of a popular evangelical preacher, which, he felt, encouraged temporarily but proved insubstantial when pitted against the rigours of a whole lifetime.

It was possibly with the idea in mind of redressing the imbalance in his writings towards a more solid expositional legacy² that Roberts finished, in his very last year, his longest exegetical work, The Law of Moses, in 1898, and that, after his decease, C.C. Walker³ completed a work Roberts had begun⁴ and went on to write up in toto a book which claimed to have been based on Roberts's ideas,⁵ citing Roberts's directive to do this work in the 'Introductory'.

Despite the regard in which early Christadelphians from Dr. Thomas's time onwards held total baptism of adult believers, only a tiny amount of Roberts's writing was devoted to this issue - namely the small 32-page The Good Confession. Considering the brevity of the booklet, the cursory nature of its treatment of baptism is even more surprising. The preface was designed to defend the practice, well-established amongst orthodox Christadelphians by 1865,⁶ of 'examining'

-
1. Roberts, The Ways of Providence, p. 326.
 2. There is some evidence that future generations, besides his own, regarded Roberts as a mentor. His works, for example, were studied at Bible Classes. The Cannock Ecclesial Minutes for 1907-8 record that Roberts's The Ways of Providence, The Visible Hand of God and The Law of Moses be read at Bible Class, and that The Ministry of the Prophets be purchased 'for the use of the brethren' - Business meeting (29/6/1908), Cannock Ecclesial Minutes.
 3. Roberts's successor as editor of The Christadelphian, 1898-1937.
 4. The Ministry of the Prophets, (B'ham 1898).
 5. The Old Testament Doctrine of Eternal Life, (B'ham 1906).
 6. Norrie, Early history, ii. 274-6, printed an extract from such an interview, dating from the summer of 1865. Norrie indicated that, in the mid-1860s, there was some attempt to tighten up the requirements of candidates for baptism. Of issues like the nature of the resurrection body and the personality of the devil, Norrie said 'I interposed at this stage, and suggested that [Brother Greenwood] should not put this question, as not being one of the first principles... It was not necessary that one should know every detail respecting the Kingdom and its King before immersion; as, after baptism, we were required to "add to our faith knowledge", and to "grow in knowledge".' - Norrie, Early History, ii. 274-6.

candidates for immersion against 'some who hold that examination is altogether unscriptural, and that it is a practice savouring of priestly arrogance'.¹ Further, of the 172 questions and their answers which the two characters in Roberts's story exchange, Socrates-fashion, in the pages of the pamphlet, not all are devoted to baptism as such - the promises to Abraham, the nature of the Kingdom of God, the nature of Adamic disobedience and many other issues are dealt with. Thus, even in the only one of Roberts's writings designed to refer to baptism, baptism was not dealt with in any detail. This is very surprising when one considers that only a small proportion of Christadelphian converts came from denominations such as Strict Baptists and Campbellites, where adult immersion was already, prior to any contact between Christadelphianism and the convert-to-be, regarded as a sine qua non.²

Although respect for the intellectual skills of his opponents was a mark of Roberts's attitude on occasion - for example, with reference to F.W. Grant's book on Annihilationism³ - at other times he could be very scathing and dismissive. An example of the latter response was Roberts's 26-page booklet entitled Scepticism Answered. Roberts had written a book in 1883 on the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, entitled The Trial. This was opposed, early in the following year, in an anonymous pamphlet entitled A Reply to 'The Trial'. Roberts, whilst appearing content to preserve the anonymity of the author, revealed a sufficient number of clues to his identity for a calculation to be made regarding the circumstances in which the booklet was written. 'S.W.', apparently, was a former Christadelphian - a brother S. Williams - who left the movement because he found it impossible to reconcile himself to the death of his wife, who deceased despite his earnest prayers that she might be spared. Roberts dealt with Brother Williams in a cavalier manner:

-
1. Roberts, The Good Confession, p.5.
 2. A larger number converted to Christadelphianism from the Baptists than from the two denominations mentioned above. However, the baptismal requirements amongst Baptists were not quite so stringent as amongst the Strict Baptists and Campbellites during this period. For the exact details of numbers converted see ch. VII below, pp. 284, 286.
 3. See TC, ix (1872), pp. 78-80 et seq., and ch. III above, p. 103n.

'The pamphlet is no reply to The Trial at all (as I shall show), the argument of which its writer has failed to grasp. It has further to be remarked that the writer of the pamphlet does not come forward under circumstances affording the best guarantee of fitness to deal with the subject. He has hurriedly embraced other men's views on a subject which is of a multiplex and far-reaching character, and requires long and patient balancing of many things, which no man can even see all of (not to speak of weighing them) without years of reading and study. He rushes into print as an adversary of Christ within a few months of having broken bread in obedience to his commandment. He has simply, in a strong fit of predisposition, embraced the conclusions of Strauss, Taylor, and Co., at second hand, and re-hashed their vulgar diatribes with a forwardness and haste that is not decent in a man professing to feel sorrow at parting with the glorious hope of eternal life.'

Indeed, emphasising his point, Roberts went on:

'Were I to consider only the intrinsic merits of the pamphlet... I should take no notice of it. But I have to consider those who place their hope in Christ, some of whom might not be able at a glance to see through the thrice-stale sophistries... and who might be needlessly discomfited in the reading of them.'

In The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, a sixteen-page leaflet written in 1883, Roberts dealt with twelve different aspects of the evidence for, importance of and consequences resulting from the Resurrection. However, unlike a variety of other fundamentalist works written on a similar topic³ with the Higher Critical views of Strauss, Renan, Baur, Wellhausen, W.R. Smith, Ritschl, and similar scholars in mind, Roberts's evidence was all internal to the Bible and designed to indicate its self-consistency. For example, his section 'Many other witnesses' dealt not with evidence from first century secular writers, but with that provided by Matthew xxvii. 63, Acts v. 32 and I Corinthians xv. 30. Towards the end of his booklet, Roberts made oblique reference to a Mr. Suffield who opposed the concept of the Resurrection. The probable

-
1. Roberts, Scepticism Answered, Preface, p. iii.
 2. Roberts, Scepticism Answered, Preface, p. iii.
 3. For example, Frank Morison's Who Moved the Stone? (London 1930).

explanation for the brevity with which Roberts treated this issue, and the importance he placed upon Biblical internal consistency was that he had written a book the previous year¹ in which the historical arguments in support of the Resurrection of Christ had been given full ventilation. In 1884, Roberts, in answering criticisms of The Trial, produced a pamphlet-length résumé of the arguments in The Trial.² This résumé consisted of twenty propositions. The twenty propositions locked tightly together into a closely-reasoned argument. Amongst the most convincingly-put were proposition eight in which Roberts argued that the apostles believed the Resurrection since they were subsequently subject 'to every condition of self-denial in the deliverance of their testimony'; proposition eleven where he postulated that the New Testament was too much part of the fabric of first century history to be extracted at this late date as bogus;³ proposition three where he stated that Christians, subsequent to the time of the apostles, professed Christ only at the cost of 'grave temporal consequences', and would therefore require to be thoroughly convinced about the account of the Resurrection; and proposition seventeen where he argued that, as a seal upon the truth of the Resurrection, the New Testament Church was given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that 'the presence of miraculous power in the Christian community of the first century, is proved by the circumstantial arguments of Paul's epistles.'

In 1875, a work was written against Christadelphians by the American theologian F.W. Grant. Its title, Life and Immortality: the Scripture Doctrine Briefly Considered in Relation to the Current Errors of Annihilationists, concealed the fact that it was almost wholly concerned with Christadelphianism. It was, in Roberts's opinion, 'the strongest thing yet published in the way of attack

-
1. Roberts, The Trial, written in 1882.
 2. This was entitled Scepticism Answered, written in May 1884.
 3. 'The New Testament could not have been palmed upon the early Christian community as the writings of the apostles, if they were not the writings of the apostles: because the New Testament is mainly composed of letters addressed by an apostle, not to persons but to churches, and these churches would have denounced writings representing to have been addressed to them if they had not been so addressed.' Roberts, Scepticism Answered, p.2.

on the truth as advocated by Christadelphians. It is clear, subtle, and temperate, with just sufficient animus to give spice to the reading.¹ Roberts soon produced a book 103 pages in length in answer to it, entitled Man Mortal. Roberts's argument was thorough and forceful. In particular, the passages where he defended Christadelphian views on the Soul, the Fall and the state of the dead illustrated Roberts's power as a popular expositor. Unusually for him, he relied quite heavily on linguistic arguments. Roberts opposed Mr. Grant, who was attempting to defend the orthodox position, by saying that if, as Mr. Grant maintained, animals besides men have souls, and that the animals are not immortal 'it follows it is not proving man immortal to prove he has a soul.'² Roberts felt he had caught Grant out with more self-contradiction in the latter's description of the state of the blessed. Having admitted the truth of Luke xx. 36 (that the redeemed would be 'equal unto the angels'), Grant stated that 'the angels are spirits never souls'.³ This, Roberts noted, proved the non-immortality of the soul: 'therefore, the redeemed, when saved, being equal to the angels, are not souls but spirits, having parted with that which constituted their inferiority.'⁴ On other occasions, Roberts noticed what he believed were mistakes in Grant's linguistics,⁵ in his Bible knowledge and exegesis. In the final chapter, he cited instances where Grant accused Christadelphians of 'undermining... the authority of Scripture', having 'a new translation specially to teach their views', denying the resurrection, the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.⁶ All of these, Roberts was able easily to show, were basic errors of comprehension. Roberts's book was written in such a well-argued, puckish way as to be thoroughly readable irrespective of the subject matter, and it well illustrated his journalistic skills of analysis, précis and the selection of the purple passage.

-
1. Roberts, Man Mortal, Preface, p. 3, and reiterated in the last chapter, p. 102.
 2. Roberts, Man Mortal, p. 39.
 3. Roberts, Man Mortal, p. 42.
 4. Roberts, Man Mortal, p. 42.
 5. For example, Roberts, Man Mortal, pp. 39-40.
 6. Roberts, Man Mortal, pp. 102-3.

(g) ROBERTS'S CONTRIBUTION AS A JOURNALIST (1864-1898)

Roberts started a number of magazines - The Ambassador in July 1864 and the Good Company in 1890, which were both monthly magazines catering for baptised Christadelphians, and in 1872 a Christadelphian Children's Magazine. The Good Company, which ended its short life in 1894, was intended as a family magazine, diluting detailed exposition to a level easily assimilable by most members of the average Christadelphian family, even those who did not consider themselves students of the Word in their own right, whilst retaining enough 'meat of the Word' to justify their existence in a community 'holy unto the LORD'. The Christadelphian Children's Magazine had two lives!¹ However, it was The Ambassador (or The Christadelphian from 1869) to which Roberts contributed most and from which the Christadelphian community gained most. In round terms, these magazines produced 16,000 pages in the thirty-five years during which Roberts was editor. Of that vast amount he himself wrote perhaps one quarter, but he was largely responsible - operating for the bulk of the period without an assistant editor - for the remaining three-quarters. His style was often racy and exciting, usually interesting, compelling reading and rarely dull!²

Several books which appeared later in Roberts's career were compilations from articles he originally produced as editor of the Ambassador, Christadelphian or other magazines. Amongst these were Answers to Bible Questions, which was originally part of the 'Answers to Correspondents' section of the magazine, Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work, My Days and My Ways and Supposed Inconsistencies, which was an eight-page leaflet of 'Answers to Correspondents' vintage.

If one were to make an overall criticism of Roberts's usually excellent qualities as a journalist, it would be that, on occasion, he allowed himself to become overexerted and that, in such stressful circumstances, he made exaggerated statements and other errors of judgement which in normal situations he would have avoided.

-
1. For details of these events, which began in 1872 and 1882, see ch. III above, p. 122.
 2. One notable exception was the occasion when Roberts, pleading pressure of overwork, wrote an article for The Christadelphian purely and simply to fill up the gaps. He apologetically requested that his readers should ignore the material altogether. See TC, xxiv (1887), 180-183.

(h) BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES BY ROBERTS (1864-1894)

Roberts's biographical writings consisted of a travelogue of his journey to the antipodes¹ and a historically very valuable account of his early days as a Christadelphian called My Days and My Ways which he wrote in 1890-94,² along with a history of the early days of Christadelphianism and its pioneer, known as Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work.³ In addition, Roberts produced, in 1890, a biography of Jesus Christ entitled Nazareth Revisited.

A model biography could, perhaps, be said to consist of three major elements: first, the telling of the story of the individual's life thoroughly, but clearly; second, the analysis of this into themes, trends, developments, consistencies and inconsistencies; third, a comparative, or 'foil', section, where the profile of the individual's idiosyncracies is cast into sharper relief by comparison with another figure or figures of similar ilk. In Nazareth Revisited Roberts scored high on the first two of these three elements, as one might expect from a professional journalist. However, whilst he was happy to make full use of the Old Testament prophetic background to fill in biographical gaps in the material afforded by New Testament accounts of the life of Jesus, he rarely referred to extra-Biblical material. In some passages⁴ he actually scorned the use of such material, describing it as 'foolishness'. References to such early material as Origen's writings and the Ebionite gospels were made, as were citations from then modern theologians, not for the purpose of supplementing his matter, but purely to defend

-
1. The Diary of a Voyage to Australia, New Zealand and Other Lands was published in 1896.
 2. In serialised form in the magazine Good Company. This was supplemented, in the 1917 edition, by an account of Roberts's life in the period 1871-1898 compiled by his successor as the editor of The Christadelphian, C.C. Walker.
 3. Two editions were produced of this biography of Dr. Thomas at a very early stage. The first, entitled 'Dr. Thomas and his Mission', began its serialisation in the very first issue of The Ambassador, vol. i (1864), pp. 9-12, and continued over the following two and a half years until February 1867. The book, referred to above, was first published in April 1873.
 4. For example, Roberts, Nazareth Revisited, pp. 76-77.

the Bible from Higher Critical attack regarding apparent discrepancies between the Gospel accounts.

Apart from one gratuitous reference to Simeon bar Koseba (whom he entitled Barchocheba) and passing mention, in the space of six lines, to Napoleon Bonaparte, Charles Dickens, W.E. Gladstone, Walter Scott, Tennyson and Shakespeare, Roberts was silent about comparisons between Jesus Christ and other men. By contrast, Roberts's expositional sections were very fully detailed, the parable of the Sower alone being referred to on 32 pages. Thus, Nazareth Revisited is not biographical material in the normal sense, but a moral tract mediated through a biographical format.

One of the longest biographies Roberts ever wrote was Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work. Originally serialised in The Ambassador, its first edition, stretching to 317 pages, appeared in 1873. After Roberts's death, two further editions were produced, one in 1925 by C.C. Walker, the editor of The Christadelphian, and the other in 1954 by W.H. Boulton.¹ In the original edition, a considerable section of the book, almost 260 pages long, was devoted to the sixteen year period 1834-1850; less than one seventh of that detail was concentrated on the much longer period from 1850 to Thomas's death in 1871. In the earlier period, Thomas's major controversies with the Campbellites took place and the seeds of the Christadelphian movement were sown; in the latter, most of Thomas's theological works were published and the seeds of Christadelphianism came into blossom. This apparent misemphasis of Roberts's, then, would clearly imply that, to him, Thomas's major contribution was in controversy and as a pioneer, rather than in the establishment of the Christadelphian body in either its theological or organisational aspects. All this reads even more oddly when compared with a conclusion that had occurred to Roberts as early as 1862, namely that Thomas's oratorical skills were overrated, and that his real forte lay in the literary field.² If the answer were simply that Roberts produced this biography under pressure, without the opportunity to reflect

1. Boulton, a railwayman, was author of a large number of long historical works on such countries as Persia, Babylon, Palestine, Greece and Rome, and co-author of The Apocalypse and History with W.H. Barker, professor of geography at Southampton and later Head of the Department of Geography at Manchester University.

2. Roberts, MDANW, pp. 155-157.

duly on the perspectives of Thomas's life, it seems odd that he did not rectify these faults between the original publication date and his own death 25 years later. Whatever the explanation was, it left Roberts's major foray into the biographical field a gnarled and twisted oddity.

(i) ROBERTS'S CLASH WITH SOCIALISM (1895)

John Thomas, Robert Roberts, their contemporaries amongst first-generation Christadelphians, and Christadelphian generations since their day steadfastly avoided contact with local or national politics. Nevertheless, in 1894, a work was produced which tempted Roberts into political controversy by involving him in the assessment of then nascent Socialism. The particular work Roberts had in his sights was Merrie England¹ by Robert Blatchford.² Although Blatchford's reputation as a Socialist suffered by dint of his support for the Boer War, he has enjoyed reappraisal in recent historiography.³ A matter of great concern to Blatchford was the 'Broad Church' within the new labour movement in Britain:

'... to the ILP came women and men from the ranks of Tories, Liberals, Radicals, Nonconformists and Marxians ... There were Free-Traders, Home Rulers, Local Optionists, Republicans, Roman Catholics, Salvationists, Church and Chapel-goers and believers in the cosmopolitan brotherhood of the workers.'⁴

By May 1892, Blatchford came to take the practical step against that 'mixed multitude' which he felt diluted the cause of the working man

-
1. This sold 750,000 copies within a year.
 2. Robert Blatchford (1851-1943) was one of the early leaders of British Socialism. He worked in a number of trades, ending his career as a journalist and writer. His most notable works included an autobiography, My Eighty Years (1931), the founding of the socialist weekly Clarion (1891) and Merrie England (1894).
 3. One writer described him as 'one of [the] most colourful and perhaps rather underestimated personalities... of the anti-religious tradition in the nineteenth century labour movement ... Blatchford was a journalist and a propagandist of considerable effect.' See Roger Moore, The Emergence of the Labour Party, 1880-1924, (London 1978), p. 4.
 4. See Moore, op. cit., p. 1.

of establishing, in the Manchester area, an independent Labour party.¹ At first, however, Blatchford contented himself by attacking the Christian trades unionist, or 'lily-livered Methodists' as he referred to them.² In laying about him with caustic words such as 'In such a world as this, friend Christian, a man has no business reading the Bible, singing hymns and attending divine worship. He has not time',³ Blatchford hoped to purify the labour movement of unwanted Christian support. What he did also was to attract to himself the attentions of Robert Roberts.

Robert Roberts appreciated the pungency of Blatchford's arguments in support of Socialism, especially as set out in Merrie England. Roberts produced a reply to Blatchford's arguments. This reply was originally contained in a series of sixpenny pamphlets, of which 140,000 were produced. In 1895 these appeared in collected form under the title of England's Ruin. This work is very useful because it indicates clearly Roberts's attitude to politics in general and to Socialism in particular.

In England's Ruin, Roberts began by wrong-footing Blatchford. Blatchford had spoken disparagingly of the then current economic system because it did not alleviate the sufferings of the poor. Roberts replied on behalf of the poor, speaking of 'our sufferings'. He ended one moving passage with the words 'Mr. Blatchford, I have been in the gutter, and I know.'⁴ Roberts said that, to the rich, the lot of the poor child playing 'with broken crocks and mud pies' in the gutter must seem awful, as must the homes they lived in and the drab clothes they wore. But, continued Roberts, this was how the rich fancied they would feel 'if lifted out of the carriage and set to playing with broken crocks and mud pies in the gutter.'⁵ In terms of food, Roberts replied to Blatchford who had 'ask[ed] God

1. Blatchford's strength within the party grew so that party conferences in 1895 and 1896 sided with him and against Keir Hardie on this issue.
2. R. Moore, op. cit., p. 54.
3. R. Moore, op. cit., p. 4.
4. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 24.
5. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 24.

to strengthen [the poor's] digestion' that 'I can do with things maybe that would make your stomach turn.'¹ By posing as a man of the people and setting himself to answer Blatchford on behalf of the poor, Roberts conjured up a picture of Blatchford as a well-meaning, if middle-class, do-gooder, interfering through ignorance in circumstances beyond his ken.

Blatchford, in Roberts's view, tied himself in knots in his attempt to distinguish between varying levels of legal rectitude, because it was impossible to unravel all the tangled threads of history so as to be able to start with a clean slate. For example:

'You say the land held by the English peers has been in great part "plundered from the Church". What, Mr. Blatchford? Had the Church a right to it, then? Surely you do not think so. If not, how could it be plundered from the Church, seeing that plunder is wrongful taking? You do not plunder a forest that belongs to nobody if you cut down the trees. Your argument tumbles back upon itself at every step.'²

Similarly with Blatchford's accusations of malpractice against the owners of 'sweated labour' and rent racketeers. Roberts said that to attack them was to attack the symptoms not the cause of the ailment. The context, the fabric of society, produced them. That, in turn, was a manifestation of human nature. That was the real source of the trouble. Further, Blatchford's remedy, socialism, would curtail individual liberty, and

'no wise man will agree that it is an advantage to suppress individual liberty for the sake of preventing its abuse. Rather let us have its occasional abuse for the sake of its boundless blessings than sacrifice its boundless blessings to prevent its occasional abuse.'³

With these introductory tilts against the Windmills of Socialism, Roberts set out his main thesis. This was, first, that human nature was fundamentally evil in a way which, in this era, could not be rectified. Thus, Socialism, which was based on the concept of improving the environment and so liberating the 'good' chained

-
1. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 26.
 2. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 35.
 3. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 128.

up within Man was in fundamental error. Second, the 'evils of capitalism' which Blatchford hated so much were, in so far as competitiveness and the support of one's family were concerned, perfectly understandable and natural parts of Man's present lot and not intrinsic evils at all. Third, the only possible hope for this distressed world was that it be rescued from itself by someone not restricted by human nature's evil inclinations - someone who would not 'judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears',¹ someone, too, who would have as his assistants helpers perfected and liberated from human nature by the Resurrection.

In more detail, Roberts's analysis of the propensities of human nature began with a Rousseauesque picture of a savage. Roberts's savage, however, was not so noble as Rousseau's.

'If human nature were not innately bad, it would not develop badly, as it does, in every case where it is left to itself in an individual or a nation. Bring up a child to manhood with a dumb nurse, cut off from contact from all other human beings, and you would have a speechless imbecile, a beast of prey, nothing but evil. Nations having had no contact with instruction exterior to themselves are nations of savages.'²

In a later passage, Roberts made it absolutely clear that he had not been speaking of '... humanity as only capable of beastliness'.

'You say human nature "only becomes bad when it is poisoned and perverted and defiled". Mr. Blatchford, the truth is just the other way round - that human nature only becomes elevated when it becomes anti-doted, harmonised and cleansed by a process from without. The poison, the perversion, and the defilement are all within. This view may be unacceptable, but if it is true, what a stupendous and disastrous mistake it is to ignore it in the attempt to construct a new social system. You are committing the very blunder which you lay at the door of your opponents - building your economic science upon a false estimate of human nature, and therefore rearing a structure that is bound to come down in ruina. God avert "England's Ruin".'³

On his second major point, which involved a rebuttal of most of Blatchford's allegations about the evils of capitalism, Roberts

1. Isaiah xi. 3.
2. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 81.
3. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 82.

conceded nationalisation might work better than private enterprise in certain industries. He felt that the danger lay in the evils brought by the thicker end of nationalisation's wedge:

'... when you propose to allow the State to take charge of our private business, you are crossing the line where service ends and tyranny begins.

'The State monopoly of the postal and telegraph departments works well, but not by excluding competition; you must remember that there is competition within the service. The best men are put into the best places, and every man knows that if he does not look sharp, he will have his place and his bread taken by others. If all the men were sure of their berths as you propose to make every man sure of his bread, you would soon see a different state of things.'

Referring to eagles which push their young out of the nest, so as to oblige them to fly, Roberts argued, by analogy, that 'Men have often to be pushed away from home, and thrown upon their own resources, to be fully brought out. If they are looked after all the while, they remain undeveloped. It is well for people to be compelled to look after themselves.'

Whilst there was the suggestion of an overlap between Roberts's thinking and that in Max Weber's later thesis The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, there was little connection between these views and those of the Christian Socialists, whose stance Roberts condemned as vigorously from one side of the philosophical spectrum as Blatchford did from the other.

The excusing of the 'social misbehaviour' of the poor, on the grounds that all they were able to do was 'drink up and forget' was not agreed to by Roberts. He put forward two reasons for his view. First, he said that overdrinking was able to consume a much greater proportion of the family budget than overeating, because 'food imposes its own limit'. This was the cause of many additional social ills.

'... drink becomes an endless swill in which a man's wages are spent long before the week is out, with perhaps a long score at the "pub" besides. His house

1. Roberts, England's Ruin, pp. 86-7.
2. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 88.

is squalid; his wife meanly clad; his children in rags. They run the streets, and are often without food. He is in a rut from which he cannot lift himself. Rent gets behind, and by-and-bye the man and his wretched family are turned out of doors, to find shelter in some more squalid den for a time. Then, as an unsteady man, he easily gets out of work, and the story ends in darkness.¹

Secondly, said Roberts, 'Is it only the poor that drink?' To alleviate poverty would not provide the poor with a 'well furnished mind' sufficiently morally resolute to stand up to the battering of circumstances without recourse to drink. It would merely translate them into 'clever devils', drinking a better class of drink.

In Roberts's final section, he agreed with Blatchford about the evils which needed removing - inequitable distribution of resources, land, trade and the like. Roberts fundamentally disagreed with Blatchford over the possibility of this being achieved by human management. 'The ground wants clearing', Roberts wrote, 'as it only can be done by irresponsible and irresistible power.'² This 'irresistible power' Roberts saw as being vested in the person of Jesus Christ alone, combining all the very best qualities of the greatest political leaders in History. He wrote:

'A king reigns, who combines in himself all the sweetness and manliness of Arthur, all the grace and ability of Cyrus, all the energy and capacity of Alexander, all the talent and celerity of Napoleon, all the irresistible velocity of Charles XII, all the military invincibility and organising skill of Charlemagne, all the pertinacious genius and paternal disinterestedness of Frederick, all the impressive and dignified splendour of Louis XIV, all the wisdom of Solomon, all the kindness and fervour of David, all the patience and faithfulness of Moses, and all the patience of Job.'³

Blatchford, as Roberts understood him, admired Christ too. Roberts felt the best Blatchford could do was to join him in proclaiming the return of Christ, who alone was fitted to put the world right.

Whilst it appeared that Roberts and Blatchford were polarised in religion and politics, they were at one in their conclusion that

1. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 119.

2. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 147.

3. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 160.

Christianity and Socialism were mutually exclusive solutions to the world's problems:

'Now, Mr. Blatchford, I must either believe this and reject Socialism, or believe in Socialism and reject this.'¹

However, although Roberts's views on some political issues might have appeared radical in later Victorian times, he gave the appearance of being a man of his time on others. In The Blood of Christ, Roberts was considering the relationship of Christ to his brethren and contending for the existence, within 'humanity' of a variety almost amounting to a subspecies. By this means, he was hoping to establish the feasibility of Christ being a brother of Fallen Man, whilst, at the same time, being of a very different genre. This argument by analogy caused him to make the following observations regarding racial differences:

'But this is not the only difference. Though all men are equally human on certain points, there are fundamental differences arising from parentage. Two boys - one an Indian cross-breed, and the other a European - may be brought up in the same family, sent to the same school, and will turn out totally different men - one stupid and barren and intractable, and the other bright and fertile and docile. They are both human, but they both differ radically. How fallacious it would be to reason from one to the other on the ground of both possessing a common human nature. They are both human truly, but humanity of very different qualities.'²

However, it would be wrong to deduce from this extract that Roberts's intentions were racist. His gauche political comments emerged by accident as he attempted to develop a particular theological emphasis in the context of a discussion upon the doctrine of the Atonement.

(j) ROBERTS'S VIEWS ON THEOLOGY

I THE ATONEMENT

In examining the Atonement, Roberts began by dealing with those who 'experience distress at the association of Jesus with sinful

1. Roberts, England's Ruin, p. 155.

2. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 28.

flesh in any sense'¹ by seeking relief in such phrases as Romans viii,² which stated that God sent his son 'in the likeness of sinful flesh'. Roberts disposed of this objection, citing both Old Testament and New Testament examples of the use of 'likeness' to mean verisimilitude, not mere approximation, for example, Genesis v. 3, where Adam begot a son 'after his image'. Roberts commented wryly 'you would not say the word "likeness" means that Seth was in any wise different from Adam.'³ Roberts went on to deal with the question 'in what sense did Christ come in sinful flesh?', and answered it:

'He was made part of the sin-constitution of things, deriving from his mother both the propensities that lead to sin and the sentence of death that was passed because of sin... It pleased God to require the ceremonial condemnation of this sin-nature in crucifixion in the person of a righteous possessor of it, as the basis of our forgiveness.'⁴

Having reaffirmed that Christ's coming 'in the likeness of men' (Philippians ii. 7) really meant a 'likeness... as extending to "all points" and "all things"' by quoting Hebrews ii. 17 and iv. 15, Roberts went on to answer the question 'Surely he was made superior to man in some respects.'⁵ His answer to this enquiry was in the affirmative: 'Unquestionably. He was not a mere man - not a mere Jew - not mere flesh.' It was at this point where he felt pushed into a corner by trying to explain how Christ could be like mankind in 'all points', whilst at the same time not 'mere man' that Roberts's rhetoric took over. It is instructive to note carefully the process of Roberts's thinking. He had two possible bolt-holes from this paradox. The first was to say that the difference between Jesus and Man was genetic. This, however, would leave him open to objections from the 'in all points' lobby. The second was to come down in favour of environmental factors influencing Jesus's uniqueness, but this would dissatisfy the viewpoint Roberts was seeking to appease by agreeing that Jesus was 'Unquestionably... superior

-
1. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 25.
 2. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 26.
 3. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 26.
 4. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, pp. 26-27.
 5. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 27.

to man.' However, it was unlike Roberts to be indecisive... so he came down in favour of both! He first explained that 'the difference made by instruction and training makes all the difference in the world between two men both equally human: one shall be a stolid brute, and the other verging upon the grace and intelligence of angelhood.'¹ Roberts clearly had Jesus Christ in mind in this last phrase and passages like Hebrews ii. 9, which speak of Jesus as 'made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.' However, dissatisfied with being a pure environmentalist, Roberts went on in the very next paragraph to make the comments about the influence of genetic differences, which led to unfortunate implications referred to above about racial distinctions.

As B.R. Wilson has pointed out,² in many aspects of his theology Roberts was the avowed disciple of Dr. Thomas. However, it is equally clear that there were differences of emphasis between them. Thomas was always at his happiest leaving matters in their Scriptural contexts, however urgent the demands might be to sound humanly practical.³ Roberts's mind, perhaps through a desire to be tidy, liked to clarify a conundrum wherever possible.⁴ Events such as the requirement upon him, as editor of The Christadelphian (on a single-handed basis from 1864 to 1883), to deal with Scriptural problems of all kinds sent in by correspondents, both Christadelphian, non-Christadelphian and quasi-Christadelphian, wrought, from his tidy

1. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 28.

2. In his Ph.D. thesis, London University, 1955, ii. 979, footnote 3.

3. The starkness of this contrast is made apparent if one compares Thomas's Statement of Faith, which was a short list of Biblical texts, with Roberts's Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias, which was approximately 35,000 words in length, but made reference to only 26 Bible passages.

4. See, for example, his attempts to analyse the nature of Christ, pp. 187-189, above.

mind, theological formulations which were more crisply defined than anything Dr. Thomas produced. Pressure of events - especially in 1873 and 1885¹ - squeezed out of Roberts definitions of the nature of Christ and the position of the editor of The Christadelphian which were not only crisper than anything Thomas wrote, but also difficult to reconcile with Thomas's views. Details of the differences between the two men on the first of these issues emerge from the analysis of the Atonement presented in The Blood of Christ as shown above.² Thomas's view on this topic, as explained in Eureka volume one³ was much vaguer. Thomas contented himself with simply asserting that 'the spirit... operated germinatively upon the contents of Mary's ovarium' so that her offspring was also the offspring of God. The exact biological practicalities and the precise theological implications of this were nowhere pursued by Thomas. However, Thomas was a pioneer, pursuing a voyage of theological discovery. Roberts stood for almost forty years as the defender of territory Thomas first found. It was perhaps this simple difference, rather than any profound theological divergence which explained their differing emphases.

Roberts believed that Dr. Thomas's view of the Atonement was correct. The Doctor, he said, had revived 'the Truth [of the Atonement]... in our age.'⁴ Nonetheless, he sought to clarify and explain the Atonement to a more refined degree of detail than Thomas had done. Roberts, for instance, made it clear that Christ himself benefited by the effectiveness of his own sacrifice. His view was based on Hebrews xiii. 20 and ix. 12 and Philippians ii. 8. Nowhere was Thomas so clear on that point.⁵

Roberts attempted to resolve the dichotomy between the human

-
1. These dates refer to the Renunciationist and Inspiration controversies, respectively.
 2. Pp. 187-189.
 3. For a detailed treatment of Thomas's views on this point, see ch. II, p. 53-4, above.
 4. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 8.
 5. Most, if not all, of the elements in Roberts's thinking on this issue existed in Thomas too, but as discreet items. See ch. II, p. 52, above.

and divine elements in the nature of Christ. However, having assessed matters as well as he was able, he ended, like Thomas, by giving up the attempt to produce a formulation any neater than was involved in a recitation of the relevant Scriptural texts. He concluded:

'Thus far we have considered the human side of the atonement, as we might express it. We have not ignored the divine side by any means, but there is a closer and a higher view of the divine side that is essential to a complete view of the case. It is a view that is a little difficult to formulate in a palpable manner for the reason appearing in Isaiah 55, that God's ways and thoughts are as high above ours as the heaven is high above the earth. Because this is the case, and because the whole work of atonement or reconciliation through Christ is a work of God, it necessarily embodies ideas too high and too subtle for mortal mind easily to apprehend or appreciate.'¹

In a later section of The Blood of Christ Roberts went on, in a passage entitled 'Sin in the Flesh', to consider the heresy prevalent twenty-two years previously in Renunciationism. Roberts acknowledged the difficulty of this topic and concluded:

'It is impossible not to respect the spirit and intent of many who do not share these views. There are men with almost agonizing sincerity of purpose who cannot see through the fogs that envelop the truth in an age when there is no living voice of authoritative guidance, and when the power of correctly interpreting the written Word is the only rule of conviction. It is natural to wish to think that in such a situation of divine truth on the earth, the same consideration will at the last be shown towards those who earnestly do their best in the dimness that was shown, on the intercession of Hezekiah, towards the multitude in Israel who "had not cleansed themselves, and yet did eat the Passover otherwise than was written" (2 Chron. 30: 18). God is not unrighteous or unreasonable. At the same time, in such a situation, when the truth can with difficulty be kept alive at all, it is not for those who know the truth to work by a may be. We must be governed by what is revealed, leaving the Lord to revoke the present rule of probation, or make His own allowances in its application.'²

-
1. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, p. 22 - In his section on 'The Divine Side of Christ', pp. 22-24, Roberts said more than is cited here, but did not resolve the issues further than this.
 2. Roberts, The Blood of Christ, pp. 28-29.

Whilst these views, written by Roberts almost at the end of his life, were sweetly reasonable, he had opposed the 1873 Renunciators very stridently indeed. Under that pressure, he had put forward views which were difficult to reconcile with Doctor Thomas.

II THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Is the Bible the Work of Inspiration? was a booklet in which Roberts sought to clarify the Christadelphian view beyond a perchance. That there was, previously, some room for manoeuvre seemed clear from the sympathetic hearing that Robert Ashcroft, whose views were clearly different from Thomas's on this issue, got in some ecclesias. The three most radical and outspoken of Roberts's eleven sections in this booklet were entitled 'In What Way Did Inspiration Act?', 'Apparent Discrepancies', and 'The Human-element Theory and Where It Leads To'. In the first of these sections, Roberts quoted Jeremiah xx. 9 and Matthew xx. 20 and concluded:

'The "God-inspiration" which Paul affirms of all their writings was the most powerful element in the case, and so controlled their individual peculiarities, while employing them, so as to over-ride the will of man and give us a book unlike all human books under the sun, reflecting its own mind and its own mind alone.'

The second section was disappointingly short, being a mere two paragraphs in length. Roberts stated that it was a work of detail to reconcile apparent discrepancies, but a work which could certainly be done. He added the generalisation that very many 'discrepancies' were actually the results of artefacts of translation or the transmission of manuscripts. In particular, he itemised the frequent gaps between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint. In the third section, Roberts quoted from works, without naming them, in which a Higher Critical view of inspiration predominated. These, said Roberts, illustrated the corollaries of the human-element theory. These were two-fold:

-
1. Roberts, Is the Bible the Work of Inspiration?, (Birmingham n.d.), p. 17.

'(a) that attempts to reconcile apparent inconsistencies are often characterised by straining and ingenuity; and that "our sense of candour and integrity is distressed and weakened in the enforced attempt to extract harmony" from them. (b) that the Bible needs to be saved from those who stand up for its absolutely divine character, "who are [alleged to be] too little acquainted with its history, and with the embarrassments which beset the theory they entertain of its origin and contents."¹

These views, said Roberts, were tantamount to accusing the Bible of lying. This, in itself, was a lie, he felt.

Although Roberts did not have the facility with the original languages of the Bible that John Thomas had,² he did develop a good working knowledge, sufficient to sustain him in debates, which rose above the level of reliance on dictionaries, lexicons and concordances. One example of this was the debate with the Jew Louis Stern on the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, part of which concerned the text of Isaiah vii.³ However, Roberts rarely went into print, even before 1885, to make academic judgements about points of Hebrew or Greek grammar. It was not only that he was not intellectually in a position easily to do so, it was also that he did not need to. There were, around him, leading brethren who had a good knowledge of the requisite languages, upon whose assistance he was able to call. Amongst these, perhaps the pre-eminent were Professor David Evans⁴, J.W. Thirtle⁵ and Dr. Welch.⁶

The major issue where Roberts broke his self-imposed silence on linguistics was over the appearance, in 1881, of the Revised Version translation. A large number of articles, mainly deprecatory in

1. Roberts, *Is the Bible the Work of Inspiration?*, p. 13.
2. See Appendix G, below, for an assessment of John Thomas's linguistic ability.
3. See Appendix M.
4. D.L. Evans (1813-1902), professor of Hebrew and mathematics at Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, was converted to Christadelphianism in 1884, after having come out of retirement in the year 1879-80 to act as Unitarian minister at Colyton in Devon.
5. See pp. 117, 127 and 133 above, and p. 233 below, for biographical and other details of J.W. Thirtle.
6. Dr. L.B. Welch, of Shire Oaks, Pasadena, U.S.A., was often cited in *TC*, adjudicating on linguistic matters, after the demise of J.W. Thirtle, following the 1885 schism.

nature, appeared in The Christadelphian and a pamphlet was written by Roberts about one particular mistranslation which grated on his spiritual sensitivities. This was the Revised Version translation of the Lord's Prayer passage in Matthew's gospel.¹ The Authorized Version of 1611 had read 'lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom...' The Revised Version altered this to 'deliver us from the Evil One'. Christadelphians, from Thomas's day, had objected to the orthodox Christian conceptions of the Personal Devil, and the Revised Version's deviation from the text, as Christadelphians understood it, was too much for Roberts and his brethren to stomach. Roberts's argument in the pamphlet The Evil One rested mainly on the idea, from Thomas, that the key to Biblical exposition was to accept the Bible as fully inspired (so that all texts should be allowed to modify the interpretation of all other texts to produce compatibility). In this case, since the idea of a Personal Devil was against the general tenor of Scriptural teaching, it must be wrong to translate Matthew vi. 13 in the way the Revised Version had done. However, Roberts did also employ straightforward linguistic arguments.

Roberts died in September 1898, aged 59, in San Francisco, U.S.A., during a lecture tour as The Christadelphian's editor. His body was transferred to the East coast so that Roberts could be buried in the same grave as John Thomas. Thomas and Roberts were as aligned in life as they were to be in death. Certainly this was true in theology - Roberts had written 'To the charge of holding "that the knowledge of Scripture in the writings of Dr. Thomas has reached finality" we plead guilty.'² This view appears to have been an objective one. However, in matters of ecclesiastical polity there was a great degree of divergence between the two men.³ Where Thomas had sought to make no pronouncements, Roberts made plenty - as Bryan

1. Matthew vi. 13.

2. TC, xi (1874), 408.

3. There is some evidence that Thomas later espoused a view of ecclesiastical politics similar to that of Roberts - see ch. VI below, concerning George Dowle, pp.231-5.

Wilson has said 'Thomas had been concerned primarily with exegesis ... [but] Roberts soon became something of an oracle for the movement, pronouncing on issues of all types, doctrinal, social and economic.'¹ However, it was not simply, as Wilson argued, that 'Thomas... keenly expected the very early return of Christ, which made social issues of less consequence',² but rather that Thomas made Truth his first and only priority. If the pursuit of this goal generated ecclesias of like-minded brothers and sisters, well and good; if schism, then so be it. Roberts, however, decided upon the preservation intact of both the theology and, where possible, the ecclesias as received from Thomas as being his prior concern. This reversal of priorities generated strife when, in the minds of Christadelphian purists, Roberts sacrificed an equation consisting of '100% Truth with ecclesiastical fragmentation' for '90% Truth and the preservation of an intact majority'.³ Thomas had appeared to drift towards a more authoritarian attitude in ecclesiastical politics towards the end of his life. Roberts, on the other hand, appeared to adopt a more liberal stance. Early in his career as the editor of The Christadelphian, Roberts was forced, by pressure of circumstances, to make snap judgements on important issues. For instance, in 1873 and 1885, to solve problems caused by brethren Turney and Ashcroft, Roberts developed instant theological aphorisms and considered each member of the Christadelphian movement's readiness instantly to accept the ipsissima verba of these solutions a test of their acceptability as Christadelphians. Later, in 1898, he seemed to have mellowed and to have realised the need for a flexibility in the correct interpretation of truth, for he wrote in The Christadelphian upon 'True Principles and Uncertain Details; or The Danger of Going Too Far in our Demands on Fellow Believers.'⁴

1. B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, ii, 980-981.

2. B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, ii, 981.

3. For example, in 1885, Roberts trod down the possibility of ecclesial autonomy so as to excise quickly what he felt was the theological cancer of Ashcroftism. For a detailed study of these events, see ch. V below.

4. TC, xxxv (1898), 183-189.

He seemed to realise that a dichotomy would be seen by onlookers between his previous and current stances. Thus, he exclaimed rhetorically 'How are the mighty fallen! What a change in the position of brother Roberts with reference to the question of fellowship.' He continued by denying equivocation, claiming that circumstances altered cases. Another example, for all Roberts's disclaiming of a liberalisation of his stance on ecclesiastical politics, occurred in his assessment of the status of the editor of The Christadelphian. In 1883, he had claimed that he himself 'should be allowed to run The Christadelphian single-handed, unimpeded by the trappings of democracy. 'The death-knell of The Christadelphian', he wrote, 'will have been rung on the day that its Editor passes under the control of big purses - under the name of a committee, or any other speciosity. It certainly will not happen while the present Editor is outside his coffin.'¹ By 1885, having acted on his own initiative to deal with the Inspiration controversy, and the ecclesias having been split into many splinters, he began to think differently about the role of the Editor. He wrote to his former colleague on The Post, J.J. Hadley, in the autumn after the schism:

'The Proposed Advisory Council... has been in the air for a long time. I have often been told that I ought to share with other brethren the duty that has in the course of years, grown up with The Christadelphian, of deciding in cases of ecclesial disputes, who should be recognised in the intelligence department. I have never been averse to the idea in the abstract. The difficulty lay in reducing it to practical shape without incurring worse evils than those sought to be remedied. Recent circumstances have revived and intensified the idea, and with the result of its being pressed upon my attention in a special manner, and to these representations I have yielded, by way of experiment at all events... I am consenting to share with others a function that I have hitherto been obliged by force of circumstances to exercise myself...'²

In one way or another Roberts dominated the thinking of a movement of fiercely independent, congregationalist-minded individuals for about thirty years. For someone who died before the age of sixty, this was a tremendous achievement. However, this domination was that of a populariser and organiser, not that of an intellectual or an original thinker.

1. TC, xx (1883), 75. 2. The Bible Lightstand, ii (1885), 291.

CHAPTER V1885 - WHAT WENT WRONG?

In the Autumn of 1885, the Christadelphian ecclesias in Britain, which had begun a mere 38 years earlier with a small number of isolated individuals who had read the writings of John Thomas, had become, within four decades, a community of five to six thousand baptised adults in about 200 ecclesias in most British counties; but, at the same time, they lay in the shallows, broken on the reef of discord. From that time, the Christadelphian body, although it later increased, its strength, both in terms of membership and numbers of ecclesias, never regained the momentum built up in the period 1876-84. From 1885 on, many of its 'converts' were taken from within the ranks of Christadelphian families. The community became, if not neurotic, then introspective - concerned about the power of individuals, lest they should found personality cults, happier with committees, despite the relative lethargy of bureaucratic decisions.¹ With this institutionalisation came ossification, and, later, fossilisation. Gone, it seemed, were the days when an individual brother would witness in a town on his own, giving Bible talks composed by himself, advertised by a hoarding in his own front windows, and delivered in his own front room. Although in its very earliest days, in the two decades after 1847 and Thomas's parting from the Campbellites, Christadelphianism had had its large

1. The Auxiliary Lecturing Society (A.L.S.) was formed in 1903 to preside by committee over the preaching of God's word; a committee was organised in 1915 to see to the welfare of the brethren over conscientious objection; by 1937, The Christadelphian itself had become a limited company.

formal occasions with big set-piece speeches, soon, as a general rule, preaching had become a matter for a specialist, talks were advertised expensively in newspapers or on privately printed invitation cards, and delivered in comfortable municipal halls.¹

Initially, perhaps, Thomas was to be blamed for the disaster in 1885, in that he had not made provision for any ecclesiastical polity. On the other hand, he had been interested in mining Truth, not in organising the mineworkers' union. Roberts, who succeeded Thomas, was more political in bent than his predecessor, yet was not overconcerned in 1864², or even in 1871,³ with politics either. After all, the Christadelphian community, in 1864, was tiny,⁴ but with growth organisation became a more important issue. However, by the 1880s, Roberts was absorbed in various activities - editing, lecturing, touring, writing, problem-solving - and had little opportunity to step back from his situation to reassess his perspective on Christadelphian political arrangements - he was in the saddle, the horse was galloping, and he simply had to ride.

Given this disorganised background, it is not surprising that political problems, when they arose, wreaked a disproportionate amount of havoc. There were many problems with which Roberts, the lone rider, could deal by industry and devotion. The problem, as it arose, however, involved in part the questioning of his lone ridership - perhaps, it was implied, Roberts should have shared his seat with a rota of other jockeys.⁵ Given, also, the theologically

1. There was a certain continuing degree of individualism in Christadelphia after this point, as is made evident in the history of the Heanor ecclesia by Birks, but it was now exceptional.
2. This was the year when Roberts became editor of The Ambassador.
3. This was when Thomas died and Roberts became de facto leader of the Christadelphian movement.
4. According to B.R. Wilson's London University Ph.D. thesis, p. 921, 'there can have been hardly more than a few hundred Christadelphians in Great Britain in the mid-1860s, and perhaps not more than a thousand in the world.'
5. Roberts, writing in The Christadelphian in 1883, had been very scathing indeed about committees, after it had been suggested that he might run the magazine by committee. See TC, xx (1883), 75, quoted on p. 196 above.

fundamental nature of the problems raised, it is not surprising that the rider became distracted in mid-gallop, was almost unseated, and that his mount lost the rhythm of her stride and became un-nerved. Nor is it astonishing that, having stumbled in 1885, the gait of the mount was thereafter lame and its progress less rapid than before.

The main protagonists in the clash of 1885 were Robert Roberts, editor of The Christadelphian, and Robert Ashcroft,¹ its assistant editor. One of the principal components in explaining this confrontation was the meteoric rise of Robert Ashcroft. In January 1876, he was still the Congregationalist minister at Rock Ferry in Cheshire. By January 1883, his credit as a Christadelphian stood so high that he was encouraged by Roberts to become assistant editor of the magazine on an annual stipend!²

In early 1877, only six months after Ashcroft's immersion as a Christadelphian, a fuss was made of him in the pages of The Christadelphian magazine - how wonderful were his abilities! how much had he given up! what was his job to be now?³ Later in the same year, he was cast in the role of a Christadelphian parson.⁴

During the next twelve months, articles from Ashcroft cascaded through the pages of The Christadelphian in a happy prolixity, so that articles from his pen were second in number only to those by Roberts⁵ and Thomas himself.⁶ His articles ranged over biographical matters such as 'Extracts from the Diary of a

1. For details of Ashcroft's conversion in 1876, see pp. 106-107 above.
2. Roberts had gone to Birmingham as a reporter for The Birmingham Post. When accepting the job as editor of The Christadelphian he had not considered it a remunerative post. Ashcroft had had to forgo his minister's salary. His piano business and two other projects had got into financial straits by 1882. Something, felt Roberts, must be done for him. So, in June 1882, Roberts appealed for financial aid to make Ashcroft 'sub-editor'. This help was, apparently, forthcoming.
3. TC, xiv (1877), 329-30.
4. TC, xiv (1877), 381.
5. According to A.T. Jannaway, The Inspiration Division, p. 5, by 1885 Ashcroft had 'more moral weight in the ecclesias than any living brother.'
6. Thomas had died in 1871, but articles by him, including a great many previously published only in the U.S.A., were multiple in the pages of The Christadelphian until 1898.

Congregational Minister' and 'Pulpit Perplexities' to works of exhortational or exegetical importance. By February 1880, he was claiming¹ that it was expected of him that he should send in an article to the magazine every month for publication.

It was not only in the literary sphere that Ashcroft's services were in demand.² In 1878, the first of a chain of Young Men's Mutual Bible Study Associations had been founded. By 1880, a number had sprung up. The main purpose of these associations was, in the absence of a Christadelphian ministry, to train young men in the methods of Bible study and public speaking. Gatherings of these trainees were addressed, at regular intervals, by the top speakers available within Christadelphia - speakers such as J.J. Andrew, F.R. Shuttleworth and Roberts himself. By 1880, Ashcroft joined this select group, and, by 1881, was working hard in that particular corner of the vineyard - a guest speaker at 'Mutual' gatherings, on a regular basis.

Because of Ashcroft's skill in oratory, and because of the number of Christadelphians in the newspaper industry, several of Ashcroft's addresses in defence of Christadelphian views were taken down verbatim by one of his listeners skilled in shorthand and reproduced by this means in the pages of The Christadelphian.³ Of the four Town Hall lectures for 1881, two were given by Ashcroft and reprinted in the magazine - even though that meant giving over twenty pages of one month's issue to an Ashcroft article.⁴

1. TC, xvii (1880), 81.
2. One leading Christadelphian, in verbal evidence, said Ashcroft preferred to move an audience, rather than manipulate a pen.
3. 'What Christadelphians are not', TC, xv (1878); 'Divine Nature', TC, xvii (1880); 'Impending Changes in Human Affairs', TC, xviii (1881); 'The Abiding Condition of the Vast Majority of the Dead', TC, xix (1882); 'What Makes a Man a Friend of Christ?', TC, xix (1882), were examples of this.
4. TC, xviii (1881), 148-168. These were very well attended meetings - Birmingham Town Hall being packed with three thousand visitors, four hundred Christadelphians occupying the orchestra seats and 'many [visitors] standing in the passages'. Forty thousand leaflets had been distributed to advertise these meetings.

A further index of the success of Ashcroft and his recognition as a top Christadelphian speaker was his appearance, in 1882, at the annual tea meeting at Birmingham. Ashcroft, along with F.R. Shuttleworth, Robert Roberts and J.J. Bishop, delivered the major addresses.

In 1881, Ashcroft was attacking the local Congregationalists at Trammere. By 1882, or 1883, he had teamed up with a former Wesleyan¹ minister from Derby, now baptised a Christadelphian, called J.H. Chamberlin,² to expose clerical apostasy in double-bill meetings.³

By June 1882, Roberts⁴ had decided that increasing success, and consequent increased pressure of work on himself, and the existence of a young⁵ and talented brother, short of work, fitted together like complementary jig-saw pieces. Thus, he used his position as editor to appeal, through the pages of The Christadelphian, for financial assistance in paying Ashcroft a salary in order to appoint him assistant editor. By August 1882, Ashcroft had removed from Rock Ferry to Birmingham, presumably to facilitate the accomplishment of this plan. By January 1883, Ashcroft appears to have been appointed assistant editor.⁶

In the meantime, Ashcroft had been asked to visit the U.S.A.'s Christadelphians on a lecture tour and had accepted. The narrative record of his journey occupied over fifty pages of The Christadelphian in 1882 and 1883. His visit was regarded by the American

-
1. Some sources say 'Methodist New Connexion', for example, B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, p. 954.
 2. For additional details respecting the conversion of Revd. Chamberlin, see ch. III above, p. 117.
 3. For example, Shipston-on-Stour witnessed such a gathering - see TC, xx (1883), 142-3.
 4. There was some reservation in the Christadelphian movement about Ashcroft's rapid promotion. Roberts stood as personal surety for Ashcroft's good conduct. This may help explain Roberts's personalisation of the issue in 1885.
 5. Ashcroft was only in his early thirties when baptised in 1876.
 6. No fanfare was made about this at the time, but, in the index of articles from January 1883, Ashcroft's contributions appear under the heading of 'Articles by the Assistant Editor', whereas the 1882 index described all such articles as 'Articles by Brother Ashcroft'.

brethren as a great success. One of them wrote to The Christadelphian that 'he never listened to anything like Brother Ashcroft's discourses, which move him even to tears.'¹ During the Autumn and Winter of 1882, and the Spring of 1883, unmitigated adulation of Ashcroft poured into The Christadelphian's office from all over the U.S.A. - even from intellectual brethren like Dr. Reeves and Thomas Williams.² By the Summer of 1883, Dr. Edwards (a Christadelphian) wrote to Ashcroft, pleading with him to remove from Birmingham and live in the U.S.A. Ashcroft took these expressions of affection and respect, as they were indeed, no doubt, intended, in a serious way. So, too, did Robert Roberts! Roberts had, himself, previously toured the U.S.A., although he was not really invited to make a lecture tour as such, but rather to stay on in 1871 after he and Brother Bosher had attended Dr. Thomas's funeral. Thomas himself had made several series of American tours, and Brother J.U. Robertson, of Liverpool, had toured Canada. However, none of these tours had produced the same euphoria as had Ashcroft's visit.

All of this must have fallen on Roberts's ears a little like that of the women out of all the cities of Israel who said 'Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands.'³ Not surprisingly, from this point of view, when Roberts was absent from his office in 1883, it was not Ashcroft whom he asked to deputise for him as editor, but F.R. Shuttleworth, the man who took over as assistant editor after Ashcroft's return to the Congregationalists.⁵ During 1884, overt rancour broke out between Roberts and Ashcroft over the suggested move to the U.S.A. By the end of that year, it had become necessary to answer the question, now explicit in Christadelphian circles, as to whether he was jealous of Robert Ashcroft or not.⁴

1. TC, xix (1882), 456.

2. Williams later became the founder of the 'Advocate' fellowship, whose English ecclesias subsequently united with the 'Suffolk Street' fellowship - see p. 222 below.

3. I Samuel xviii. 7.

4. TC, xxi (1884), 528. It is not explicitly clear that Roberts was referring to Ashcroft. It is unlikely that he would be thought jealous of many others, however.

5. The source of this information was the cover-sleeves of TC, xxv (1888), from January to May. In June 1888, Shuttleworth's name was replaced by that of C.C. Walker, who succeeded as editor after Roberts's death in 1898.

Meanwhile, however, the ex-Wesleyan minister, Joseph H. Chamberlin, was being given favoured status within Christadelphia, despite being less gifted than Ashcroft. Chamberlin was invited to exhort at the Breaking of Bread service on the very first Sunday after his baptism. Before long, he too was taken onto the staff of The Christadelphian magazine, though in a minor capacity. Again, apparently, Roberts took personal responsibility for this move. Possibly his new-found popularity caused Ashcroft to neglect restraint he would have otherwise preserved - possibly his new attitudes owed their source to some different derivation - but, beginning in April 1883, Ashcroft began to express what was to become known as the 'Partial Inspiration' point of view.¹

Briefly put, this view was that inspiration of the Scriptures extended to those areas where it was essential for the salvation of Man - that is, what is commonly defined as theology. Matters of history, geography, astronomy and the like may or may not have been correct simply because they were non-essentials to salvation. These may have been the innocent questionings of an inquisitive mind, openly seeking answers. However, a veritable hornet's nest was stirred up as a result. A series of highly controversial questions began openly to be asked - Why should these views be given expression from a public platform as if Christadelphian? Where was the line to be drawn, precisely, over which matters were to be regarded as 'theological' and, therefore, inspired? More importantly, who was to draw the line? Was the implication in brother Ashcroft's contention that there were things God did not know? Was it, in fact, a kind of theological statism drawing brother Ashcroft back to his earlier Congregationalist predispositions?²

These, and questions like them, sprang from a series of impulses: there were those, by 1883, who had joined the Christadel-

-
1. On the fourth Sunday in April 1883, Ashcroft gave a public lecture on this subject in the London ecclesia - see TC, xx (1883), 238.
 2. John Thomas's comments on plenary inspiration were directed against those who rejected the Bible as an authority or who wished to supplement Biblical authority with an additional didactic source. The problems presenting themselves to Ashcroft's mind had not been considered previously by Christadelphians. For Thomas's views, see ch. II above, pp. 44-49.

phian movement largely in response to the theological uncertainty which had afflicted Britain suddenly during the previous three decades¹ - here, in Christadelphia, by contrast, was certainty, soundness, authority; brother Ashcroft's views, par contre, seemed to involve a regression to the scourge of Higher Criticism, currently blighting Christendom at large; there were those, too, on the other hand, who had put into perspective, seven years on from 1876, the joyous conversion of a man of the cloth and viewed with growing alarm the increasing ascendancy of the popular, young ex-minister; there were others, however, who felt their faith secure enough against the storms of Higher Critical attack to look even profound uncertainties unflinchingly in the eye. Of these categories, the latter were more likely to be irked by the responses to 'Ashcroftism' of the former two categories of Christadelphians, than by Ashcroft himself. Thus, fragmentation, when it developed within Christadelphianism, emerged from two apparently opposite stances - the 'defend the Bible at all costs' party and the 'defend the freedom of speech at all costs' group. The irony in the situation was that, fully expressed, the viewpoint of the two 'parties' could be stated as 'defend the Bible at all costs - because it really is the source of truth and must not be sullied by theological jibes' and 'defend the freedom of speech at all costs, because that is how we came to discover the real truth from within the Bible in the first place'. That is, both 'parties' were defending slightly different emphases within the same viewpoint. However, because of the highly charged polemical atmosphere in which the discussion between them took place, reaction produced equal and opposite counter-reactions, finely-honed edges of spiritual nicety designed for delicate theological surgery were sacrificed for the blunt instruments of theological polemics, and personality-issues replaced principles. Even this was not all - for a third 'party' emerged, which, in several areas, constituted the minority, which attempted to steer a middle course. By this stage, however, each of the extreme parties

1. See Owen Chadwick, The Victorian Church, p. 530.

had taken up well-defined defensive stances and refused to move. The existence of two extreme factions and a moderate centre group, moving through a minefield of controversy created groups, sub-groups and sub-sub-groups until an almost atomic level of disintegration was reached.

Bryan Wilson summarised this complexity nicely:

'Once divided, every attempt to reconcile contending parties merely resulted in widening the gulf, and creating new and varied positions of schism. There were heretics, those who would fellowship heretics, those who would not emphatically 'disfellowship' heretics, and those who sought to pass resolutions which permitted heretical views on inspiration to find accommodation in ecclesias predominantly orthodox.'¹

The world-reaction, within Christadelphia, was even more complicated.² Elsewhere Wilson commented:

'The issue of who might fellowship whom involved numerous ecclesias, and caused many minor secessions over the following months. In many places the division was not clean once and for all, - there were second splits among the orthodox who remained.'³

As splits sub-split into splinters, the stance of some ecclesias, such as Edinburgh, Manchester⁴ and Cardiff, was to take no stand, and to hope to remain aloof from the issues until the storms died down.

By the end of the Spring of 1884 the differences between Ashcroft and Roberts seemed to have been resolved in terms of Ashcroft's giving up the idea of emigrating to the U.S.A. For six months, a period of uneasy calm reigned in Christadelphia. Ashcroft continued to publish articles on varied subjects⁵ in The Christadelphian. Then, in the Autumn, a further period of change

1. B.R. Wilson, Sects and Society, (London, 1961), p. 248.

2. If one were to include the non-British Christadelphian ecclesias, the position was more complex - as Wilson continues (*op. cit.* p. 248): 'Overseas there was less willingness to accept Roberts's formulation, and the ecclesia at Washington roundly attacked him for libelling Ashcroft and Chamberlin.'

3. B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, p. 961.

4. See The Bible Lightstand, ii (1885), 383.

5. 'The Character of Christ' (May); a short biography of the Apostle Stephen (June); a similar study of Paul (July); 'Religious Pre-tence' (August).

began. J.H. Chamberlin and Robert Ashcroft both left the offices of The Christadelphian. Chamberlin, with a thinly-disguised Robertsian flea in his ear,¹ went to Glasgow to start a new magazine, The Aeon. Shortly afterwards he left the Christadelphian movement altogether. Ashcroft left his assistant editorship for Liverpool in September 1884, to start a magazine entitled The Bible Exegetist which was 'intended for circulation mainly among scholars and students of an alien type'.² Concerning Ashcroft's departure, Roberts was much less critical than he had been of Chamberlin's removal, but he was also less fulsome in his praise of Ashcroft compared with remarks he made about F.R. Shuttleworth in the same paragraph.³ Ashcroft continued to lecture on the controversial topic of inspiration from Christadelphian platforms. On 21 September, he spoke at Swansea on 'Inspiration: its Necessity, Nature and Limits'. This evoked fears from South Wales brethren, many of whom wrote to Robert Roberts expressing their concern. In October, the first shots-in-anger were fired. The first issue of Ashcroft's Exegetist appeared. In this he took up a variety of Higher Critical stances, unacceptable to Christadelphia as a whole.⁴ In mitigation of Ashcroft's offensiveness here, Professor

-
1. Roberts said of him 'Brother Chamberlin has left Birmingham... He was taken into the office as a substitute for "the work-house", which he said he saw ahead... If he prove an apostolic servant of the truth - which means more than literary ability, good men will rejoice... It would be a pleasure to speak in more confident terms.' Later, in response to criticism, Roberts went further in censuring Chamberlin: 'We should esteem it a great calamity for the brethren to be inoculated with his spirit and principles... he can write well - so can the clergy - beautifully... he lacks nearly all the qualifications except literary ability... should it subsequently appear necessary to speak more particularly in the way of explanation, we shall do so.' TC, xxi (1884), 426-7, 474.
 2. TC, xxi (1884), 427.
 3. Of Ashcroft's Exegetist, Roberts said 'We cannot but wish the project God-speed, and shall rejoice in its success.' Of Shuttleworth, he said 'he may be relied upon to reflect the true mind of the Spirit in this age of rampant Gentilism, elegant and otherwise.' TC, xxi (1884), 427.
 4. However, Butterfield reported that 'literally hundreds' of difficult Biblical texts were latched on to by brethren who supported Ashcroft's views - see The History of the Truth in the Latter Days, (Stockport 1958), p. 31. In a single issue of TC (January 1885) alone, Roberts sought to deal with 28 criticisms of Biblical accuracy.

Tom Turner¹ later pointed out that Ashcroft's journal was intended for external consumption only and that zeal for making converts had overbalanced his judgement: 'he seemed to have the idea that he would catch their attention by going as far as possible in their direction.'²

The exact parameters of Ashcroft's views on inspiration are difficult now to determine. According to Turner, Ashcroft was a delicate academic, not able to stand up to someone of so robust a temperament as Roberts. It may be, therefore, that apparent divergencies between statements made by Ashcroft about inspiration were real discrepancies - that is, that, under pressure from Roberts, he modified his view.

Thus, in October, Ashcroft wrote:

'The inspirational power would, therefore, probably come upon the writers in silence, and it would serve as an infallible guide to them for all its purposes. This, of course, would only apply to the original documents, and, in our view, to only such parts of them as could not otherwise be produced.'³

Here, Ashcroft seemed to be speaking of inspiration in general, and to be enunciating what, in the circumstances, could be regarded as quite a liberal view - that is that only the parts of the Bible as could not otherwise be produced (that is salvation as opposed to history and the like) were inspired.

Towards the end of November, however, having been attacked stridently by Roberts, he expressed himself on the same issue in the following way:

'The statement which the Editor of the C. challenges, was not made of sacred history as a whole, but only of certain minor features present in all our versions, which are allowed to be discrepant, and which no ingenuity can make to appear otherwise. My remark is connected with what Dr. Alford says about Stephen's speech. Let any one compare Acts vii. 15, 16 with Gen. 1. 13, and see if there be not

-
1. Turner, later to become professor of metallurgy at Birmingham University, was an able young brother in 1885 and subsequently became a leader of the 'Suffolk Street' fellowship.
 2. T. Turner, 'Inspiration and Fellowship Past and Present', from The Fraternal Visitor, January 1921.
 3. From the Bible Exegetist, reprinted in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea (Birmingham 1903), p. 4.

some justification of it. The one account says that Jacob was buried in Sychem: the other, that he was buried in Macpelah before Mamre - nearly 50 miles to the south of Sychem! Stephen is made to say (though I do not think he ever did) that Abraham bought the burying place of the sons of Emmor. In Genesis xxiii. 16, he buys it of Ephron the Hittite. It was Jacob, not Abraham, that "bought a parcel of a field" of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father; but neither he, nor Isaac, nor Abraham was buried there. It is for those who somnolently contend that inspiration covers every fragment of Bible history as we now have it, to explain away the obvious contradiction.¹

It is noteworthy that, in this passage, Ashcroft denied that his remarks were of general significance, but that they applied 'only [to] certain minor features present in all our versions'.

However, Ashcroft could be quite truculent. In another passage from the same magazine he said:

'This painful controversy, which has been without the least provocation on my part, has illustrated to me and many others the danger of entrusting any one man with unlimited and irresponsible control over the literature of the truth. I beg permission to record my emphatic protest against the supercilious disregard of brotherly counsel which marks the general policy of him from whom I have the misfortune to differ. When, in the early part of the first century a question of difficulty arose among the disciples, the apostles and elders met with their brethren to consider the matter. They had the gifts of the Spirit in their midst, while we have not. The necessity for such a conference in our day is surely none the less apparent on this account. "Where no counsel is the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety." (Prov. xi. 14). I believe in the inspiration of this verse. It would be well for the brethren if such belief were shared by all.'²

It is possible that Turner's judgement was faulty and that Ashcroft's variability was not a derivative of his timidity, but of failure to make up his mind.

Ashcroft's non-belligerent intentions were unobserved by Robert Roberts, who conducted against him what Turner described

-
1. R. Ashcroft in the Æon magazine for 21 Nov. 1884, reprinted in How it Happened, p. 22.
 2. R. Ashcroft, op. cit., p. 23.

as a 'campaign'. In November, Shuttleworth, who had also started a new magazine, called The Bible Lightstand, printed a long article by Roberts, attacking Ashcroft for his position regarding theological scholarship. Three weeks later, on 21 November, Chamberlain's magazine, the Aeon, printed Ashcroft's reply to this attack. By now, the battle lines had been well drawn up for internecine strife to commence.

Two-thirds of the December edition of The Christadelphian was devoted to issues relating to the controversy, including letters which attacked Ashcroft very strongly. Of the 48 pages of the January 1885 Christadelphian only two, which advertised Roberts's forthcoming book Further Seasons of Comfort, ignored the 'Inspiration' issue, and for the first time the possibility of a division occurring over this matter within the Christadelphian Household was the subject of discussion.¹

Action was taking place on other fronts, too, to resolve the dichotomy before it turned to schism. Professor Evans,² who had tutored Ashcroft in Hebrew and Greek, visited his former pupil and produced a formula on the subject of inspiration which he hoped would heal the breach. Roberts printed its text, in apparently approving terms, in the magazine.³

Roberts was engaged, simultaneously, in actions which did not appear to proceed along the same conciliatory path, and which were not recorded in The Christadelphian. In January 1885, an ecclesial meeting of the Birmingham (Temperance Hall) ecclesia was held at which the Ashcroft Exegetist article was discussed. A preliminary⁴ vote, rather than one specifically on the inspiration issue, was taken, according to Turner, 'in which Bro. Roberts did not obtain the majority; that is to say, the majority were against him.'⁵

-
1. In The Christadelphian, xxii (1885), 38, Roberts said 'Whether we shall escape division altogether, remains to be seen... speaking for myself, I shall refuse to remain associated with any assembly that tolerates the doctrine in their midst that any part of the Bible is not divine.'
 2. For details of Prof. Evans's conversion to Christadelphianism, see ch. IV, p. 193, above.
 3. TC, xxii (1885), 60-1.
 4. This was Turner's word to describe the nature of the vote. The information he provided revealed more about what the vote was not about than what it did concern.
 5. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, p. 5.

In the days following this meeting, Turner, then a young man of 24, visited Roberts to attempt a reconciliation over the two entrenched positions on Inspiration. Turner claimed 'that Bro[ther] Ashcroft denied that he ever intended to teach what Bro[ther] Roberts made out in regard to his article.' Roberts was not pacified by this approach - '[he] was very excited, and stormed at me, saying something to this effect, "Do you think I haven't the intelligence to understand what a man means?"'.¹ Turner observed dryly to Roberts that 'a man is usually supposed to know what he means when he writes. Be must surely be the man who is to interpret his own writings.'² But his intervention was fruitless, except that Roberts disavowed the use of the 'postcard' method of solving this dispute which he had twelve years previously adopted to great effect in the Edward Turney 'Clean Flesh' controversy.³

Roberts claimed that his reason for attacking Ashcroft involved the defence of a dead man's good name: 'He who touches Dr. Thomas, does touch the apple of our eye.'⁴ Again, 'I am ashamed to have Dr. Thomas's achievements placed by the side of the modern system of "Biblical criticism" and the "entire apparatus" of modern learning. What have these done for the truth?'⁵

Ashcroft replied, in the Aeon⁶, stating that his letter to Roberts about Thomas had been private and that:

'I may say that my private allusion to Dr. Thomas was intended to restrain the immoderate and fulsome panegyric of him which is so prominent a feature in his successor's writings. This I am persuaded, cannot be other than displeasing to him who "will not give his glory to another." The Dr. himself admitted that he "wrote some chaff". I have said nothing stronger than this.'⁷

-
1. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, pp. 5-6.
 2. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, pp. 5-6.
 3. See ch. III above, pp. 98-99.
 4. TC, xxi (1884), 559.
 5. The Bible Lightstand, 1 November, 1884, cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 15.
 6. Cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 23.
 7. After the controversy had blown over, a number of brethren on Roberts's side in the issue freely admitted that the discussion between Ashcroft and Roberts over inspiration had shown up defects in John Thomas's linguistic skills. For example, The Bible Lightstand, ii (1885), 359-360, where Bro. H.B. Smither wrote 'The controversy has taught us that our noble brother, Dr. Thomas, was no scholar, and that his Hebrew and Greek were satisfactory only to himself and a few devotees.'

Ashcroft's view of Roberts seemed to be not only that he was authoritarian, but that he extrapolated from his own authoritarianism and mistakenly applied the same characteristics to Dr. Thomas. Having mistakenly worshipped Thomas's teachings as themselves authoritative, Roberts then went to excessive lengths to defend his leader against a man who showed Thomas's views were not authoritative.

A further meeting of the Birmingham Ecclesia was held on Thursday, 19 February, 1885, at which Roberts stated in public, under questioning from Tom Turner, that he would not use the post-card method in this case.¹ A resolution was proposed by Roberts and carried regarding the Inspiration question. The text read:

'COPY OF RESOLUTION.'²

Passed at Birmingham, February 19th, 1885.

"That this Ecclesia believes that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which now exist in all languages, were originally produced, in all parts of them, by inspiration of God, in this sense, namely, that the Holy Spirit moved and guided the writers either to use its own words conveying information of which they had no knowledge, or to record their own knowledge in words which it superintended; or to adopt and incorporate, from outside sources, whatever it might approve or require to be recorded for its own purposes - the writers being in no case left to their own unaided efforts, and the result being that their writing was free from error; - and further, that this Ecclesia will hereafter refuse to fellowship all who maintain that inspiration was limited to the writing of certain parts only, and that the other parts were the work of a merely human authorship liable to err, but will take no action of withdrawal from any member of the ecclesia until accusation is made against him in the Scriptural form, and he has been heard in his own defence." - Proposed by Bro. Roberts.³

-
1. Turner's interpretation of this meeting was supported by Hadley in the *Aeon*, June 19th, 1885, no. 38, pp. 298-300.
 2. From How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 24.
 3. The Recording Brother of the Temperance Hall ecclesia later claimed that the brethren of the Central Fellowship 'did not think Matthew xviii applied to the situation created in 1885.' - 20 Years Ago and Now, by 'P', (B'ham 1905), p. 22. The last section of this resolution, however, was clearly alluding to Matthew xviii.

So far as Turner and his associates in the Birmingham meeting were concerned, the matter was now closed: Ashcroft had removed six months before to Liverpool, and was no longer the Birmingham Ecclesia's concern; a resolution on the controversy had been proposed by Roberts, had been found acceptable by a meeting of the ecclesia and everyone was satisfied; Roberts had foresworn the use of postcards, and was therefore committed not to adopt unilateral action.

Three months and three days of calm passed by. Ashcroft had published no more issues of The Exegetist, little had been published in The Christadelphian about the inspiration issue, other than two articles by Roberts continuing his series on 'The Question of the Inspiration of the Bible' in March and April, and letters expressing ecclesial support for Biblical inspiration.

In May, however, the Washington (D.C.) ecclesia wrote from America attacking Roberts and praising Ashcroft and Chamberlin.¹ The volume of support for Ashcroft from British ecclesias began to grow too - Birkenhead, Abergavenny, Manchester, Grantham, Kidderminster, most of the large Halifax meeting, Glasgow and most of Mumbles favouring him.² Ashcroft began rather tartly to turn

1. TC, xxii (1885), 234.

2. See B.R. Wilson, Ph.D thesis, pp. 957-958. Wilson, as far as the Manchester ecclesia, at least, was concerned, was too sweeping here. Private correspondence between the Oldham and Manchester ecclesias on this issue was printed in full in The Bible Lightstand in November and December 1885. This revealed that, whilst the Manchester ecclesia's detractors sought to tar Manchester with Ashcroft's brush, Manchester were merely supporting the concept of ecclesial autonomy. The secretary of the Manchester ecclesia, William Carr, wrote that 'there are none in our midst who call in question the inspiration of any portion of the original Scriptures fresh from the hands of the divine penman.' However, replying to Oldham's cross-questioning on the persons Manchester considered themselves in fellowship with, Carr wrote 'By what authority are ye constituted the judges of those who have put on the saving name of Jesus in the divinely appointed way... As to who we would or would not fellowship, we may just say, that we are not indebted to you... we would therefore thank you not to interfere in our affairs, where you have no right.' - See The Bible Lightstand, ii (1885), 383 & 397; also p. 205 above.

down offers of speaking appointments at ecclesias whose platforms were also available to Roberts.¹

Ashcroft was being encouraged to face up to Roberts by a number of other developments, too. Brother W.D. Jardine, for example, described the Exegetist article as 'the best article on inspiration that has appeared in Christadelphian literature.'² Another prominent brother wrote to Ashcroft 'Personally, I go with you all the way... You are perfectly right in what you say.'³ Ashcroft was invited by members of the Temperance Hall ecclesia in Birmingham to lecture on their behalf (although it was made clear that the subject of the address was not to be inspiration).⁴ Butterfield noted that 'outside Birmingham, resolutions were being passed denouncing the Editor of The Christadelphian and expressing confidence in Ashcroft and Chamberlin.'⁵

Whether these were the sparks which were required to rekindle the old antagonism or not,⁶ Roberts called a meeting to which Turner and his associates⁷ were invited, on Friday 22 May. This was not called in an officious-sounding way - indeed, it was Whitsuntide, and the invitation was to tea with the editor of the magazine in the Garden Room. Roberts had declared in his invitation that he 'had nothing to propose', but a quiet talk could do no harm.⁸

The tea appeared pleasant enough. What occurred after tea was rather less palatable to Turner. He later wrote:

-
1. See How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 21.
 2. Cited in Twenty Years Ago and Now by 'P', (Birmingham 1905), p. 17.
 3. See How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 21.
 4. See How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 33.
 5. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 33.
 6. Hadley certainly felt this was the case. Ashcroft's invitation to lecture in Birmingham was regarded by Roberts, he said, as 'unsatisfactory', and led directly to his 'insist[ing] on renewing the stir in our midst.' - From The Aeon, 19 June 1885, reprinted in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 33.
 7. The list of names included those of brethren Bishop, Collins, Hadley, Shepherd and Thorneycroft.
 8. How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p.34.

'After tea Bro[ther] Roberts asked us - he did not refer particularly to me, but to Brethren Collins, Hadley, Bishop and others who were there - whether we would retire from the meeting amicably. It was a bombshell. We had no desire to retire from the Ecclesia; we had no reason to suppose that our work in the Ecclesia was not satisfactory.'

Roberts next proceeded to a manoeuvre intended to mollify the effects of this proposal. If the brethren present, he said,² were prepared to denounce the two leaders of dissent, namely Ashcroft and Chamberlin, all could be forgiven and forgotten. However, when it became apparent that the brethren present were not prepared to undertake such a course of action, Roberts proceeded to reveal that Turner and his 29 or so brethren were in for more unpleasant shocks.

Very shortly afterwards,³ Roberts produced postcards and circulars on which the recipients were to sign full and unequivocal acceptance of the Robertsonian formula for Inspiration, and their promise to withdraw from brethren Ashcroft and Chamberlin.⁴ Turner's shock gave way to anger that an unscriptural method of

1. T. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, p. 6.
2. 'Bro[ther] R., in the presence of about 30 brethren, including bro[ther] Hadley and bro[ther] Bishop, frankly told us that if we would but repudiate yourself and bro[ther] Ashcroft, the matter is settled.' - Letter to Chamberlin, editor of the Aeon, from brother James Thorneycroft, 28 May 1885, cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 28.
3. Hadley felt that all this happened too smoothly and speedily to be a natural cause and effect sequence. Writing to Chamberlin in the Aeon four weeks later under the heading 'The majority in Birmingham - how obtained and of what sort', he said 'Bro[ther] Roberts never told us that he had had a little secret meeting of intimates, at which the whole "plant" had been devised and agreed upon... The measures were by the next day's post to send out a circular and post-card, containing, among other things, an affirmation of belief in bro[ther] Roberts's representation of bro[ther] Ashcroft's and your own teaching, to which he knew those of whom he wished to be rid would not consent.' - Cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 34.
4. For the text of this postcard, see p. 215 below. For Roberts's use of this method of solving disputes in 1873 and 1885 see ch. III above, pp. 98-99.

resolving the issue had apparently been adopted and that Roberts was likely to have his way because 'he had the lease of the premises... and had told those brethren that he had the lease, and whoever remained with him would remain in the premises.'¹ In short, total agreement with Roberts was the price to be paid for a ticket to the Breaking of Bread service. Hadley said that the postcard and circular advertised a caucus meeting 'where [Roberts] would be relieved of the pressure of some who... he had found inconveniently powerful in argument. This meeting was deferred for a fortnight, while a vigorous personal canvass was carried on by his supporters to get in the postcards of a majority of the ecclesia.'² The text of Roberts's postcard was as follows:

'BROTHER -----, Address, -----,
 and Brother Ashcroft having publicly promulgated,
 and Brother Chamberlin having publicly endorsed, a
 doctrine to the effect that the Bible is only partly
 inspired, and that there is in it an element of
 merely human composition liable to err, I recognise
 the necessity for standing aside from all who re-
 fuse to repudiate this doctrine, and I will co-
 operate in any measures that may be adopted to en-
 able us in Birmingham to do so in a peaceful
 manner.

'Initials -----.'³

J.J. Hadley, a fellow employee of Roberts on the Birmingham Daily Post and a leading Christadelphian, tried to organise a counter-coup. He issued a circular which stated the following:

'DEAR BRETHREN,---The unseemly haste of Brother Roberts in the endeavour to snatch an unfair advantage of certain brethren, of whose statement of the case he is afraid, has placed them in a position of great difficulty in arranging for the Ecclesia receiving full information upon what is being done. Brethren are, however, earnestly besought to withhold the posting of their post-cards, by which they hand themselves over to Brother Roberts, until they have attended a meeting to be held as early as possible this week, in defence of those Birmingham brethren unjustly aspersed. This meeting - to announce the time and place of which means will be

-
1. T. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, p. 6.
 2. From the Aeon, cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 34.
 3. The text of this postcard was cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, pp. 25-6.

devised without delay - will be convened by brethren who "believe that the Bible is wholly inspired", and who hold that there is no Scriptural ground for exacting a more minute definition of inspiration than the following:- Inspiration is the imparting of such a degree of divine influence, assistance or guidance, as enabled the authors of the several books of Scripture to communicate divine knowledge to others without error or mistake.'

'P.S. - The meeting will probably be held in the Girls' Department of the Bristol Street Board Schools, at eight o'clock on Tuesday evening; if otherwise, see Tuesday's Mail.'

It is noticeable that, whilst 1885, in Christadelphian historiography, is known as the Inspiration Division, the main subject of disagreement in the texts of the above was on fellowship, not the definition of Inspiration. Roberts felt that the case was urgent enough to demand immediate, summary withdrawal of fellowship: Hadley and his peers did not.

Very shortly afterwards, the meeting together of those who agreed with Roberts produced a new ecclesial constitution, automatically excluding those unticketed (and, therefore, not present) not only from the Breaking of Bread meeting, but from ecclesial fellowship in toto. Having officially dissolved themselves and reconstituted themselves upon the basis of a constitution incorporating a clear and Robertsian definition of inspiration, the Temperance Hall meeting held a Breaking of Bread meeting for ticket-holding Christadelphians only - non-ticket-holders being excluded from communion, but allowed to remain as witnesses. Turner described what happened to him:

'I went to the door on the Sunday morning - there was a strong brother put there to keep the door, and behind the door there was a table, so that the door could only be opened a little way, and no one without a ticket could pass. I was asked where was my ticket? I replied, "What ticket? You did not ask me for a ticket last week; why do you want one this week?" The answer was, "Do not pretend, Bro[ther] Turner. Up to the gallery for you!" Up to the gallery went Bro[ther] Turner. And this is what Bro[ther] Roberts termed Bro[ther] Turner withdrawing from the Ecclesia!'

1. Hadley's circular is cited from How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 26.

2. T. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, p. 6.

Turner was scandalised, but rational as to the success of Roberts in the face of a plethora of printed material from leaders of the Ecclesia¹ which dismantled the logic inherent in his viewpoint. Looking back, with over thirty years of hindsight, Turner said of the 1885 schism:

'It went through the length and breadth of the land - nay, of the world. The methods were not repeated elsewhere, I am thankful to say. The methods in Birmingham were condemned by some of Bro[ther] Roberts's best friends and supporters, but the camp had been riven into two, and the brethren had to stand on one side or the other. The way most of them looked at the position was this: Here is Bro[ther] Roberts, who has stood so many years for the Faith; and on the other hand we have two weak men like Ashcroft and Chamberlin, whom we are not prepared to support. Is it a matter of surprise that so many supported Bro[ther] Roberts in these circumstances? They did not realise, however, that we who were turned out, who were expelled, were not voting in favour of partial inspiration, or any other fable, but that we were protesting against the violation of all Ecclesial rules and the following of unapostolic methods.'²

The Fraternal Visitor magazine produced volume one, number one in October 1885. It was sent free of charge for three issues to all those who were previously subscribers of The Truth. These people had, by then, received nine issues of that magazine, in addition to the one and only issue of the Exegetist. The Fraternal Visitor subsequently became the main organ of the 'Exchange' brethren, or as they were shortly to be known, the 'Suffolk Street' fellowship. These brethren opposed Roberts's tactics of May 1885, but otherwise considered themselves 'Central' fellowship Christadelphians. As such, the Fraternal Visitor became the rival of The Christadelphian magazine. These facts led opponents of the Fraternal Visitor scornfully to dismiss it, and the Suffolk Street brethren along with it, as the equal representative of Higher Criticism with The Aeon, The Truth or The Exegetist.³

-
1. Such as J.J. Hadley, James Thorneycroft and J.J. Bishop.
 2. T. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship, Past and Present, p. 7. Bryan R. Wilson commented similarly to Turner on the personalisation of ecclesial politics in Christadelphia - see his Ph.D. thesis, p. 963.
 3. See, for example, A.S. Thompson, Separation! When is it Necessary?, (London 1921), pp. 5-6.

Suffolk Street brethren themselves explained the facts differently. They claimed that many of them were opponents of Ashcroft of as vehement an ilk as Roberts, but that they were equally opposed to Roberts's politics as to Ashcroft's theology. However, they believed, The Truth had possibly been unjustly blackened and 'in the absence of any other vehicle of communication, owing to the closing to us of the pages of The Christadelphian, The Truth was used for a very brief period, until its character was manifested.' Because:

'Later numbers contained attacks by Bro[ther] Thirtle on Dr. Thomas and advocated "immortal emergence"... the Exchange brethren then decided... to start anew. A committee of brethren of experience and good repute was formed... Bro[ther] J.J. Hadley wrote a four-page, closely printed, and well reasoned article... showing why it was decided not to take over The Truth, but to start an entirely new magazine... Bro[ther] Ashcroft was not in fellowship with the Exchange brethren, in October, 1885, when the Fraternal Visitor was started.'

However innocently the Fraternal Visitor may have begun life, as a medium for exchange of information between like-minded people, it became, through process of time, a focus for the Suffolk Street point of view, and, as such, a magnet of opposing polarity to The Christadelphian.

Dreadful havoc was wreaked in Christadelphia by this divisiveness.²

-
1. This extract comes from an article entitled 'The "Fraternal Visitor". Its Origin', which first appeared in the Fraternal Visitor, liii (1938). It was subsequently re-issued by S.P. Clementson of the Young Christadelphians' Amity Movement, as part of a pamphlet entitled Walking Together, (New Malden n.d.). Ashcroft was admitted to the Suffolk Street fellowship in 1889, after a declaration by him repudiating his former stance - see Ecclesial Fellowship and the Inspiration of the Scriptures, published anonymously by the Birmingham Suffolk Street Ecclesia in January 1930.
 2. Roberts himself confessed: 'a state of comparative prosperity ten years ago has been succeeded by one of strife, division and obstruction, and unutterable affliction has followed in the wake of ventures and expectations that seemed big with blessings.' - from TC, xxvii (1890), 27. For a comparison of ecclesial membership figures before and after 1885, see Appendix N.

As B.R. Wilson recorded¹: 'Barely a month passed without a division in some ecclesia, and certainly no year passed without many such secessions and a few reunions.' In general, the figures Wilson quoted for ecclesial membership for the early 1890s were about half the totals recorded in 1885.² Of the 25 ecclesias whose numbers Wilson cited, ten did not exist in 1885. This was not, as Wilson suggested,³ evidence of 'a steady gain of personnel gradually replac[ing] those lost to the fellowship of the Masonic Hall'⁴ but of a little increase coupled with a lot of fragmentation of the older, larger ecclesias into several factions. In many areas, the Suffolk Street fellowship retained control of the lease of the ecclesial hall. The Temperance Hall faction had perforce to move on.

On a number of occasions, reconciliations between Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street were attempted. For example, in August 1889, an olive branch proffered to Temperance Hall by Suffolk Street foundered when the wording of the Temperance Hall resolution required Suffolk Street not only to adopt a form of words similar to that originally proposed by Roberts four years earlier but also to agree that 'we are unable to compromise that principle by continuing in association with those who either believe or tolerate the doctrine promulgated by brother Ashcroft...'⁵ This, Suffolk Street felt, would have healed one breach but created many others, since some of their brethren tolerated Ashcroftism only in that they were prepared to discuss it, rather than dismiss it out of hand.⁶ In 1890 and 1892 further attempts were made at reunion. These, too, proved abortive, mainly because Suffolk Street ecclesias

-
1. Wilson calculated, in his Ph.D. thesis, p. 965, on the basis of figures provided by Roberts in TC, xxx (1893), 21, that there were 'something toward 3,000 Christadelphians in the Central fellowship' in that year. Before the division in 1885 there had been about 6,000.
 2. At Halifax, for example, out of an ecclesia totalling, in 1885, 196 members, only 23 sided with Roberts.
 3. B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, p. 965.
 4. An alternative title for the Exchange or Suffolk Street fellowship.
 5. Cited in W. Butterfield, The History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 45.
 6. W. Butterfield recorded the details, op. cit., p. 45.

were alleged to have fellowshipped individuals with known doctrinal heresies or character weaknesses.¹ On one notable occasion in March 1920, the two large Birmingham ecclesias² had healed the breach to the extent of agreeing a wording on the definition of inspiration. However, even after 35 years since the division, the tenderness of the feelings involved was great. Ad hominem arguments were sufficient to undo emotionally what reason had well-nigh perfected, even when these arguments were brought by a third party:

'This reply was accepted as satisfactory and the committees met. The meeting was adjourned for further consideration of the matter, but before the further meeting took place London Temperance Hall brethren issued circulars full of allegations against the Suffolk Street brethren. At the second meeting which was held it was found that progress was impossible, and a resolution was passed that the time for the consideration of the matter was not opportune.'³

While the Birmingham meetings were thus locked in periodic efforts to renew dialogue and unity interspersed with periods of renewed hostility, ecclesias away from the 'epicentre' were attempting reunion in their own locality. This illustrated the degree to which, despite the supremacy of Roberts, Christadelphian thinking still refused officially to recognise ultimate leadership as being exercised either by the Birmingham ecclesias, the Christadelphian magazine or its editor. One such area where reunion was attempted was Derby. In 1901, three years after Roberts's death, an attempt was made to debate the issues and to effect a reconciliation. Some movement was made by each side, but the St. James' Street (Suffolk Street fellowship) ecclesia took the lead in the issuing of written documentation to the 'Temperance Hall' ecclesia, then meeting at the Athenaeum. The text of the initial letter was as follows:

-
1. See TC, xxvii (1890), 274, and xxix (1892), 475.
 2. Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street.
 3. Ecclesial Fellowship and the Inspiration of the Scriptures, published by the Birmingham Suffolk Street Ecclesia, p. 4.

MAY, 1901.

'DEAR BROTHER OR SISTER,

Greeting in the name of our dear Lord.

We wish to inform you that a sincere and loving effort will be put forth on SUNDAY, JUNE 16th, 1901, in ST. JAMES' HALL, ST. JAMES' STREET, DERBY, to help forward the work of healing up the breach in the House of God, which was made upwards of fifteen years ago on the question of "Inspiration".

We most earnestly invite you to come, whatever may be your position as regards "fellowship"; also that you will kindly ask all with whom you come in contact to do the same, and thus support this Scriptural effort towards being reconciled in the work of the TRUTH. This is a duty from which the faithful in Christ Jesus will not shrink.

To facilitate this good work it has been arranged that the following proposition be discussed between two brethren:-

"That the division of the Household of Faith on the Inspiration Question is unjustifiable."

Bro. R.R. JARDINE will affirm.

Bro. W.H. HOFMEYER will deny.

The discussion will take place in the afternoon and evening of the above mentioned date, commencing at 2 and 6 o'clock respectively.

You will do a good work in the Lord's service by helping forward this, and all efforts towards "re-union" in The Faith as proclaimed by Jesus and the Apostles.

We remain,

Yours sincerely in Christ Jesus,

W.H. HOFMEYER.

R.R. JARDINE.'

The Athenaeum meeting's letter of reply simply asked the St. James' Street meeting to accept the pro-Roberts text of a resolution accepted by themselves in 1886. This stated:-

'1. "We hereby affirm our unabated confidence in the Divine Authorship and consequent infallibility of the Bible, and in the reliability (subject to errors of translation) of the copies in our possession - a recognition of which has hitherto been implied in our basis of fellowship."

1. Source: Derby (Bass St.) ecclesia's archival records.

2. "We reject the doctrine which attributes to some parts of the Bible a fallible authorship, and we deem it our duty to decline the fellowship of those who believe it."¹

The subsequent correspondence illustrated that this genuine and apparently sincere attempt by both sides to come together was frustrated by the desire of the St. James' Street ecclesia not to adopt any form of words devised by man to define Biblical inspiration, but to rely upon the Scriptures themselves (lest they should fall into some unforeseen error arising as a by-product of human reasoning) and the desire of the Athenaeum ecclesia not to fall into the error of creating the appearance of an agreement based upon a Scriptural text's definition of inspiration, whilst actually disagreeing on the precise interpretation of that text.²

As the standard around which non-Christadelphian Christadelphians rallied, the Fraternal Visitor and the Suffolk Street fellowship attracted ill-assorted comrades-in-arms. By about 1898, this group included the original assortment³ (less the more extreme supporters of the Ashcroft line who had followed him into the 'Wilderness'⁴); the Advocate fellowship, led from the U.S.A. by T. Williams; and, because some Suffolk Street ecclesias were prepared to tolerate what, by Christadelphian standards were wide latitudes of dissent,⁵ a whole range of unorthodox viewpoints. These unorthodox views included, for example, differences on who was to be 'responsible' to the Judgement Seat after Resurrection; on what, if anything, was to

1. Source: Derby (Bass St.) ecclesia's archival records.
2. There is little doubt that the St. James' Street ecclesia's resolution was more in the spirit of John Thomas. For Thomas's views on the advisability of written creeds, see ch. IV above, p. 147.
3. Referred to on pp. 212-8 above.
4. Despite reconciling himself to Suffolk Street in the manner described above (p.218), Ashcroft soon afterwards fraternised with Congregationalists at Seaforth, near Ormskirk, and received 100 guineas from them before leaving for the U.S.A. See W. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 50.
5. As well as coming to differ from the Central fellowship on the doctrine of fellowship itself, Suffolk Street also disagreed on the nature, scope and methods of ecclesial discipline - especially on whether arranging brethren could discuss a brother in his absence, as in 1885, or whether he was entitled to be heard personally - and the issue of ecclesial autonomy. The Central Fellowship always remained in line with the 1885 Roberts standpoint and looked to Birmingham for a lead. Suffolk Street hotly contended that the ecclesia was the only Biblical unit and that hierarchies were anathema.

be included in the category of pardonable doctrinal weaknesses,¹ and even, on a smaller scale, the nature of man and of salvation.²

The eventual healing of the breach was as strange as the failures to heal which had preceded it. John Carter, editor of The Christadelphian (1937-62), was known to oppose reunion between the Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street fellowships. In a very short space of time, however, in the 1950s, he inexplicably changed his view. This volte-face was so sudden and so drastic that not only was a further splinter group - the 'Old Paths' fellowship - generated, but many Christadelphians who remained within the Central fellowship found it difficult to understand, or even forgive, Carter. Some went so far as to cancel subscriptions to The Christadelphian in protest.

The consequences of this controversy did no good to the Christadelphian movement - distaste was expressed openly for any form of learning;³ many of those with intellectual status were squeezed out of the Temperance Hall fellowship, like Turner, or out of the movement altogether, like J.W. Thirtle;⁴ any form of

-
1. See, for example, Tom Turner, cited in W. Butterfield, The History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 42-43.
 2. See Butterfield, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
 3. For example, Zechariah Drake wrote to TC, xxii (1885), 76-7: 'As to the question of "Inspiration", I am with you, and am sure that in taking a stand on "Christ's estimate of the Old Testament", you are on the "ROCK" that all the D.D.s cannot overturn... the "M.A.s", "D.D.s", step in as Christ and Paul walk out, and a distrust and uncertainty take the place of that wise and just reverence for the Scriptures that has hitherto reigned among us.'
 4. Thirtle, much of whose early life was spent as a journalist and editor in Staffordshire, when he was a Christadelphian, later became part of an evangelical no-man's land between Christadelphians, Baptists and evangelical Anglicans, became editor of The Christian in 1920 and obtained doctorates in both literature and divinity. For details of Thirtle's earlier career as a Christadelphian, see ch. III above, pp. 117, 127, 133. The exact date at which Thirtle left the Christadelphian movement is not clear from the records. He may well have been part of the massive exodus in 1885-6 after the Inspiration controversy. It is certainly the case that he took over editorship of The Truth from Ashcroft, Roberts's arch-opponent, in Sept. 1885, that he had cast doubts upon the linguistic skills of John Thomas, and that his books were unfavourably reviewed by A.T. Jannaway. Despite Jannaway's dismissal of Bullinger's The Companion Bible (prefaced by Thirtle in March 1910) as 'an attractive but dangerous work', many of Thirtle's books, especially The Titles of the Psalms, were read avidly by Christadelphians. Thirtle died in 1934.

academic treatment of Biblical topics was anathematised from the pages of The Christadelphian for many years;¹ and, in Tom Turner's view, it altered the whole basis of the faith, twisting it away from that of Dr. Thomas.²

'We may not say so much about "originals" as our Temperance Hall brethren. Obviously if there are copies there must have been originals. Presumably they would partake of the character of the Holy Spirit under whose direction they were produced. But these originals never all existed at one time in one place. If they were put into my hands I could not read them. Hence the opponents of the Bible regard us as trying to hide behind a fence if we make claims for the originals which we cannot clearly demonstrate. My training in scientific investigation has led me to adopt another course. I do not claim the inspiration of the Bible to prove its truth. I prove its truth and then claim its inspiration.'³

This distaste for learning in the Central fellowship did not flag in succeeding years - if anything it accelerated. One correspondent wrote to The Christadelphian, 'I shall read with considerably less interest the next announcement of "Another "Revd." obeying the truth.' Roberts supported this conclusion.⁴ Bracketed with this was another letter deprecating 'learning of the nature [Ashcroft] advocates' and extolling the virtues of 'unlearned fishermen'. 'The adherents of the truth', this writer went on, 'are sufficiently educated to understand God's laws. To advocate learning of the kind suggested would lead to striving about words to no profit. I think this affair will stem the tide of mere head knowledge which lately set in.'⁵ A strong feeling, amongst certain Christadelphians, regarded all formal education beyond the legal minimum as tending in a potentially dangerous direction. This view

-
1. The formation of The Testimony magazine in 1931 was to fulfil the objective of providing rational treatment of academic issues in their relation to Christadelphian principles.
 2. That is to say, given an open Bible and freedom of speech, the Bible could be proved true, rather than claimed to be true a priori. See p. 204 above for a discussion of how Christadelphia was unsettled on this principle by the events of 1885.
 3. From Divisions - their Cause and Cure by Tom Turner, (Birmingham 1929), p. 75.
 4. See B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, p. 956.
 5. TC, xxi (1884), 562.

persisted well into the twentieth century.

A further result of the 1885 division was the search it provoked, amongst Central fellowship members, for causes of schism other than personality differences between Roberts and Ashcroft. It was argued that many converts to Christadelphianism lacked an adequate understanding. This had led to schism. It was the result of the inadequacies of 'examining brethren'.¹

In conclusion, the schism of 1885 can be seen to have been the result of a long- and a short-term weakness. In the long term, Christadelphians had made no political provision of any kind for regulating their internal affairs. Consequently, when important differences arose they were bound to have an explosive effect upon the structure of Christadelphia, since no method of containing them had been devised. Questions of fundamental importance in dealing with contentious matters - who in the ecclesial unit was to resolve disputes? who was to resolve inter-ecclesial disputes? what was the role of The Christadelphian in such scenarios? what was the importance of its editor relative to brethren holding offices within ecclesias?² what were the limits of tolerance on doctrinal and moral issues? - had never been considered, and agreed upon, universally.³ In the short term, Roberts's twenty years as editor and

1. See TC, xxvi (1889), 444.

2. J.J. Hadley put this question forcefully to the brethren in his letter of 28 May, 1885 (cited in How it Happened, ed. J.W. Lea, p. 27): 'Whence does bro[ther] Roberts derive authority to make his theory of inspiration the only one which brethren shall be permitted to hold on peril of being denied the privilege of fellowship... inasmuch as an exact theory of inspiration, and precise information as to how far the holy spirit in giving divine instruction interfered with the ordinary mentality of God's messengers has not been vouchsafed, it is simply papal arrogance on the part of any man, however estimable, to endeavour to bind the Ecclesia to the acceptance of his dicta on these matters.'

3. It was not, of course, 'political' issues only which the 1885 division raised. As Bryan Wilson has stated, 'Roberts saw the attack on the Bible as the undermining of the whole Christadelphian position - where would they be if they could not with certainty declare what they quoted to be the inspired word of God?' - Ph.D thesis, p. 959.

his 'star role' in confronting Hine, Stern and Bradlaugh had given him great prominence. The undoubted mistake in allowing the rapid rise of Ashcroft and Chamberlin had created friction at the top of a hierarchy that was already unstable because its behaviour-patterns were undefined. The precedent of 1873, where ecclesias had felt uncomfortable, but had let Roberts's summary treatment of Edward Turney pass unchallenged, was the only precedent available. In that sense, Roberts could hardly have been blamed for thinking the policy would work satisfactorily a second time. It is clear that the non-'political' nature of the Christadelphian constitution pre-1885 allowed the development of a power-vacuum, which was filled by 'personality cults' among leading brethren. As Bryan Wilson remarked: 'The frequency with which the principal proponent of a heresy could draw all or almost all of his own assembly with him... indicates the charismatic element at work.'¹ In addition, Roberts had taken on Ashcroft at The Christadelphian office, against the advice of many brethren, on his personal guarantee of Ashcroft's behaviour. This factor ensured a personalised aspect to the schism.

In sum, when one considers the 'fireworks' sparked off by the friction of 1885, the raging fires which developed from them and the length of time - 72 years - required for the furore thus engendered to die down, it is not surprising that more has been written about this single topic than any other in the history of the Christadelphian movement. Beside the accounts written by those who were actual participants in the events,² a number of subsequent authors have added their contributions to the general m⁴elée.³ The

1. B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, p. 963.

2. For example, Ashcroft, Bishop, Chamberlin, Hadley, Roberts and Turner.

3. For example, G.M. Lees, 'The Pioneers', The Mutual Magazine, xvi (1939); J. Owler, 'Controversies and Divisions', The Mutual Magazine, xvi (1939); W.J. White, 'The Past 100 Years', The Dawn Magazine. This last series of articles was published as a booklet in May 1948, at Peckham, London, having been serialised in The Dawn magazine between April 1947 (vol. viii) and March 1949 (vol. ix).

long period which the Christadelphians gave themselves to consider the matter did not, however, signify that the process involved careful mental digestion of the issues and logically-wrought deductions, leading to unanimity. Rather, Carter's sudden conversion to union between Suffolk Street and Temperance Hall was dissatisfying to the movement, not only because it generated yet another splinter group (the Old Paths)¹, but also because it blurred the issues over into a working compromise rather than effecting neat spiritual surgery to excise what Roberts had certainly considered a cancerous growth.

The questions to which a number of writers - both actual participants and subsequent authors² - have addressed themselves are two-fold. First, was Robert Ashcroft correct in theology in his contentions concerning the Inspiration of the Bible? Second, were Robert Roberts's methods of dealing with the theological and pastoral implications of Ashcroft's views spiritually sound? These major problems were connected with a number of lesser polemics: was Ashcroft reflecting the Biblical Criticism which he had only recently forsaken? was he given responsibility within the brotherhood too early? had it gone to his head? was Robert Roberts jealous of Ashcroft's oratorical prowess? could brethren be fellowshipped³ who, themselves, were known to have fellowshipped those in error on the Inspiration issue?

For the reasons outlined above, 1885 has assumed, within Christadelphian historiography, more significance than any other single year in the century and a half since the movement's inception.

-
1. This, in turn, sub-split, giving off 'The Wayfarers' sect.
 2. These included W.V. Butterfield, J.W. Lea, S.P. Clementson and A.S. Thompson, in addition to the individuals mentioned in footnotes 2 and 3, p. 226 above.
 3. See Glossary.

CHAPTER VISCHISMS WITHIN THE CHRISTADELPHIAN MOVEMENT, 1847-1885(a) INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the theological nature of a number of heterodoxies within Christadelphianism is considered, along with the history of the development of each one, and with some comment about the interreaction between orthodox Christadelphianism and these sub-sects.¹ One paradox is immediately striking - namely, the numbers seceding from Christadelphian orthodoxy in most of these cases were small, yet the amount of disturbance caused by their departure from the fold in all cases was substantial. A complex series of reasons contributes to the explanation of this dichotomy: a group having just cleansed itself from what it believed the corruption of established religion would clearly be dismayed at being sullied by doctrinal corruption itself; a sect registering a high degree of success, relative to its size, in its preaching efforts, would view with automatic scepticism news of reverses and would minimise to known defectors its reporting of such news; realisation of the importance of the role of The Christadelphian in nationwide communication would cause an editor to wish to prune news to a minimum, rather than to seek to advertise the problems.² All this might help to explain a minimising of the statistics, without recourse to an explanation which involved the editor of

-
1. Detailed references about the manner of the dealing by Christadelphians with several of these groups already exist in ch. III and V above in particular.
 2. A classic example of Roberts's censorship of news for this reason is mentioned on p. 259 below.

The Christadelphian in sharp-practice. A tradition of free, open discussion; a zeal sufficient to brave the taking on of all-comers such as leading atheists or prominent members of the established church; and a deep-seated desire to expunge any spot of worldliness would help to account for the publicity that even a tiny group would generate within Christadelphia.

(b) BAPTISED BELIEVERS, OR DOWIEITES (1848-1895)

In 1864, the Christadelphians in Britain comprised a small but homogeneous unit. By 1885, seven schisms had taken place - six brought about by named factions, known and recognised at the time¹ - and one brought about by a group not organised initially as a self-aware fifth column, but recognisable by historians today as holding a distinctive viewpoint, and which could be described as the 'Democratic Polity' group.² Two other groups - the 'Resurrectional Responsibility' and Advocate groups - manifested themselves shortly after 1885 and displayed theological traits which had repercussions on the religious alignment of the seven subsets already extant.

George Dowie (1824-95) was a Scot. He had become persuaded of John Thomas's views by March 1853. From that date, he and twenty-three other believers began to meet at his house at 12 Beaumont Place, Edinburgh, for their 'Breaking of Bread' meetings. Dowie's group was loath to adopt any distinguishing name, as were most early Christadelphians, but eventually agreed to call themselves 'Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.'³

-
1. These were the Dowieites, the Dealtryites, Proto-No-Willists, Renunciationists, No-Willists and Ashcroftites.
 2. The line taken by Roberts, after his assumption of the editorship, on ecclesial polity had a distinctly hierarchical flavour to it. The 'Democratic Polity' group aligned themselves along the older pro-Thomas axis.
 3. W.V. Butterfield and Robert Roberts referred to them in this way. Norrie, in his Early History, i, 9-10, referred to alternative early titles for believers in Scotland, such as 'The Royal Association of Believers', and, in vol. iii, 279-80, as 'Antipas'. Usually Norrie referred to them simply as 'the Church'. No separatism within the brotherhood was intended by the adoption of these titles - the term 'Christadelphian' was not coined until 1864.

A major distinction between the views of Dowie, and those who thought like him, and the views of Roberts, and what came to be Christadelphian mainstream thinking, was that Dowie wished to preserve the exciting, experimental debatability of issues which had existed for his peers and himself in the period 1848-64, whilst Roberts wished to clear up the disorganisation which prolonged debates on every imaginable subject had left and, eventually, to clamp down on debate itself, rooting out any remaining opposition.¹

Roberts, Butterfield and other writers presented a picture of tiny minorities in Scotland being led by Dowie into holding doctrines different from accepted Christadelphian tenets.² However, Norrie presented a picture of Scots ecclesias being populated by a large number of dour, independent-minded individuals such as James Lawrie who, on one occasion, referred to an old High Street brother called W.K. Rose who lived in days when brethren 'stood up for the "open communion" principle from which we had now withdrawn.'³ Other such individuals nominated by Norrie included Grierson G. Mitchell, John Forman, James Cameron, James Bannerman, Susan Mark, William Laing, William Dickson, John Duncan, James Steele, John Menzies, David Lawson, Allan Fordyce, Francis Renwick, Agnes Norrie, Margaret Swanson, John Norrie, James Dowie and William Norrie himself. Perhaps both these views contained truth, in that Dowie was primus inter pares.⁴ However, the later 1860s formed a period, coming after a decade and a half of debate, when it was resolved, only slowly, what accepted Christadelphian tenets were to be. It would be wrong, therefore, to view Dowie as a heretic. It would be nearer the truth to view him as an

-
1. For a list of the issues Dowie felt useful to discuss, see Appendix O.
 2. For example, a member of the Edinburgh ecclesia pleaded to be allowed to continue to believe in the 'doctrine of eternal torments' - W.V. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, pp. 11-12.
 3. W. Norrie, Early History, i. 317-8.
 4. George Dowie, for example, produced Edinburgh's first attempt at a pamphlet, The Bible, in 1855, and, in 1861, he wrote Reasons for Reimmersion, which the Roberts's had submitted to - see Norrie, Early History, iii. 304, 307, and i. 234-239. Dowie's hymn book, The Disciples' Choral Services of Bible Themes: a Selection of Short Anthems and Motetts, in the Words of Holy Scripture, produced in 1864, antedated by five years that of Roberts - See Norrie, op. cit., iii. 296; and TC, vi (1869), 147-9.

independent-minded individual unwilling to move in the same direction as Roberts over the clarification of doctrine.

The view, presented bluntly by Butterfield, and to some extent by Roberts, of Dowie, in a minority of one in the ecclesia, gradually being cornered and ousted, was not one which squared with the position as illustrated in Norrie, who, in volume iii of his Early History, presented the ipsissima verba of many inter-ecclesial debates on controversial topics in the period 1854-65.¹ These detailed extracts indicated a lively debate with two or more viewpoints being supported by articulate proponents.

The story of the coming to a head of the dispute between Dowie and Roberts was complex and unhappy, and involved the status of Dr. Thomas, too. Thomas's relations with Roberts had been 'frosty' for some period.² One of the reasons for this was Roberts's failure to deal adequately with Dowie, who had developed a different view of the book of Revelation from that of Thomas as currently being published in Eureka. Of this clash of interpretations, Norrie wrote: 'To an ardent disciple of Dr. Thomas's, fresh from the perusal of Eureka, the whole of George Dowie's article must have been as gall and wormwood...'³ In March 1864, Roberts wrote to Dowie attempting to produce a formulation of doctrine which would bridge the gulf between Dowie and Thomas.⁴ Dowie acquiesced in this test and replied to Roberts to that effect.⁵ Roberts was delighted. However, in the April 1864 edition of Dowie's Messenger magazine,⁶ an interpretation of part of the book of Revelation was produced in which Dowie alluded to belief

-
1. W. Norrie, Early History, iii. 1-179.
 2. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 97. This period followed the visit of 1862-3 to Britain of Thomas and was referred to in Roberts MDAMW under ch. XXI's rubric 'Strained Relations with Dr. Thomas'.
 3. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 94.
 4. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 91-3.
 5. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 93.
 6. The role of The Messenger of the Churches, first published in 1860, north and south of the Scots border, was gradually taken over by The Ambassador and The Christadelphian. Dowie's magazine struggled into the 1870s under new names. For details see the Bibliography below.

in a personal devil. Norrie wrote:

'This, it is to be noted, was not a new piece of intelligence to Robert Roberts as, during his residence in Edinburgh, five years previously, he was well aware that some of the brethren believed in a personal devil, and he had always combatted the idea, although never suggesting that such a belief invalidated the faith of the person who held it.'

However, Roberts wrote at once to Dowie 'cancelling the acknowledgement of brotherhood he had sent only a few days previously...'² A further letter from Roberts was the last which was ever exchanged between the two. It was followed shortly after by a thaw in the frost between Thomas and Roberts, which had lasted approximately nine months.³ A fellow Scot, James Cameron, was later to stigmatise Roberts for making the personal devil a sudden and expedient ground for fellowship.⁴ Norrie, too, although Roberts's brother-in-law, criticised him over this issue, especially since, shortly afterwards, another individual, Maria Henry, was not disfellowshipped by Roberts on the identical grounds of belief in a personal devil. When Norrie broached the matter with Roberts, Roberts replied that:

"There was a great difference between the two, as George Dowie could teach error in the meeting, while Maria could not." I said this was making a person's capacity to teach the test of fellowship, and not his or her individual belief. He would not admit this...'⁵

Thomas's opposition to Dowie was not mollified by the latter's ostracism. In December 1864 he wrote: 'Had I the authority and power, I would very soon suppress, without one warning, much less three, such twaddling sheets as the Messenger...'⁶ Roberts, too, pursued the antagonism. Norrie wrote that, whilst Robert and Jane

1. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 93.

2. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 94.

3. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 97.

4. Cameron's article appeared in the October 1874 edition of the Christadelphian Lamp, then edited by Edward Turney. It was cited by Norrie in Early History, ii. 97-8.

5. W. Norrie, Early History, ii. 98-9.

6. W. Norrie, Early History, iii. 341.

Roberts were reading their Bible Companion readings from Proverbs, in April 1864, and whilst they were simultaneously contemplating the new magazine which Thomas had suggested they should go to Birmingham to begin, they read: 'A wicked messenger falleth into mischief: but a faithful ambassador is health.'¹ Norrie recorded: 'Both Roberts and Mrs. Roberts laughed heartily when they found how exactly this Proverb of Solomon fitted their requirements.'² Three months later the first edition of The Ambassador of the Coming Age was produced, taking over the role of supplier of 'intelligence' of Dowie's Messenger.

Although Dowie was disfellowshipped, with official opprobrium from both Roberts and Thomas attaching to him, the issue was regarded as having been resolved unsatisfactorily by some Scots. When, in 1867, Roberts visited the Aberdeen ecclesia a confrontation took place in which Roberts refused to break bread with the ecclesia because they had not 'endorse[d] his judgment' in the case of George Dowie. They said they could not do this without full investigation of the facts. Roberts equivocated. 'After much evasion and repeated pressure by Bro [ther] Gill for an answer... [Roberts stated that] it was his private judgement.'³ Eventually Roberts became involved in 'much disputing concerning the position of the brethren in Union Hall, during which he asserted many things concerning them which by the evidence in our position⁴ they did not hold...'⁵ The ecclesia eventually 'deemed it the safest course to pass no judgement on the matter.'⁶

Roberts had been accepted as a leading light in Birmingham, soon after his arrival there early in 1864, and despite his youthfulness.⁷ Supported by Thomas, Roberts's Ambassador flourished; opposed by Thomas, Dowie's rival Messenger went into decline.

1. Proverbs xiii. 17.

2. W. Norrie, Early History, iii. 357.

3. Aberdeen Ecclesial Minutes, p. 85.

4. A MS. error appears to exist here. Perhaps 'possession' was meant.

5. Aberdeen Ecclesial Minutes, p. 86.

6. Aberdeen Ecclesial Minutes, p. 86.

7. For the details of this reception in Birmingham, see ch. III above, p. 83.

Discussions were taking place in Scotland at this time on topics about which no-one had previously raised official objection. These included the immortality of the soul and the resurrectional responsibility of 'the Esquimaux' and 'all heathens'.¹ The doctrinal distinction underlying these divergent views was that of fellowship, of which the Dowieites had a much more liberal view than that which was developing in England under Roberts's direction.²

The weight of received opinion began to tell against George Dowie, so that, in May 1866, the majority of Christadelphians followed the lead of the Birmingham Ecclesia, and Robert Roberts, in disfellowshipping the Scot. The text of the excommunication

-
1. W.V. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 12. Why the Eskimos should have been selected for special consideration, either by Dowie or Butterfield or both, is difficult to establish with certainty.
 2. That the real source of disagreement was other than the immortality of the soul was borne out by the fact that the Dowieites eventually became the Conditional Immortality Mission, a group which existed well into the twentieth century, and which, as its name implied, was against the immortality of the soul. One Scots Christadelphian corresponding with the author commented that he felt Robert Roberts had been very unfair to George Dowie over this issue. Many brethren baptised in the late 1840s and 1850s expressed reservations about the fissiparist direction in which Christadelphian credal punctilliousness was going. Norrie, in his Early History, cited instances regarding intercommunion (vol. i. 72, 317-8; vol. ii. 143); preaching being regarded as essentially a non-bureaucratic individual responsibility (vol. i. 190); suspicions against written constitutions (vol. i. 245); tremendous variation in ecclesial organisation (vol. ii. 179-80); and instanced comments by Thomas, from that period, in support of these attitudes (see vol. i. 28-9, 71-2; vol. ii. 103-4). Dowie, at an Annual Aggregate Meeting held at Edinburgh in 1864, reminisced: "We have been accustomed to date the origin of our several assemblies to the lectures of Dr. John Thomas, in 1848-50, when a large proportion of the earlier brethren had their attention first directed to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God - preached by our Lord and his apostles as the subject of saving faith. The bond of fellowship amongst us, as established at the first, was a common faith in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and a subsequent immersion into the name of the Lord. Along with this uniformity of belief and practice, there existed, on the part of many, a difference of opinion on other matters, which, though important in themselves, were not reckoned matters of saving faith; and the holding or expressing of them was not regarded as antagonistic to the most cordial fellowship in our common faith and salvation. Now, however, it is different." - Norrie, Early History, iii. 136.

read:

'That the Ecclesia, having heard read to them, and having considered the report of a discussion on the bearing of the immortality of the soul on the one faith, which took place on Sunday, April 8th, Sunday, April 15th, and Sunday, May 6th (1866) among those in Edinburgh, styling themselves "Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God", and meeting in Union Hall, 98 Southbridge, the Ecclesia consider it their duty, as witnesses of the truth, to disavow with the so-called "Baptised believers in the Kingdom of God", and requests the secretary to write to George Dowie, the Secretary of the community in question, apprising him for the information of himself and the said community of this their solemn decision.'

Dowie, however, was not cowed by this treatment. He himself felt that even John Thomas was too authoritarian - certainly as his views were presented by Roberts.²

The clash between Roberts and Dowie was perhaps unavoidable, given some difference over doctrine and a wider difference of ecclesiastical polity affecting the issues of both hierarchy and fellowship. However, although the term 'Dowieite' did persist, it was mentioned in the 1870s only in terms of former Dowieites making application to rejoin the Central fold. As early as 1869, the issues involved in Dowieism had been ossified, as far as mainstream Christadelphianism was concerned, to the extent that they were relegated to the 'Answers to Correspondents' section of the Ambassador.³ The Messenger maintained a continued existence by going through a variety of metamorphoses - a new series beginning in November 1876.⁴

-
1. W.V. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, pp. 12-13.
 2. Although Dowie began with a very charitable view of Roberts - during the early 1860s Dowie included a note of praise in the Messenger regarding Roberts's impact on Birmingham, as recorded by Norrie, Early History, ii. 65 - Dowie later became critical of what he saw as Roberts's authoritarianism. On one occasion, Dowie described the situation of the Birmingham Ecclesia vis-à-vis Roberts in this way: 'the [Birmingham] Christadelphians are an inconsiderable faction under the domineering dictation of a pride-blown novice.' - the Ambassador, iii (1866), 48.
 3. See the Ambassador, vi (1869), 103-4.
 4. For the details of this, see Norrie, Early History, iii. 350-351.

As an issue of live debate within Christadelphianism, Dowieism was important until 1866 or 1867. Although basic differences made a clash between the Dowieites and the Central fellowship seem likely, one of the sparks which ignited the explosion was struck fortuitously. In 1849, a rupture in Wesleyan Methodism had led William Clement of Mumbles in South Wales to separate himself. In abhorrence of the system by which Methodist Chapels became the property of the Methodist Conference, half the congregation followed in Clement's footsteps when, in 1863, he decided to become a Christadelphian. Since the congregation had built the chapel themselves, under Clement's direction, it was their own property. Many problems had to be resolved during the next few years. Robert Roberts described the situation of flux as follows:-

'For awhile things were in a transition state. The old foundations were upheaved, but the new ones were not yet laid. An ecclesiastical chaos set in. No-one knew what was to be believed, or what might turn up next. Bro[ther] Clement went on steadily preaching the new doctrines so far as he understood them, and gradually order began to come out of confusion.'

In the confusion someone in the Mumbles ecclesia felt that help should be sought from the Edinburgh brethren, from whom Clement had first learned about Christadelphianism. However, the ecclesia communicated with was the Dowieite not the 'Central' one. George Dowie responded to this appeal for help, much to the chagrin of the Central fellowship. Not only was Dowieism to spread, it seemed, but at the expense of this Welsh chapel congregation who had only just escaped enslavement to Wesleyan Methodism. Roberts subsequently visited Mumbles to help develop a more orthodox attitude in the congregation. The outcome, Roberts felt, was successful. He later wrote that, in terms of ecclesiastical polity, 'The Mumbles ecclesia, perceiving the wisdom of these considerations, acted upon them, and have thus protected them-

1. The Ambassador, iii (1866), p. 24.

selves against the perils incident to the former¹ arrangement.² In terms of doctrine, too, Roberts felt that Mumbles was moving in the right direction: 'The Mumbles ecclesia is progressing to this position, and will, doubtless, in due time obtain the victory.'³ Clement had converted to Christadelphianism in 1863;⁴ Dowie had fallen out of favour with Roberts and Thomas in 1864;⁵ as late as 1865, Clement was speaking out in appreciation of Dowie. At the Annual Aggregate Meeting of the Scots' ecclesias in July 1865, Clement, in commenting on his conversion from Methodism, had said:

'Soon afterwards I saw Brother Dowie... I recollect putting some very straightforward questions to that Edinburgh brother; and what struck me was, that he never answered me at all, but quoted from the Bible! I thought Brother Goldie was bad, but he was far worse!'⁶

Whether the Mumbles ecclesia had disowned Dowie by 1866, or whether this was wishful thinking on Roberts's part is difficult to decide. Whichever was the case, the Mumbles ecclesia, from which Professor Tom Turner's⁷ family came, had come to think so little of Roberts's views that they separated themselves from him after 1885.

Later, in April and May 1866, a three day discussion was arranged at the Union Hall, South Bridge, Edinburgh, between Dowie and the Scots brethren opposed to him.⁸ Roberts reported the outcome of this discussion in The Ambassador with some satisfaction.⁹

1. This 'former arrangement' regarded the over-hasty administration of adult baptism 'at a moment's notice, to any person requesting such a service', (The Ambassador, iii (1866), 149), and discussing the admission of the baptised person to the ecclesia.
2. The Ambassador, iii (1866), 150-151. later.
3. The Ambassador, iii (1866), 150-151 - the Mumbles ecclesia was also in doubt about the existence of a personal devil and about the necessity of a literal judgement of the saints, in Roberts's opinion.
4. See pp. 35-36 above.
5. See pp. 231-233 above.
6. Norrie, Early History, iii. 168.
7. One of the leaders of the Suffolk Street fellowship.
8. The debate was occasioned by a brother David Watson of Dundee stating that, at the time of his baptism, he had believed that all men were 'naturally possessed of immortality'. This led to controversy about whether or not Watson should be in fellowship as a Christadelphian. Dowie said this was acceptable, but the 'Central' brethren disagreed with him.
9. See The Ambassador, iii (1866), 261-274.

Dowie, supported by a number of the brethren present, began by seeming to get a very positive hold of the debate. As time went by, and questions from his opponents became more and more specific about whom Dowie would be prepared to fellowship, Dowie became vaguer and vaguer. When asked by William Norrie whether 'we should receive into our fellowship visitors from other meetings who had not at the time of their baptism believed that eternal life was only to be had through faith in Jesus Christ',¹ Dowie proposed that 'the question should not be taken up.' When pressed on the issue three times he said 'Oh! you may give me a twelvemonth [to consider the issue], and perhaps another after that.' A few minutes later he left the meeting. He was not present at all at the final meeting in May 1866,² at which a unanimous agreement on the issue was arrived at. The text was as follows:

'A clear understanding of eternal life being had only through Christ must precede baptism, in order to render it valid, and that all who are admitted into our fellowship must have had such an understanding previous to their baptism.'³

However, despite the efforts of Robert Roberts to contain Dowieism in Scotland, and despite the diligence of many Scots brethren to extirpate it in that country, Dowieism did spread south of the border. In January 1867, a discussion was reported in The Ambassador entitled 'The Good Fight of Faith', subtitled 'Letter from Certain in Huddersfield, Holding the Truth Dowieistically, and Rejoinder by the Faithful in Halifax.'⁴ If the criticism of George Dowie's performance at Edinburgh by the Central brethren had been his lack of Scriptural precision, they could hardly cavil at the Huddersfield Dowieite brethren from this angle, since their short letter contained over a hundred Scriptural

-
1. The Ambassador, iii (1866), 272.
 2. Roberts omitted to record the existence of twelve years of discussion between George Dowie and those who opposed him, in which Dowie believed he had won the arguments, but lost out to big guns firing from south of the English border. These discussions in Scotland (mainly Edinburgh) during the period 1854-66 were recorded in detail by Norrie in his Early History, volume iii, having been taken down in shorthand initially.
 3. The Ambassador, iii (1866), 274.
 4. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 11-15.

citations.¹ In fact, the reply from Halifax did not refer directly even to one of these references, but called upon Huddersfield to make unconditional surrender. It ended:

'N.B. Any future relationship between us must be based upon your expressed and avowed renunciation of the foolishness by which you are now adulterating, and otherwise making void the word of God. We shall be ever happy to hear of such a renunciation.'²

By the time the May 1867 edition of The Ambassador was ready for printing, the Huddersfield Dowieites sent in the following forlorn intelligence to Roberts:

'James Mitchell, Mrs. Mitchell, and Thomas Fisher, lately meeting with the Dowieite church here, have withdrawn, and united themselves with Brother Rhodes and those who meet with him.'³

That was the end of Dowieism as a virulent opposition group to Roberts's dominance within Christadelphia. Some of their anxieties cropped up again, in 1873 and 1885, especially as far as ecclesiastical polity was concerned. Dowie himself merged, by the 1870s, with Protestant mainstream tradition. He became part of the theological 'ginger group' which produced The Rainbow monthly magazine.⁴ The significance of the journal's title was in reference to Genesis ix, rather than to any ecumenical spirit. Its objects were:

'The restoration of Biblical doctrine respecting the nature of Man and the promised Kingdom of God. It exposes the Dogmatic Errors which theology has retained since the Dark Ages; it proves that man is not immortal by nature, but that immortality is exclusively the gift of God in Christ; that the dogma of everlasting misery is no part of Revelation; and that the glorious work of the Redeemer will issue in a holy and happy universe; with kindred topics of profound and universal interest.'⁵

-
1. The Huddersfield argument was by far the most closely-reasoned of the various extant Dowieite postulations. Their case - that 'subjects, more or less abstruse, such as the personality or non-personality of the devil, the mortal or immortal resurrection of the saints, etc., we cannot exalt into portions of the glad tidings... but are "questions which do gender strife"' (The Ambassador, iv (1867), 13) - had at least a priori validity, and merited a fuller discussion.
 2. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 15.
 3. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 130.
 4. Although relations between Christadelphians and The Rainbow had never been fraternal, they had been less than frosty on occasion - see ch. III above pp. 90, 103 and 108.
 5. Cover of the Sept. 1875 issue of The Rainbow (vol. 11, no. 21).

Contributors to the periodical included such notables as Professor Shearer, Professor Birks,¹ Dr. F.D. Huntington, Dr. Robert Young² and Dr. Seiss.³ It was edited by Revd. Dr. W. Leask,⁴ minister of

1. Thomas Rawson Birks (1810-1883) was famous as a theologian and controversialist. He came from a non-conformist family. After graduating at Cambridge, he became a fellow of Trinity College, and professor of moral philosophy from 1872. Birks joined the Church of England after completing his studies, and became curate to the Revd. E. Bickersteth. From the 1850s, Birks became especially interested in Bible prophecy. His works included Horae Paulinae (1850), Modern Rationalism (1853), The Inspiration of the Scriptures (1853), and, at the request of the Religious Tract Society, The Bible and Modern Thought (1861). Birks later enlarged this work with a series of notes on the evidential school of theology, the limits of religious thought, the Bible and ancient Egypt, the human element in Scripture, and Genesis and geology. In the same year as his appointment as professor, he published his Scripture Doctrine of Creation and The Philosophy of Human Responsibility. In later years, he delivered the annual address to the Victoria Institute on 'The Uncertainties of Modern Physical Science' (1876) and published Modern Physical Fatalism and the Doctrine of Evolution (1876), Manuscript Evidence in the Text of the New Testament (1877), and Supernatural Revelation (1877). For twenty-one years, he was the secretary of the Evangelical Alliance. He was also an examiner of theological studies and a member of the board of theological studies.
2. Robert Young (1822-1888) was a theologian and orientalist. After a private education, Young became a printer, studying Hebrew, oriental languages in general and religion, in his spare time. He was connected for some time with Dr. Chalmer's Territorial Church Sabbath School, in the West Port, Edinburgh. He spent the period 1856-1861 as a missionary in India, adding Gujarati to his linguistic accomplishments, which already included Hebrew, Gaelic, Finnish, and the Romance and Teutonic languages. He eventually proceeded to the degree of Doctor of Laws, but was unsuccessful in standing for the chair in Hebrew at St. Andrew's in 1871. He was best known for his Analytical Concordance to the Bible (1879), although he also produced a literal translation of the Old Testament and a translation of Maimonides' 613 precepts.
3. Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., was pastor of the Church of the Holy Communion, Philadelphia, and author of The Apocalypse or the Prophecies of the Revelation (London 1882).
4. William Leask (1812-1884) was a Congregationalist. He was born in England, and converted to Christianity at the age of sixteen. He agitated against the established kirk in Scotland, becoming a member of the Scottish secessionist movement. For a time he edited the Christian Examiner, contributed to the short-lived Universe, edited the Christian Weekly News, until it became known as The Christian World. He also edited, for about a year, the Christian Times (1864), and, for two years (1864-5), The Rainbow, which J.M. Rigg described in the Dictionary of National Biography as 'a magazine specially devoted to propagating millenarianism and the Lockean heresy of conditional immortality'. He was an honorary D.D. of an American university.

Maberly Chapel, Balls Pond Rd. Although produced in Scotland, it had subscribers on the Continent and in the U.S.A. Its theological complexion may be gathered from some of the volumes it advertised, such as The Alliance of Roman Catholicism with Protestantism against the Kingdom of God by H. Brittain, and Wesleyan Methodism and its 'Cutting' the Progressive Christian Church, Atherton¹ by John Skelton. Dowie's part in The Rainbow was to act as an agent for some of its publications - at least one of which he wrote himself. Significantly, considering his Christadelphian background, this was entitled The Restoration of Israel.

The Rainbow engaged in controversy with The Christadelphian on two occasions shortly after Dowie had joined them.² On each occasion the issue for debate was the immortality of the soul; on each occasion Christadelphians felt that their views were mis-stated;³ on each occasion The Rainbow view was the traditional one of the inherency of immortality. This was in opposition to the tenets of the group as set out above. One possible deduction from these facts is that The Rainbow responded to Dowie's membership of their organisation by moving to a more traditional stance.

A handful of Scots ecclesias were the only ones who embraced Dowieism, but the exact number of Dowieites is unknown.⁴

-
1. This church considered moving wholesale to Christadelphianism - see TC, xiv (1877), 187-8.
 2. TC, vii (1870), 173-176, and TC, xi (1874), 497-504.
 3. This mis-statement related to an assessment of Christadelphian views as being 'materialist', Unitarian, and even atheistic. The first of these disputations occurred whilst Roberts was in the middle of looking after Dr. Thomas, who was on a visit to Britain - see ch. III above, p. 90. The controversy was discussed in The Rainbow in Nov. 1869, but referred to later in TC, vii (1870), 173-176.
 4. The number, as recorded by The Ambassador and TC during the period, was 18, 15 of whom returned to the Central fellowship after a period of Dowieite exile. However, variable amounts of censorship were exercised by Robert Roberts over reports of the activities of the various sub-sects. The record of the debates at Annual Aggregate meetings in Scotland between March 1853 and July 1865, as preserved in Norrie's Early History, iii. 1-179, indicated a substantial degree of general sympathy for Dowie, especially over the issue of the increased importance accorded to the tightening of the criteria of credal acceptability, in comparison with the liveliness of the faith - see, for example, Norrie, Early History, iii. 136, cited p. 234 above. Supporters of George Dowie preserved an identity independent from Christadelphians until the mid-twentieth century. These Christadelphian figures, therefore, can be regarded as very conservative estimates.

(c) DEALTRYISM OR 'JOSEPHISM' (1866-1868)

Although the percentage of Unitarians who became Christadelphians was only a tiny percentage more than one would have expected from the size of the Unitarian Community in Britain,¹ the Christadelphian community was not unappealing to Unitarians, neither was it immune to appeal from a Unitarian type of standpoint.

During one of his visits to Britain, Dr. John Thomas himself baptised a former member of the Adventists - Charles Dealtry. Dealtry busied himself in July 1866 in preaching his new-found faith, such that, at Bradford on Avon, large numbers of people attended his lectures - four immersions taking place promptly, with other people interested in following suit. This incensed members of the local clergy, one of whom interrupted one of Dealtry's lectures. Pressure from clerical sources behind the scenes caused the cancellation of the next in the series of lectures - the lessees refusing Dealtry leave to use the premises. Dealtry, undeterred, simply switched venues to an unoccupied Unitarian chapel and continued his activities.

The broadmindedness of Unitarians allowed Christadelphians a platform even when their chapels were not untenanted. F.R. Shuttleworth, for example, travelled the twenty miles from Halifax to Rawtenstall in Lancashire to speak from a Unitarian pulpit, in the same month as Dealtry's lectures in Wiltshire.

Shuttleworth and Dealtry got together at Whitby the following year, when sizeable numbers of people were converted to Christadelphianism. However, the value of Dealtry's assistance was soon questioned:

'Brother Shuttleworth thus reports... "I am happy to say that brother Cheetham and I found the friends at Whitby, brethren, "waiting for the kingdom of God and looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life." True, I found them entertaining an error respecting the sonship of the Christ (holding that he was the son of Joseph) but being of a teachable disposition, it was speedily relinquished for the truth on my "preaching Christ that he is the Son of God" - Acts 9.20."²

1. See ch. VII below, p. 287.

2. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 286.

It was later reported that 'a subsequent visit by sister Shuttleworth has developed in some a desire for reimmersion.'¹

In January 1868, the following 'Intelligence' was accredited to Whitby:

'WHITBY - Brother and sister Shuttleworth (transferred from Halifax) have settled here, taking up their abode at 8, Grey street. Breaking of bread has for the meantime been suspended among the friends of the truth gathered by the labours of Mr. Dealtry. The reason of this is that they have seen the fallacy of the belief upon which their immersion was based, that Jesus was the son of Joseph; and are progressing toward a mature comprehension of the truth in its several details. Upon this new foundation they desire to place themselves, and will shortly be re-immersed and organised as a Christadelphian ecclesia.'²

This is quoted in full because it illustrates the care with which the 'heretics' were dealt with - Shuttleworth, a keen, able zealot, was dispatched from the numerically strong Halifax ecclesia to keep an eye on the situation; breakings of bread were suspended lest unfortunate precedents be established regarding fellowship. By the following month, the pastoral discussions implicit in the sending north of Shuttleworth bore fruit in the reimmersion of four brethren and sisters. However, there was a relative brusqueness implicit in the above 'Intelligence' as far as Charles Dealtry was concerned: no olive-branch was held out to him; no plaudits for work well done; no offer, tactfully put, of setting him on the right theological tracks again; and he was entitled 'Mr.' Dealtry, even though he had not been disfellowshipped by any ecclesia and was a keen, if misguided, Christadelphian. Dealtry evidently felt the chill wind of editorial disapproval, because, in the truncated version of correspondence between Dealtry and Roberts that the latter allowed to be published, Dealtry always referred to Roberts's letters to him as 'strictures'. However, despite censure, Dealtry continued to be interested in the views of Christadelphians. In March 1868, he said:

-
1. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 287.
 2. The Ambassador, v (1868), 24.

'I must say that I should be very sorry to see the Ambassador given up, through want of means to keep it on. You ably conduct it. I much relish the articles on "the Judgment", by J.J. Andrew. Do me the favour of putting me down as an annual subscriber for two guineas.'

Implicit in this, perhaps, is the voice of misunderstood brotherliness - a desire that, for one mote in one eye, a diagnosis of wholly insensitive organs throughout the body should not be inferred.

The 'Dealtry heresy', or 'Josephism', as it was sometimes called, stated that Jesus was the Son of God in a non-biological sense: 'The Christ is called the Son of God for two reasons: first, because this title is equivalent to that of Messiah... second... because he was the first raised from the dead to an immortal life.'² Dealtry supported his view by citing substantial numbers of Scriptural references. His view can be summarised as follows:

(i) None of the apostles postulated the doctrine of the virgin birth; it had to be deduced. If it had been true, it would have been central and, thus, explicit.

(ii) Isaiah vii was not literally predictive of Christ in every respect - for example, he was never called 'Immanuel'.³

(iii) On some occasions in the New Testament, the sonship of Jesus from Joseph was mentioned.

(iv) Joseph's registry of Jesus directly implied he was Jesus's father.

(v) 'Born of a woman' was a Hebraism and did not imply a miraculous birth.⁴

(vi) Jesus's life as the Son of God was recorded as beginning with his baptism - for example, the temptations of Jesus, who was 'tempted in all things like ourselves, though without sin', took place after the immersion, not the physical birth.

(vii) The authenticity of the early chapters of Matthew and Luke - the only New Testament passages from which the virgin birth

1. The Ambassador, v (1868), 80.

2. The Ambassador, v (1868), 44.

3. Matthew i. 23 was an interpolation in Dealtry's view. A Gospel written in Hebrew and for the Jews would not need 'to give the interpretation' - see The Ambassador, v (1868), 45.

4. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 306.

could be established - needed scrutinising.¹

(viii) Old Testament predictions of the virgin birth were non-existent.

Roberts replied to Dealtry's views by occupying over three times the amount of space he allowed to his opponent; pro rata, he used less scriptural support for his argument. Roberts's lengthy answer can be summarised in the following eleven points:

(i) Jesus was unique amongst Bible prophets and seers; Dealtry's view had him as no more unique than many another holy man.

(ii) When, in the New Testament, Jesus was occasionally referred to as the son of Joseph, this was in citation of the historical fact that people of his generation believed that that was the case, rather than in Biblical corroboration of the fact.

(iii) Old Testament predictions of the virgin birth were sparse, but extant.

(iv) The vast majority of early manuscripts contained the first chapters of Matthew and Luke, and so 'the question to be decided is, were the chapters in question fraudulently excluded from the few copies, or fraudulently introduced into the many?'² Also, '... as against Mr. Dealtry's hypothesis, we have to place the internal evidence of genuineness presented by the chapters in question.'³

(v) 'If Christ was a mere man, how is it that he was sinless?'⁴ Though Jesus needed, in part, to be of sinful flesh, 'a mere product of Adamic procreation... would have been a sinner.'⁵

(vi) Some New Testament passages clearly imply that Jesus was the Son of God before his baptism - for example, 'THOUGH HE WERE A

1. Implicit in Dealtry's reasoning was a Biblical-criticism type of standpoint, which was foreign to and disliked by Roberts and the majority of Christadelphians. Roberts terminated Dealtry's defence of his views, after the publication of only three letters, in March 1868, and disallowed much being said on this topic. However, Dealtry had been allowed to state, in The Ambassador iv (1867), 305, that early manuscripts, such as Marcion's in the second century, omitted the first two chapters of Luke, and that the Cambridge manuscript contained the same genealogy in Luke as in Matthew - that is, a 'Josephite' one.

2. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 311.

3. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 311.

4. The Ambassador, v (1868), 46.

5. The Ambassador, v (1868), 48.

SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.¹ Roberts added 'Did he not learn obedience before he was thirty?'² (vii) Matthew's Gospel may not have been written in Hebrew; or may have been originally in Hebrew and later translated into Greek - thereby providing the textus receptus with an authentic Hebrew term like 'Immanuel' translated for the reader.³ Similarly, there was no evidence of Jesus's being known as 'Wonderful, Counsellor...' et cetera, but this did not debar him from fulfilling Isaiah ix.

(viii) Joseph's registry of Jesus's birth may have been simply to satisfy legal requirements rather than the concomitant of frankness about the child's biological origin.⁴

(ix) Dealtry had asserted that Roberts's views were merely prima facie allegations rather than proofs. By this yardstick, said Roberts, 'Mr. Dealtry also ... alleges... he does nothing more.'⁵

(x) The disciple Philip's statement that "'Jesus of Nazareth" was "the son of Joseph"' could be understood to be a legalistic, rather than a biological comment.⁶

(xi) If man could be justified 'by doing what God has commanded to be done'⁷, and if Christ's merit was as an exemplar, a 'mere man', then 'Christ's first advent was merely an incident, and not a necessity, or a vital means of salvation.'⁸

Other, minor, casuistry was involved in Roberts's answer to Dealtry - such as the precise calculation of the chronological prophecy of seventy weeks in Daniel ix - but the controversy brought from Roberts one important declaration, at least. This was the clearest resolution to the paradox - how could Christ, if the Son of God, really suffer temptation and meaningfully invite sons of men to follow him, and also, par contre, if less than the Son of

1. Hebrews v. 8.

2. The Ambassador, v (1868), 48

3. The Ambassador, v (1868), 51-2.

4. The Ambassador, v (1868), 52.

5. The Ambassador, v (1868), 52.

6. The Ambassador, v (1868), 81.

7. As Dealtry had claimed.

8. The Ambassador, v (1868), 82.

God, offer a sacrifice of universal significance. Roberts said:

'His inception by divine energy gave an affinity for divine things which is lacking in us, poor sons of earth. To speak phrenologically, the spirit stamped the perfect image of the elohim on the product of Mary's womb, and gave to the powers of his mind that perfect balance, which sin disturbed in the first Adam. Thus there would exist in him that soil for the quick germination of divine ideas, and a strong affinity for the divine revelation which was impossible in the first Adam, and impossible with us; - impossible with Adam, because the weight of painful ancestral experience did not exist to incline the balance on the right side; and impossible with us because we inherit a nature hopelessly out of balance ... Thus constituted, he was capable of developing a spotless character, and having our condemned nature upon him, he could stand in our stead. He died for us. He rose again. He was without sin. Death had no claim on him as an individual... Having risen, he is immortal... It is his exaltation to this position that is our salvation.'¹

The exact number of the followers of Charles Dealtry is unknown - he himself was regarded as a 'Mr.' - that is, not in fellowship as a Christadelphian - without having been technically disfellowshipped by any ecclesia; but the numbers concerned were very tiny, according to the accounts submitted to Robert Roberts.²

(d) PROTO 'NO-WILLISM' (1866-1876)

Shortly after Dealtryism had disappeared, an opposite heresy - 'Proto-No-Willism' - came to light. The 'No-Will' heresy as such did not occur until 1877. However, there were those, from the earliest days of The Ambassador, who believed that Jesus Christ was a mere emanation of his father and, therefore, had no independent will of his own.

In the U.S.A., in 1866, a number of Christadelphians adopted this viewpoint, and had an article written in opposition to their views in The Ambassador by Sister Lazius, Dr. Thomas's daughter. This was entitled 'The Origin and Nature of the Lord Jesus.'³

-
1. The Ambassador, v (1868), 83-84.
 2. The Ambassador and The Christadelphian, in the period 1864-1885, recorded only two individuals as being withdrawn from, or as resigning to, Dealtryism. These figures are, however, subject to the caveat contained in the introduction to this chapter.
 3. The Ambassador, iv (1867), 85-88.

A short skirmish on the issue developed ten years later in Britain. The origin of this was that one, unnamed, ecclesia had developed ideas of this sort. The ecclesia subsequently invited Robert Roberts to lecture for them. He wrote, in January 1876, that he 'could not feel at liberty to be identified' with their stance in public, and asked them to defend themselves scripturally.

All the correspondence involved was published in the March edition of The Christadelphian.¹ On this occasion, Roberts worked to try and 'leave the door open for conciliation'² by suppressing the names of the ecclesia and individuals involved. The correspondence in question included the exchange of nine letters, some from the original ecclesia concerned and addressed to Roberts, others from two sisters involved, one of whom was answered by Roberts in detail without the publication of the original text. Finally, in June 1876, J.J. Andrew noticed in the Christian Standard³ an account criticising the idea of 'No-Willism' from the viewpoint of mainstream Christianity. Extracts from the Standard, along with Andrew's observations, were reprinted in The Christadelphian.⁴ The particular view postulated in 1876 was not that Jesus Christ had 'no will' because he chose to surrender it voluntarily at some point in his life; it was not even that he had had no will primo, from his birth; it was that Jesus Christ pre-existed as 'Jehovah of the old [Testament]'⁵ and, ipso facto could have no other will than that of God Himself.

Roberts, in reply, conceded that 'while Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, and therefore the arm of Jehovah in the execution of the work which he was sent to do,' there was also another aspect to the work of Jesus Christ which was completely negated if a 'No Will' position was adopted. This was that:

... as the Son of God, [he] had a part of that work to do, in the rendering of a free and unconstrained obedience to the commandments of the Father,

1. TC, xlii (1876).

2. TC, xlii (1876), 118.

3. Insufficient information was provided in TC accurately to identify this publication from the several sharing that title.

4. TC, xlii (1876), 271-2.

5. TC, xlii (1876), 118.

under circumstances that made obedience difficult and the rendering of it a victory, which free loving, willing, intelligent obedience is the ground of his exaltation, and the basis of his headship over all the saints of God.¹

Whilst this Jesus of Roberts may have sounded a very human one, it is to be born in mind that nothing is easier when correcting what one believes to be misemphases, than to appear to misemphasise oneself. Pronouncements by Roberts on other occasions and in other circumstances presented a more balanced view, which indicated a rather more divine Jesus.

Because of the suppression of information by Roberts, which was designed to allow members to change their minds without losing face, little is known of the numerical significance of this Proto-No-Willist movement. However, the publication of the articles and letters seem to have effected the desired result because, for the rest of 1876, nothing further was heard of the issue. Nevertheless, in February 1877 it became clear that 'No Willism' had not been stamped out, and a further flurry of articles appeared in The Christadelphian.

(e) THE 'CLEAN-FLESH' THEORY OR 'RENUNCIATIONISM' (1873-1881)

In 1873, a schism occurred over what came to be known as the 'Clean Flesh' or 'Renunciationist' view.² The two leaders of this movement, as in the case of the Inspiration division in 1885, had both previously been important individuals in other denominations - Edward Turney amongst the Methodists and David Handley amongst a small group of evangelical Christians, not dissimilar to the Baptists, known as the 'Peculiar People'.³

Turney and Handley's view was that if Jesus Christ was to have

1. TC, xiii (1876), 121. This comment, as understood in general by Christadelphians, would imply a worshipful appreciation by Roberts of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, rather than being a tacit analysis of the humanity rather than divinity of Christ. Roberts's examination of Christology is outlined in ch. IV above, pp. 187-192. See also pp. 249-254 below.
2. See pp. 92-103 above.
3. See Appendix P.

been a 'ransom for all', that must have implied that his own nature was not stained by the effects of the Adamic curse. He died not as an exemplar, but as a substitute to satisfy the requirements of a divine equation that necessitated the sacrifice of a perfect, untainted 'free life' to balance out the effects of Sin.

The traditional view of Christadelphians had been that Christ, like a High Priest, under the Law of Moses, sacrificed first for himself, then for the People - not that he had committed actual sin, but that, being human, he carried potential sin in his nature - and that Christ died as an example to his followers both of how to follow God's commands, and of what the weaknesses of human nature merited, namely annihilation.¹

This controversy was not 'argued out' into its fine doctrinal ramifications, but dealt with by Roberts by the 'Post-card' method.² The result of this was that, whilst Christadelphians knew this was a sensitive issue, and tended to keep clear of it for that reason, no-one had actually won the argument about the nature of Christ. Thus, this issue remained beneath the surface as a potential threat. It reappeared during the 1950s with Ernest Brady - part of whose platform was that Edward Turney had never actually been proved wrong.³ The analogy with the problem of statehood detected by political scientists is difficult to avoid. How can a war end, without a real victory? There was no real victory on this issue within Christadelphia, and the problem dragged on. Brady also

-
1. Whilst this is so, Roberts made a very fine line of distinction on this point, when contending with Charles Dealtry. Roberts maintained that Jesus's mind, and character, were different from those of the average man in that 'the spirit entamped the perfect image of the elohim on the product of Mary's womb, and gave to the powers of his mind that perfect balance which sin disturbed in the first Adam. Potential sin, however, appeared not to have been erased during Jesus's conception, for that, from a Christadelphian view, would have made the struggle against sin by Jesus too easy. See p. 247 above.
 2. For details of the outworkings of this, see ch. III above, p. 98ff. The issue of matters not being argued out substantively by a thorough and exhaustive opening up of all the issues, but rather glossed over to prevent friction being generated by discussion and leading to fissiparism, is one which has bedevilled Christadelphian history, with a number of controversial and troublesome points of view recurring in cycles and being touched on rather than extirpated.
 3. Hence the re-issue by Brady of Turney's leaflet The Sacrifice of Christ, in the 1950s.

contended that the argument from Hebrews vii. 27 about the High Priest offering first for himself, then for the people, and the deduction that therefore Christ's nature was tainted, was invalid because, in Hebrews xiii. 11-13, Christ was equated to a sacrificial animal which did not die for its own sins, but for the sins of others.

As in the case of Charles Dealtry, Robert Roberts's treatment of the disaffected minority was such as to guarantee a hardening of attitudes between the two groups. There could be no doubt that, of the two leaders of the Renunciationists, Edward Turney was the more strong-minded - two years after Turney's death in 1879, David Handley recanted and the Renunciationist movement collapsed. Yet, two years before Turney's death, the Renunciationists held out an olive branch to the Central Christadelphian fellowship. This was met with a frosty and negative response from Roberts:

'If they have changed their minds... there is no difficulty whatever in the way of the re-union they ask for. If they have not changed their minds, their proposal is inexplicable.'

There was in this response no joy, no proposal from Roberts of a meeting to discuss any outstanding differences so that brotherly affection could be restored - merely cold indifference and a distinct 'us' and 'them' emphasis.

The numbers recorded in the official magazines - The Ambassador and The Christadelphian - as having been affected by Renunciationism were much more substantial than those influenced by earlier heresies.² Apart from the Inspiration controversy, which began in 1885, no other schism appears from official figures to have influenced the Christadelphian movement so much as the 'Clean Flesh' heresy.

1. TC, xiv (1877), 539.

2. According to the two magazines, 68 individuals and one large family were influenced by Renunciationism in the period. Of these, 62 returned to the central fellowship and six remained permanently disfellowshipped. The family concerned was mentioned specially since it was the family of David Handley.

(f) NO WILLISM (1877-1885)

Following the combatting of Dealtry's Josephism, a heresy of the opposite polarity afflicted Christadelphianism. Roberts wearily picked up his pen in January 1877 and wrote:

'Some time ago, it was a mere-man assault on the truth that came under our notice in this form: now it is the opposite extreme. We regret both exceedingly - one as much as the other; for both obscure some portion of the truth, and both are fraught with mischievous practical consequences. When we have the choice, we choose peace, but we have no alternative when error advances to the attack...'¹

What Roberts was commenting on was a pamphlet written by John Heywood of Manchester, and entitled Letters on the Doctrine of God-manifestation, and Extracts from the Most Recent and Advanced Writings of the Late JOHN THOMAS, M.D. This was, moreover, backed by John Birkenhead, one of the early notables of the Christadelphian community, baptised in 1868, and younger brother of William Birkenhead², who had returned from the U.S.A. to found the Sale

1. TC, xiv (1877), 9.

2. 'The Records of the Christadelphian Ecclesia, Sale' are verbose and almost poetic in their convolution of style. However, it would appear from these that William Birkenhead, an orthodox Christian, on leaving for the U.S.A., attacked Christadelphianism in America; but eventually, having been convinced that Christadelphianism was the Truth, he returned to Britain, founding an ecclesia in his home town of Sale. The ecclesia originally met in his house, and a number of his relatives - his mother; his sister, Mary Birkenhead; and his younger brother, John Birkenhead - were baptised. Members at Sale continued to exercise an independent voice in ecclesial affairs even during the tensions of 1885. In the aftermath of the 'Inspiration' controversy, William Carr, originally of Sale, but by December 1885 of the Manchester Ecclesia, wrote as secretary of his ecclesia to the managing brethren at Oldham in the most trenchant terms. One letter, published in Shuttleworth's Bible Lightstand, ii. 397, included the words 'As to who we would or would not fellowship, we may just say, that we are not indebted to you, except for this, that you have exceeded the limit of your privilege in making this enquiry. And we would therefore thank you not to interfere in our affairs, where you have no right. We fellowship all those who are obedient believers of the "Truth as it is in Jesus", which "Truth" hath its foundations in the writings of Moses and the Prophets... If such is your position, you are with us; if not, then you are removed from these ancient bulwarks of divine truth that shields the believer from the coming storm...'

Ecclesia, Cheshire, in about 1868.¹

John Birkenhead's position was similar to that of the No-Willists of 1876, but much more verbose and obfusate. Roberts wrote a simple two-point letter querying the logic of Birkenhead's view:

'1. Had Christ, the manifestation of God, a will of his own, which he voluntarily subjected to the requirements of his Father who sent him?

2. Did Christ undergo probation before exaltation?'²

Birkenhead asked for definitions of five of the words and phrases in enquiries - 'Christ', 'the manifestation of God', 'will', 'voluntary' and 'probation' before he would reply. After these had been defined, Birkenhead wrote another long and complex rejoinder, from which Roberts printed what were described as 'extracts', but which amounted to over seven hundred words. The essence of this prolixity, in answer to Roberts's two queries, was, first, that Jesus Christ only had the same freedom of choice as God Himself, that is, he could no more choose to do evil than God could, and, second, that Jesus was only tempted in his lifetime as 'Christ before he clothed himself with our sinful flesh, was tried, tempted and proved by the Israelites in the wilderness 40 years.'³ This, then, was just as near traditional definitions of the Trinitarian nature of God and the pre-existence of Jesus Christ as the Proto-No-Willism of 1876 had been. Indeed, an anonymous letter, supporting Roberts, concluded as much: 'We could understand a Trinitarian writing such a strain; but how a Christadelphian could do so, is utterly incomprehensible.'⁴ The possibility of light being shed on

-
1. 'The Records of the Christadelphian Ecclesia, Sale' were not very explicit on the year involved. They mentioned a number of baptisms of people not in the Birkenhead family, such as Mr. R.O. McIlwrick, Miss E. Eveson and William Carr, after 'a time' during which William Birkenhead had endured opposition alone, and a further period of 'a time' when W. Birkenhead and a Sister MacDonald 'who had been in the One Faith for some years... continued to contend... earnestly for the faith.' - Sale Records, pp. 10-11.
 2. TC, xiv (1877), 131.
 3. TC, xiv (1877), 133.
 4. TC, xiv (1877), 136.

Bible doctrines about God's nature extra to that available in traditional Christadelphian formulations was admitted by Roberts in the abstract, but denied in this particular:

'The doctrine advocated is not an advance in knowledge, but the reverse. We admit that increased acquaintance with the word should produce clearer perceptions of its teachings or growth in the truth, but this is very different to beginning in "second childhood" to discuss what are the first principles of the faith into which we have been immersed.'

The numbers affected by No-Willism, according to the official record, were very small, only four individuals leaving the central Christadelphian fellowship in the period 1864-85.² When and how this heterodoxy terminated is cloked in silence.³

(g) ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY (1885)

The greatest controversy within Christadelphianism in the period 1864-85, by far, was the Inspiration Division of 1885.⁴ The schismatic slivers split from Christadelphianism fell in a variety of directions: the main Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street fellowships were themselves hybrids produced by the amalgamation of a number of strange bedfellows; a number of the more able brethren joined evangelical fundamentalist groups, as Dowie had done twenty years earlier; some rejoined traditional mainstream denominations; and a few may have lost faith altogether. From the two large hybridised fellowships, a number of subgroups emerged, as time went by, and as attempts were made with hindsight to rationalise into eternal verities spiritual stands made in the heat of debate in 1885. Thus came into existence a whole range of Christadelphian sub-sects. When fully developed, this range came to include the Temperance Hall fellowship, the Suffolk Street fellowship, the Berean Christadelphians, the Dawn fellowship and the Advocate fellowship. Smaller groups included the

1. TC, xiv (1877), 133.

2. Figures cited here are derived from The Ambassador and The Christadelphian, i-xxii (July 1864 - December 1885). However, see the reservations about the figures quoted and the significance of the heresy on p. 228 above.

3. See pp. 258-259 below.

4. For a detailed delineation of this controversy, see ch. V above.

Elstonite fellowship, Bijou Hall, the Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia, the Old Paths Christadelphians and the Wayfarers.¹ All these groups existed in addition to a call for individual Christadelphianism made from Vancouver by W. Mosley.²

This process of fragmentation was augmented by the development, in the period after 1885, of a number of other issues of spiritual difficulty not present in the original pre-1885 gamut of problems. These included the Resurrectional Responsibility debate of 1894,³ and the emergence of the Advocate fellowship in America, led by Thomas Williams and A.H. Zilmer.

Whilst only 46 individuals and one entire ecclesia were recorded as having been lost to Ashcroftism in 1885,⁴ a much more considerable number was in fact involved by the time the Inspiration controversy had worked its way through the Christadelphian system.⁵ Thus, from a small, tightly-knit community in 1864, blossomed a potent, rapidly increasing denomination, whose seed-pods burst after 1885, distributing true progeny, hybrids and mutants in profusion over the vineyard.

Amongst the group of brethren who supported Thomas's view

-
1. The Wayfarers were an offshoot from the Old Paths Christadelphians.
 2. 'When we are tried we shall be left alone of God' - W. Mosley, The Sin of My Soul, p. 266.
 3. This related to the nature of the constitution of individual responsibility to Christ's Judgement Seat. The Central fellowship contended that even hearing the Word constituted responsibility to Judgement; J.J. Andrew et alia believed that God alone knew who, in addition to baptised believers, was responsible. See Appendix K, for a specimen of the type of issue involved in this debate. A number of the brethren who had separated themselves from Roberts and the Central fellowship in 1885 had done so because they felt they had detected an intemperance and intolerance which exceeded by a wide margin a simple zeal for doctrinal rectitude. Other brethren, nine years later, came to share this view over the way in which the Resurrectional Responsibility issue was handled by Roberts. Thus, in 1894, a link was forged, on the anvil of distaste for dictatorship, between the Suffolk Street brethren and the followers of J.J. Andrew, who, in 1885, had appeared to share few common bonds. This 'fellowship of adversity' aspect to Suffolk Street brethren led to the growth of a view within the Central fellowship that Suffolk Street brethren were doctrinally lax.
 4. Figures are derived from The Ambassador and TC (1864-1885).
 5. See ch. V above, pp. 218-227 for a detailed description of this situation.

that a minimum of organisation was for the best,¹ were W. Birkenhead, W. Clement, W. Carr, W. Norrie, J. Birkenhead, Henry Sulley, C.F. Smith and W. Grant.² A desire to continue to adhere to the principle of ecclesial autonomy and dispense with hierarchies of all kinds also lay behind much of Dowie's disagreement with Robert Roberts. The Roberts' camp included F.R. Shuttleworth, J. Butler, Dr. S.G. Hayes, J.J. Hadley, W. Robert, John Norrie (a relative of Roberts) and J.U. Robertson. There were 'defectors' from both camps in the period up to 1885 - Henry Sulley became a Roberts man and J.J. Hadley a supporter of Suffolk Street, which tended to be more 'democratic' than Temperance Hall. What this illustrated was that leading brethren were evenly divided on the issue. Since

-
1. For a detailed assessment of Thomas's views on this point, see ch. IV above, p. 147. It appears to be the case that, during the period approximately 1864 to his death in 1871, Thomas's views on ecclesiastical politics became rather more authoritarian than they had previously been.
 2. The Aeon, ed. J.H. Chamberlin, (Glasgow 1884 onwards), supplies additional names to this list. Amongst the contributors, sympathetic correspondents and advertisers in The Aeon between vol. i, no. 2 (3 October, 1884) and vol. ii, no. 56 (30 October, 1885) were the following prominent brethren: J. Bland, W. Cundall, J.J. Hadley, J.J. Bishop (Secretary at Birmingham Exchange Ecclesia), R. Ashcroft, J.H. Chamberlin, W.H. Wilson, J.W. Lea, J.U. Robertson, D. Handley, W. Grant, J.W. Thirtle, T. Nisbet, C. Smith (Edinburgh), G. Dowkes, C. Reid (Wishaw), T.J. Thorneloe, T. Turner, E. Caldicott, F. Smith (Secretary at Kidderminster), J. Thorneycroft, W. Beddees, F.S. Herne, T. Williams (Iowa U.S.A.), C. Dealtry, J.H. Goldie and R. Goldie. In addition, there were brethren from Portland, Oregon, Rochester (N.Y.), Toronto, Washington, St. Paul (Minnesota) and Hamilton (Ontario). In vol. i. (1885), 276, Chamberlin said that the following ecclesias would 'remain firm on the old basis: Halifax, Leeds, Birkenhead, Liverpool, Peterborough, London, Derby, Leicester, Abergavenny, Yarmouth, Kidderminster, Cannock, Wolverhampton, Dudley, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Barrow, Brierley Hill and most of the English ecclesias.' Chamberlin omitted to mention that, in the towns to which he referred, a majority, at best, supported his view. His reference to 'most of the English ecclesias' was simply an exaggeration. Nonetheless, 1885 was a body-blow to the development of the Christadelphians from which they never entirely recovered to recapture their early zest.

the merits of ecclesiastical polity were never debated in the period 1864-1885, it was left to the influence of the status quo, the development of schisms or a brother's own personal study to determine the view he adopted.

A number of brethren who had been clerics outside Christadelphia¹ tended to agree with Dr. Thomas² that the personal influence of pastors was prone to be greater than that of the Chief Shepherd. Other brethren felt that a congregational system was more vulnerable in a crisis, and that some kind of hierarchy rendered Christadelphia more defensible, if less democratic.

Because of the nature of this distinction, it is very difficult to measure its numerical support amongst Christadelphians. However, when one considers that the number of members who followed Ashcroft not only out of the central fellowship, but out of the Christadelphian movement altogether, was small; that the number seceding to the Suffolk Street fellowship was very considerable; and that the Suffolk Street fellowship was of a more democratic disposition than the Central; it is clear that a substantial fraction, certainly one third, and possibly more, of Christadelphians had sympathy with those who dissented from Roberts over ecclesiastical polity.

The schismata of Christadelphianism can be subsumed under two headings - those which appeared to affect a very small number of people (under a hundred in each case)³ in the formation of sub-sects, and those which affected many more. In the first category were Dowieism, Dealtryism (or Josephism), Proto-No-Willism, No-Willism and 'Ecclesiastical Polity'.⁴ In the latter were the Clean Flesh (or Renunciationist) group and the anti-

-
1. Brethren such as W. Clement, D. Handley, R. Ashcroft and J. Chamberlin.
 2. See ch. II above, pp. 70-73.
 3. But see the reservations on this point expressed on p. 228 above.
 4. Immediately after 1885, differences of view regarding the inspiration of the Bible, ad hominem contentions against Roberts and disagreements over ecclesiastical polity were fused inextricably. After the division of 1885, it would no longer be possible to bracket schisms over ecclesiastical polity in the category of minor issues.

Roberts faction in the 1885 Inspiration or 'Jot and Tittle'¹ controversy. All other religious secessions from Christadelphianism in this period involved individual consciences, rather than group action.

Dowieism caused a number of Christadelphians to reconvert to Evangelical Fundamentalism. With the exception of a few Mumbles brethren, these were Christadelphians from a small number of Scots ecclesias. By 1885, over twenty of these individuals had converted back from Dowie to the Central fellowship.

Dealtry's heresy of 1867-8 was of little importance, more largely because Roberts nipped it in the bud, than because of any failing of eloquence on Dealtry's part. Twelve brethren were reconverted to the Central fellowship from Dealtryism in the period 1868-78. It is possible that, if Roberts had treated Dealtry's main discovery - that passages proving the virgin birth were limited to the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke - as an interesting idea needing explanation, more brethren, including Charles Dealtry, would have been won over. The exact number of Dealtryites remaining outside the mainstream, and the future of Dealtry himself, were not recorded.

No-Willism's brief revolution in 1876 appeared to die stillborn. Again, Roberts moved quickly - but the most likely destination of any Christadelphians coming to believe in this was mainstream Christianity² - so that silence from those exiting, rather than continued agitation, was to be expected. This accounted, too, for the tiny number of No-Willists (three brethren in all) reconverting to the Central Christadelphian fellowship from both the 1876 and the 1877 schisms.³

-
1. The term 'Jot and Tittle' controversy was coined because Chamberlin and Ashcroft were perceived by their opponents as asserting that only theologically essential parts of the Bible needed to be, and were, inspired. A common and opposite view to this within Christadelphia was that every Jot and Tittle of the Bible was inspired. This picked up the reference to the Mosaic law in Matthew v. 18.
 2. No-Willism's affirmation of the pre-existence of Jesus, and its identification of Jesus and Jehovah, belonged more closely to the orthodox Trinitarian formulation than to Thomas's God-manifestation beliefs.
 3. See p. 259 below for a comment on the small numbers and large problems for Christadelphia caused by these heresies.

Roberts, well prepared for the 1877 outbreak of No-Willism, simply dropped a cloak of silence over affairs at Sale until they should sort matters out in a satisfactory way. After publishing 'Intelligence' from Sale in The Christadelphian for January 1877, stating:

'We publish the report in the hope that it signifies a retreat on the part of Sale from the unscriptural position represented by the pamphlet reviewed... we could have no interest in reporting operations conducted on a wrong foundation.'¹

Roberts published nothing from that ecclesia for the rest of 1877. Indeed, in the period from that report until the division over the 'Partial Inspiration' controversy starting in midsummer 1885, the only report of any kind from Sale was a terse three-and-a-half line announcement of the death of Sister M.E. Birkenhead.² An announcement in May 1885, headed 'Levenshulme' was signed 'Bro. Carr'. Levenshulme, south of Manchester, was about four miles from Sale; William Carr had been a member of the Sale ecclesia; there had been no prior announcement in The Christadelphian of the formation of a new ecclesia at Levenshulme - thus its origins are obscure. It is possible, therefore, that pressure brought by Roberts's verbal excommunication of Sale had caused the restructuring of the ecclesia, so that the new, small ecclesia at Levenshulme was now 'orthodox', whilst the old 'Sale' meeting was shunned. In the maelstrom of change after summer 1885, it is impossible now to determine what happened to all the former members of the Sale ecclesia. Thus, whilst the office of editor of The Christadelphian began by being a purely honorary and literary position, and whilst it was never required of any editor to defend a more hierarchical aspect than that theologically, it was evident that the power of complete censorship within such a small inter-dependent community was enormous.

Lucid distinctions made between the schismatic groups and mainstream Christadelphia tended to be blurred in practice. This lack of clarity was increased after 1885, with certain Suffolk

1. TC, xiv (1877), 46.

2. TC, xix (1882), 239.

Street fellowship ecclesias operating an 'open-table' policy, such that those with views hybridised between orthodoxy and heterodoxy were welcomed. Hybridisation after 1885 took many forms and included, for example, the joining of forces between the 'Baptised Believers' (Dowieites) with some of the followers of Robert Ashcroft; both parties could be observed engaging in the activities of The Rainbow.¹ Another example was the joining together of some of the former Renunciacionists with some of the Suffolk Street ecclesias.²

This kaleidoscoping of theological alignments within Christadelphianism has had a plethora of ramifications within the movement in more recent times.

Overall, from this welter of information, two points stand out clearly. First, in the seventeen years between the formation of Baptised Believers in 1847 until the adopting of the editor's mantle by Robert Roberts in 1864 no divisions occurred within the movement. In the only slightly longer period of twenty-one years from 1864 until 1885 six major rifts disturbed the theological equanimity within Christadelphia, the last, in 1885, leaving the movement bereft of many members and devoid of momentum. There is undoubtedly some connection between these two facts: it is not impossible that the abrasiveness of Roberts's personality contributed to the friction involved, as contemporary writers maintained. Second, Roberts's method of dealing with problems - on occasion involving the use of political manoeuvrings rather than exegesis - swept problems under the theological carpet and accounted, in part, for their recurrence in identical form throughout the history of the Christadelphians.

-
1. Further details about The Rainbow's status and activities are recorded in ch. III above, pp. 90, 103 and 108, and in this ch. p. 239.
 2. See W.V. Butterfield, History of the Truth in the Latter Days, p. 43.

CHAPTER VIIA STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GROWTH OF CHRISTADELPHIANISM,
1864-1885(a) INTRODUCTION

David Butler and Jennie Freeman have pointed out¹ the difficulty of applying numbers to the history of religion. In general, this difficulty arises from two sources - the variation in the threshold of official recognition of membership from church to church, from 'the Roman Catholic Church [which] officially records the Roman Catholic population of all ages, regardless of church attendance... [to] Nonconformist churches with adult baptism... [which] are the most exclusive';² secondly, no census since 1851 'has included questions on religious affiliation.'³

In dealing with the purely internal history of the Christadelphians per se these difficulties arise rarely. Under the editorship (1864-98) of Robert Roberts, The Christadelphian insisted⁴ on clear 'Intelligence' from the ecclesias; unclear knowledge of each other's membership had led to difficulties in the earlier period (1848-64) under Dr. John Thomas⁵ and was now deplored; in a denomination with

-
1. In British Political Facts 1900-1960 (London 1964). The quotations on this page are from chapter XVI on Churches, pp. 200-204. Even the baptisms of eminent Christadelphians such as Dr. J.W. Thirtle and Professor David Evans were not recorded in the official magazine of the movement. It was necessary to look outside the movement to find much in the way of detailed biographies of such persons.
 2. Butler and Freeman, British Political Facts 1900-1960, p. 200.
 3. Even in 1851, there was no compulsion to answer questions on religious affiliation.
 4. See above, ch. I, p. 34. Even slight errors relating to the spelling of an individual's surname or the nature of his profession were corrected immediately as a matter of course.
 5. See above, ch. I, pp. 26 and 34.

such a tiny membership¹ each new convert was prized, treasured and certainly recorded with loving, meticulous care.

In three respects, the figures regarding Christadelphian conversions do present singular difficulties. First, for a variety of reasons, ecclesial secretaries varied considerably in the amount of detail they recorded about each convert. Thus, it is difficult to provide total statistical cover for Christadelphian conversions either throughout the country, or throughout the period 1864-85 (whilst it would be possible to furnish full details for a particular town during the decade and a half tenure of office of a punctilious and unrestricted secretary).² Second, when attempting to compare the Christadelphians' conversion success, or their social or geographical composition, with those of other churches, the keenness of one's analytical edge is blunted by the clumsiness of statistical non-comparability referred to by Butler and Freeman. Third, the period 1848-64 was one in which extreme congregationalism was practised in Christadelphian ecclesial politics - there was no hierarchy, no supremo... the de facto theological supremo, John Thomas, saw to that. However, this led to problems over comparability of fellowships, procedures, and the like. It was Roberts's forte, from 1864, to bring order and system to Thomas's wild, raw, overgrown, if thriving, spiritual garden. This led to The Christadelphian's record of conversions being the 'True Account' ipsissima verba, and is one reason why local records were not preserved as carefully as they might have been. This, in turn, led to the difficulty of substantiating the information furnished by The Christadelphian regarding the personal

-
1. An ecclesia of twelve members in 1864 would have been respectably large. Many brethren by that date still met, as the few English 'Baptised Believers' had done in 1848, namely singly, well isolated from fraternal support, relying much on written contact.
 2. In some areas, where profession and religious affiliation were linked, Christadelphians suffered the loss of their position upon their conversion - see ch. III, p. 94n, above. In other areas, such as Birmingham, where the Guilds were strong or where there was a tradition of tolerance, Christadelphians had an easier lot. One reason for the vagueness of secretaries about the professional background of their most recent converts may have been fear of reprisal in terms of sackings. Certainly, tolerant Birmingham, was usually very full in the details supplied about converts.

details of converts.¹ Wherever possible, the record from the official Christadelphian magazine has been compared with ecclesial minutes and registers obtained at the local level, although this has only been achieved for a minority of cases.²

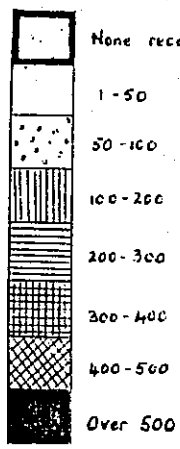
What, then, has been attempted in this chapter is a description of growth within Christadelphia in the period 1864-85, supplemented by a breakdown of the figures in terms of the churches of origin, the previous professions and the geographical distribution of the converts.

In order to facilitate the usefulness of this work to others, I have employed the sort of scheme in use in standard works on related subjects. Thus, in the section on denominational origin of converts to Christadelphianism, a similar layout has been adopted to that used by Currie, Gilbert and Horsley in Churches and Church-goers; in the section covering the analysis of the spread of professions of converts to Christadelphianism, similarities to the English Historical Documents series³ will be noticed; the section analysing the geographical distribution of converts is intended to offer direct comparability with John Gay's The Geography of Religion in England.

(b) A GEOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF CHRISTADELPHIAN ACHIEVEMENTS, AS MEASURED BY ADULT IMMERSIONS (1864-1885)

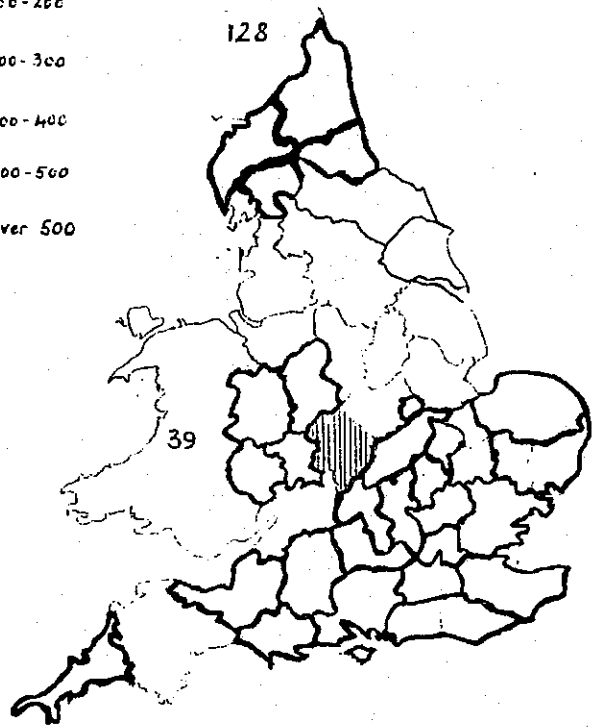
From Map A on page 264 it will be seen that, by January 1870, no county in England had baptised as many as one hundred Christadelphians (since central records began in July 1864), with the single exception of Warwickshire. Of the 12 other counties to record baptisms in this period only the West Riding of Yorkshire exceeded forty immersions. In the time up to 1864, the vast majority of

-
1. There are several other contributory causes of this difficulty - the very passage of time; change of ecclesial venue; schism; the destruction of records resulting from embarrassment at schisms.
 2. They are those of ecclesias at Sale, Sheffield, Crewe, Cumnock, Halifax, Birkenhead, Rock Ferry, Cannock and Heckmondwike - see Bibliography.
 3. Volumes XII (i) (1833-74) by Young and Handcock and XII (ii) (1874-1914) by Handcock. This, in turn, was based on the structure of the censuses of the period.



264

MAP A



THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF CHRISTADELPHIANS BAPTISED IN ENGLAND,
BY COUNTIES (JULY 1864 - DECEMBER 1869).¹

1. For further details and source of statistics, see Appendix Q.

Christadelphians in England were isolated individuals, dependent upon the circulation of John Thomas's magazines from the U.S.A. or letters from distant British brethren or upon occasional visits from brethren in larger ecclesias. Even Warwickshire was not really a thriving county, for all 149 of the baptisms recorded there in this period were in fact baptisms by the Birmingham Ecclesia. In contrast, six ecclesias contributed to the West Riding's more lowly total of 48 immersions by December 1869, indicating a more widespread, if less prolific, establishment of Christadelphianism than in Birmingham.¹

In interpreting the spread of Christadelphianism in the 1860s to individual counties, one or two notable features emerge. First, there can be no doubting the numerical superiority of Birmingham over every other part of England. The strength of the guilds and the non-ecclesiastical nature of the ties associated with most of the employment in the area, which has been referred to elsewhere,² goes much of the way to explaining this superiority.

Nottinghamshire, equal, in terms of number of baptisms, to Greater London, at this stage, was the county in which Dr. John Thomas gave his first address in Britain in 1848 and was the scene of much activity in the early development of the Christadelphian organisation, partly because of the relatively high concentration of Campbellites in the county.

All 28 of the North Riding's immersions in this period took place at Whitby, where 21 people were baptised in 1868 alone. Recruitment of members there diminished in the latter half of the 1870s, after the removal from Whitby of brother F.R. Shuttleworth, who later became Assistant Editor of The Christadelphian. Prior to this, recruitment had slowed down by the tacit disfellowship of Charles Dealtry.³

Much early success for the movement is attributable to earnest, industrious individual brethren working in areas where communications were well-developed. Thus, the West Riding stood out, along with Warwickshire, from the start, as a major area of Christadelph-

-
1. For details of the picture sketched here, see ch. I above, pp. 23-28 and 32.
 2. See p.262n above.
 3. See ch. VI, pp.244-247 above.

ian development. Preaching in this area also benefited from the endeavours of Shuttleworth, who, on leaving Whitby, moved to Halifax. Earlier, Robert Roberts, and even John Thomas himself, had worked in West Yorkshire. One little idiosyncrasy in the statistics, as can be seen, for example, in those concerning West Yorkshire, inflated them in this period, however. That is that brethren were so few in number that prospective converts would travel long distances to be baptised. Thus, four of those baptised on one occasion in the 1860s, and credited to Halifax as converts, had travelled from the East Riding and from Lancashire.¹

In the period to 1870, Devon alone, of England's south-west, contained active ecclesias. This, again, was a success largely attributable to the endeavours of a single, faithful brother.²

In general, the number of Christadelphians in 1870 was still tiny, with only one county in England baptising over a hundred individuals in the five and a half years from the beginning of official records until January 1870. Indeed, only 13 out of England's 41 counties baptised any Christadelphians at all. The pattern, in England, was predominance in the North and the Midlands, with the exception of two small communities at Barnstaple and Devonport in Devon, and the London ecclesia.³ However, even taking the six then extant West Riding ecclesias as a whole, the Birmingham meeting baptised more than them all. Thus, growth in the Christadelphian movement in the period 1864 to 1870 was principally attributable to Birmingham.

Map B on page 267 reveals a picture which differs in two main respects from the map covering baptisms made in the sixties. First, by 1879 Christadelphianism had become much more widespread - more than double the number of counties in England were now recording Christadelphian conversions. Second, what is more, whereas only

-
1. 'HALIFAX. Bro. R. Whitworth, under date Oct. 22, reports the following immersions: William Unsworth, tin plate worker, Hull, formerly Church of England; James Phillips, shoemaker, Hull...; John Birkenhead of Sale, near Manchester...; William Carr, saddler, of Sale, near Manchester.' - The Ambassador, v (1868), 323.
 2. This was J.W. Moore of Devenport. He was encouraged by occasional visits from Brother Dr. S.G. Hayes, then of Jersey, and from Dr. Thomas.
 3. This baptised 13 individuals in the period 1864-1870.

None recorded

1-50

50-100

100-200

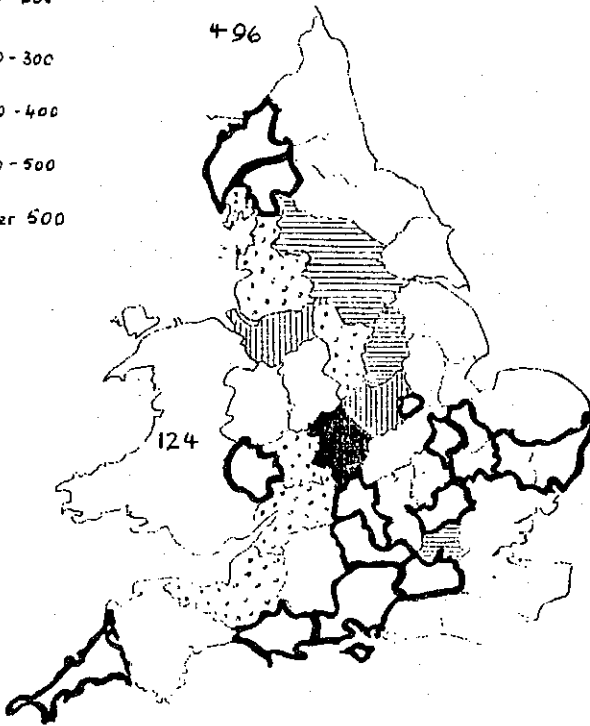
200-300

300-400

400-500

Over 500

MAP B



THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF CHRISTADELPHIANS BAPTISED IN ENGLAND,
BY COUNTIES (JULY 1864 - DECEMBER 1879).¹

1. For further details and source of statistics, see Appendix Q.

Warwickshire (that is, mainly Birmingham) recorded over one hundred immersions in the sixties, the West Riding, Nottinghamshire, Greater London, Cheshire and Leicestershire had also baptised over one hundred individuals by December 1879, and the first 3 of these counties, along with Birmingham, recorded figures approaching three times that total.

Within Nottinghamshire, the bulk of the 204 baptisms were accounted for by the city of Nottingham itself. The majority of these baptisms occurred in the first third of the 1870s, when Nottingham's records of registered immersions actually surpassed those of Birmingham itself. After the division of 1873, concerning brother Edward Turney and the 'Clean Flesh' theory, however, Nottingham was never the same again.¹ Indeed, Nottingham's performance was so poor in the 1880-85 period that Lancashire, which began in 1880 with less than half Nottinghamshire's total, had almost exceeded Nottinghamshire's numbers by the end of 1885. The repercussions of the 1873 schism were enormous, and it has been remarked that Nottingham today contains more Christadelphian splinter-groups than any city in the world.

By 1880, Somerset, Worcestershire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire and Essex had baptised at least 25 Christadelphians, and one county - Cheshire - had baptised over one hundred; before 1870, none of these counties had baptised as many as ten. These successes were the result of a variety of different causes. In the case of Cheshire, the baptism of Robert Ashcroft in 1876 led not only to other members of the extensive Ashcroft family being immersed, but also, since he was a practising Congregationalist minister and well loved by his flock, this resulted in the passing of prestige and respectability to the Christadelphian cause. In any event, there were only 36 Christadelphians in Cheshire before 1876 and as many as 124 by 1880, more than one third of these being at two ecclesias - Birkenhead and Rock Ferry -

1. For a detailed discussion of the problems at Nottingham in 1873, see ch. VI above, pp. 249-251.

which were in the immediate vicinity of Ashcroft's former parish.¹

A not dissimilar story lay behind the figures from Essex, where David Handley, a respected figure amongst the Peculiar People at Maldon, was baptised in March 1869.² All 44 of the Essex baptisms were made at Maldon. All of them, too, were made prior to 1873, the year in which Handley, along with Turney of Nottingham, left the main Christadelphian body over the 'Clean Flesh' heresy. The effect of schism on Maldon was similar to that on Nottingham - whereas 44 immersions took place in the period before the schism (1869-1872), only nine were added in the longer period 1873-1885.

There was a very rapid spread of Christadelphianism in the period to 1880, such that now 27 counties were baptising members and only 14 were not. The baptisms within counties which had recorded baptisms before 1870 increased, too. The West Riding's ecclesias, for example, increased by over 600 per cent in ten years.

The most unproductive areas were the agricultural counties - Cumberland, Westmorland and Hereford, and the South. Here, again, the slow spread of ideas in agricultural communities may be responsible, in part, for this poor performance.

Shuttleworth's departure from Whitby left that community in the doldrums, from a baptismal point of view. His new ecclesia, Halifax, was certainly the pacemaker for the West Riding: its 94 baptisms (1870-1880) increased the number baptised since records began to 127 and its proportion amongst the seven West Riding ecclesias active in baptising to almost half.

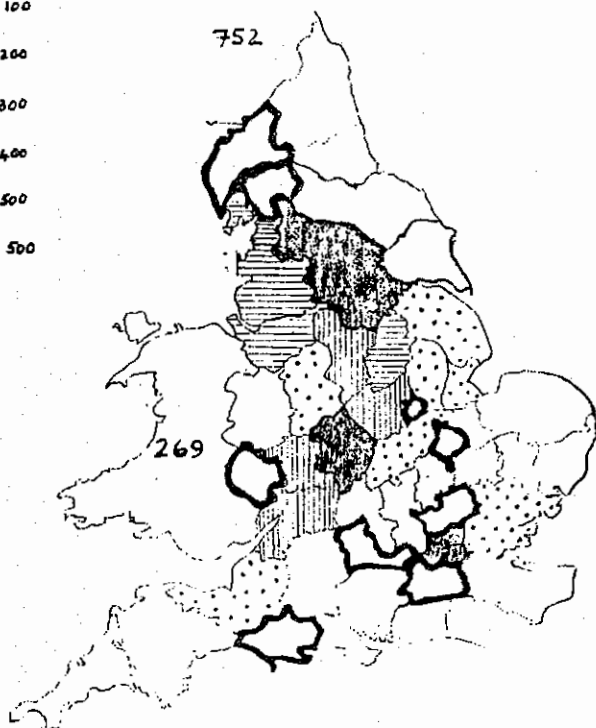
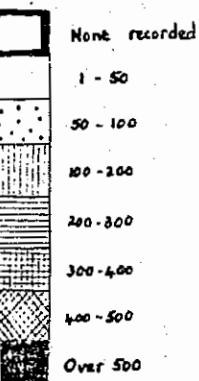
The greatest increases in Christadelphian successes in this period occurred in the North. Of the 14 counties still not reporting baptisms by 1880, ten were south of a line from the Avon to the Wash. Significantly, many of these areas were predominantly agricultural.

-
1. At the time of Ashcroft's resignation from the Congregationalist Church, 'there was a harrowing scene in the chapel two thirds of the congregation wished him to stay; but he would not withdraw his resignation. Then the friendly majority offered to build him another chapel, and allow him to teach them what he liked. Mr. Ashcroft replied he would never again preach for hire, and declined their proposal. He left the chapel in a state of suspense and progression.' *The Record of the Rock Ferry Christadelphian Movement*, 1876, p. 4.
 2. Details reported in *TC*, vi (1869), 121-124. See Appendix P.

From map C on page 271 it is evident that two further changes had occurred in the period of only five years since map B, which served to emphasise trends originating in the 1870s. First, by 1885, only nine counties in England did not contain baptised adult Christadelphians. Second, the success, in terms of baptismal numbers, in the three major areas of Warwickshire, Greater London and the West Riding of Yorkshire, was even more apparent, by that date, than it had been previously - with over 500 Christadelphians having been baptised in each area during the previous twenty year period, whilst only about half that number had been immersed in the next most successful counties. It would be misleading to suggest that there was anything approaching a genuine spread of interest in Christadelphianism in the county of Warwickshire as a whole - for 903 of the 955 baptisms there were made in the two Birmingham ecclesias - Temperance Hall (by far the larger) and Ward Hall (later known as Suffolk Street). The remaining handful of immersions were distributed fairly evenly among the other five Warwickshire ecclesias of Easington, Leamington, Shipston, Small Heath and Stratford, with the exception of the last which was tiny. In London, Christadelphianism, which had tended to focus in the area north of the River Thames, established three ecclesias out of the original North London meeting, in 1883. These were North London itself, along with Westminster and Fulham. Of these three ecclesias, Westminster baptised most in the 1883-85 period, with the parent, North London, meeting running it a close second. Fulham managed 18 immersions in the three years. In the West Riding, Christadelphianism established much more in the way of a genuine geographical spread. Whilst the Halifax ecclesia, with almost 200 immersions between 1864 and 1885, was more than double the size of any of the others, it is also true that Leeds and Sheffield, along with Huddersfield and Elland, boasted big meetings, and there were 14 ecclesias in all in the fairly compact southern area of the West Riding, known at that time as the 'Yorkshire Woollen District'.¹

1. The ecclesias, with figures of baptisms in brackets, were: Barnsley (1), Bradford (1), Elland (78), Halifax (196), Heckmondwike (12), Huddersfield (66), Jump (2), Keighley (53), Leeds (87), New Wombwell (2), Normanton (9), Sheffield (74), Sowerby Bridge (5) and Todmorden (17).

MAP C



THE TOTAL NUMBERS OF CHRISTADELPHIANS BAPTISED IN ENGLAND,
BY COUNTIES (JULY 1864 - DECEMBER 1885).¹

1. For further details and source of statistics, see Appendix Q.

The continuing effect of the internecine strife of 1873 in Nottingham and Maldon is evidenced in Map C by the continuing relatively low numbers of baptisms in the counties of Nottinghamshire and Essex. Although Nottinghamshire's total looked reasonably healthy,¹ a different perspective is made apparent when one remembers that, by 1872 (just prior to the schism) Nottingham ecclesia recorded more baptisms than Birmingham, but, by 1885, had only 26 per cent of the Birmingham total. All this despite the fact that the twelve intervening years since the schism had seen a craven published apology by the joint leader of the Renunciationists, David Handley of Maldon, a measure of reconciliation of attitude, the return of large numbers of the Renunciationists to the Central fellowship, and the death of the other joint leader of the Renunciationists, Edward Turney of Nottingham.

Numbers of baptisms in the North Riding of Yorkshire continued fairly static throughout the period 1870-85, due in large measure to the departure of the energetic F.R. Shuttleworth. However, both Halifax and Birmingham benefited in turn from his enthusiastic services in this period.

Several counties did well in the period, doubling their baptised populations. Notable amongst them were Lancashire, the baptised population of which rose from 97 to 246, and Derbyshire, where immersions reached 154, having been only 55 in 1880. Cheshire, which had increased dramatically between 1870 and 1880, appeared to continue to do reasonably well between 1880 and 1885. Shortly after 1885, the trouble which had been brewing in the Birkenhead area over the Ashcroft episode fermented and made its impact on the statistics.

In general, the performance of Christadelphianism in the area south of a line from the Avon to the Wash continued to be poor, with five out of the nine counties not to record baptisms to 1885 lying within this area. In particular, this was true of the South-East.

Comparing maps A and C, it is clear that, whilst only 13 English counties baptised Christadelphians by 1870, only nine did not by 1885. This was a remarkable achievement. It was a more rapid

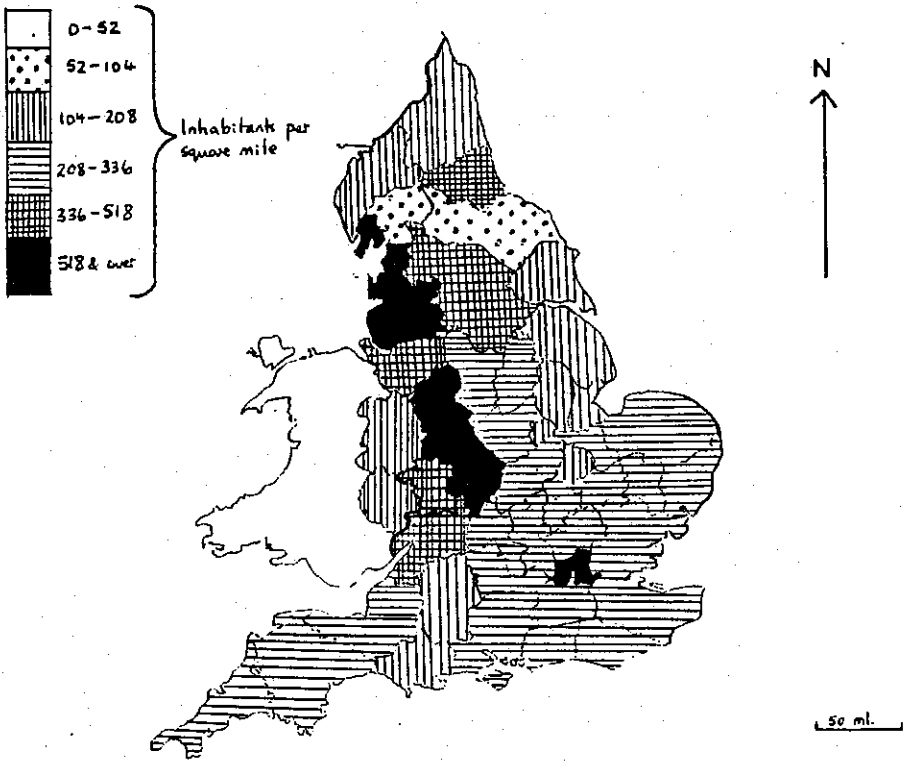
1. 279 Christadelphians had been baptised in Nottinghamshire by 1885, 238 in Nottingham itself.

geographical growth than that provided, for example, by the Primitive Methodists or the Peculiar People,¹ despite the fact that Christadelphians, unlike the followers of Hugh Bourne and William Clowes in the one case or of James Banyard and Samuel Harrod in the other, did not have an extant major denomination to recruit from, but were obliged to rely upon external conversions.

An analysis of the implications of Map D on page 274 (based on statistics made available by dint of the 1851 census) in terms of the distribution of Christadelphians which one would have expected, bearing in mind the sole criterion of population density, shows considerable disparity between that and the distributions which actually developed (see Maps A, B and C pp. 264, 267 and 271).

In this comparison, Staffordshire and Lancashire come out as relatively poor areas for Christadelphian recruitment. They had populations in the densest category according to the census, yet neither of them rose higher in Map C than the very modest total of 200-300 recorded baptisms. The eight Staffordshire ecclesias had a particularly poor record having, between them, baptised only 71 individuals in the period 1864-85. Why there should be dense populations in these counties and diminutive baptism figures is very difficult to determine. Lancashire's eleven meetings baptised 246 persons in the same time-span - although almost two-thirds of these were immersed in the most successful part of the period, namely 1880-85. The West Riding of Yorkshire, by contrast, had a very successful record of baptisms in terms of its population density.

1. Mark Sorrell considered the growth-rate of the Peculiar People phenomenal: 'The increase in numbers had been very marked. In 1855, after Banyard's "fall from grace", the combined congregations of the church had stood at about one hundred Peculiars, according to Bishop Harrod. In 1884, more than thirteen hundred brethren were able to make their way, some with considerable difficulty, to the county town, from the furthest corners of the county. It was no wonder that the proceedings, held in the Chelmsford Corn Exchange, were marked with scenes of the keenest enthusiasm.' - M. Sorrell, The Peculiar People (Exeter 1979), p. 36. Christadelphians, in the period 1855-85, without a major denomination supplying converts, increased from 173 (see Table 2, p. 29, above) to over 5,000.

MAP DTHE POPULATION OF ENGLAND IN 1851.

Source: The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. xiv, p. 99.

Whilst the West Riding's population was not as concentrated as those of Lancashire, Staffordshire, Greater London or Warwickshire, the number of baptisms recorded there was second only to that of the last of these counties. Its population was, in fact, at the same level as that of Durham, Cheshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Yet even the most successful of these counties, Cheshire, produced only about a third as many converts; and Durham, the least successful, produced less than 0.5% of Yorkshire's total. Whilst it is true that any representation of statistics causes distortion, it must be significant that the exercise of adding together the total number of converts of the four counties of Durham, Cheshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire (which individually had a similar population-density to that of the West Riding) produces a total less than that recorded in the West Riding.

Other areas where a significant divergence occurred between population-density and number of baptisms were Nottinghamshire (where despite a modest population in comparison to Lancashire or Staffordshire the baptismal figures exceeded both); England south of a line from the Avon to the Wash (where despite relatively healthy population figures the number of baptisms was limited to single figures in the cases of many counties¹); and the North Riding of Yorkshire (which, despite being one of the two least densely populated counties in England, produced, particularly in the period before 1870, one of the top five growth rates in the country²).

Map E on page 277 illustrates the development of the Christadelphian movement in Britain between 1848³ and 1864. This was the period before Robert Roberts was involved in the organisation of the movement, when, under John Thomas, there was a sort of disorganised fecundity about the way the movement developed. Also,

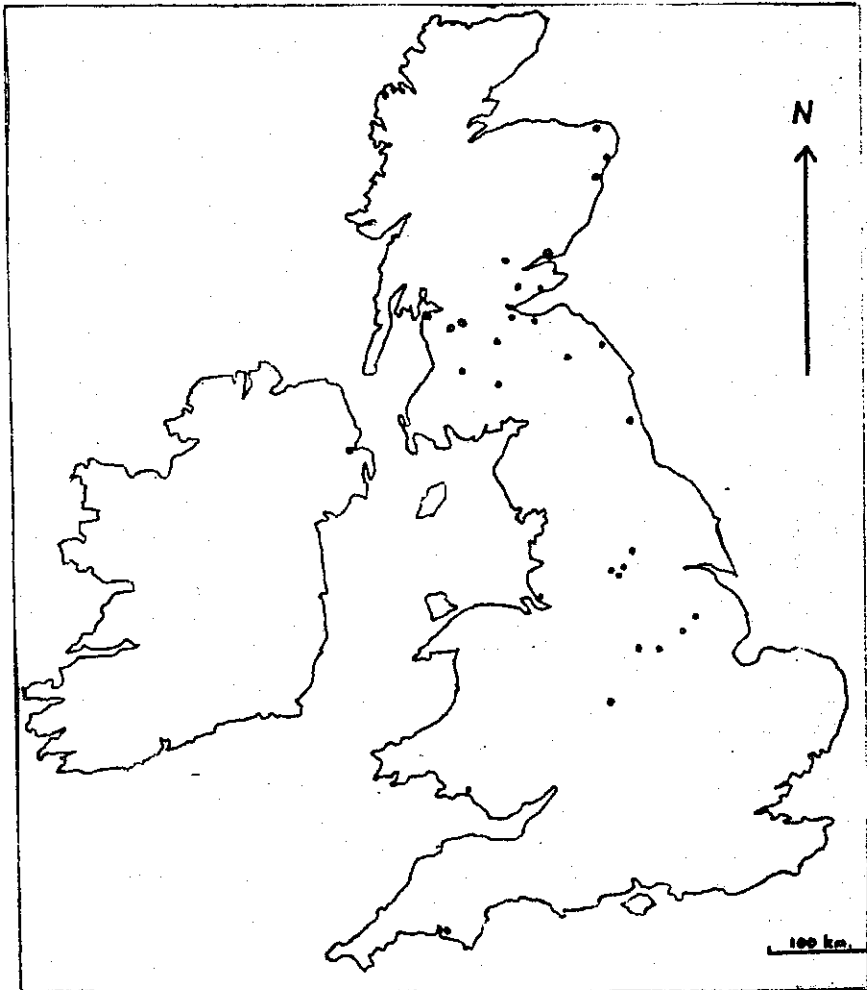
-
1. Baptismal figures by 1885 for this area include the following: Bedfordshire 4, Cambridgeshire 2, Cornwall 5, Hampshire 2, Kent 8, Oxfordshire 2, Suffolk 1, Sussex 8.
 2. This was largely due to the exertions of one man - F.R. Shuttleworth, following on the labours of the discredited Charles Dealtry. For details of the situation in the North Riding, and especially at Whitby, see ch. VI above, pp. 242-3 and p. 247.
 3. This was the year of John Thomas's first visit to Britain, and the year when he baptised the first British Christadelphian at Lincoln. See ch. I above pp. 17-18.

there was no centralised record of statistics of baptisms, deaths, withdrawals or resignations at this time. Nor was there a Christadelphian 'creed' or set of dogmas against which the faith of each individual member in each ecclesia throughout the country could be matched.¹ For these reasons, the unusual statistical problems encountered when dealing with matters of a religious nature are compounded when comparing the 1848-64 period (Maps E and E₁) with the period from 1864 onwards (Maps F and F₁).

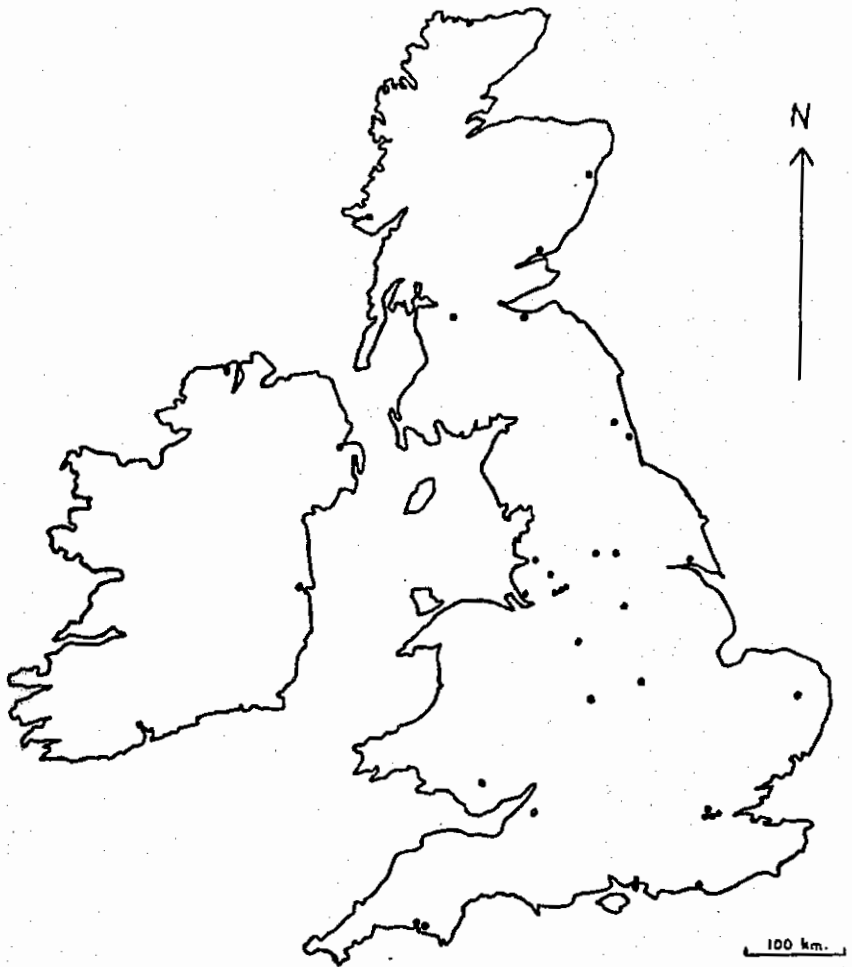
It is clear that there were four areas within Britain where groups of ecclesias had been formed before 1864, and an additional handful of ecclesias scattered widely and separately throughout the country. Of the groups, by far the largest was in the Central Lowlands of Scotland, where 18 of the 37 British ecclesias were situated. Foremost amongst the factors involved in explaining this is the great extent to which Christadelphia drew upon Campbellitism for its early recruitment. The Campbellites, or 'Scotch Baptists', were very numerous in that area. The pattern of development of Christadelphian ecclesias owed significantly more to this fact than to the high urban population of the Central Lowlands, because ecclesias developed in the period 1850-61 in towns like Cumnock, Berwick, Kirkaldy, Moffat, Crossgates, Dunkeld and Galashiels, which had very small populations.

More difficult to explain is the development of a group of three North-East Scots ecclesias - at Aberdeen (1849), Newburgh (1853) and Fraserburgh (1863) - on anything other than accidental grounds. Robert Roberts, editor of The Ambassador and The Christadelphian throughout the period 1864-1885, was a native of Aberdeenshire, and returned on evangelising tours, preaching the Gospel as he had newly come to understand it. However, this impact, such as it was, came a decade and more too late to explain the formation of these three ecclesias in the period 1849-63. An alternative view - that the Plymouth Brethren (a group relatively strong in North-Eastern Scotland, especially amongst the fishing communities in Aberdeenshire) proved fertile ground for Christ-

1. The latter developed over the period 1853-1883. For details see above ch. I, pp. 26-7 and 34; and ch. IV, pp. 145-8.

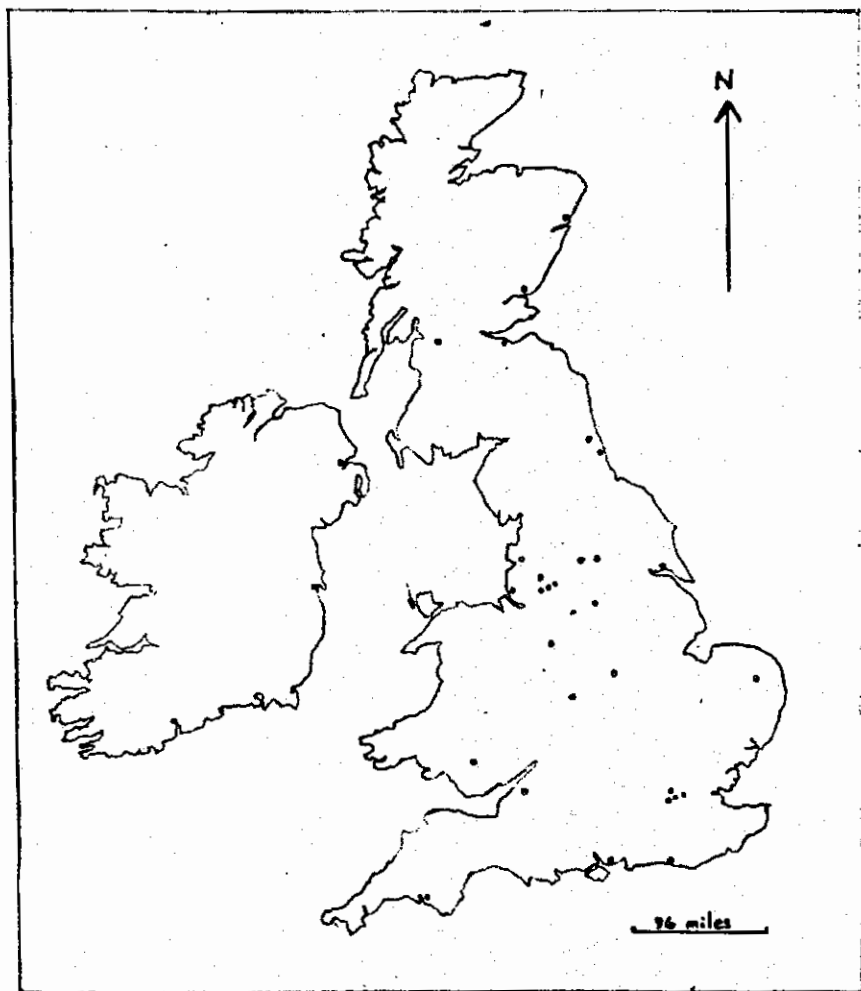
MAP ETHE PRE-1864 SPREAD OF CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAS

Source: C. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciii (1956), 449 - c(1963), 502.

MAP E-1

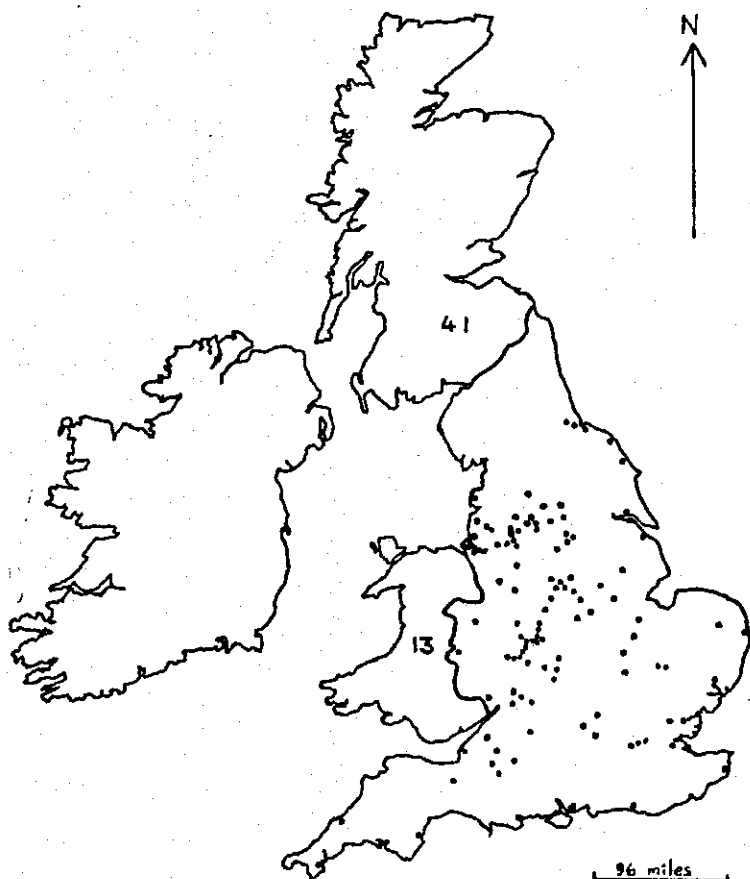
BRITISH TOWNS AND CITIES WITH POPULATIONS OVER 60,000 IN 1851.

Source: The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. xiv, p. 99.

MAP F

BRITISH TOWNS AND CITIES WITH POPULATIONS
IN 1851 OF 60,000 OR MORE.

Source: The New Cambridge Modern History, vol. xiv, p. 99.

MAP F₁THE DISTRIBUTION OF CHRISTADLPHIAN ECCLESIAS IN ENGLAND TO 1885.

Source: Information derived from The Ambassador and TC, vols. i - xxii (1864-1885) and C. Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xciii (1956), 449 - c (1963), 502.

adelphianism - is supported by the overall denominational statistics¹, which indicate a 7 to 8 times greater proportion of ex-Plymouth Brethren amongst Christadelphians than of Brethren amongst the population as a whole.

Two small groups of ecclesias developed south of the Scots border: one in the West Riding, and a second in the North Midlands - largely in Nottinghamshire. Of these, the 'North Midland' group (Derby, Newark, Nottingham and Lincoln) is the easier to explain, because, here again, there was a large number of Campbellites. Some of these Campbellites were eminently amenable to conversion, having already broken away from mainstream Campbellitism, and being prepared, in 1848, to open their doors to John Thomas, even when Campbellite headquarters in London issued a warning of the dangers inherent in Thomas's views.² The West Riding group - Halifax (1852), Heckmondwike (1858), Huddersfield and Leeds (both 1863) - is more difficult to explain, as is the continuing success, relative to other much larger towns and cities, throughout the period to 1885, of the small town of Halifax.

Only a few other ecclesias had developed in Britain prior to 1864, and they were very scattered. In chronological sequence of their development they were at Devonport (1849), Liverpool and Belfast (1859), Jarrow (1861), Mumbles (1863) and Birmingham (1855).³

A comparison between the distribution of Christadelphians, as recorded in maps A-F in this study, and the research of John Gay⁴

1. See Table 7, p. 284, below.

2. See ch I, pp. 15-17 above for details. Mr. Hudson of Nottingham made his Bible Advocate magazine, then one of the main Campbellite periodicals, available as a mouthpiece to Dr. Thomas - see Norrie, Early History, iii. 319-323.

3. The Birmingham Ecclesia sent representatives to an inter-ecclesial conference held in 1855 and so must have existed by then. According to C. Evans (TC, xcvi (1959), 255) some of these members had been baptised by John Thomas in 1848. By 1855, however, there were only 13 members and Christadelphianism in Birmingham was 'in a disorganised state, and no definite information was available... it was by no means successful until bro[ther] Roberts moved there from Huddersfield' (in January 1864) - Evans, '100 Yrs.', TC, xcvi (1959), 255. See also Evans '100 Yrs.', TC, xciv (1957), 293. William Norrie, in his Early History, ii. 33-65, certainly confirms this view.

4. J.D. Gay, The Geography of Religion in England (London 1971), the relevant maps being on pp. 288, 292, 297, 301, 303-10, 317 and 320.

affords some illumination upon the explanation of the growth of Christadelphianism, although Gay said nothing about the Campbellites and other fringe groups.

There is a very large degree of asymmetry between the geographical pattern portraying the development of the Christadelphians to 1851 on the one hand, and those of the Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Calvinistic Methodists, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, Wesleyan Methodists and Unitarians (as recorded by Gay), on the other.

However, there is some similarity between the pattern of development of Christadelphia and the Wesleyan Methodist Reformers and the Methodist Original Connexion (as far as the importance, to Christadelphians, of the West Riding was concerned) and between the Christadelphian pattern and that of the Methodist New Connexion and the total distribution of Methodists (as far as Christadelphianism, in both the West Riding and Nottinghamshire were concerned).

Whilst it is true that Gay's study related principally to figures from the census of 1851 - a year by which Christadelphianism was not in full flower - and that therefore the two studies are not strictly comparable, a number of possible implications may be drawn from these statistics. For example, there does seem to be some kind of spiritual sympathy between some branches of Methodism and Christadelphianism in their development in the West Riding.¹ However, the major implication is that the development of Christadelphianism was generally reliant neither upon the decay nor the symbiotic support of one of the major churches studied by Gay, but upon independent phenomena. This conclusion would correspond, in broad outline, with the conclusions reached from the examination of the previous religious allegiance of Christadelphians on pp. 282-287 below.

(c) A DENOMINATIONAL ANALYSIS OF CHRISTADELPHIAN CONVERSIONS
(1864-1885)

Table 7 on page 284 records the figures available for Christadelphians baptised between 1864 and 1885 in terms of their previous religious alignment. Also illustrated in the table is the expression of these figures in terms of percentage and the comparison

1. This may help to explain the problem outlined on p. 281 regarding Halifax and other West Riding towns.

of those figures with what could have been expected in terms of percentage proportions of previous religious affiliation based on national figures. Finally, these two sets of percentage figures have been related to each other to illustrate the amount to which conversions to Christadelphia in the period displayed a drift away from what might, in average terms, have been regarded as 'normal'.

In general, there was one very big difference between the Christadelphian recruitment pattern and the national distribution of sects, and a number of smaller, though important, differences. The big difference was that, in the period 1864-85, only one generation on from the founding of the Christadelphian movement, over 30% of recruitment was recorded as being derived from the children of parents who were Christadelphians, or from other relatives of those already converted. This position was complemented by the fact that the various churches and denominations of Britain reported 'nil returns'¹ as far as recruitment to their numbers from Christadelphianism was concerned. Whilst Christadelphians did not invest much time or effort in market research or in the creation of a pleasing public image, and did not, therefore, attract as much attention as they might have done, they did alert a number of speculators and charlatans who swindled several of the brethren. Whether it was, therefore, that the obscure and difficult parts of the Christadelphian creed, such as God-manifestation, put off some potential recruits, whilst the spectacle of a number of professional people losing their jobs on becoming Christadelphians put off others, the evident charitableness of the effects of these teachings on the lives of the early brethren attracted the attention of relatively large numbers of their immediate family, is hard to determine, but sounds plausible.

A related difference between the recruitment pattern of Christadelphians and what might be expected by studying an average distribution profile of denominational numbers is that sects of

1. This is as far as national records were concerned. The Christadelphian did record a number of ex-Christadelphians rejoining the various denominations of origin, in the period up to 1885. The number was very tiny, however. After the Inspiration Division in 1885, this number temporarily increased.

TABLE 7

A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE RELATIVE SIZES OF DENOMINATIONS CONTRIBUTING CONVERTS TO CHRISTADELPHIANISM 1864-85 IN ENGLAND AND WALES

A DENOMINATION	B % FIGURES FOR CONVERTS TO CHRISTADELPHIANISM	C % FIGURES FOR KNOWN RELIGIOUS ALLEGIANCE ²	D DIFFERENTIAL BETWEEN B & C EXPRESSED AS A %
1. Churches of England, Wales and Scotland	18.58	26.08 ⁴	71.2%
2. Members of Christadelphian families (not children)	18.4 ³	n.a.	
3. Methodist (includes WMC)	16.28	11.9 ⁵	136.8%
4. Children of Christadelphians	12.4	n.a.	
5. Baptists	12.0	5.4 ⁶	222.2%
6. Congregationalists	7.07	5.6 ⁷	126.2%
7. Campbellites and related groups	6.8	0.12 ⁸	5666.6%
8. Brethren	2.25	0.3 ⁹	750.0%
9. Free Church ¹⁷	1.3	n.a. ¹⁰	
10. Presbyterians	1.3	21.1 ¹⁰	6.1%
11. Roman Catholic	0.58	28.2 ¹¹	2.0%
12. Previously unaligned	0.52	n.a.	
13. Peculiar People	0.5	0.02 ¹⁵	2500.0%
14. Unitarian	0.44	n.a. ¹⁶	
15. Quakers	0.25	0.25 ¹²	100.0%
16. Mormons	0.08	0.06 ¹³	133.3%
17. Jews	0.06	0.138 ¹⁴	43.5%

1. These are statistics available from internal Christadelphian sources. They do not include converts to Christadelphianism where the denomination of origin, if any, was unknown. Converts of unknown denominational origin amounted to 875 people, or 14.6% of the total of 5,971 converts to Christadelphianism, in the period 1864-1885.
2. The source here is Currie, Gilbert and Horseley, Churches and Churchgoers, (Oxford 1977) - hereafter CGH. Concentration in these figures on known religious allegiance produces occasional statistical artefacts, such as the high Roman Catholic and low Established Churches percentages.
3. Categories 2 and 4 are mutually exclusive.
4. Table A4, CGH, p. 149.
5. Table A3, CGH, p. 142.
6. Table A4, CGH, p. 149.
7. Table A4, CGH, p. 149.
8. Table A6, CGH, p. 157.
9. Table F1, CGH, p. 216. The figure given is for the no. of sittings.
10. Tables A2 and A4, CGH, pp. 132 and 149. These percentages include the members of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, then known as the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion.
11. Table A5, CGH, p. 153. The figure given in this table, for 1887, is the earliest available.
12. Table A6, CGH, p. 157.
13. Table A6, CGH, p. 157.
14. Table F1, CGH, p. 217. The figure given is for the no. of sittings.
15. This figure comes from Mark Sorrell, The Peculiar People, p. 36.
16. CGH give figures for ministers and for lay members in Scotland only. See pp. 207-16, 219.
17. The definition of 'Free Church' offered here includes a wide range of small sects including 'Freegospeller', 'Moodey and Sankey types', 'Town Mission' and 'Blue Ribbon Gospel Army'.

similar doctrinal ilk to Christadelphians formed about 7% of total conversions in the period. Of this 7%, the largest single contributing group was the Campbellites - the congregation from which John Thomas had originally emerged. Although statistical evidence is scanty, there is reason to believe that in the period before The Ambassador was founded in 1864, the recruitment from Campbellites to Christadelphians was bigger still,¹ and very high indeed in certain areas of the country. Of the fifteen groups of which this 7% was comprised, only the Campbellites and Churches of Christ have national figures provided in standard works on nineteenth century religious history.

Of the nationally numerous churches from which a relatively high recruitment might have been expected, actual conversion patterns illustrate a variable correlation. The churches which shed a number of adherents to Christadelphianism approximate to their size in proportion nationally to other churches included the Established Churches, the Methodists, the Congregationalists, the Quakers and the Mormons. The numbers involved in the latter two cases were so small that no statistical significance can be attached to any interpretation of them. Of the former three, conversion rates to Christadelphianism were so close to what might have been expected, in terms of the sizes of the churches relative to each other, that little of deep theological significance can be deduced. Traditions related to the use of lay-preachers in the case of the Methodists, and of that plus a strong disposition towards ecclesiastical independence in the case of the Congregationalists, may have contributed to the development of sympathy between certain members of these denominations and Christadelphianism. As far as the established Church is concerned, it is highly probable that any spiritual sympathy existed between members of the Low Church and Christadelphians, although converts to Christadelphianism were rarely described in sufficient detail as to allocate their theology to High Church, Broad Church or Low Church, rendering such calculations

1. Norrie, Early History, i. 82-3, 131, 196-7 and ii. 1, 13, 135-6, 160-161.

speculative.

However, there appears in Table 7 a number of conversion rates wildly different from what one might have expected from the sizes of the churches in Britain. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Jews these were very low indeed. The size of the community of practising Jews was itself tiny in the nineteenth century, amounting to 8,000.¹ It is odd, nonetheless, that a faith so ostentatious in its orientation to Hebrew semantics as Christadelphianism should not have evoked more response from the Jews. Roman Catholic antipathy to any Protestant theology, especially one so radical as Christadelphianism, is understandable. Less easy to explain is the lack of interest shown by Presbyterians. Whether either the Calvinism of Presbyterian theology or the tight organisation of their church discipline was mainly responsible for this disinclination for Christadelphian views is impossible to assess.

In the case of the Baptist Church, there was more than double the number of converts to Christadelphianism pro rata than could have been expected. A number of sympathies of view existed in this case: the immersion of adult believers, after a confession of faith; some congregational independence; Biblical inerrancy; and the intense moral earnestness and austerity of evangelicalism. Some of these views were shared by the Brethren, whose relatively tiny community contributed a relatively heavy number of converts to Christadelphianism. Most notable of all was the relatively vast influx of Campbellites and members of the Churches of Christ into the Christadelphian fold. This is very significant because, as noted elsewhere,² the number of Campbellites who converted in the period up to 1864, when few official statistics were kept, was held by all commentators of the time to have been more considerable than it later became.

The relatively high number of Peculiar People converting to Christadelphianism is largely attributable to the early conversion to the ranks of the Christadelphians of David Handley, one of the

1. For details see Currie *et alia*, Churches and Churchgoers, p. 217.
 2. Citation from Norrie, footnote 1, p. 285, above.

originators of the Peculiar People movement.

Despite their very idiosyncratic understanding of the nature of God, which could perhaps most pithily be described as a Christian version of Judaism, Christadelphians made no great impression upon that other bastion of heterodox theology, Unitarianism. The proportion of Unitarians within Christadelphianism, a tiny 0.44%, could hardly have been greater than the national average figure.

The detailed picture presented above seems composed of two main elements. First, Christadelphianism had concentrated far more on research and development than on marketing; as such it had less immediate appeal than might have been the case. Consequently, the main sector of converts, once the movement was underway, came from those close enough to see the effect of Christadelphian theory when put into practice and to be convinced by the integrity and sincerity of the faithful. The majority of those in this position of close proximity was composed of members of Christadelphian families. The second element in the picture appears made up of a number of individualistic radicals - rather more from denominations in broad sympathy with Christadelphian principles, rather less from those traditionally antipathetic to radical nonconformity - from a wide range of sixty or more denominations, sects and sub-sects.

(d) AN ANALYSIS BY PROFESSION OF CHRISTADELPHIAN CONVERSIONS
(1864-1885)

An analysis of the census returns for 1881 in terms of percentages of the population employed in England, Wales and Scotland in the various professions is presented in Table 8 on p. 289. Figures in the left column represent the average percentage in mainland Britain as a whole, whilst figures in the right hand column are those representing the percentage of Christadelphians in the same profession.

In Table 8, a number of professions are seen to have been similarly distributed within the Christadelphians as in the population as a whole - for instance the 'Commercial Occupations', 'Mining', 'Building' and 'Brick Manufacture' categories were very similar. Those which were dissimilarly distributed did not, on the whole, display differences which could be described as significant.

There were, however, one or two exceptions. 'Agriculture', for example, absorbed 13% of national manpower, but only 3.8% of Christadelphians were involved in agrarian tasks. Similarly, over twice as many people on average worked as 'Domestics' compared with the picture within Christadelphia. The 'Professions', 'Machines, Vehicles and Metals', 'Jewellers', 'Wood' craftsmen, and 'Skins and Leather Ware' craftsmen were all significantly of a higher relative percentage within the Christadelphian body than in national terms.¹

Of course, these significant differences were of a complementary nature. The beliefs of Christadelphians spread rapidly in the first felicitous era of growth down to 1885. They spread most rapidly along lines of communication and within urban areas, where communication of the Gospel was easily facilitated. Equally, the growth in rural areas, bound by long traditions and relatively slow in the communication of ideas, was very slow in comparison.

The growth of Christadelphianism in Birmingham, where craft guilds were important and the type of thinking associated with the Test Acts was not powerful, was remarkable. Many 'brothers' came from skilled craft jobs to the beliefs of the Christadelphians in the Black Country, and were able to continue in them. Although more than three times the national average number of Christadelphians came from professional backgrounds, a number of them who had been teachers, including some who were Head Teachers, found it impossible to maintain their employment after their conversion because of the attitude to religious toleration of their employers.

Similarly, the relatively small number of Christadelphians among the 'Domestics' and the high number amongst the skilled craftsmen could be accounted for by the emphasis, within Christadelphia, on two features - one, mental effort, and, the other, conscientiousness. The mental effort required from a body of men allowed no paid ministry and urged in toto to become lecturing brethren, exhorting brethren and deliverers of Bible class addresses on a frequent basis went along naturally with an alert and disciplined mind. Such minds were attracted to professions requiring

1. The terminology involved in occupational distinctions referred to in Table 8 may sound a little bizarre. It is derived from an analysis of the occupations of census groups as set out in W.D. Handcock (ed.), English Historical Documents, xii (2) 1874-1914, (London 1977), 173-185.

TABLE 8

A PROFESSION	B OVERALL NATIONAL AVERAGE %	C % OF CHRIST- ADELPHIANS	D DIFFERENTIAL BE- TWEEN B&C EX- PRESSED AS A MULTIPLE
1. General Local Government	1	0.6	(-)1.66x
2. Army and Navy	1	0.6	(-)1.66x
3. The Professions	4	15.0	(+)3.75x
4. Domestic	12.0	5.45	(-)2.20x
5. Commercial Occupations	2.25	2.45	(+)1.08x
6. Conveyance of men, goods and messages	7.5	9.4	(+)1.25x
7. Agriculture	13.0	3.8	(-)3.42x
8. Fishing	0.5	0.15	(-)3.3 x
9. Mining	5.0	4.1	(-)1.22x
10. Machines, vehicles and metals	7.25	12.35	(+)1.71x
11. Jewellers	0.75	4.25	(+)5.66x
12. Building workers	7.5	6.5	(-)1.15x
13. Wood, furniture, decorations	1.75	3.0	(+)1.71x
14. Brick, cement, glass and pottery manufacture	1.25	0.82	(-)1.52x
15. Chemicals	0.75	0.15	(-)5.66x
16. Skins and Leather ware	0.75	4.55	(+)6.06x
17. Paper, printing and stationery	1.5	2.4	(+)1.6 x
18. Textiles, drapers and bleachers	11.0	9.1	(-)1.20x
19. Dress machinists	1.3	0.75	(-)1.73x
20. Food, tobacco and drink	6.75	4.5	(-)1.5 x
21. Gas, water and sanitary services	0.25	0.37	(+)1.48x
22. Other, general and un- defined workers and dealers	7.5	8.2	(+)1.09x

Source: Calculations made by the author of this thesis based on data available from *The Ambassador* and *TC*, vols. 1 - xxii (1864-85). The categories derive immediately from *English Historical Documents*, vol. xii. (2), ed. W.D. Handcock, pp. 173-185, and ultimately from the censuses of 1881, 1891, 1901 and 1911.

skill. Similarly, exhortations such as that of the Apostle Paul, (cited frequently, with others, in Christadelphian circles), 'servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ'¹ went in close proximity to what Max Weber described as the 'Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'. By the same token, the almost total absence of Christadelphians from professional callings such as the Armed Services, barristers, solicitors, politicians, publicans and the whole range of leisure time entertainers indicated the lack of desire on their part either to put this world right or to settle too comfortably to enjoy it. Rather, they felt the importance of the example of Abraham to 'confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.'²

In those days, many Christadelphians were recruited from professional groups - between three and four times the national average percentage, in fact. Others, because of overt discrimination,³ were forced out of their professional posts. Such men and women tended, instead, to take up a craft requiring some skill. Thus it was that almost twice as many as the national average percentage were in skilled or semi-skilled jobs in trades relating to machines, vehicles, metals and carpentry; almost six times the average percentage were in jewellery and more than six times the average held jobs such as shoemaker, saddler, tanner, clicker, bridle cutter and cordwainer.

There was relatively little encouragement, given the theological background of Christadelphians, in pursuing a career such as charwoman, laundry worker, washer, ironer or mangler, and very few did.

To the relative numbers of Christadelphian unemployed we make little reference here. Only 27 'brethren' or 'sisters' were recorded as being unemployed amongst Christadelphians in the entire period 1864-1885, either for the reason that they were widows, still

1. Colossians iii. 22-24.

2. Hebrews xi. 13.

3. See ch. III, p. 94, above.

at school, retired or simply out of work. This was a tiny percentage compared with a national total of retired or unoccupied people in Great Britain as a whole for 1881 of 9,342,523, (a percentage figure of the total population of 42.3%). It may well have been that the 'Protestant work ethic' was at work and that very few Christadelphians were unemployed during this period. However, the available figures of professional occupancy are only about 25% of the total number of Christadelphians baptised between 1864 and 1885, and, naturally, the ecclesial secretaries tended to record the details of those who had jobs rather than those who were housewives and did no remunerative task outside the home.

CONCLUSION

In answering the first of the two questions posed in the Introduction to this study, namely, what is to explain the success of Christadelphianism to 1885, a number of reasons has been suggested in these pages. The organising ability of Robert Roberts was very important: he gave the movement its rules, institutions, and much of its literature. The original openness of the Christadelphian community and the accessibility of its credal formulae to change based on empirical data derived from the Bible commended itself to men from a wide spectrum of orthodox persuasions whose Christianity was of an open-minded, individualist and fundamentalist-rationalist stamp. These converts proved to include a number of individuals who, once convinced, were able, determined, loyal and hard-working. Many of them, such as Roberts, Norrie, Hadley, Mowatt, Stoddart, Thirtle and Mackley, were professional journalists who used their communicating skills to effect. The openness of Christadelphianism in its early days permitted brethren, once converted, to stay nominally within their churches of origin, causing a wider spread of the new views amongst those with some sympathy for them than would have occurred under tighter restrictions regulating communion. The combination within Christadelphianism of erudition and the appeal to many an ordinary man of a lay ministry came at the right time in terms of the history of nineteenth century British education. The non-test act openness of the Birmingham guilds made that Midlands city a natural centre for a nonconformity as radical as Christadelphianism and lent impetus to its development within Warwickshire. Writers in adjacent fields have suggested the development in mid-nineteenth century Britain of sizable schisms within mainstream Protestantism: not only the Anglicans with their Oxford Movement and Tractarians on the one hand, and the Low Church Evangelicals and the Clapham Sect on the

other, but Baptists, Congregationalists and Wesleyans, too, were sundered by controversy.¹ Some have judged² that the alienation of men like Manning and Newman from the English Church lost it intellects equipped to meet the challenge of Darwinism. Both O. Chadwick³ and W. Neil⁴ considered that the challenge to fundamentalists in Britain did not occur until well into the second half of the nineteenth century. In Vidler's view it was shortly after 1870 when 'most of the influential teachers of the age were either unbelievers or professed a faith... calculated to unsettle if not destroy traditional Christian belief.'⁵ A suggestion of this thesis is that the spiritual vacuum created by those dismayed by these developments was, in part, at least, filled by Christadelphianism which was seen to be on the offensive against idiosyncrats such as Hine and disbelievers like Bradlaugh.

The second question suggested as significant in the Introduction related to the explanation of the relative demise of Christadelphianism after 1885. Again, a number of contributory factors has been suggested above. The early idea, accepted amongst Baptised Believers, of continual reimmersions after the discovery of new truths, was gradually replaced by the requirement of credal exactitude prior to a unique immersion. Hand in hand with this change went the removal of Thomas's spirit of discovery and its replacement by a faith which was creed-based such that the creed was regarded as virtually immutable. Although Roberts became de facto leader of Christadelphianism (in 1864, and, more particularly, after Thomas's death in 1871) it is worth noting in his exculpation that Thomas's legacy was not an easy one to inherit: a decision had to be made and then implemented - was he to organise Thomas's ideology and its concomitant following, contain it or merely prolong its wild but prolific growth-rate, casting the cares of ecclesiastical polity to the winds? In answering the question as he did, and in seeking to organise the movement, much of the post-1885 declension can be explained. However, even with hindsight,

-
1. A.R. Vidler, The Church in the Age of Revolution, (London 1961), p. 143, suggested that the Wesleyans alone lost 100,000 members in the mid-nineteenth century.
 2. For example, Roy Avery MA FRSA contributing to the Dictionary of World History, ed. G.M.D. Howat, (London 1973), pp. 7126-7.
 3. O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church, (London 1966), p. 530.
 4. W. Neil in The Cambridge History of the Bible, ed. S.L. Greenslade, (Cambridge 1963), pp. 269-270.
 5. Vidler, The Church in the Age of Revolution, p. 112.

it is difficult to see whether one of the alternative dispositions of Thomas's spiritual legacy would have been more successful. The understanding of some other, minor, issues contributes to the comprehension of the problem caused by Christadelphianism's rapid decline - for example, pressures applied from outside the movement caused a number of notables to recant their conversion to Christadelphianism. However, there is no gainsaying the significance of the principal factor - namely the offence and rupture caused by the schism of 1885. The 'Clean Flesh' schism of 1873 had illustrated the drag of schism on spiritual momentum. By 1885's standards, the 1873 schism was mere dust on the balances. After 1885, many of the better speakers departed; intellectuals were discredited for many years within the Central fellowship, which became, in consequence, introverted; issues of personal distaste (some raked up from the past), theological distinctions, and polemics over ecclesiastical polity became jumbled inextricably into chaos. Certain that Roberts was right, the Central fellowship could not deny that the means he had selected to combat Ashcroft had been political, not expositional - and unspoken doubts about his conduct lingered behind assured statements of support. Injustices were done, and known to have been done, to brethren who, whilst as assured as Roberts about the inspiration of the Bible, found his political methods distasteful. These injustices were not admitted. Thus, many issues were left clouded in the hope that, when the clouds drifted away with time, the injustices too would have vanished. All this complexity and sordidness in what only twenty years previously under Thomas had been earnest, unsullied and confident, does much to explain the difference in ethos within Christadelphianism before and after 1885.

Whilst a constant harping on semantic niceties can be irritating, genuine clarification occasionally emerges from unlikely sources. T.F. O'Dea produced a synthesis and simplification¹ of the work of the generation of sociologists of religion which included E. Troeltsch, J. Wach and H.R. Niebuhr and also more recent

1. T.F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion, (New Jersey 1966).

authors such as J.M. Yinger and B.R. Wilson. In sum, O'Dea maintained, these sociologists had developed a clear delineation between the terms 'church' and 'sect'. Table 9 below sets out O'Dea's assessment.

TABLE 9

Values	Church	Sect
Basis of membership	Birth	Voluntary, after conversion
Mode of administration	Via hierarchy and formal dogma	No general rule applied to this criterion
Social structure	Inclusive of others, often geographically and ethnically	Exclusive of other approaches and individuals
Expectation-level regarding conversions	Universal	Numerically low, but expectation of a spirit of regeneration within converts
Attitude to society	Ready to adjust to and compromise with existing values and institutions	Withdrawn from general society into an austere, ascetic, separate and even defiant stance.

The term 'denomination' stood approximately mid-way between 'church' and 'sect'. The 'denomination', O'Dea felt, involved second and subsequent generations of a sect's development, increased prosperity due to ascetic attitudes favouring hard work, greater conservatism, more comfortable adjustment to the established social order, respectability and routinisation.

O'Dea cited work from Yinger¹ and Wilson² to show that sectarianism could become established by geographical and other forms of withdrawal from the world. O'Dea's own work on Mormonism³

-
1. J.M. Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, (New York 1957).
 2. B.R. Wilson, Sects and Society.
 3. American Journal of Sociology, (Nov. 1954), No. 3, 60:285-293.

provided a template for a further alternative response - the type of wilderness experience which the Biblical Hebrews had gone through - producing 'something resembling an ethnic group'.¹ Troeltsch's The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches provided O'Dea with a third possible response for a sect which wished to avoid development as a denomination, namely mysticism.

It has been the contention of this thesis that Christadelphianism had developed, by 1885, in an idiosyncratic direction in terms of the categories outlined above.

The Robert Roberts or 'Temperance Hall' section of the movement was sectarian in some ways: membership was by the baptism of adults; the world and other religious groups were regarded with suspicion; a low expectation of conversions existed and the movement had adopted a stance towards society which showed itself austere and withdrawn. However, in certain respects, Christadelphianism was developing as Niebuhr had indicated denominations did: an ever-increasing sector of its membership was drawn from the families of first-generation converts; prosperity was being produced from an ascetic attitude to endeavour; and certain plaudits had been accorded to the movement, resulting in increased respectability. Indeed, an almost church-like approach had been developed by 1885 in terms of attitude to hierarchy and formal dogma: the office-holder of Editor of The Christadelphian had become de facto leader of the movement and certain of his pronouncements, which themselves involved a routinisation of religious life, had been universally accepted.

A different flavour of religious taste had, by 1885, been developed amongst Christadelphians who had formed the 'Suffolk Street' branch of the movement: in ecclesiastical polity, they were much more congregational and, hence, more sect-like; in attitude to society and the expectation-level of conversions, they were more adventurous than their 'Temperance Hall' brethren - prepared to believe that if what to them was 'the Truth' was, indeed, the

1. T.F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion, p. 70.

True Gospel, it must be able to appeal to all¹ - in this, they were more church-like than the 'Temperance Hall' section, according to O'Dea's categories.

In general, it is possible to conclude that, by 1885, both the Temperance Hall and Suffolk Street sectors of the Christadelphian movement had become stable enough institutionally to be regarded as parts of a 'denomination' in many respects and, although sect-like in certain features of religious life, were church-like in others. Overall, therefore, the emergence of a 'denomination' is an acceptable description of Christadelphianism by 1885.

1. The Temperance Hall section of the movement had been shocked by the importation into Christadelphianism of Higher Critical views by two former clergymen, Revd. Ashcroft and Revd. Chamberlin. After the expulsion of these gentlemen in 1885, a residue of suspicion lingered for almost fifty years within Temperance Hall of any obtrusion from the outside world: the movement became withdrawn, suspicious, even hostile.

APPENDIX A

JOHN THOMAS'S 34 QUESTIONS OF 1835

"1.- Is there any other difference between man and the inferior animals, than their organisation, i.e., does not the essential difference between them consist in their susceptibilities?

"2.- What was the state of our first parents, in relation to eternal existence, before God said, 'Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it', &c.; i.e., was it any other than a state in which they were susceptible either of mortality or immortality?

"3.- Is man naturally and, therefore, necessarily immortal, i.e., is he an "immortal soul", because he is man; or is immortality a gift consequent upon the due observance of certain conditions proposed by God, at certain periods of the world's age?

"4.- If the former, how can "life and incorruptibility" be said "to be brought to light by Jesus Christ in the gospel"?

"5.- If the latter, can idiots, infants, pagans, and unbelievers of every grade, with Scripture propriety, be called "immortal souls"?

"6.- If immortality be a gift, is that gift conferred as soon as a man dies, or does he wait for it, in unconsciousness, "till the revelation of Jesus Christ" at his second advent, when he will descend from heaven to ascend "the throne of his father David"?

"7.- Can any person living be said to be immortal, except by anticipation of his resurrection from the dead?

"8.- If, as soon as the breath is out of a man's body, he be instantly translated to heaven or hell, how can he be said to be dead, and to rise again from the dead? Is a man in heaven or hell, dead and alive, at the same time? If so, where do the Scriptures teach this?

"9.- Do the Scriptures teach that men and women, and children, come from heaven and hell when they rise from the dead; or do they not rather teach that men's mortal bodies will be made alive, i.e., re-animated by the spirit, i.e., the power of God, as the body of Jesus was?

"10.- If immortality, or perennial bliss or woe, be conferred upon men as soon as they die, i.e., if they be even sent direct to heaven or, contrariwise, to hell, pray what is the use of the judgment, which all say is to be at the end of the world?

"11.- Is the "second death" eternal life in torment?

"12.- If instant perennial bliss or woe has obtained through all ages, at death, consequent upon the alleged possession of an hereditary immortal principle, is not the gospel nullified, seeing that Paul says it brings life and incorruptibility to light?

"13.- Are not "the great recompense of reward" and "punishment" consequent on the rejection of God's proclamation, or offer of immortality on the terms of the gospel?

"14.- If so, and if God have never made the offer of "life and incorruptibility" to pagans, say the Chinese, will they be raised again from the dead to suffer punishment, and to be involved in a common and fierce catastrophe with those who have heard it and yet refuse to obey it?

"15.- Does not God's distribution of judgments on the nations,

show that He makes a difference between those to whom His message has been sent and those to whom it has not?

"16.- Is not the term "unjust", in the Scripture sense, limited to those who have rejected God's way of justification; as the term "just" is confined to those who have accepted it under His several dispensations?

"17.- Does not "the resurrection of the just and of the unjust" exclude pagans who have never heard the messages of God, infants, idiots, and insane, i.e., do not these at death fall into a state of unconsciousness, from which they will never be delivered?

"18.- When it says, "Be fruitful and multiply, and RE-plenish the earth", &c., does it imply that the earth was inhabited before the creation of Adam; and that the earth being without form and void, and darkness upon the face of the deep waters which pervaded it, was the result of a catastrophe, by which its former inhabitants were destroyed?

"19.- May not these inhabitants be "the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their proper habitation, whom God has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day (Jude 6), "the angels that sinned whom He spared not, but with chains of darkness confining them in Tartarus, delivered them over to be kept for judgment (II Peter 2:4) - the angels whom Christ and the saints are to judge (I Cor. 6:3) - may not these inhabitants of a former world on earth be the demons whom God in ancient times permitted to possess man, the chief of whom is Satan, and who cried out, saying, "Ah! Jesus of Nazareth, what hast thou to do with us? Art thou come to destroy us? I know who thou art, the holy one of God" (Mark 1:24); and "what hast thou to do with us, Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us BEFORE THE TIME?" - (Matt. 8:29.)

"20.- Is not the word "heaven", in Scripture, synonymous with dispensation, state of society divinely constituted and governed, in opposition to that composed of institutions merely human?

"21.- Does not the phrase, "heaven and earth", signify an age in reference to its governmental and subordinate relations?

"22.- Does not the phrase, "a new heaven and a new earth", simply import a NEW dispensation of ages in relation to a former one which had become old?

"23.- Are not dispensation, state, age, and world, often and for the most part synonymous terms in Scripture?

"24.- Does not the solid material earth composed of hills, mountains, oceans, rocks, &c., bear a similar relation to dispensation, state, age and world, that the permanent stage of a theatre does to the shifting scenes?

"25.- Does not the Scripture teach that three "heavens", or Divinely constituted states of human society, are to obtain upon the earth; and that the third is to remain through all eternity?

"26.- Are not these three heavens, first, the kingdom of heaven, or the church of Jesus Christ; second, the millennial age; third, the eternal dispensation? Is not the first illustrated in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists; the second in Isaiah 65: 17-25; Ezekiel 37:21-28; chaps. 40-48, &c., &c.; the third in the Apocalypse, chaps. 21, 22 to v. 5? And was it not the third heaven, or eternal age, which is also called Paradise, to which Paul was suddenly conveyed away in vision, when he heard unspeakable things?

"27.- Does not the promise made to Abraham, Gen. 17:8, confirmed by the institution of circumcision, v. 9-14, - in which those who are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands by the circumcision of Jesus Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, are interested - refer to the possession of Canaan, in Asia, under the personal reign of the Messiah?

"28.- Will not the faithful of all past dispensations be put in possession of Canaan in Asia, and of the government of men of all nations, by a resurrection from the dead; and will not the faithful on the earth at that time undergo an instantaneous change from a state of mortality to one of incorruptibility; and will not all this be consequent upon the descent of Jesus to the Mount of Olives?

"29.- Is not the subject of God's promise to Abraham synonymous with the "Kingdom of God and of Christ", "the Kingdom of God", "the reign of God", "my father's Kingdom"; and is it not when Jesus enters on the possession of the land of Canaan that the apostles will sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of (the restored) Israel; that he will partake of the passover which will be accomplished in the kingdom of God; that he will drink of the product of the vine, with the apostles, new in his Father's kingdom; that many will come from the east and west, and will be placed at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, &c?

"30.- Does not the present animal constitution of things bear the same relation to the millennial and eternal ages as a mass of bricks, stones, timbers, scaffolding, mortar, &c., do to a palace about to be built, or rather being built from their materials; and may not all but the true believers, be aptly compared to the refuse or rubbish, after the palace is built, fit only to be burned, destroyed, or cast out, and trodden under foot of men?

"31.- Will not the inhabitants of Paradise restored, or the eternal age, symbolized by John in the Apocalypse, as the new, not the restored, Jerusalem, be the TRUE ISRAELITISH NATION - a nation, every member of which will be an immortal, incorruptible, or spiritual, as opposed to an animal or mortal man; a nation, constituted of the descendants or children of Abraham according to the promise?

"32.- Is not restoration, and not destruction, the ultimatum of all God's dealings in relation to man; and does not the restoration relate to the earth, which was cursed on man's account, as well as to its inhabitants? if so, why look for heaven in some unknown, unrevealed, remote region of immensity? And cannot the hell of the wicked be scripturally discovered in the renovating and purifying flames latent in the bowels of the earth, to be brought into operation for judicial and physical purposes?

"33.- Are not "the court of the priests", "the holy place", and "the most holy place" types of the Jewish, Christian, and millennial states of society under divine rule?

"34.- Are not these interrogatories worthy of the investigation of all who desire to add to their faith, knowledge? Are they not calculated to stimulate us to search the Scriptures? And if the hints contained in these questions be valid, what becomes of the popular notions of immortality, heaven, hell, baby-rhantism, circumcision by modern Jews, funeral sermons, modern psalmody, immersion into experiences, obituaries, salvation of Pagans independent

of the gospel, untypical sectarian churches, &c., &c.; and would not their scriptural elucidation remove many obstacles at present in the way of objectors to revelation on account of the supposed incompatibilities and its incongruities?"

Source: The Apostolic Advocate as cited in Roberts, Life Dr. T., (ed. W.H. Boulton 1954), pp. 33-36.

APPENDIX BJOHN THOMAS'S 30 POINTS OF 1846

"1.- That the Spirit of God formed man in the image and likeness of the Elohim, "very good", but without character, susceptible of mortality or of immortality, but then actually in possession of neither.

"2.- That the subsequent state of Adam upon the earth was predicated on the character he should develop, that is, upon his obedience or disobedience of the Eden law.

"3.- That by transgression, he came under the sentence of death, and all his posterity in him, by which when 930 years old, he was demolished, and became as he was before his formation, leaving only his character behind written in the remembrance of God.

"4.- That he was driven out of the garden that he might not become immortal.

"5.- That immortality is deathlessness, and consists in life manifested through an incorruptible body.

"6.- That inasmuch as immortality is no inherent principle of the nature of the animal or natural man, it must be sought for as a "gift from God", "who only hath it" as the "fountain of life".

"7.- That God purposed in Himself before the world began, to set up a kingdom, the attributes of which should be "glory, honour, incorruptibility, and life" to all who should possess it; that these things, therefore, are to be manifested through and in connection with it alone.

"8.- That this kingdom is terrestrial and has a territory, a king, subjects, constitution, laws, and an executive administration.

"9.- That the kingdom is David's kingdom, at present non-existent, but soon to be restored.

"10.- That the territory of this kingdom is the 3,000,000 square miles of country promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their seed, or descendant, the Messiah; and these are all to possess it coetaneously and for ever; that none of them either did or expected to possess it in his corruptible lifetime, and therefore that in the covenant of territory, there is a veiled promise of a resurrection to eternal life; and of the coming of Abraham's Seed to take possession of it as the inheritance willed and confirmed to him by his Father in Heaven.

"11.- That God promised that David's throne and kingdom should endure throughout all generations; that he should never want a man to sit upon his throne; and that David should witness the fulfilment of these things.

"12.- That God has promised to give the Messiah these promises made to his father David, after he should have been first raised from the dead, but not immediately after.

"13.- That David's throne and kingdom have had no existence since the dethronement of Zedekiah, upwards of 2,400 years ago; hence for the promises concerning the kingdom to be fulfilled, the Messiah must come and re-establish David's kingdom and raise David from the dead.

"14.- That the fulfilment of these things is the regeneration, restoration, or restitution of all things spoken of by all the prophets since the days of Moses.

"15.- That all who would inherit this kingdom must become the "seed of Abraham" and "joint heirs with the Messiah".

"16.- That the descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, in the line of Jacob are the saints of the law; but that "the People OF the Saints", are those Jews who walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, and those Gentiles who become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel and Abraham's seed, by becoming Christ's: that these are the true Jews who shall possess the empire of the world, exercising sovereignty over Jews and Gentiles in the flesh.

"17.- That for Jews and Gentiles living in the times of the Gentiles to become heirs of this kingdom, they must become the subjects of repentance and remission of sins through the name of Jesus.

"18.- That repentance is the gift of God, and consists in that state of mind in which the disposition of the fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, obtains possession of the affections, and turns men to the obedience and wisdom of just persons; that this Abrahamic disposition, which is childlike, humble, believing, and teachable, is appointed and accepted as repentance, consequent on belief of the gospel of the kingdom, and baptism in the name of the king; that the fruits meet for repentance are the fruits of the Spirit, which evince the indwelling of the disposition of these fathers in the heart.

"19.- That they who hope for the things of the kingdom of God, may become the subjects of repentance and remission of sins, by believing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah foretold in the law and the prophets, both Son of David and Son of God; that his blood cleanses from all sin, and that he rose from the dead; and by being baptized into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

"20.- That we are sinners by constitution and actual transgression, being destitute of all inherent holiness or righteousness; so that to become holy and righteous, we must be constituted the righteousness of God in Christ.

"21.- That Matthew gives the genealogy of Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, from Abraham in the line of David, Solomon, and Zorobabel; by which lineage it is demonstrated that Jacob and Joseph were descendants of Abraham in the royal line.

"22.- That Luke gives the genealogy of Heli, the father of Mary, from Adam and Abraham in the line royal of David, Nathan, and Zorobabel: thus the families of Jacob and Heli were two branches of the royal house.

"23.- That David's throne and kingdom were decreed to the heirs male, as proved by 2 Sam. 7. A daughter of David, or female descendant, could not, therefore ascend the throne. The right of the Princess Mary, derived from her father Heli of the elder branch, would consequently give way to those of Joseph son of Jacob, though descended from the younger son of David.

"24.- That the families of Nathan the elder, and of Solomon the younger, of the sons of David by Bathsheba, united in Zorobabel, governor of Judah under the Persians; from Zorobabel the family again divided into the branches terminating in Jacob and Heli.

"25.- That by the marriage of Joseph, son of Jacob, with Mary, daughter of Heli, the two branches from Zorobabel were again united; so that all right and title to the throne and kingdom of David concentrated in Mary's First Born. He, therefore, became the head and hope of the family and nation. Hence he is styled the BRANCH;

but, dying without issue, the royal house in the direct line became extinct.

"26.- Jesus, the grandson of Heli, being born of Joseph's wife, was born hereditary king of the Jews. Heli married the sister of the father of Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah, and mother of John the Baptizer, who was, therefore, second cousin to Jesus. Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron; consequently Mary, daughter of Heli and mother of Jesus, was of the house of David by her father, and of the house of Aaron by her mother, so that in her son Jesus was not only vested, by his birth and the marriage of his mother, all kingly rights, but all rego-pontifical as well. In Jesus, therefore, is united the combined kingly and high-priestly offices of the nation of Israel: so that when the government shall be upon his shoulders he will sit as a priest upon his throne, after the order of Melchizedec, being without predecessor or successor in the united office of king and priest.

"27.- From all which it is evident that if there lives any one who has a right to David's throne, it can only be Jesus; and therefore he must have been raised from the dead; that if the Jews of this age were to agree to restore David's throne, they could not effect it, though all other things might favour, because they could not find a son of David to occupy it. Hence there is no one can re-establish it but God, who retains at His right hand the only descendant of David who is alive.

"28.- That the period occupied by the kingdom of God and of David's son is "the dispensation of the fulness of times", which lasts 1,000 years. That this is the day of judgment, when Messiah shall sit upon David's throne, judging the living and them that were dead in his kingdom. That this periodic-day is the world to come, or future age, of which Paul speaks in Hebrews, when the saints judge the world, and the unjust are punished according to their works.

"29.- That the Scriptures classify mankind according to the times and circumstances under which they live; that these are the times of ignorance and times of knowledge; that under the former, they are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them", being permitted to walk in their own ways, and "receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet". That this class, though in part accountable, are irresponsible, and therefore not the subjects of a resurrection to judgment or to life: that this class is composed of two orders of beings, the one accountable, the other not being able to give an account, but both from circumstances peculiar to their case, irresponsible, and the heirs, therefore, only of what the constitution of the kingdom of sin, under which the human race has been involuntarily placed, can give them a title to.

"That it is light or knowledge which makes accountable men responsible. That by this light, accountable and responsible men are subdivided into three orders: first, those who would not receive the light; second, those who receive and continue in it; and third, those who having once received it, turn from it. That "sinners", "wicked", "unjust", and "just", are terms indicative of these orders of men: that the third order is composed of "cursed children", who awake from the dust to everlasting shame and contempt", while the "wicked", or "rest of the dead live not again till the 1,000 years are ended". That the second order is composed of

"blessed children", who are to inherit the kingdom prepared for them.

"30.- That the dispensation of 1,000 years is the state intermediate between the times of the Gentiles and the eternal state. That to enter the eternal world we must pass through the intermediate dispensation of the future age. "

Source: The Herald of the Future Age (1846) as cited in Roberts, Life Dr. T., (ed. W.H. Boulton 1954), pp. 118-120.

APPENDIX C

JOHN THOMAS'S CONFESSION, ABJURATION AND DECLARATION OF 1847'CONFESSION AND ABJURATION

"When we consider the nature of flesh and blood, and the constitution of the world to which it stands related, it seems impossible that a man should struggle for twelve long years in and with the darkness and evil by which he is surrounded, and have no errors to confess and abjure. There may be some immaculates who, being wise in their own conceit, consider themselves as free from these; and who regard with pious horror the possibility of "heresy" being an ingredient of their religionism. But it is not so with the Editor of the Herald of the Future Age. He admits he has erred "in many things"; and it affords him great and pleasant satisfaction to announce to his readers that by the profitable assistance of the sacred writings, he has discovered some mistakes, which, if not corrected, would prove fatal to his eternal well-being. His errors are of a positive and negative character - errors of omission, and errors of commission. While it may be a palliation to say he erred in sincerity, he considers such a plea no valid excuse or expiation. Paul committed many heinous offences ignorantly, therefore he found mercy; but he was not therefore pardoned. So, because we have erred ignorantly, and at the same time honestly contending for what we believed to be true, we have also "obtained mercy", in the forbearance of God towards us, seeing that we are still spared to the discovery of the sandiness of our foundation, and the correction and abjuration of our errors unto life.

"When we look back upon the past thirteen years, it is with mingled astonishment and satisfaction. But though in the course of that period we have had many regrets, yet from the position we now occupy in viewing "the landscape o'er", we cannot confess that our mingled feeling is disturbed by the bitterness of regret. Our barque has been buffeted and tossed by the winds and waves of an unfathomed and stormy course. It is true that its masts and spars have bent and creaked under a not infrequent press of sail; but her hull was tight, and her stays and halliards, though stretched, have not given way. She has always answered to her helm, and we rejoice to know that we have brought her to soundings tight and trim. But from the tropical, let us turn to plain, unvarnished details of matters and things.

"I.- First, we remark that our moral training at the hands of a kind and pious mother was the best her education in the Calvinism of the Scottish Kirk could enable her to give. She instilled into us a profound veneration for the Holy Scriptures, which we retain till this day. We had more veneration for the book than accurate knowledge of its contents. Hence, while our youth was strictly moral, the hereditary principle of our flesh was strong and unsubdued. Pride and ambition, our ancestral sins, were the leading characteristics of our early manhood. These urged us on to "high things", as we then esteemed them. We sought distinction in politics and science, "the mean ambition and pride of men"; but God in His goodness foiled all our schemes, and we found ourselves an alien

in a strange land.

"II.- With a very, very insufficient knowledge of the word, amounting almost to nothing, we became a truth seeker. We sought truth as a worldly-minded, but otherwise moral young man might be supposed to seek it. We sought it at the lips of the world's prophets and diviners. In the search we failed. Events introduced us to our worthy friend W.S., of the Protestant Unionist. We conversed on the Book of Daniel. We were acquainted with these prophecies then only so far as they were interpreted by Rollin, which we have elsewhere, by a different interpretation, proved to be fallacious. If, therefore, the Kingdom of God was touched upon, and we think it was not, it is very certain we did not understand it. However, said our friend, "we agree very well as to generals; let us see if we cannot come to an understanding as to particulars." "You believe that Jesus is the Christ." The truth is, in relation to this, we could not have told when we did not "believe" it! We answered "yes!" "What hinders, then, that you should be a Christian?" "You believe that Christ died for sins, was buried, and rose again; why not be baptised?" "Yes, we believed this, because it was so written; but we had also supposed ourselves as good a Christian as others, though not in a church. We had belonged to the Independents, when 17 years old, for about six months, when we withdrew. We had always been a church-goer, and had officiated as a sort of chaplain on board a ship. A Christian! Could we be more a Christian than we were?" Such was the kind of thoughts flitting athward the mind; but we replied that "we thought that, being a stranger, he ought not to press us to do this; but that he should wait, and prove whether we were worthy; we might discredit our profession, which would be worse than none." He very politely expressed that he had no fears of that kind. We told him however, frankly, that we were seeking the truth, and if the course he recommended were scriptural, we would comply. He cited the case of the Ethiopian officer, and in the conversation quoted Acts ii. 38, which proved an end to all controversy.

"Such are the leading facts in the case, as well as we can remember at this distance of time. We cast no blame on our friend, while we condemn ourselves. With the views he had then, and seems still to retain, and which for many years we have shared with him and others, we should, and doubtless have pursued the same course; but, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, as we verily believe, we confess that the whole matter was a mistake, and as such make this public abjuration thereof.

"1.- Because our "faith" rested mainly, if not solely, upon the word of man.

"2.- Because that most excellent man, we think, did not then, neither does he now, appear to know, nor did we, what the Gospel of God is concerning His Son.

"3.- Because we mistook the mystery of the gospel for the gospel itself.

"4.- Because the editor was a stranger to the Abrahamic disposition and mode of thinking which are the true type of "repentance unto life."

"5.- Because being destitute of this childlike frame of mind, even had he known and believed the gospel of the kingdom, his faith would not have been imputed to him for righteousness.

"6.- Because that men are "saved by the hope", being ignorant in toto of that hope, he was not saved by it, and therefore, while he writes this, must be in his sins.

"These, we consider, are sufficient reasons why we should abjure the whole transaction, in which we once firmly thought we had believed and obeyed the one only true apostolic gospel of Jesus Christ.

"III.- Having been immersed into what we now see is an erroneous system, an interest was then awakened in us to know more about it. Accordingly we devoured the Christian Baptist and Harbinger. For seven months we supposed we were studying the truth itself. We were but too faithful a student of these writings. We acquired a taste for theological gladiatorship, for which we have not been altogether unjustly blamed. If at this period we studied the word otherwise than through these works, the impression thereof has faded from our remembrance.

"IV.- At the end of seven months, an unforeseen and unwished for change in our circumstances supervened. When we look back we are astonished. It was not, however, presumption, but a pressure from without, that placed us in the attitude of a religious instructor! Our friend W.S. could never induce us to attempt "to preach". We were concerned in relation to this matter by Mr. A. Campbell, who forced us most reluctantly into the position. We now found ourselves under an extraordinary obligation to study the word. Accordingly we closed the other works and set about it in good earnest; and, becoming an editor, a new impetus was communicated, which became irresistible. While the Christian Baptist maintained its ascendancy, our mind continually reverted to its author as the light of the age, and we wrote and spoke of him as such; but, as the word began to take root in our hearts, and to enlighten the eyes of our understanding, in the same ratio that light became dim, and we began to discover the dense fog in which he and his system are embedded.

"V.- It has consumed many years to convince us thoroughly of this. This will explain how it is we have taught errors we are now under the necessity of abjuring. We taught these errors under the influence of human tradition; we have recently perceived the truth, aided only by the prophets and apostles; therefore, we do confess:

"1. That we have taught that to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; that he died for sins, was buried, and rose again for our justification; and that to be immersed into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins, is to believe and obey the gospel.

"2. That we have taught, that to be sorry for sin, cease to do evil, and learn to do well, is repentance.

"3. That the kingdom of God was set up on the Day of Pentecost; that it consisted of 3120 citizens; that the apostles then sat upon their thrones; and we have sung that we shall gain kingdoms beyond the skies, &c.

"4. That the gospel was preached for the first time by Peter, on Pentecost, and that it is contained in Acts ii. 38; and that the transactions therein detailed are a fulfilment of Isaiah ii.3.

"5. That by immersion, a believer after the type of No. 1, is introduced into the kingdom.

"6. That, while we have always contended that the faith of the sectarian world, and the faith without which a man cannot please God, are essentially different faiths, we have erroneously attributed that essential difference to not believing in the remission of sins through immersion into the name of Jesus, instead of to their utter ignorance of the gospel of the kingdom.

"7. That while formerly, with these errors, we taught the truth as it opened up before us from the word, we have never, till comparatively recently, perceived that it was the gospel, and, therefore, we have never ventured to affirm that these things were necessary to salvation.

"8. That, like all the rest of our contemporaries, we have taught unknowingly the conditions of the gospel as a substitute for the gospel of the kingdom of God.

"9. That, under the influence of human tradition and example, we have invited persons to come forward on the spur of the moment, and be baptised for the remission of sins, when, from the nature of things, it was impossible that they could have been enlightened; had we been properly instructed we should not now have had to make this confession and abjuration of our mistakes. Better late, however, than not at all.

"10. We do not remember that we ever taught the existence of an immortal soul in corruptible man, and the translation thereof to heaven or hell, at the instant of death; if we have, so much the worse: no man can hold this dogma and acceptably believe the gospel of the kingdom of God and His Christ; we abjure it as "a damnable heresy."

"The former nine of these items we confess to; there may be other things which have escaped our recollection; whatever they be, let them all go into eternal oblivion; we count them all but dross, and abjure them all, that we may enter upon a new era, as the freedman of Christ and his truth.

"VI. We erred in holding in abeyance the most trivial inference from the truth on any pretence whatever; we abjure all errors of this kind, and take this opportunity of declaring that no compromise with men or principles can hereafter be extracted from the editor of this paper.

"VII. We admit that we have not accepted the slanders and reproaches bestowed upon us with that gratitude the word inculcates. Born and educated in a country where character is more precious than gold, we have, in time past, felt like Ephraim, unaccustomed to the yoke, when suffering under the galling imputations of reckless assailants. Experience, however, has taught us that, in this country, slander is the people's broadsword, with which they seek to slay the reputations of all who aim to serve them otherwise than in subservience to their passions in the things of time or eternity. But, blessed be our foes in their basket and their store. We thank them for their persecution and opposition with which they have encountered us. But for these, we should have been, perhaps, like them, "in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." Their course has compelled us to study more diligently than we might have done the Holy Scriptures, that we might be better able to give an answer to every one that should ask a reason of the hope that is in us. Had they let us alone, it is probable we should have in good repute indeed with them and their leaders, and might even have been

teaching the same fables; which, however, would have deprived us of the pleasure of confessing our errors and mistakes, and of thus publicly renouncing and bidding them adieu.

March 3rd, 1847"

'DECLARATION

"Having presented the reader with our confession and abjuration of errors, the fitness of things requires that we should declare to him what we believe the Holy Scriptures teach in lieu thereof. We shall, therefore, now proceed to do this epitomially, and in as few words as possible.

"1. First, then, they reveal that **THE GOSPEL WAS PREACHED TO ABRAHAM.**

"This is proved by what follows: "'The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all the nations be blessed.'" - (Gal. iii. 8.) Referring to this incident, Jesus said to the Jews, "Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." (John viii. 56.)

"Upon this we may remark, that all nations have never yet been blessed in Abraham; secondly, that when all nations shall be blessed in Abraham, Messiah's day will have been revealed; and thirdly, that these events, not having been accomplished, their fulfilment is yet a matter of hope; hence Abraham rejoiced in the prospect of the future age, then far off, but now near, because it was, doubtless, then revealed to him that he should sit with his descendant, the Messiah, in the kingdom of God (Luke xiii. 28); for Abraham, when called, went out into a country where the kingdom is to be set up; which country "he should after receive for an inheritance;" "he sojourned in (this) the land of promise, as in a strange or foreign country; for he looked for a city or state which hath foundation, whose builder and maker (or founder and constitutor) is God - (Heb. xi. 8-10.) These passages are a few of the beaconlights which display the kind of truth preached to Abraham as the gospel. They shew that he looked for a state, or kingdom, divinely established and constituted under his descendant in the land promised to him and his seed, when all nations should own his sovereignty. This he looked for as Messiah's age; he saw it by the eye of that "faith", which is "the assured expectation of things hoped for; the conviction of things unseen;" and without which "it is impossible to please God;" "he saw it, and was glad." This was the ancient gospel, preached to Abraham, which is still a matter of hope to all of Abraham's seed.

"Query. Of those who preach "baptism for remission," &c., as the ancient gospel, we would inquire, when the gospel was preached to Abraham by the Lord God, did He preach to him that Jesus was the Christ, His Son; that he died, was buried, and rose again for faith, and repentance, and baptism into the name of the Trinity, for the remission of sins, in obedience to that faith? In the nature of things, this could not have been preached, yet He preached to him the gospel; and you admit that there is but one gospel. How do you disentangle yourselves from this difficulty? Is it not manifest that we have been preaching something else than what the Lord God

preached to Abraham, and which Paul says was the Gospel?

"2. The same gospel was preached to Abraham's descendants in Egypt and in the wilderness of Egypt.

"This is proved by these testimonies. In the good news announced by Jacob to his sons, he said: "'The sceptre (the symbol of sovereign power) shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until he whose it is come: and unto him shall the gatherings of the nations be.'" - (Gen. xlix. 10.) Joseph preached the same gospel to them fifty-four years after, saying, "'God will surely visit you, and bring you out of the land (of Egypt), unto the land He sware (or promised) to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob: and ye shall carry up my bones.'" - (Gen. l. 24,25.) None, however, of Joseph's generation left Egypt; but, by faith, Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of Israel, and gave commandment concerning his bones - (Heb. xi. 22.)

"The Angel of the Lord preached the gospel to Moses at the bush, saying, "'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows: and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good and large land, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place or country of the Canaanites, and Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. - (Exod. iii. 6-8.) In this discourse, Jesus says God preached to Moses the resurrection of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. - (Luke xx. 37.) What were they to rise from the dead for? To inherit this "good and large land flowing with milk and honey," promised to them in the gospel preached to them; and in which they, and all their posterity, as yet, have only dwelt as pilgrims and sojourners.

"By an assured expectation of the things delivered to him from his fathers, and a conviction of them then as yet unseen, "'Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of (or, on account of the expectation of) the Anointed King (spoken of by Jacob when blessing Judah), greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward," which Shiloh should bring. - (Heb. xi. 24.) Moses, then, believed the same gospel as did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and, as we shall see, preached it likewise.

"'Go,'" said Jehovah to him, "'and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: and I have said (to Abraham: Gen. xv. 13-16) I will bring you up out of the affliction unto the land of the Canaanites, &c., unto a land flowing with milk and honey'" - (Exod. iii. 16.) "'And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed, and bowed their heads and worshipped.'" - (Exod. iv. 29-31.) And "'by faith'", yea, by this faith, which Paul defines in Heb. xi. 1, "'they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land.'" - (v. 29.)

"In Exod. vi. 4, Jehovah saith, "'I have established my covenant

with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant." From which remembrance we are to understand that the Exodus of Egypt under Moses, the passage of the Jordan under Joshua, the occupation of the land of promise temporarily by the Twelve Tribes, somewhat more permanently by Judah, and the events of the times of the Gentiles, which are all converging to a grand and awful crisis in the Holy Land, with all their correlates and details, constitute the economy of means instituted by the Almighty, through which He predetermined that the gospel preached to Abraham should be manifested in its glorious consummation: this economy, how vast! It begins with the departing from Egypt, and is accomplished in the setting-up of the kingdom of God, when the son of Abraham shall come in power and great glory!

"Wherefore," O Moses, "say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgment: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God, &c.: and I will bring you into the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you (also) for a heritage; I am the Lord (ver. 6,8). This was the same gospel that the Lord God preached to their fathers. They should have that good land for an everlasting heritage when the promise should be fulfilled to the worthies enumerated by Paul in Heb. xi.

"The Lord brought them into the wilderness to prove them; but "they always erred in heart." They were a stiff-necked and perverse generation. They despised the gospel preached to them, and wished themselves again in Egypt. They murmured against the Lord, whose wonders they had witnessed in the land of Ham. They were a people in whom was no faith, so that "the Lord swore in His wrath they shall not enter into my rest."

"Now, the apostle saith of this generation under Moses, and of those Jews who lived in his own day, "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them; but the word of hearing did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. - (Heb. iv. 2.) From which it is clear, first, that the gospel was preached to the Israelites whose carcasses fell in the wilderness; and, second, that IT WAS THE SAME GOSPEL THAT WAS PREACHED TO AND BY THE APOSTLES TO THEIR CONTEMPORARIES.

"3. The same gospel was preached to the generation that invaded Canaan under Joshua.

"The Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, "Be strong, and of good courage," for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them: and I will be with thee." - (Deut. xxxi. 23.) At that time Moses was permitted to view the land promised to him and his fathers, but not to enter it. He was to wait until it was made "a heavenly country" under the sovereignty of Shiloh, to whom he was afterwards introduced on the Mount of Transfiguration.

"Within three days," said Joshua, "ye shall pass over this Jordan to go in to possess this land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it." - (Josh. 1. 11.) "And the Lord gave unto

Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it and dwelt therein. And the Lord gave them rest round about, according to all that He swore unto their fathers. (ch. xxi. 43.) But this was not the rest promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Samuel, David, and the prophets; they all hoped for the rest to be manifested in the country lying between the Euphrates, Mediterranean, Nile and the Gulf of Persia, according to the promise: this was the gospel preached to them, whether actual residents in the land or out of it. These all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise. God having provided some better thing (than Canaan as it was in their day) for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." - (Heb. xi. 39,40.)

"The rest in Canaan under the Mosaic law to which Joshua introduced the nation, was not the final rest which constitutes the burden of the gospel. Several hundred years after Joshua, the Holy Spirit said by David to his and all subsequent generations, "If ye harden not your hearts, ye shall not enter into my rest;" thus speaking of another rest in the land of promise differently constituted from that of Joshua. Let the reader study well Heb. iii. and iv., without referring to word-corrupting commentators. Paul says Joshua did not give them rest, therefore there remains a Sabbatism to Joshua, Caleb, &c. Where is this rest? In the Holy Land, when it shall be constituted an heavenly country or paradise. And remember that it is declared that **NO ONE SHALL ENTER INTO THE REST WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE THE TRUTH CONCERNING IT.**

"4. This same gospel of the rest which was preached to Abraham is amplified throughout all the prophets.

"Speaking of this, Paul says, he was "separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. - (Rom i. 1.) Indeed, under this head, we may state summarily that all that is said about the latter-day glory of the Israelites, about the magnificence and everlasting sovereignty of David's son, of his throne, and of his kingdom; of the future destiny of the Holy Land, of Jerusalem and Zion; of the benign and peaceful reign of Messiah on his father David's throne; of his dominion over all nation; of the the glory, honour, immortality, and royal and priestly dignity of his saints, &c., - all these, and much more, make up "the gospel of God concerning His Son."

"This same gospel was preached by John the Baptist, by Jesus, and by his apostles before the day of Pentecost.

"5. John preached, saying, "Repent, for the royal dignity of the heavens hath come!" "Now, after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled (see Daniel) and the kingdom of God (or His royal dignity, or majesty) is come: repent ye, and believe the gospel. - (Mark i. 74.) "I am sent," said he, "to preach the kingdom of God." - (Luke iv. 43.) "And he sent his twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere. - (Luke ix. 1,2,6.)

"From these texts it is plain that to preach the gospel was to preach about the kingdom of God; and, vice versa, that to preach the kingdom of God was to preach the gospel. Did John, Jesus, and the Twelve preach for the gospel baptism into the Trinity for

remission to those who believed Jesus was the Son of God? No; they preached the gospel Abraham rejoiced in; the good things of which wrought in the hearts and minds of those who believed dispositions and modes of thinking after the Abrahamic type; this was repentance because of the kingdom of God.

"6. The same gospel was preached by the Twelve, and by Paul, after the day of Pentecost.

"It would be easy to shew that it was preached on every occasion recorded in the Acts. We are not now arguing, but declaring in as condensed a form as the subject will admit. We cannot now, therefore, go into minutiae. Turn to Acts viii. 12. Philip's discourse consisted of two general divisions; first, "the things concerning THE KINGDOM OF GOD;" and, second, concerning "the NAME of Jesus Christ;" now mark, the first was the gospel; the second, the mystery of the gospel. See also Acts xix. 8; xx. 25; xxviii. 31.

"7. The grand principle brought to light by the preaching of the gospel from Abraham to the apostolic era, was: LIFE AND INCORRUPTIBILITY THROUGH THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"The nature of the kingdom will manifest this. Read Daniel ii. 44; vii. 13, 14, 18, 27. Here it will be seen, that the kingdom is to be indestructible; secondly, that it is not to be left to other people, or to pass from hand to hand; thirdly, it is to stand for ever, that is, to be superseded by no other; fourthly, the saints are to take this kingdom and possess it for ever; fifthly, they will possess it with the Son of man, to whom, sixthly, all nations will be politically and ecclesiastically obedient.

"Flesh and blood, therefore, cannot inherit this kingdom; for flesh and blood is destructible, or corruptible. If, when God sets up this kingdom, the administration of its affairs were committed to mortals, they could only retain it as they now do the kingdoms of the world; but it is not to be left to successors; hence those who are promoted to its glory, honour, peace, and power, must be immortal; so that when once appointed to office, being endowed with an incorruptible life, they can administer its affairs until it is delivered up to the "Father by the Son, at the expiration of 1,000 years." This glory, honour, incorruptibility, life, might, majesty, peace, blessedness, and dominion, are attributes of this kingdom alone; to preach these things is to preach the gospel through which incorruptibility and life are brought to light by Jesus Christ, the future sovereign of the world.

"Such is the gospel we now believe with our whole heart. Like Abraham, through the testimony concerning it, we "rejoice to see Messiah's day, and do see it and are glad." It is our hope; the hope of our calling through Jesus, "the anchor of our soul, both sure and stedfast, within the vail." It is by this hope we are saved.

"Does the reader believe this gospel; does he earnestly desire to partake in such a glorious inheritance as this? Dismiss, then, "the vain and deceitful philosophy" of the pietists; dream no more of phantom "kingdoms beyond the skies;" but be content to receive the word as a little child, and yield a willing conformity to the conditions of the

MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM.

"These are to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks fool-

ishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ crucified, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. - (I Cor. 1. 23.)

"1. The first condition is, that you believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the anointed King (Christ) and Son of the living God.

"2. That, according to the predetermination of God, he was crucified for believers' sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead, according to the prophets and apostles.

"3. That you be the subject of the same disposition and mode of thinking as were Abraham, &c.

"4. That ye be immersed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, that you may become the recipient of repentance and remission of sins, or of an imputation of righteousness, through the name of Jesus Christ.

"We cannot enter into detail. The Scriptures must be searched in relation to these conditions. We can only kindle up the beacon fires. The word is profitable for all things. An ENLIGHTENED believer being thus obedient to the faith, is baptised for the resurrection, for the kingdom of God, and for all else the Gospel promises. He thus becomes an heir of God, and co-heir with Jesus of the world. He will "inherit all things", provided:

"5. That he walk worthy of his high destiny, "denying himself of ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present age; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." If he do these things, he will never fall."

Source: R. Roberts, Life Dr. T. (1st. edition, Birmingham 1911), pp. 204-213.

APPENDIX DJOHN THOMAS'S 20 PROPOSITIONS OF 1847

1. That the Gospel preached by the apostles was originally preached to Abraham, announcing blessedness for all nations in him and in his Seed, when he should possess the gate of his enemies.
2. That this Gospel promised Abraham and his Seed that they should be the Heirs of the World, which they should possess forever.
3. That Abraham, "hoping against hope, was fully persuaded that what the Deity had promised he was also able to perform, and therefore it was counted to him for righteousness.
4. That the land in which he sojourned, and kept his flocks and herds, and in scripture styled the Holy Land, and Yahweh's Land was promised to him for an everlasting possession.
5. That this promise of the land became a confirmed covenant 430 years before the Mosaic Law was added.
6. That the Seed of Abraham, whose day he rejoiced to see, was to descend from the tribe of Judah in the line of David; and to be at once both son of David and Son of God.
7. That a covenant was made with David, ordered in all things and sure, promising that the Seed should descend from him; that he should possess a kingdom in a future age; that he should be Son of the Eternal Father; that he should be afflicted unto death; that he should rise again; that the throne of his kingdom should be David's throne; that Christ should occupy the throne in his presence; that he shall reign over the House of Jacob, in the covenanted land, during the age; and that of his kingdom there shall be no end.
8. That these covenants made with Abraham and with David are styled by Paul "the Covenants of Promise," and that they contain "the things concerning the Kingdom of God," which must be believed as a part of the faith that justifies.
9. That the Christ is the Eternal Father by his spirit manifested in the Seed of David, and that Jesus of Nazareth is he.
10. That in his crucifixion, Sin was condemned in the same flesh that had transgressed in Paradise, so that in the crucified body he bore the sins of his people upon the tree, that they, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness.
11. That he was raised from among the dead by the power of the Father, for the justification or pardon of those who believe the covenanted promises, and the things concerning him.
12. That the things concerning the Christ as a sufferer, and fulfilled in Jesus, are "the things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ," which must also be believed as the other part of the faith which justifies.
13. That Repentance is a change of mind and disposition, produced by "the exceeding great and precious promises" lovingly believed, and resulting in "the obedience of faith."
14. That repentance, remission of sins, and eternal life are granted in the name of Jesus Christ.
15. That the Obedience of Faith consists in believing the gospel preached to Abraham, the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the revealed mystery of his Name, and in being immersed into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
16. That repentance, remission of sins, and a right to incorrupt-

ibility and life are institutionally granted to believers of the truth as outlined above in being buried with Christ by immersion into death to sin, from whence they rise with Christ, to walk in newness of life.

17. That Abraham, the prophets, and the brethren under the Mosaic Law, are justified by the belief of the promises covenanted to Abraham and David, which covenants were brought into force by the death of the Testator, or Deity in flesh-manifestation called Jesus Christ; and that the immersed, and they only, whether Jews or Gentiles, from the Day of Pentecost to the return of the Ancient of Days, are justified by belief of the same covenanted promises and of things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ as specified above. Thus, there is one Deity who shall justify the circumcision $\epsilon\kappa$ $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$, by, from, or out of faith; and the uncircumcision $\tau\eta\varsigma$ $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\omega\varsigma$, "through the faith," for whether under the Law or since the law, "the just shall live by faith," "without which it is impossible to please God."

18. That "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," is equivalent to "the Name of Jesus Christ;" and expresses "the great mystery of godliness," the Deity manifested in the flesh: that this manifestation was first an individual unity, and then a multitudinous unity, in flesh and blood nature; that the individual divine unity was "justified by spirit" when Jesus was glorified; and that the multitudinous unity, consisting of all saints, will be made like him when he shall appear in power. Hence, when this consummation shall be complete, "THE NAME" will be the Eternal Father by spirit manifested in a multitude of immortals, whom no man can number. The scriptural designation of this DIVINE UNITY is $\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$, Yahweh echud - the ONE WHO SHALL BE.

19. That this name exists in Two States, - the present and the future - which states are separated by the resurrection. In the present state, the Name is apocalyptically symbolized by "the Sealed," "the Golden Altar," "the Holy City trampled," "the Woman and the remnant of her seed;" and in the future state, by "the Four Living ones full of eyes," and "the four and twenty elders;" by the Rainbow Angel; by the Nave; by the 144,000 on Mount Zion; by harpists and singers; by the Lamb's Wife arrayed in white; by the armies in the heaven; and by that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem, as a Bride adorned for her husband.

20. That the Gospel is glad tidings, inviting men and women to become constituents of this Divine Name, and therefore Heirs of the World with Abraham, on condition of believing the truth as it is in Jesus, being immersed, and walking in the newness of life, as shown above.

Source: J. Thomas, Eureka, ii. 668-670.

APPENDIX ECORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JOHN THOMAS AND ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

1847

This correspondence began with an article by John Thomas, in the pages of the Herald, which proposed to Alexander Campbell a full written discussion of the immortality of the soul. The challenge ran as follows:-

"There is no subject of more, or even of equal importance to mankind than that contained in the inquiry, "If a man die shall he live?" We need not argue here to prove that it is paramount to all other questions; its superlative importance is self-evident and admitted by all.

"In this question the patriarch in effect inquires, "If a man die, what is his state after death?" or, as he asks in another place, "When a man gives up the ghost where is he?" In Job. xiv. 12, the question is solved in these words: "He lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." By this, the enlightened prophet instructs us plainly that when man dies he does not live till "the heavens," or "times of the Gentiles," pass away, or "are fulfilled;" and that in the interval between his death and resurrection, he sleeps in the dust of death. He teaches us that man does not live till he rises from the dead; that he comes forth into the present state "like a flower; that he fleeth through his life as a shadow and continueth not." In other words, he hath continued long enough to leave behind him a character which remains written in the book of remembrance before God, and then passes away into nonentity until a "set time," when he will be raised identical with the character which he left behind. Character is alone perpetual; as a shadow and a fading flower its animal proprietor vanishes away, and "is no more" till the spring time of immortality arrive.

"Such was the doctrine taught and believed in the days of the patriarchs. Upon what principles in detail this resurrection from nonentity, or nothingness, to an antecedent identity was to be developed, they knew not; but that they might attain to a resurrection to consciousness and all its correlates, has been the one hope of the sons of light in all ages and generations since the world began.

"In "the Word of the Truth of the Gospel" the realization of this hope has been made consequent upon retaining the knowledge of the true doctrine thereof in memory, and on not holding traditions, the reasonings and conclusions of which nullify, and therefore subvert it. Let the reader mark well what we have to say; let him think deeply upon the words of this paragraph, for they are words of fearful and weighty import.

"Now it is notorious that this doctrine is not the teaching of our day. On the contrary, a doctrine is taught, which is not only different, but subversive of the hope of Israel, which is the only hope that God acknowledges, and by which alone a man can be saved. Job's words are in effect denied. "Man's body fleeth," say they, "as a shadow; but he continueth." The patriarch saith, "he continueth not." Job saith that when men die "they go to nothing."

Others say "this is devilish doctrine, for there is something left that is immortal and cannot die. Job saith, "my life is wind." They say, "no; it is the essence of the Deity, or God in every man." Job saith "that man in his nothingness is in a state analogous to sleep, and commingled with the dust. They say, that this is "soul sleeping," which they call "damnable heresy," and pronounce that he is awake, and in consciousness dwelling with God or the Devil! Thus they make the word of God of "none effect by their traditions;" for if these things are believed and maintained, to such persons at least, the resurrection and the judgment of the day of Christ are a mere nullity, and inconvenient and troublesome conceit.

"These traditions constitute a part of the theology of all sectarian teachers, from His Infallibility the Pope, down to the most recent edition of infallibility in the Protestant world. They teach one and all that the descendants of the first Adam, the great progenitor of sinners, have all in their animal bodies, and as a part of their fleshly natures, immortal souls! That, being immortal, when man dies his existence continues in heaven or hell, and consequently that the eternal life and eternal death of the holy word are but eternal happiness and misery.

"Now we can prove that these dogmas are not only untrue, but pernicious and damnatory to him that believes them, as they are false and absurd. Being convinced that this is the case, we desire an opportunity of demonstrating it to mankind; but through what channel shall this demonstration flow into the minds of men? There is no particular medium through which all men may see, for there is no paper or periodical that all men will read. Our demonstration, therefore, must be to a part, that through this part we may operate upon all who take an interest in the answer to the question, "What is the truth?"

"Well, we have a periodical, it is true; but then only a very small part of the public, comparatively, will or care to read it. As time and labour are precious, we would economise both as much as possible. We would, therefore, seek a vehicle more extensively diffusive than our own. But the great difficulty is not the finding of such equipage for the way, but the lighting upon such a conductor as would not be afraid: that, in admitting us as "an inside" with our baggage, we should cause his Diligence to break down, and henceforth to be condemned as mere lumber by the way. But as there are periodicals which profess to be devoted to the apostolic precept, "prove all things, and hold that which is good," we should judge that such at least would not demur to take us up as a traveller by the way. On the other hand, can it be possible that a paper professing to revere this admirable precept, can be found upon this planet that would refuse to allow the question of immortality to be fairly and fully discussed in its pages? We would hope that there is no such paper under the sun which would act thus, on any conceivable pretence whatever. But we shall see.

"But what "theologian" under these heavens can be found, who has confidence enough in his own dogmas, who will come forward, panoplied in his Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, and defend "the immortality of the soul" in all its relations against the editor of the Herald of the Future Age? There is one champion in theology of whom we have some knowledge, whose spirit hath for years by-gone proved itself to be most chivalric and combative. He is a knight whose renown for "tilt and tourney" has echoed through the world, against whose

lance the Anakim have been broken as the reed. We knew such an one, who has bestrode his Bucephalus in the glory of his power, and become almost like another Alexander, in weeping because for him there remained no more champions to subdue! But hinc illae lachrymae. Avaunt these tears! "Be followers of me," says the apostle, "and so walk that ye have us for an example." Paul was a courageous and untiring combatant for the faith; a soldier of Christ, whose soldiership is worthy of admiration and imitation, till the Lord of Hosts appear at the head of his celestial squadron. It was not till the end of his service that he said, "I have finished my course; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." There was no resting upon his sword with him, and sighing for weariness, or for more Anakim to slay. "Be thou faithful unto death! is the condition of "crown of life." The "fight of faith" is not crowned with victory to the soldier that faints or runs away.

"Will that warlike theologian on any pretence seek to wage a combat for the truth? He is among the Philistines, whose "Dagon" is the "Immortality of the Soul," and while he fraternizes with them, we cannot but regard him as a champion of their idol. If this fondly cherished dogma be the truth of God, if it be the doctrine of His holy word, it can easily be demonstrated. We deny it, and challenge the whole world to the proof; and we denounce it as a pernicious falsehood, and dare this champion of it to make it appear from the Scriptures that it is the truth.

"But, why do we challenge him to the combat before any other? Because he is regarded as "a Master in Israel," and of great authority by "this Reformation," with which we are identified,* and to perfect which in doctrine and morality, we are primarily solicitous. Will the conductors of the Millennial Harbinger open their pages to a discussion of the subject of immortality, the parties to which shall be the senior editor on the one side, and the editor of the Herald of the Future Age on the other? We want a full and fair investigation of the matter, in type, that the public may see where the truth lies; if with the Platonists, then let it be proclaimed as proved that we are in error, and that "life and incorruptibility were brought to light by Plato;" but, if the truth be with us, then let all embrace it, though persecution and reproach follow; or if it be with neither, then may we all still search for it as a hid treasure.

* "We say advisedly, that we are identified with "this Reformation;" not that we regard ourselves belonging to it in a sectarian sense. All that has been proved to be good in relation to it we believe, teach, and earnestly maintain; the principles of reformation we advocate even to a preparation for the Lord at his coming. We are, however, opposed to these things of "this reformation," which consist in the building up by reformers what they formerly destroyed. We wish, and we are ready to co-operate with reformers in going on to perfection in knowledge and morality; but in so doing we feel bound to protest against their practice, if, in our judgment, they are contrary to the truth. We trust we shall never be found the apologist for iniquity, transgression, and sin, because the abominations happen to be current among those with whom we associate."

"We do not forget that the senior editor of the Millennial Harbinger has said that he wants nothing to do with us in any way. This may be his desire truly; but neither the times, the circumstances, nor the relation he professes to hold to the truth will permit him to evade a discussion with us upon this matter. We are obliged "to do with" many things and persons in this life which are by no means agreeable. Let Paul be his example in this particular, who "wrestled against the rulers of the darkness of this (his) world (or age), against wicked spirits in the heavens;" or the archangel Michael, who disputed with the devil. Now, we argue, if Paul and Michael acted thus with devils, and the disputation of the latter was about a dead body, the senior editor may not fail of Scripture precedents to dispute with us about the hope of Israel, through which "life and incorruptibility" are manifested in the world.

"Nor let him excuse himself on the plea of our inferiority. This will not avail him; for, if in 1838 he demurred not then, on account of inferiority, he can have no just cause to do so now. If he is strong and we are weak, let him show his strength by proving his propositions. Our strength is in the truth; if this be against us, we shall be exhibited as weak indeed. We were then "a very young man," and "a stripling;" yet he or his friends, we forget which, proposed a debate. It was then sought by our opponents, now we seek it, not to steal a march upon them unawares, but that the truth may be made manifest.

"We invite to a discussion in the Harbinger, upon fair and equal grounds. We ask nothing we are not willing to grant. We would not put all the burden of proof on him, but divide it into two sets of propositions; the one expressing the dogmas on the side of which we find him, and the other the things we affirm in opposition thereto. With these views we submit the following particulars.

FIRST SET OF PROPOSITIONS.

"1.- There is a principle or essence in all animal men which is inherently and necessarily immortal.

"2.- When animal men die, their inherent and hereditary immortal essence, commonly styled "the immortal soul," lives in heaven, hell, or an intermediate place other than the grave. Hence, "eternal life" is simply "eternal happiness," and "death" misery without end.

"3.- The heaven promised to the saints in the Scripture, is "beyond the skies," is the place of "immortal souls," and is entered when the body dies.

"4.- The hell spoken of in the Scriptures is the place of the unrighteous "immortal souls," burning with fire and brimstone, into which "immortal souls" are placed at the instant of death.

"These four propositions embody the hopes and fears of orthodox professors. As the senior editor is now reputed orthodox to a considerable extent, he can affirm these, perhaps, and we will meet him with a denial, saving only a slight modification of the fourth. But, from our recollection of his sentiments as expressed in his debate with us in 1838, we have a misgiving that he will not affirm the third and fourth of these. We would, therefore, present him the two following as alternatives, which, if he pleases, he may affirm instead: we also denying.

SUBSTITUTIONAL PROPOSITIONS.

"5.- The heaven promised to the saints in the Scriptures is "beyond the skies." It consists of two departments, the one proximate and the other remote. The proximate heaven is a place and a state intermediate between the death of the body and its resurrection, and is tenanted by "disembodied immortal souls;" these enter into it at the instant of death, and there remain till the end of time. At this crisis, "disembodied immortal souls," or "departed spirits," leave the proximate, or intermediate heaven, and are united with their bodies in the graves from which they issue forth to judgment, after which they enter the ultimate heaven as disembodied immortal souls.

"6.- The hell spoken of in the Scriptures is the place where the unjustified dwell coeval with the years of God, burning in fire and brimstone. It consists of two departments, proximate and remote. These are states of being in one place or two; the proximate being for wicked departed immortal disembodied souls or spirits, and the ultimate or remote, for the same spirits when embodied; which embodiment is a reunion of the spirits with their bodies at the end of time, when they come forth from their graves to judgment, after which they enter upon the fulness of their torment.

"These six propositions, we believe, cover the whole ground of our opponents, and if they contain the truth, it can easily be shewn without many words. But until we can meet with something like truth, we cannot justly be condemned for not assenting to them. In the meanwhile, we offer to demonstrate, subject to the denial and critique of the senior editor of the Harbinger, this

SECOND SET OF PROPOSITIONS.

"1.- From the Creation until the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of God by the apostles, all men were ignorant of the true doctrine concerning immortality.

"2.- Immortality is not an essence or abstract substance, but a quality or property of body.

"3.- Immortality is a part of "the recompense of reward," and, therefore, promised only to the righteous.

"4.- The "great recompense of reward," or "hope of the gospel," glory, honour, incorruptibility, life, corporeal might, political majesty, and dominion and power over the existing nations, in association with Jesus Christ, reigning in person on the throne of his father David, to be re-established, exercising supreme ecclesiastical political jurisdiction over the restored twelve tribes of Israel and the Gentiles for 1,000 years, at the end of which this everlasting kingdom and empire will be discontinued.

"5.- Heaven is a place and a state of being. Its locality is the planet earth, as reformed and renewed when the future age, or "Dispensation of the fulness of times" shall have passed away. Its population will then be, to a single individual, all sinless, glorious, and immortal as the angels of God. This, and this only, is the heaven to which God invites mankind, on the terms of the gospel of the kingdom of David's Son.

"6.- Before the saints can enter heaven, they must reign with Christ on earth 1000 years, or "a season and a time." This reign

is "the state" intermediate between this and the eternal world.

"7.- "Hell," as importing the punishment of men, is periodical and confined to time. It is on the earth's surface, and makes no part of the arrangements of the eternal world. The day of judgment is the day of Christ.

"8.- For men to inherit "the things of the kingdom of God," who live prior to the resurrection of the first fruits, it is necessary that they become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel, or they are without part or lot in the matter.

"9.- All who hold traditions subversive of the one hope of Israel, as preached by the holy apostles, will be rejected from the kingdom of God.

"10.- The things preached by "this Reformation," as the reward of righteousness, are contrary to and subversive of the hope of the gospel, which Paul announced to all men by revelation of God.

"The following we propose as the rules by which the discussion shall be regulated.

RULES

"1.- Nothing to be admitted as proof of these two sets of propositions but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

"2.- The Scriptures may be reasoned upon for and against the propositions.

"3.- All other matter, though admissible at the expense of the time and space of the party introducing it, shall be considered as irrelevant "and proof only of deficiency in Scripture testimony." The opposite party may notice it at his own option. Not to do so shall not be construed unfavourably to the propositions in hand.

"4.- He that first indulges in personalities shall be regarded as averring in so many words the weakness of his position, that it cannot be sustained by reason and Scripture.

"5.- No reference shall be made to, nor quotations from anything which either party may have said, or written, upon the matter in dispute, previous to this discussion.

"6.- The discussion to be conducted in the pages of the Harbinger and Herald of the Future Age.

"7.- Equal space to be afforded to each, and nothing to be construed in the arrangements in favour of the one which is not equally admissible for the other.

"All which is submitted in the spirit of truth, candour, and oblivion of the past, for the sake of the "one hope" of "the majesty of God."

To this the following appeared in the Millennial Harbinger, as

MR. CAMPBELL'S REPLY:

" "JOHN THOMAS, not D.D., but M.D. " has recently published a very pompous challenge to the editor of the Millennial Harbinger to admit him into his pages as large as life, to discuss with him, once more, his tale, moth-eaten, twice dead speculations upon no-soulism and materialism. His Herald of the Future Age, in the agonies of death, threw out this challenge in the last number of his volume, in the forlorn hope of holding on his far scattered and scattering

subscribers, and raising to life his desponding, drooping, dying friends, already sickened unto death with the soul-withering speculation about souls manufactured out of blood, and spirits out of breath, by the vis conservatrix naturae. Having had a full proof, both in theory and practice, of all the saving graces of materialism, a number of the initiated, we have learned, are disposed not to pay seven times for the same improbable speculations, and are disposed to lay the Herald of the Future Age on the shelf, to see whether it may resemble Samson's slain lion, killed by the jaw-bone, or some other weapon, of an ass - out of which came honey and oil for the consolation of the sick and dying.

"To lay aside the figurative and to speak the literal truth, our readers have in former times been sated with the lucubrations of this moon-stricken speculator. They have heard him to satiety. He still has the assurance to allude to his Amelia interview with me - at which his friends, seasonably, though without any good effect, interposed in hopes of saving him from ruin, and snatched him from the discussion. Since that time we honoured his theory with an extra on Life and Death, to which he has never, so far as known to me, presumed to respond, nor any one for his sake. With this essay not only unanswered, but in his own practice deemed unanswerable, how ridiculous to all men of common sense must appear his late egotistic puff of himself in the form of a challenge, when retiring at the back door from a stage, with his lease expired in the judgment of three and twenty Richmond friends!!! For these faltering and unflinching adherents, the fruit of seven years toil, he has laboured only to prove that, like Priestley and Hume, though of incomparably less dimensions, he can create doubts from which "he cannot deliver his own soul," nor say to himself or then, "Is there not a delusion in my right hand?" He has long enough fed them upon ashes. I am told he is about to migrate to New York in quest of new adventures."

A.C.

To this Dr. Thomas published a rejoinder, accompanied by the following:-

LETTER TO MR. CAMPBELL.

"March 24, 1847.

"MR. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

"Dear Sir, - By accident, as it were, I learned that you had again broken your oft-repeated, and as oft-infringed determination, not to notice me any more. I was glad to hear that you had been moved to speak, supposing that after three months' reflection you had concluded, as "one of nature's noblemen," as you have been styled, to act nobly; and, in the spirit of courtesy and truth, to lift the gauntlet which I had thrown down to you in the first number of the present volume of the Herald of the Future Age. I say by accident, for although I never fail to forward you the Herald periodically, you have not reciprocated the compliment; so that, if anything happens to come out against me, I am very apt to hear it from everybody else before I see it in print. Your last was received at the Times and Compiler office, whence, through a third person, I was informed that you had come out upon me "as no

politician would have dared to assail another." I was sorry to find that this was the style of your notice, seeing that if the proposed discussion were acceded to, it would be undertaken in a very bad spirit by yourself. Now, permit me to remark that, while it gives me an advantage over you, it was very bad policy for you to manifest such a spirit in view of the fourth rule of the proposed discussion, which saith, "he that first indulges in personalities shall be regarded as averring in so many words the weakness of his position, that it cannot be sustained by reason and Scripture." Now, I hold that it matters little whether a disputant get angry, or abusive, or indulge in false, and therefore slanderous accusations, before, in the course of, or after a discussion; it equally proves against him - it proves one of three things: either, first, that he fears he will be beaten; or, that he is being beaten; or, that he has been beaten. If I had felt desperate, I would have been prudent enough not to have shown it. I think, therefore, that in publishing the manifestation before us you have acted unwisely, and without due regard to your favourite doctrine of expediency.

"It is to be regretted, for your sake, that you should have permitted the flesh to dictate such an article as that before us. Sceptic-maker, like Priestley and Hume, though of incomparably less dimensions, as you deem me, do you think you have replied to my proposals as a Christian, supposing you to be one, ought to have answered even such a character? Doth not the apostle say "Be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and respect?" You say that you have within you an immortal soul, and that you hope it will go to Paradise or to Abraham's bosom, or to Christ, when your body dies; I repeat you say this; for this is the side you are understood to advocate. Now, I ask you respectfully for a reason of this hope, for I can discover no such hope taught in the Word. You are to give it "with meekness and respect." Have you obeyed this injunction? I endeavoured to ask you in this spirit; for at the conclusion, I say, "all which is submitted in the spirit of truth, candour, and oblivion of the past, for the sake of the one hope of the Israel of God." Could you not have answered me in the same spirit? Would it have cost you any more, save a little crucifixion of the flesh?

"But, bating the spirit, you say in effect that you have given me a reason as the apostle enjoined; and that it was so convincing, or confounding, that I could not, because I did not respond. It is true I did not formally respond to your extra on life and death, and I think I gave you a reason in one of the Heralds why I did not. I will state it here. Before the extra came to hand I had prepared a manuscript upon the same subject, a portion of which was published in the Herald in the number after it arrived. When it had all appeared, I republished it in a pamphlet of 43 pages 8vo., under the title of the "Things of the Spirit of God." This was, therefore, published sometime after your extra, and has been in part republished in the Bible Examiner by Mr. George Storrs, of Philadelphia - an honest man and independent thinker, and one who appears to love truth for its own, and not for party's sake. Seeing, therefore, that this pamphlet, a copy of which I sent to you, demolishes all your strong points, I did not think it necessary to go into a formal refutation of yours; but, if you will consent to the discussion in the Harbinger, you shall have no reason to complain that your most invulnerable fortresses have not been attacked, and, by the help of the truth,

raised to their foundations.

"And here, I would remind you, that I have in the Herald, fully identified you, and all on your side the controversy, with "Philetus, Hymemeus," and that ancient "Alexander, whom Paul delivered to Satan, that they might learn not to blaspheme." You are advocating precisely the same principles; and be assured that if you are not converted to the truth, Satan will have you as certainly as he laid hold of them. My desire is to save you and this reformation from Hymeneanism; for it is, little as you suspect it to be so in your own case, "a damnable heresy" in the strictest import of the words.

"You say the proposed discussion is "a very pompous challenge." The pompousness of it depends a good deal upon the style of the reading. If you read it pompously, it would, doubtless, appear "very pompous;" but, as I did not feel at all pompous when I penned it, all the pomposity must be on your side of the hedge.

"You are labouring under a mistake when you say that I want to discuss "no-soulism and materialism" with you. I do not advocate no-soulism; I believe that a living man is a living soul. It is you, my dear sir, who advocate no-soulism; for, you contend that there is in man such a thing as Plato, Hymeneus and Co., termed an "immortal soul, which the profoundest philosophers on your part admit cannot be proved by reason to exist. "As the abstract existence of a thinking principle before birth, so abstract feeling, thought, or consciousness, after death, cannot be proved by human reason." This is their language; it would be useless, therefore, for you to attempt, and waste of time for me to follow you through a labyrinth of sophistry to prove, the existence of such a soul as you believe in. An immortal soul in mortal man is incapable of demonstration by reason. You believe, then, in a soul, which, as far as abstract reason is concerned, does not exist: this is equivalent to believing in no soul. But, if your "immortal soul" be a reality, then its existence can be demonstrated by the Word. Now, I invite you to prove it by the Prophets and Apostles. I say you never have, and cannot prove that any such thing exists. Believing, therefore, in a soul, the existence of which can neither be proved by reason nor Scripture, you believe in truth in no soul at all, and, therefore, are yourself the advocate of "no-soulism", quad erat demonstrandum.

"As to "materialism," in our debate at Paineville, you admitted the materiality of spirit, therefore, you are as much a materialist as you declare me to be. You have too much good sense to allow anyone to extort from you the avowal that you are an immaterialist; and, if not an immaterialist you must be a materialist, for there is no middle ground between them. That which is material is something, that which is immaterial is nothing. An immaterial immortal soul is something curious anyhow, if nothing can be something. You recollect, perhaps, my remark on your admission that you did not believe in immaterial spirit. "My friends," said I, "while Mr. Campbell is opposing me, you must not jump to the conclusion that he is, therefore, advocating your philosophy. He would wish, as it would seem, to make this impression on your minds; but, the fact is, he is maintaining his own peculiar notions to the utter subversion of the foundation of your theory. Your philosophy teaches that the spirit, or soul, is immaterial; and because it is immaterial, therefore immortal. But, Mr. C. says that spirit is material, and that he cannot conceive of immateriality; therefore, on your hypothesis

of immateriality being necessary to immortality, he has proved this thing you call the soul to be mortal."

"I am surprised you should say that the Herald is in the agonies of death. I can readily believe that you wish it were, not only in articulo mortis, but actually defunct. Look at the present volume and compare it with the former, and you will discover that the symptoms of recovery, if at all diseased, are quite flattering. It is now printed in a new fount of bourgeoisie, and contains twenty-four instead of sixteen pages as before. I think, with its new and flowery border and handsome-coloured jacket, and better paper than the Harbinger, that it will pass muster with all "our periodicals," if not excel them and the Harbinger to boot. But, on this point, I will say no more, lest I be thought to boast of things beyond my measure.

"As I have said, you err exceedingly in supposing that the object of the proposed discussion is "no-soulism and materialism" - it is not these, but the hope of the gospel. The propositions on your part are the "stale, moth-eaten, twice dead speculations," handed down to you from your brethren Hymeneus and Alexander; and which have so eaten as a cancer, as completely to eradicate from your faith, or religious system, the "one hope of the calling". These are not mine as you mistakingly affirm - they are yours; I reject them, and am prepared to prove, before your readers, that the man who holds them has a vain and shipwrecked faith. No, my dear sir, the discussion I propose is for the vindication and elaboration of the one hope, which has been rendered null and void by the traditions you hold in common with all the world. I want to enlighten you and this reformation in the doctrine of Christ, which teaches that life and incorruptibility are attributes of the kingdom which the Ancient of Days shall set up, in contradistinction to the "profane vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called" - that "philosophy and vain deceit, handed down to us from "the fathers" of the apostacy.

"In the conclusion of the first paragraph of the article before us, you are so highly "figurative" that really I cannot exactly discover the point you are aiming to illustrate. Is the Herald of the Future Age comparable to the young lion before it was slain - for, if in death's agonies, it is not yet dead, therefore, it is not like the lion slain. Are you the Samson to slay it with the jaw-bone of an ass? And when you have put it to death by this weapon, do you mean that when dead, the Herald will still give out sweetness, to solace the sick and dying? In one thing, however, you mistake. Samson did not kill the lion "with the jaw bone or some other weapon of an ass: he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand. You read the word too loosely: be more particular in future.

"It has seemed good to you to announce to the world that my friends are "desponding, drooping, dying." If this be indeed so, it is bad news, and I am very sorry to hear it. I have been doing the best I could, since my return to this State, to inspire both my friends and yours by the glowing truths of the Word of God, to be manifested to human kin at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I fear, however, that there is some ground for your remark, that they are "drooping." I lament it sorely. I expound to them the word, but I cannot give them faith. But, seeing that my enemies are watching for their fall, that the truth may be gainsayed by their delinquency, I

do hope that they will "awake to righteousness," and "labour to enter into God's rest," when the kingdom shall be restored again to Israel. While I grieve for them with as much intensity, at least, as you seem to rejoice over their "dying" state, I cannot refrain from saying that, sickly as they may appear, upon the principle that "a living dog is better than a dead lion," I rejoice to know that they have this advantage over your friends in Eastern Virginia, namely that, if they be "desponding, drooping, dying," your adherents are dead and plucked up by the roots. It is said that "while there is life there is hope;" but "the dead know not anything." It is a bad state of things, both for your friends and mine; but, while I admit there is ground for your reproach, I would observe, in extenuation, that you should make some allowance for them, when you consider how long a time they were the recipients of your traditions and those of other sectarian leaders before they had anything to do with me. Turn your attention to your own churches, into which my name has only entered through the Harbinger, and consequently repeated with a chill of pious horror. Look at them where my views have never entered, and behold their spiritual death! What mean those lamentations over churches of which we read in "News from the churches?" Look at home, my dear sir, and you will find evil matters enough among your own friends, without wantonly assailing mine!

"It will have been a pretty good stroke of policy, I admit, if you can persuade your readers that I am a "moon-stricken speculator." On this hypothesis, they will entirely approve of your refusal to discuss with me. If I thought you were "moon-stricken," I should decidedly avoid any encounter with you. If you really believe that this calamity hath befallen me, commiserate my misfortune, but do not, I beseech your "benevolence," revile me on this account! But, if you believe that I am not a lunatic, why callest thou me "moon-stricken?" Did the Jews believe that Jesus was indeed insane, when they said he was mad? Or did Festus, when he cried out "Paul, thou art beside thyself?" I reply to thee almost in the words of Paul, "I am not mad, unguarded sir; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness: believest thou the prophets? I affirm nothing but what these have said shall come to pass." The ability I possess, however "incomparably less" it may be than the "dimensions" of Priestley and Hume, I employ, after the example of Paul, in reasoning out of the Scriptures. You call this "speculation," and myself, therefore, a moon-stricken speculator." Ah, unhappy me! I cannot help it; so true is it, that "what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh." The prophets teach me thus and so; if thus, then I say to myself, that dogma of the world's religion must be false. Thus enlightened by the word, I think aloud, and being a public speaker and editor, I speak and publish what I believe; and in this way, I imitate the apostles, and co-operate with them in "casting down imaginations (such as immortal-soulism and all its cognates) and everything that exalteth itself against God's knowledge." It is true I do not worship the shrine of Bethany; I do not first make a pilgrimage thither to learn first what is truth, and when learned, to know it to be expedient to publish it. You will, my dear sir, excuse me for this; for I have not yet learned to think, speak or act according to the rules, words or decrees of "infallibilities," great or small, in relation to the things of the spirit of God.

"Your highness seems to think it great assurance in me to allude to my Amelia interview with you. If in doing so I have committed an offence, I pray thee have me excused. That interview had become

historical; and I was not aware that any part of history was interdicted to me or others. I alluded to facts - that we had met in 1838; that my inferiority then was inferred on no ground whatever; that I was then regarded as "a very young man" and "a stripling;" and that you and your friends proposed a debate. These are the allusions. I made no boast, considering it neither your province or mine to decide which of us had the better. You appear to think that you were a perfect Goliath on the occasion; not when prostrate under the stripling's sling-stone, but when he proudly stalked with his beamlike spear, attended by his armour-bearer, defying the hosts of Israel. Your friends claimed for you the victory; mine deny it: but as you objected to any report being recorded, there is no written proof of the truth either way. But upon the hypothesis that you ate me up, what had that to do with the proposed discussion now? If I am so easily devoured, would it not afford you unspeakable satisfaction to cannibalize me before your readers, and thus put me to rout for ever? May I give you a piece of advice here? When you gain such another overwhelming victory, take care and bury the slain, lest, like the witnesses of God, they will not stay killed, but stand again upon their feet, and great fear fall upon you.

"You seem to think it a great argument against the usefulness and truthfulness of the things I advocate, in that I have, after seven years' toil, but few friends in this city. At all events, does this not prove how strong my faith and hope are, seeing that I have so few, yet am so unconquerably persevering against overwhelming odds? You know the song you used to sing, or have you forgotten it, with other things? "Numbers are no mark that you will right be found," &c. By your own report, I have more friends than Noah had, or than Elijah, when he supposed himself the only one left of the true believers; or than Jesus, when all forsook him; or than Paul in Asia, when all had turned him off, &c. Do you not know, my dear sir, that at "the completion of the appointed times," the ancient gospel will have very few believers, and that because of this unbelief, the Gentiles will be broken off, and Israel grafted in again? You and your co-labourers, like David, are numbering your forces, and vaunting yourselves in your 250,000; you are planning enterprises and forming schemes, by which you promise yourselves vast results; you are building up things which formerly you demolished, and now talk even of sending the gospel to Turkey, China, Hindostan. Oh sir, if you did but believe the prophets, whom you have all sadly neglected, you would not thus misdirect your well-meant, but infallibly abortive undertakings. Set your house in order; abstain from lucrous collegio-religious schemes; so use the mammon of unrighteousness you have acquired as to gain for yourself friends who shall give you an entrance into the eternal mansions; renounce your Hymeneanism; learn, digest and believe the gospel preached to the fathers; become as a little child; be teachable; let your disposition and habit of thought be formed after the type of the father of the faithful; obey the gospel, that your faith may be imputed to you for righteousness; do these, my dear sir, for the Lord is coming upon you as a thief; and if he find you the patron of the Hymenean heresy, and absorbed in the cares of this world, and building up colleges for generations to come, and are not yourself rich towards God, you need not expect "a portion of the inheritance of the saints in the light."

"In conclusion, do not waste time in personalities, you will

gain nothing by it in the end. I admit there is wisdom in your policy; yet, it must be confessed, it is but worldly wisdom. So long as you can keep me from arguing the cause I advocate before your readers you are safe; keep them in the dark; make me out as darkness that may be felt, and you have nothing to fear. But, remember Providence can throw open even your pages to me. You know there is such a thing as pressure from without, which will unbar and unfold the gates of the inquisition itself; and if the truth does edge in, rather than stand in the shoes of Alexander Campbell, I would prefer to remain for ever the "moon-stricken speculator,"

JOHN THOMAS, not D.D., but M.D."

Source: Roberts, Life Dr. T., (ed. W.H. Boulton 1954), pp. 132-142.

APPENDIX F

THOMIAN CHRISTOLOGY

Thomas's contribution to the discussion about the nature of Christ's sonship was incomplete in that it concentrated on the negative side. Thomas denied that the Trinitarian formulation solved theological problems in this area, and retreated from that tenet. However, he retreated to a series of Biblical statements in the area of the problem, without attempting to resolve these into a formula of his own. Thomas's views, therefore, on the sonship of Jesus, tended to be a collection of what were to him representative Biblical statements on the issue, plus refutations of orthodox dogmas. This also left him a residue of awkward passages to deal with. Nowhere did he resolve the central issue of how Christ could be sufficiently distinct from mankind to offer a sacrifice so meritorious in God's eyes as to be 'in credit' for any number of men who might wish to avail themselves of salvation by that means, whilst at the same time sufficiently similar to mankind to be 'tempted in all points'¹ like them in some meaningful way. The lack of resolution of this issue led to a major schism in the ranks of Christadelphians in 1873 and to several minor ones subsequently. Of what Thomas considered awkward passages and dealt with, the following series is representative:

1) Who are the 'Sons of God'?

In his doctrine of God-manifestation, he came close to equating the sonship of Jesus and the sonship of subsequent Christian believers - he referred, in at least one place, to Christ as the 'Elder Brother'² of latter-day believers. But a distinction was still there in his mind. He said: 'In putting on Christ the Son of God by eminence, a man becomes a son of God.'³

Moreover, in his analysis of this issue, Thomas turned up another problem, namely, if the phrase 'the son of God' always referred to those who had undergone a 'probation'⁴ similar to that of Jesus Christ, or of believers in his own day, then, when the phrase was used of the angels that implied that 'in their former state [the angels] were Sons of God subject to evil as we'⁵. This led him to look for hints of this probationary period in the Scriptures, and to see them where, in the opinion of Christadelphians of later years, they were really not.⁶ It is odd that Thomas, so punctilious elsewhere over matters of grammar and philology should have made this elementary slip over a quirk of translation in the Authorised Version of Genesis 1. 28.

1. Hebrews iv. 15.
2. Thomas, Eureka, 1. 28.
3. Thomas, Eureka, 1. 29.
4. See Glossary.
5. Thomas, Eureka, 1. 29.
6. For example, Robert Roberts, Life Dr. T., p. 34, points 18 and 19 - 'When it says "be fruitful and multiply and RE-plenish the earth" &c, does it imply that the earth was inhabited before the creation of Adam... may not these inhabitants be "the angels who kept not their first estate"... the angels whom Christ and the saints are to judge (1 Cor. vi. 3).' In the 3rd edition of Roberts's book, this was corrected by W.H. Boulton who, in a footnote, said 'Replenish is not necessarily implied by the Hebrew word used in this passage; its primary meaning being to fill.'

2) The finite Christ being the 'beginning of the creation of God'
 Thomas held that there was more than one creation spoken of in the Bible - and, since 'Jesus Anointed had no existence in the era of the Adamic creation',¹ the creation spoken of in Genesis i and ii could only have been carried out by 'the anointing spirit'.² However, since the spirit was 'an uncreated agent, and therefore not the first of a creation'³ it could not be the Genesis creation that had been in the mind of the Apostle John in Revelation iii. 14. Indeed, the description of Jesus Christ as a 'creation' of the Deity was one which, in Thomas's view, corroborated his negation of the pre-existence of the Son. Instead, Thomas pointed out that, in several New Testament passages, a second or 'new' creation was spoken of. In one of these passages, indeed, Christ was described as 'the beginning, the first-born from among the dead.'⁴ In Romans chapter i, the apostle Paul had spoken of Jesus Christ as becoming 'the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.'⁵ Thomas felt that as the apostle Paul had viewed Jesus retrospectively from a first century vantage point, he could well have described a finite Jesus, who began his existence as a babe in the manger at Bethlehem, as 'an image of the invisible Deity, first-born of all creation.'⁶

3) A Body hast thou prepared me (Hebrews x. 5)

Far from being the feelings of God the Son about to be incarnated in flesh, in Thomas's view this was the statement of Christ's situation prior to the resurrection. He first argued that the translation of the Authorised Version was wrong.⁷ The text should read, he said, 'a body hast thou repaired me.'⁸ He went on to contend that the ravages of overwork in Christ's ministry had worn out Jesus Christ's body - as had been prophesied in Psalms xxxviii. 7; xxii. 6, 14-15 - but that 'walls, and seals, and soldiers, could not bar out the Spirit from the Body he was about to repair for future manifestations. Hence the Spirit in David represents the Son as saying, "My body was not concealed from thee when I was made in the secret place, I was embroidered in the under parts of the earth. Thine eyes saw my imperfect substance, and in thy book all of them were written as to the days they were fashioned, when there was not one among them," Psalm cxxxix. 15.'⁹

4) 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'

Thomas understood this saying in a way unrelated to the analysis of the nature of the Godhead. First of all, he retraced the words to their source in Psalm xxii, and then proceeded to retranslate them as 'my strength, my strength, why hast thou forsaken me?'¹⁰ This, in turn, he believed, related to the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit,

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 406.

2. Thomas, Eureka, i. 406.

3. Thomas, Eureka, i. 406.

4. Colossians i. 18.

5. Romans i. 3.

6. Colossians i. 16.

7. Thomas, himself, retranslated various parts of the Scriptures, which, he felt, had become very garbled because of clerical and translators' interference.

8. Thomas, Eureka, i. 14-15.

9. Thomas, Eureka, i. 14-15.

10. Thomas, Eureka, i. 13.

which had been given to him without measure for the pursuance of his ministry. 'The Father-Spirit had evacuated the son of David's daughter, who is styled, in the Songs of Zion, "the Handmaid of Jehovah," Psalm cxvi. 16. The Son was, therefore, left without strength or power, and consequently without God. Still, he was suspended to the tree a living man; a man crucified through weakness (II Cor. xiii. 4), and dying of his own volition in obedience to God.'¹

1. Thomas, Eureka, i. 14.

APPENDIX G

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS OF JOHN THOMAS'S LINGUISTIC SKILLS

Few of these have been made. Thomas did not start a movement which was politically revolutionary, or which had a massive following. If value is measured in terms of the histrionics of history, it is not surprising, perhaps, that he has been neglected by academics. There were other reasons contributing to this neglect. Thomas's views were not simply religious - they involved history, Hebrew and Greek semantics, philosophy and logic, as well as what might readily be subsumed under 'Biblical studies'. With the modern fragmentation of learning into small specialist areas, few have felt themselves in a position professionally to assess such a breadth of approach. The radical nature and all-embracing claims of Thomas's theology deterred some who might otherwise have felt so inclined from taking a professional interest in validating Thomas's views.

W. Lambert¹ and A. Gibson² are both professionally able to assess at least a part of Thomas's work. Both, additionally, are Christadelphians and have some knowledge of Thomas's views in general. Professor Lambert's view is that Thomas 'was not a great Hebraist or Greek scholar, but had a little knowledge of them.'³ Mr. Gibson's assessment is that, although Thomas's Hebrew skills were not very sophisticated, 'in the mid 19th century no scientific lexicography or semantics had been produced... In this perspective John Thomas's value-judgements and basic methodology are generally of an extremely high order.'⁴ Professor G. Henton Davies, a non-Christadelphian,⁵ having studied one controversy involving Hebrew linguistics, between Thomas and a clergyman, felt that 'there could be several explanations of the Hebrew - or lack of it - in both disputants.'⁶

In sum, one could perhaps conclude that Thomas was a controversial figure, whose specialist knowledge of esoteric issues, whilst technically suspect in the assessment of some commentators, covered a complex inter-disciplinary area with wide philosophical, moral, religious, historical and theological ramifications. Further assessments, by Christadelphians, of Thomas's linguistic skills are to be found elsewhere in this thesis.⁷

-
1. Professor of Assyriology in the University of Birmingham.
 2. Tutor in the University of Cambridge and author of Biblical Semantic Logic (Blackwell, Oxford 1981).
 3. Evidence by letter to the author of this thesis.
 4. Evidence by letter to the author of this thesis.
 5. Emeritus Principal of Regent's Park College, Oxford.
 6. Evidence by letter to the author of this thesis.
 7. See p. 210 footnote 7 and p. 223 footnote 4 above.

APPENDIX HLETTER FROM ROBERT ROBERTS, THEN AGED 17, TO JOHN THOMASIN OCTOBER 1856

'MY DEAR BROTHER, - Although personally unknown to you, I have, nevertheless, in virtue of a unity and identity of "hope," presumed thus far upon your forbearance. It has long been my intention to write to you, but hitherto I have been deterred by various considerations. At last, however, I have got the pen in my hand, which I am resolutely determined not to relinquish till I have transferred my ideas (such as they are) to paper. My object in writing, is more to encourage you in the struggle in which you are engaged, than to perplex (?) you with pointless questions and imaginary difficulties.

Allow me to remark then, that, to my mind, you seem to be carrying forward the "good fight" to a successful termination, for I conceive that the capture of the "good and honest-hearted" (of which I painfully testify there are but few) by the truth, is the very highest point of success to which we could aspire. This, then, you are certainly accomplishing. True, in relation to the mass, the progress of the truth is slow and uncertain. While the state superstitions, and the most extravagant absurdities of the multifarious "sects and denominations" meet with respect, and command attention, "the truth," even with the most "learned" and "intellectual" among them, meets with the bitterest opposition, and its adherents they treat with the most profound contempt. In fact, their "divines," "philosophers," "fathers," etc., do not deem it worthy of investigation. They summarily discard it as altogether unworthy even of notice, while they will gravely discuss such monstrous absurdities as Romanism, Campbellism, Mormonism, etc.!!! But with the other class it is the reverse. When the "word of the kingdom," (Matt.) is sown in "good ground," it springs up and bears fruit, some an hundredfold, etc., a synonymous expression with the belief of the truth.

Therefore, my dear brother, although it may appear anomalous that a young, inexperienced youth such as I, should be encouraging a hardy veteran; still, I cannot but speak from the fulness of my heart, and encourage you to persevere. What, if by your faithful advocacy of the truth, you entail upon yourself the contempt and abuse of all Christendom! That's nothing but what Paul experienced from the "philosophers" too! And it is nothing but what all must and do experience, who "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered in the saints." But, after all, these considerations would afford little consolation, were it not for the "gracious promises." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

You will bear with me if I should appear too minute in detailing a case illustrative of the illuminating influence of the truth, as set forth in Elpis Israel. The case is my own, and I can, therefore, speak with certainty. Previous to coming in contact with the above-mentioned work, I was zealously affected for what I considered the truth, viz.: The ideas propounded from the pulpit. I believed them, and so far as I am aware, walked consistently. I was sincere, quite in earnest, and my language mentally was, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" On all hands, I invariably received the response, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Being in

perfect ignorance, except of what I had received from maternal indoctrination, I accepted the generally received understanding of "Believe, etc.," as truth. I was just on the eve of being immersed on Baptist principles, when I fell in with a Herald. There was something so rational, so comprehensible, something which partook so much of common sense, that my attention was at once arrested. My curiosity was so much excited, that nothing short of an understanding of the whole matter, in some way or other, would satisfy me. I therefore procured a copy of Elpis Israel, and read it with intense interest. I then compared it with what the Scriptures actually said, and I was perfectly struck with the identity of the language. Without further hesitation, I renounced for ever the absolute blasphemies to which I had before adhered, viz., "immortality of the soul," "heaven," "hell," an atmospherical recompense at death, etc., etc., etc.; and, having become aware of the existence of a meeting of believers here, although then only in my fifteenth year, I identified myself with them, by putting on Christ by immersion.

In following this course of action, it is almost needless to add that I experienced the most abusive misrepresentation and utter contempt that vindictiveness could possibly devise. Former friends turned their backs and became sworn enemies; relations became cold; and all agreed to pity my infatuation. And yet, if you "reason with them from the Scriptures," the very strength of the arguments, the very overpowering nature of the evidence, seems to confirm them in their unbelief; they, therefore, hesitate, stammer, sputter, and turn round and brand you as an "infidel," "materialist," etc., etc., reminding one forcibly of the words of Paul, "To the one it is a savour of death unto death," etc. They will not reason, but resort to vociferous vituperations. Surely these are not sincere, surely they are not interested in the absorbing question, "What is truth?" who will not reason. Their faith is certainly as you express it, "An unreasoning assent to certain dogma."

Brother Thomas, my gratitude is unbounded. I cannot possibly give utterance to my feelings. What a great salvation has been revealed! What a book is the Bible!! What a God is Jehovah!!! My heart swells with grateful emotion when I contemplate these things. My thanksgiving knows no bounds, when I revert to the former contemptible, effeminate appearance which these things made, when reviewed through the medium of sectarian theology.

My efforts for the diffusion of the truth, I regret to say, can extend no further than contention, of which I have plenty. Being only seventeen years of age, I am, of course, poor in this world's goods, or else, I can assure you, dear brother, the Herald should never go down for want of funds. As it is, however, my exertions in behalf of the truth must be confined exclusively to speaking; and, when the time comes, they will also be extended to co-operation in the way of funds; and then when Jesus returns, He will reward every man according to his work.

I am afraid I have trespassed on your forbearance, but then you know how to excuse one that is in earnest.

With an earnest desire that you may be spared until our Lord returns to Zion, I remain, your affectionate brother in the hope of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

APPENDIX I

A SUMMARY OF ECCLESIAL MANAGEMENT RULES FROM 'THE GUIDE'

1. Christadelphian doctrines were summarised adequately in the accompanying Statement of Faith.
2. That only those would be recognised as brethren who had been immersed 'by whomsoever' after accepting the doctrines in the Statement.
3. That majority votes within the ecclesia were to be abided by.
4. Officeholders should be appointed by election and should serve the Ecclesia, according to Biblical precept, in sobriety, marital harmony and the like.
5. A rotation of officeholders was to be in vogue so as to facilitate the shared experience of office, and the depersonalisation of the post.
6. Elections were to be by secret ballot.
7. Week-to-week running of ecclesial matters to be arranged by seven 'arranging brethren', including a secretary known as the 'Recording brother'.
8. Meetings of the arranging brethren to be open to all members of the ecclesia to observe.
9. Presidential work at ecclesial meetings to be undertaken by presiding brethren, who should occupy the president's office for one week, in rotation alphabetically, from the list of those elected as president by a majority of the ecclesia.
10. Special meetings to be called by the arranging brethren or by any written request from ten or more brethren.
11. A viable meeting of the ecclesia to require a quorum of 25% total ecclesial membership.
12. Arranging brethren to act as financial Trustees.
13. Any officeholder to be ejected from office by an extraordinary vote of the majority of the ecclesia.
14. Arranging brethren to determine the spiritual health of any member:-

'Any brother departing from any element of the one faith... shall, on proof of the fact being given to the satisfaction of the arranging brethren, cease to be in fellowship, without a formal vote of withdrawal.'¹

15. Matthew xviii. 15-18 to be fulfilled by any brother before administrative action would be taken by the ecclesia.
16. Absence from the Breaking of Bread 'is an offence against the law of Christ... None shall... absent themselves from the assembly.'²
17. Individual brothers or sisters out of fellowship at one ecclesia should not be accepted into fellowship at another without an investigation being made by both ecclesias concerned.
18. That marriage with the alien 'is an offence against the law of Christ.'³ Only by 'admitting their offence' would brothers or sisters 'retail'⁴ their places among the brethren.'⁵
19. The Sunday School to come under the administrative umbrella of the ecclesia, although run by a separate superintendent, secretary

1. Roberts, Guide, p. 42.
 2. Roberts, Guide, p. 42-3.
 3. Roberts, Guide, p. 43.
 4. Presumably Roberts meant 'retain'.
 5. Roberts, Guide, p. 44.

and treasurer.

20. No rule to be altered except by 'a majority of the whole ecclesia' after a month's notice during which the proposed alteration in writing was to be read by the Recording Brother 'at each intervening week-night meeting.'¹

It will be apparent from the above that the only 'offences' selected for mention were absence from the Breaking of Bread and marriage with the alien. No mention was made of divorce. This equivocation as between divorce and remarriage on the one hand and marriage with non-Christadelphians on the other has continued ever since, and has been a bone of contention and a source of internecine strife leading to divisions throughout the history of the Christadelphians.

Source: The Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias (1883). Roberts based this on a number of earlier documents of which the most important was The Record of the Birmingham Christadelphian Ecclesia, containing the names and addresses of the brethren and sisters; the arrangements agreed to for the conduct of ecclesial affairs; and a verified statement of the faith on which they are built as distinguished from all other professing Christians, (Birmingham 1875). This latter document had had a very much simpler 'Rules' section than the later Guide. It had embodied only 21 Rules of Guidance, originally adopted in November 1873. The Guide was antedated by a number of individual ecclesial Rule Books - for example, the Rules of the Westminster Christadelphian Ecclesia, which was drawn up in October 1882.

1. Roberts, Guide, p. 44.

APPENDIX J

- (1) DEBATES PLANNED TO HAVE INVOLVED ROBERT ROBERTS,
FROM WHICH HIS OPPONENT(S) WITHDREW.

MONTH	YEAR	OPPONENT	OPPONENT'S RELIGIOUS ALLEGIANCE	PROJECTED TOPIC(S) OF DEBATE(S)
April	1868	Revd. Harrison	Primitive Methodist	Roberts's writings on Christianity
Feb.	1870	Mr. Pearce	Methodist	The nature of the Kingdom of God
June	1874	'Mr. W.' & 'Mr. Telfire'	Anglican(?)	Not stated
Nov.	1874	Revd. Rawlings	Wesleyan ¹	Only tentative arrangements were made for a debate in Stockport
March	1876	E.W. Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury	Anglican	The Immortality of the Soul; the eternal torment of the wicked; the supernatural devil; Heaven is abode of the redeemed
March	1877	Revd. Child	Swedenborgian	Not stated
April	1880	Revd. David King	Campbellite	Christadelphianism
Feb.	1885	Mr. T.C. Nichols	Primitive Methodist	Christadelphianism

1. This was not stated explicitly in The Christadelphian. Brother W. Birkenhead of the Stockport ecclesia wrote to The Christadelphian in December 1874 stating that: 'You will not be surprised that these accessions to the one body in which we rejoice, should be a source of disquietude to the Wesleyans of Stockport, since they all come out of the ranks of that popular body.' TC, xxi (1874), 584. It seems likely from the context that Mr. Rawlings was a Wesleyan.

(2) DEBATES AND OTHER DISPUTES INVOLVING CHRISTADELPHIANS OTHER THAN ROBERT ROBERTS, INCLUDING DEBATES CANCELLED BECAUSE OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF ONE OF THE PARTIES.

DATE	OPPONENTS OR PROponent	ALLEGIANCE OF NON-CHRIST-ADELPHIAN(S)	PROJECTED TOPIC(S) OF DEBATE(S)
Oct. 1868	John Bowes	Not stated	'Thomasism'; the Immortality of the soul.
Oct. 1868	Mr. W. Danks v. Bro. C. Smith	'Protestant'	Whether 'the Protestant religion is in accordance with the religion of Christ.'
May 1870	Revd. W.M. Parry	Independent	The nature of the after-life.
May 1870	Revd. J. Kenner v. Bro. Bennett	Anglican (?)	Eternal torments of the wicked after death.
June 1870	Not stated	Campbellite	The truth of Christadelphianism.
June 1870	Revd. Dr. Stock	Baptist	Christadelphian views on Hell.
July 1870	'A Methodist Preacher' v. Bro. Owen.	Methodist	Immortality.
July 1873	Revd. J.O. Wills	Baptist	Christadelphianism.
Dec. 1874	Mr. J.C. Milbourn v. Bro. H. Sulley	'Orthodox Christian'	The divinity of Christ.
Jan. 1876	Mr. Mitchell v. Bro. T. Nisbet	Free Church	The Immortality of the soul.
Dec. 1876	Revd. W.W. Jubb	Congregationalist	'Christadelphianism Exposed'.
Jan. 1877	Revd. G. Campbell	Not stated	Christadelphianism.
Feb. 1877	Revd. E.W. Campbell	Not stated	Christadelphianism.
Jan. 1878	Canon H.B. Bowlby	Anglican	Christadelphian views.
Oct. 1878	Mr. Mitchell v. Bro. C. Smith	Free Church	The Immortality of the soul. (4 nights).

DATE	OPponents OR PROponent	ALLEGIANCE OF NON-CHRIST -ADELPHIAN(S)	PROJECTED TOPIC(S) OF DEBATE(S)
Oct. 1879	Mr. Penney v. Bro. E. Nisbet	'An old missionary'	Christadelphianism.
Dec. 1879	Revd. Fisk	Baptist	Christadelphianism.
Dec. 1879	Revd. N. Rouse Revd. J. Warwick and 'a number of local preachers'	Methodist Free Church	'Do the Scriptures teach the annihilation of the wicked?'
Feb. 1881	Mr. J. Poulton v. Bro. G. Waite	Primitive Methodist	'Eternal Torments'.
June 1881	Revd. G. Wooller v. Bro. Horsman	Not stated	Is Man Immortal?
Aug. 1881	Revd. Francis v. Bro. D. Clement	Anglican(?)	The Scripturality of the Athanasian creed.
Dec. 1881	Mr. Maclaren v. Bro. Robertson	Not stated	The Immortality of the soul.
Feb. 1882	Mr. H.A. Long v. Bro. Nisbet	Not stated	The Immortality of the soul.
March 1882	Revd. Briscombe v. Bro. D. Cle- ment	Not stated	Not stated.
Oct. 1882	Mr. R. McKenny v. Bro. Dixon	The Reform- ation Soci- ety	The Immortality of the soul; Eternal Torments of the wicked; the Trinity. (3 nights).
Dec. 1882	Mr. Carter v. Bro. Dixon	'Calvinistic Baptist'	Not stated.
Feb. 1883	all 'clergymen, ministers, lay- men and others' ¹		The Immortality of the soul.
March 1883	Mr. Jackson v. Bro. Chandler	Campbellite	The Promises to David.
May 1883	'Several of the leading clergy- men and ministers in the dist- rict' v. Bro. Guest		The Immortality of the soul.
Dec. 1883	Mr. Nichols v. Bro. Bishop	Campbell- ite(?)	Christadelphianism.

1. An advertisement in the Dean Forest Mercury (repeated for three weeks) alleged misunderstanding of Christadelphianism by local clerics, and asked for evidence of the immortality of the soul. It challenged all 'clergymen, ministers, laymen and others' to a public discussion - TC, xx (1880), 90.

DATE	OPPONENTS OR PROPONENT	ALLEGIANCE OF NON-CHRIST -ADELPHIAN(S)	PROJECTED TOPIC(S) OF DEBATE(S)
Feb. 1884	Revd. R. Evans v. Bro. J.H. Cham- berlin	Baptist	Christadelphianism.
May 1884	Revd. S. Jackson v. Bro. Bishop	Baptist	'The Kingdom of God is not now in existence.'
May 1884	'A representative of orthodoxy' v. Bro. Z. Drake	Anglican(?)	The Immortality of the soul.
Aug. 1884	A 'local Board Clerk' v. Bro. Z. Drake	Anglican(?)	'The Nature of Man'.
Dec. 1884	Mr. Yuill v. Bro. Horsman	Christian Evidence Society	(a) The Kingdom of God (b) The Nature of Man (c) The Salvation of Man
Dec. 1885	Mr. G.W. Foote v. Bro. R.R. Stainforth	Humanist	'Moses v. Darwin' (2 nights).

Source: The Ambassador and The Christadelphian, vols. i (1864) -
xxii (1885).

APPENDIX K

EXTRACTS FROM ROBERT ROBERTS'S DEBATES WITH CHARLES BRADLAUGH M.P.,
JUNE 13-22 1876, AND J.J. ANDREW, A CHRISTADELPHIAN, APRIL 3-4 1894.

(1) The Bradlaugh Debate

'Mr. BRADLAUGH, do you believe that ever such a man as Saul of Tarsus existed? - I have not not evidence sufficient to believe that he did exist.

Are you doubtful? - It is quite possible a man named Saul of Tarsus may have existed.

If I were to prove that the book of Acts and Paul's epistles were in circulation at the close of the first century, would you doubt then that such a man as Paul existed and took a leading part in the establishment of the Christian faith? - I think you had better give me the proof first, and then I will tell you what my opinion is on that proof.

It will make it more worth my while to produce the proof if I have some hope of doing good. - If you produce the proof I must be convinced by it, and it is no use asking me what effect it will have on me till I see it.

I ask you whether you will accept Paul's epistles as proof of Paul's existence? - I accept proof as a fair man, when the proof is produced.

I asked you last night how far back you allowed the New Testament to have existed, and I think you said you could trace it no further back than A.D. 150? - I stated that the four gospels cannot be brought to a date as early as A.D. 150.

Would you object to substitute in your answer the New Testament for "the four gospels?" - Yes, I certainly should.

Why do you fix on the year 150 for any part of the New Testament? - Because I know I can show it later than that, and I always like to be on the safe side.

What is the earliest date you can show it? - That is not my business. It is your business to show it, and I decline to give you proof which it is your business to bring.

Can you trace it before 150? - I have already said that I decline to give you proof which it is your business to bring.

Why do you fix on that year? - Because I know you cannot produce the shadow of a particle of evidence, going earlier.

What proof of forgery can you give me in Paul's letters or outside of them? - If you will hand me the volume of Eusebius, I will give you lots of proofs of forgeries.

I ask you about the Epistle to the Corinthians. - I have not said it is a forgery.

Then do you admit it is real? - It is not my business to do so.

Can you prove it is a forgery? - I have not said it is a forgery.

Do you believe it real? - My belief is not an atom's weight in this debate. We are not discussing "Does Mr. Bradlaugh believe the Bible to be an authentic revelation?" We are discussing "Is the Bible an authentic revelation?" and Mr. Roberts undertook to prove it. I don't believe those to be the writings of Paul, but I don't necessarily involve any allegation as to forgery about them, because it is not part of my case.

I must return to my question. I must insist upon an answer whether or no Mr. Bradlaugh believes the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians to be forged or real? - I don't believe the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians to be the writing of Paul.

Then if it is not the writing of Paul, is it not a forgery? - I don't know anything about it until you give me the evidence for it, and then I will tell you my opinion on that evidence.

What is your reason for saying it is not the writing of Paul? - Because the evidence that I have examined has not brought the opinion to my mind that it is Paul's.

Have you any evidence that it is not? - That is my business, not yours; your business is to prove that Paul wrote it.

Is it not your business to take away the foundation on which I stand? - Oh! the moment you build a foundation I will knock it away quick enough.

I ask you again, are you prepared to prove Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians a forgery? - I have not said it is a forgery. I have said I do not believe that to be the writing of Paul. It is not my business to express anything more than my belief at the moment.

If it be not the writing of Paul, is it not a forgery in pretending to be so? - I can give no other answer than that I don't believe the writing to be the writing of Paul, and that it is your business to make out that it is.

And my question is that if it be not the writing of Paul, is it not a forgery in pretending to be so? - If it does pretend to be the writing of Paul, and is not the writing of Paul, then it is a forgery; but my belief and the fact are two distinct matters.

Will you define the sense in which you used the term "forgery" as applicable to a literary document? - O yes; I say that where I can show that the name of an author has been used for a book that he never wrote, that if that has been used intentionally then that is a forgery; but it may not have been used intentionally: then it is not a forgery but a blunder.

Then do you mean to start the theory that somebody unintentionally wrote these letters as Paul's letters, when they were not the letters of Paul? - That is not my business.

I ask you whether that is the theory you wish to broach to-night. - I will tell you my theory in my speech.

Do you believe that Josephus, the Jewish historian, wrote, in the first century, the works which are attributed to him in our day? - I believe that the works accredited to Josephus in our day, are, with slight alterations, as Josephus left them to us.

Have you any better evidence in the case of Josephus than you have in the case of Paul? I think yes.

Please produce it. - The business is not for me to prove the writings of Josephus, and, therefore, I decline.

Can you produce contemporary evidence of Josephus having written a work which you believe to be his? - I can produce it, only that it is no part of this debate, and therefore, I utterly decline to do it, because I have not relied on Josephus. I can produce quotations, in every age, coming through from time to time, of the writings of Josephus; but it is not my business to do it; it is no part of this debate, and I decline.

Can I produce any at that time? - I don't know what you can produce, because I don't know how far your researches have extended.

I am speaking to a gentleman on the supposition that he is educated, and I am asking him how far the proof can be carried in his

view of the case? - You will find the whole of the proof stated by me in my pamphlet, When were our Gospels written? in my discussion with B. Harris Cooper, Esq., in Horne's Introduction to the Bible, in Davidson's Introduction to the New Testament, in Norton's Introduction, and in other works of that class.

Then you cannot tell me why you fix on 150? - Yes, I have told you: so that you sha'n't catch me on a wrong date.

You have told me generally; I ask for specific information? - And I decline to give you that which it is your duty to produce.

You can't do it, then? - Yes, I can.

Then you won't? - No; it is your business to prove your case, not mine to make it out for you.

Then I must produce it. I first produce the book itself: every book is prima facie evidence of itself until it is disproved. - That is not true.

It is a canon of universal criticism that a document is evidence of itself until it is disproved? - No, that is not true: the book of Mormon is not evidence until it is disproved; the tale of the sea-serpent is not evidence until it is disproved.

Then you refuse to recognise the universal principle of literary criticism? - It never has been the principle of literary criticism in relation to theological Scriptures.

Well, all I can say, of course, is that you contradict the facts. - I generally do, especially when they are not true.

Can you disprove that Paul wrote the Epistles bearing his name? - It is not my business to try until you have given me the proof.

I give you the proof. - I have not heard it.

I will read it. - What are you going to read from?

"Ye see how large a letter I (Paul) have written unto you with mine own hand." (Gal. vi. 11). - What are you reading from?

I am reading from Paul's epistles. - That is the book you have got to prove.

Then I produce the book as prima facie evidence. Can you disprove it? - Really, that is simple nonsense. If I produce a bill signed "Robert Roberts," before I am entitled to make Robert Roberts pay, I must prove his signature.

Then I ask you, why don't you believe the evidence I produce that Paul wrote that statement? - Because I don't: the evidence is not sufficient to induce me to believe it. There have been so many forgeries in connection with apostolic writings that I am inclined to look at all of them as false until I have evidence of their verification.

What are apostolic writings? - Writings pretending to be by apostles.

Do you mean to say that those are apostolic writings that are not apostolic writings? - I do not mean to say anything more than my answer conveyed.

Do you mean to say a pretended thing is a thing itself? - Everything is a thing.

"A pretended thing?" - A pretended shilling is a shilling.

Is it a real one? - The difference between a pretence and a reality is that one is sham and the other is real.

I ask you if an apostolic writing is not a real apostolic writing? - A forged apostolic writing is no more a real apostolic writing than a forged bill signed "Robert Roberts" would be a real bill

signed "Robert Roberts."

I ask about a real apostolic writing? - I know nothing of any real ones.

Then what do you mean by apostolic writings? - I said "forged."

"Forged!" Then I ask again, Are forged writings real? - If you don't know the meaning of the words you have used yourself, I cannot supply you with any better.

Are forged writings real? - Forged apostolic writings are real forgeries, but are not real writings by apostles.

Then do I understand you to mean that there are no such things as real apostolic writings? - That is not my business. Show me something, and ask me whether I consider that to be so, and I will answer.

I ask you whether there are such things as real apostolic writings? - Out of the enormous mass of forgeries, I have not been able to find any.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I can understand that this process of questioning and answering might be extremely interesting if we were only permitted to listen to it quietly. Mr. Bradlaugh will now have the privilege of either making a speech or questioning Mr. Roberts.'

(2) The J.J. Andrew Debate

- '150. Who are the synagogue of Satan, bro. Andrew? Answer: That is the 2nd or 3rd of Rev. is it not?
151. You need not refer to it. You know where it is. Who are the synagogue of Satan? Answer: The brethren of Christ who had become unfaithful.
152. Were they Jews? Answer: Unfaithful.
153. Were they Jews? Answer: They said they were Jews, but because of unfaithfulness were not accounted as such.
154. What? Answer: They said they were Jews, which implied they were faithful Jews, but because of unfaithfulness they were not accounted as such.
155. Did they cease to be brethren then? Answer: No.
156. How did they cease to be Jews? Answer: That is an elliptical form of the expression to describe unfaithfulness.
157. That is your assertion. It is "those who are not Jews, but do lie." Answer: They claimed to be faithful Jews, but were not.
158. It does not say unfaithful Jews. It is those "who say they are Jews and ARE NOT, but do lie." Answer: It is equivalent to having a name to live, but are dead.
159. Does Christ describe his brethren as the synagogue of Satan? Answer: Not while they continue faithful.
160. If they are not Jews, they are not brethren, are they? Answer: They are unfaithful brethren.
161. Excuse me, unfaithful Jews? Answer: Yes, unfaithful Jews.
162. But Jesus says they were not Jews. Answer: That is an elliptical statement.
163. That is your assertion. Jesus says they are not Jews, but do lie. Are they to be present at the judgment? Answer: Yes, and Jews living in the time of Christ.
164. Very well, Jews living at the time of Christ are to be present at the resurrection? Answer: Yes.
165. Are they justified by the blood of Christ? Answer: These Jews?

166. No; the others you referred to, those living in the time of Christ? Answer: They were justified by the sacrifices they offered up, and these were subsequently ratified by the blood of Christ, because all who had entered upon a probation for eternal life were given to Christ by God.
167. Did these sacrifices have any virtue apart from that of Christ? Answer: None whatever.
168. How is the blood of Christ brought to bear? Answer: Now?
169. Then; any time? Answer: The blood of Christ was brought to bear upon them, then, by their faith, in the first instance, and the offering up sacrifices for sin.
170. Did these persons have faith? Answer: They had faith at the commencement of their probation.
171. Excuse me, "I never knew you," Had they faith? Answer: "Then I will profess unto you that I never knew you." He will treat them as if he had not known them. It is not an absolute statement that he never knew them, but "I will profess unto you." "I will treat you in consequence of your unfaithfulness to me as if I had never known you."
172. Will he profess that which is not true? Answer: It is not a profession of that which is not true.
173. He says I never knew you. Answer: I will profess, I will treat you as if I never knew you.
174. Will he say that which is not true? Answer: No.
175. Do you know that the word profess means to declare, to proclaim, to state? Answer: Yes.
176. Will he state that which is not true? Answer: No.
177. Will he say I never knew you? Answer: He knew them in a certain sense.
178. He says I never knew you, and they are there to be judged? Answer: They are there through the sacrifices they offered up.
179. Are these sacrifices of any use without the blood of Christ? and how is the blood of Christ brought to bear? Answer: By God recognizing the sacrifice at the time, and subsequently ratifying them through the blood of Christ.
180. How does the ratification come to the person? Answer: How does the ratification come to the person?
181. Yes. Answer: By his having been introduced into the Abrahamic Covenant.
182. Is it not by faith? Answer: Now?
183. Excuse me, you are speaking of then, the ratification. Answer: Yes, by faith.
184. These had no faith. Answer: They had a certain faith.
185. "Children in whom there is no faith." Answer: Faith in the particular things that were being imparted to them at that time. They had not faith in that which Christ preached.
186. Can a man be justified by the blood of Christ without having faith in it? Answer: Previous to it taking place?
187. Any time, before or after, yes or no? Can he be justified by the blood of Christ without having faith in it? Answer: He was justified by believing the promise, and by the sacrifices which he offered up, which was a shadow of that of Christ.
188. But those who offered the sacrifices and who rejected Christ, were they justified by the blood of Christ? Answer: They were justified by the sacrifices they offered.
189. Answer the question: Were they justified by the blood of Christ? Answer: They were justified by the sacrifice by which they

- entered upon their probation, and thereby they came under the justification of Christ when his blood had been shed.
190. Had those sacrifices any effect apart from Christ? Answer: No.
191. How then could they justify those who rejected Christ? Answer: Because they were under probation and in a state of responsibility toward God, and God transferred them to Christ when he shed his blood.
192. Transferred rebels? Answer: Yes.
193. That is a new doctrine. Answer: Is it?
194. Yes, quite. Why will God raise the unfaithful? Answer: Because they have been justified in the first instance from Adamic condemnation.
195. For what purpose will he raise them? Answer: Judgment.
196. With what object in the case of the unfaithful? Answer: They are raised to be judged.
197. But what is the object of the judgment? Answer: The judgment in their case will result in punishment.
198. Why are they to be punished? Answer: Because they were unfaithful.
199. Unfaithful to what? Answer: To the position of favor and responsibility in which they were placed.
200. Is it not because they were disobedient? Answer: The word "disobedience" may be taken as having two senses, and therefore I prefer not to use it. I must ask you to define the sense, because obedience is used in reference to the act of immersion, and it is also used in reference to the course of conduct pursued after immersion.
201. Precisely; is not disobedience the ground of punishment? Are they not raised because of disobedience? Answer: For their unfaithfulness.
202. For disobedience? Answer: For their disobedience subsequent to entering upon probation.
203. Is it not the fact that the punishment is for their disobedience? Answer: Yes.
204. Why should He punish them for disobedience? Answer: Because they deserve it, and because God had made known to them that they would be punished.
205. That is supplementary. Who are the disobedient? Answer: It depends in what sense you mean.
206. "Because of these things, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience"? Answer: The world as a whole are sinners.
207. I have asked the question in a particular form. Answer: They are disobedient in the sense of being not obedient.
208. Are they not punished because they deserve punishment? Answer: The world as a whole deserves to be swept off the face of the earth.
209. We are speaking of a particular class, the children of disobedience? Answer: Who do you mean by them?
210. You have already recognized who I mean. Do not put it off. Ans: The unfaithful.
211. No, no. With regard to the unfaithful we have arrived at this point, that they are to be punished for their disobedience because they deserve it. Does not the world deserve punishment? Answer: The world deserves sweeping out of existence.
212. Does it not deserve punishment then? Answer: It receives punishment.

213. Does it deserve it? Answer: It deserves whatever God gives it.
214. Why hesitate? Does it deserve punishment? Answer: Certainly it does.
215. Will not God punish it? Answer: God is doing so.
216. Will He not in days to come? Answer: Those who are living at the time.
217. Why does He do it then? Answer: Because of their iniquity.
218. Yes, that will do. Then supposing Christ comes tomorrow, why of two sinners one of whom obeyed God in baptism, and another with equal knowledge refused to do so, why should God punish one and not the other? Answer: Because the punishment of the one is on the basis of the law, and the other is not under law.
219. Is not the law, in both cases that disobedience deserves punishment? Answer: One was under the law.
220. Is not that the law of the case? Answer: One sinned under law.
221. Is not that the law of the case, that he is punished because he deserves it? Answer: Because he sinned under law.
222. Because he deserves it? Answer: Because he deserves it by sinning under law.
223. You have admitted the other deserves it, too. Answer: Not the same punishment.
224. He deserves it? Answer: Not the same punishment.
225. Then does it not come to this, that you make God punish a man who obeyed Him a little, and let a man go free who would not obey Him at all? Answer: Suppose I do?
226. Then you accuse God of iniquity? Answer: I do not.
227. I will not push that further. Answer: I recognize the justice of God to the fullest extent.
228. I have no doubt your intent to do so. You think knowledge makes no difference in a man's position as to responsibility? Answer: Without justification from Adamic condemnation, it does not give him a resurrection to the judgment-seat.
229. Why did God wink at time of ignorance? Answer: You refer to the statement that God did wink?
230. Why did He so? Answer: Because He chose to overlook the iniquity that was committed in times of ignorance.

Sources:

- (1) R. Roberts, Is the Bible Divine? The Bradlaugh Debate (London 1876), pp. 51-54.
- (2) R. Roberts and J.J. Andrew, The Resurrectional Responsibility Debate (Birmingham 1894), pp. 17-20.

APPENDIX LDR. THOMAS'S EIGHT RULES

'RULE I.

Except a man's righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, he can, in no case, enter the kingdom of the heavens. - (Matt. v. 20.)

RULE II.

Except a man be a doer of Jehovah's will he cannot enter the kingdom of the heavens. - (Matt. vii. 21; James i. 21.)

RULE III.

Except a man become as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. - (Matt. xviii. 3; xix. 14; xxi. 16,9; I John ii. 12.)

RULE IV.

Except a man REPENT (metanoete) he must inevitably perish. - , (Luke xiii. 3.)

RULE V.

Except a man be born again, γεννηθη ανωθεν he cannot enter into the kingdom of the Deity. - (John iii. 3-5.)

RULE VI.

Except a man have the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. - (Rom. viii. 9.)

RULE VII.

Except a man eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, he cannot have eternal life. - (John vi. 53.)

RULE VIII.

Except a man strive for eternal life lawfully, he cannot obtain it. - (II Tim. ii. 5.)

THE LAW OF FAITH.

He that believes the gospel of the kingdom, and is immersed, shall be saved. - (Mark xvi. 16; Rom. i. 16.)'

Source: TC, ix (1872), 150-1, under the heading 'Scraps from Dr. Thomas's Papers', sub-titled 'Certain Rules, nonconformity to which makes Salvation impossible.'

APPENDIX M

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TECHNIQUE OF INTERPRETING THE ORIGINAL BIBLE
LANGUAGES AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH VII.

A theological problem is usually considered to exist in Isaiah vii, bound up in the semantics of the use of the Hebrew words almah and bethoolah, translated 'maid', 'virgin', 'woman' and the like in the traditional English versions.

Of these issues, Professor Gesenius observed: 'The notion of unspotted virginity is not that which this word conveys... but of the nubile state and puberty.'¹ Dr. Tregelles commented: 'The LXX ... render [the word] virgin in the very passage where it must to their minds have occasioned a difficulty. Almah in the Punic language signified virgin.'²

In the debate 'Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?', held in the Temperance Hall, Birmingham on October 17, 18 and 19, 1871, Robert Roberts maintained that:

'The word for "virgin" is almah, which I will contend is a proper distinct substantive for an unmarried female. The rejecters of Jesus say that it means young woman. Well, a virgin is a young woman, so that even supposing they were right, the word does not exclude virginity. But they are not right. This is proved by the fact that in all other places in which the word is used, it is applied in the sense of unmarried females. I will read to you all the cases in which the word occurs...'³

Louis Stern, an Orthodox Jew, contended:

'Mr. Roberts... says if "virgin" does not mean a virgin, what does it mean?... You must understand that the word (aalmha) means a young woman... But I will prove to you that my friend is so far in error on this point, for although the word aalcha can be used for a young woman who is a virgin, where virginity is meant to be particularly expressed, the word peseeloo must always be used ... I have proved that it is a wrong translation, and that it does not really mean what Mr. Roberts would have you believe.'⁴

This dispute was interesting in that it indicated the dichotomy of view between Christadelphians and orthodox theologians. Roberts, like Thomas,⁵ used a Scripture-compared-with-Scripture technique of explaining textual problems; Stern, as with orthodox 'Christian' exegetists, used the grammar and the lexicon.

-
1. Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, translated with additions and corrections by Dr. S.P. Tregelles, (London 1857), p. 834a.
 2. Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, p. 834b.
 3. Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?, (B'ham 1904), p. 14.
 4. Was Jesus of Nazareth the Messiah?, pp. 19 and 22.
 5. See ch. II above, pp. 45-49.

APPENDIX N

THE DECLINE IN ECCLESIAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE
1885 DIVISION

PLACE	MEMBERSHIP BY DEC. 1884 ¹	MEMBERSHIP IN THE EARLY 1890s ²	SHORTFALL
Birmingham	918	476	442
Bristol	58	25	33
Sheffield	62	32	30
Middlesborough	-3	6	?
Cannock	3	12	(+)9
Kilmarnock	5	38	(+)33
Barnsley	1	5	(+)4
Peterborough	60	20	40
Nottingham	263	'perhaps c.130-150'	113-133
Huddersfield	76	34	42
Blackpool	8	4	4
Nuneaton	-3	7	?
Bradford	04	26	?
Greenock	17	5	12
Bexley Heath	-3	9	?
Chipping Norton	-3	6	?
Sleaford	-3	3	?
Guernsey	-3	4	?
Wolverhampton	13	5	8
New Cross	-3	19	?
Oxford	-3	4	?
Kerthyr	-3	6	?
Mumbles	61	20	41
Batley	-3	16	?
Plymouth	-3	34	?
Leeds	83	'probably 150'	(+)67
Glasgow	193	'upwards of 50'	c.140

1. Figures here are produced from the author's own research of The Ambassador and Christadelphian statistics, vols. i-xxi, for baptisms, deaths, withdrawals, resignations and returns to fellowship, plus figures for the pre-1864 period from William Norrie's Early History for the years 1848-1853, 1856 and 1860. Because Norrie's figures contain gaps, and because there was a gap of three years between Norrie's last available statistic in 1861 and The Ambassador's first in 1864, these figures will tend always to be underestimates.
2. Source: B.R. Wilson, Ph.D. thesis, 'Social Aspects of Religious Sects...', p. 965.
3. No figures for ecclesias in these places were sent either to The Ambassador or The Christadelphian in the period July 1864 - Dec. 1884.
4. The position of the Bradford Ecclesia appears very strange! One death was reported, in August 1884. This was the year prior to the first baptism in Bradford being recorded - in 1885! Presumably, the individual who died, Sister Johnson aged 73, was an inhabitant of Bradford, but a member of an ecclesia in a nearby town.

Note on sources: These ecclesias were selected because information on them was provided in B.R. Wilson's Ph.D. thesis. Because of the

tentative nature of Wilson's figures for Nottingham, Leeds and Glasgow in the early 1890s, and because of the uncertainty over the source of membership in the 1890s and over the existence of an ecclesia by December 1884 at Middlesborough, Nuneaton, Bexley Heath, Chipping Norton, Sleaford, Guernsey, New Cross, Oxford, Merthyr, Batley and Plymouth, any conclusions must be drawn with care. However, if one takes only those twelve ecclesias where true membership figures are known, 1885 had the effect of causing a reduction in membership of 44.27%. The comparative figure for Nottingham (taking 140 as the membership in the early 1890s), Leeds and Glasgow is 35.05%. These figures are to be compared with a national average increase of about 10% during the period 1864-85.

APPENDIX OMATTERS OF DEBATE IN THE EDINBURGH ECCLESIA, DURING THE
SECRETARYSHIP OF GEORGE DOWIE¹

- (a) 'As far as possible, official appointments of every kind should be dispensed with.'²
- (b) The style of meetings should be informal, based on a seminar format.³
- (c) Breaking of Bread meetings should, perhaps, be restricted to evenings since the original communion was a last supper.⁴
- (d) The advisability of the worship of Jesus was discussed, but no conclusion was reached. Norrie wrote that the ecclesia 'declined to give any formal deliverance upon the subject.'⁵
- (e) The essentiality, or otherwise, of reimmersion of previously baptised adults, once belief had been changed on doctrines deemed to be significant or important. The Roberts's and Norrie all submitted to reimmersion.⁶
- (f) It was thought best, at first, to have no written constitution at all, because of the danger inherent in creeds. Eventually, a list of views was produced, simply for clarity's sake, entitled 'Things most surely believed amongst us'.⁷
- (g) Having discussed alcoholism, it was decided not to make total abstinence a grounds of fellowship amongst the brethren.⁸
- (h) After assessing a wide range of social activities - leisure activities, marital relationships, business partnerships, politics, social tea meetings, and the like - it was felt that Christians should be involved in politics, but not in Friendly or Assurance societies.⁹
- (i) It was felt that written prayers might replace extempore ones, on certain occasions. Some of the brethren, however, felt that this was the beginning of the road back to formal services, which they had come to believe as being apostasy.¹⁰
- (j) Ideas, accepted as beneficial, and put into practice initially, were challenged and allowed to lapse. These included the singing of the Lord's prayer each Sunday and greeting the brethren with a kiss.¹¹
- (k) George Dowie produced The Philosophy of Courtship for the young people of the ecclesia.¹²

-
1. Information in Appendix O derives from Norrie, Early History, i. 179-322.
 2. Norrie, Early History, i. 181.
 3. Norrie, Early History, i. 185-6.
 4. Norrie, Early History, i. 187.
 5. Norrie, Early History, i. 225.
 6. Norrie, Early History, i. 234-5, 239.
 7. Norrie, Early History, i. 245.
 8. Norrie, Early History, i. 247.
 9. Norrie, Early History, i. 250-71.
 10. Norrie, Early History, i. 294-5.
 11. Norrie, Early History, i. 295-6.
 12. Norrie, Early History, i. 297.

(l) Individual and ecclesial letters were dispatched regularly to brethren and sisters in isolation. This was another of Dowie's ideas, but it met with unanimous support.¹

(m) After George Dowie had put forward suggestions on 'the art of living together', James Lawrie, William Norrie and Grierson Mitchell discussed the setting up of a type of commune.²

The younger members of the Edinburgh Ecclesia felt that the Dowies had done so much, both in general hospitality and in providing the wherewithal for their discussions on the nature of their faith, that they bought George Dowie and his wife a new carpet, to replace the one they had worn out.³

1. Norrie, Early History, i. 298-300.
2. Norrie, Early History, i. 321-2.
3. Norrie, Early History, i. 329.

APPENDIX P

THE PECULIAR PEOPLE

This sect, known as 'the Peculiar People' or 'the Peculiarists', began in the Rochford district of south-east Essex in the 1830s. Two Wesleyan preachers, James Banyard and William Bridges, originated the movement. One of the early leaders was David Handley, in whose rooms in Maldon the first Peculiar bishops were appointed, and who, in 1860, produced the first Peculiar Hymn Book. By 1862, Handley had become a Christadelphian.¹

The Peculiarists, who took their name from such passages as Deuteronomy xiv. 2; xxvi. 18-19; Titus ii. 14; I Peter ii. 9-10, were evangelicals - 'in a sense they led the way for the charismatic movement of our time.'² Members appeared to join them mainly from Methodist, Baptist or Anglican backgrounds. Their numbers in 1855 stood at about one hundred; by 1884 this figure had risen to 1,300.³ Emphasis within the movement was on piety, simplicity and devotion.⁴ Schism, when it did occur, tended to be over personal disagreements or devotional emphases such as 'the notion that religion was all happiness, singing and rejoicing,'⁵ rather than over expositional or theological controversy.

Peculiarists were distinctive in naming their officials by New Testament terms;⁶ disallowing members to visit physicians for sick-cures; their total reliance upon, and literal interpretation of, the Bible; the independence of their preachers; their lack of a paid ministry; their Sunday wholly dedicated to worship; and their women with their 'quaint Quakerish dress with black bonnets.'⁷

In Spring 1956, the Elders' Council agreed to affiliate with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (F.I.E.C.) and to change the names of their churches to 'Evangelical Churches'. Sorrell wrote: 'On the 7th March 1956... the Peculiar People had passed into history.'⁸

-
1. This date, given by M. Sorrell in The Peculiar People (Exeter 1979), p. 31, is flatly contradicted by the Christadelphian's own account, vol. vi. (1869), 151, which referred to Handley's conversion occurring in April 1869. Even allowing for the longer than usual gap between interest in and conversion to Christadelphianism, as compared with most orthodox Christian denominations, because of the lengthy process of 'instruction' which precedes the immersion itself, a seven year disparity between these dates is difficult to account for.
 2. M. Sorrell, op. cit., p. 10. One of these aspects of the charismata was divine healing - an early feature of worship amongst the Peculiarists.
 3. M. Sorrell, op. cit., p. 36. Sorrell considered this rate of increase 'very marked.'
 4. An elaboration of church ritual developed towards the end of the nineteenth century, especially under Bishop William Heddle.
 5. M. Sorrell, op. cit., p. 20.
 6. For example, 'helps', 'elders', 'bishops', 'brethren' and 'sisters'. In this, as in some other features of their faith such as conscientious objection, they were rather reminiscent of the Christadelphians, who, especially in the pre-Roberts days, aimed at establishing virtually the full range of New Testament offices.
 7. M. Sorrell, op. cit., p. 9. The habits of the Peculiarists were very strict - little alcohol was taken; smoking was considered an
 8. M. Sorrell, op. cit., p. 60. [abomination.

APPENDIX Q

BAPTISMS OF CHRISTADELPHIANS IN ENGLAND BY COUNTY (1864-1885)

COUNTY	JULY 1864 - DEC. 1869				JAN. 1870 - DEC. 1879				JAN. 1880 - DEC. 1885				OVERALL NET INCREASE IN BAPTISED CHRISTADELPHIANS (1864-1885)
	BAPTISMS	LOSSES ¹	N-B GAINS ²	NET GAINS	BAPTISMS	LOSSES ¹	N-B GAINS ²	NET GAINS	BAPTISMS	LOSSES ¹	N-B GAINS ²	NET GAINS	
Bedfordshire				0	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Buckinghamshire				0	4	0	0	4	22	1	0	21	25
Cambridgeshire				0				0	2	0	0	2	2
Cheshire	1	0	0	1	123	9	0	114	94	6	13	101	216
Cornwall				0				0	5	0	0	5	5
Derbyshire	6	0	0	6	49	0	0	49	99	12	0	87	142
Devon	4	0	0	4	14	1	5	18	13	4	2	15	37
Durham				0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	2	3
Essex				0	44	1	0	43	11	3	3	11	54
Gloucestershire	12	0	0	12	76	6	0	70	97	24	0	73	155
Hampshire				0				0	2	0	1	3	3
Kent				0	7	0	0	7	1	0	0	1	8
Lancashire	4	0	0	4	93	14	1	80	149	13	4	140	224
Leicestershire	14	0	0	14	197	0	2	99	22	15	4	11	124
Lincolnshire				0	22	1	0	21	53	7	0	46	67
London	30	1	0	29	224	7	5	222	251	11	20	260	511
Norfolk				0	17	3	0	14	22	0	0	22	36
Northamptonshire				0	29	0	0	29	32	1	0	31	60
Northumberland				0	9	0	0	9	14	0	1	15	24
Nottinghamshire	39	2	0	37	166	12	13	167	74	28	2	48	252
Oxfordshire				0				0	2	0	0	2	2
Salop.				0	7	0	0	7	3	0	0	3	10
Somerset				0	53	4	0	49	22	5	0	17	66
Staffordshire				0	26	0	0	26	45	2	2	45	71
Suffolk				0				0	1	0	0	1	1
Sussex				0	1	0	0	1	7	0	0	7	8
Warwickshire	149	9	0	140	471	41	8	438	484	20	29	493	1071
Wiltshire				0				0				0	0
Worcestershire				0	81	8	0	73	88	54		134	207
E. Riding	6	1	0	5	4	1	0	3	4	1	0	3	11
Yorks. N. Riding	28	0	0	28	15	12	0	3	2	0	0	2	33
W. Riding	48	3	3	48	249	11	2	240	306	24	2	284	572
SCOTLAND	128	12	11	127	368	33	23	358	257	42	7	222	707
WALES	39	1	0	38	85	13	3	75	145	19	2	128	241
IRELAND				0	5	0	0	5	4	0	0	4	9
TOTAL												5971	

1. Correction for deaths, resignations and withdrawals.

2. Non-baptismal gains - that is, returns to fellowship.

Source: The Ambassador and TC, i - xxii (1864-85), 'Intelligence' sections.

GLOSSARY

Aggregate meeting: This was an early form of Christadelphian regional assembly. It partook partly of the nature of a Fraternal Gathering (see Glossary below) and partly of the nature of an annual general meeting.

Arranging brother: This was the term used to describe one of the brethren heavily involved in running the ecclesia's (see Glossary below) affairs. Under the terms of Roberts's Guide of 1883, this term came into general use. In the period 1847-64, various terms had been used for ecclesial office-holders, some of them New Testament ones such as elder, deacon and the like. Often an ecclesia would have seven such 'A.B.s'.

Baptised Believers: This was the label often used for Christadelphians in the period 1847-64, and for the followers of George Dowle after 1864. The term was sometimes extended to 'Baptised Believers in the Gospel of the Kingdom of God'. Other descriptions were 'Thomasites' or 'Robertites' - see also ch. VI, p. 229n, above.

Breaking of Bread: The weekly communion service.

Campbellites: The followers of Alexander Campbell were often known as this in Christadelphian literature. At other times they were called Scotch Baptists. John Thomas referred to them as Scotto-Campbellites. In England they are currently known as the Churches of Christ.

Christadelphian: The term, inaugurated in 1864 by John Thomas, for those who had been baptised, as adults, into the Christian faith as he understood it from 1847 onwards. Originally the term denoted 'brethren in Christ'. Later references mention 'brethren of Christ'. In the twentieth century, there are many groups who would claim the name Christadelphian, in addition to the Central Fellowship - for example, the Berean, the Dawn, the Advocate, the Bijou Hall, the Remnant of Christ's Ecclesia, the Old Paths and the Wayfarers fellowships.

Disfellowship: This was the process of severing spiritual links with a Christadelphian for moral or theological misdemeanours. It was not an irrevocable step. Under Roberts's 1883 Guide, certain offences became subject to statutory disfellowshipping. Prior to 1883, not much reference was made to this activity, which seemed, then, to be administered flexibly. See 'fellowship' below.

Dowleites: This word described a follower of George Dowle (1824-1895) who parted from the Central Fellowship of Christadelphians after Dowle's disfellowshipping in 1864. See 'Baptised Believers' above.

Ecclesia: The usual Christadelphian name for Church. Various terms have been adopted including 'church', 'meeting' and, in the early days, 'synagogue'. 'Ecclesia' has been the standard term since the days of Roberts.

Exhortations: This was the standard term for the sermon at the Breaking of Bread Service (see Glossary above). Originally, there were often two - always two under Roberts's Guide of 1883 - one before and one after the communion itself.

Fellowship: This term denoted those 'in communion' with the central fellowship of Christadelphians. It connoted a spiritually uplifting atmosphere and, occasionally, the Bible study designed to produce such an atmosphere. See 'Disfellowship' above.

Fraternal Gatherings: In Christadelphian history, between 1847 and 1898, inter-ecclesial meetings, of a spiritually uplifting nature, were often described as 'Tea meetings'. The phrase 'Fraternal Gatherings' gradually superceded 'Tea meetings' which is extinct in modern Christadelphian literature. Often, early Fraternal Gatherings would have as many as six exhortations (see Glossary above). After the nineteenth century, this number was gradually reduced to three.

Lecture: This word described the Bible Talks delivered by Christadelphians at Sunday evening church meetings to preach the Gospel.

Meeting: This was an alternative term for the ecclesia (see Glossary above). It could refer to the congregation, or the assembly hall, or both.

Millerites: The Christadelphians often referred, in their early literature, to Seventh Day Adventists by this term.

President: Presidents were Christadelphian brethren of mature years whose office was to conduct, always in rota, services of the ecclesia (see Glossary above). This term pre-dated Roberts's Guide of 1883, although it was continued by it.

Probation: This term (deriving from, for example, II Corinthians 13. 5-7) described the earthly life of believers as a testing ground to gain approved entry to the Kingdom of God.

Recording Brother: This term, established by Roberts's Guide of 1883, was an alternative for Secretary (see Glossary below).

Reformation: John Thomas used 'Reformation' to refer to the Campbellites. He appeared to regard them as the only genuine remnant of the sixteenth century Reformation still relatively untainted by compromise with Catholicism or the State.

Renunciationists: These were the followers of Edward Turney and David Handley, based at Nottingham, many of whom were disfellowshipped (see Glossary above) en bloc in 1873. They renounced the previous Christadelphian concept of the nature of Christ, believing it to be unhistorical. They considered the nature of Jesus Christ to be special and closer to God than that of ordinary human beings.

Secretary: This was the name for the individual whose office was to link the ecclesia (see Glossary above) with other ecclesias and with the outside world and to maintain the ecclesia's private papers. Secretaries existed even in the 1840s and 1850s when the usual move was to name ecclesial officers in terms of what were deemed to have been their first century counterparts. Roberts, in

1861, was the 'General and Corresponding Secretary' of the Huddersfield ecclesia. From 1883, under the influence of Roberts's Guide, this term was replaced by 'Recording Brother' (see Glossary above), although Suffolk Street ecclesias (see Glossary below) tended to maintain their 'secretaries' after 1885, in preference to any other title.

Special Efforts: These were lectures (see Glossary above) delivered on special occasions. The term developed as routinisation did.

Suffolk Street: This was the name for the main splinter group of Christadelphians who broke with Roberts after 1885. The group was sometimes referred to as the 'Ward Hall', 'Masonic Hall' or 'Exchange' brethren.

Tea Meetings: This was the early name for Fraternal Gatherings (see Glossary above).

Temperance Hall: The 'Central' fellowship of Christadelphians, from 1885 to 1957, was known by this term, which took its name from the building where the Birmingham ecclesia met.

The Truth: This phrase was used to describe the Christadelphian understanding of the Gospel, and, also, those related to it or disfellowshipped (see Glossary above) from it, who were spoken of as being 'in the Truth' or 'out of the Truth' respectively.

Types: This phrase, originally emanating from I Corinthians x.11, was used in Christadelphian exegesis to describe prophetic foreshadowings of spiritually parallel events or themes. Thus, King David could have been a 'type' of Jesus Christ, or the exodus of Israel a 'type' of the believers' journey through life to the kingdom of God.

Withdrawal: This was an occasion when the ecclesia took the initiative in separating from an individual member. The term used to describe the use of this initiative by the individual was 'resignation'.

BIBLIOGRAPHYINTRODUCTION

A number of notes is necessary to explain the method of setting out this bibliography, and the nature of its contents. It has not always been possible to refer to first editions of the printed works mentioned. Where second, third or subsequent editions have been used, this has been made clear in the information which follows, q.v. 'Abbreviations'.

The Bibliography is divided into three main areas, devoted to Manuscript, Primary and Secondary sources. The distinction used to differentiate Primary from Secondary sources was the closeness in time of the publication's first edition to the period under study: material written before approximately the start of the First World War was considered Primary; works produced thereafter were considered Secondary. Thus, even though Professor Thomas Turner was a leading member of the Suffolk Street fellowship in the 1885 schism, a number of his works were categorised as 'Secondary' because they were produced more than 30 years after the events they described.

There is no central repository of Christadelphian literature. Birmingham Public Library, The Christadelphian Office and certain Copyright Libraries, such as those of Edinburgh and Cambridge Universities, have some Christadelphian publications in their archives. The majority of the literature is widely scattered and in the hands of private individuals. Consequently, under the rubric 'Manuscript Sources', it was deemed helpful to provide the names and addresses of those individuals and institutions in whose keeping the material is lodged. The dates mentioned, in reference to Ecclesial Minutes, Address Rolls and the like, are the dates of the material available. They are not to be regarded as consonant with either the dates of foundation or longevity of the ecclesias concerned.

Although this thesis is principally concerned with British Christadelphianism, some of the Primary sources were printed in the U.S.A. These have been included in the Bibliography since

they were mailed by John Thomas to people in Britain interested in his views, especially in the period before the British Christadelphian organ, of which Thomas principally approved (namely, The Ambassador of the Coming Age), began in July 1864.

Abbreviations used in the Bibliography

- nd - no date of publication given
- npp - no place of publication given
- nd/pp - no date or place of publication given
- odp - the original date of publication, where this diverges from the edition used in preparation of this thesis

A) MANUSCRIPT SOURCES1) Ecclesial minutes

Aberdeen Ecclesial minutes (1844-1917).

(Mr. J. Coutts, Maryville, Wellington Rd., Nigg, AB1 4BB.)

Birkenhead: The Record of the Birkenhead Christadelphian Ecclesia containing the names and addresses of the brethren and sisters, the arrangements agreed to for the conduct of ecclesial affairs and a verified statement of the faith on which they are built, as distinguished from all other professing Christians. (1876-1880).

(Mr. R. King, 91 Allport Rd., Bromborough, Wirral, L62 6AB.)

Cannock: Ecclesial minutes (1901-1915).

(The Christadelphian Hall, Price St., Cannock, Staffs.)

Crewe: Crewe Christadelphian Ecclesia; minutes of ecclesial and managing brethren's meetings (1916-1928).

(Mr. O. Johnson, 35 Broughton Lane, Wistaston, Crewe, CW2 8JR.)

Cumnock: The minutes of Cumnock Ecclesia, Ayrshire (1880-1895).

(Mr. A. McDougall, 14 Braehead Ave., Malngavie, Glasgow.)

Derby: Ecclesial minutes - series 1 (1886-1892); series 2 (1886-1907).

(Christadelphian Ecclesia, Bass St., Derby, DE3 3BR.)

Edinburgh: Ecclesial minutes (1876-1881; 1908-1921).

(Mr. I. McHaffie, 176 Granton Rd., Edinburgh, EH5 1AH.)

Halifax: Extracts only extant from these ecclesial minutes.

(Estate of the late James Carter; c/o Mr. J.M. Buckler, 7 Newhall Rd., Swadlincote, Burton-on-Trent.)

Heckmondwike: Ecclesial minutes (1918-1925).

(The Christadelphian Hall, 117 High St., Heckmondwike, W. Yorks.)

Sheffield: Ecclesial minutes, including A Statement of Faith (1864 onwards).

(Mr. R.L. Hardy, 2 Knab Croft, Sheffield, S7 2EQ.)

2) Correspondence

Correspondence between C. Evans, author of 'One Hundred Years Ago' in The Christadelphian (1956-63), and a number of individuals and ecclesians in researching his history.

(Mr. I McHaffie, 176 Granton Rd., Edinburgh, EH5 1AH.)

Correspondence between the author of this thesis and various Israelis on the issue of the history of Christian understanding of prophecy concerning the restoration of the Jews to Israel. (Mr. A.R. Wilson, 12 Tilstone Close, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4HU.)

Correspondence between the author of this thesis and a number of Christadelphian ecclesias about the movement's history. (Mr. A.R. Wilson, 12 Tilstone Close, Kidsgrove, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4HU.)

3) Ecclesial rolls and attendance books

Birkenhead: Birkenhead Christadelphian Movement Ecclesia Attendance Book (1877).
(Mr. R. King, 91 Allport Rd., Bromborough, Wirral, L62 6AB.)

Edinburgh: Membership Roll (1878-1891).
(Mr. I. McHaffie, 176 Granton Rd., Edinburgh, EH5 1AH.)

Sheffield: Original ecclesial membership statistics available in The Minute Book of the Sheffield Ecclesia. There are also some figures in H. Lilleyman's 'Historical Record'.
(Mr. R.L. Hardy, 2 Knab Croft, Sheffield, S7 2EQ.)

Other membership data are available from either The Ambassador/Christadelphian or The Messenger's 'Intelligence' sections or from the records of the Aggregate Meetings of ecclesias in volume iii of William Morrie's The Early History of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in Britain.

(Complete copies of the former magazines with Mr. R.P. Carr, 'Lichfield', 36A Boxworth End, Swavesey, Cambs., CB4 5RA. Some copies of the latter magazine and a copy of Norrie with Mr. I. McHaffie, 176 Granton Rd., Edinburgh, EH5 1AH.)

4) Ecclesial histories

Barrow: The History of Barrow-in-Furness Ecclesia.
(Mr. J. Melville, 18 Park Drive, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria.)

Rock Ferry, Cheshire: The Record of the Rock Ferry Christadelphian Movement (1876).
(Mr. R. King, 91 Allport Rd., Bromborough, Wirral, L62 6AB.)

Sale: The Records of the Christadelphian Ecclesia, Sale (c. 1870).
(Mr. K. Wrigley, 8 Beech Ave., Blackpool, Lancs., FY3 9BD.)

Sheffield: Historical Record of Sheffield Ecclesia (probably compiled by H. Lilleyman in 1955).
(Mr. R.L. Hardy, 2 Knab Croft, Sheffield, S7 2EQ.)

B) PRIMARY PRINTED SOURCES1) Periodicals i) Christadelphian

<u>The Aeon</u> (1885-1886).	Birkenhead & Glasgow
<u>The Ambassador of the Coming Age</u> (1864-1869).	Birmingham
<u>The Bible Exegetist</u> (1884).	Birmingham
<u>The Bible Lightstand</u> , ii (1885) - iv (1887).	Birmingham
<u>The Christadelphian</u> (1869 on).	Birmingham
<u>The Christadelphian Children's Magazine</u> ¹ .	Birmingham
<u>Christadelphian 'Mutual' Magazine</u> (1912 on).	Bristol
<u>The Fraternal Visitor</u> (1885 on).	Birmingham
<u>Good Company</u> (1890-1894).	Birmingham
<u>Herald of the Future Age</u> (1844-49).	Richmond, Va.
<u>Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come</u> (1851-61).	West Hoboken, New Jersey
<u>The Messenger of the Churches</u> ² (1860 on).	Glasgow
<u>The Testimony</u> (1931 on).	Birmingham

ii) non-Christadelphian - sympathetic to Christadelphian theology

<u>The Apostolic Advocate</u> (1834 on).	Richmond, Virginia
<u>The Christian Examiner</u> (1852-1854).	Bristol
<u>The Investigator</u> (1840).	app
<u>The Rainbow</u> , xii (1875).	London

1. 1st series 1871-1872; 2nd series 1882 on.

2. This publication was subsequently renamed The Messenger of the Gospel (in 1871) and, later still, in 1872, the Church Messenger.

- iii) non-Christadelphian - involving critical comments on Christadelphian theology

The Quarterly Journal of Prophecy (1848-73) London

- 2) Books and pamphlets 1) organisation

The Constitution of the Birmingham Temperance Hall Ecclesia (Birmingham 1886, revised 1908).

A Declaration of the Truth Revealed in the Bible (Birmingham 1867).

R. Roberts, Ecclesial Guide (Birmingham 1867).

R. Roberts, A Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias (Birmingham 1883).

R. Roberts, 'True Principles and Uncertain Details', The Christadelphian, xxxv (1898), 182-189.

J. Thomas, 'Rules', reprinted in The Christadelphian, ix (1872), 50-51.

ii) Christadelphian history

Aberdeen: sundry articles from local newspapers, 1909.

J. Birks, The History of the Christadelphian Ecclesia at Heanor (Heanor 1932).

J.W. Lea (ed.), How it Happened (Birmingham 1903).

J.W. Lea (ed.), The Life and Writings of Dr. Thomas (Philadelphia 1915).

W. Norrie, The Early History of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God in Britain with Historical, Critical and Social Reminiscences of Persons, Places and Events (Earlston (Edinburgh) 1904-6).

iii) the doctrine and exegesis of Christadelphianism

- J.J. Andrew, Jesus Christ and Him Crucified (Birmingham 1882).
- J. Bland, At the Table of the Lord (Kidderminster 1902).
- J. Bland, Church and Chapel Arithmetic (Kidderminster nd).
- J. Bland, Divine Teaching (Kidderminster 1908).
- J. Bland, The Very Christ (Kidderminster nd).
- J. Bland, The Wesleyan Conference (Kidderminster 1884).
- J. Bland, What the Spirit saith unto the Churches (Birmingham 1889).
- J. Bland, Who Established the Church of England? (Kidderminster nd).
- J. Bland, The Words of Jesus (Kidderminster 1901).

[The following is a list of the complete works of Joseph Bland. It is inserted at this point for the purposes of reference and research:- The Abolition of War; Apostolic Christianity; The Assassin on the Throne; Bible Themes for Truth Seekers; Bible Truth and Clerical Error; Contending for the Faith; Daniel's Visions of the Night; The Dying Doctrine of Endless Torment; The Dying Year; Father, Son and Holy Spirit; The Gospel of God's Love to a Perishing World; The History of Death; The Imposition of the Clergy; Is it Peace? or, is it War?; Is the Soul Immortal?; The Jubilee Year; The Keys of Hell; The Kingdom of God. What is it?; The Land Question; The Larger Hope; Living Again; Maran-atha; Putting Off the Old Man and Putting on the New; The Resurrection of Christ; Ritualism - the Highway to Rome; Russia and Britain in the East; Russia and the Jews; Salvation; The Soul: What is it?; A Startling Question - Will the Wicked Be Punished?; The Struggle for Eternal Life; Three Lectures on the Present Day Teaching of the Church of England; Who is Jesus Christ?; Why Confess to a Priest?; The World to Come and the Life Everlasting.]

- J.J. Hadley, An Introduction to the Apocalypse (Birmingham 1913).
- H. Sulley, What is the Substance of Faith? A Reply to Sir Oliver Lodge (London 1908).
- H. Sulley, The Tabernacle (Nuneaton nd).
- T. Turner, Elements of Bible Truth (London 1929).
- E. Turney, The Sacrifice of Christ (Halesowen nd).

- C.C. Walker, Christ and War (Birmingham 1900).
 C.C. Walker, Thoughts on Inspiration (Birmingham 1905).
 C.C. Walker, Notes on the Apocalypse (Birmingham 1909).
 C.C. Walker, Theophany (Birmingham 1929).
 C.C. Walker, Christadelphianism Briefly Defended By Scripture (Birmingham 1934).
 C.C. Walker, A Ransom for All (Birmingham 1937).

iv) the writings of Robert Roberts

- The Bible Companion (npp 1853).
The Twelve Lectures (Huddersfield 1862).
The Nightingale Debate (2nd. edn. London & B'ham 1872; odp 1866).
The Good Confession (Birmingham 1868).
Supposed Inconsistencies (Birmingham 1933; odp 1869).
The Stern Debate (Birmingham 1904; odp 1871).
Everlasting Punishment, not Eternal Torments (npp 1871).
Eternal Life - a Lecture (Birmingham 1872).
Dr. Thomas: His Life and Work (Birmingham 1873; 3rd. edn. B'ham 1954).
The Slain Lamb (Birmingham 1873).
Man Mortal (Birmingham 1875).
Is the Bible Divine? The Bradlaugh Debate (London 1876).
Prophecy and the Eastern Question (London & B'ham 1897; odp 1877).
The Hine Debate (Birmingham 1919; odp 1879).
Seasons of Comfort (Birmingham 1880; odp 1879).
Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse (Birmingham 1880).
The Evil One (2nd. edn. Birmingham 1911; odp 1881).
The Return of Christ to the Earth (2nd. edn. B'ham 1893; odp 1881).

- The Ways of Providence (Birmingham 1881).
- England and Egypt (Birmingham 1882).
- Epitome of the Commandments of Christ (Birmingham 1882).
- The Trial (London 1882).
- Christendom Astray (Birmingham 1883).
- A Guide to the Formation and Conduct of Ecclesias (B'ham 1883).
- The Resurrection of Christ (Birmingham 1911; odp 1883).
- Three Lectures by Three Lecturers (with Ashcroft and Chamberlin; Birmingham 1884; odp 1883).
- The Visible Hand of God (Birmingham 1883).
- Further Seasons of Comfort (Birmingham 1884).
- Scepticism Answered (Birmingham 1884).
- The Inspiration of the Bible (npp 1885).
- Letters to the Elect of God (Thornbury, Victoria, Australia nd; odp 1885).
- The Christadelphian Instructor (Birmingham 1886).
- Nazareth Revisited (3rd edn. Birmingham 1926; odp 1890).
- Christ on Earth Again (2nd edn. Birmingham nd; odp 1892).
- My Days and My Ways (Birmingham 1894), reprinted as Robert Roberts, an Autobiography with an appendix by C.C. Walker (Birmingham 1917).
- The Resurrectional Responsibility Debate (Birmingham 1894), co-author J.J. Andrew.
- Resurrection to Condemnation (Lompoc, California nd; odp 1894).
- The Blood of Christ (Birmingham 1895).
- England's Ruin (npp 1895).
- Is Christ Very Near? (Birmingham 1895).
- Diary of a Voyage to Australia, New Zealand and other Lands (Birmingham 1896).
- A Look Round a Troubled World (npp 1896).
- Daniel (Birmingham 1897).
- Help to the Memory of History (Birmingham 1897).

The Parables of Christ (Birmingham 1906; odp 1897).

The Law of Moses (Birmingham 1898).

Ministry of the Prophets (Birmingham 1898), completed by C.C. Walker.

Rejoinder to the Reverend J.P. Barnett (Birmingham 1898).

Answers to Bible Questions (Roberts et alia; Bristol nd).

Call to Arms (Sutton Coldfield 1922).

Coming Events in the East (nd/pp).

A Defence of the Faith Proclaimed in Ancient Times (nd/pp).

Is the Bible the Work of Inspiration? (Birmingham nd).

Is Man Immortal? (Birmingham 1912).

The Kingdom of God (nd/pp).

The Prophecy of Isaiah (nd/pp).

The Sect Everywhere Spoken Against (Birmingham 1904).

v) the writings of John Thomas

Discourse on Eternal Life (npp 1832).

Confession, Abjuration and Declaration (npp 1847).

Elpis Israel (4th edn. Birmingham 1866).

Clerical Theology Unscriptural (Newcastle, Staffs. 1972; odp 1850).

How to Search the Scriptures (Birmingham 1915; odp 1851).

What is the Truth? (Birmingham 1915; odp 1852).

The Destiny of Human Governments in the Light of Scripture (npp 1853).

Anatolia, or Russia Triumphant and Europe (npp 1854).

The Revealed Mystery (Birmingham 1915; odp 1855).

The Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth (Thornbury, Australia 1969; odp 1859).

Eureka (Birmingham 1861-69).

Anastasis (Birmingham 1914; odp 1866).

The Roman Question or The Fall of the Papacy (Birmingham 1867).

Catechesis (Baltimore 1868).

The Book Unsealed (Birmingham 1869).

Is Christadelphianism of the Devil? (npp 1869).

Phanerosis (London 1869).

Odology: an Antidote to Spiritualism (Birmingham 1869; odp 1852).

Who are the Christadelphians? (Birmingham 1869).

The Destiny of the British Empire as Revealed in the Scriptures
(Birmingham 1871).

Pictorial Illustration of God-manifestation (1st published in The Christadelphian xxviii (1901), 280.)

The Apostacy Unveiled - a Debate between John Thomas and Mr. J.S. Watt (Birmingham 1872).

Bible Dictionary (incomplete), (cited in The Christadelphian, xix (1882), 151-4, 198-202, 247-51, 294-8, 344-9, 464-73, 506-9, 546-9; xx (1883), 6-11, 56-61, 103-7, 153-4, 202-6, 252-6.)

Chronikon Hebraikon (Birmingham 1903; odp New Jersey 1865).

Exposition of Daniel (nd/pp).

The Kingdom of God (nd/pp).

The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained (Adelaide nd).

vi) commentaries on Christadelphian doctrine

J. Blann, Christadelphianism Astray - An Examination of their Refuge from the Storm (London c. 1898).

Revd. C. Clemance, Christadelphianism Exposed (4th edn. London and Nottingham 1873).

vii) works of Christian theology sharing with Christadelphianism some main expositional principles

- J. Angus, The Bible Handbook (London 1866).
Armageddon (London 1858).
 J.J. Blunt, Undesigned Scriptural Coincidences (London 1847).
 E.W. Bullinger, How to Enjoy the Bible (London 1907).
 E.W. Bullinger, The Companion Bible (reprinted London 1964).
 W. Cooke, A Survey of the Unity, Harmony and Growing Evidence of Sacred Truth (London 1874).
 L. Gaussen, Theopneustia: the Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures (London 1888).
 W. Grant, The World Crisis (Edinburgh 1916).
 H. Grattan Guinness, The Approaching End of the Age (London 1880).
 H. Grattan Guinness, Light for the Last Days (London 1886).
 H. Grattan Guinness, Romanism and the Reformation from the Standpoint of Prophecy (London 1887).
 H. Grattan Guinness, Progressive Revelations as to the Millenium, the Resurrection and the Judgement (Dudley nd).
 E. Hitchcock, Religion of Geology (Glasgow 1851).
 T.H. Horne, An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of Holy Scriptures (Edinburgh 1822).
 S. Kinns, Moses and Geology (London 1883).
 I.F.M. Phillips, Cumulative Evidence of the Divine (Cambridge 1883).
 J.W. Thirtle, In the Name: the Warrant of Prayer (London 1914).
 J.W. Thirtle, The Lord's Prayer (London 1915).
 J.W. Thirtle, Old Testament Problems (London 1916).
 J.W. Thirtle, The Titles of the Psalms (London 1916; odp 1904).

C) SECONDARY PRINTED SOURCES

1. Books and pamphlets i) organisation

F.G. Jannaway, Christadelphians and Fellowship (London 1934).

The Report of the London Christadelphian Co-operation Committee (London 1946).

G.B. Suggit, Worship: its Right Form and Usage (Blackpool 1930).

ii) Christadelphian history

J.P. Eland, 'Ernest Kendal - Editor', The 'Mutual' Magazine, xxvi (Sutton Coldfield 1950).

G.B. Elore, 'Archives and the Future', The Testimony, xlvii (Hereford 1977).

W.V. Butterfield, The History of the Truth in the Latter Days (Manchester 1958).

James Carter, 'Who are the Christadelphians?', The Testimony, xxxi (Torquay 1961).

James Carter, 'Dr. Thomas and the Campbellites', The Testimony, xxxi (Torquay 1961).

James Carter, 'The Early Years', The Testimony, xlv (Sutton Coldfield 1974).

James Carter, 'Another Link with the Past', The Testimony, xlv (Sutton Coldfield 1974).

John Carter (ed.), The Faith in the Last Days (Birmingham 1949).

G.E. Clementson, I Will Remove thy Candlestick (London nd).

Ecclesial Fellowship and the Inspiration of the Scriptures (Birmingham 1930).

W.J. Elston, 'Summary of Recent Divisions' in The Enmity (npp 1936).

W.J. Elston, A Summary of the Heresies of Recent Times (Nottingham 1924).

- C. Evans, 'One Hundred Years Ago', The Christadelphian, xciii (1956), 449 - c (1963), 502.
- A.T. Jannaway, The Inspiration Division (London 1921).
- F.G. Jannaway, Christadelphians and Military Service (London 1918).
- F.G. Jannaway, Christadelphians during the Great War (London 1929).
- F.G. Jannaway, 'Christians' not CHRISTIANS (London 1930).
- G.M. Lees (ed.), The Story of the Truth (London 1944).
- J. Marshall, 'Ecclesiastical History - the Origin and History of the Christadelphians', Christadelphian Mutual Improvement Societies' Union Essays (Kidderminster 1961).
- 'P', Twenty Years Ago and Now (Birmingham 1905).
- Quiet Reflections on Unity (Epping, Australia 1938).
- L.G. Sargent (ed.), One Hundred Years of The Christadelphian (Birmingham 1964).
- The Sentinel Story (Stoke-on-Trent 1973).
- B.S. Snelling, The Central 'U-Turn' of 1957 (Sutton, Surrey 1980).
- Stockport Christadelphian Ecclesia 100th Anniversary (Stockport 1975).
- A.S. Thompson, Separation! When is it Necessary? (London 1920).
- T. Turner, Inspiration and Fellowship - Past and Present (Birmingham 1921).
- T. Turner, Divisions - their Cause and Cure (Birmingham 1929).
- T. Turner, Walking Together (New Maldon 1938).
- T. Turner, Partial Inspiration Repudiated (Birmingham nd).
- J.H. Watkiss, Christadelphians and Fellowship (Stockport nd).
- J.H. Watkiss, Partial Inspiration Division - 1884 (Stockport nd).
- C.P. Wauchope, Ecclesial Peace and Unity (London nd).
- W.J. White, The Past Hundred Years (Portslade, Sussex 1959).

iii) histories of the Churches of Christ (Campbellites)

- W. Robinson, The Shattered Cross (Birmingham 1945).
 B.L. Smith, Alexander Campbell (St. Louis, Missouri 1930).
 D.M. Thompson, Let Sects and Parties Fall (Birmingham 1980).
 A.C. Watters, History of the British Churches of Christ (Indianapolis 1948).

iv) histories of the Peculiar People

- F.J. Jiggins, Glory Be (Ilfracombe, 1978).
 M. Sorrell, The Peculiar People (Exeter 1980).

v) the doctrine and exegesis of Christadelphianism

- W.H. Boulton, Names and Titles of the Deity (London nd).
 E. Brady, The Gospel that is Never Preached (Halesowen nd).
 E. Brady, Doctored Christadelphianism (Halesowen 1974).
 John Carter, God's Way (Birmingham 1947).
 S.P. Clementson, A Critical Commentary on Eureka (London 1956).
 I. Collyer, The Vegetable in the Witness Box (Bristol 1922).
 I. Collyer, The Bible and Modern Thought (Birmingham nd).
 I. Collyer, One King, One Empire, One Religion (Birmingham nd).
 W. Grant, The Bible's Message of Hope to the World (Edinburgh 1920).
 A.T. Jannaway, The Ground of Resurrectional Responsibility (London 1921).
 F.G. Jannaway and Revd. N.E. Egerton-Swann, Socialism or the Reign of Christ (London 1909).

- F.G. Jannaway and Revd. C. Noel, Ought Christians to be Socialists? (London 1909).
- F.G. Jannaway, Palastine and the Powers (London 1918).
- F.G. Jannaway, Christadelphian Answers (Birmingham 1920).
- F.G. Jannaway, The British Museum with Bible in Hand (London 1921).
- F.G. Jannaway, The Real Christ (London nd).
- F.G. Jannaway, Without the Camp (London 1917).
- F.G. Jannaway, The Worst Enemies of the Bible - an Indictment of the Pulpit (London nd).
- E. Kendal, The Bible the Book for Today (Watford 1934).
- G.M. Lees, 'British Israelism' Unscriptural (Birmingham 1936).
- H.P. Mansfield, The Truth Vindicated (Adelaide 1948).
- Marriage. Ought Believers to Marry Unbelievers? (Birmingham 1915).
- F.J. Pearce, The 'Clean Flesh' Controversy (Newbridge, Mon. 1925).
- K.M. Pook, The Christian's Relations with the State (Birmingham nd).
- W.L. Wille, God in Nature and Revelation (Bristol 1918).

vi) biographies

- I. Collyer, Robert Roberts (Birmingham 1977).
- W. Laing, Life and Advent Papers (nd/pp).

vii) commentaries on Christadelphian doctrine

- M.C. Burrell, Christadelphianism (London 1962).
- R. Govett, Christadelphians not Christians (2nd edn. Norwich 1874).
- A.B. MaGruder, Certain Christadelphian Doctrines Compared with Scripture (Baltimore nd).

- P. Mauro, Three Letters to a Christadelphian (Glasgow nd).
- S. Miller, Christadelphianism - a Counterfeit of Christianity (Adelaide 1948).
- W. Mosley, The Sin of My Soul: a Sinner's Evolution from Christadelphianism to Christ (Vancouver 1938).
- A.J. Pollock, Christadelphianism Astray from the Bible (London 1930).
- A.J. Pollock, Christadelphianism Briefly Tested by Scripture (London nd).
- J.O. Saunder, Heresies and Cults (London 1948).

viii) studies in nineteenth and twentieth church history

- C. Binfield, So Down to Prayers (London 1977).
- O. Chadwick, The Victorian Church (London 1966, 2nd edn. 1970).
- R. Currie, A.D. Gilbert and L. Horsley, Churches and Churchgoers (Oxford 1977).
- J. Gay, The Geography of Religion in England (London 1971).
- A.D. Gilbert, Religion and Society in Industrial England (London 1976).
- J. Lea, 'The Baptists in Lancashire 1837-87' (Liverpool Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1970).
- T.F. O'Dea, The Sociology of Religion (New Jersey 1966).
- E. Troeltsch, Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (New York 1931).
- B.R. Wilson, 'Social Aspects of Religious Sects: a Study of some Contemporary Groups in Great Britain, with Special Reference to a Midland City' (London Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1955).
- B.R. Wilson, Sects and Society (London 1961).
- B.R. Wilson, Patterns of Sectarianism (London 1967).
- K. Young, Chapel (London 1972).

ix) documents analysing Christadelphian literature

A. Crawford, Index to Christadelphian Books, Pamphlets and Inserts (Torrens Park, S. Australia 1981).

A. Crawford, Index (Magazine) (Torrens Park, S. Australia 1981).

E.J. Green, Subject Index to The Christadelphian 1864-75 (Birmingham 1975).

Index to Eureka (Moorooka, Australia nd).

x) works of reference

H.C. Darby and H. Fullard (ed.), The New Cambridge Modern History vol. xiv., Atlas (Cambridge 1970).

S. Lee (ed.), Dictionary of National Biography. Index and Epitome (London 1903).

Young and Hancock (ed.), English Historical Documents, vols. xii (1) and (2), (London 1977).

