

CHRISTADELPHIANISM

astray from
the Bible

by A.J Pollock

Mr. Robert Roberts
denies the Deity
of the
Lord Jesus Christ

Let Scripture itself settle the matter

Baptism

Essential to Salvation?

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**Roberts denies the atoning character
of the death of Christ**

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**His existence is derived
and not eternal?**

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Immortality of the soul denied

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**Does Mr Roberts know more
than the Apostle Paul?**

*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing.
... Ye shall know them by their fruits... (Matt.7:15-16) KJV*

CHRISTADELPHIANISM ASTRAY FROM THE BIBLE

We have lying before us a book of 342 pages, entitled, "Christendom Astray from the Bible." Its Author, the late Mr Robert Roberts, was for over forty years a prominent leader among the Christadelphians, and his book is a recognised text-book among them.

The title is certainly a startling one. It takes the ground that Christendom is astray, and that the only right people in the world are the Christadelphians.

We propose in the following pages to submit this claim to the test of the infallible Word of God. If Mr Roberts has Scripture for his assertion, then nothing that we can say can neutralise it. If it is not according to Scripture the more thoroughly its fallacy is exposed by Scripture the better.

If the reader is a Christadelphian, we beg him to give the following pages a careful reading. Let him not be afraid to read the other side. Let Scripture itself, and neither Mr Roberts' ideas nor the writer's settle the matter. Surely the reader can afford to bring the matter to the final test of the Word of God.

MR ROBERTS DENIES THE DEITY OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The following extracts from his book clearly prove this,

"The Son is a manifestation of the Father in a man begotten by the Spirit." (page 108).

... "The simple appellation of 'Son,' as applied to Christ, is sufficient to prove that his existence is derived and not eternal" (page 110).

... "He was the Son of God, the manifestation of God by spirit-power, but not God Himself" (page 111).

These extracts make it plain that Mr Roberts teaches that Christ had no existence before He became a Man, that He was not God, the Son, co-equal with the Father and the Spirit; in short, that born into this world He was a man without previous existence.

Is it possible that multitudes of godly Christians, ripe in scholarship, earnest in their searching of the Scriptures all down the centuries are all mistaken in this ancient item of the Christian faith, the deity of the Lord Jesus? One thing is certain that if the faith we profess is not sound as to the Person of Christ, it is unsound throughout. If the foundation is rotten, there is no security in what is built thereupon.

If Mr Roberts is right, then Christendom is unsound in every item of the Christian faith, and according to Mr Roberts, outside the pale of salvation. By his teaching he will consign Augustine, Luther, Wycliffe, Wesley, Whitfield, Spurgeon and the vast multitudes of Christian men and women, who are not believers in the Christadelphian doctrines, to eternal destruction. Indeed, according to Mr Roberts, the generations before the Christadelphian doctrines were promulgated were in a sorry case.

If on the other hand, Mr Roberts is wrong, on the very showing of Scripture, those who do not believe in the deity of the Lord Jesus, including Mr Roberts himself, are themselves outside the pale of salvation. This is frightful to contemplate, but Scripture leaves us in no doubt in the matter. The Lord

said to the scoffing Pharisees, “If ye believe not that I am *He*, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

The Jews were certainly under no illusion as to what His claims were, that of Godhead, equality with the Father. We read:- “The Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:18). In reply the Lord said to them, “All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (verse 23). It were audacity to make such a claim, if the Lord were not God, the Son. If He had been a man, with no previous existence, He could not have rightly made this assertion.

We notice that Mr Roberts quietly ignores Scriptures that he cannot explain away, and contents himself with quoting Scriptures, that in the main apply to the lowly place of subjection as Man that the Lord took in relation to His Father. His treatment of them showing that he does not understand their import.

We will draw attention to some of the Scriptures that Mr Roberts does not quote. Let us begin with one or two from the Old Testament. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6). Here we have one and the same Person, a Child of days and the Father of eternity. How could that be if He were not both God and Man, one Person? The inspired Word of God calls the child, “The mighty God”. Is there not the plainest assertion of the deity of the Child born, the Son given? We are left in no doubt as to who is meant, for in Isaiah 7:14, we read, “Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” Matthew relating the birth of Christ tells us distinctly that all this happened as the fulfilment of this very Scripture. Moreover the angel of the Lord told Joseph that the name of the blessed Child was to be JESUS, which means, *Jehovah Saviour*, the clearest affirmation of His deity, for Jehovah is one of the names of God.

Again we read, “But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, . . . out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). :”FROM EVERLASTING” is very different from Mr Roberts’, “*His existence is derived, and not eternal.*”

Let us quote from the New Testament. Strange that Mr Roberts says nothing about John 1. There we read; “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:1-3). Let us take this remarkable affirmation step by step.

“*In the beginning WAS the Word*” — the beginning setting forth creation, when time could be taken account of. The Word existed when creation began. This means that He existed BEFORE creation.

“*The Word was WITH God.*” Here we get in plainest language the distinct Personality of the Word. He was WITH God.

“*The Word WAS God.*” Here we get His unequivocal deity announced. It may be pointed out that here there is no definite article before the word, *God*—“the Word was God”. A Christadelphian once urged this upon the writer, and had the audacity to translate the text, “The Word was A god.” In this he showed his lack of knowledge of what he was talking about. There is no indefinite article in the Greek.

“*All things were made by Him.*” The Word was the great Creator, and surely the Creator is God.

Nor are we left in the slightest doubt as to who the Word is. We read: - “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth. John bare witness of Him, and cried saying, This was He of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for He was before me . . . For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*” (John 1:14-17). In plainest language we have here the deity of the Lord Jesus from all eternity presented to us, and the fact that He became a Man in order to be the Saviour.

Why did Mr Roberts not comment on these verses in the book that lies before us? Was it that even his ingenuity could not explain away their meaning, which lies so plainly on the surface?

One of Mr Roberts' proof texts for the theory that the only Person, who can claim Deity is God, the Father, denying it to the Son and the Spirit, is rather unfortunately chosen by him, for the proof is all the other way. He quotes ON PAGE 93, "Hear O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). Mr Roberts emphasises that there is only one God and so does this Scripture in the most emphatic manner.

But that does not shut out the teaching of Scripture that there are three Persons in the Godhead — God the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit; yet ONE God. In the verses in question, it reads thus, "Hear O Israel, the Lord [Jehovah, *singular*] our God [Elohim, *plural*] is one Lord [Jehovah, *singular*] and thou shalt love the Lord [Jehovah, *singular*] thy God {Elohim, *plural*}."

Now in the Hebrew language there are three numbers; *singular* meaning one; *dual*, meaning two and two only; *plural*, at the least three, or more. How is it in the passage that so loftily asserts the oneness of God, that the word, *God*, should be in the plural? Nay, further, in the Old Testament Scriptures, for centuries in the custody of the Jews, who were fiercely monotheistic, how is it that the word, *God*, is found 2,579 times in the plural, and only 314 in the singular, if it does not enshrine the thought of the Trinity.

Elohim is the plural of Eloah, and means originally great or powerful ones. It can be used to describe men or angels, but in the Scriptures this is so in only a mere handful of instances. The Spirit of God has, however, largely used the word to describe God, and has used it in the plural over eight times to one in the singular in that connection.

It is true that in the Old Testament times there were heavenly visitants to earth who appeared as angels, (*elohim*). In certain cases it is plainly the Lord, who so presents Himself. See the instance of the angel, who spoke to Abraham, and Abraham's recognition of who He was on the occasion of the communication of the doom of the cities of the plain; of the man who wrestled with Jacob at the brook Jabbok; and again of the angel, who visited Manoah, communicating the tidings of the approaching birth of Samson. In each case the language the angel employed could only have been used by Jehovah Himself.

Again Mr Roberts' choice of a proof text is unfortunate for his theory. Indeed all through his book it is an attempt to make the facts fit the fancy. In other words, he twists Scripture in his effort to prove his theory. On page 105 Mr Roberts says:

"In Hebrews 1:6, Paul quotes a statement from Psalm 97:7, in which the word 'Elohim' occurs. In the Psalm it is rendered 'gods'-Worship Him, all ye gods'; in Hebrew it is rendered as follows; — 'Let all *the angels of God* worship Him.' Here to Paul's mind, *Elohim* represented angels.'

Yes, this is true, but not so fast Mr Roberts. It does not follow by any means that this is so in every case. If he had only studied the subject more carefully, he would have found out that *Elohim* (plural) stands for God in the vast majority of cases, the exact opposite of what he states.

Further, when Mr Roberts insists that the word for angels in this passage answers to the *Elohim*, he neglects to point out who the "Him" is, whom the angels are bidden to worship. To do so would have been to wreck his theory. Here is the verse referred to by Mr Roberts; "And again, when He [God] bringeth in the first begotten [Christ] into the world, He [God] saith, and let all the angels of God worship HIM [Christ]" (Hebrews 1:6). Would the supreme God, who cannot share His glory with another, have bidden the angels to worship One less than God? Had He done so, it would have been a command to the angels to commit a grievous sin. No, the fact that God called the angels to worship the incarnate Christ, is a proof of what Mr Roberts dares to deny with the Scriptures in his hand, that the Lord Jesus was God, the Son, uncreated, from all eternity, "upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews 1:3), co-equal with the Father and the Spirit.

Another verse is equally plain, and surely Mr Roberts must have read it, "But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne O GOD, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8). When God addresses the Son as God, surely we may well do so, But Mr Roberts in his book refuses to do this.

Mr Roberts has the effrontery to write;

"These instances prove that 'Lord' and 'God' as employed in the English version, do not always signify the great Increate, but sometimes, in fact, almost generally those glorious beings who act and speak in His name and with His authority. Keeping this in mind, many seeming difficulties made much of by unbelievers entirely disappear" (page 105).

It is only on the ground that many of his readers have not the means to check such a statement as this, which is so glaringly beside the mark, that his book could hope to succeed. "Almost generally" the word, *Elohim*, refers to God, the opposite of what Mr Roberts states.

One or two remarks and then we must pass on to other points in the book, though we have touched upon but a title of the testimony in the Scriptures as to the deity of the Lord Jesus.

When the Lord Jesus was here on earth, He was constantly the object of worship, and never once did He refuse to accept such homage. If He were not God, it were blasphemous on His part to be a party to such demonstrations, but on the other hand, if He were God, He could not refuse such homage. Note the contrast in the case of the Apostle John. As John fell down to worship, the angel said, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant . . . worship God" (Rev. 22:9).

In conclusion we would rather be in the company of doubting Thomas, doubting no longer, who, at length convinced that he was in the presence of the risen Saviour, exclaimed in worship, "My Lord and my GOD" (John 20:28), than that of the confident Mr Roberts, who would put all, who are of the same belief as Thomas, outside the pale of salvation.

We shall never forget the gratitude and delight that a man showed in speaking of his deliverance from such soul-destroying teaching as this. He came right across the great city of Birmingham to tell the writer that a pamphlet he had written¹ was the means of his deliverance. We shall never forget the delight with which he quoted John 17:5, where the Lord said, "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee BEFORE THE WORLD WAS." The Scripture had set him free. His face was radiant. "'BEFORE THE WORLD WAS,' " he cried, settled the matter for me." May it settle it for the reader. If Christ had glory "before the world was" He existed "before the world was." Where is the contention of Mr Roberts that He had no existence previous to His birth into this world?

In denying that the Son is God the Son, Christadelphianism is poisoned at its fount.

MR ROBERTS DENIES THE ATONING CHARACTER OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

If Mr Roberts is unsound about the very foundation of the Christian faith, it is not surprising that he should be unsound as to the atoning death of Christ. It is terrible to have to write such words of one, who professed to be a servant of Christ, but his own words leave us in no doubt in the matter. He writes: -
“It is a theological habit to represent the death of Christ as an act on his part to appease the wrath of the Father towards sinners. The Scriptures ON THE CONTRARY², always speak of it as an expression of God’s love toward fallen humanity” (page 113).

If the Scriptures ALWAYS speak of the death of Christ as an expression of God’s love, then according to Mr Roberts they NEVER speak of it as exhausting the wrath of a sin-hating God, when the blessed Lord took the sinner’s place at the cross. Nay, further, he denied that the Lord was the Substitute at the cross. Read his own words: -

“There is a great difference between a representative and a substitute. A representative is not disconnected from those represented. On the contrary, those represented go through with him all that he goes through. But in the case of a substitute, it is otherwise. He does his part instead of those for whom he is the substitute, and these are disassociated from the transaction” (page 118).

So according to Mr Roberts, Christ did not bear the wrath of god when He died upon the cross, nor was He a Substitute for the sinner when He died. Nay, further, if all *represented* go through with Him all that He goes through, then they are co-Saviours with Him. The gospel is clearly whittled away by such reasoning.

What meant the bitter cry, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” uttered by Christ upon the cross, if He were not bearing the wrath of God against sin? How could the Apostle Paul write: ”Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from WRATH through Him” (Romans 5:9), if He did not bear that wrath and exhaust it at the cross? Again he writes of the Lord Jesus, as the One, who “delivered us from the WRATH to come” (1 Thessalonians 1:10). How could He deliver us from the coming wrath, if He had not met that wrath for us on the cross? How can Mr Roberts say that the death of Christ is not a question of meeting the wrath of God against sin, when we read that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3); that “He [God] hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

It is playing with words, a travesty of all that is true of the gospel, to write of it in the way that Mr Roberts does. It makes light of sin, and would lead to light ideas of the atonement itself. If we think lightly of sin, we are bound to think lightly of the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus on the cross.

MR ROBERTS AFFIRMS THAT BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION.

This is a main plank in Mr Roberts’ theology. He writes: -

“A man may believe in all the glorious promises of God, and yet not be a participator in them. HE MUST BE BAPTISED², as we have seen; “He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved” (page 302).

Now Christian baptism is a rite which is incumbent on all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The word of God makes that plain. But to make it necessary for salvation is highly unscriptural. It is dead

against the tenor of Scripture. Mr Roberts quotes a number of examples to support his theory, but in truth they are destructive of it. He quotes the Day of Pentecost, when the convicted hearers asked the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The answer was, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

The reason the matter was stated thus is very evident. The anxious Jews were part of a nation that lay under the governmental wrath of God because of their rejection of their Messiah. Not only would the Jews reject their Messiah, but they would also reject with bitter scorn, those who professed His blessed Name. What was the way of escape, but to repent of the deed their nation had done, as well as of their individual sins, and show their sincerity by being baptised? But it was certainly not the case that Peter everywhere and always preached baptism as essential to salvation.

A little lower down on the page Mr Roberts quotes in support of his view, the case of Cornelius and his friends, but he fails to point out that they received the forgiveness of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, BEFORE *they were baptised*. Would the Holy Spirit have come upon those who were unsaved? Certainly not!

Another quotation that Mr Roberts makes shows clearly in the words of Scripture that baptism is not essential to salvation, though he quotes it in defence of his theory. It is plainly destructive of it. He quotes: - "The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM DOTHS ALSO NOW SAVE US³ (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:20-21).

But in this passage we are plainly told, and the point is carefully guarded, that baptism does not deal with filth of the flesh, but it is the answer of a good conscience towards God. How can Mr Roberts put the words, "BAPTISM DOTHS NOW SAVE US" INTO CAPITALS, when the following sentences guard the point that baptism does not save *eternally*? Why did Mr Roberts take no notice of the safeguarding clause? At best it may be looked upon as GOVERNMENTAL salvation.

Let us explain. If a believing Jew refused to be baptised, the Jews would still claim him religiously; and he would be under the wrath of God governmentally along with the nation. Whereas if he were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, he would be disowned by the Jewish nation, and refused all part in their religion. But on the other hand he would be acknowledged by the Christian circle. In that way he would receive governmental salvation.

In our limited space we cannot comment upon every Scripture that Mr Roberts quotes, or point out all the wrong statements that he makes. We can only go over the most important points, and that very briefly.

But on the other side, take the Epistle to the Romans. If baptism were essential to salvation, the Apostle Paul in unfolding the gospel, and that by divine inspiration, would surely not have left out an essential element of salvation. Yet chapter after chapter he unfolds the gospel, and nothing is said about baptism. We read that the righteousness of God is upon all them that believe, and no clause added that baptism is essential. We read that God is the Justifier of the one that believes, and no further condition is imposed. It tells us that being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and nothing is added to it.

Baptism is indeed mentioned in chapter 6. If then it were essential to salvation that were the place for it to be so stated. But it is not so. It is used as an argument why believers should not continue in sin, seeing they are dead to it, but that they should walk in "newness of life". Does Mr Roberts understand the gospel better than the inspired Apostle of the Gentiles? Ephesians tell us that we are saved by grace and through faith. The word, baptism, is not so much as mentioned in the epistle. If it had been essential to salvation it surely would have been. But it is not.

Mr Roberts says: -

“Baptism by water is the ceremony by which believing men and women are united to Christ, and constituted heirs of the life everlasting” (page 119).

This astounding statement is unqualified in the place where it occurs. It stands in unabashed dogmatism. Galatians 3:27, tells us that being baptised, believers put ON Christ, surely in the way of outward public profession. Believers are united to Christ in virtue of the reception of the divine life, believing the gospel of their salvation, and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, and not by the rite of baptism. Then Mr Roberts talks of believers being constituted heirs of eternal life. Where does it say that believers are *heirs* of eternal life? Titus 3:7, does not say so, but that those who are heirs have the hope of eternal life. The Pauline Epistles always put eternal life as something at the end of the Christian path, but the Apostle John puts it as a *present* possession, not a matter of attainment, or becoming heir to it, but of *present* possession. “He that believeth on the Son HATH everlasting life” (John 3:36). The Apostle John reiterates this again and again. He does not contradict the Apostle Paul, how could he when they both wrote under inspiration? But they looked at the subject from different angles. Nothing could be more positive than, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may KNOW that ye HAVE everlasting life” (1 John 5:13). Spurgeon was asked what “HAVE” meant, and he replied in his homely way, “*Got it*”.

Would the Apostle Paul have said, “Christ sent me not to baptise, but to preach the gospel” (1 Corinthians 1:17), if baptism had been an essential part of salvation? How Scripture exposes these sophistries!

Mr Roberts guards the thought of the mere act of immersion when not accompanied by any genuine entering into its real meaning.

He writes of baptism: -

“The apostles . . . recognized in it a constitutional transition from one relationship to another — a representative putting off of the old man, or Adam nature, and a putting on of the new man, or Christ . . . Of course this effect is imputative; that is to say, it is not brought about by the mere act of submersion by water, but is the result recognised by God when the act is performed in connection with an intelligent apprehension and affectionate belief of the truth” (pages 303, 304).

But even this guarding does not do away with the deadly error that, according to Mr Roberts, baptism is essential to salvation. For with him, it does not suffice that the sinner believes truly in his heart in the Lord, and trusts Him as his own personal Saviour. Even with that belief he is not saved, unless he has been baptised. We are afraid that the Apostle Paul’s warning would come in here, “There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:7-8). Words could not be more solemn! It is a serious thing indeed to add to the words of the Lord, making an ordinance a necessary part of salvation.

MR ROBERTS SAYS THAT ULTIMATE ACCEPTANCE DEPENDS ON CHARACTER.

We are not surprised, once Mr Roberts has denied the very fundamental of the Christian faith, even the deity of the Lord Jesus, that he should be unsound as to the gospel. We have seen how he makes baptism an essential part of salvation; we shall now quote an extract, which shows how he flounders in the mud of his own theories more and more.

“Repent and be baptised into the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins’ (Acts 2:38). When he has yielded this obedience of faith, he is ‘born of water’ through the inceptive influence of the truth; and having entered ‘The Name’, his sins are ‘covered’; his transgressions ‘hid’; whole past life is cancelled, and he has commenced a life of probation in which he is a lawful candidate for that ‘birth of the spirit’ from the grave which will finally constitute him a ‘son of God, being of the children of the resurrection’ (Luke 20:36) . . . *But his ULTIMATE acceptance will depend upon the character he develops in this new relation*”⁴ (page 306)

Could there be a more terrible perversion of the gospel than is contained in the above extract? The Lord spoke to Nicodemus of being “born of water and of the Spirit” (John 3:5). The new birth is clearly by these two agencies, water and the Spirit. Water here, surely refers to the word of God, and not the water of baptism. Christian baptism was not carried out till AFTER the resurrection of Christ. You could not be baptised unto His death, until He had died. Ephesians 5:26, links up the symbol of water with the word, “the washing of water BY THE WORD”; while the Apostle Peter links up the new birth with the *word* as the divine agency. “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, BY THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Peter 1:23).

These two agencies — the word and the Spirit — bring about the new birth under the sovereign power of God. What right then has Mr Roberts to make the water to mean baptism? True he makes it essential that there should be heart belief of the truth to accompany it, but even then denies the Deity of Christ and the atoning character of His death, but granted this, he still makes baptism an essential to salvation. It looks very much like the old fallacy of baptismal regeneration.

Further, what right has Mr Roberts to put being “born of water” at the beginning of the Christian path, and “born of the Spirit” at the end, linking it up with the resurrection of the body? “Born of water and of the Spirit”, is ONE *act*. The Lord told Nicodemus that to be born again of water and the Spirit was like the wind that no one could tell whence it came nor whither it went. Yet Mr Roberts will make it a question of *attainment*. He will allow a man is saved by the grace of God when he believes and is baptised, but after that he must be his own saviour and be blessed by his own efforts in developing character in his new relationship. Was there ever a more terrible mixing up of grace and law, of salvation and works, gift and merit, to the utter destruction of the gospel.

Note, how in this extract, Mr Roberts writes of commencing a term of *probation*, and only by character building is the believer found worthy of resurrection. To be finally constituted a son of God is the goal, which Mr Roberts sets before the believer. How different is the sentence of the apostle Paul, “Ye ARE [present tense] all the children of God by FAITH in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26). Or that of the Apostle John, “Beloved, NOW [present time] are we the sons of God” (1 John 3:2) — not gaining it by probation and character building but “NOW”.

Where is the chance of anyone of us being saved, if our ultimate acceptance depends upon our character? We would fling such a false gospel from us with scorn as not being the gospel of the grace of God.

Mr Roberts then speaks of sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit. He writes: -

"The two classes are differently dealt with by the Father . . . The names of the former are 'blotted out of the Lamb's book of life' (Rev. 2:5), in which they had been inscribed at their immersion; while the other become the special objects of divine training by means of the circumstances around them, providentially arranged" (page 306).

According to Mr Roberts, a man can be a true believer, have his name inscribed in the Lamb's book of life, have his sins "covered", his transgressions "hid", his whole past life "cancelled", and then if he fails to produce character, and sows to the flesh, he will be lost after all. That is what Mr Roberts says. This is what the Lord says, "I give unto them [His sheep, believers] eternal life, and THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH" (John 10:28). Shall we believe Mr Roberts when he contradicts the very Son of God? The issue is most solemn.

We do not make light of a believer sowing to the flesh. If he does he will assuredly reap corruption, and come under the chastening of the Lord. Perhaps the most striking and serious case on record is that depicted in 1 Corinthians 11. There was gross laxity in the Corinthian assembly, composed, as it was, of Gentiles, saved out of the wicked voluptuous city of Corinth. They were turning the Lord's supper into an orgy of eating and drinking. They were even "drunken" at the solemn feast of the Lord's supper. What happened?

Mr Roberts would tell us that they would be lost, their names blotted out of the Lamb's book of life, that

"While faith turns a sinner into a saint, obedience only will secure a saint's acceptance at the judgement seat of Christ; and that a disobedient saint will be rejected more decisively than even an unjustified sinner" (page 310).

But what saith the Scriptures? We read that those, who partake of the Lord's supper unworthily, eat and drink judgement, not discerning the Lord's body. Failing to judge themselves they come under the severe discipline of the Lord. We read, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, *that we should NOT be condemned with the world*" (1 Corinthians 11:30-32). Mark that! "NOT condemned with the world."

Mr Roberts says, "A disobedient saint will be rejected more decisively than even an unjustified sinner." The Scriptures say that the disobedient saint may even be removed from this world by the chastening hand of the Lord, in order that he may "NOT be condemned with the world". Again we prefer to bow to Scripture, than to imbibe the theories of Mr Roberts, which are subversive of the grace of God in which the believer stands.

MR ROBERTS DENIES THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

He writes: -

"If we regard immortality as the essential attribute of human nature, we displace the sacrifice of Christ from its Scriptural position. We destroy its character as a means of securing life, and are compelled to transform it into that anomalous doctrine of pulpitology which regards it as substitutionary suffering of divine wrath, in order to save immortal souls from the eternal tortures of hell The doctrine of the immortality of the soul must be removed from the mind before gospel truth can obtain a proper entrance Previously to this the mind is filled with truth-neutralising doctrine, which effectually prevents the entrance of a single ray of truth" (page 298).

The meaning of this last sentence is that the multitudes of God's people, who believed that the soul is immortal, were unable to receive a *single* ray of truth. The very extravagant language that Mr Roberts employs stultifies all he says, and places him in a ridiculous position, if it were not so tragic for the poor creatures, who imbibe his ideas. This last sentence would consign millions of good Christians to destruction. No one believing in that, which was universally believed for centuries, viz.: - the immortality of the soul⁴ has, according to Mr Roberts, any chance of salvation.

The advocates of the non-immortality of the soul triumphantly demand, "Where in Scripture do you get the expression immortality of the soul?" And the answer, of course, is nowhere. But that does not prove what they wish. There are many words you cannot find in the Bible, but the truth they stand for is clearly there. For instance the word, *Trinity*, is not in the Bible, but the truth of the Trinity — of God, the Father; God the Son; God the Holy Spirit, yet one God — is clearly there. The word *Substitute*, as referring to the Saviour in His sacrificial work on the cross, is not in the Bible, but the truth covered by the word is there. When we read, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, *the Just for the unjust*" (1 Peter 3:18), we get the thought of the Substitute in the clearest possible way.

Writing on this subject, Mr Roberts says: -

"The strength of natural instinct can never be overcome by theological fiction" (page 29).

It has often been said that the strongest beliefs in the human heart are those that come as the result of intuition. It is a remarkable thing that the belief in the immortality of the soul is intuitive. It is spread all over the globe. In heathen lands where the gospel has never penetrated, where the Bible has never been seen, nor its teaching ever heard of, the belief in the immortality of the soul is held. See the Chinese idolater offering up his votive sacrifices to the spirits of his ancestors. See the American Red Indian, who buries the weapons of the chase, and food, in the graves of their braves, to assist them to reach the "happy hunting grounds", which they hope to reach.

The cases we have adduced are just those of "natural *instinct*", and not created by reading the Bible, for it is found in lands where a copy of the Scripture has never been heard of. That "natural instinct" — that is, belief in the immortality of the soul — is not to be overcome by Mr Roberts' "theological fiction".

It may be as well to clearly state what he holds, for one defective doctrine leads to another, and we shall find him denying the immortality of the soul, denying that the saved sinner goes to heaven at all, that there is a personal Devil, and that there is any hell at all. And certainly no eternal punishment, and teaching the terrible doctrine of annihilation. All this in spite of the clear teaching of Scripture.

We will give a few quotations: -

"*The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is an untrue doctrine*" (page 15).

. "Of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, *there is not the slightest mention*" (page 24).

. "Man . . . only holds this life on the short average tenure of three-score years and ten, at the end of which he gives it up to Him from whom he received it, and returns to the ground whence he originally came, *and meanwhile ceased to exist*" (page 16).

. "The belief in question is not only erroneous in supposing that the dead go to such places as the popular heaven or hell, *immediately after death*, but in *thinking that they ever go there at any time*" (page 44).

. "This going to heaven is a purely gratuitous speculation. There is not a single promise of heaven throughout the whole of Scripture to warrant a man in hoping for it" (page 45).

. "Death, the extinction of being, is the pre-determined issue of a sinful course" (page 49).

. “The unjust are to be brought forth at Christ’s appearing, for judicial arraignment, and their sentence is, that, after the infliction of such punishment as may be merited, they shall, a *second time*, by violent and divinely-wielded agency, be destroyed in death” (page 49).

. “The orthodox ‘hell’ is mere imagination, based upon Pagan speculations of futurity” (page 52).

We would ask our readers to carefully note these extracts for we shall have to comment upon a number of egregious errors that they contain. The one error impinging upon another makes it difficult to take one at a time.

Let us take up the question of the immortality of the soul. Mr Roberts writes,

“Eminent theologians . . . maintain (or at least suggest) that the reason of the Bible passing over in silence the doctrine of human immortality is because it is so self-evident as to require no enunciation. This is very unsatisfactory. It would be much more appropriate to suggest the very opposite significance to the silence of the Scriptures on the subject. If the immortality of the soul is to be believed without sanction from revelation, on the mere assumption that it is self-evident, may we not uphold any doctrine for which we have a pre-possession? A more rational course is to suspect a doctrine not divinely inculcated, and subject it to the severest scrutiny” (page 24).

Mr Roberts treats “eminent theologians” unfairly in this extract, for they certainly do not suggest that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul rests *solely* and *only* on “the mere assumption that it is self-evident”, but what they do contend is this, that, whilst, no verse of Scripture states that the human soul is immortal, in just these words, yet it has a very definite “sanction from revelation”. The matter is taken as self-evident in Scripture, the whole tenor of which falls in with the truth of the immortality of the soul, the very strongest proof possible.

If the soul’s immortality is a truth, then every Scripture that bears in any measure upon the subject will be found to uphold that truth. A very pertinent text is Matthew 25:46, “These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal”. Here we have the righteous and the unrighteous living in the other world for ever.

MR ROBERTS DENIES ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

For sheer audacity, putting a meaning on eternal in one part of the verse to suit his theories, and denying that same meaning in the other part of the verse, the following extract is unsurpassed: -

"We are explicitly informed by other testimonies, that while aionian punishment ends in death, the life to be conferred in that same aion is extinguishable" (page 68).

That is to say that *aionian*, the Greek adjective for eternal, means eternal in one part of the verse and not in the other part of the verse. What confidence can the reader have in any reasoning of Mr Roberts, or indeed in his honesty, when he can make words suit his fancy, and call white black and black white?

But says the objector, "Eternal punishment does not mean eternal punishing". If language means anything eternal punishment does mean eternal punishing. If a judge sentences a man to twelve month's imprisonment it means twelve month's imprisoning. That is very evident. If we make no mistake about man's phraseology, why should we make a mistake about God's? Surely the inspired word of God plainly tells us that one class go into eternal punishment, and the other into eternal life, and eternal in both cases has one meaning. Does this not teach as clearly as possible the immortality of the soul? If eternal punishment is the portion of the wicked, it shows that they will exist for ever. Even Mr Roberts has no doubt about the eternal existence of the believer.

Again Mr Roberts in his effort to explain away Scripture that does not suit his purpose betrays what a sophisticated reasoner he is, and stultifies his own assertions. He says, commenting on the verse, thrice repeated, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44,46,48), and the twice repeated phrase, "The fire that never shall be quenched" (verses 43 and 45), warning words that fell from the lips of the Saviour Himself: -

"The worm that preys upon the wicked will disappear when the last enemy, death, is destroyed, and the fire that consumes their corrupt remains will die with the fuel that it feeds on; but in relation to the wicked themselves, the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (pages 52,53).

The Lord distinctly says, in a three-fold solemn asseveration, that "their worm dieth not". He as solemnly avers that the fire shall never be quenched. Indeed this is reiterated no less than five times. In these solemn symbols of judgement does the Lord give warning as to the eternal punishment that awaits a certain class. Yet Mr Roberts has the effrontery to contradict the solemn assertions of the Lord on the point. If the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched, it proves that the wicked, which the worm and the fire will feed upon, are never consumed. What is that but the assertion again of the immortality of the soul?

Nay, further, the Lord proceeds to say, "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt" (verse 49). Now salt is a preservative. Fire in its material sense is a destructive agency, and the very reverse of preservative. Yet, in the other world, the Lord Himself speaks of the action of the fire as preservative. Keble, the Christian poet, wrote,

*"Salted with fire they seem to show
How spirit lost in endless woe
May undecaying live . . ."*

We are told that the word, Aionios, does not mean eternal. It is true that a primitive meaning of the word meant "age-lasting", but in time it clearly bore the meaning of eternal, as we understand the word. Very often divine ideas are conveyed in words of human origin, bounded by human experience. Finally, they are stamped by the divine usage with a new and spiritual meaning. The word, *Aion* or *aionios*, is a case in point.

Apart from the Bible usage of the word, secular writers give the full meaning of eternity to *aionios*. In a passage in Philo we read, "In eternity nothing is either past or to come but only subsists". Philo's use of the word, and definition, leaves nothing to be desired as to clearness. No past, no future, a continuous present. Could anything be more striking as a definition of eternity? Moreover, Philo has special weight as a witness. He was a Hellenistic Jew and contemporary with the apostles. When it is a question of Greek words used in the New Testament we could not adduce weightier authority.

Aristotle declares that its force is "always" existing," whilst Mosheim, whose learning none can dispute, says *aion* properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration as opposite to what is finite and temporal.

Arrian, the Greek philosopher, says, "I am not an *Aion*, but a man, part of all things, as an hour of a day. I must subsist as an hour, and pass away as an hour". Arrian here contrasts the ephemeral existence, and for this he employs the word, *aion*.

But whilst these authorities have great weight, let us turn to the way Scripture uses the word. Out of seventy-one times that the word *aionios*, is used in the New Testament, only three times is the word used in the sense of age-lasting, 1 Corinthians 2:7; 10:11; Hebrews 9:26. In all other cases the word clearly means *eternal*. The following list will show how often and in what connection it is used.

- (2) God.
- (2) Christ.
- (1) The Holy Spirit.
- (42) Eternal Life.
- (14) Eternal bliss.
- (7) Eternal punishment.

Even Mr Roberts would admit that in case of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, of the life and bliss of the believer, *aionios* means eternal. Why then not in the case of eternal punishment, especially when the adjective occurs almost side by side in the verse, "And these shall go away into everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life eternal?" (Matthew 25:46).

Professor Salmond says truly in "*Christian Doctrine of Immortality*", "To say that the adjective *aionios* has one meaning in the first half of a sentence, and another in the second, is the counsel of despair."

Nor are we left to one form of expression in this deeply important and serious subject. Within the compass of a few verses we read, "God who liveth for ever and ever [literally to the ages of the ages, an eternal generation of unending ages]" (Revelation 15:7); and "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever [literally to the ages of the ages, an eternal generation of unending ages]: and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image" (Revelation 14:11).

How forcible is this! The same writer affirming the eternal existence of God, and that the torment of the lost shall continue as long as God exists, even for eternity. What is annihilated cannot be tormented. That which has no existence cannot be so spoken about. Therefore if the torment of the lost is to continue for ever and ever, to the ages of the ages, it is necessary that these should be in conscious existence, in other words have an immortal existence.

We could furnish the reader with further proof of the immortality of the soul, but space forbids.

Mr Roberts writing of the soul, says: -

"It is never said to be immortal, but always the reverse. It is not only capable of death, but as naturally liable to it. We find the Psalmist declaring in Psalm 22:29, 'None can keep alive his own soul'; and again in Psalm 89:48, 'What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver HIS SOUL from the hand of the grave?' And in making an historical reference, he further says, "He spared not THEIR SOUL from DEATH, but gave their life over to the pestilence" (Psalm 78:50). Finally Ezekiel declares (chap. 18:4), 'The soul that sinneth IT SHALL DIE'" (page 25).

We take this as a sample of the habitual way that Mr Roberts distorts Scripture. Where in these Scriptures does it teach that the soul is mortal, and does not survive death, as Mr Roberts avers? If the reader will examine the context of the first Scripture quoted, he will find that it simply teaches that man is dependent on God and cannot afford to ignore Him. Keeping alive his own soul simply means that as far AS THIS WORLD is concerned no man can stay in it indefinitely, that it is a matter quite beyond his own control, “none can keep alive his own soul”.

As to Psalm 89:48, the word for *grave* is *sheol*, translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word *Hades*. Now *sheol* or *hades* is wrongly translated grave, as can be seen by consulting a good concordance that gives the words used in the original. Sheol stands for disembodied state, and is not a place, but a condition, just as death is a condition and not a place. This can be easily proved, and the text in question instead of strengthening Mr Roberts’ contention in reality is the proof of just the reverse.

One verse will prove our contention as to the meaning of *sheol* or *hades*. Psalm 16:10 says; “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [sheol]; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.” The Apostle Peter, on the great day of Pentacost, quotes this verse as referring to our Lord, and as prophetic of His resurrection. His blessed body, given in death, lay in the grave; His spirit was absent from the earth in the CONDITION of being without a body, and this condition of the body without the spirit and the correlative condition of the spirit without the body was ended on the third day after His death by His being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. We also read of the rich man in Luke 16 who died and was buried, and in hell [*hades*] lifted up his eyes being in torments. The body was in the grave, the spirit entered the unseen world. The parabolic way that the truth is presented is simple and graphic. Of course the rich man’s eyes had gone to corruption in the grave, but this language is employed to convey the truth of *consciousness* after death. Mr Roberts alas! argues away the whole truth of this remarkable discourse of our Lord, but surely we do well to believe the Lord. If the incident is a parable it is a parable to set forth the truth.

Mr Roberts has the audacity to say,

“It may be asked, Why did Christ parabolically employ a belief that was fictitious, and thus give it His apparent sanction?” (page 37).

Surely no right-minded Christian would consent to follow a teacher, who puts a doubt on the honesty of our Lord. The matter is serious beyond words.

Finally Mr Roberts quotes in support of his theory, “The soul that sinneth IT SHALL DIE.” The word soul, in that passage evidently is put for the person, as we say a steamer foundered at sea, and fifty souls perished. Mr Roberts admits it is sometimes put for persons on the very page where he quotes the verse.

MR ROBERTS DENIES THE EXISTENCE OF HELL.

Mr Roberts tells us that there is no hell. By hell we mean “the lake of fire”, the place where the wicked shall endure the everlasting judgement of God. Our Lord warns His hearers of hell again and again. Twelve times in the New Testament have we the word for hell, *Gehenna*. Eleven times out of twelve does the word fall from the lips of the Son of God. But Mr Roberts contends that He alludes to the valley of Hinnom, a gorge in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where the garbage was burned, where the fire was being ever fed by the refuse of the city, and the worms ever fattened upon their putrid food.

The Lord never spoke of Gehenna, the place outside Jerusalem, save as in a symbolical sense as indicating the place of judgement for the lost in the next world, "the lake of fire". One verse of Scripture will prove this abundantly. The Lord said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell [Gehenna]" (Matthew 10:28). This verse is a disastrous one for Mr Roberts' theories. Notice, man can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul, proving that the soul survives the death of the body. But God can destroy, that is bring down into ruin, body and soul in hell (Gehenna). Did God ever ruin, much less annihilate, bodies and souls in the Gehenna outside Jerusalem? There the garbage of the city was burned. There was no question of any living person being immolated there. The Jew hearing our Lord's words would not make the mistake that Mr Roberts has made of imagining that our Lord referred to the actual gorge outside Jerusalem, but that He spoke of the dread place of judgement in the next world.

MR ROBERTS, IN REALITY, DENIES RESURRECTION.

He teaches that the body and soul die together, whether they belong to saint or sinner. That the saint will be raised to eternal life, confounding the terms eternal life and immortality, as is usual with conditional immortality advocates. Eternal life is a *divine* life, communicated to the one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). Immortality is never-ending existence without relation as to how or where in the next world the existence shall be perpetuated. But if the saint or sinner in death has ceased to exist, if body and soul, in other words, ceased altogether to have any being at all, where can resurrection come in? There is nothing to resurrect. For Mr Roberts to talk about resurrection is a denial of his theory, which of course proves that his theory is a denial of Scripture.

As to the sinner Mr Roberts says,

"The unjust are to be brought forth, at Christ's appearing, for judicial arraignment, and their sentence is, that after the infliction of such punishment as may be merited, they shall a second time, by violent and divinely wielded agency be destroyed in death" (page 49).

To the word destroy, or perish, Mr Roberts attaches the meaning of annihilation, destroying the thought of resurrection, and forcing the idea of a re-creating for the purpose of deciding the hereafter of the human race. He says,

"Paganism, heathenism, idiocy, and infantile incapacity are amenable to no law. Therefore, resurrection does not take place in their case" (page 68).

He attempts to deduce this from the verse, "As many as have sinned without the law, shall also *perish without law*" (Romans 2:12).

Mr Roberts writes the following in the spirit of having scored a great triumph, but we shall see that he merely displays his own ignorance in the matter: -

" '*Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul*' (Matthew 10:28) — This is the orthodox advocate's great triumph. He feels here he has foothold, and he recites the passage with an emphasis entirely absent from his other efforts. He generally snatches his triumph too early, however. He begins comment before finishing the verse. He exultingly enquires why this passage has not been quoted, and so on. If asked to go on with the verse, and not leave it half finished, he is not at all enthusiastic in his compliance. However, he goes on if somewhat reluctantly, and stumbles over the concluding sentence, '*but rather fear Him that is able to DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY in hell.*'

"Instantly perceiving the disaster which this elaboration of Christ's exhortation brings upon his theory of imperishable and immortal-soulism, he suggests that 'destroy' in this instance means 'afflict', 'torment'. But there is no ground for this. In fact, a more unwarrantable suggestion was never hazarded by a theorist in straits. In all the instances in which *apollumi*—the word translated 'destroy', is used, it is impossible to discover the slightest approach to the idea of affliction or torment" (page 43).

Not quite so fast Mr Roberts. It is easy to put up men of straw, and then knock them down to your own satisfaction. To start with we have never known anyone suggest that *apollumi* means to “afflict” or “torment”. But it certainly does not mean annihilation or ceasing to exist, as Mr Roberts states. He proceeds to quote twenty-four passages of Scripture, in which the word, *apollumi* occurs, to prove his point. But there are over ninety passages where the word is used, and Mr Roberts has ignored the verses that contradict his meaning of the word as annihilation. It would be awkward for his theory if he did not. But as we are after the truth we shall proceed to make good his deficiency.

Mr Roberts prints the word, “DESTROY”, in large capitals in his book, as if that settled the matter. Remember he teaches that the word means, annihilation, or ceasing to exist. Let us begin by giving the real meaning of the word, *destroy*.

It means to render a person or thing useless in respect of the purpose for which he or it is made.

We drop a handsome vase. It is shivered into a thousand fragments. We say, and say rightly, it is destroyed. That this is the meaning of the word, *apollumi*, is plain. We read, “No man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred” (Greek, *apollumi*) (Mark 2:22). Evidently destruction here means bottles burst and rendered useless, and not annihilated.

Again we read, “Rejoice with Me; for I have found My sheep which was *lost*” (Greek, *apollumi*) (Luke 15:6). Could the Good Shepherd have found something that was annihilated or did not exist — something that was not something? No, it was a lost or destroyed sheep He found, and He saved it from its lost estate, and recovered it from destruction.

Again we read, “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost” (Greek, *apollumi*) (2 Corinthians 4:3). Most evidently the lost or destroyed here are sinners in this world. It would be useless talking of the gospel being hid from that which does not exist.

These instances disprove Mr Roberts’ confident assertion that the word, *Destroy*, means annihilation. We ask the question, Why did Mr Roberts not give us these instances? Why did he try to hoodwink his readers, who might not have the means to check his statements, by only quoting verses that seemed to help his theory, and ignoring the use of the word in other passages that would refute his evil teaching?

MR ROBERTS SAYS THAT THERE IS NO HEAVEN FOR THE UNBELIEVER.

He says,

“The belief in question is not only erroneous in supposing that the dead go to such places as the popular heaven or hell, immediately after death, but in thinking that they ever go there at any time”* (page 44).

..... “This going to heaven is a purely gratuitous speculation” (page 45).

..... “The earth we inhabit is the destined arena in which Jehovah’s great salvation will be manifested. Here, subsequently to the resurrection, will the reward be conferred and enjoyed” (page 47).

At great length Mr Roberts pours scorn on the idea of the believer going to heaven at his death. He admits that the Lord is there. Writing of the believer’s reward, he says,

“Jesus, the pledge of that reward, the very germ thereof, is in heaven”* (page 45).

Hear the Saviour's own words,

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2,3).

Here is the promise that where Christ is there the believer shall be also. Mr Roberts says that the Lord is "in heaven". If the believer is to be with the Lord, and the Lord is in heaven, then the believer will be in heaven also. That is clear.

At the second advent of Christ, we read,

"The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be WITH THE LORD" (1Thessalonians 4:16,17).

The meaning here is plain. The Lord comes from heaven to the clouds, and calls His own, whether dead or alive on the earth "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Corinthians 15:52) to the clouds. At any rate the believer leaves the earth, which Mr Roberts avers will be his eternal dwelling place. The believer is caught up to the clouds, and the Lord then takes His own to heaven, to the Father's house, to be with Himself, and even Mr Roberts allows that He is in heaven. "So shall we ever be WITH THE LORD". If He is in heaven, and we are "with the Lord", then we must be in heaven.

We are told to "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18). We propose to accept this comfort and believe the word of God rather than Mr Roberts' contradiction of it.

The Lord said to the dying thief by His side when He hung upon the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be WITH ME IN PARADISE" (Luke 23:43). 2 Corinthians 12:2-4, proves that paradise is the same as the third heaven, or "the heaven of heavens". So the dying thief went to heaven, and Mr Roberts would deny this. We prefer to believe Scripture.

MR ROBERTS AFFIRMS THAT MANKIND CEASES TO EXIST AT THE MOMENT OF DEATH.

We are well aware of the quibble that *to-day*, in the passage just quoted, refers to the time that the Lord uttered these words, and not to the time when the dying thief would meet his Lord in paradise, in heaven. It can easily be proved that the word, *to-day*, refers to the time when the dying thief would enter into bliss with the Saviour, who died to save him. When the dying thief drew his last breath, he did not cease to exist.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8). Does this look like dying, and ceasing to exist, till, what Mr Roberts is pleased to call the resurrection? But, if the dead have ceased to exist, there can be no resurrection.

The Lord tells us that Lazarus died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, that the rich man died, was buried, and lifted up his eyes being in torments. Does this look like ceasing to exist at the moment of death? True the details are couched in parabolic language, but that does not alter the truth that the Lord was teaching.

Again the Apostle Paul wrote, “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Philippians 1:23). The Apostle certainly did not desire to cease to exist, indeed if death meant ceasing to exist he would have been in no strait, for evidently to live in the conscience sense of the love of God on earth were far better than ceasing to exist.

How Scripture hangs together! There is ample proof on every page of the truth of God.

We feel that we have said enough to prove from Scripture the ANTI-CHRISTIAN TEACHING of *Christadelphianism*. We could take up other points, viz., the denial of the existence of a personal devil, of a personal Holy Spirit, etc., but time and space forbid.

As to the gospel Mr Roberts preaches it is a strange jumble of truth and error. Listen to the concluding words of the fourteenth lecture in his book,

“Salvation is of the Jews’, nationally and individually. It is important then to understand this element of the truth of God, that by our enlightenment, we may be enabled to put off Gentilism and become related to a higher polity — even the commonwealth of Israel — in which, being ‘Abraham’s seed’, we shall be heirs according to the promise’.”

What a mix-up of Jewish And Christian hopes! The believer is exhorted to put off Gentilism and put on Judaism. Has Mr Roberts not read the threefold division of Scripture, “the Jews — the Gentiles — the Church of God?” (1 Corinthians 10:32). The believer is neither connected with Gentilism nor Judaism, but the believer of the gospel of the grace of God, becomes part of the Church of God.

Indeed the whole book is one tissue of mistakes of a deadly nature. In plain language the Christadelphian gospel is a latter-day delusion of the devil. It robs the gospel of its essential truths. We warn the reader to have nothing to do with such a soul-destroying system.

The late Mr FW Grant in his monumental book, “Facts and Theories as to a Future State” reviews the teaching of Mr Roberts. He writes,

“Thus for his own views, out of over fifty passages produced, nine belong to the New Testament, and forty-seven to the Old. Whilst out of passages which he thinks might be adduced as against his views (though scanty in number) nine out of ten are from the New Testament . . . Really does it not seem a question between the Old Testament and the New?”

“It is not that; but still there is a tale these quotations tell, the moral of which will be found in 2 Timothy 1:10, where the Apostle tells us, that ‘Christ hath abolished death and brought life and

incorruption [not immortality] to light by the GOSPEL.

“That means that these writers are groping for light amid the shadows of a dispensation where was yet upon this subject comparative darkness. They look at death as it existed before Christ had for the believer abolished it.

They look at life there where as yet it had not been ‘brought to light’. No wonder if they stumble in the darkness they have chosen” (pages 124, 125).

Apply this test to Mr Roberts’ book and it will be seen that verses, that describe the relation of the dead to the world that they have left, are used by him to attempt to prove the non-immortality of the soul, and the ceasing to exist at death. Take one verse only, which Mr Roberts quotes, “The dead know not anything” (Ecclesiastes 9:5). How true that is as to *this* world. It is no affirmation as to the next. Look up the passage, and the meaning is plain.

What a sad death-bed a Christadelphian must have as compared to the Christian. Christadelphian, not Christian, parading in the name of Christ, yet denying His deity and the true nature of His atoning death, unable to rejoice in the plain assurance of Scripture as to the eternal salvation, with no hope of being with Christ in heaven, which is “far better”, looking forward in a few moments to extinction of being, at some time being resurrected — though how a being that has ceased to exist can be resurrected, we must leave the Christadelphian to explain — and then examined as to whether his character has merited a place on earth for ever, no certain hope of blessing, no hope of heaven at all — the death-bed of a Christadelphian must be gloomy indeed.

How blessed is the prospect of the Christian, who believes the gospel of the grace of God, who can rejoice in the sure hope of being with Christ in heavenly glory. May God grant that you, my reader, may be among that happy multitude, that no man can number.

APPENDIX.

It may be of interest to the reader to have some little account of the origin of *Christadelphianism*.

Its founder was Dr John Thomas, M.D., who was born in London in 1805, and died in New Jersey, USA, in 1871. Though a medical man, he practised medicine very little. At one time he took to farming, but made no success of it. The most of his life was spent in promulgating his strange doctrines by word of mouth, and the aid of a busy voluminous pen.

When twenty-seven years of age he emigrated to the United States of America, and got into touch with and joined a sect named, Campbellites, so called after the chief protagonist of the system. Baptism, as essential to salvation, is one of their chief doctrines. After some time Dr Thomas began to teach the non-immortality of the soul, to deny eternal punishment, etc., and indeed was beginning to shape what became in time known as *Christadelphianism*. Christadelphian is a coined word meaning *The Brethren of Christ*.

When about thirty-three years old the divergence between Thomas and Campbell became acute, and occasioned a very wordy warfare on paper. It makes very sad reading. Bitter personalities were indulged in on both sides. It ended in their parting. Labouring often under great disappointment and reverses, Dr Thomas founded the sect that bears the name of Christadelphian. Dr Thomas visited Great Britain three times, and finding his propaganda more prosperous in this country, decided to reside in England, went to the States to arrange his change of residence, but died before it could be carried into effect. We glean the accounts of how this sect originated from a biography of Dr Thomas written by Mr Robert Roberts.

Mr Robert Roberts was the chief exponent of Dr Thomas' views in Great Britain. He was born in Aberdeen in 1839, and died in an hotel in San Francisco in 1898, and was buried by the side of Dr Thomas in the Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, USA. He has written his biography in a book of 386 pages.

When very young he got into touch with a Christadelphian meeting in Aberdeen, though not known by that name then. Gradually he went south till he finally made Birmingham his headquarters, where the Christadelphians, we understand, have their stronghold in this country. They are a struggling sect at the best. Their assemblies are in the main few and far between, and often consist of a mere handful of adherents.

Robert Roberts' autobiography is strangely like Dr Thomas's biography. There is the same struggle, disappointments and reverses, the same bitter personalities and the same kind of sad end. His life was a hard struggle to plant a system that was the negation in every detail of the gospel.

Whilst there is a great show of quoting the Scriptures, it reminds us of the Scripture, which says, "In which [*the inspired writings of the Apostle Paul*] are some things hard to understand, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). How true these words are of Dr Thomas and Mr Robert Roberts, and all who imbibe their anti-Christian teaching.

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time" (1 John 2:18).

Endnotes

¹Christadelphianism briefly tested by Scripture (Central Bible Truth Depot, price 2d.).

²Capitals ours.

²Capitals ours.

³Capitals Mr Roberts

⁴Italics ours.

* Italics as in Mr Roberts' book.

NOTE. A good deal is made of the text, referring to God, “Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light that no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (1 Timothy 6:16). It is plain that this verse teaches that only God has immortality **INHERENTLY**. To deduce from this verse the non-immortality of the soul puts one in the position to be consistent, of denying immortality to the angels, and the possession of eternal life to the believer as the gift of God. God alone has immortality **INHERENTLY**; the soul of man has it as **CONFERRED** and **SUSTAINED** by God. Further, let it be clearly borne in mind that immortality and eternal life do not mean the same thing in Scripture. All the conditional immortality writers confuse the two. Immortality is endless existence conferred on man as man, irrespective of where that existence is passed. Eternal life is life in Christ, involving the knowledge of God in the relationship of Father, as John 17:3 states, and it is the gift of God to those, who put their faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour.

* The adjectives *eternal* and *everlasting* carry the same meaning, and are the same word, *aionios*, in the Greek of the New Testament.

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The Central Bible Truth Depot,
5 Rose Street, Paternoster Square,
E.C. 4.

Price Fourpence

(The Bible Book & Tract Depot
302 Pit Street, Sydney)

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