

ROME AND CHRISTADELPHIANS.

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Being a Reply to

“CHRISTADELPHIANISM”

By J. W. POYNTER, published by the Catholic Truth Society,
72, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

And which is mainly a criticism of the widely circulated book,
Christendom Astray, by the late ROBERT ROBERTS.

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Rome and . . . Christadelphians.

IN October, 1921, a brother sent us two copies of the *Catholic Gazette* (September and October) containing articles by Mr. J. W. Poynter on "CHRISTADELPHIANISM."

These have since been published by "The Catholic Truth Society" in the form of a 20-page pamphlet.* The pamphlet contains nearly all the substance of the two articles, and we reply to it as thoroughly as we can in the space available. As an introduction the subjoined *Bible Finger Post* No. 57: *Rome and Christendom and You*, written in October, 1884, by Robert Roberts, the author of *Christendom Astray*, and but little known to the present generation, is of itself quite a good testimony against the claims of Roman Catholicism. It may be had in leaflet form from the office of *The Christadelphian*.

It will be observed that the qualification "Roman" is always very carefully excluded from present-day propaganda. The Greek word *katholikos* simply means general, universal; and the Roman Catholic Church has no sufficient justification for the claim to be "Catholic" without qualification. According to

* *Christadelphianism*, by J. W. Poynter. London, Catholic Truth Society, 72, Victoria Street, S.W.1. Price 2d.

Whitaker for the year 1922, there are about 273 millions of Roman Catholics, 120 millions of Orthodox Catholics, and 172 millions of Protestants among the 565 millions of "Christians" in the world. And all these put together account for but little more than a third of the estimated "religious" population of the world. The late Col. Conder, in his most interesting book, *The Rise of Mankind* (pp. 346-7), commenting on the Reformation and The Council of Trent, satirises Roman claims to Catholicity as follows:—

"The decisions of the Council were not to be interpreted without Papal authority, and, as embodied in the Creed of Pius IV., they finally separated the Roman Church from all others. For the proud boast, '*Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*,'* had been examined by those learned in the Fathers; and 'always' was found to mean only two centuries and a half; 'everywhere' only the south-west of Europe; and 'by all' a minority which, in our own times, nominally represents about ten per cent. of mankind."

Here follows *Bible Finger Post* No 57.

ROME, AND CHRISTENDOM, AND YOU.

Reader, you may protest that there can be no possible connection between Rome, Christendom, and you. Consider for a moment; the connection may be close and serious.

An intelligent friend, who was once an atheist, on finding out that the path of atheism was not the path of wisdom or hope, desired to embrace and profess the

* "What always, what everywhere, what by all (has been received)": that is to say, the Roman doctrine defined in the Creed.

gospel. What did he do? He saw many churches—many sects. How was he to decide which of them all was apostolic? He took, as he imagined, a short and satisfactory cut out of his dilemma. He looked at the Roman Catholic Church. “Here,” he said, “is a church with an unbroken history since the days of the apostles: this must be the right one.” And he joined it.

He soon found that whatever historic claims Rome might have, she lacked those essential points of identity with the church of the New Testament, without which inspiration itself would be nothing (1 Cor. xiii.): and he left.

A wise decision, you say: and foolish he was to join in the first case. Granted; but are you wiser? You are a Protestant, perhaps. Are you sure you are not compromised with Romanism? What is Protestantism? It is a system of PROTEST against certain doctrines and pretensions of the Church of Rome. So far, so good; but does it protest against *all the doctrines and all the principles of the Church of Rome that are unscriptural?* Have you realised how far wrong the Church of Rome was to go, according to the prophetic fore-shadowings of the Spirit of God to John in Patmos?

Rome, you know, was the city having dominion over kings in the days of John. In view of this, consider the statement made to him concerning a certain symbolic woman whom he saw in vision, labelled “Babylon the Great.” “*The woman that thou sawest IS THAT GREAT CITY THAT REIGNETH OVER THE KINGS OF THE EARTH*” (Rev. xvii. 18). Now, consider what was foreshown of this woman who is declared to signify Rome:

She was to corrupt the earth (Rev. xix. 2).

She was spiritually to inebriate all nations (xvii. 2 : xviii. 2).

Her sins were to reach to heaven (xviii. 5).

She was to bring wrath upon all who should be associated with her in any way (xiv. 8-10 : xviii. 4).

In the Apocalypse styled "Mystery, Babylon the Great," she is in Paul's prophecy described as "The mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. ii. 7), a system which he said was to arise in the earth as a result of "a falling away" (see verse 3)—a falling away from the truth delivered in the apostolic age—an abandoning of the gospel preached at the first. Paul is very express on this point :

"They shall TURN AWAY their ears *from the truth*, and shall be TURNED UNTO FABLES" (2 Tim. iv. 4).

The history of Rome has completely fulfilled the apostolic predictions. The truth of the gospel originally planted in that city by apostolic labours was lost in the course of time in a mass of traditions and false doctrines ; and the city being already politically powerful, became, with the triumph of Constantine, ecclesiastically supreme, and imparted her principles to all the world.

Now, England was included in this sphere of Rome's religious influence. England was out-and-out Papal for many centuries. Till the days of Henry VIII. she believed the Pope's doctrines, and accepted the Pope's claims as the mouth of God in the earth. In those days, as the result of the quarrel about the divorcing of his wives, Henry, and England with him, rejected the Pope's claims and some of his doctrines.

But were all the Pope's false doctrines rejected at that time ?

Investigate this. You will find it affects you. The probability is you have inherited the false doctrines that your forefathers still held on to. The way to test it is by the Bible.

Does the Bible teach the immortality of the soul? Does the Bible teach that men are judged when they die? Does the Bible teach that the righteous are saved in the grave? and that the wicked go to be tormented in an endless hell? There are other things that there is no room to mention. Read Christadelphian books, and you will discover that Romish doctrines have vitiated the entire circle of religious truth, and that there is scarcely a Protestant to be found who believes what the apostles taught. An astounding assertion; but look into it: you will find it true.

"CONTRADICTIONS."

The pamphlet under review makes little or no attempt to controvert the doctrines of Christadelphianism by reference to the authority of the Bible. How could it? The argument is rather to the effect that "the Church" is above the Bible, and has in fact given us the Bible; and that her interpretations are authoritative and infallible. But this argument can be met effectively, as we shall see, by the very considerations that the pamphlet urges against Christadelphianism.

Nothing could be fairer than the opening words of the pamphlet, which run as follows:—

"There is, in honest enthusiasm, something which always appeals strongly to one's sympathies. A man is earnestly convinced of the truth of some doctrine which therefore he conceives it as his binding duty to

propagate to the utmost of his power. He devotes his time, his intellect, and his energy to endeavours to spread abroad that doctrine. On this account, then, one cannot but feel human sympathy for people like the Salvationists, the Russellites, the Christadelphians, and others of similar enthusiastic zeal. At the same time, one immediately calls to mind the fact that it is not only one, but all, of these sects which is absolutely convinced that it is right. *But*—they contradict one another ! ”

Perfectly true ! And it certainly follows that they cannot *all* be right. But it does not follow that one among them *which contradicts all the rest* may not be right. This is the Christadelphian position. It undertakes to demonstrate that all the churches, from Rome to the Salvation Army and Russellism, contradict not only “one another ” but the Word of God itself.

The pamphlet continues :—

“ The Salvationist, teaching about hell-fire and immortality, is no whit less certain he is right than is the Christadelphian, who teaches that the above doctrines, in any ordinary sense, are false ! Evidently, then, zeal is, in itself, no test of truth. A doctrine must stand or fall precisely in so far as it can produce reasonable motives of credibility.”

Once again, perfectly true ! And demonstrable from the Bible. Paul was zealous against Christ before he knew the truth. As concerning hell-fire and immortality, the Romanists and Salvationists are very fairly agreed in their doctrines, but that does not prove that they are right notwithstanding their admitted zeal. And the Bible revelations concerning hell and immortality prove them both to be wrong ; because both are in glaring contradiction to the Bible. The Bible “ hell ”

is the grave, whence the "soul" or "body" of Jesus was liberated by resurrection from the dead. And Bible immortality is incorruptibility of body which must be sought for by patient continuance in well doing (Rom. ii. 7), and actually obtained by resurrection from the dead and approval and bodily change by Christ at his coming (1 Cor. xv. 53).

ENERGETIC WITNESSES.

The testimony of this pamphlet to the effective witnessing of "Christadelphianism," notwithstanding the comparative fewness and weakness of its representatives, is almost too flattering, though it may cover a pitying smile. The public are told that

"One cannot go into any large town in England at least, without coming across the Christadelphians. True, they have no large or beautiful churches; but such things are not in accordance with their beliefs, so the absence of them is no evidence of lack of members of the sect. In the halls of public libraries; in little meeting-houses; even in disused railway-stations of which they have converted the waiting-rooms into places of assembly; they meet to spread abroad, and to make as many converts as they possibly can, to the one true faith as they conceive it. They always say 'Bring your Bible with you, so as to test what is said' They undoubtedly make an impression at least in large towns. What, then, is the substance of their doctrine?"

We are particularly obliged for that reference to "Bring your Bible." The title of *Christendom Astray*, which is said to be "the standard text book," is set out in full by the pamphlet, and admitted to be an accurate representation of the claims made, namely,

that "Christendom, the ostensible repository of revealed truth, is away from that truth." The book's challenging of the infallibility of the reformers, Luther, Calvin, and others, naturally is approved; but objection is taken to the Christadelphian proposal "to set the Bible above them." Why so? Because, says the pamphlet, the Reformers' interpretations "were merely *their* opinions." And those of the Christadelphians are nothing more than theirs. "The Christadelphians, in fact, are simply an ordinary Protestant sect."

NOT "ORDINARY PROTESTANTS."

But, unfortunately for this thesis, all the "ordinary Protestant sects" unite in repudiating and antagonising Christadelphians. How is that? When the pamphlet goes on to ask

"In what way do the Christadelphians differ, in principle, from the principle upon which rest the other Protestant sects? How can they claim to be elevated above these sects which they profess to despise, and from which they suppose themselves radically to differ?"

We answer, It is not so much a difference in principle, as in the results of applying the principle. Protest against Rome in the name of the Bible was on the part of the Reformers quite good as far as it went; but it did not go far enough. Christadelphianism is *advanced Protestantism*; so advanced, in fact, that it protests against Protestantism as much as against Roman Catholicism, and affirms that the former is but the rebellious daughter of the latter, and both alike portions of "Christendom Astray." And it affirms this on the authority of the Bible, which in Christ's last

prophecy represents the Roman system as " Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth " (Rev. xvii. 5). It is well known that even Roman Catholics cannot dispute the applicability of this Apocalyptic term Babylon to Rome ; but the usual interpretation is that it applied to Rome pagan, before the days of Constantine. But this is inconsistent with the seven-headed and *ten-horned* phase of the scarlet-coloured beast which obtained long after Constantine's day and extends to the war of the " ten horns " with " the Lamb," which war is still future.

BASED UPON THE BIBLE.

But as touching the Bible itself. The pamphlet goes on to say, concerning Christadelphians :—

" Their essential oneness with ordinary Protestantism is further shown by the fact that, as the basis of their whole position, they have simply taken *the ordinary English Protestant Bible*, evidently unaware that that version rests entirely, so far as it differs from the Catholic Bible, upon the foundation of that very Protestant sectarianism to which they imagine themselves to be superior !

" This fact is exemplified still more by their *treatment* of the Bible. ' The demonstration,' they say, ' is by the Holy Scriptures.' ' We shall assume, throughout these lectures, that the Bible is a book of Divine authorship.' ' The books of the prophets, from *Isaiah* to *Malachi*.' The ordinary Protestant (thus differing from the Catholic) version of the Bible, as regards the Old Testament, ends at *Malachi* : the Christadelphians have simply taken this version, uncritically and with no inkling of difficulty, from the very sects they profess

to despise ! They are apparently quite unaware that this very question, as to what books compose the Biblical canon, is one which (if you reject the authority of the Catholic Church) is beset with confusions ; and most decidedly there is no conclusive reason for that security which the Christadelphians imagine themselves to possess when they give their trust to the canon they take from the English sects of Protestantism."

Now what does Mr. Poynter want us to understand by this criticism? Does he want to bring in the Apocrypha, or to cast out the prophets? Does not the Roman Catholic Church itself "assume that the Bible is a book of Divine authorship?" Of course it does, even though some of the Popes have made the most extraordinary blunders in their contradictory interpretations thereof. They have at least appealed to the Bible in support of their claims.

CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES.

As concerning the Old Testament Scriptures, what had "the authority of the Catholic Church" to do with the question of the canon? Did not the Lord Jesus Christ accept as divine the Bible of his time? And does not Josephus assure us that these books were "justly believed to be divine?"

"For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from, and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all past time; which are justly believed to be divine"—*Against Apion*, Book i., §8. And he goes on to particularise, from the five books of Moses onward; and to exclude

from the "divine" the subsequent history written since the days of Artaxerxes.

As concerning the New Testament Scriptures, Christadelphians are by no means unaware of the objections mentioned by Eusebius, Jerome, Dionysius of Alexandria, and others, to which objections Mr. Poynter draws attention. But to what do they all amount? The epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude, and, above all, the Apocalypse, are too well rooted and grounded in the other scriptures to be called in question at this late day. One is particularly struck with the minatory clauses in the end of the Apocalypse in the comparison of these with similar divine utterances in the Law of Moses.

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches . . . I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. xxii. 17-19).

Compare Deut. iv. 2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep *the commandments of the Lord your God* which I command you."

This the Prophet like unto Moses speaks to the Christian Church as Moses of old spoke to the Jewish "Church" (Acts vii. 38); and both churches have alike preserved, and in the face of all objections, prophecies that have condemned their iniquities in the most

unmeasured terms ; and have in that very condemnation become a monumental witness for God upon earth.

It matters not to Christadelphians that, as Mr. Poynter reminds them, "Cyril and the Council of Laodicea omit the book of Apocalypse," like others before them. The word of Jesus has prevailed, and even Rome itself cannot now get rid of the book that pronounces its doom. Concluding this part of the argument, Mr. Poynter continues :—

"The only possible way of knowing what is, and what is not, 'the Bible,' is by *some authority outside the Bible*. The Catholic Church *is such an authority*, and IT has fixed the list of the Biblical canon. Unfortunately for the Christadelphians, however, they reject *that* canon, and, instead, have accepted the one usually received by the sects of English Protestants. Yet they profess to reject, and to be superior to, these sects ; from which, as a matter of fact, they have in reality trustingly and confidently received the very Bible 'canon' to which they have bound all their beliefs, and on to which they entirely depend ! They cannot say they get their canon from the Bible itself ; for (even apart from the fact that such a contention would be 'arguing in a circle') the Bible contains no list of any canon. They cannot appeal to the *Catholic* canon, for they call the Catholic Church 'Antichrist.' They cannot appeal to any 'consensus of historical opinion,' for there is none."

Now consider what is involved in this thesis. Here is a church which presumes to say authoritatively what is and what is not "the Word of God." And, on Mr. Poynter's own showing concerning the Apocalypse, it does not always say the same thing ! What shall we say to it all ? The Lord Jesus Christ is the "AUTHORITY" both outside and inside the Bible. As to the Apocalypse

we have seen his word prevail. As to James, Peter, Jude and John, and we might add Paul—did he not say, “He that heareth you heareth me”? What do we care for “any ‘consensus of historical opinion’” in view of these things? It is simply a question: Are these the authentic writings that have come down from the days of the apostles? And even Rome will not now dare to say they are not. The question of the Canon that is thus adroitly introduced to discount Christadelphianism cannot faithfully be so used. The books admittedly divine by Roman Catholics and Christadelphians alike are the court of our appeal.

INTERPRETATIONS.

Dismissing the question of the Canon, and accepting the fact that Roman Catholics and Christadelphians alike accept the Bible as the Word of God, as is quite evident on the Roman Catholic side in this pamphlet by the numerous texts quoted in the footnotes, we come to the question of interpretation. On this Mr. Poynter freely admits that the initial principles of *Christendom A stray* are sound—that the Bible “means what it says,” and is to be interpreted literally, except where metaphor and other figurative language demand a qualification. He says:—

“Of course, no one will deny that there is a great measure of truth in this principle, considered merely as a principle, and apart from erroneous applications thereof. Yet, even so, the Christadelphian writer exaggerates the simplicity of the matter. Holy Writ itself says. ‘Our most dear brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, hath written to you: as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in

which are certain things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction'; and again, 'No prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation.' "

No one recognises more fully than do Christadelphians the difficulties of Paul's epistles, and the divinity of the prophecies. In the context of the last quotation (2 Pet. ii. 1) Peter goes on to speak of "false prophets," "false teachers." Christadelphians affirm that the Roman system is full of these. The truth or otherwise of this affirmation must be determined by the Word of God in the mouths of the true prophets.

" HOLY ORDERS."

As to "holy orders." The author of *Christendom Astray* did not mean to deny the apostleship of Christ's own chosen ambassadors, but only the successorship of the moderns who claim the authority of the Holy Spirit, but do not speak the same things as the apostles, and cannot produce the least "sign of an apostle" such as Paul and others produced in attestation that God was really and truly working with them: "God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will" (Heb. ii. 4). "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you" (2 Cor. xii. 12). If the Pope, or a Roman Catholic priest, could strike a gainsayer blind, heal the sick and raise the dead, we should be constrained to listen. We have heard the tale of the Pope who smilingly confessed that he could not appropriate the words of Peter and say, "Silver and gold have I none" (Acts iii. 6); and of the

repartee: "Neither can you say to the lame, 'In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.'" Perhaps it is apocryphal, but it is very much to the point. Similar reflections attach to Mr. Poynter's further remarks under this head. He continues:—

"The Holy Ghost said to them: Separate Me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away" (Acts xii. 2, 3); also: "And they ordained them priests (*cheirotoneantes de autois presbuterous*) in every church" (Acts xiv. 22); also: "He (Christ) breathed on them; and he said to them, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins' . . . etc" (John xx. 22, 23); also: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (*meta epitheseos ton cheiron tou presbuterion*) (1 Tim. iv. 14); also: "If thy brother will not hear thee, tell the Church (*eipe te (i) ecclesia (i)*). And, if he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (Matt. xviii. 17); again: "He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and other some Evangelists, and other some Pastors and Doctors, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry" (Eph. iv. 11, 12); again: "Obey your prelates (*tois hegoumenois*—literally, *rulers*), and be subject to them" (Heb. xiii. 17); again: "The Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 14). It is plain, then, that, according to the Bible, Holy Orders are a proper institution of the Church; that they were appointed as such by Christ; that the Church has (over its members) authority to "rule"; and that its ministry should be paid. In other words, Christadelphianism contradicts

the very standard to which it professes to appeal, *i.e.*, the Bible.

NO "APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION."

Allowing for the Roman Catholic flavour of some of the translations here, it is fully and thankfully admitted that God did by the Holy Spirit in the Name of Jesus Christ establish the apostolic Church. What is denied is that "Christendom" is similarly empowered and established. True Christadelphians are not "unruly." They obey the injunction of Peter: "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. v. 5); but they cannot admit that divine authority attaches to the priests of "Christendom" as it undoubtedly did to the apostles.

Mr. Poynter has quite a neat cut at Christadelphians and *Christendom Astray* concerning "tradition," as follows:—

"Let earnest-minded people," says Christadelphianism, "throw aside tradition." Scripture, however, says: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast; and hold the traditions (*krateite tas paradoseis*) which you have learned" (2 Thess. ii. 14)—also: "Brethren, in all things I praise you that you are mindful of me: and keep my ordinances as I have delivered them to you."

But it will be observed that the apostolic qualification of "the traditions" is this—"which ye have been taught, whether by word or by our epistle." Now in the immediate context here is a warning against a false system of "strong delusion," by reason of which unfaithful worshippers should come to "believe a lie." It is *this anti-apostolic "tradition"* that Christadelphians exhort earnest-minded people to "throw aside." And

that is the exhortation of the apostolic "tradition" in this very place. It is in fact the Roman system that is condemned root and branch in this very chapter. For centuries Protestants have recognised the Papacy in Paul's portraiture of "The Man of Sin" in this place. We will not labour it here. Read *Christendom Astray*. Granted that its language is sometimes extreme (and suffers from the fact). The historical facts involved cannot be overthrown. The prophecies of Dan. vii. referred to by Paul in the "traditions" of 2 Thess. are fulfilled to the letter in the Roman Catholic system, the Head of which to this day "sitteth in the temple of God setting himself forth as God" (2 Thess. ii. 4, R.V.).

"THE PRIMACY OF ST. PETER."

The next complaint of Mr. Poynter against Christadelphianism is that it has no place for "the primacy of St. Peter":—

"Christadelphianism, again, has no word in favour of the ecclesiastical primacy of St. Peter, although what could be plainer than: Matt. xvi. 18-19; Luke xxii. 31-32; John xxi. 15-17?"

Now Christadelphians believe all that is written in the Scriptures concerning Peter, whom they hope to meet in the Kingdom of God. They believe Christ's words concerning him in Matt. xvi.; and that the Father in heaven really did reveal to Peter that Jesus was "the Christ the Son of the Living God." They believe that Christ is that "rock" upon which his "church" is built; and that "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). They believe that Peter being thus

called by God and by Jesus Christ was "in Christ," and thus in the "Rock" and part thereof. And that being so, a church composed of Jews and Gentiles brought together upon the basis of Peter's and the apostles' testimony to the Christ, is said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone" (Eph. ii. 20). And that therefore the wall of "the Holy City, New Jerusalem," in the symbolism of the Revelation, is said to have "twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 14).

They believe that Peter is at present not in heaven but in hell (*hades*), locked in behind "the gates of hell," which Jesus says "shall not prevail against" him, For, saith the Lord, "I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. i. 18).

Christadelphians believe that the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" which Jesus promised to Peter, were the keys of knowledge (Luke xi. 52; Matt. xxiii. 13); and that Peter used these with divine effect in preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to Jews and Gentiles on the Day of Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius (Acts ii. and x.), as well as on other occasions of his preaching. The kingdom of heaven was "shut up against men" by the Scribes and Pharisees, who rejected Christ who is "the Door." Peter, using the "key of knowledge," unlocked "the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts xiv' 27).

PETER "BINDING" AND "LOOSING."

Christadelphians believe that examples of Peter's "binding" and "loosing" are to be seen in the New Testament. He "bound" Ananias and Sapphira in death for their "lie to the Holy Spirit" (Acts v.); and his word of condemnation, uttered "on earth," was attested by the death sentence immediately enforced "in heaven." At Lydda (Acts ix. 32-35) he "loosed" the palsied Æneas, "who had kept his bed eight years." He said, "Æneas! Jesus Christ maketh thee whole; arise and make thy bed." And Jesus Christ "in heaven," "loosed" the paralytic. "And he arose immediately."

Notwithstanding all this, Christadelphians believe that Peter was no "infallible Pope," but very fallible and human, like the rest of us. When, after the Lord's "blessing," he began to lay it down *ex cathedra* THAT THE CHRIST MUST NOT BE KILLED (Matt. xvi. 21, 22), Jesus called him "SATAN"! and said he was "a stumbling block unto him," for, said he, "*Thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*" And when the time actually came for the Christ to be killed, Peter's boast (Matt. xxvi. 33; Mark xiv. 29; Luke xxii. 33), followed by his desperate sword-stroke at Malchus (John xviii. 10), immediately gave place to that three-fold denial of which the Lord had forewarned him in the verses which Mr. Poynter omits from his reference to "Luke xxii. 31-32." But Jesus had prayed for Peter, and he was "converted" and "strengthened his brethren." He was tellingly reminded of his three-fold denial by the Lord's three-fold question in John xxi. 15-17: "Lovest thou me?" and was warned that he would indeed have to follow the Lord "to prison and to death," as he had volunteered to do. That

was enough by way of preparation for Peter to use "the keys of the kingdom of heaven." He then went on to execute his divine commission.

Once more, see an indication of the fallibility of the so-called "first Pope." He "trimmed" to the "Judaisers" for fear of the Jews. "When Peter was come to Antioch" (says Paul to the Galatians who were being "bewitched" or "deluded"), "*I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.* For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew and separated himself, *fearing them which were of the circumcision.* And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; inasmuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation (literally, 'hypocrisy'). But when I saw that *they walked not uprightly* according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (literally, *to Judaize*).

It speaks well for the nobility of the impulsive Peter, that, after this severe rebuke from the apostle to the Gentiles, he can allude to "our beloved brother Paul," and approve the divine "wisdom given unto him," and written "*in all his epistles*" (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16). Rome has made a god of Peter, and put him up in the Papal "paradise" with the golden "keys." Jesus Christ does not so.

" THE LORD'S SUPPER."

" The Lord's Supper," or as Mr. Poynter prefers to call it, " the Eucharist," is the next subject of complaint against Christadelphians, thus :—

" Christadelphianism has no word in favour of the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, although what could be plainer than Matt. xxvi. 26 ; Mark xiv. 22-4 ; Luke xxii. 19 ; John vi. 48-67 (an evident prediction, and refutation of modern anti-transubstantiationists) ; 1 Cor. x. 16 ? "

Certainly. " What could be plainer " ?

It was on the occasion of his last Passover, and Christ said to his disciples : " With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer ; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God " (Luke xxii. 15, 16). " And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples and said, Take. eat, this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye *all* of it ; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom " (Matt. xxvi. 26, 29 ; Dan. ix. 27 ; Mar. xiv. 22-25 ; Luke xxii. 13-20). Consequently, from that day to this, wherever there have been any real friends of Christ, they have done this in remembrance of him in hope of the Father's Kingdom.

Of the apostolic custom after the original institution by Christ we read :

“ They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and *in breaking of bread*, and in prayers ” (Acts ii. 42). Of Paul at Troas we read : “ Upon the first day of the week, *when the disciples came together to break bread*, Paul preached unto them ” (Acts xx. 7). And a further reference to the customary meeting is found in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The order in Corinth was to be such as had been specified for “ the churches of Galatia.” Paul rebuked many disorders in Corinth. In chap. v. 6-8, he says : “ Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness ; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” And again : “ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? *For we being many are one bread and one body* ; for we are all partakers of that one bread . . . Flee from idolatry ” (1 Cor. x. 14-17). The Corinthians, or some of them, transformed “ the Lord’s supper ” into a disorderly love feast in which “ one was hungry and another drunken.” Paul rebuked this, and said : “ I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you ” ; and he rehearsed the Lord’s appointment in “ the same night in which he was betrayed,” and added, “ As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come . . . Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup ” (1 Cor. xi. 17-34). In all this there is visible a simple weekly

remembrance of Christ's death in the hope of his coming again, and performed in the spirit of humble self-examination.

“ TRANSUBSTANTIATION ”

Christ says that all nations are deceived by the “ sorceries ” of “ Babylon the Great ”—that is Rome (Rev. xviii. 23). One of the worst of these “ sorceries ” is the doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or the change of the bread and wine by the priests into the actual “ body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ.” This is coupled with the withholding of what they call the “ blood,” that is the wine, from the common people! Whereas Christ said, “ Drink ye *all* of it.” And this doctrine of transubstantiation is being pushed by ritualists even in the Church of England, which is nominally Protestant. When Christ said : “ This is my body . . . given . . . my blood . . . shed,” his body was there and his blood had not as yet been shed. They might as well say that Christ is literally a “ rock ” — (“ that rock was Christ ”—1 Cor. x. 4)—or that “ we ” are literally “ bread ” (1 Cor. x. 14-17). Do they think that the apostles will literally eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood when they “ eat and drink at his table in his Kingdom ” ? (Luke xxii. 30). Under the Law of Moses it was said, “ Whosoever eateth blood shall be cut off ” (Lev. xxvi. 14).

With regard to the “ prediction ” of John vi. 48-67, the substance of Christ's teaching is the exact reverse of the doctrine of “ transubstantiation.” The question of the Jews was : “ How can this man give us his flesh to eat ” ? (verse 53). And even the disciples were constrained to exclaim : “ This is a hard saying ; who

can hear it?" (verse 60). What was the answer of Jesus to these puzzled learners? Did he tell them that there should be a "transubstantiation," that literal bread should become his literal flesh throughout the ages? Or that literal wine (of which, however, the common people were not to partake) should similarly become his literal blood in quantities enough for the circulation of countless thousands of mortals? Nothing of the kind. What he said is on record:—

"When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? *It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the WORDS which I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life*" (verses 61-63).

The word "substance" is one of the most controversial terms in the language. We call Cardinal Newman to witness. In 1841 he wrote, among other things to a Catholic layman, the following:—"I have nowhere said that I can accept the decrees of Trent throughout, nor implied it. The doctrine of Transubstantiation is a great difficulty with me, as being, as I think, not primitive. Nor have I said that our Articles in all respects admit of a Roman interpretation; the very word "Transubstantiation" is disowned in them." — *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, page 192.

This was four years before Newman joined the Roman Catholic Church.

Afterwards, in chapter v. of the same book, "Position of my mind since 1845," he says he is "far from denying" the difficulties of Catholic and Protestant creeds, and adds, "It is a simple fact, that, for myself, I cannot answer these difficulties. . . . People say that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is difficult to

believe ; I did not believe the doctrine till I was a Catholic. I had no difficulty in believing it, as soon as I believed that the Catholic Roman Church was the oracle of God, and that she had declared this doctrine to be part of the original revelation. . . . For myself I cannot indeed prove it. I cannot tell *how* it is : but I say, ' Why should it not be ? What's to hinder it ? What do I know of substance or matter ? Just as much as the greatest philosophers, and that is nothing at all ' ; --so much is this the case, that there is a rising school of philosophy now, which considers phenomena to constitute the whole of our knowledge on physics. The Catholic doctrine leaves phenomena alone. It does not say that the phenomena go ; on the contrary it says that they remain ; nor does it say that the same phenomena are in several places at once. It deals with what no one on earth knows anything about, the material substances themselves . . ." pp. 239-240.

And Newman concludes this extraordinary paragraph with a very adroit reference to the doctrine of the Trinity (accepted alike by Protestants and Catholics), which he truly says presents quite as much difficulty as the doctrine of Transubstantiation.

We cannot concede that, in holding and propagating the doctrine of Transubstantiation, the Roman Catholic Church " leaves phenomena alone." But we can ask of the Holy Scriptures what Jesus Christ taught about his body and the means by which his identity should be known. When after the resurrection, he appeared to the " terrified and affrighted " disciples in Jerusalem, he said, " Why are ye troubled ? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts ? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself : handle me and see : for a spirit (or apparition) hath not *flesh and bones* as ye

see me have " (Luke xxiv. 38, 39). This is a highly intelligible phenomenon. The substance of the risen Lord's "flesh and bones" was discernible by the senses—sight and touch—no mistake about those hands and feet! And he also ate before them.

Now in the purpose of God the flesh of the Holy one was not to see corruption (Psa. xvi.). But in any literal eating of flesh that which is eaten does "see corruption." Even what a mortal man assimilates is only changed into "this corruptible." Much more does that remainder which he does not assimilate pass away in "corruption."

It is Jesus himself who emphasises these things, when rebuking the vain ritual of the Pharisees who quarrelled with his disciples because, said they, "they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matt. xv.). He said their worship was vain, and calling the multitude, added: "Hear, and understand, Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." And when the disciples themselves stumbled at the saying, he said, "Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Conversely, not that which goeth into the mouth *cleanseth* a man; but that which goeth into the heart. "Now are ye clean through the WORD which I have spoken unto you" (John xv. 3). "Ye are clean, but

not all " (John xiii. 10). Judas indeed ate the passover with Jesus. But, " He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me " (verse 18). What good was that flesh to that man? He was but " the son of perdition." As Paul says of another matter : " Meat commendeth us not to God ; for neither if we eat are we the better ; neither if we eat not are we the worse " (1 Cor. viii. 8). And even of the Lord's supper, he says an " unworthy " man " eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body " (1 Cor. xi. 29).

In view of these things where is the doctrine of Transubstantiation? Christadelphians reject that doctrine on the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who says : " The flesh (his flesh) profiteth nothing." Could one have literally eaten his flesh and drunk his blood, he would have been no nearer eternal life, apart from metaphorically eating and drinking of his " spirit-and-life WORDS." In another chapter of John's gospel we read that he said (in prayer to the Father) " This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent " (John xvii. 3). " I have given them *thy word*, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world " (verse 14). To " read, mark, learn and inwardly digest " *the word of God* ministered by Jesus Christ, and affectionately to obey the same, is to know the Father and the Son, and in figure to eat his flesh and drink his blood. And such a course of patient continuance in well-doing will result at last in eternal life (Rom. ii. 7).

“ ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.”

The next objection to Christadelphian doctrine concerns “ eternal punishment ” :

“ Christadelphianism rejects the doctrine of eternal punishment, though what could be plainer than : ‘ Our Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with the angels of His power : in a flame of fire yielding vengeance to them who know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall suffer eternal punishment in destruction ’ (2 Thess i. 7-9).”

In answer to this objection we have to say :—

FIRST, that it is not true. Christadelphians do not “ reject the doctrine of eternal punishment.” To quote the language of Dr. Thomas of over fifty years ago, “ They believe in the eternal punishment of the wicked, but not in their eternal tormentation ; also in a devil and Satan, but not in the popular sense of these terms ; in hell, but not as ordinarily expounded ” (*Who are the Christadelphians?* paragraph 17).

SECOND, “ The wages of sin is death ” (Rom. vi. 23). And death is the opposite of life in all respects, so that “ the dead know not anything ” (Ecc. ix. 5-6). “ His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish ” (Psa. cxlvi. 3-4).

As to the wicked : “ Yet a little while and the wicked *shall not be* ; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be ” (Psa. xxxvii. 10). Agreeably with this, the Lord Jesus says : “ These (the ‘ cursed ’) shall go away into eternal punishment : but the righteous into eternal life ” (Matt. xxv. 46, R.V.). The *aionian* punishment is the punishment peculiar to that *aion* or age ; and the *aionian* life also

is "the life of that age to come." The life truly is unending, for it is testified of those accounted worthy of it (Luke xx. 36) that they cannot die any more. But the punishment is not unending, for it is testified that at last there shall be no more death, nor mourning, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor curse (Rev. xxi. 4 : xxii. 3). In "the second death," the wicked obnoxious to it *cease to be*. They "perish for ever, like their own dung" (Job xx. 5-8). Many of the wicked "*shall not rise*" (Isa. xxvi. 13, 14); but shall "sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, *saieth the Lord*" (Jer. li. 39). See also the whole of the argument in Lecture III., *Christendom Astray*.

THIRD.—Not only is the translation of the passage in question (2 Thess. i. 7-9) very unsatisfactory, but the quotation is cut short in a manner that obscures the apostolic idea. The Revised Version runs as follows :

"The revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering (*didontos*, not 'yielding'!) vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus : who shall suffer punishment (*dikee*, vengeance), *even* eternal destruction (*olethros*) from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come . . ."

Now the apostolic idea of "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord" was not that of "eternal punishment in destruction," and Paul never used words conveying the idea of the "eternal tormentation" of the wicked, so appallingly illustrated in some Roman Catholic pamphlets, and in much Protestant theology as well. It was Paul who wrote that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23). And the nature of death has been indicated in the foregoing lines.

The "fire" of the Lord's wrath at his coming "consumes sinners out of the earth" (Psa. civ. 35 : lxxiii. 27). They simply "perish" (2 Cor. iv. 15, 16) "like the fat of lambs" (Psa. xxxvii. 20). Sodom and Gomorrah are "set forth as an example suffering the punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Not that they are still burning, but that their fate was final and irremediable. It is only the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul that has beclouded the scriptural doctrine of "eternal punishment," and denied the Scriptural decree: "The wicked shall not be."

CELIBACY.

Mr. Poynter's pamphlet is, as therein announced, mainly a reproduction of articles from the *Catholic Gazette*. But, on comparing page 10 of the pamphlet with page 200 of the *Catholic Gazette* for September, 1921, we find that the following short paragraph in the *Gazette* has been omitted from the pamphlet:—

"Christadelphianism, like other Protestant sects, has no place for the monastic life; though how, except as our Lord's own commendation of that life, can one explain Matt. xix. 12, 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18; 1 Cor. vii. 40?"

Only in the Bible is the question of sexual relationship (Marriage, Divorce, Celibacy) handled with the combination of authority, sympathy and finality which marks the matter as divine.

Christ's beautiful words in Matt. xix. illustrate the case. The Pharisees sought to entangle him on a question of divorce. He referred them to the Law and to "the beginning," asking them, "Have ye not read?" When they retorted that Moses not only tolerated but

regulated divorce by commandment, he added that that was because of "the hardness of the hearts" of his brethren: "From the beginning it was not so." And he forbade "putting away" "except it be for fornication." And when his own disciples stumbled at this, he recognised the difficulties of the flesh and "said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs which were so born from their mothers' womb; and there are eunuchs which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. *He that is able to receive it let him receive it.*"

The naturally impotent illustrate the first class; the eunuchs of Eastern courts illustrate the second, of which the prophet Daniel was a highly honoured example (2 Kings xx. 18; Dan. i. 3; Isa. lvi. 3-5); and celibates of the type of the Lord Jesus himself and the apostle Paul illustrate the third. But it is to be remembered as concerning these last, that both Jesus and Paul definitely upheld the sanctity of marriage. Jesus wrought his first miracle on the occasion of the marriage at Cana of Galilee, where he was an honoured guest, "and manifested forth his glory." And Paul affirmed his right to "lead about a sister a wife as well as other apostles" (including Peter, the so-called "first Pope"), if he judged it convenient (1 Cor. ix. 5). "A bishop," said he, "must be blameless, the husband of one wife" (1 Tim. iii. 2). Not that a bishop must of necessity be married, as a deceased brother once absurdly contended, for that would disqualify the "Shepherd and Bishop of our souls" (1 Pet. ii. 25). But that a bishop must not be a polygamist. Under the Law of Moses the priests were married, and barrenness was esteemed a calamity

(Luke i. 7). Even Rome, in the early days of Christianity, had no idea of *enforcing* celibacy.

“Celibacy of the clergy was a custom which distinguished the Roman Church from all others after 443 A.D. We have epitaphs of a Roman married deacon dating 295 A.D., of a married Roman priest in 389, and of a ‘Levite’s wife’ even as late as 472 A.D. The council of Elvira in 305 had vainly attempted to introduce celibacy; and Leo the Great permitted priests already married to keep their wives. Gregory the Great (about 600 A.D.) forbade such marriages, and Hildebrand, in the latter part of the eleventh century, waged war on the married clergy; but though asceticism thus prevailed in the West, all the ancient evils relating to ‘sub-introduced sisters’ were thus perpetuated.”—Conder, *The Rise of Man*, p. 336.

It may also be remarked that twice-married men were admitted to the priesthood by Pope Callixtus I. (219-222), and that the Councils of Constance (1415) and Basle (1432) proposed, but without effect, to reintroduce the marriage of the clergy.

Enforced celibacy was to be one of the marks of the wilful or apostate “King” of the latter-days, of whom the Spirit of God spoke expressly by the angel to the prophet Daniel in the third year of Cyrus. “The king shall do according to his will . . . Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, *nor the desire of women*, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all” (Dan. xi. 36, 37). Laying down the qualifications of bishops (1 Tim. iii.), and especially permitting marriage though excluding polygamy, the apostle Paul warned the brethren of this long-predicted celibate-apostasy that was coming. “Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart

from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron. *Forbidding to marry*, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it be received with thanksgiving. For it is *sanctified by the Word of God and prayer*" (1 Tim. iv. 1-5).

Enforced clerical celibacy then, on the showing of the angel Gabriel and the apostle Paul, is a feature of the Apostasy, the product of, and productive of "a conscience seared with a hot iron." On Conder's passing reference to the "*Mulieres subintroductae*," and the crying evils resulting therefrom, which had to be repressed by repeated decrees, see Milman's *History of Christianity*, Vol. III., pp. 382-390. Little wonder that honest Protestants like the Waldenses, whose theses are cited from an old manuscript by the Centuriators of Magdeburgh, as quoted by Bishop Newton on *The Prophecies* (pp. 514-515), and Dr. Thomas in *Eureka*, Vol. iii., pp. 354-6—little wonder that such should say: "Vows of celibacy are inventions of men and occasions of Sodomy." "Monkery is a stinking carcase." "The marriage of priests is lawful and necessary."

We look forward to the Temple service of the Age to come, and the marriage of the lower order of the mortal priests is there, limited by law, as in the following words: "Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before" (Ezek. xlv. 22).

Finally, under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the Lord Jesus Christ and the apostles, we look forward to "the end," and "they that are *accounted worthy* to obtain that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God" (Luke xx. 35, 36). "This I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world (this flesh and blood *kosmos*), as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Cor. vii. 29-31).

"PENANCE."

Next, as to penance: it is objected that "Christadelphianism has no place for the sacrament of penance and the power of the Christian priesthood to remit sin as delegates of our Lord; yet what could be plainer than John xx. 23?"

The words of Jesus in the passage quoted are these:—"Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained." He had just "breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." It is, in fact, a repetition and extension of his promise to Peter:—"Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 19). Of this we have spoken before when considering "the primacy of St. Peter." We need not, therefore, say much more here, but may

add that the promise was to the apostles, and was fulfilled in their experience. "The signs of an apostle" were not lacking in Paul for example:—"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. xii. 12). But where are "the signs of an apostle" now? Where is the Roman Catholic, or Anglican priest who can in God's name strike an Elymas blind (Acts xiii. 11), raise a Eutychus from the dead (Acts xx. 9), heal a ruler of dysentery (Acts xxviii. 8), or deliver an evil-doer "to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"? (1 Cor. v. 3, 4). These were the things that illustrated the fulfilment of the Lord's promise to the apostles. But where are "the signs of an apostle" now?

IS MAN IMMORTAL?

Now we pass on to the fundamental divergence between Bible-truth and popular religion, whether Greek or Roman Catholic, or Protestant of whatever shade. It is that noticed in the *Gazette* for October, 1921, and on page 10 of the pamphlet under review. In introducing this feature, Mr. Poynter says, "We shall examine some other, and *really extraordinary tenets* of Christadelphianism." It is introduced as follows:—

"The life of man," says the Christadelphian text-book, ". . . is the very same life that is possessed by the beasts of the field." Again: "The proposition we have to maintain . . . is *that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is an untrue doctrine.*" Again: "The doctrine of the immortality of the soul will be

found to be the great error of the age." "Our argument," the book goes on to say, "may appear to savour of infidel tendencies; but we are confident this appearance will disappear." Indeed: "The doctrine of the immortality of the soul will be found to be . . . the great obstruction to the progress of true Christianity!"

Chapter and verse are given from the text of *Christendom Astray*, and we stand to the doctrine enunciated by that book with full assurance of faith.

THE WORD "IMMORTAL."

is found but once in the Bible—1 Tim. i. 17: "The King Eternal, *immortal*." "Immortal soul." is therefore *an unscriptural phrase*.

"IMMORTALITY"

is deathlessness of body. It is an object of search by Christians in "patient continuance in well doing" (Rom. ii. 7), and to be bestowed upon such "well-doers" in the day of judgment (verse 16). It is to be "put on" by "this corruptible" body "in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump," for "the dead shall be raised incorruptible." "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 52-54). Thus is "mortality swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4). "Immortality" is possessed *inherently by God alone*—"who only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16). But he has bestowed it upon Jesus Christ "who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel"

(2 Tim. i. 10). This Jesus did by a sacrifice for sins, and resurrection from the dead. His flesh "rested in hope" (Psa. xvi.), and God "suffered not his Holy One to see corruption."

In view of these things, where is the room for the doctrine of the natural "immortality of the soul"? "What a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. viii. 24 : with ii. 7).

THE WORD "SOUL"

is of very frequent occurrence in the Bible, but nowhere connotes the idea of immortality.

"In all the 754 places where the Hebrew word *Nephesh* (soul) occurs in the Old Testament Scriptures, it is said in 326 places to be subject to death. In the first of these, *the soul* is said, in 203 places, to be *in danger of death*, and in the second it is said, in 123 places, to be *delivered from death*, implying its *liability* to death."

"In the 106 places where the Greek word *Psukee* (soul) occurs in the New Testament Scriptures, it is said in 45 places to be *subject to death*. . . . In the first of these, *the soul* is said in 29 places to be *in danger of death*; and in the second, it is said in 16 places to be *delivered from death*, implying its *liability* to death."

These two paragraphs, which are simply bald statements of fact, verifiable from any good Hebrew and Greek concordances, are not from *Christendom Astray* or any Christadelphian book, but from *A Biblical Concordance on The Soul, The Intermediate State and The Resurrection*, by Rev. G. Waller, M.A. London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1906, 2s. 6d. net (now, we fear, out of print). Exhaustive concordances are given, and the

whole of course harmonises absolutely with the doctrine of *Christendom Astray*.

By the way, we have just stumbled across the case of Pope Boniface VIII., of Bull *Unam Sanctum* fame (*Ency. Brit.*, article BONIFACE). He was arrested by the French at Anagni, but was liberated by the populace. He was accused of heresy. The article says: "The accusation of heresy has usually been dismissed as a slander; but recent investigations make it probable, though not quite certain, that Boniface privately held certain Averroistic* tenets, such as the *denial of the immortality of the soul.*" Whether or no the accusation be true, it is very certain that throughout the ages all who have really and truly understood the Bible have "denied the immortality of the soul." The detailed consideration of the question will, of course, be found in *Christendom Astray*.

THE WORD "SPIRIT"

similarly, when used with reference to human nature, does not convey the idea of natural immortality. The spirit of man is neither man nor man's but God's power, by which man and beast alike live. At the flood God destroyed "all flesh wherein is the breath (spirit) of life" (Gen. vi. 17). "If God set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust" (Job xxxiv. 14, 15). Flesh may indeed become "spirit," for the apostle declares that if there is "a

* The adjective is derived from the Latinized form of the name of a celebrated Arabian philosopher, whose doctrine in this respect seems to have been true.

natural body" (like Adam), there is also "a spiritual body" (like Christ) (1 Cor. xv. 44-45). But it will be observed that the "spiritual body" is by no means a "natural" inheritance, but an object of hope, and of future possession only by "such as are heavenly." Again we must refer for details to the text of *Christendom Astray*.

MAN AND BEAST.

Now these views do not really cover such an implication as Mr. Poynter seems to suppose. He says:—

"The author of the Christadelphian text-book, however, apparently fails to realize the implications of his doctrine on this subject. If there are no powers in man which are not possessed by 'the beasts of the field,' then our *intellectual capacities* cannot differ from theirs in kind, but only, at the most, in degree. What, however, of the essential difference between 'instinct,' as in lower animals, and reason?"

But the author of the book under review has nowhere said or implied that "there are no *powers* in man which are not possessed by 'the beasts of the field,'" or that the *intellectual capacities* of man are not infinitely higher than the instincts and aims of beasts. Man alone, of all the animals, was made in "the image of God," with mental, moral and physical *capacities* very much higher than the beasts. But, because of sin, man dies like the beasts, no matter what anyone says to the contrary. Observation and experience ought to be sadly all-sufficient in the case. And they certainly agree with the word of God. "Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return" (Gen. iii. 19). "We are dust"

(God remembers it) (Psa. ciii. 14). " That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts ; even one thing befalleth them : as the one dieth so dieth the other ; yea, they have all one breath ; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast ; for all is vanity ; all go unto one place ; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again ' (Ecc. iii. 19-20). Solomon is not speaking of " powers " but *of natural life and death*. He was quick to emphasise *in the very next words* the difference between the tearing and soaring ambition of man (in nothing more manifest than in this God-defying boast of natural immortality) and the grovelling instincts of the beast :— " Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth ? " (verse 21).

We are aware that this verse is construed into a supposed proof of the natural immortality of the soul ; but such a construction charges a wise man with the most flagrant of contradictions in a few lines. He has just prayed that God might convince men that they " are but as beasts " (R.V.). He has just declared that *both* " go downward to the earth "—" All are of the dust, all turn to dust again." How, then, can he contemplate an " immortal soul " in man and not in beast ? How can he immediately declare (or at least infer) that men go to heaven while beasts go to dust ? This is, in fact, the very doctrine he is challenging. " Spirit " in verse 21 means mind, disposition, rather than " breath of life," as in verse 19. The world was as full of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul in Solomon's day as ever afterwards, down to our own, but David and Solomon did not believe it. Their faith in the condition of " souls living " was that they might " hear " the gospel of the " everlasting covenant," even " the

sure mercies of David" (Isa. lv. 3). Those souls who will not "hear" shall not "live." On the contrary, "the soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. xviii. 4).

"REASON" AND "SPOILS."

Mr. Poynter in the pamphlet under review discusses the knotty question, "What is reason?" And after quoting a certain author concludes thus:—

"Man has religions, arts, philosophies, progress, even retrogression—infinite or indefinite variations due to free will and the mental power of 'abstraction' which is the result of the possession of an immaterial soul. 'Animals,' however, have none of this. There is, then, an essential difference between the souls of 'animals' and of human beings. The former are entirely immersed in their bodies—in matter; the latter are spiritual, immaterial. *If, however, a soul is immaterial* does it not follow that it is immortal also? Death is simply the dissolution of the particles of a body. *If, however, a substance is not material*, it cannot have particles, cannot suffer dissolution, cannot die,—it is immortal. *Ergo, 'animals' have not immortal souls; men have.*"

But is not this begging the question? Where does the Bible speak of "an immaterial soul"? What is "matter"? How does Mr. Poynter know what is "material" and what "immaterial"? Bible "souls" can be "smitten with the sword," or "strangled" (Josh. xi. 11; Job vii. 15). Christ's "soul" that was not left in hell, the "I myself," as he said, was his "flesh" that could be and was "handled," both before and after death and resurrection. Christ is God's standard example of a *saved soul*, "saved from death"

(Heb. v. 7), through death. The following extract from *Christendom Astray* which Mr. Poynter quotes as a dreadful "mingling of fallacies," is an argument which we are quite content to leave in comparison with his own:—

Christendom Astray (p. 18) says: "It is argued that the possession of 'reason' is evidence of the existence of an immortal and immaterial soul in man. The logic of this argument is difficult of discovery. Reason is unquestionably a wonderful attribute and an incomprehensible function of the mental machinery: but how can it be held to prove the existence of a something beyond knowledge, since there can be no known connection between that which is incomprehensible and that which is unknown? To say that we have an indestructible soul, because we have reasonable faculty, is to repeat the mistake of our forefathers of the last generation, who referred the achievements of machinery to Satanic agency, because in their ignorance they were unable to account for them in any other way. We may not be able to understand how it is that reason is evolved by the organization with which God has endowed us, but, we are compelled to recognise the self-evident fact that it is so evolved."

If the Bible said that "thought" survived the dissolution of the brain, we should be puzzled. But it does not say so. It says that in the day of death men's thoughts perish (Psa. cxlvi. 3, 4). And this agrees with observation and experience.

“SATANIC AGENCY.”

Mr. Poynter's suggestion that the superstitions of our ancestors “arose from the fact that our ancestors were faced with cases which might possibly be due to *Satanic or other non-natural agency*” shows that he has not grasped the Bible doctrine of “Satan.” Satanic agency is the most “natural” thing in the world—so natural that even Peter himself illustrated it, as Jesus said (Matt. xvi. 23). Why was Peter “Satan”? Because, said Jesus, “Thou savourest not the things that be of God, *but those that be of men.*” How “natural” are men!

“CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.”

Mr. Poynter is frankly puzzled over *Christadelphianism*, which he quite openly differentiates from “mere atheistic materialism.” He says:—

“The real case, however, is far more remarkable even than this! What Christadelphianism believes in is—*Conditional Immortality*. Before treating of this, however, we must remind the reader that Christadelphianism professes (*professes*) to ‘go by the Bible only;’ and that, in its denial that we have immortal souls, it claims to rest *on Scripture*. Take the following passage: ‘Of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul *there is* (in the Bible) *not the slightest mention*. This fact is acknowledged by eminent theologians, but does not seem to suggest to their minds the fictitiousness of the doctrine. They argue that the reason of this is that it (immortality) is so self-evident as to require no enunciation.’”

Against this Mr. Poynter sets a long list of passages of the Old Testament "full of the judgment, the mercy, and the divine holiness of God," and concludes:—

"What is proved, from *Genesis* to the *Apocalypse*, but that God is the all-holy, eternal spirit, and that mankind is intimately related to Him as Judge: some to receive, from Him, reward, others woe; and what does this imply but that we are, as regards our souls, spiritual and immortal—for to what others could such age-long elaborations apply?"

Christadelphians thankfully recognise "that God is the all-holy eternal Spirit, and that mankind is intimately related to Him as judge." But that only confirms them in the doctrine of conditional immortality. Have we not shown that immortality is a reward to be bestowed conditionally upon "patient continuance in well doing"? (Rom. ii. 7, 16). And it will be observed in this passage that "eternal life" is the equivalent of "immortality." Did not Jesus teach that eternal life was conditional upon believing in him, and obeying him. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life" (John iii. 36). At the resurrection "they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life" (John v. 29). How then can we now be "as regards our souls, spiritual and immortal"? "What a man seeth why doth he yet hope for"? (Rom. viii. 24).

Mr. Poynter's citation of all these passages from the Old Testament concerning "the judgment, the mercy, and the divine holiness of God," is really nothing more than an adroit changing of the terms of the argument. It is not, "the holiness of God" that is in dispute, but the unholiness of man, both as concerns his character and nature. He is mortal because of sin; but immor-

tality is accessible in the mercy of God upon conditions—belief of the gospel and obedience—“patient continuance in well doing.” “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. xxi. 9).

It is rather remarkable that Mr. Poynter should so frankly recognise that the “hope” of eternal life or immortality implies that it is not in the present possession of mortals :—

“As for ‘our desire proving *we are without what we desire,*’ this is true enough, but it does not prove that we have no souls. It merely indicates that our souls are not yet in heaven, their home. What we, as yet, lack is not *souls*, but the *Beatific Vision of God*, which is our souls’ proper destiny.”

No one has said that this “desire” proves “that we have no souls”; but Christadelphians say (and truly) that it proves that we are not “immortal souls.” As to heaven, that is not “our souls’ proper destiny.” “No man hath ascended up to heaven” (John iii. 13); “David is not ascended into the heavens” (Acts ii. 34); “The righteous shall inherit the land and dwell therein for ever” (Psa. xxvii. 29). Christ indeed has ascended up to heaven for a time, but he is to return and cause the meek to inherit the earth when he inherits all nations (Psa. lxxxii. 8).

As to the wicked, we have before shown that “they shall not be,” and a state of not being is incompatible with “a punishment involving continued existence.” “The devil and his angels” are not immortal. There comes a time when there shall be “no more curse.”

"THERE IS A SPIRITUAL BODY."

Stephen's dying prayer is quite in harmony with the foregoing. The meaning of the prophetic words of Psalm xxxi. 5: "Into thy hands I commit my spirit," found with but little variation in the mouths of both Jesus and Stephen as they died, is obvious from the case of Jesus himself. God raised Jesus from the dead, and gave him life, preserving his body from corruption. The phrase (*to pneuma mou*) does not mean "my immortal soul." Mr. Poynter says, "We may remark that this common New Testament word for the soul (*to pneuma*; Latin, *spiritus*) is the last conceivable word for a *body*—even an undying one!" In this, however, Mr. Poynter is doubly mistaken: (1) *To pneuma* is "the spirit," and is not "the common word for the soul" at all; (2) *Pneuma*, Latin *spiritus*, most undoubtedly stands for the "undying bodies" of the Lord Jesus and the angels. Jesus became "a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45) (*pneuma zoopoioun*), and as such possessed "flesh and bones" (Luke xxiv. 39). Again it is written of the angels, "Who maketh his angels spirits?" (*pneumata*) (Heb. i. 7). "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (verse 14). Jacob wrestled with one of these "ministering spirits," and bore very distinct bodily evidence of the bodily nature of the encounter (Gen. xxxii. 24, 25). "There is a natural (soulical) body (*soma psuchikon*); and there is a spiritual body (*soma pneumatikon*)" (1 Cor. xv. 44). Mr. Poynter must look again. In the Bible nobody is found without a body.

CONCLUSION.

There is not much more to say about this pamphlet. One can scarcely understand how the writer can think that the author of *Christendom Astray* "thinks 'Our Father who art in heaven' means that He is *nowhere else!*" For on the same page (91) we read: "By His Spirit in immensity-filling diffusion He is everywhere present." Then there is the well-worn objection that Christadelphians say "the Spirit of God is electricity" (page 95). If the whole sections on "THE SPIRIT" be read, the reader will see just how the matter stands.

As to "the Catholic Church" and the Apocalypse we cannot, of course, expect Mr. Poynter to agree with what he calls "the familiar old Protestant misunderstandings." Nothing but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to judgment will settle this point.

As to the Christadelphian view of the Kingdom of God coming to Jerusalem see Micah iv. 8. And as to the "sanguinary wars," at which Mr. Poynter's soul revolts, see the context immediately following. Rome joined Jewry of old in crucifying our Lord at Jerusalem. Let Rome beware how she lays profane hands on Jerusalem hereafter. For, saith the word of the Lord, "I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle. . . . Then shall the Lord go forth and fight *against those nations* as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives . . . and the Lord my God shall come and all the saints with thee" (Zech. xiv. 1-5).

If all this be a "fantastic mass of 'clotted nonsense,'" pray what is the gospel? The alleged "clotted nonsense" can at least easily clothe itself in the language of the Spirit of God in the Bible, but

who ever read there of an "immortal soul" ? Mr. Poynter concludes thus :—

"And this fantastic mass of 'clotted nonsense' is being propagated, up and down the country, by zealous 'apostles,' as being the true and only Gospel of Christ ! One turns with relief to that Apostolic, Catholic, Roman Church from which these sects have parted, and apart from which they have developed absurdities such as Christadelphianism ; and one remembers the words of St. Paul : 'Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding the profane novelties of words, and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called : which some promising, have erred concerning the faith.'"

Now Christadelphians affirm : (1) That the Roman Church is not Catholic nor Universal, and (2) that they (Christadelphians) *are* keeping that faith and hope which Paul committed to Timothy his son in the faith (1 Tim.vi. 20). The proof must be left to readers of good and honest heart—"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

C. C. WALKER.

