

Dear brother Fred,

Loving Greetings

January 1, 1972

I will try, to the best of my ability, to answer your letter point by point.

I believe it is quite clear from your letter that you have not fairly and carefully read my article, as you say several things that I am sure you would not say if you had given it consideration.

This article was a sincere effort to point out the innumerable errors and fallacies in bro John's article which was trying to introduce the Clapham error among us as a matter of fellowship. It was a sincere effort to show what our pioneer brethren taught on the subject, and to show, as best I could, the scriptural foundation for their teaching,

I believe it should be fairly considered, and I believe it should be answered if it is wrong. I did not start this. I avoided it as long as I possibly could; Bro John kept pressing it and pressing it.

I am honestly convinced that the teaching of bre Thomas and Roberts, and my conclusions in my article, are Truth, and I am firmly convinced that this matter will not be settled fully among us until brethren are willing to study and face the facts, It is not my desire, however, to push anything. All the pushing, all the new doctrine, has come from the other side.

You say, "I believe you would have been a much wiser man had you not written on this subject, for I believe you have influenced some against their better judgment."

There is little here that I can get hold of. This issue was forced by others. Please receive that fact. We must be willing to face facts if we are going to make any headway in this problem. We may be right or we may be wrong, but at least we must have the courage and wisdom to face facts.

Bro John's article was about to be railroaded through the London ecclesia as a fellowship stand. We are very close to the London ecclesia. I had no possible alternative than to fulfil my duty and responsibility to point out the completely erroneous nature of this article. Would you feel you were pleasing

God and doing your duty if you stood by while the Richard ecclesia was railroaded into error?

I had to write something. I wrote what I prayerfully considered to be the truth on this issue, the truth so clearly, unmistakably taught by bro Roberts,

Now either you agree with it, or you do not, or you do not know whether it is truth or not.

If you agree with it, why do you condemn me? If you do not know, why do you condemn me? If you do not agree with it, why do you not point out where I am wrong? Bro John challenged me to answer him from the Scriptures. I have done so to the best of my ability. From that day to this, not one person, not even bro John himself, has come forward with one point on which they are prepared to say I am wrong, and to back it up with Scripture.

You say, "I believe you have influenced some against their better judgment," What is there here I can get hold of to answer? I have certainly tried to influence as many as will read the article. Who is to judge whether they are influenced against their better judgment? You do not say who they are, and you do not say in what way they have been influenced against what you believe to be their better judgment. So how can I answer this charge? It is too indefinite. It is like a shot from ambush.

You say, "Your constant defense is what you think our older brethren taught." If by this you mean I am relying on these brethren and not on Scripture, then you are unfair and incorrect. I wrote 35 pages, mostly in scriptural defense of what they taught, which no one has attempted to answer,

And is it not what I "think" these brethren taught, It is what they taught. Agree with them or not, at least we must be men enough to face the facts. Let us take one thing at a time, and let us at least get the facts straight. Then we can build on that. I will give you 2 quotations from bro Roberts, eight years apart, the last one less than 3 years before he wrote the words you refer to from *[the]* Law of Moses. If you can possibly get any meaning out of them than one very clear meaning, please tell me. Please face these things. Bro John kept on about those who would not answer him as hiding their head in the sand.

Christadelphian, 1884, March cover: "Divorce is inadmissible according to the law of Christ, except in the case he mentions in Matt. 19:9. Where this case arises, and the parties are divorced, they are a liberty to marry again, both by human law and Divine. Objection may be well meant, but it is without ground,"

Christadelphian, 1892, pg 422; "There seems nothing difficult about Mt 5: 31-2. The words of Christ amount to this, that his law recognizes no cause of separation between the husband and wife except conjugal infidelity... He does not mean that if divorced from a proper cause, a woman may not marry again. His words must be taken in their connection."

Now, dear bro Fred, I do not ask you to agree with bro Roberts, but please be frank and fair. Can you take anything but one thing out of these statements? Is there any doubt about what he believed on this point? Is it what I "think" he taught, or is it what he taught? Please answer me. Let us build our facts, one at a time.

Bro Roberts did not say this was a hazy difficult thing to decide, He said the very opposite. He said "there seems nothing difficult about Matt 5:31-2." Did he, or didn't he, say this?

Furthermore, it is positively established from the "Christadelphian Answers", published by bro Jannaway in 1920, that up to that time, this was the belief of the Christadelphian Body. Do you agree? Am I stating a fact?

\* \* \*

You say, "If you had been fair you would have left room for his last views in the Law of Moses. I don't believe you are fair in quoting his early statements and not his later ones."

This is what disappoints me so much. On page 4 of my article, I do quote the very thing you say I am unfair for not quoting. How can I answer? I did hope that those who did not agree with bro Roberts would at least read as far as page 4. I also quoted from bro Thomas in 1848, saying exactly the same thing, You are trying to tell me that bro Thomas changed one way, from 1848 to 1866, and bro Roberts changed the other way, from 1892 to January, 1895,

when that quote from Law of Moses appeared – and that neither of these intelligent brethren said a word about completely changing their convictions.

There is absolutely no conflict between what bro Roberts wrote in 1892 and what he wrote in 1895. Both are true and both are harmonious. In the Law of Moses he was talking about the basic law, as was bro Thomas in 1848. In 1892 bro Roberts was talking specifically about the Exceptive Clause, which comes into consideration when someone violates the basic law of marriage, which he gives in the law of Moses.

I am terribly disappointed that brethren try to set these brethren against themselves, and make them look like most of their lives they did not know what they were talking about. It is not good for our young brethren and sisters to be taught that these brethren spoke very positively one way at one time, most of their lives, and then completely switched a couple of years later on what is now proclaimed to be a First Principle of saving Truth, without even admitting they had changed, or trying to undo the damage they had done by teaching error most of their lives.

Is this any way to build respect for these brethren and the work they, by super-human labor, accomplished in the earth in these last days? I could expect this from enemies of these brethren, but not from their friends.

I thank God for these brethren. The more I look at this sad welter of ideas on this subject among us which has come to light in this past couple of years, the more I thank God for them, and thank God that I have been led in this, as in so many things in my life before, to see that what they taught was truth.

This sad welter of theories and speculations on this subject will not just divide us, it will completely disintegrate us, if we do not have the wisdom to look into this subject deeply and prayerfully, and get back to the sound foundation these brethren have providentially laid.

You say, “I believe a man of your intellect should leave these dear brethren to rest, and go to God’s word yourself.”

Brother Fred, this is very unfair and unkind. I have written 35 pages on this subject, mostly from Scripture. I implore you to at least carefully read it, and if you believe it can be proved wrong, please answer it. You have far more time

on your hands than I have. I wrote this article under great physical pressure, because I believed it to be my duty to the truth, and I still believe so, and stand behind it. If I am wrong, will you take the time and interest to study it and show where it is wrong? Will you defend bro John's article? Will you deny that I showed that in many, many places he was in error, actual, factual error?

Should we "leave these dead brethren AND THEIR WRITINGS to rest," as you suggest? Should we throw away Christendom astray, and Elpis Israel and that treasure of all books next to the Bible, Eureka, and go to God's word our own proud, cocky selves as so many suggest today?

Not me. I know by whose self-sacrificing labors I learned the truth, and I know I learn something new and beautiful every time I read their works. I know whom God raised up in his mercy to point out the truth for my salvation, and I am thankful. The most terrible part of this whole matter is the way these brethren have been maligned and belittled - poor befuddled men who kept changing and did not know their own mind on First Principles.

You say, "Believe it or not, bro. Rene G. has changed his views." This could be answered yes or no. If being forced to look deeply into something, being forced to face something and take a stand, being forced to reach a conviction and defend it on a matter on which before there had been no strong and firm conviction - if this is "changing", then I cheerfully confess to this sin, and God bless changing, and let's have more of it in the Brotherhood. If there is more prayerful, quiet study, and less emotion, there will be more and more of this "changing".

I am very glad and thankful I have been forced to "change" from not having a conviction to having one. I am very thankful I have been forced to the conviction, by Bible study, that bro Roberts was right after all -- in this as in so many things.

I compiled these quotations from bro Roberts many, many years ago. I did not like them at all, any more than you do now. But I did not try to argue them away in a way that is very dishonoring to him. Nor did I accept them just because he said so. I thank God that I had the wisdom to say to myself: "This is what he says. There is no use denying it. It is clear this was his firm, lifelong conviction, and he could see no problem or difficulty about it. I will just wait

and study. I pray we will never have to face this problem, and waste time on this unsavory matter, but can get on with the real pressing work of the Truth, but I pray that if we have to face it, we will be guided to face it scripturally and faithfully.”

I firmly believe that that is what has happened. I believe this whole matter is for our good, nay, for our salvation. We were heading far down a cold, mechanical, pharisaical road, but God has pulled us back. I am confident that we shall come out of this stronger than ever. I am confident that this long nagging cancer will be cured among us, that we will get back to the sound, scriptural, Christlike foundation of our pioneer brethren. I see light now at the end of the tunnel, and I have much more peace of mind. There will be sadnesses, and losses, but we shall come through them all, with the help and in the mercy of God.

You say, “Now I have no intention of arguing the question out.”

Why not, brother Fred? Why not? What are these letters all about, anyway? If you do not have any intentions of arguing it out, what intentions do you have? Maybe it’s just a good idea -- to quietly study it out right to the depths -- starting with my article. There is nothing complicated about it. My article is much simpler and clearer than bro John’s (even if I do say so myself). If you understood bro John’s, I’m sure you will have no trouble with mine.

You say, “Am I right in saying that you published in the Berean the Re-Statement of position in relation to the current problems?” Yes, you are perfectly right. If by “publishing” you mean that over a period of a couple of years I was the one who got together a statement that all the Brotherhood was willing to accept, and that went just as far as there was agreement among us. I might add that the divorce question was by far the most difficult to finally formulate in terms acceptable to all. In fact, it was to all intents and purposes the only one with which there was any difficulty at all. All the Brotherhood accepted that, but not another word read or interpreted into it according to what any thinks it implies or ought to mean.

The brethren who all along have agreed with bro Roberts were willing to accept this statement because it was a broad, basic, general statement that did not go into details (such as the Exceptive Clause), and did not go into how

cases should be handled. It was the strongest general statement we could make (like bro Roberts in the Law of Moses). It was not intended to be an invitation to sin (by stressing the Exceptive Clause, or by stressing the fact that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible in these matters as in all others).

Some wanted it made clearer and more specific on these details, but as you are quite aware, if we had gone any further we would not have been able to have unanimous agreement.

The fact that it was unanimously accepted should convince you that it does not conflict with the teachings of bro Roberts and the brethren of the past on the Exceptive Clause and the possibility of reconciliation and return.

It fell to me to be the one to work out the wording, by trial and error, to submit to the ecclesias, in order to work toward a unanimous statement that was as strong as we could make it, and still agree. I can assure you that I for one, and I am not alone, would never subscribe to or publish anything that ruled the lifelong convictions of bre Thomas and Roberts on a matter this serious as unacceptable in fellowship -- unless I was prepared openly and honestly to go all the way and stand on my own feet and reject the foundation they laid. We can't have it both ways. If this is a matter of fellowship now, and if this is wrong now, it was equally a matter of fellowship, and equally wrong then. These brethren stand condemned. Many moderns have taken this path in relation to these brethren, but it is the path to disaster.

You say, "This (the Restatement) I feel is the stand we should be holding out for now. Do you agree with this Statement now?"

Yes, indeed. As a statement of general principles, I stand with it, as I stand with what bro Roberts wrote in Law of Moses. This is the aspect to emphasize. This is the aspect to cry aloud. Divorce and remarriage cannot happen unless there is adultery. Adultery is one of the worst of sins, because it is the flesh at its worst. James even appears to regard it as worse than murder. It could well be, in God's sight. (James 2:10-11.) This is the sin, literal and spiritual, that has corrupted the world from the beginning -- made it one big animal mess of corruption.

This whole divorce controversy, as bro Erby Wolfe so well points out in his excellent article (of, I believe, 1948 or 49) in defense of the teachings of bro Roberts -- this whole controversy focuses all the attention and the opprobrium on the solution that Christ gives for those sinned against by adultery, and passes over quite lightly the adultery itself that is the root of all the trouble.

If we could keep first things first, and convince everyone of the terribleness of this original sin that breaks up and destroys marriages, we could avoid this whole problem altogether. Yes, I'm 100% for the Restatement.

You say, "Are you going to try to make Christ disagree with himself by saying that he does make room for these evils?"

Any question that starts by saying, "Are you going to try to make Christ disagree with himself...?" obviously isn't intended as a true question but as an accusation.

First of all, I might point out that your question points directly at bro Roberts, for at least most of his life, if not all (as I believe). You are inferentially accusing bro Roberts of trying to make Christ disagree with himself. This is getting the argument and accusations down to a level where it is not profitable or wholesome. No one on any side of this consideration is trying to make Christ disagree with himself. All are, I believe, at least trying sincerely to harmonize all that is said. Bro Roberts' view, in my judgment, harmonizes Christ's statements much better than yours does, but I would not accuse you of trying to make Christ disagree with himself. If we accuse any of knowingly and deliberately trying to make Christ (who always spoke the words of the father) disagree with himself, we are getting very close to accusing them of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This is a very serious charge, and does not help solve this problem.

You say, "The statement in Matt 5:32 to me is plain, Christ is not laying down a law, but is just stating a literal fact." I am not quite sure what you mean (as bearing on this problem), but Matt 7:24-29 makes this explanation sound very weak. Christ was certainly teaching something, and not just wasting his time stating obvious facts. It is our wisdom to learn what he was teaching. Bro Roberts' explanation appeals to me as much more reasonable and meaningful and in harmony with all the circumstances than yours does. For 80

years at least the Brotherhood thought he was teaching something here, and not just passing the time of day. "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU": does that mean anything?

You say, "He confirms the Edenic law, and surely we would not have to admit that Christ established something that God in the beginning forgot."

No, of course not. God forgets nothing. This is another of those "make Christ disagree with himself" statements.

God laid down a beautiful law at the beginning. He gave many other laws that we do not have in detail. See Gen 26:5 –

"Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

No, God did not forget. He made "laws, statutes, commandments" for each dispensation as He saw fit. What were the laws, statutes and commandments that Abraham had and kept? We do not know. Much is not recorded. We have one interesting case to the point, however.

We read in Genesis 16:3 that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to be his wife. This was not in harmony with the ideal at the beginning, and we cannot believe that God was pleased, but He accepted it, and blessed the child Hagar had. Hagar became his wife, and bore him a child.

Later on, there was friction, and Sarah said, "Cast out the bond woman and her son." This word "cast out" is very instructive. It is the only word in the Old Testament translated "divorced" (Lev 21:14, 22:13, Num 30:9). In these three places there is not the slightest doubt that the meaning is "divorced". Also in 2 more places the meaning is unquestionably "divorced" though it is translated "put away" (Lev 21:7 – same context as 21:14 above; and Eze 44:22).

Sarah says, "Divorce the bond woman and her son." What does God say? – He spoke very kindly and sympathetically to Abraham about his son, and made a covenant to take care of him for Abraham's sake, and He told them to do as Sarah said –

"Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond woman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice."

So in obedience to God, Abraham divorced the bond woman, and upon this whole transaction and beautiful and instructive type was built (Galatians 4:30).

And what does this prove? That God approves of divorce? Not at all. We cannot believe that the whole transaction was pleasing to God. It was a deep lesson of bitter experience for Abraham, a sad lesson, for He was attached to his son –

“And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son” (Genesis 21:11).

What it **DOES** prove is two very important things to the point of this discussion:

1. God does not “forget,” but in each dispensation, and for each circumstance He makes the best and wisest provision and decision, though it may not fit the ideas of marriage we inherit from the Orthodox churches.
2. There is a vast amount of legislation and provision that God has made that we know nothing about, or just get brief glimpses of.

What provision did He make for handling the sin of adultery in pre-Mosaic times? We are not told. Did He ignore it? We can be quite sure He did not. God said to Abimelech (Genesis 20:3) –

“Behold, thou art but a dead man, for she is the man’s wife.”

And Abimelech answered –

“Wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?”

I believe we can reasonably infer from this that the penalty for adultery in pre-Mosaic times was death. We have also the case of Judah and Tamar –

“Let her be burnt” (Genesis 38:24).

Judah was far from righteous. In this case he was hypocritically condemning Tamar for a sin in which he himself was equally involved. We cannot take these hints as positive proof that adultery and harlotry meant death in those days, but I believe you will agree it is pretty close to conclusive, and it does prove the important point – that God did not forget, but made provision as He saw fit.

\* \* \*

When we come to the Mosaic dispensation, we have many interesting provisions of God concerning divorce in various circumstances, and the handling of adultery. I have gone into these fully in my article.

The point I am positively establishing is that God did not “forget” from Eden to the time of Christ, and then suddenly make a provision for something that had not occurred to Him before. You imply that this must be the case if Matthew 5:32 is a law of God through Christ, not given before. Jesus said, “it hath been said.... But I say unto you.” Here is clearly a new provision for a new dispensation. God is not in this dispensation require His people to solve the adultery problem by the death sentence, as He did in the past.

\* \* \*

You say, “If I understand your writing correctly, you should now come out straight and truthful and say you can no longer support the Restatement on this clause or your quoted statements in our Recommendation.”

These are two different things. Let us take them separately. On the Restatement I have already spoken. It is a general statement with which I wholeheartedly agree. It is the aspect to be emphasized. It was accepted by ALL the Berean Fellowship, including those who clearly understood and believed the matter just as bro Roberts did (and bro Thomas). And let me re-emphasize this: It went just as far as it was possible to go, and still have unanimous acceptance. When you start reading your beliefs into it, you go beyond what is written, and on that basis you accuse me of not being “straight and truthful” about it.

On the quotations you make from me, I have spoken very clearly in my several long letters to you and bro Art, after you inquired of me concerning using these quotations, and before you use them.

I was very disappointed that under the circumstances you chose to use them after I had written so clearly to you. However, that is entirely your responsibility. When something is written, I believe that anyone may quote it, but they have a serious responsibility not to quote misleadingly.

Some in different parts of the world told me they cannot understand how you could use these quotations as you do, after my full explanation to you of my present views concerning them and the circumstances connected with them. They believe it is so obviously misleading, and adding confusion is certainly not going to help us solve this problem.

I do not believe your intention was to mislead. I cannot understand why you could not see it would be misleading and confusing, but I have no doubt you acted in sincerity and honesty.

I made very clear to you my belief that that “head-in-the-sand” compromise that these statements refer to was no longer either right or possible, in view of the developed circumstances, and in view of the great agitation of Clapham views among us, as illustrated by bro John’s article. Once error has been aggressively agitated, then compromise for the sake of peace becomes infinitely more difficult, if not impossible.

This agitation of the Clapham theory among us, to the point of forcing it to a Fellowship issue (Houston), forced me to look into the whole subject more deeply.

I said, in the context of the very quotations that you used, that this compromise was “unsatisfactory,” for it was no solution, just a ducking of the issue and casting brethren out for the sake of peace.

The more I looked into the matter scripturally, and came to realize the soundness of the views of bre Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway and the whole Body down to 1920, the more and more ashamed I was of ever having even theoretically supported this compromise. Peace bought by compromise is hardly ever a very worthy or glorious thing, and it ill befits those who claim to bring the light of God to a perishing world.

I am quite sure that the more you, or any other brother, sincerely, quietly and prayerfully look into this matter, the less enthusiastic you will be about any compromise for the sake of what we like to call “peace.”

You say, “The happenings in the south to me are a revelation of the apostasy developing.” This is a very cruel and unfair thing to say, and you are taking a

great and terrible responsibility on yourself at the judgment seat of Christ for so speaking of your brethren.

If you have anything against anyone, the law of Christ is clear. We are not above the law. In our zeal for holiness it is so easy to ourselves ignore the very specific command Christ gives for dealing with offences.

Blanket condemnations are always unworthy and unscriptural. Please tell me your exact charges against brethren in the South: the charge, the persons, and the course you have followed according to the law of Christ. (Matt 18)

It is these blanket condemnations from ambush that is tearing our fellowship apart and destroying the love and spirit of Christ among us, not the brethren who are sincerely following the teachings of bre Thomas and Roberts – even though they may be mistaken.

You say, “The underhanded way in which this trouble has been handled is nothing short of disgraceful. When sin is known and read of all men, why was no notice given in the magazine of withdrawal or even of re-fellowship? It appears to have been a cover-up job, and is to this day.”

This is one of the most terrible, and unfair, and cruel condemnations I have ever heard brethren say about others, and I tremble for your judgment at the judgment seat of Christ if this is your frame of mind.

This brother married out of the Truth: admittedly a serious sin. You will be well aware that bro Thomas wrote concerning this sin in a way that we would feel is a very weak stand, though doubtless in the case he faced he was up against some hypocritical Pharisaism that had to be rebuked, like the case of the woman taken in adultery.

You will be well aware of the position on this matter taken by bro Roberts in the Constitution and the Guide. He does not recommend disfellowship in either: only strong rebuke, and the requirement of a public recognition that it was a sin against the law of Christ.

You will be well aware that in the view of bre Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway, this brother in Texas was at liberty to remarry. (only in the Lord).

Because it was realized that his marriage would upset the Brotherhood, and because it was desired to give the Brotherhood time to study the matter, and

not be forced to make a sudden decision without prayerful preparation, this brother was asked to stand aside, though the clear scriptural teachings of bro Thomas and Roberts did not require it on either count (alien marriage or remarriage after divorce).

This brother stood aside for 8 months. For 8 months the Texas brethren patiently waited, standing aside from a brother they believed they should be trying to build up in love and fellowship, because they wanted to give the Brotherhood full time to decide what they wanted to do about it before forcing the issue on them.

And now you make terrible charges because there wasn't another pound of flesh extracted, and the matter blazoned around the world.

There never was any concealment. I am quite sure you knew of the facts long before you could have learned of them from the magazine. I spoke to a brother in Richard less than a week (I believe) after the brother was received back into fellowship. All questions were always answered openly and fully. We received a notice from the recording brother in San Angelo several months before he was actually received back, saying that it was planned to receive him back. This was a circular letter, and I am sure you too must have received a copy. The brother was persuaded at the time to give the Brotherhood more time, but it was against the better judgment of some who could see no scriptural justification for further delay and who feared the continued effect of isolation on the brother himself and those deeply concerned about him.

I have never been among those who believe every temporary standing aside must be a permanent record in the magazine. I do not so read the law of Christ. Sin must certainly be publicly rebuked locally, when it is open, but that does not mean that every sin must be blazoned worldwide and must be a permanent record. I cannot understand the frame of mind that desires this, in the light of the whole beautiful trend of the teachings and mind of Christ. Do you want your sins so treated? Would you consider such a course a manifestation of sympathy and love and Christlikeness?

I am sure I read recently a conclusion by bro Roberts that no withdrawal should be published for several months, in the hope that the matter could be corrected, and need not be a permanently recorded stain. That is my view,

and I believe it is in harmony with the mind of Christ, and I would tremble to stand at the judgment seat with any other view.

As to publishing in the magazine, there is another minor aspect at the present time that has some bearing on this matter of what we publish.

You are well aware that we have had a tremendous struggle getting the magazine out at all for the past year or so. Do not take the magazine so lightly for granted, as something that is always there to be handy to publish brethren's sins in. We have gone through much labor and travail.

The magazine does not just happen, like the sun rising in the morning. It takes a lot of work, and time, and money. Some help and encourage, and some do not. That is all well. God knows the hearts. We do not want anything that is not in full enthusiasm and sympathy, from the depths of the heart. For the 20 years that I have been connected with the magazine there has always been enough money come in to pay for it. In fact, some are far too generous and have to be restrained. The slightest hint of need will bring a flood of help. There is no problem there, except that it would be much healthier for the Brotherhood if it were more evenly distributed. It is always the same ones who are openhanded and openhearted.

The magazine's whole purpose, as long as I have had anything to do with it, has been to prod and exhort and encourage the Brotherhood to more and more holiness and godliness. There are different ways of doing this. Publicizing and lambasting sin is one way. We believe there is a better and a deeper and a more wholesome way. We have never failed to speak very clearly on all aspects of godliness.

We are still behind in publication. The last magazine we mailed was the August issue. Actually, however, we are pretty well caught up. September, October, November and December have long since gone to the printer and unless there is some great problem I am not aware of, all four of these magazines should be mailed out in much less than a month. I am waiting for them daily. January is all ready to print and will be forwarded to the printer as soon as the others are done.

I mention all this to give you a little better perspective on the magazine, and because it has somewhat of a bearing on what it is practical to publish until

we get caught up and publishing with a reasonable regularity. As I say, I am sure you knew all the facts of this case as they occurred, long before you could have read them in the magazine. Information was always just a phone call away, and there was never any attempt at any time to conceal anything.

You say, "Those who went out in protest were declared out, and who came back were declared in. Why were these other matters concealed?"

In the first place, they were never concealed, and this is a grave false accusation against your brother for which you will have to answer if not repented of.

The ones in Houston were not withdrawn from, but went out voluntarily, and DESIRED TO HAVE THE FACT KNOWN, publicizing it themselves. Their departure was reported in sadness, their return in joy. Nothing was said at either time to reflect upon them or condemn them. Surely you can see how cruel and unfair your comparison is, and your condemnation based upon it!

You say, "If I am correct in my understanding of your view, if Christ permitted divorce for one reason, how can you write of such a one as a repentant sinner?"

I find it difficult to believe you really mean this question, because the answer is so obvious. I do not know just what statement of mine you referred to, and what the context was so I will answer generally.

If you are talking about this particular case, there are two answers. One is that this brother married out of the Truth. This is a sin. Therefore he is (or was) a sinner. He claims to be repentant. The local brethren have endeavored to assure themselves of his sincerity, and have done so to the best of their ability. Therefore he is a repentant sinner.

Again, you believe he is a sinner for remarrying (regardless of the alien aspect). Therefore it is quite fitting in my appeal to you to exhort you to follow the law of Christ and to receive and forgive those whom you believe to have been sinners. It is a matter of principle.

If you are talking generally about the whole divorce and remarriage issue, then the participants may or may not be sinners, according to the circumstances of the case.

Certainly there are cases in which “repentant sinners” are involved. This is the problem we face, and it is to this problem my words are addressed. When we are faced with someone who has sinned against the law of Christ in this matter, and they profess repentance, how should we treat them?

I believe with bro Roberts that if there is a legal divorce, and if there is adultery by the other partner, then there is no sin in a brother remarrying. In this case, the term “repentant sinner” would not apply.

If any brother or sister sues at law for divorce (for adultery), then they are sinners for going to law against another. And if they repent, they are repentant sinners. They are at liberty to subsequently marry, but marriage does not cleanse the sin. Only repentance does that. They are sinners forever if they do not repent.

If any brother or sister is divorced by another, and there is no adultery, and they remarry, they are sinners. And if they repent, they are repentant sinners.

So where is the difficulty in my using the expression “repentant sinners” in connection with this matter? There are many circumstances in this Divorce and Remarriage matter in which we can be faced with the problem of how to handle the case of repentant sinners. I cannot therefore understand the point of your objection.

You say, “Like bro Roberts we don’t feel that we can aid and abet these evils by extending our fellowship to such and so violate our conscience and walk with darkness.”

If you are referring to the bro Roberts who wrote Christendom astray, THE bro Roberts whom we usually understand to be meant when we say “bro Roberts,” then I cannot understand how you can possibly say the above, for he very specifically says in the quotations I have given you that he would extend fellowship to such. How can you quote him as saying the very opposite of what he says? If you mean some other bro Roberts, then I believe you should be more specific to avoid misunderstanding.

You say, “I feel that the Berean magazine should be used as in the past to guide the household. It should be the voice of the ecclesias but unfortunately it is not.”

Much could be said in answer to this. In the first place, I believe you would be one of the first to object if the magazine took it upon itself to “guide to household” – if it was not the guidance you thought it ought to be.

We have no authority to “guide the household” in matters which very sincere brethren are struggling with. As individuals we can, and must, and HAVE done our best to point out the scriptural Truth on the matter, and to point out the only possible solution for soundness, peace and unity in the Brotherhood – and that is to get back to the original sound foundation of our pioneer brethren and the stand the whole Body united took for its first 80 years.

This will come, but it will come slowly. It cannot be forced. Brethren must be sincerely convinced by quiet, prayerful study. I am not pushing it. It is not, and has never been considered, a matter that the Body should be torn apart about, and woe betide those reckless ones who try to break up the Body over it. But in the love and wisdom and mercy of God, it will come, and we shall have peace, and all this terrible struggle will not have been in vain.

But I feel it would be a betrayal of a trust to use the magazine to take advantage to further my own beliefs in a matter that the Brotherhood is struggling with. The magazine must be, as you say, the “voice of the ecclesias,” and until the ecclesias have a unified voice on this matter that chooses and can go further than the Restatement, then it would be highly improper for bro Gibson and I to use the magazine to air our views.

This is why we took nearly 2 years to get complete unanimity on the Restatement. It was because we realized the magazine must be “voice of the ecclesias,” and we honored that trust.

Now, what kind of a “guide to the household” do you believe the magazine should be? You refer to what it was in the past. I believe I am as well aware of its past contents as any, and I do not believe you would like it to give that kind of a lead.

All through bro Roberts day, it gave a “lead” along the lines of the quotations I have made from bro Roberts in the magazine. I firmly believe these quotations to be 1) the lifelong views of bro Roberts and bro Thomas, and 2) the scriptural truth of the matter. Is this the guide you would like in the magazine today, just like the good old days? No. I am sure it is not, and out of

respect to your sincere convictions we are not using the magazine to reiterate bro Robert's position of the magazine in his day, though we believe it to be the truth.

How about when bro Jannaway was editor? Would you like it to be presenting his views? You know from the Christadelphian Answers that he believed with bre Thomas and Roberts that the Exceptive Clause was part of the Law of Christ. You know, too, that he believed in receiving back repentant sinners, for it was not till after his day that Clapham changed to their present theory.

How about when bro Dowling was editor? Would you like the magazine today to be giving a lead along the line of his views? You are well aware of what they were from his widely distributed pamphlets "Clapham Change" and "Clapham Folly."

All the Brotherhood may not have agreed with bre Thomas, Roberts, Jannaway and Dowling in their day on this subject, but they did not try to break up the Brotherhood about it. Nor did these brethren use the magazine to try to force others to accept their views. Bro Roberts only answered when asked, and it was very brief, but he left no doubt of his basic convictions about Matt 5:32.

We believe the magazine should be the "voice of the ecclesias" and until the ecclesias have a unified voice on this matter, we do not intend to use the magazine to further our views, though we firmly believe them to be right.

Furthermore, we are very fearful of the development of any kind of a centralized rule of the Body, radiating from the magazine. Editing and publishing the magazine gives a couple of brethren a tremendous potential advantage that could very easily be used to further their own views. We want to be very careful not to abuse this.

We do not want anyone looking to us for guidance, just because we put out the magazine. Let them look upon us as entirely individual from the magazine. The magazine is a mutual trust, to be edited for everyone's good, and as far as possible to everyone's satisfaction. What we are agreed on, let's put it in there, and hammer at it.

But we stand or fall as individual brethren, just the same as anyone else. Let's fight the slightest hint of any trend to centralized popery, as we see in the Central group. Remember the Papacy started with very small beginnings. It took hundreds of years to develop to the full. But it all started when people began to look to some center to give them a lead.

As an individual, I have done my best to face the serious crisis forced on us by the agitation of the Clapham theory among us over the past couple of years. I hope brethren will prayerfully study it. I hope they will, in a constructive, brotherly way, point out where they believe I am wrong.

I am not pressing the views of bre Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway, but I am convinced they are our only long-range solution. Maybe you are not aware of the wide and wild variety of ideas being toyed with among us on this subject, due to having drifted away from the original foundation.

If a split is forced upon us, if this is made another new basis of fellowship, 120 years after the beginning of the present Body by bro Thomas, it will not be division but disintegration. Let those who are agitating this matter fully realize the responsibility of what they are doing. Some will drift to Central, some will drift to Dawn, some will drift to bro Livermore (if he will take them: he has rigid fellowship stands in many points); some will drift to Old Paths, and, saddest of all, some will just DRIFT – period. If that is what the brethren want, then let them push this issue.

\* \* \*

You are offended because what you believe to be a brother's sins have not been permanently recorded in the magazine, even though he has now been reconciled to his brethren.

You will note that your sin of withholding fellowship from your brethren and sisters in Texas, and bro John's sin in further compounding the matter by, right after that, fellowshipping those who had separated from us – you will note that these sins have not been blazoned in the magazine, although they were very distressing to the Texas brethren and had a very discouraging and harmful effect on the unity of the Body.

None of us can write our own rules of fellowship. When we are “correcting” others, let us be sure we are not putting ourselves above the law. This arbitrary withholding of fellowship without following either the scriptural or constitutional course greatly periled the whole principle of orderly fellowship principles among us. If a few more took the law into their own hands, as you and bro John did, we would have chaos.

The circumstances gave all the appearance of a concerted effort to force a fellowship crisis upon the Body – withholding from one and fellowshipping the other. It looks like you felt the time had come for the dominoes to fall, and split the fellowship apart. Things that were said at the time in the heat of what appeared to be impending “victory” added to this appearance.

Fortunately, the Texas brethren, though greatly disturbed, chose to follow the course of love and patience, and to interpret your actions as kindly as possible – as a failure to realize that the principles of fellowship, or [*to realize*] the harm that you were doing, rather than a deliberate attempt to break up the Body.

But unless you can see things more clearly now, I would be afraid to come to Richard any more, for if you would take upon yourself – without any due scriptural process – to withhold fellowship from your Houston brethren, what assurance would I have of any fellowship welcome? This is why taking fellowship arbitrarily into our own hands and putting ourselves above Christ’s law is so harmful. We would have no assurance of going anywhere and not being arbitrarily barred without due process. What would we have left if we so break down the established pattern of orderly and scriptural fellowship principles? No man liveth to himself. Please, bro Fred, think this over very prayerfully and seriously.

\* \* \*

I have tried to the best of my ability to answer every point in your letter. Please try to think charitably of your brethren. Please do not pedal rumors. They are terribly destructive.

Please do not make blanket condemnations. If you have a matter against any, follow the scriptural, Christlike course – between you and him alone.

It is so easy to sow discord by believing and peddling vague rumors. It is so satisfying to the flesh. It is so hard to discipline ourselves to follow the Christlike course, but only such will attain to the Kingdom of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers."

With much love in the Truth to yourself and all in Richard,

Sincerely your brother,

(signed) Rene

Dear brother Fred:

Loving Greetings

January 1, 1972

I will try, to the best of my ability, to answer your letter point by point.

I believe it is quite clear from your letter that you have not fairly and carefully read my article, as you say several things that I am sure you would not say if you had given it consideration.

This article was a sincere effort to point out the innumerable errors and fallacies in bro John's article which was trying to introduce the Clapham error among us as a matter of fellowship. It was a sincere effort to show what our pioneer brethren taught on the subject, and to show, as best I could, the scriptural foundation for their teaching.

I believe it should be fairly considered, and I believe it should be answered if it is wrong. I did not start this. I avoided it as long as I possibly could. Bro John kept pressing it and pressing it.

I am honestly convinced that the teaching of brethren Thomas and Roberts, and my conclusions in my article, are Truth, and I am firmly convinced that this matter will not be settled fully among us until brethren are willing to study and face the facts. It is not my desire, however, to push anything. All the pushing, all the new doctrine, has come from the other side.

You say, "I believe you would have been a much wiser man had you not written on this subject, for I believe you have ~~XXXXXX~~ influenced some against their better judgment."

There is little here that I can get hold of. This issue was forced by others. Please receive that fact. We must be willing to face facts if we are going to make any headway in this problem. We may be right or we may be wrong, but at least we must have the courage and wisdom to face facts

Bro John's article was about to be railroaded through the London ecclesia as a fellowship stand. We are very close to the London ecclesia. I had no possible alternative than to fulfil my duty and responsibility to point out the completely erroneous nature of this article. Would you feel you were pleasing God and doing your duty if you stood by while the Richard ecclesia was railroaded into error?

I had to write something. I wrote what I prayerfully considered to be the truth on this issue, the truth so clearly, unmistakably taught by bro Roberts.

Now either you agree with it, or you do not, or you do not know whether it is truth or ~~not~~ not.

If you agree with it, why do you condemn me? If you do not know, why do you condemn me? If you do not agree with it, why do you not point out where I am wrong? Bro John challenged me to answer him from the Scriptures. I have done so to the best of my ability. From that day to this, not one person, not even bro John himself, has come forward with one point on which they are prepared to say I am wrong, and to back it up with Scripture.

You say, "I believe you have influenced some against their better judgment." What is there here I can get hold of to answer? I have certainly tried to influence as many as will read the article. Who is to judge whether they are influenced against their better judgment? You do not say who they are, and you do not say in what way they have been influenced against what you believe to be their better judgment. So how can I answer this charge? It is too indefinite. It is like a shot from ambush.

You say, "Your constant defence is what you think our older brethren taught." If by this you mean I am relying on these brethren and not on Scripture, then you are unfair and incorrect. I wrote 35 pages, mostly in scriptural defence of what they taught, which no one has attempted to answer.

And is it not what I "think" these brethren taught. It is what they taught." Agree with them or not, at least we must be men enough to face the facts. Let us take one thing at a time, and let us at least get the facts stright. Then we can build on that. I will give you 2 quotations from bro Roberts, eight years apart, the last one less than 3 years before he wrote the words you refer to from Law of Moses. If you can possibly get any meaning out of them than one very clear meaning, please tell me. Please face these things. Bro John kept on about those who would not answer him as hiding their head in the sand.

Christadelphian, 1884, March cover: "Divorce is inadmissible according to the law of Christ, except in the case he mentions in Mt. 19:9. Where this case arises, and the parties are divorced, they are at liberty to marry again, both by human law and divine, Objection may be well meant, but it is without ground."

Christadelphian, 1892, pg 422: "There seems nothing difficult about Mt 5:31-2. The words of Christ amount to this, that his law recognizes no cause of separation between ~~ma~~ husband and wife except conjugal infidelity . . . He does not mean that if divorced from a proper cause, a woman may not marry again. His words must be taken in their connection."

Now, dear bro Fred, I do not ask you to agree with bro Roberts, but please be frank and fair. Can you take anything but one thing out of these statements? Is there any doubt about what he believed on this point? ~~RR~~ Is it what I "think" he taught, or is it what he taught? Please answer me. Let us build our facts, one at a time.

Bro Roberts did not say this was a hazy difficult thing to decide. He said the very opposite. He said "there seems nothing difficult about Mt 5:31-2." Did he, or didn't he, say this?

Furthermore, it is positively established from the "Christadelphian Answers," published by bro Jannaway in 1920, that up to that time, this was the belief of the Christadelphian Body. Do you agree? Am I stating a fact?

\* \* \*

You say, "If you had been fair you would have left room for his last views in the Law of Moses. I don't believe you are fair in quoting his early statements and not his later ones."

This is what disappoints me so much. On page 4 of my article, I do quote the very thing you say I am unfair for not quoting. How can I answer? I did hope that those who did not agree with bro Roberts would at least read as far as page 4. I also quoted from bro Thomas in 1848, saying exactly the same thing. You are trying to tell me that bro Thomas changed one way, from 1848 to 1866, and bro Roberts changed the other way, from 1892 to ~~1895~~ January, 1895, when that quote from Law of Moses appeared-- and that neither of these intelligent and honest brethren said a word about completely changing their convictions.

There is absolutely no conflict between what bro Roberts wrote in 1892 and what he wrote in 1895. Both are true and both are harmonious. In the Law of Moses he was talking about the basic law, as was bro Thomas in 1848.

In 1892 Bro Roberts was talking specifically about the Exceptive Clause, which comes into consideration when ~~some~~ someone violates the basic law of marriage, which he gives in Law of Moses.

I am terribly disappointed that brethren try to set these brethren against themselves, and make them look like most of their lives they did not know what they were talking about. It is not good for our young brethren and sisters to be taught that these brethren spoke very positively one way at one time, most of their lives, and then completely switched a couple of years later on what is now proclaimed to be a First Principle of saving Truth, without even admitting they had changed, or trying to undo the damage they had done by teaching error most of their lives.

Is this any way to build respect for these brethren and the work they, by super-human labor, accomplished in the earth in these last days? I could expect this from enemies of these brethren, but not from their friends

I thank God for these brethren. The more I look at the sad welter of ideas on this subject among us which has come to light in this past couple of years, the more I thank God for them, and thank God that I have been led in this, as in so many things in my life before, to see that what they taught was truth.

This sad welter of theories and speculations on this subject will not just divide us, it will completely disintegrate us, if we do not have the wisdom to look into this subject deeply and prayerfully, and get back to the sound foundation these brethren have providentially laid.

You say, "I believe a man of your intellect should leave these dear brethren to rest, and go to God's word yourself."

Bro Fred, this is very unfair and unkind. I have written 35 pages on this subject, mostly from Scripture. I implore you to at least carefully read it, and if you believe it can be proved wrong, please answer it. You have far more time on your hands than I have. I wrote this article under great physical pressure, because I believed it to be my duty to the Truth, and I still believe so, and stand behind it. If I am wrong, will you take the time and interest to study it and show where it is wrong? Will you defend bro John's article. Will you deny that I showed that in many, many places he was in error, actual, factual error?

Should we "leave these dead brethren AND THEIR WRITINGS to rest", as you suggest. Should we throw away Christendom Astray, and Elpis Israel and that treasure of all books next to the Bible, Eureka, and go to God's word our own proud, cocky selves--as so many suggest today?

Not me. I know ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ by whose self-sacrificing labors I learned the Truth, and I know I learn something new and beautiful every time I read their works. I know whom God raised up in His mercy to point out the Truth for my salvation, and I am thankful. The most terrible part of this whole matter is the way these brethren have been maligned and belittled--poor befuddled men who kept changing and did not know their own mind on First Principles.

You say, "Believe it or not, bro. Rene G. has changed his views." This could be answered yes or no. If being forced to look deeply into something, being forced to face something and take a stand, being forced to reach a conviction and defend it on a matter on which before there had been no strong and firm conviction--if this is "changing", then I cheerfully confess to the sin, and God bless changing, and let's have more of it in the Brotherhood. If there is more prayerful, quiet study, and less emotion, there will be more and more of this "changing."

I am very glad and thankful I have been forced to "change" from not having a conviction to having one. I am very thankful I have been forced to the conviction, by Bible study, that bro Roberts was right after all-- in this as in so many things.

I ~~compiled~~ compiled these quotations from bro Roberts many, many years ago. I did not like them at all, any more than you do now. But I did not try to argue them away in a way that is very dishonoring to him. Nor did I accept them just because he said so. I thank God that I had the wisdom to say to myself: "This is what he says. There is no use denying it. It is clear this was his firm, lifelong conviction, and he could see no problem or difficulty about it. I will just wait and study. I pray we will never have to face this ~~problem~~ problem, and waste time on this very unsavory matter, but can get on with the real, pressing work of the Truth, but I pray that if we have to face it, we will be guided to face it scripturally and faithfully."

I firmly believe that that is what has happened. I believe this whole matter is for our good, nay, for our salvation. We were heading far down a cold, mechanical, Pharisaical road, but God has pulled us back. I am confident that we shall come out of this stronger than ever. I am confident that this long-nagging cancer will be cured among us, that we will get back to the sound, scriptural, Christlike foundation of our pioneer brethren. I see light now at the end of the tunnel, and I have much more peace of mind. There will be sadnesses, and losses, but we shall come through them all, with the help and in the mercy of God.

You say, "Now I have no intention of arguing the question out."

Wht not, bro Fred? Why not? What are these letters all about, anyway? If you do not have any intentions of arguing it out, what intentions do you have? Maybe it's just a good idea--to quietly study it out right to the depths--starting with my article. ~~There's~~ There's nothing complicated about it. My article is much simpler and clearer than bro John's (Even if I do say so myself). If you understood bro John's, I am sure you will have no trouble with mine.

You say, "Am I right in saying that you published in the Berean the Re-Statement of position in relation to current problems?" Yes, you are perfectly right, if by "publishing" you mean that over a period of a couple of years I was the one who got together a statement that all the Brotherhood was willing to accept, and that went just as far as there was agreement among us. I might add that the divorce question was by far the most difficult to finally formulate in terms acceptable to all. In fact, it was to all intents and purposes the only one with which there was any difficulty at all. All the Brotherhood accepted that, but not another word read or interpreted into it according to what any thinks it implies or ought to mean.

The brethren who all along have agreed with bro Roberts were willing to accept this statement because it was a broad, basic, general statement that did not go into details (such as the Exceptive Clause), and did not go into how cases should be handled. It was the strongest general statement we could make (like bro Roberts in Law of Moses). It was not intended to be an invitation to sin (by stressing the Exceptive Clause, or by stressing the fact that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible in these matters as in all others).

Some wanted it made clearer and more specific on these details, but as you are quite aware, if we had gone any further we would not have been able to have unanimous agreement.

The fact that it was unanimously accepted should convince you that it does

not conflict with the teachings of bro Roberts and the brethren of the past on the Exceptive Clause and the possibility of reconciliation and return.

It fell to me to be the one to work out the wording, by trial and error, to submit to the ecclesias, in order to work toward a unanimous statement that was as strong as we could make it, and still agree. I can assure you that I for one, and I am not alone, would never subscribe to or publish anything that ~~is~~ ruled the lifelong convictions of bre Thomas and Roberts on a ~~matter~~ matter this serious as unacceptable in fellowship--unless I was prepared openly and honestly to go all the way and stand on my own feet and reject the foundation they laid. We can't have it both ways. If this is a matter of fellowship now, and if this is wrong now, it was equally a matter of fellowship, and equally wrong then. These brethren stand condemned. Many moderns have taken this path in relation to these brethren, but it is the path to disaster.

You say, "This (the Restatement) I feel is the stand we should be holding out for now. Do you agree with this Statement now?"

Yes, indeed. As a statement of general principles, I stand with it, as I stand with what bro Roberts wrote in Law of Moses. This is the aspect to emphasize. This is the aspect to cry aloud. Divorce and Remarriage cannot happen unless there is adultery. Adultery is one of the worst of sins, because it is the flesh at its worst. James even appears to regard it as worse than murder. It could well be, in God's sight. (James 2:10-11). This is the sin, literal and spiritual, that has corrupted the world from the beginning--made it one big animal mess of corruption.

This whole Divorce controversy, as bro Erby Wolfe so well points out in his excellent article ~~is~~ (of, I believe, 1948 or 49) in defence of the teachings of bro Roberts--this whole controversy focusses all the attention and opprobrium on the solution that Christ gives for those sinned against by adultery, and passes over quite lightly the adultery itself that is the root of all the trouble.

If we could keep first things first, and convince everyone of the terrible-ness of this original sin that breaks up and destroys marriages, we could avoid this whole problem altogether. Yes, I'm 100% for the ReStatement.

You say, "Are you going to try to make Christ ~~disagree~~ disagree with himself by saying that he does make room for these evils?"

Any question that starts by saying, "Are you going to try to make Christ disagree with himself . . ." obvious isn't intended as a true question but as an accusation.

First of all I might point out that your question points directly at bro Roberts, for at least most of his life, if not all (as I believe). You are inferentially accusing bro Roberts of trying to make Christ disagree with himself. This is getting the argument and accusations down to a level where it is not ~~more~~ profitable or wholesome. No one ~~is~~ on any side of this consideration is trying to make Christ disagree with himself. All are, I believe, at least trying sincerely to harmonize all that is said. Bro Roberts view, in my judgment, harmonizes Christ statements much better than yours does, but I would not accuse you of trying to make Christ disagree with himself. If we accuse any of knowingly and deliberately trying to make Christ (who always spoke the words of the Father) disagree with himself, we are getting very close to accusing them of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. This is a very serious charge, and does not help solve this problem.

(More to come soon. God willing)

You say, "The statement in Mt. 5:32 to me is plain, Christ is not laying down a law, but is just stating a literal fact." I am not quite sure what you mean (as bearing on this problem), but Mt. 7:24-29 makes this explanation sound very weak. Christ was certainly teaching something, and not just wasting his time stating obvious facts. It is our wisdom to learn what he was teaching. Bro. Roberts' explanation appeals to me as much more reasonable and meaningful and in harmony with all the circumstances than yours does. For 80 years at least the brotherhood thought he was teaching something here, and not just passing the time of day. "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU": does that mean anything?

You say, "He confirms the Edenic law, and surely we would not have to admit that Christ established something that God in the beginning forgot."

No, of course not. God forgets nothing. This is another of those "Make Christ disagree with himself" statements.

God laid down a beautiful law at the beginning. He gave many other laws that we do not have in detail. See Gen. 26:5--

"Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

No, God did not forget. He made "laws, statutes, commandments" for each dispensation as He saw fit. What were the laws, statutes and commandments that Abraham had and kept? We do not know. Much is not recorded. We have one interesting case to the point, however.

We read in Gen 16:3 that Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham "to be his wife." This was not in harmony with the ideal at the beginning, and we cannot believe that God was pleased, but He accepted it, and blessed the child Hagar had. ~~Somehow~~ Hagar became his wife, and bore him a child.

Later on, there was friction, and Sarah said, "Cast out the bond woman and her son." This word "cast out" is very instructive. It is the only word in the Old Testament translated "divorced" (Lev 21:14, 22:13; Num 30:9). In these 3 places there is not the slightest doubt that the meaning is divorced. Also in 2 more places the meaning is unquestionably "divorced" though it is translated "put away" (Lev 21:7--same context as 21:14 above; and Eze 44:22).

Sarah says, "Divorce the bond woman and her son." What does God say?-- He spoke very kindly and sympathetically to Abraham about his son, and made a covenant to take care of him for Abraham's sake, and He told him to do as Sarah said--

"Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman. In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice."

So in obedience to God, Abraham divorced the bondwoman, and upon this whole transaction a beautiful and instructive type was built (Gal. 4:30).

And what does this prove? That God approves of divorce? Not at all. We cannot believe that the whole transaction was pleasing to God. It was a deep lesson of bitter experience for Abraham, a sad lesson, for he was attached to his son--

"And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son" (Gen 21:11).

What it DOES prove is 2 very important ~~two~~ things to the point of this discussion —

1. God does not "forget," but in each dispensation, and for each circumstance He makes the best and wisest provision and decision, though it may not fit the ideas of marriage we inherit from the orthodox churches.

2. There is a vast amount of legislation and provision that God has made that we know nothing about, or just get brief glimpses of.

What provision did He make for handling the sin of adultery in pre-Mosaic times? We are not told. Did He ignore it? We can be quite sure He did not. God said to Abimelech (Gen. 20:3)--

"Behold, thou art but a dead man, for she is a man's wife."

And Abimelech answered--

"Wilt Thou slay also a righteous nation?"

I believe we can reasonably infer from this that the penalty for adultery in pre-Mosaic times was death. We have also the case of Judah and Tamar--

"Let her be burnt" (Gen 38:24).

Judah was far from righteous. In this case he was hypocritically ~~is~~ condemning Tamar for a sin in which he himself was equally involved. We cannot take these hints as positive proof that adultery and harlotry meant death in those days, but I believe you will agree it is pretty close to conclusive, and it does prove the important point--that God ~~is~~ did not forget, but made provision as He saw fit.

\* \* \*

When we come to the Mosaic dispensation, we have many interesting provisions of God concerning divorce in various circumstances, and the handling of adultery. I have gone into these fully in my article.

The point I am positively establishing is that God did not "forget" from Eden to the time of Christ, and then suddenly make a provision for something that had not occurred to Him before. You imply that this must be the case if Matt 5:32 is a law of God through Christ, not given before. Jesus said, "It hath been said . . . but I say unto you." Here is clearly a new provision for a new dispensation. God does not in this dispensation require His people to solve the adultery problem by the death sentence, as He did in the past.

\* \* \*

You say, "If I understand your writing correctly, you should now come out straight and truthful and say you can no longer support the Restatement on this clause or your quoted statements in our recommendations."

These are 2 different things. Let us take them separately. On the Restatement I have already spoken. It is a general statement with which I wholeheartedly agree. It is the aspect to be emphasized. It was accepted by ALL the Berean fellowship, including those who clearly understood and believed the matter just as bro Roberts did (and bro Thomas). And let me re-emphasize this: It went just as far as it was possible to go, and still have unanimous acceptance. When you start reading your beliefs into it, you go beyond what is written, and on that basis you accuse me of not being "straight and truthful" about it.

On the quotations you make from me, I have spoken very clearly in my several long letters to you and bro Art, after you enquired of me concerning using these quotations, and before you used them.

I was very disappointed that under the circumstances you chose to use

them, after I had written so clearly to you. However, that is entirely your responsibility. When something is written, I believe that anyone may quote it, but they have a serious responsibility not to quote misleadingly.

Some in different parts of the ~~the~~ world have told me they cannot understand how you could use these quotations as you do, after my full explanation to you of my present views concerning them and the circumstances connected with them. They believe it is so ~~obviously~~ obviously misleading, and adding confusion is certainly not going to help us solve this problem.

I do not believe your intention was to mislead. I cannot understand why you could not see it would be misleading and confusing, but I have no doubt you acted in sincerity and honesty.

I made very clear to you my belief that that "head-in-the-sand" compromise that these statements refer to was no longer either right or possible, in view of the developed circumstances, and in view of the great agitation of Clapham views among us, as illustrated by bro John's article. Once error has been aggressively agitated, then compromise for the sake of peace becomes infinitely more difficult, if not impossible.

This agitation of the Clapham theory among us, to the point of forcing it to a fellowship issue (Houston), forced me to look into the whole subject more deeply.

I said, in the context of the very quotations that you used, that this compromise was "unsatisfactory," for it was no solution, just a ducking of the issue and casting brethren out for the sake of peace.

The more I looked into the matter scripturally, and came to realize the soundness of the views of brethren Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway and the whole Body down to 1920, the more and more ashamed I was of ever having even theoretically supported this ~~compromise~~ compromise. Peace bought by compromise is hardly ever a very worthy or glorious thing, and it ill befits those who claim to bring the Light of God to a perishing world.

I am quite sure that the more you, or any other brother, sincerely and quietly and prayerfully look into this matter, the less enthusiastic you will be about any compromise for the sake of what we like to call "peace."

You say, "The happenings in the south to me are a revelation of the apostacy developing." This is a very cruel and unfair thing to say, and you are taking a great and terrible responsibility on yourself at the judgment seat of Christ for so speaking of your brethren.

If you have anything against anyone, the law of Christ is clear. We are not above the law. In our zeal for holiness it is so easy to ourselves ignore the very specific command Christ gives for dealing with offences.

Blanket condemnations are always unworthy and unscriptural. Please tell me your exact charges against brethren in the south: the charge, the persons, and the course you have followed according to the law of Christ. (Mt. 18)

It is these blanket condemnation from ambush that is tearing our fellowship apart and destroying the love and spirit of Christ among us, not the brethren who are sincerely following the teachings of bre Thomas and Roberts-- even though they may be mistaken.

You say, "The underhanded way in which this trouble has been handled is nothing short of disgraceful. When a sin is know and read of all men, why was no notice given in the magazine of withdrawal or even of re-fellowship. It appears to have been a cover up job, and is to this day."

This is one of the most terrible, and unfair, and cruel condemnations I have ever heard brethren say about others, and I tremble for your judgment at the judgment seat of Christ if this is ~~is~~ your frame of mind.

This brother married out of the Truth: admittedly a serious sin. You will be well aware that bro Thomas wrote concerning this sin in a way that we would feel is a very weak stand, though doubtless in the case he faced he was up against some hypocritical Pharisaism that had to be ~~be~~ rebuked, like the case of the woman taken in adultery.

You will be well aware of the position on this matter taken by bro Roberts in the Constitution and the Guide. He does not recommend disfellowship in either; only strong rebuke, and the requirement of a public recognition that it was sin against the law of Christ.

You will be well aware that in the view of brethren Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway, this brother in Texas was at liberty to marry. (only in the Lord).

Because it was realized that his marriage would upset the Brotherhood, ~~and~~ because it was desired to give the Brotherhood time to study the matter, and not be forced to make a sudden decision without prayerful preparation, this brother was asked to stand aside, though the clear scriptural teachings of bre Thomas and Roberts did not require it on either count (Alien Marriage or Remarriage after Divorce).

This brother stood aside for 8 months. For 8 months the Texas brethren patiently waited, standing aside from a brother they believed they should be trying to build up in love and fellowship, because they wanted to give the Brotherhood full time to decide what they wanted to do about it before forcing the issue on them.

And now you make terrible charges because there ~~was~~ wasn't another pound of flesh extracted, and the matter blazoned around the world.

There was never any concealment. I am quite sure you knew of the facts long before you could have learned of them from the magazine. I spoke to a brother in Richard less than a week (I believe) after the brother was received back into fellowship. All questions were always ~~be~~ answered openly and fully. We received a notice from the recording brother in San Angelo several months before he was actually received back, saying that it was planned to receive him back. This was a circular letter, and I am sure you too must have received a copy. The brother was persuaded at the time to give the Brotherhood more time, but it was against the better judgment of some who could see no scriptural justification for further delay and who feared the continued effect of isolation on the brother himself and those deeply concerned about him.

I have never been among those who believe every temporary standing aside must be a permanent record in the magazine. I do not so read the law of Christ. Sin must certainly be publicly rebuked locally, when it is open, but that does not mean that every sin must be blazoned worldwide and must be a permanent record. I cannot understand the frame of mind that desires this, in the light of the whole beautiful trend of the teachings and mind of Christ. Do you ~~is~~ want your sins so treated? Would you consider such a course a manifestation of sympathy and love and Christlikeness?

I am sure I read recently a conclusion by bro Roberts that no withdrawal should be published for several months, in the hope that the matter could be corrected, and need not be a permanently recorded stain. That is my view, and I believe it is in harmony with the mind of Christ, and I would tremble to stand at the judgment seat with any other view.

As to publishing in the magazine, there is another minor aspect at the

present time that has some bearing on this matter of what we publish.

You are well aware that we have had a tremendous struggle getting the magazine out at all for the past year or so. Do not take the magazine so lightly for granted, as something that is always there to be handy to publish brethren's sins in. We have gone through much labor and travail.

The magazine does not just happen, like the sun rising in the morning. It takes a lot of work, and time, and money. Some help and encourage, and some do not. That is all well. God knows the hearts. We do not want anything that is not in full enthusiasm and sympathy, from the depth of the heart. For the 20 years I have been connected with the magazine there has always been enough money come in to pay for it. In fact, some are far too generous and have to be restrained. The slightest hint of need will bring a flood of help. There is no problem there, except that it would be much healthier for the Brotherhood if it were more evenly distributed. It is always the same ones who are openhanded and open hearted.

The magazine's whole purpose, as long as I have had anything to do with it, has been to prod and exhort and encourage the Brotherhood to more and more holiness and godliness. There are different ways of doing this. Publicising and lambasting sin is one way. We believe there is a better and a deeper and a more wholesome way. We have never failed to speak very clearly on all aspects of godliness.

We are still behind in publication. The last magazine we mailed was the August issue. Actually, however, we are pretty well caught up. September, October, November and December have long since gone to the printer and unless there is some great problem I am not aware of, all four of these magazines should be mailed out in much less than a month. I am waiting for them daily. January is all ready to print and will be forwarded to the printer as soon as the others are done.

I mention all this to give you a little better perspective on the magazine, and because it has somewhat of a bearing on what it is practical to publish until we get caught up and publishing with a reasonable regularity. As I say, I am sure you knew all the facts of this case as they occurred, long before you could have read them in the magazine. Information was always just a phone call away, and there was never any attempt at any time to conceal anything.

You say, "Those who went out in protest were declared out, and who came back were declared in. Why were these other matters concealed?"

In the first place, they were never concealed, and this is a grave and false accusation against your brethren for which you will have to answer if not repented of.

The ones in Houston were not withdrawn from, but went out voluntarily, and DESIRED TO HAVE THE FACT KNOWN, publicising it themselves. Their departure was in sadness, their return in joy. Nothing was said at either time to reflect upon them or condemn them. Surely you can see how cruel and unfair your comparison is, and your condemnation based upon it!

You say, "If I am correct in my understanding of your view, if Christ permitted divorce for one reason, how can you write of such a one as a repentant sinner?"

I find it difficult to believe you really mean this question, because the answer is so obvious. I do not know just what statement of mine you refer to, and what the context was, so I will answer generally.

If you are talking about this particular case, there are two answers. One is that this brother married out of the Truth. This is a sin. Therefore he is (or was) a sinner. He claims to be repentant. The local brethren have endeavored to assure themselves of his sincerity, and have done so to the best of their ability. Therefore he is a repentant sinner.

Again, you believe he is a sinner for remarrying (regardless of the alien aspect). Therefore it is quite fitting in my appeal to you to exhort you to follow the law of Christ and to receive and forgive those whom you believe to have been sinners. It is a matter of principle.

If you are talking generally about the whole divorce and remarriage issue, then the participants may or may not be sinners, according to the circumstances of the case.

Certainly there are cases in which "repentant sinners" are involved. This is the problem we face, and it is to this problem my words are addressed. When we are faced with someone who has sinned against the law of Christ in this matter, and they profess repentance, how should we treat them?

I believe with bro Roberts that if there is a legal divorce, and if there is adultery by the other partner, then there is no sin in a brother remarrying. In this case, the term "repentant sinner" would not apply.

*OTE* If any brother or sister ~~sues~~ goes to law for divorce (for adultery), then they are sinners for going to law against another, and if they repent, they are repentant sinners. They are at liberty to subsequently marry, but marriage does not cleanse the sin. Only repentance does that. They are sinners forever if they do not repent.

If any brother or sister is divorced by another, and there is no adultery, and they remarry, they are sinners. And if they repent, they are repentant sinners.

So where is the difficulty in my using the expression "repentant sinners" in connection with this matter? There are many circumstances in this Divorce and Remarriage matter in which we can be faced with the problem of how to handle the case of repentant sinners. I cannot therefore understand the point of your objection.

You say, "Like bro Roberts we don't feel that we can aid and abet these evils by extending our fellowship to such and so violate our conscience and walk with darkness."

If you are referring to the bro Roberts who wrote Christendom Astray, ~~THE~~ bro Roberts whom we usually understand to be meant when we say "Bro Roberts," then I can understand how you can possibly say the above, for he very specifically says in the quotations I have given you that he would extend fellowship to such. How can you quote him as saying the very opposite of what he says??? If you mean some other bro Roberts, then I believe you should be more specific to avoid misunderstanding.

You say, "I feel the Berean magazine should be used as in the past to guide the Household. It should be the voice of the ecclesias but unfortunately it is not."

Much could be said in answer to this. In the first place, I believe you would be one of the first to object if the magazine took it upon itself to "guide the Household"--if it was not the guidance you thought it ought to be.

We have no authority to "guide the Household" in matters which very sincere brethren are struggling with. As individuals we can, and must, and HAVE done

our best to point out the scriptural Truth on the matter, and to point to the only possible solution for soundness, peace and unity in the Brotherhood-- and that is to get back to the original sound foundation of our pioneer brethren and the stand the whole Body united took for its first 80 years.

This will come, but it will come slowly. It cannot be forced. Brethren must be sincerely convinced by quiet, prayerful study. I am not pushing it. It is not, and has never been considered, a matter that the Body should be torn apart about, and woe betide those reckless ones who try to break up the Body over it. But in the love and wisdom and mercy of God, it will come, and we shall have peace, and all this terrible struggle will not have been in vain.

But I would feel it to be a betrayal of a trust to use the magazine to take advantage to further my own beliefs in a matter that the Brotherhood is struggling with. The magazine must be, as you say, the "voice of the ecclesias," and until the ecclesias have a unified voice on this matter that chooses and can go further than the Restatement, then it would be highly improper for bro Gibson and I to use the magazine to air our views.

This is why we took nearly 2 years to get complete unanimity on the Restatement. It was because we realized the magazine must be the "voice of the ecclesias," and we honored that trust.

Now, what kind of a "guide to the Household" do you believe the magazine should be? You refer to what it was in the past. I believe I am as well aware of its past contents as any, and I do not believe you would like it to give that kind of a lead.

All through bro Roberts day, it gave a "lead" along the lines of the quotations I have made from bro Roberts in the magazine. I firmly believe these quotation to be 1) the lifelong views of bro Roberts and bro Thomas, and 2) the scriptural truth of the matter. Is this the guide you would like in the magazine today, just like the good old days? No. I am sure it is not, and out of respect to your sincere convictions we are not using the magazine to reiterate bro Roberts position of the magazine in his day, though we believe it to be the truth.

How about when bro Jannaway was editor? Would you like it to be presenting his views? You know from the Christadelphian Answers that he believed with bre Thomas and Roberts that the Exceptive Clause was part of Law of Christ. You know, too, that he believed in receiving back repentant sinners, for it was not till after his day that Clapham changed to their present theory.

How about when bro Dowling was editor? Would you like the magazine today to be giving a lead along the line of his views? You are well aware of what they were from his widely distributed pamphlets "Clapham Change" and "Clapham Folly."

All the Brotherhood may not have agreed with bre Thomas, Roberts, Jannaway and Dowling in their day on this subject, but they did not try to break up the Brotherhood about it. Nor did these brethren use the magazine to try to force others to accept their views. Bro Roberts only answered when asked, and it was very brief, but he left no doubt of his basic convictions about Matt 5:32.

We believe the magazine should be the "voice of the ecclesias" and until the ecclesias have a unified voice on this matter, we do not intend to use the magazine to further our views, though we firmly believe them to be right.

Furthermore, we are very fearful of the development of any kind of a

centralized rule of the Body, radiating from the magazine. Editing and publishing the magazine gives a couple of brethren a tremendous potential advantage that could very easily be used to further their own views. We want to be very careful not to abuse this.

We do not want anyone looking to us for guidance, just because we put out the magazine. Let them look upon us as entirely individual from the magazine. The magazine is a mutual trust, to be edited for everyone's good, and as far as possible to everyone's satisfaction. What we are agreed on, let's put it in there, and ~~we~~ hammer at it.

But we stand or fall as individual brethren, just the same as anyone else. Let's fight the slightest hint of any trend to centralized popery, as we see in the Central group. Remember the Papacy started with very small beginnings. It took hundreds of years to develop to the full. But it all started when people began to look to some center to give them a lead.

As an individual, I have done my best to face the serious crisis forced on us by the agitation of the Clapham theory among us over the past couple of years. I hope brethren will prayerfully study it. I hope they will, in a constructive, brotherly way, point out where they believe I am wrong.

I am not pressing the views of bre Thomas, Roberts and Jannaway, but I am convinced they are our only long-range solution. Maybe you are not aware of the wide and wild variety of ideas being toyed with among us on this subject, due to having drifted away from the original foundation.

If a split is forced upon us, if this is made another new basis of fellowship, 120 years after the beginning of the present Body by bro Thomas, it will not be division, but disintegration. Let those who are agitating this matter fully realize the responsibility of what they are doing. Some will drift to Central, some will drift to Dawn, some will drift to bro Livermore (if he will take them: he has rigid fellowship stands on many points); some will drift to Old Paths, and, saddest of all, some will just DRIFT--period. If that is what the brethren want, then let them push this issue.

\* \* \*

You are offended because what you believe to be a brother's sins have not been permanently recorded in the magazine, even though he has now been reconciled to his brethren.

You will note that your sin of withholding fellowship from your brethren and sisters in Texas, and bro John's sin in further compounding the matter by right after fellowshipping those who had separated from us--you will note that these sins have not been blazoned in the magazine, although they were very distressing to the Texas brethren and had a very discouraging and harmful effect on the unity of the Body.

None of us can write our own rules of fellowship. When we are "correcting" others, let us be sure we are not putting ourselves above the law. This arbitrary withholding of fellowship without following either the scriptural or constitutional course gravely perilled the whole principle of orderly fellowship principles among us. If a few more took the law into ~~their~~ their own hands, as you and bro John did, we would have chaos.

The circumstances gave all the appearance of a concerted effort to force a fellowship crisis upon the Body--withholding from one and fellowshipping the other. It looked like you felt the time had come for the dominoes to fall, and split the fellowship apart. Things that were said at the time in the heat of what appeared to be impending "victory" added to this appearance.

Fortunately the Texas brethren, though greatly ~~is~~ disturbed, chose to follow the course of love and patience, and to interpret your actions as kindly as possible--as a failure to realize the deep principles of fellowship, or the harm that you were doing, rather than a deliberate attempt to break up the Body.

But unless you can see things more clearly now, I would be afraid to come to Richard any ~~is~~ more, for if you would take upon yourself--without any due scriptural process--to withhold fellowship from your Houston brethren, what assurance would I have of any fellowship welcome? This is why taking fellowship arbitrarily into our own hands and putting ourselves above Christ's law is so harmful. We would have no assurance of going anywhere and not being arbitrarily barred without due process. What would we have left if we so break down the established pattern of orderly and scriptural fellowship principles? No man liveth to himself. Please, bro Fred, think this over very prayerfully and seriously.

\* \* \*

I have tried to the best of my ability to answer every point in your letter. Please try to think charitably of your brethren. Please do not peddle rumors. They are terribly destructive.

Please do not make ~~blanket~~ blanket condemnations. If you have a matter against any, follow the scriptural, Christlike course--between you and him alone.

It is so easy to sow discord by believing and peddling vague rumors. It is so satisfying to the flesh. It is so hard to discipline ourselves to follow the Christlike course, but only such will attain to the Kingdom of God. "Blessed are the peacemakers."

With much love in the Truth to yourself  
and all in Richard,

Sincerely your brother,

