

## **For Himself THAT IT MIGHT BE FOR US**

**This is from the Aug. 1913 Christadelphian and was reprinted in the November 1990 Berean.  
It begins with a long quotation from bro. Roberts.**

THE statement of Paul (Heb.7:27) is that Christ did 'once' in his death what the high priests under the Law did daily, namely, offered '*first for his own sins*, and then for the people's.' But there is all the difference between the two cases that there always is between shadow and substance. Christ's 'own sins' were not like the sins of the priests: they were not sins of his own committing. He was without sin, so far as his own actions were concerned.

Yet as the bearer of the sins of his people—whether 'in Adam' or otherwise—he stood in the position of having these as 'his own,' from the effects of which he had himself first to be delivered. Consequently, HE OFFERED FIRST FOR HIMSELF. He was the first delivered. He is 'Christ the *first fruits*' He obtained eternal redemption in and *for himself* as the middle voice of the Greek verb *euramenos* (Heb. 9:12) implies. The 'for us' is not in the original: RV omits it. He was—

"Brought again from the dead *through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant*" (Hebrews 13:20).

But this offering *for himself* was also the offering for his people. The two aspects of the double typical offering were combined in one act. He had not twice to offer for himself—

"By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:14).

Yet, though combined, the two relations of the act are visibly separate. Christ was the first saved from death (Heb. 5:9)—

"Afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming" (1 Cor. 15:23).

In this way the Mosaic type has its counterpart.

There is no inconsistency whatever between these facts and the constant declaration that Christ 'died for us.' ALL that Christ was and did was 'for us.' It was 'for us' he was born; 'for us' he bore sin; 'for us' he came under the curse of the Law; 'for us' he died. And the fact that personally he was without sin where all were transgressors, gives all the more point to the declaration.

It was 'for us' that he came to be in the position of *having first to offer FOR HIMSELF*. The 'for us' does not deny that what he submitted to 'for us' was our own position—

"He was MADE SIN for us who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21).

—and does not sin require an offering?

The matter might be simplified by supposing the case were leprosy instead of sin; and the cure to be passing through fire instead of death. But that the fire should only possess the power of cure where the disease existed without the virus of the disease; and that in all other cases the effect of the fire should be to destroy. Let the leprosy be death in the constitution, brought about by sin; and the virus, actual sin itself.

By this illustration, all mankind are under the power of leprosy, which cannot be cured by the fire, owing to the presence of the combustible virus, which will catch fire and destroy the patient. If only one could be found free from the virus, he could go through the fire and save the rest: but he cannot be found.

God interposes, and produces such an one among them, one in whom the *leprosy exists without the virus*, that the rest may be cured by joining hands with him after he has gone thru the fire. He goes through the fire 'for them,' but is it not obvious that he goes through it *for himself* in the first instance? For if he is not delivered from the leprosy first, how will his going through the fire avail them?

It is 'for himself that it might be for them.' He is NOW 'separate from them,' but he was *not so in the first instance*.—Bro. Roberts, Chdn., 1875, p. 139.

The foregoing was written by bro. Roberts in answer to a correspondent in the *Christadelphian* for 1875, p. 139. At that time there had been much controversy concerning the Sacrifice of Christ, and some had introduced old errors that in effect denied that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. The doctrine became known some 40 years ago by the term *Renunciationism*, because the promulgators printed & published a document '*renouncing*' their previous views in favour of their supposed new discovery. This new discovery was really only a bit of old 'philosophy & vain deceit,' which speedily gave the lie to Christ himself. Thus one asked a—

*QUESTION: What is meant by Adam's posterity?*

And he supplied the—

*ANSWER: Every human being who has been born of two human parents.*

Therefore, in the writer's judgment, Jesus was not of Adam's posterity. Yet Jesus himself is at pains to emphasize the fact that he is 'the Son of Man! Here are some more examples of this false philosophy—

*"Jesus not having Adam for his father, he was not involved in Adam's transgression."*

*"Jesus Christ was not a son of Adam, but a second Adam made in the nature of the first Adam."*

And so the 'philosophy' of 40 years ago gave Jesus a 'free life,' 'unforfeited,' & affirmed he was UNDER NO NEED OF SACRIFICIAL REDEMPTION HIMSELF. Thus there was proposed the—

*QUESTION: Was the sacrifice of Christ an offering for himself?*

And there was given the—

*ANSWER: No.*

This same ERROR is cropping up again in various parts of the world, and in *The Shield* (Sydney) for June a determined attempt is made to re-introduce it. It is actually and strenuously denied that Heb.7:27 applies to Jesus at all! And this three times over by three brethren in this one issue. A. J. Webb says (p. 101)—

*"We make the assertion that there is not a passage of Scripture in the whole Bible that says that Jesus offered up sacrifice first for his own sins and then for the people's."*

R Irving says (p. 104)—

*"It does not say that 'Jesus' offered up sacrifice 'first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people.'"*

J. Bell says (p. 105)—

*"No apostle ever said any such thing."*

Now this is a DIRECT DENIAL OF SCRIPTURE, and, as such, is to be resisted. How bro. Roberts viewed the passage is seen from the above extract. And that that view is the only right and scriptural one should be apparent to honest and impartial discernment. Look again at Heb. 7:27—

*"Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for THIS he did once, when he offered up himself."*

Who Offered up himself? Jesus. Who did this once? Jesus. What is 'this' that he did once?—

*"Offered up sacrifice, first for his own sins & then for the people's."*

But did not the Levitical high priests so? Yes, 'daily' in the type. But Jesus is he 'who needeth NOT *daily* as those high priests' so to do, 'for this he did *once*' in antitype.

Look again: the 'who' with which v.27 opens relates to the same person as the 'who' of the preceding v. 26— "who is holy, harmless, undefiled."

And this in turn relates to the 'he' of the preceding v. 25 —

*"He is able to save to the uttermost . . . he ever liveth."*

And this again relates to 'this man' of v. 24:

"This man . . . continueth ever."

And this of course is none other than 'Jesus' of v.22. Who can deny it? And if you attempt to deny it, you *destroy the correspondence between type and antitype*, and present us with an antitypical high priest who himself needed no redemption. This did the Renunciationists of 40 years ago. And the utterances we now complain of are only too sadly in harmony with some of those of so long ago. Thus R. Irving says (Shield, June, p. 104) that the Aaronic high priest—

*"had first to cleanse himself from sin. This he did. Then he was a perfect representative of that spotless Lamb of God who needed NOT to first cleanse himself by sacrifice from sins which he had committed, for he knew no sin."*\*

\* This is practically word-for-word for what we have heard just recently.

He does not perceive that in that 'not' he has *destroyed the correspondence* between type and antitype, and *denied the Scripture*. And that, in the insertion of the words 'which he had committed' he has very wrongly introduced an ambiguity with the effect of beclouding the issue.

We have never heard of a Christadelphian who contemplated 'sins which he (Jesus) had committed,' and therefore such an idea should not be introduced. But that *Christ needed to be cleansed from 'sins' by sacrifice is here testified in the Word of God*. The flesh is 'this corruptible,' and from this Christ was delivered *'through death'* (Heb.2:14; 5:7-9; 7:27-28; 9:12-26; 13:20). It is NOT correct to say—

"It was for us he died. It is always 'for us,' On our account': *never for himself*."

Of course it was 'for us,' as we all most thankfully believe. But if that 'never for himself' be logically adhered to, then Christ is not the 'first-fruits,' the 'first-born,' but a being superior to human nature, and needing no redemption. The *truth* is, as above defined, that the sacrifice of Christ WAS 'for himself' that it might be 'for us.' —Editor, Christadelphian Magazine, August, 1913, p. 339.

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The 'Christadelphian Magazine' of April, 1902, p. 148 contains the following—

Ques: Does Heb.7:27 teach that Jesus offered for his own sins?

Ans: Yes: it says so plainly. But you must remember that the reference is to the antitypical fulfilment of the high-priestly offerings under the Law, which was—

"A shadow of good things to come, & not the very image itself" (Heb.10:1).

Jesus was in character sinless, and he 'bare the sin of many' only in the sense of BEARING THEIR NATURE in obedience to death, even the death of the cross. He—

"carried up our sins IN HIS OWN BODY to the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness" (1 Pet. 2:24).

This is an inspired definition and comment.

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And this occurs in the Christadelphian, Dec, 1910, pgs. 538,547—

All the priests under the Law were sinners in the sense of being transgressors of the Law. Christ was not so. Yet—

"THIS *he did once . . . offer . . . first for his own sins*" (Heb.7:27).

What is *meant* is explained in a later part of the same wonderful expository epistle (13:20)—

"The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus . . . *through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant*."

God required the Lord Jesus to lay down his life in sacrifice, and through that 'one offering' he was *himself* redeemed from death as the 'firstfruits' . . .

That Christ had to offer for himself is testified in Heb.7:27. The reason why is revealed: that he might *himself* be saved by his own blood (Heb.13:20; 5:7). Though in character sinless, he inherited the sin-nature from his mother, and therefore needed redemption from death. Christendom has altogether lost sight of this truth.

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**The Christadelphian, Oct., 1907, p. 459, reprints these statements by bro. Roberts, originally appearing in the Chdn. of Sept., 1896, p. 339, concerning the same errors in Australia about which a later editor writes in 1913, as quoted above—**

God's method for the return of sinful man to favour required & appointed the putting to death of man's *condemned and evil* nature IN a representative man of spotless character whom He should provide, to declare and uphold the righteousness of God as the first condition of restoration, that He might be just while justifying the unjust, who should believingly approach thru him in humility, confession and reformation—

"God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, & for sin condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8).

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy that having the power of death, that is, the devil" (Heb. 2:14).

"Who his own self bare our sins IN HIS OWN BODY to the tree" (1 Pet. 2:24).

"Our old man is crucified with him, that the BODY OF SIN might be destroyed" (Rom.6:6).

"He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb.4:15).

"Be of good cheer, I have OVERCOME THE WORLD" (John 16:33).

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past thru the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time, His righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:25-26).

**Christ was himself saved in the redemption he wrought out for us—**

"In the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to SAVE HIM FROM DEATH, and was heard in that he feared. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:7-9).

"By his own blood he entered once into the Holy Place, HAVING OBTAINED ETERNAL REDEMPTION" (Heb.9:12).

"The God of peace brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus . . . THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT" (Heb. 13:20).

**As the antitypical High Priest, it was necessary that he should offer FOR HIMSELF, as well as for those whom he represented—**

"And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also FOR HIMSELF, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a high priest" (Heb. 5:3).

"Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer" (Heb.8:3).

"Who needeth not DAILY, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins & then for the people's: for THIS HE DID ONCE, when he offered up himself" (Heb.7:27).

"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens (that is, the symbols employed under the Law) should be purified with these (Mosaic sacrifices), but the HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES (that is, Christ who is the substance prefigured in the Law) with better sacrifices than these (that is, the sacrifice of Christ)—Heb.9:23). (End of quotes from old Chdn.Mags.)

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It is notable that even bro. Carter—who was quite vague\* on the subject of the Sacrifice of Christ in all his Australian statements, reducing the Adamic defilement to merely that of conscience (C.C. Addendum), and ridiculing bro. Thomas' (Elpis Israel, p. 126-127) sound definition of the two-fold use of 'Sin' in the Scriptures (Unity, p. 32,62, 62), and accusing the Bereans of 'Andrewism' for agreeing with bre. T. & R.—it is notable that at an earlier time he was quite clear in his book "Hebrews" that Christ had to offer for his own cleansing from the defilement of the sin-nature.

\*In a 'battle of quotations' (which he deprecates), he brings forward some irrelevant quotations from brethren Thomas and Roberts, and brushes aside relevant ones.

He says on Heb. 9:12 (p. 95)—

"It has many times been pointed out (*Blood of Christ*, p. 9; *Law of Moses*, ps. 91 & 172) that the italicized words 'for us' in the AV are an unwarranted addition. They are omitted by RV. If any words are added, they should be 'FOR HIMSELF—but the fact that *he obtained* eternal redemption involves this.

"And here it may be remarked that *he needed redemption*: otherwise how could it be said that he 'obtained' it? And it was *by his own blood that he obtained it*. He was himself a sharer in the effects of his own sacrifice, because he was a member of a race that is mortal because of sin."

Again on Hebrews 9:23 (ps. 102-104)—

"The 'heavenly things' is a phrase denoting Christ & those who are redeemed by him . . . It is important to observe that these 'heavenly things' *stood in need of cleansing*, and undoubtedly Christ is part of the heavenly things."

Then he approvingly quotes bro. Roberts (*Law of Moses*, p. 92 )—

"There must therefore be a sense in which Christ (the antitypical Aaron, altar, mercy-seat, the antitypical everything) must not only have been sanctified by the action of the antitypical oil of the Holy Spirit, but *purged by the antitypical blood of his own sacrifice* . . .

"If the typical holy things contracted defilement from connection with a sinful congregation, were not the antitypical (Christ) holy things in a similar state, *through derivation on his mother's side from a sinful race*? If not, how came they to NEED PURGING with his own 'better sacrifice'? . . .

"All (the Mosaic patterns) were both atoning and atoned for. There is no counterpart to this if Christ is kept out of his own sacrifice. He CANNOT be so kept out, if place is given to all the testimony—an express part of which is that, as the sum-total of the things signified by these patterns, *he was 'purified with' a better sacrifice than bulls and goats*—his own sacrifice.

"If he was purified,' there was something to be purified from: what was it? Look at his hereditary taint, as the son of Adam, through whom death entered the world by sin, and there is no difficulty."

(End quotes from bro. Carter's 'Hebrews')

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It is not a matter of 'atonement,' in the orthodox sense of the term. That just befogs the issue. It is CLEANSING, PURIFICATION, as bro. Roberts points out. 'Atonement' is a misleading, confusing, ecclesiastical word. It has acquired unscriptural connotations from which it is impossible to separate it in the average mind. It is not a scriptural term. It occurs only once (erroneously) in the AV of the New Testament, and not at all in the RV. In the OT it is used in our versions incorrectly and confusingly for redemption, purifying, cleansing and covering. It is far better to stick to these scriptural terms and ideas. This will clear the Sacrifice of Christ of much confusion and contention.

'Atonement' expresses the orthodox idea of the Sacrifice of Christ: paying a penalty, Christ receiving the punishment due to sinners, so sinners can go free.

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These quotations are not endorsements of subsequent editors who followed bro. Roberts. They are simply given as evidence that on this vital point they held fast to the original sound and scriptural Christadelphian foundation, as indeed any must do if they wish to use the Christadelphian name legitimately. Those who have a new doctrine should adopt a new name, in all fairness and honesty.

There are really no *new* crotchets, no *new* errors. That Christ did not offer for himself is listed as an error that had already troubled the Brotherhood over 100 years ago (Chdn., Dec, 1873, p. 542). Sound brethren have been fighting it ever since.

In the wisdom of God, error is necessary, and has a useful purpose. It throws the Truth into sharper focus, & it gets brethren thinking and studying the sound writings of the pioneers. Otherwise the tendency in these easy and treacherous days is to go to sleep to the tune of the TVs and the Disneylands.

It is a very dangerous sign when anyone says: "*Let us not consider what bre. T & R. say: let us forget them & just stick right to the Scriptures.*" It has a very noble & high-sounding ring, but it usually means: "*I have a 'new' theory to propound that is different from the sound and established Christadelphian beliefs.*"

Christadelphians have understood and believed and taught the Truth for over 100 years, and have repeatedly repudiated all the errors. It is therefore foolishness at this late date to ignore the soundness and stability of the past, and keep starting over to see if we can find the Truth.

To say Christ did not offer for himself is to deny the very heart of all Christadelphian belief from the beginning. This is the fundamental difference between substitutionary orthodoxy and scriptural truth. We believe bre. T & R and the brethren of the past were right, and those wrong who deny Christ's need of purification and redemption through sacrifice. The Sacrifice of Christ is the very core of the Truth. And his one-ness with the condemned, sin-cursed race is the nucleus on which Truth of salvation is built.

Those who say Christ did not offer for himself repudiate the scriptural Christadelphian Christ of bre. T & R & of the whole Body for over 100 years: the Christ who (as these brethren so beautifully open up and manifest)—  
"*Was brought from death by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant*" (Heb. 13:20).  
"*By his own blood obtained eternal redemption*" (Heb. 9:12).  
"*Was the central reality of all the 'heavenly things' that were 'purified by better sacrifices than those of Moses' Law*" (Heb. 9:23).  
"*As the antitypical High Priest, 'offered first for his own sins and then for the people's'*" (Heb. 7:27).  
"*As the great Prince-Priest in the Age to Come offers a memorial 'sin offering for himself and for all the people'*" (Ezek. 45:22).  
"*Destroyed the Diabolos in his death by nailing the sin-body to the tree*" (Heb. 2:14).  
"*Battled the 'law of SIN IN HIS MEMBERS,' and perfectly overcame & subdued it; and was for ever cleansed from it by his perfect, life-long life-&-death sacrifice culminating in the final obedience of Calvary—the final, once-for-all fulfilment & REALITY of all the typical sacrifices: the true sacrifice' (holy work) which God required for the redemption of ANY mortal son of Adam.*"

He did not just go thru one more typical, shadowy, powerless ritual, as those say who claim he did not offer for himself. They must come out of the shadows & perceive the glorious *reality* of what he did. He alone achieved immortality through a *real* SACRIFICE: even his *WHOLE life and death* laid on the divine altar—  
"*Sacrifice (ritual) Thou wouldest not, but a BODY Thou hast prepared me'* (Heb. 10:5)

He accomplished in himself & FOR himself what God demanded for human salvation: a perfect sacrifice of self—absolute and entire; and the death that completed and crowned it cannot be separated from the life of perfection that gave it its God-pleasing, purifying power. It was by this *REAL* life-sacrifice that HE was saved, and all who, in God's mercy, are allowed to get INTO him.

In his death Christ manifested and vindicated God's holiness, because the Body of Sin was publicly repudiated and crucified. If you say that the diabolos-law-of-sin-in-the-members of every descendant of Adam is not scripturally 'sin,' then you have no 'body of sin' to be repudiated & crucified, no manifestation of God's holiness & righteousness in Christ's death: no 'sins IN his own body' to be borne to the tree. You have just one more powerless type, shadow, ceremony, pattern, ritual, foreshadowing: *no final, once-for-all REALITY.*

Those who say that Christ's glorious, total life-and-death offering to God was not for his own purifying & perfecting repudiate all the teachings of bre. T & R on the subject, and go back to the dark, orthodox, substitutionary, vicarious Christ who was just one more empty, powerless type like the endless stream of animals before him, just ritually and imputedly (but not *really*) 'being MADE SIN.'

If Christ was not *actually* 'made sin,' if he did not 'bear our sins IN HIS OWN BODY,' then sin was not put to death on the cross. It was just one more shadow of what *needed* to be done, but not the glorious, triumphant, actual DOING of it.

Some apparently can only see cold, dead, legal ritual in this glorious life-sacrifice, missing all the mortal conflict and the terrible reality of the enemy.

God is not interested in ritual as such, but in reality. Ritual never *accomplishes* anything. Ritual, yes, for those who by a ceremony unite themselves, or express their union, with the reality (but even then there must be the *reality* in the personal life for the ritual to be acceptable to God).

But in the case of Christ—who was the *fulfilment* of all preceding foreshadowing ritual and of all succeeding memorial ritual, and who concentrated in himself the once-for-all *accomplishment* of all that has ever been or ever will be ritualized—there must be more than ritual.

There must be the living *substance* to which the ritual points: there must be the ACTUALITY. And that actuality was the overcoming and putting to death of Sin's Flesh, the Diabolos: the perfect, lifelong, victorious sacrifice by which he 'obtained redemption,' was 'made perfect,' was the 'heavenly things purified,' was 'brought again from the dead.'

We miss all the power and beauty of the Psalms\* if we cannot see in them his lifelong battle with the Diabolos—his 'sin' that constantly assailed him, but to which he never for a moment gave way. When we realize that anything short of perfection is sin, and any tendency or temptation to render less than perfection is enticement to sin, then we begin to understand his conflict and his victory.

For directing our minds to these glorious and saving truths, we have to humbly thank the God-given discernment of bre. T & R. Let us never lose them and slip back into dark orthodoxy. The easy and natural reaction is—

*"Does it really matter? Is it important? It will cause contention. It may divide us. We are all one big happy family. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'. Why agitate the Body?"*

\*(As bro. Roberts beautifully expounds in many places: 'Slain Lamb,' 'Blood of Christ,' etc.)

The majority have always followed this pleasant and downward path. We see disturbing trends of it today, as 'required' beliefs get more and more rudimentary, and shallowness is glorified as progress and 'simplicity.' The 'contentions' of the past, which kept the Truth pure and the Body healthily awake, are being deprecated as 'contentiousness,' and pabulum is prescribed in place of strong meat: 'If you can't stomach Eureka, read 'Beside the Brook.'

Shallowness and 'simplicity' and harmony-through-apathy might be fine, if there were no errorists to eat at the foundations. But there always are. So the Truth must be contended for, and kept sharp & clear. The 'Let us have peace' approach is at best precarious in its rootless instability. God demands, and simple wisdom mandates, depth and foundations. This should be our life's only real interest. We haven't time for anything else. It's so easy for the Truth to slip away. There's safety only in rock-deep foundations.

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