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Editorial

Dear Sisters, Brothers and Friends,

Loving Greetings. In 1984 someone sent me a copy of the “Testimony”; a magazine that proclaimed then, and maybe still does, that it was a magazine “For the study and defence of the Holy Scripture.” Evidently the issue sent to me was entirely devoted to the Atonement and Ernest Brady’s views were mentioned in it, I wrote to the secretary/treasurer a Mr Barrett telling him that my father Ernest had written a short piece explaining his view of the Atonement more fully and clearly than anything that the Testimony articles produced, and I asked if I could be supplied with a full address list of their readers so that they could all be sent a copy of the article.

I added that in the Christadelphian world there had been much work attempting to convert people of other religious persuasions, and for that reason they would not wish to stand in the way of someone who wished to the same for Christadelphians and Testimony readers. I also said that no one who is convinced they have the truth is ever fearful of a different point of view or a new idea.

I received the following reply from a Mr Benson who was then the publishing editor.

Thank you for your letter. I do not think we would be happy to provide an address list of our subscribers for the purpose which you mention. I think our readers ought to be able to be assured that their names and addresses are held only for the purpose of receiving the Testimony itself, and are not available to those whether inside or outside the Christadelphian body who want to circulate literature. The Testimony fully upholds the doctrines set out in the BASF and it is not our policy to allow doctrines other than those promulgated in our magazine. I am aware of your father’s views on the Atonement assuming they remain as previously stated in various pamphlets circulated they are not in accord with the BASF. It follows that we would not wish to do anything that would assist your father to put forth his views. You are of course free to send literature to the magazine and to request that it be considered for publication, but our policy is as stated at the front inside cover.

To this I replied:-

Dear Mr Benson,

Thank you for your letter in answer to my request for an address list. Sadly your reply was as I fully expected it would be: I wrote only with a faint hope because some of your long standing members have led me to believe that as a community Christadelphians are open minded Bible students, seekers after truth and ready to hear and learn. Some Christadelphians even say to my everlasting amazement “really we all believe the same thing.” I see that at least you have grasped there is not so much differences as chasms between us. Your notepaper is headed “A magazine for the study and defence of the Holy Scripture.” But you also say in your letter that the Testimony is devoted to upholding the doctrines set out in the BASF. It is of course impossible, in my view, for you to defend both the Scriptures and the BASF when the Statement of Faith contradicts Scriptures so blatantly, To be believable and truthful you should change one or the other, your motto or your doctrines. In the study of the Atonement as it appeared in the Testimony edition I see all Christadelphians still cling tenaciously to the obnoxious and well known Roman Catholic doctrine of original sin: an idea invented for the idle and weak willed by one of the same type named Augustine. His followers including Christadelphians and Roman Catholics insist on blaming God for their own and everyone’s failings and shortcomings because, so the theory goes, God made human nature sinful after Adam’s disobedience. It is not surprising that some people turn away from religion and religious ideas when they discover it requires them to believe in such a fatuous proposition, one that flatly contradicts all natural laws and logic, and removes the possibility of true free will operating in any of us.

As someone who takes the full blame for their own many shortcomings and failings — I would not dare blame God, my flesh or Adam -- perhaps you can explain to me for as yet no one else has been able to, why if Adam could sin before he was changed physically, which he undoubtedly did: why did he have to have his flesh changed afterwards? For if the purpose of the change in human flesh was to make him and us inevitably sinful, it seemed to be working perfectly well in that respect before the “change” or he could not have sinned in the first place. Could it be that flesh is the same as it has always been before and after Adam’s sin? What changed was our precious relationship to God. As Christadelphians you ought seriously to consider shaking yourselves free from the Roman Catholic church and her evil influence. Even your policies in running a magazine sound rather like a Papal encyclical of exclusivity and infallibility. Would you like to read my father’s article on the Atonement?

H.B.

Mr Benson did not respond further. All this took place 25 years ago and as Russell is experiencing the internet is changing things. Magazines and managing brethren may wish to keep the lid on such discussions and views that are contrary to the BASF but people are finding out and debating matters for themselves at last. When my parents realized more than 60 years ago the Christadelphians were mistaken and tried to tell them so it was a miserable and vain task. It mostly produced enmity and on occasions downright hatred. But God, as it has been said, moves in a mysterious way and so perhaps the new technology that is the internet will open up the way for many whose minds were closed or deprived of the true bread, and they will at last be fed and not with stones but with the true bread of life.

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. 1 Corinthians 1.18-19.

Love to all. Helen Brady.

The Federal principle

The First Principle of the Oracles of God.

All are agreed that according to Romans 5 alone, the posterity of Adam are all involved in the Sin of Adam, and in the Death Sentence incurred by him, on account of what is known as the “Federal Principle” being employed by God, but regarding the manner of its application there is a variety of opinions.

The ‘majority’ understand it to be visited upon us through our physical organism which, if such procedure were attempted by mankind, would bring down the righteous anger of every son upon the “Unjust Judge.” Moreover, they would realise in it the dastardly and horrible process of “killing by slow poisoning,” and again, the crown of sufferers would pounce upon the “Unjust Judge” and consider themselves “Justified” in putting him out of existence as positively unfit to live.

Shall we, then, accept such a horrible story in connection with the procedure of the Just God who “so loved” that He gave His “Own” Beloved Son to save the unfortunate trespasser from his merited punishment, even though He knew that he wilfully transgressed? Would it not be more consistent with the attributes of a Just God if He, on account of the Federal Principle under which we, the members, are accounted parts of the Federal Body of which Adam is the Federal Head, included us under the sentence of death for Adam’s sin when we became enlightened, and from which we can instantly become extricated by rendering obedience to the appointed form of doctrine for our participation in the redemption therefrom, effected typically in Eden, Antitypically on Calvary? (Genesis 3:21, Revelation 13:8, 1 Peter 1:18, Revelation 5:9.)

This understanding of it excuses the unenlightened, leaving them in the natural sphere, to die as do the beasts (Ecclesiastes 3:19) from physical exhaustion... and is decidedly a more just procedure than the “Slow Poisoning” assumption, is it not?

The reason for God introducing this Federal Principle seems to have been for the exercise of our faith in His promise to provide a Ransom Price (Genesis 22:8) and to incite our love toward Him for His merciful act and wonderful love toward Adam, but for which we had never come into existence at all, because had Adam been slain instead of the Lamb in Eden, we had perished in Adam.

Understanding and applying this Federal Principle in this manner shows plainly why only one random sacrifice was requisite to extricate the One Adam (Body) from the effects of the One Sin committed in Eden, and why “without the shedding of (Christ’s) Blood” no remission - and reveals a perfectly Just and gracious God, a loving “Father,” and exonerates Him, also accounting for the One literal participant in the redemption effected thereby, and the many symbolical participations therein, does it not?

Personification of Sin

It seems evident that the language of personification was adopted to enable us more readily to perceive the absolute necessity for, and to understand, the scheme of redemption. Having become by transgression the “Servant” of, and sold under Sin, he became this sin’s possession. No provision for remission having been made in the Edenic Law, Adam could do nothing to obtain, and having become the lawful possession of another, there was no other honourable means whereby his release from this “Bondage” could be effected by “redemption” which necessitated that an equivalent be paid in Ransom.

How could this transaction be accomplished in harmony with the attributes of a Just God, other than by making provision whereby His Second Son could attain to a right Resurrection again? Having honourably secured this Son’s willing co-operation He then could honourably pay over to “Mr.” Sin the life “in the blood thereof” (Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 1:18,) of this Son as a Ransom to Redeem His brother, could He not?

“O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?”

Not a single soul of Adam’s race need have perished. “Thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory.”

Brother A. Wilson

Consideration of Some Items to Support The Federal Principle

Without what has been written solely on the Federal Principle, we present the following for consideration, which every honest person is bound to admit – only biased minds will oppose them.

We intend to quote Dr. Thomas and others who have a dual idea that it is a physical as well as a legal application.

First, we are sure that no Scripture can be brought forward to prove a constitutionally physical change in Adam after he had sinned. This should be sufficient to discard it –and a great help for any reader to see and accept the constitutionally legal change or principle.

“The Sin” is a mighty factor if you are willing to recognise the difference between “the Sin” (singular) of the world (John 1:29) in contrast to “the sins” (plural) of the world (1 John 2:2).

You are bound to recognise that Jesus saved Adam, and that Romans 5:12 proves that by Adam Sin (The Sin – Emphatic Diaglott) entered. The First Sin

It is impossible to say “The Sin” if all are sinners by their own actions. Hence, ‘The Sin’ and ‘the sins of the world’ must be understood in their respective position.

Much could be written upon this, but we conclude by showing that in the Justice, Wisdom and Love of God there was ONE sin that made or constituted all sinners, and ONE righteous Act which made or constituted all righteous.

Next, there is the sin of ignorance. Here is another striking factor to the same end. The responsibility question is very vital to keep all factors in their proper place.

Read “Apples of Gold” items 17, 18, 54, 55, and 56, and I am sure that a better explanation cannot be given.^{*(See note below)}

“But upon what principle can this which Jesus did become effective for the forgiveness of any sins? The answer is that God is dealing with the race of mankind upon a Federal principle. This is explained in Romans 5:12-21, the consideration of which must be left until we come to that section.” (John Carter, August 1929, page 350).

In addition we quote: “sin is defined in Scripture as “transgression of law”... But we have the phrase, “transgression and disobedience” – these are not necessarily the same.

The Jew who commits a sin of ignorance is a transgressor in the first sense of the word, but he is not guilty of an act of disobedience; but if, when such a transgression comes to his knowledge, he refuses to offer the appointed sacrifice, he is guilty of disobedience. Adam’s sin in relation to all posterity, may be considered a sin of ignorance: but that sin having been brought to our knowledge, if we refuse to avail ourselves of the only means of atonement, we are guilty of disobedience.

When Adam had sinned he was a servant of sin. In the exact language of Scripture, he was SIN’S bond slave: he was sin’s flesh. This legal bondage of his own contracting made his children captives of sin like himself. (See Exodus 21:4).

“Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.” (Ephesians 4:18).

“Gentiles in the flesh... that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” (Ephesians 2:12).

I can remember reading the “Law of Moses” in my younger days and how I felt like those who made a stout revolt against the sin of ignorance. (page 240). It is the same today regarding the Federal Principle, but if anyone will only accept God’s dealing with the race, they will soon find like the sin of ignorance, His Justice, Wisdom and Love is magnified above all the wisdom that reject them.

“All sinned in Adam” can only mean and apply to ‘All’ upon the Federal Principle; it cannot apply to babes and the ignorant as actual sinners. By the knowledge of the law sin is known. The Federal Principle fits every aspect of righteousness.

If a person died under the law of ignorance not knowing it, it would not be held against him. If he died under the law of ignorance and refused to do the thing commanded of him, he would be held responsible; so the same justice can be seen under the Federal Principle.

ADOPTION. We would advise you to read “Two Sons of God” by E. Turney, page 65, and “Apples of Gold”.

From the moment of adoption in the gospel sense. . . the child in all legal respects belongs to the adoptive father. In the eyes of the gospel of deliverance all the natural born children of Adam are slaves - made slaves by him who was the first sinner, and therefore “made sinners.” All have sinned (in him) and come short of the glory of God. . . In this sense then, sin is (or was) our ‘lord’.

God sent forth His Son that we might receive the adoption of sons. Whence it is plain that apart from such adoption we are not sons. In this living picture (of the Jews - F.J.P.), we recognise two families – the family of God, and the family of Satan, and the entrance of proselytes by circumcision foreshadowed the grand reason of adoption, by “the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of sin’s of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2:11). The ceremonial of adoption consists in an acknowledgement of our enslaved state, the recognition of Jesus as the God-provided Redeemer, immersion for induction into the Name He bears, and steadfast hope of the inheritance defined in the Word.

Brother F.J.Pearce.

*This piece was written about fifty years ago and it is not known to which article Brother F.J.Pearce was referring.

Let The Dead Bury Their Dead

Matthew 8:22

If the word “dead” in the above quotation, means the same in each case, then we are asked to believe in the impossible. Is it not obvious, therefore, that a correct understanding of the different deaths in Scripture is essential before we can harmonise the same?

We venture to say that if the knowledge of the different states of death be absent, then we can close the good Book and store it away as being incomprehensible.

Dr. Adam Clarke says re this verse, “It was usual for a Jew to consider a man dead who had departed from the precepts of the law, and on this ground every transgressor was reputed, a dead man.”

This verse had no difficulty for the Jew – “leave the spiritually dead to bury their naturally dead.”

Before one can spiritually die one must have been made spiritually alive. “God is not the God of the dead but of the living.” The spiritually dead, though naturally alive, have no life in them, although they had

seen and heard the Prince of Life and have done many wonderful things in His name, they will hear those dreaded, words: “depart from me, I never knew you.”

“If one died for all, then were all dead.” Is this state of death the same as those above (spiritual, or natural)? We believe it is neither, but rather that which passed upon all men by Adam’s breach of law.

All men, until enlightenment and acceptance of the Redemption in Christ, are legally dead, being under sentence, or constituted, (by law) sinners. After acceptance of the Redemption in Christ they pass from death to life. If, after enlightenment, the Blood of Christ is trodden underfoot, then they become spiritually dead, or twice dead, plucked, up by the roots (Jude 12); for such there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin but a certain fearful looking for of judgement which will devour the adversary.

None are the children of God, who are without knowledge, neither are those who reject Christ.

From this it should be seen that the dead in the first reference are those who are dead by the one sin of Adam, or those who had been spiritually alive but had fallen from grace; add literal or natural death to these former two and all three could be applied to “God is not the God of the dead.” (Matthew 22:32).

The “all dead” of 2 Corinthians 5:14 can only be on the Federal Principle – legally dead by the Law of Sin and Death which passed upon all men and which all are under, until passing from the death sentence to the life sentence in Christ Jesus.

Brother T. Gettliffe

A REPLY to “THE SAVING WORK OF CHRIST”

- an article appearing in “The Christadelphian Magazine” for May 1990 being part of a series under the heading of “Studies in the Statement of Faith.”

Not only do the Nazarenes appreciate this important and crucial subject but came to the conclusion years ago that Christadelphians, chiefly Mr Roberts, did not fully understand why Christ died, or he and subsequent writers and members of his community would not have subscribed to a document known as the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith which many sincere people have come to realise is a blasphemous degradation of the Son of God and of God Himself in many respects.

Robert Roberts was a chief pioneer of the Christadelphian community and made this document, (separated into thirty clauses) as a basis of belief and binding upon all members. It was not their Bible but his interpretation of it.

Seeing that the copy I received concerning studies of the B.A.S.F. only commences at Clause 12, I find it necessary to revert to some of the earlier Clauses.

At the beginning the writer states the scriptures of Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them except, and it is here where Clause 1 reserves the right to add, alter or take away anything that does not harmonise with what is their own teaching and basis of faith, and blame the translators for being biased. The translators were very sincere men and had nothing to gain, as did R. Roberts - to lose in his self-esteem, when the true meaning of the Sacrifice of Christ was presented to many of his members.

I have no disagreement with Clauses 2,3, or 4. This particular Clause 4 which describes Adam's creation from dust, a living soul or natural body of life 'very good' in kind and condition. God placing him under a law through which the continuance of life was contingent on obedience, I take to mean that if Adam disobeyed, then this natural life would no longer continue, it would be taken from him. But no. Clause 5

states, "Adam broke the law for continuance of his natural life and was adjudged (not unworthy of natural continuance of life but) unworthy of immortality." Was Adam immortal? Does the record or Clause 4 state anything about immortality? Does it not say a natural body of life - a living soul - its continuance contingent on obedience? Why substitute the statement "natural life" for "immortality"? Why say that Adam was sentenced to return to the ground but that this not only required a change of nature but a defilement of it in some way that only God could perform, and also transmit to Adam's posterity, when in fact, Adam needed no miracle or change to cause his return to the ground from whence he was taken?

If God performed this transmission of change and defilement upon Adam's posterity how could He justly condemn sinners? Some of the references to scripture in this Clause 5 are irrelevant to the subject and out of context; they are merely cited to make it appear as the teaching of the Spirit. When the contents of Clause 5 (not then adopted) were suggested to both Dr Thomas and R. Roberts it was rejected as unacceptable having no scriptural evidence, yet this very same doctrine was a tenet of the Roman and Apostate Churches at that time. Much has been written, and I could write much, and talk much to any Christadelphian who feels qualified to discuss the B.A.S.F. and some of them would be surprised, if not appalled, by the revelation of what they are expected to believe.

Examine one of the references in Clause 5 - 2 Corinthians 1:9 - cited as a proof of the sentence of death on Adam and Posterity. It is not relevant to Paul's position at the time he used those words. Paul had been made free from the law of sin and death, so how could what the writer affirms to be the law of sin and death, be in him and his fellow members of whom also he spoke? The writer says later in the article that God abrogated this law of sin and death in the case of Jesus only. Paul teaches differently. But Clause 6 states that "God conceived a plan of restoration and ultimate rescue of the race from destruction, without setting aside His justice and necessary law of sin and death, etc." The scripture teaches that Jesus was never under the "Law of sin and death" but that He was capable of natural decay and death by virtue of His nature being the same as the First Adam, a living soul. If, as Christadelphians teach, His nature was worthy of death how could a penalty due be set aside by suffering its penalty? After all, The writer must accept that every righteous act of Jesus depended on His physical nature, which he is endeavouring to discredit in every way possible out of context, where he quotes only the mind and works of the flesh. Matthew 15:19,20. Did any of these things come out of Jesus? If not, they were not in His flesh or in His mind, yet Clause 5 states, "A sentence which defiled and this defilement became a physical law of his being and was transmitted to all Adam's posterity." Why did the writer not quote the words of Jesus in Luke 6:43-49? Simply because it would destroy his case. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil..."

I think I have shown the main root of the Christadelphian trouble, as far as doctrine is concerned, to be Clause 5 principally; and many of those that follow are contradictory manipulations of men who, in a desire to portray Jesus as a man of flesh and blood, have reduced Him who was provided by God as the anti-type of the legally clean and unblemished animal types under the law, as a degraded and inferior polluted condemned body of flesh exposed naked on a tree before a jeering and leering mob of Jewish and Gentile rabble as a demonstration of what was justly due to mortal flesh. Yet one of their late members saw it fit to write in the book entitled "Redemption in Christ Jesus" that there was no injustice in Christ's death. A few years ago, in the 1980's, he was asked in a letter if he had changed his mind about this and other matters relating to it, but no reply was received, and since then both men concerned have passed off the scene.

The clauses are all meant to impress on the reader the condemned nature of Jesus but in trying to achieve this, a dual Christ is the imminent result. I have not the time or space to go into all the Clauses but will point out some of the contradictory and false teaching as expressed in the article. I would advise first a reading of Exodus 12:1-10, and Exodus 13:11-13, also Leviticus 16:5-24, and I would emphasise that Jesus was not the anti-type of Aaron, for on earth He should not be a Priest, seeing there were priests that offered gifts according to the law: serving unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle as shown to him in the mount by pattern, Jesus being the substance (heavenly) of that pattern when He passed through the veil into Heaven itself. Hebrews 8:1-6. Jesus was not a priest when He offered Himself as a willing sacrifice for us. He was the victim, not the priest, and He only died once, so their contention of Hebrews 7:27 needing two deaths by blood shedding, falls to the ground.

[I understand one or two of their female members at Gloucester have contended with F. G. Hampton in support of this general Christadelphian view, and this is the main reason why that body cannot explain the Sacrifice of Christ in the scriptural way people would be willing to accept, without having to impugn the Justice and Love of God.]

Clauses 9,10, and 11 imply that Jesus was, by His begetting, a dual person, a sinless man inside a body of condemned nature directing the body in its actions but not responsible for its production by God through Mary, yet as a separate entity, the sinless part of Him could be released by death and rise again after the condemned part of Him had suffered the death required by the Righteousness of God. This death, one must admit, involved blood-shedding, yet they believe the death required and passed on Adam and his posterity was natural decay followed by death and a return to corruption and dust. And in Clause 10 it is stated of Jesus that this is the death Jesus suffered as a result of Adam's transgression and of partaking of the nature of all men. If this is so, why did not Jesus see corruption and return to dust? Why did this "flesh-body" remain if it was condemned? Was his blood drained as being faulty? If so, why was it described as being precious? Has God purchased us with faulty, condemned blood, and a condemned man who, we of the Nazarene Faith believe had no choice in that nature? Surely every physical aspect and every spiritual aspect, which was moral and righteous and holy, describes Jesus as the man; not partly divine and partly human which was stated recently by a writer in the "Glad Tidings" magazine.

Clause 11 states that the message of Jesus He delivered from God to His kinsmen, the Jews, was a call to repentance from every evil work, the assertion of His divine Sonship; and the proclamation of the glad tidings that God would restore their kingdom through Him, and accomplish all things written of Him in the prophets. The fact is that the Statement of Faith asserts only part of His Sonship as divine, the other part is Adam's. And why a call to the Jews to repent of every evil work if, according to Christadelphian teaching, this is not possible in a normal human being? Why say that Jesus could not have been fully obedient if He had not been the Son of God? Was Jesus justified in calling Jews to repent from every evil way if He knew that they were incapable of it? Why do Christadelphians continually give people the impression that the ability to sin is a fixation of evil in the flesh, whereas sin can only be an act of transgression of Law? Where there is no Law there is no transgression. Adam could not have sinned therefore in Eden until Law entered. Keep Divine Law always in mind and you have the key to understanding.

Concerning Clause 12; to a person who is aware of the attributes of God as being just and righteous, plenteous in mercy, Truth, and, above all, Love, this clause teaches the opposite, and borders on blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and a declaration of the unrighteousness of God. It teaches that in the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Thing produced as a result, was by nature, more inferior to the animal types of which He was the anti-type (in regard to His death by blood-shedding) and not in character. He did not sacrifice His character; this was a preserved necessity for His heavenly Priesthood, but not so the life in the blood - this was shed for all. The writer denies this by saying that the death Jesus voluntarily suffered was not a sacrifice, but a demonstration by Himself and His Father of what was just and fit for a condemned, sinfully inclined nature begotten by the power of the Spirit of God, and the Jews and Romans were instruments in the hands of God for the committing of this cruel torture and death of a Son who had no choice in the nature He possessed, unless, of course, you believe Jesus was pre-existent with His Father and that Hebrews 2:11-17 supports this view. By this means God could neither condemn the flesh of Jesus, nor His sinless character, and be just, or the justifier of him that believeth such a doctrine.

Previous to his disobedience, Adam was a related Son of God by creation, as a living soul, or natural body of life, "very good," but his sin brought a sentence of death upon him but not a change of nature. To remove such a sentence a means of redemption needed to be found. God foresaw this from the beginning and foreordained His begotten Son of a virgin, who would voluntarily pay Adam's debt of life by giving of His own, and by this ransom restore to Adam a continuance of probation in relationship to God as an adopted son, but not only to Adam but all who were federally constituted under his sin but not actual sinners. Romans 5. This "legal and federal position" teaching of Paul, the writer refuses to accept, because the Statement of Faith clauses are the result of an indoctrinated obsession that sin is in the physical flesh. Even Dr Thomas misread and misunderstood the sense of Paul's words, and concluded that sin had to be an element of some kind in the physical flesh, and in order for it to be condemned, it had to be destroyed. The following is a quotation from Elpis Israel, page 128, "Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those for whom he died." Dr

Thomas also said, "Sin, whose wages is death, had to be condemned in the nature that had transgressed." You can see from the first quotation how Dr Thomas makes 'sin' a physical thing. The correct understanding of Paul's statement is, that Jesus, in the identical nature in which Adam was created, proved obedience to be possible by not submitting to temptation which could have caused Him to sin. Thus by being of this very flesh, yet sinless, Jesus justified His Father in condemning Adam's sin. Robert Roberts once wrote, "If there had been a Jew who had kept the law in all things, it would have been in his power, by dying, to cleanse himself from Adamic condemnation." With all his professed reading of scripture, either R. Roberts had never read Romans 6:14 and some of Paul's other statements, or he paid no heed to their message, i.e., that those who were under the Law were under the dominion of sin until redeemed, and this could only be effective by recognition of Christ in the offerings which were types of Himself. In Romans 7:9 Paul says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died, and the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." Yet Paul later said that as touching the righteousness which was in the law he was blameless. "If there had been a Jew who had kept the law in all things." What of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, or what of John himself? Is there any evidence in scripture that he did not respect the law in all things? If all that was required was a keeping of the law in all things, and death to cleanse from Adamic condemnation, then would not this have sufficed in the beheading of John, and saved God the bringing forth of Jesus to perform the equivalent?

All through the comments on the various clauses there is this theme of body separation from character, and absurd contradictions. For example, the writer says, "By His obedient sacrifice Jesus overcame the power of sin in Himself and showed He was deserving of immortality." This is more of your subtle teaching of sin-in-the-flesh in Himself, and of dying-for-Himself. Jesus need not have died, because there was no power of sin over, or in Him, other than a corruptible nature which did not come by sin but by the Creator. The "changed flesh" doctrine is a myth which neither Dr Thomas nor R. Roberts believed in 1869. The whole of the comments on these studies amount to the same old doctrines of defiled nature under the synonym of Sin, but wrapped in language which makes it appear more acceptable to the reader. Alfred Norris's theory, that the death of Jesus was necessary for the betterment of His body, that a change to incorruptible nature was not sufficient to arrest the temptation to sin, which might have happened if His life had not been cut short by crucifixion, according to A.D.Norris.

In another place the writer quotes Hebrews 2:14 out of context by saying "Jesus by dying destroyed the Devil "in Himself." He describe this Devil as sin in the flesh, and misquotes Ephesians 2:15 - "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, having by the cross slain the enmity thereby..." Also that, "He abolished death in Himself," whereas the statement of Paul is that Jesus, by His own sacrificial death, abolished the death which came by sin, for those who believed in Him and were baptised into His death; He did not abolish natural death, and this is why the writer has to add to Paul's words "in Himself," to suit his false view of the death which came by sin. See 2 Timothy 1:10.

One other important observation I have to make is the reference to 2 Corinthians 5:21 at Clause 3, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin..." The intention of the compiler of the clause was to make this read as though Jesus had been made sin at His birth of Mary by being born of her supposedly "unclean nature" which was believed by the compiler to be synonymous of sin. The question arises. If we ourselves are already sin, where is the need to make Jesus sin for us? How can we derive any benefit from that? We must learn from scripture what the apostle means, and we find that under the law, the sins of the people were placed upon the head of the animal to be slain by the Priest, thus the animal, by the transfer of their sins to it, was made sin for them, but this made no difference to the animal's flesh which was legally clean beforehand, showing that sin in the physical flesh is impossible. Jesus was therefore made sin in this way at the age of 33 years, when God laid upon Him the sin of the world that it might be taken away, and that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. If Jesus was made sin at birth, or as you express it, "mortal human nature," then you have to accept that previous to this He knew no sin, and must therefore have been pre-existent. Thus you support the views of the Trinitarian element whom you profess to oppose.

I am not by disposition a man of anger or heated temperament as the outspoken comments might make me appear, but it is the gratitude I feel for God and His Son in what they have done for me, that brings out the same feelings of Christ when He cast out the corrupters of the Temple, that in the reading of the Clauses of the Statement of Faith, has the same effect on me, "Make not the Son of God an unclean unholy thing."

If we are standing on Holy ground, as the writer expresses it, then in the words of Him who was and is Holy, "Take these things hence."

Hold fast the inspired Word of God and sound doctrine, and we need not be ashamed at His coming.

I remain, a sincere labourer in The Saving Work of Christ. P. Parry, also Fellow Labourers.

Christ's Appreciation

When we turn to the story of the Master, we see how gloriously Christ appreciated. That was His way of life that blossomed in His company. When the woman broke the alabaster box, He alone appreciated what it meant. When the widow cast her mite into the treasury, He saw in a flash the splendour of her giving. Others appreciated a cup of wine, He a cup of cold water, and that was characteristic of His life. Hating sin as no man ever hated it, because He knew the Father with such perfect intimacy. The wonderful thing about the Lord is how He appreciated the common heart.

He saw the worshipping woman in the harlot, the disciple in the despised tax-gatherer, the rock in the unstapled will of Simon.

Common things were beautiful to Him – the lily was more wonderful than Solomon; sparrows, a drug upon the market, were in His eyes fed by the catering of God,

Doing Nothing

Over against the virtues of a serviceable life stand in sharp contrast destructive qualities like cruelty, rapacity, and hatred. Against these and all their kin the Master loosed His wrath, but he knew well that the majority of folk are not so much tempted to fall away from the positive service into positive destructiveness, as they are tempted to fall between the two into negative uselessness. It is worth our while, therefore, to note the intensity and persistency with which the Master bore down upon this deadly sin.

No out-breaking evil is reported of the pious travellers, the priest and the Levite, who in the parable of the Good Samaritan left the robbed and wounded man untended in his trouble. One asks in vain what positive wrong they did. The Master's condemnation falls on them because they did wrong. They "went by on the other side." No oppressive wrongs are mentioned in the story of Dives (rich man), who feasted sumptuously while Lazarus lay uncared for at his gate (Luke 16:19-31). The indictment concerns only what Dives did not do. He was useless. No destructive vices are reported of those who stand condemned in the great parable of the judgment (Matt. 25:51-46). The indictment against them is a comprehensive charge of uselessness: "I was hungry, and ye did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not."

Everywhere in the teaching of our Lord this central emphasis is found. Sometimes He illustrates His thought in forms of business. No positive dishonour is charged against the man of one talent who hid his entrustment in a napkin while his fellows profitably traded with their capital and multiplied it (Matt. 25:14:36). He is accused by the Master of doing nothing. But in the Master's eyes no charge is more terrific. He was "a good-for-nothing servant;" he must be cast into "outer darkness."

Sometimes the Master, illustrates His thought in forms of agriculture. Three kinds of ground, stand heartily condemned in the parable of the sower (Mark 4:1-20). One was hard and would not take the seed, one was stony and gave the seed thin rootage; one was rich and grow choking weeds. But the gist of the final fault in every case lay here: the ground was useless.

Sometimes the Master illustrates His thought in terms of domestic life. A most amiable boy is pictured in the parable where the father asks his two sons for service in the vineyard (Matt. 21:28-31), "I go, sir," said

one, a winsome, well-intentioned, gracious lad. “But he went not, said Jesus. That negative is one of the most damning charges that can be brought against a human life. However well-intentioned, the boy was useless. The Master’s praise goes rather to the son whose words were not gracious, but who did the work.

H. E. FOSDICK.

Posted by Brother Steve Cook on Facebook: Christadelphians World Wide Forum:-

The following message came from Edward Fudge as his daily “gracEmail”. It’s really excellent.

“The Bible does not separate doctrine from gospel, but it certainly distinguishes between them (1 Tim. 1:10-11). The gospel is the good news of what God has done for us in Christ. Doctrine is divine instruction on how to live in response to what God has done. The English words “doctor” and “doctrine” share the same root. In earlier English, a “doctor” was a teacher and “doctrine” was the content taught. Even today, doctor’s degrees (Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D., J.D. and others) presumably equip one to teach aspiring professionals. The King James expression “sound doctrine” means “healthy teaching” -- instruction that produces spiritual health and wholeness, as opposed to teaching that results in spiritual sickness, weakness and retardation.

Healthy doctrine grows out of the gospel and is consistent with it. It produces pure love, a good conscience and sincere faith (1 Tim. 1:5). Unhealthy teaching produces conceit, a morbid interest in controversy and disputes about words. It results in envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions and constant friction (1 Tim. 6:3-5). The “sound” teacher does not need to be rude or frantic -- healthy teaching engenders calmness and respect.

Unfortunately, much of what passes as “sound doctrine” among quarrelsome and sectarian religionists is neither healthy teaching, nor is it any part of the good news. The true gospel frees us from the power of such teachers, and invites us to learn from Jesus -- who is the way, the truth and the life. The gospel is the good news of our salvation. Godly doctrine is instruction in righteous living for those who have heard and believed the gospel.

[© 2009 by Edward Fudge. However, we encourage you to help spread this message by every means possible, whether forwarding this email, posting or linking it on your blog, reprinting it for church use or making and distributing copies. The only requirement is that this gracEmail not be changed, shortened or distributed for financial profit.]

Post 2 Cliff York (Australia) responded:-

Now *THAT* is sound doctrine Steve. Thank you for sharing it with us.

Arguing over *bullet points* in an artificial structure like a Statement of Faith must surely be about as “unhealthy” as it is possible to get.

Thank God for the healthy Sonshine. Cliff

And this delightful piece came from the same forum (but a different ‘thread’):-

“It would be selfish for us to ‘move on’ while there are brethren and sisters still bound and blind. Jesus Mission was and is “to liberate captives, open prisons and restore sight to the blind.”

They become exercises for learning, for strengthening our spiritual muscles. The Lord's chastening leads us in developing the fruits of the spirit and those fruits are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. We don't just demonstrate these characteristics to those we like or agree with, as that would not be showing those fruits in the true sense; they are to be shown to every one. Love them till they ask why."

THE TWO JUDGMENTS

H. GRATTAN GUINNESS

There are several passages which teach directly the truth, that judgment to come will take place in two stages. Foremost among them is our Lord's own memorable declaration, John v. 24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." It is well known that the word here translated condemnation means judgment, and is so translated in the verse but one previous. The believer shall not come into judgment, when judgement is to be to condemnation. No, he shall not be condemned in the judgment, but he shall not even come into it. The same word is used in verse 27, and again 29, where it is translated "damnation." Now this resurrection of damnation, or resurrection to judgment, is clearly that spoken of in Revelation 20; and into that, our Lord Himself declares His people shall not come. There shall be a reckoning of Christ with His people, as many passages which shall be examined presently teach; but this is not judgment. Alford says:

"The reckoning which ends with 'well done, good and faithful servant,' is not judgment; the reward is of free grace. In this sense the believers in Christ will not be judged according to their works. They are justified before God by faith and by God; 'God is He that justifieth - who is he that condemneth?' Their passage over from death to life has already taken place, from the state of spiritual death, to that eternal life which they have already. It is to be observed that our Lord speaks in very similar terms of the unbelieving being condemned already, in chapter 3 verse 18. The perfect tense of the verb must not be weakened or explained away."

Let those who hold that there will be a simultaneous judgment of the Just and of the unjust explain this statement of our Lord. He does not say that believers shall not be condemned in the judgment, but that they shall not come into it. Can anything be clearer than this?

Into what judgment then shall they come? Into one, distinct alike in its objects, principle, results, and period, from the judgment of Revelation 20:12.

In the judgment of sinners the object is to determine their eternal destiny; in the judgment of saints their eternal destiny is already determined; they are, from the moment they believe, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, one with the Lord Jesus, possessors of eternal life, and heirs of eternal glory. The resurrection which precedes their judgment has manifested this; for when Christ their life appears, they appear with Him in glory, they see Him and are like Him, conformed to the image of God's Son. Now it is clear, that when these already glorified saints stand before the judgement-seat of Christ, the point to be investigated and settled is not whether they deserve and are to have eternal life and glory; grace has already given them these, though they deserved eternal condemnation: but the point to be investigated and decided is, how far they have been faithful servants and stewards of their absent Lord; how far their works, as saved persons, can stand the test of Christ's judgment, and what measure of reward each is to enjoy. Their common possession of eternal life does not forbid degrees in glory, and the fact that they are saved by grace does not forbid that they shall be rewarded according to their works. That this is a very different thing from the eternal destiny of each individual being made to depend on his own works, is evident.

The judgment of sinners is on the ground of "rendering to every man according to his works," — justice; the judgment of saints is on the ground of grace, for it is grace alone that rewards any of our works.

The judgment of sinners ends in the blackness of darkness for ever; the judgment of saints ends in “then shall every man have praise of God.” The one is a judgment of persons, the other of works only. The one, as we have seen, is prefigured in symbolic vision in Revelation 20; the other is spoken of in various places, in the Epistles addressed to the early Church. “Every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is”; that is, the searching, penetrating, judgment of Christ shall put the works of His people to the test, and only the perfectly

pure shall abide the test. Some works, like wood, hay and stubble, will be destroyed by this “fire”; but, even so, the man who did them shall be saved; his works may perish but he shall “never perish” according to his Saviour’s promise. In Roman’s 14, Christians are urged in view of this judgment, not to judge each other, “for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ,” not the “throne,” as in Revelation 20.

The period of the judgment of sinners before the Great White Throne, is a thousand years or more after the coming of the Lord. The period of the judgment of saints is fixed to be at the coming of the Lord: “therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Corinthians 4:5).

We conclude therefore that these two judgments cannot be the same, and that so far from being at variance with other inspired prophecies, the twentieth chapter of Revelation enables us to understand and combine previous statements, and sheds new light on many. Judgment will no more be simultaneous than resurrection; both will take place at two grand epochs, marking respectively the morning and evening of the Day of the Lord; the latter will be a resurrection and a judgment unto condemnation.

H. Grattan Guinness

The House of Israel

A Jewish Opinion on The Dogma of Papal Infallibility.

The doctrine of infallibility, or rather political supremacy, for that is what the doctrine amounts to, is built on a very insecure foundation, viz., a supposed superiority and special mission of the Apostle Peter. Not only, on the one hand, is the assertion in the New Testament of that superiority and that mission doubtful, but the links binding them to the persons occupying the Papal throne, and indeed to that throne itself, and singularly feeble.

To us Jews, accustomed to exercise an almost too elastic right of judgment on matters of conscience, and as impatient of ecclesiastical control at this day as we were in the days of old, it seems marvellous that intelligent and educated men should have accepted, except for personal purposes or motives, a doctrine as monstrous as Papal supremacy. There is no “title” that is worth considering.

Perhaps the only argument is the argument that rests on unbounded faith – and certainly Faith is, we know, immense and uncontrollable. Who can doubt it in this age and this country, when intelligent and educated persons actually believe in Darwin, Tyndall, and Spirit-rapping?

Strange it is that several Popes renounced the claim to infallibility, and in effect disowned the so-called privilege of Peter... Roman Catholicism does not affect to believe the infallibility of the head of the Church in other than religious or ecclesiastical matters, and we presume that, except in inveterate, papistical eyes, the Pope is believed to be no more infallible in scientific matters than in physical matters.

Even the most rigid Catholic believes a Pope can have a toothache by mischance, or can drop a teacup by accident, or can try to solve a problem by an illogical method, or fail in performing a chemical analysis.

The statement that the figure of the key was a metaphorical expression among the Jews, equivalent to giving ordination or authority of homiletical interpretation, is based on a quotation from Grotius, which is itself inaccurate. No such “mos” existed “apud Hebraeos.” There is no mention of such custom in the Talmud, or any Hebrew writing. The ordination ceremony was an imposition of hands (Sanhedrin c. 1).

The possession of keys is used metaphorically in the Talmud, to indicate the vesting of authority.

The expression (Isaiah. 22:22) is not a case in point, as here a chamberlain and not a teacher is spoken of.

The English spirit did, long before the days of the Reformation, reject the sway sought to be exercised by Rome in an Apostolic name on the minds of free-born Englishmen.

The question Catholicism and Protestantism - or rather between Catholics and Protestants - is one which generally affects the welfare of the civilised world, and is of special interest to us as Jews in its political bearings. With the religious question at issue, we have no concern. But the political aspect of the question is highly important in its relation to ourselves. In it is involved a momentous question - that of the maintenance of practical faith in revelation and of freedom of conscience.

- From Review, in “Jewish Chronicle,” of a work by the Rev. Canon Jenkins, entitled “The Privilege of Peter, and the claims of the Roman Church confronted with the Scriptures, the councils, and the testimony of the Popes themselves”.

Portion of a letter written to Brother Ernest Brady:-

I come now to the letter which tries to make Jesus a son of Adam; and surely this is a contradiction of all and everything that God has caused to be recorded concerning the son of his love, and of everything that Jesus testified of himself. The teaching of the word which is spirit and life will show that in no way, or in any sense was Jesus a son of Adam. I have only come across this unholy suggestion once before; that was in 1946, in the Barling articles in the Christadelphian magazine, in which J.Carter hoped the critics of Christadelphian doctrine regarding sin-in-the-flesh might be silenced once and for all. But oh what a foolish exploit it proved to be, resulting in many resignations from Christadelphian membership including the recording Bro., of the Ecclesia to which F.Barling was attached at that time, and what an avalanche of criticism and condemnation descended on the perpetrators of this calumny. Better to quote F.Barling’s exact words;-

“Disobedience defiled human flesh, and caused man to become a dying creature, sinfully inclined. All descended from Adam inherit this wholly evil nature, making them inevitable sinners, and doomed to death in consequence. This is sin-in-the-flesh, which makes obedience impossible and the sentence of death just. Jesus being the son of God was especially strengthened to enable him to overcome his evil nature. His death was an exhibition of what was due to sinful flesh. It was necessary for himself as a son of Adam and under the same condemnation.”

Thus F.Barling gives Jesus two Fathers, a fact that in all probability accounts for so much Christadelphian thought that he was indeed a hybrid, half-man, half God. But what saith the scriptures? Who does Jesus say he was? Who does God say he was? Let us make a start with Jesus; Matthew 16:15, When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the son of man am? v. 14. “And they said, some say thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias: and other, Jeremias, or one of the prophets, v.15, He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.” There we have the so definite declaration

that the son of man was the son of God. Yet it wasn't the end of the dialogue by Jesus and Peter, the most important part for us is to follow. And Jesus answered and said unto him. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and "blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. (v. 18) And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." The Father himself had testified to the truth; and Peter didn't question it; Jesus had declared himself to be the son of man; the Father had reaffirmed the statement he made at the baptism of Jesus, viz. "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." It was on this firm confession that Peter became a stone, one of those living stones which are to be fashioned and built into that holy Temple for the indwelling of God through the spirit, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; that same Jesus Christ is also the foundation stone and the head of the corner.

It also fell to the lot of this same Peter to write concerning those other stones who are to compose the living church of Christ, the members of his body, and in his 1st epistle, chapter 2, he wrote, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious. Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scriptures, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, is made the head of the corner; And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word. Chosen of God and precious; that was the glorious truth which God revealed to Peter and Peter didn't stumble at the word. Thou art the Christ the son of the living God; the revealed confession of the first of these living stones; and that must be the unqualified confession of any of the stones whose hope is to be a part of the glorious Church, the Temple of the living God. On this foundation will I build ray Church. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the son of God, 1st. John 4:15.

I have yet to find a word of scripture that asks that we testify that Jesus was a son of Adam, This rouses me to ask the question, Why do we have a bible? There is but one answer, and that is, that God's children may be taught of God, it is the only medium he employs to do so; and nowhere does the scripture go beyond the terse statement that Adam was the son of God; therefore the only relationship that can be claimed for them is that of Brother. Adam was created from the dust in the image of God, Christ begotten of God, and born of a woman in the image of sinful man. That is the picture given by God. The Lord Jesus has variously been described as the second Adam. The Apostle to the gentiles says, 1st. Corinthians 15:45, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit", and adds, v.47, The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. The first and earthy man was the beginning of the first creation; the second man was the Lord from heaven, the beginning of the new creation. Behold I make all things new said God; the Lord Jesus gave this information to John; "These things saith the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." Paul takes up this theme in his letter to the Colossians Chapter 1 speaking of the one who provides for our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins through his blood; He says, He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature; v.17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. v. 18. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead: that in all things he might have the pre-eminence v.19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.

Could anybody be persuaded that this was anything to do with the Adamic creation, a creation which was fore-ordained to perish. Adam was a sinner, the father of a race of sinners; Jesus is straightly declared to be separate from sinners; Let us just include another episode in this identity question from Matthew 22. While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, the son of David. He saith unto them, how then doth David in spirit call him Lord. If David then called him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word. Jesus was prompting them to face the facts, the truth of their own scriptures, the choice was theirs, was this the God given one in keeping with the promises to David? They couldn't deny it, they were afraid to accept it, when all that was needed was that simple confession, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, they refused, but at least they didn't label him a son of Adam. They weren't quite so bold as some of the scribes of our day. We know of course the prime reason why F.Barling had to do this linking of Christ with Adam act. It was because Jesus was the son of man, born of a woman, made in all points like unto his Brethren, the problem was however, how to have a man of this same structure who didn't possess this wholly evil nature, and be an inevitable sinner, thus making obedience impossible; for this man was declared to be without sin,

always obedient, but that fact didn't mean anything to the sin-in-the-flesh advocates, inherent defilement that was a part of human heritage, that made the destruction of all human flesh inevitable, all descended from Adam were afflicted, and so the woman who gave the Lord Jesus his human nature, being inherently defiled; passed on this defiled condition to the son of God. This is the unholy idea that the creature of whom God had said, it is not in him to direct his steps, has produced to account for his own failure to meet the demands of divine law, Mary was a virgin, and the meaning of the word undefiled, as per Revelation 14:4, These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. The divine description of Jesus must also have place; Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and we are forced back to the question; Why do men want to make Jesus a son of Adam? There can only be one answer, and that is to give point to the doctrines they have prescribed; but how it helps to establish that human nature is evil nature is a mystery that is in complete obscurity; and because Jesus was definitely and frequently styled Son of Adam, and as a son of Adam he must inherit this wholly evil nature, and its condemnation.

I ask any of the believers in these things to produce a single word of scripture which says, either that human nature is wholly evil or that it is condemned. I will go further, and ask them to find me the scripture which says any man is defiled except by what he does himself or refuses to do in keeping with divine law, or that he is condemned for anything but disobedience. The 119th Psalm, opens with the words, Blessed are the undefiled, but according to Christadelphian doctrine, there are no undefiled, nor can there be any such, for defilement is a physical constituent, and the only way to erase it, is by the complete destruction of the body. Therefore there are no blessed, no obedient, for obedience is impossible, and eternal life is impossible» Jesus the son of God told the young man who asked him, (What shall I do to inherit eternal life?) Keep the commandments, and the word that is truth records, that his commandments are not grievous; and this is the love of God that we keep his commandments.

Can we then visualize what must be the portion of those who by implication tell God that his ways are not equal; that he has endowed us with a nature that makes it impossible to keep his commandments. If that is our attitude, then we must accept that the punishment of death is indeed just. However, let us remember, it is not the will of God that any should perish; he has appointed a way in the which we may escape the penalty for sin. Sons of Adam may become the sons of God, but in God's way only. Ye must be born again, and that, through the operation of God, James writes, Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth. Peter writes, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And writes Paul, And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye are also risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead, That word surely testifies to the fact that constitutional defilement is just a pure invention, and that all the fleshly sins can be removed by a simple process ordained by God. First the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God, then the circumcision of the body of sins, being buried with him in baptism, thus dying to sin, and rising again to newness of life; no longer a son of Adam, (except in the physical capacity) but a son of the living God. What a simple act, but oh how profound in its accomplishment, if the operation is through the operation of God. That is the divine way of removing the stigma of sin, and all things are possible to him said Jesus. Its simplicity is for simple minds, and it provides no problems, no stumbling block for those who are taught of God, and they are in the unique position of being able to sanctify the Lord God in their hearts, and are ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear; because they believe God and the record He has given of his son Christ Jesus. There is as far as I know, no very prime reason given as to why ho is designated son of man some eighty times; and that is just what he was in all respects except his birthright and sonship. It could well be that this frequent use of this title was to prevent the impression he was a God or a demigod on account of the mighty works He performed. We might just note that Ezekiel is addressed by God by the same title; and he accomplished some wonderful feats of endurance as a man of sign; We might therefore accept without many reservations that the extensive use of the expression 'son of man' is to emphasise the fact that that is just what both Jesus and Ezekiel were, lest the imaginative minds of mere men should exalt them to a status above the natural order. We might just repeat that it is written, God is not the author of confusion, and therefore not likely to cause it to be written that Jesus was both brother and son to Adam. We might go on in this strain indefinitely, but one thing becomes outstanding, and that is; The word of men won't mix with the word of God; and that the dreadful heresy of the sin-in-the-flesh doctrine, has caused men to distort the truth of God to a degree that makes it unbelievable

and unacceptable. To bolster up falsehood needs more falsehood, and so this idea of Jesus being a son of Adam because he is the eon of man, is born in the hope that it might in some way give point a man-made doctrine. God doesn't say it, so why should I; he doesn't teach it, therefore I don't believe it. I am more than content to accept the revelation of the Father; that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God; and hope and pray that my belief may be accounted to me for righteousness. And I am fully conscious of what God says concerning those who add to his holy word.

I hope, my dear Brother, that you may be able to find a useful thought in this very disjointed effort, for it has suffered many interruptions,

Your Brother in the hope of the Gospel, T.E.Allen

A TEACHING OF THE NAZARENE FELLOWSHIP

That Jesus was a man in all points like other men, but by reason of His birth was the seed of the woman and the Son of God and therefore not a son of Adam and not under the condemnation passed upon Adam and all his descendants on account of disobedience.

That this condemnation is not a physical condition but a legal sentence of death for sin which passes upon all who through knowledge are doctrinally in Adam, and which will be executed upon all sinners and rejecters at the judgment.

That this subjection to death could only be removed, by the shedding of the blood of a spotless offering, which was typified in Eden by animal sacrifice and was remitted, in the forbearance of God, until the appointed time when the Saviour should come.

That being holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners and the Son of God, Jesus was in no way under condemnation and was therefore in a position to redeem Adam and all in him, by voluntarily suffering the penalty incurred and paying the price of redemption. His death being a willing submission to the will of God, exhibiting the Creator's love, and that salvation might be of grace and not of works, having suffered the penalty of sin for us, the grave had no dominion over Him and His Father could justly raise Him to immortality,

That all who recognise the justice of God by accepting Jesus as their sin-offering, and avail themselves of His mercy and love in giving His only begotten Son as their Redeemer, by putting on Christ in baptism, have passed out of condemnation and at the return of Christ will receive eternal life. Thus in His death, our Saviour suffered for us, the just for the unjust, and so removed the evil effects of the first transgression, and redeemed us to God by His blood, so that we might be reconciled to Him and receive forgiveness for our personal sins and the gift of immortality.

Some suppose

Jesus Died to Declare God's Righteousness

H.C. Gates (May 1968)

One of the reasons which Christadelphians give for the sacrifice of Christ is that he died to declare God's righteousness. If it is asked further what was this righteousness of God which was declared, the answer is given that God was righteous in condemning man to death. John Carter puts this view very briefly in the words – "Jesus shared the mortality that has come by sin, and then in a voluntary death exhibiting that the mortality was a righteous appointment of God." ("Christadelphian," April 1956).

We quote other Christadelphian writings:

“How did the crucifixion declare God’s righteousness? In that Christ possessed a nature under condemnation of death, so that there was no violation of justice in his death. It was not wrong for him to die, so his voluntary death declared God’s righteousness in not waiving the Edenic sentence unconditionally.

The death of Jesus was just, because, as Son of Man (John 3:14) he was under Adamic condemnation, and thereby God could lawfully require him to die. In his death Jesus declared God’s righteousness so that God, while remaining just to his own decree, could thereafter be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

- Redemption in Christ. W.F.Barling.

“It pleased God to require the ceremonial condemnation of this sin-nature in crucifixion in the person of a righteous possessor of it, as the basis of our forgiveness.

He was born that he might die, as the first necessity in the case; for thus was the righteousness of God to be declared, and sin condemned in its own flesh, as the foundation of all the goodness to come afterwards.

...he was the very nature condemned in Eden, and therefore wrong was not done when he was impaled upon cross.

...he bore our condemnation in his own person, as much as any of us, necessitating his death before he could be purified from the curse.

– The Blood of Christ – R. Roberts.

We see him on the cross. He is there according to the determinate counsel of God. He is there because he is obedient in all things, even to the death on the cross. Was it right that he should be there? Who will say it was not? It was right he was there because he was a member of a race that was mortal, dying because of sin. His submission to it was a voluntary declaration that God was righteous in involving all in death. The righteousness could only be exhibited by the willing submission to death of one in that position. Could the voluntary death of a sinner have exhibited the righteousness of God?

He must be of God’s providing, because only thus can the two things necessary be obtained. The one who dies must righteously die, must voluntarily die, and yet be sinless that resurrection might follow.

- Epistle to the Romans. John Carter.

The sequence of ideas underlying these quotations could be summarised as follows:-

Adam was condemned to (natural) death

All mankind are likewise condemned to (natural) death.

This includes Jesus for he was descended from Adam.

Jesus, therefore, in spite of his sinlessness, was likewise condemned to death.

His death was an exhibition of what was due to sin.

His death declared God was righteous in condemning all - including a sinless man - to death.

God was thereby vindicated.

This summary shows the view to be singularly lacking in logic. Firstly, how was the death of Jesus by violence an exhibition of the natural death due to men? Secondly, how does the death of a sinless man

declare God to be righteous in condemning sinners to death? Thirdly, how was God just or righteous in requiring the cruel death of sinless Jesus in order to vindicate Himself?

The view is not only lacking in logic, it is not found in scripture and is a perversion of justice and righteousness. The death of Jesus declares God's unrighteousness rather than otherwise.

Now the only verse which speaks of Jesus "declaring God's righteousness" is Romans 5:25 which reads as follows:-

"Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

This is the only verse. Somehow the meaning given in the quotes from Christadelphian writers must be found in this verse. We ask the reader if he can detect the doctrine that Jesus in dying declared that God was righteous in condemning all (including Jesus Himself) to death? Where is it? Can anyone find it? We cannot. The verse says nothing at all about God being righteous in condemning mankind (and Jesus) to death. We challenge anyone to show where the verse teaches such things.

What then does the verse teach? Firstly, we must remark that it is useless taking a verse out of its context and putting a construction upon it which is quite foreign to the general idea of the verses. Verse 25 is part of a lengthy argument extending from verse 20 to verse 28. This is seen when the two verses are quoted:-

Verse 20 – "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

Verse 28 – "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

The subject then, is justification - it is by faith and not by the deeds of the law. The word "justify" is closely related to the word "righteous;" in fact, we find the words used interchangeably in many versions. To be "justified" is the same as being "declared righteous."

Let us follow the sequence of thought from verse 20 to verse 28 –

- v.20 No man is justified by works of the law.
- v.21 Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.
- v.22. This is righteousness by faith, not by works.
- v.25. All have sinned (works of law could not put this right).
- v.24. But justification is free to all because Jesus has brought redemption (release from sin's grasp).
- v.25. God has set forth Jesus as a mercy seat (not the Mosaic system). The faith required is in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. Jesus has declared or manifested God's (way of) righteousness to be by faith (v.22.) not of works.
- v.26. God is righteous (just) in declaring men righteous who have faith in Jesus Christ.

It had been thought that a man could be righteous by carrying out the works of the law. Paul says this was not so. God has another and better system of righteousness which He has declared and disclosed in Jesus. It is a system of righteousness by faith. Jesus is the true mercy seat. It is His blood (not that of animals) which is efficacious. Men must have faith in that blood, that sacrifice. The death of Jesus was the declaration or manifestation of this way of righteousness – God's righteousness. The apostle makes the further point that this declaration (at this time) involved the passing over of the sins of previous generations - for which there was no adequate sacrifice until Christ came.

The verse in question (v.25) has nothing to do with declaring God was just in condemning mankind to death. It shows God's righteousness to be concerned rather with the manifestation of his love and forbearance in providing a means of release from sin's grasp and in passing over the sins of Israel. His righteousness is a system of faith not of works of law. This is what Jesus declared.

Christadelphian writers have done violence to this verse and completely reversed its meaning.

Jesus said...

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46, 47.

However great our knowledge of the scriptures, however well we may reason amongst ourselves, however much logic we insist on applying, differing ideas regarding the how and the why of Jesus’ work of salvation abound.

However, we see most people leave it to others to reason these things out and then accept their findings when Almighty God has extended the invitation to each one to “come now, and let us reason together,... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isaiah 1:18. Also His Son, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me.” John 5:39.

“God is not the author of confusion” (1 Corinthians 14:33); that appertains to man, and we can avail ourselves nothing, for if our understanding is to be opened it will be by Jesus Christ, and only then can we know the truth.

The importance of understanding was known to Solomon who, through inspiration, wrote in Proverbs 4:7, “Wisdom is the principal thing: therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.”

The disciples of Jesus were God-fearing, devout law-abiding Jews, brought up throughout childhood to know the scriptures. They were chosen for their sincerity and integrity, and for three and a half years were with Jesus knowing Him to be the Son of God, the Messiah, the Saviour, yet it was after the resurrection that “opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.” Luke 24:45.

To all who will be His disciples the exhortation is “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him? (Luke 11:9)

Russell.

A Greater than John The Baptist

The statement contained in Matt. 11:11, seems to be but badly understood, by many, otherwise well acquainted with the teachings of the Spirit.

I do not attach the some importance to a proper solution of this passage as I would do to having a correct appreciation of the Nature and Mission of the Christ, or to being well instructed in the doctrine of the Resurrection, or the like.

Nevertheless, as all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is useful in some particular way, I believe it is impossible for the Scripture student to derive the proper benefit from a passage he does not comprehend the meaning of, and thus, I shall briefly state what I believe to be the proper solution to the passage referred to.

Jesus says, “Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he”

The most popular idea seems to be that the least in the Kingdom will be immortals, and as John was then but mortal, this would account for the difference.

But this does not seem good reasoning.

The passage seems to refer to parties then living, and the prophets of bygone years, "He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven IS greater than he."

In either case, if mortality or immortality was meant at that time or now, everyone alike is mortal; and in the Kingdom every approved one will be alike immortal.

Jesus was accrediting all honour to John, but, in so doing He spoke of a greater, and if among those born of women, there has not risen a greater than John, with that one exception, the exception is easily found.

John had sent his disciples to enquire of Jesus if He really was the Christ. Then, as on many other occasions, the answer of Christ was not direct. He gave them certain things to judge from and decide for themselves. Then He addressed Himself to the multitudes to whom He had been preaching the Gospel, some of whom had received it.

Not, certainly, that they were in actual possession of the Kingdom preached; but their acceptance constituted them heirs.

But, in general, the people would not give the attention to the message of the great Salvation, and Jesus shows them how they had slighted both Himself and John, and showed their culpability in refusing the greatest that ever appeared in human form.

In Matthew 12:41,42, Jesus says, "the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."

They despised John the Baptist, and also a greater than John the Baptist is here – The Only Begotten Son of God.

But it might be asked, why could He be called the least in the Kingdom of God? I answer, the kingdom was only preached, and accepted or rejected, (not certainly set up); but among the few whom He had specially chosen as some of its aristocracy, He says (Luke 22:25-27), "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them: and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so, but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as one that serveth."

We have the idea well brought out in Philippians 2:7-11 where it is said, "He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is, above every name; that at the name of Jesus every, knee shall bow, of those in heaven and on earth, and under the earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

John and all the prophets were born of woman and through Adam as their father were heirs of sin and death.

Jesus was also born of a woman but having God as His Father was "without sin," and although "making Himself of no reputation," and "becoming obedient unto death," yet it was through His death that John, or the greatest of the prophets, could attain to life everlasting.

“He was rejected, and despised of men,” yet, although He was the stone rejected by the builders, was nevertheless, the foundation and chief corner stone of the House of God.

Much more might be added, but I think this will be sufficient to shew my meaning.

If anyone thinks he has sufficient reasons for dissent from my theory, these remarks may lead him to give others the benefit of his discovery; in the meantime, and until the contrary is proved, I will believe that the meaning of the passage in plain language would be, “Among them that are born of woman, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; and, behold, a greater than John the Baptist is here,” as in the case of versos 41 and 42 of chapter 12 already referred to.

Brother A.H.