

# MUSINGS ON CREATION

## Further thoughts on Genesis 1-4

The following essays are in the nature of a sequel to “**The Divine Plan – A reappraisal of some Christadelphian Teachings**” which, when published in October 1998 resulted in this writers disfellowship by the Christadelphian community, not as they untruthfully published in their magazine for denying Holy Scripture, but for questioning the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith which I had discovered to be based on the false doctrine of ‘Original Sin,’ a pagan teaching introduced into the early church by Origen and Augustine, the “grievous wolves” of Acts 20 which severed believers (and most Christadelphians) from their true Lord and ensured their destiny to be that of the second death in the “lake of fire” of Revelation 20, rather than the “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” which they confidently expect.

John Thomas M.D. the founder of the Christadelphian community, when challenged on his beliefs, is reported to have answered, “I will willingly change my beliefs if you can prove me wrong, but if I can prove you wrong, will you be equally candid and change yours?” Sadly this attitude no longer applies except in the small Nazarene Fellowship consisting mainly of former Christadelphians who have opted out, or been thrust out, after recognising the unscriptural nature of the present Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith first devised by Robert Roberts which rapidly became a means of maintaining authority over the community following the demise of John Thomas in 1871. We shall comment later on some other errors that have led to ‘Christadelphia’ becoming merely another branch of the Roman Harlot, or as one well placed member admitted to the writer, “We are principally a well-organised social club with pretensions to Christianity and widely different views on the nature of Christ, and man, and the gospel.” Roberts himself prior to his death expressed regret at the nature of the ‘money club’ he had imposed upon the community.

The doctrine of Original Sin seems to have originated in Persian and Greek idolatry about the time of the Babylonian captivity (Daniel was contemporary with Socrates) and teaches that all matter existing in time and space is intrinsically evil and perishable and subject to change and only Spirit is good, theories enlarged upon and expanded by Plato and his successors, whose philosophies in various deviations entered into Christianity via Origen (184-254A.D.) and Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354-430A.D.), not to be confused with the Roman Catholic priest 100 years later who ended up as Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishop of Hippo has the unenviable reputation of having “married Christianity with Paganism,” and notoriously prayed for the Holy Spirit to give him chastity and celibacy, but not yet. It is even possible that ‘Original Sin’ equates to that hateful and mysterious “Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes” spoken of by John in the book of Revelation.

The Daily Telegraph for February 12th 2003 carried an interview with the new archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in which he expressed his admiration for Augustine and his writings. The following day a letter from the Dean of the British Antiochan Orthodox Church at Cambridge appeared in the Readers Letter section of the paper as follows:-

“In your interview of Dr. Rowan Williams and your leading article (Feb 12) you show an enthusiasm for Augustine of Hippo that is not shared by the Eastern Orthodox Church. It was Augustine who first argued the *filioque* clause in the Nicene Creed - “The Holy Spirit who proceedeth from the Father and the son” - which was a major cause of the split between the Western and Eastern churches. Almost as bad has been Augustine’s influence on our understanding of humanity, believing as he did in ‘Original Guilt’ and therefore the tacit denial of human freedom. This teaching led ultimately to Calvinism and its pessimistic view of our humanity, and other Protestant aberrations. The logic of Augustine’s position led him to the view that unbaptised babies, because they are tainted with original guilt are consigned to hell. These views of human nature have always been rejected by the Orthodox Church.”

Christadelphians who possess a copy of the B.A.S.F. will remember number 22 of 'Doctrines to be rejected' where Robert Roberts declares that the teaching that "heathens, idiots, pagans, and very young children will be saved" is a teaching which must be rejected. In his letter to me dated 10th February 1999, before I was officially disfellowshipped, Michael Ashton, the editor of "The Christadelphian" magazine asserts:

"You have also written in your addendum that Paul's words about the entrance of sin and death into the world are not a universal principle applying to all humanity. But they are. You say they "cannot apply to stillborn, brain damaged, or very small children who have no conception of sin. But they are the only acceptable explanation of why some children never grow to maturity"!

Thus allying himself firmly with the error of Augustine. It was said of Mr. Gladstone that "he was able to convince most people of most things and himself of almost anything." The editor of the Christadelphian would seem to merit the same criticism despite the clear evidence of scripture which he continues to deny.

I have been able to contact the writer of the letter to the Telegraph, who despite his objections to Augustine still confirms that his church, with half a million members in the middle east Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, and for the last ten years with eight congregations in Britain and about twenty in America remains firmly wedded to the doctrine of the Trinity as well as other doctrines of men introduced by the so called 'Early Fathers' (see their website).

The doctrine of 'Original Sin' or 'Original Guilt' has never been unchallenged by Bible believers. H.Bettenson's "Documents of the Christian Church," 2nd edition, Section 6 is entitled "Pelagianism, The Nature of Man, Sin and Grace" and relates how Pelagius, a British monk, probably of Irish origin, came to Rome in 400 A.D. and was distressed at the low state of conduct there. Feeling that there was need of more moral effort he was shocked by the prayer in Augustine's Confessions. "Give what thou commandest and command what thou wilt." His teaching seems to have aroused no stir until he went to Carthage after the sack of Rome in 410 A.D.

Pelagius, *Ep. Ad Demetriadem.*, 16, *ad fin P.L. xxxiii.*

"Instead of regarding the commands of our illustrious King as a privilege... we cry out at God, in the scornful sloth of our hearts, and say, "This is too hard and difficult. We cannot do it. We are only human, and hindered by the weakness of the flesh. (Blind folly and presumptuous blasphemy)". We ascribe to the God of knowledge the guilt of twofold ignorance; ignorance of his own creation and of his own commands. As if, forgetting the weakness of men, his own creation, he has laid upon men commands, which they were unable to bear. And at the same time (God forgive us!) we ascribe to the Just One unrighteousness and cruelty to the Holy One; the first by complaining that he has commanded the impossible, the second, by imagining that a man will be condemned by him for what he could not help; so that (the blasphemy of it!) God is thought of as seeking our punishment rather than our salvation... No one knows the extent of our strength better than he who gave us that strength... He has not willed to command anything impossible, for he is righteous; and he will not condemn a man for what he could not help, for he is holy."

Pelagius on Human Freedom;

Pelagius, *Pro iibero, arbitrio ap, Augustine, De gratia Christ! (418).*

"We distinguish three things and arrange them in a definite order. We put in the first place 'posse' [ability, possibility]; in the second 'velle' [volition]; in the third, 'esse' [existence, actuality]. The posse we assign to nature, the velle to will, the esse to actual realization. The

first of these, *posse* is properly ascribed to God, who conferred it on his creatures; while the other two are to be referred to the human agent, since they have their source in his will. Therefore man's praise lies in his willing and doing a good work; or rather this praise belongs both to man and to God who has granted the possibility of willing and working and who by the help of his grace ever assists this possibility. That a man has this possibility of willing and effecting any good work is due to God alone... Therefore (and this must be often repeated because of your calumnies), when we say it is possible for a man to be without sin, we are even then praising God by acknowledging the gift of possibility, which we have received. He it is that has bestowed this *posse* on us, and there is no occasion for praising the human agent when we are treating of God alone; for the question is not about veiled *esse* but solely about the possible."

Pelagius denies Original Sin:

*Pro lib. Arb. ap. Aug. De peccato originali, 14.*

"Everything good and everything evil, in respect of which we are either worthy of praise or of blame, is done by us, not born with us. We are not born in our full development, but with a capacity for good and evil; we are begotten as well without virtue as without vice, and before the activity of our personal will there is nothing in man but what God has stored in him."

Teaching ascribed to Pelagius and Coelestius:

*Aug. De gestis Pelagii, 23.*

[Coelestius, a disciple of Pelagius, was accused at a synod of Carthage, 412, and condemned. Pelagius was opposed in Palestine by Jerome, but his teaching was approved after two synods in 415. *Aug.d.g.P.* deals with the second of these synods].

Then follow statements alleged against Pelagius, which are said to be found in the teaching of Coelestius, his disciple:

- i. Adam was created mortal, and he would have died, whether he sinned or not.
- ii. Adam's sin injured himself alone, not the human race.
- iii. The Law, as well as the gospel, leads to the Kingdom.
- iv. There were men without sin before Christ's coming.
- v. Newborn infants are in the same condition as Adam before the Fall.
- vi. It is not through the death or the Fall of Adam that the whole human race dies, or through the resurrection of Christ that the whole human race rises again.

"Certain points were raised against him put forward on the mention of my name... That a man can be without sin, if he choose. That infants, even if unbaptised, have eternal life. That rich men who have been baptised are not credited with any good that they may seem to have done, unless they give up all that they have; nor otherwise can they enter the Kingdom of God."

Without passing opinion on these additional teachings or Bettenson's translations from the Latin (even if we were capable) it would seem that Pelagius and his followers may well qualify for that "first resurrection" together with the publicans and harlots of Matthew 21:31 and I believe those 7000 Christadelphians, who, as in the days of Elijah have not been 'conned' by the Robert Roberts Statement of Faith, and have been correctly baptised, or re-baptised, into the death of Jesus Christ (not please the faulty Trinitarian baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19). For when baptised into the death of Christ we forsake the Law of Sin and Death, and replace it with the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus; "Verily, verily, I say into thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3) and then continue to "walk in Spirit rather than Flesh" for it was Jesus Christ who

died for us, Deity did not die for us, nor did the Holy Spirit. Only Jesus Christ died for our sins, and it is into His death that we must be baptised.

### **First that which is natural and then that which is spiritual**

We are told in Genesis chapter one that “God (*elohim*- angels) created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them” although nothing is said in that chapter concerning the actual creation of Eve, and it is only in the next chapter, 2:7 that we learn how this “natural man” and his wife, 2:21, were formed and how they differed from the animals which preceded them. YHWH Himself (*Yahweh elohim*, not just *elohim*) breathed in his nostrils the breath (*neshamah*) of life (*chay*) and the man became a living soul (*chay nephesh*) (nephesh is translated equally in scripture as life or soul). What had been a natural animal creation with all the instincts of the animal to obtain food and drink, rest and sleep, sex in season, etc. as all other living things. The man and the woman taken from his side were now in receipt of a greater dimension of ‘life’ – (*chay*) life, the power to speak and communicate in the Hebrew tongue, to reason and decide their own course of action, to worship God, or turn away from Him. Although still a natural animal and therefore terrestrial creatures (as opposed to the celestial) with all the natural instincts, they now possessed ‘Spirit’ life or spiritual capacity if they chose to exercise it; they were now able to think and reason and communicate and decide on their actions; they were not to live out their lives dominated simply by their (*nephesh*) animal instincts. They were now fitted to “have dominion” over the rest of creation.

N.B. Greek philosophers read the word nephesh when translated ‘soul’ as the divine essence in man, and God as a distant abstraction, and anything immortal as essentially immaterial and immutable and not subject to change.

From Adam we are told in verse 22 was taken the woman, notice that the woman was taken from his side, so that it could be said of her eventual production of the Saviour Christ that He was never in Adam’s loins. He was ‘seed of the woman’ never the ‘seed of Adam’ like every other human being within the loins of Adam at that time. Only Jesus Christ was “from above” for God was His Father, not Adam, and no man has ever had two fathers. “Ye are from beneath, I am from above, ye are of this world; I am not of this world” (John 8:23) and yet He shared our physical nature and could be tempted in all points as we are.

Next we read that YHWH God “caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh thereof; and the rib which YHWH God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; and she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” It is reasonable assumption that Adam would look upon the woman as a man looks upon his daughter, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. It is only after the transgression and the divine provision of the animal skin(s), not only as a covering, but also as a ‘wedding garment’ that they came together as man and wife, ‘one flesh’ and that Adam called his wife Eve, because she was (to be) the mother of all living (3:20).

John Thomas (betraying his Calvinist background) wrote in “Elpis Israel” in the original first edition of 1850, page 74:-

“The eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” “The effect produced upon the woman by the eating of the forbidden fruit, was the excitation of the propensities. By the transgression of the law of God, she had placed herself in a state of sin; in which she had acquired that maturity of feeling which is known to exist when females attain to womanhood. The serpent’s part had been performed in her deception; and sorely was she deceived. Expecting to be equal to the Gods, the hitherto latent passions of her animal

nature only were set free, and though she now knew what evil sensations and impulses were, as they had done before her, she had failed in attaining to the pride of her life – an equality with them as she had seen them in their power and glory. In this state of animal excitation, she presented herself before the man with the fruit so ‘pleasant to the eyes.’ Standing now in his presence she became the tempter, soliciting him to sin. She became to him an “evil woman flattering with her tongue,” whose lips dropped as an honeycomb, and her mouth was smoother than oil” she found him “a young man void of understanding” like herself. We can imagine how she caught him and kissed him, and with an impudent face, and her much fair speech she caused him to yield.”

Although this passage has been subsequently sanitised (sic) by Christadelphian editors to omit the references to the pre-existence of the angels and is now entitled “Cain was conceived in Sin,” it is still Calvinism at its worst and John Thomas at his most appalling, although still favoured by a majority of “Logos” Christadelphians. The suppositions he then expressed led the doctor to make the outrageous suggestion that Moses had somehow mixed up the text and that Genesis 4:1, “And Adam knew his wife and she conceived and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from YHWH” is a verse that ought to have been placed between vv 6 and 7 of chapter 3!

Now let us see what the “Unamended” brethren in America (“Shofar” magazine January 2003, page 150) make of the situation:

## **SERIES: EDEN TO CALVARY essay 11**

### **Adam deliberately sinned on purpose**

The title above is not a mistake. Adam’s motivation to sin was different than Eve’s; he made a conscious decision, but she was deceived. What roles did they play in these events, what choices did Adam have, and why is he named the first sinner if Eve ate of the fruit first? The apostle Paul comments on each of these subjects.

Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Timothy 2:14). The apostles emphasis is on THE LACK OF DECEPTION ON THE MAN’S PART, which is to say that Adam transgressed consciously and deliberately, knowing full well what he was doing. And we wonder - why would Adam do such a thing knowing full well the consequences?

#### **Sexual Excitement?**

It has been suggested that the woman, because of the effects of the forbidden fruit upon her mind to know good and evil, became sexually excited and enticed her unsuspecting husband to eat also, that he might join with her in carnal activity conceiving Cain. We respectfully submit, however, that this suggestion is at variance with the apostle Paul’s comment on the Genesis account, “Adam (as contrasted to Eve) was not deceived.”

#### **He gave himself for her.**

It would seem more likely that Adam’s love for his wife was so great that he gave his life for her that he might intercede for her. After all, they were ‘one’ either to perish together, or to live in unity should the Lord have mercy. Since Adam is said to be a figure of him that is to come (Romans 5:14), we need look no further than Christ’s beloved bride for a parallel to this concept, for we read in Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the ecclesia, and (deliberately and willingly) gave himself for it.”

It seems that Adam, as the husband bearing responsibility for his wife, was willing to deliberately forfeit his own life to save his beloved spouse, or at least fall under the same curse in order to redeem her through God's mercy.

### **Adam's responsibility**

Along with man's position over the woman, comes a greater responsibility to bear - headship.

"The head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

"Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9).

The apostle Paul does not leave us in the dark as to why the man bears this responsibility. Because after all, "Adam was first formed" (1 Timothy 2:13). We remember the woman was given as a 'help' for man, having been taken "out of man" and "meet" or suited for his needs, "bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," not the other way around. And we are reminded of how Christ's bride is likewise taken out of him.

### **Adam, the Federal Head**

Like his wife Eve, Adam was now also liable to be slain. Please note the word 'liable,' not "required." And even though they were both liable, Adam, as the 'head,' bore the responsibility, for we read "by one man (not woman) sin entered into the world" (Romans 5:12) and "in Adam (not Eve) all die" (1 Corinthians 15:22). Adam's sin was not the first sin, it was Eve who committed the first sin. Nonetheless the Scriptures attribute the beginning of all sin to the man apparently because of his deliberate transgression in "hearkening to the voice of his wife." Adam was not deceived" and because of his position of responsibility became the Federal Head of all sin."

These observations in the January 2003 issue of the "Shofar Magazine" correspond closely with what the Nazarene Fellowship (and their predecessors) have been endeavouring to get over to Christadelphians since the days of Edward Turney, reviled and abused by Robert Roberts and his successors in "The Christadelphian" magazine, whose editors have never allowed such scriptural truth to appear in their pages as witness the regular appearance of editorial attempts to justify the B.A.S.F. although it is fair to say that John Carter, towards the end of his tenure, and Lou Sargent throughout his brief editorship both appear to have leaned towards Nazarene teachings due to the criticisms of Ernest Brady.

Let me now reproduce a letter I received shortly after the publication of "The Divine Plan." I will not give the name of my correspondent as he is still alive, although now old and frail and I would not wish him to receive the abuse I received from some Christadelphians at that time:-

"The brotherhood's divided and contentious history is excused on many grounds – concern for Truth; too much tolerance (or too little); and human nature's perversity, which makes perfection unobtainable. But we would suggest there is an underlying cause which we have failed to recognise, and that, until we do, God's full blessing, and sweet fellowship, are things we can talk about, but not experience.

With the death of John Thomas, the brotherhood became organised in its present form by Robert Roberts. The personal influence that he exercised can be judged by documents of his, which became binding on us: "The Instructor," "Ecclesial Guide," and "The Declaration." "The Bible Companion," and of course our present Statement of Faith. Any errors, or

excesses, we have readily excused on the grounds of his ability, and his total commitment; and also because he considered apostasy as inevitable before Christ's very imminent return.

Division became rife, and was accepted almost fatalistically. As it still is today. His insistence that his own definitions and hypotheses be used as the touchstone of "Truth" caused a particularly sad and unnecessary division - the Suffolk Street. The proof of this lies of course, in the "reunion." And yet, our loyalty to Robert Roberts would admit of no fault on his part, and little in the way of repentance at a grievous wrong.

A similar division - which still subsists - was caused by the equally futile difference of definition on the matter of "responsibility," between Brother J.J. Andrew and Brother Roberts, to not agree with Brother Roberts's definition was to be branded a heretic.

Another division came about when Brother Roberts labelled Brother Turney a "Renunciator" (one who denies that Jesus was of our nature). Now the sad irony of this mistake lies in the fact that Brother Turney held the same views of Jesus' nature as Brother Thomas (and the brotherhood in general) until Brother Roberts brought in the view (rejected by Brother Thomas in 1869) of "sentence implanted corruptibility and bias to sin." This view we still (supposedly) hold (clause 5). A view which was a matter of disfellowship in 1869, became a matter of fellowship in 1874 (John Thomas died in 1871).

Brother Roberts' definition "a sentence which defiled, and became a physical law of (Adam's) being" (Clause 5) implies that: because Adam, in his "very good" state, sinned voluntarily God planted a bias to sin in him which made him (and us) "very bad." And so he was made to sin further, and was punished for breaking laws which God had made impossible to keep, i.e. a 'devil' implanted in us prompts us to sin according to Robert Roberts.

The truth of what I write is fully evinced, making Brother Roberts' definition (A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being) a "vital truth" which excluded not only brother Turney, but would exclude John Thomas himself (who had firmly rejected it in 1869).

Objective Bible study effectively ended with the advent of Brother Roberts; study became simply a matter of 'expositions' for e.g. "Eureka" was elevated to the status of an inspired interpretation of Revelation, and the writings of Roberts himself became 'the standard works of the TRUTH.' Any gaps in our knowledge we have been loath to admit - thinking it devolves on us to pronounce on every subject, seeing we have 'the truth'."

It was this letter, together with many similar communications received subsequent to my own 'disfellowship' which convinces me that there are still today, as in the days of Elijah, at least 7,000 Christadelphians worldwide who have not 'bowed the knee' to the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, so stubbornly regarded by the 'establishment' as a weapon to maintain order amongst the many and varied groups and fellowships who claim the name Christadelphian whilst refusing to share the table of the Lord with each other.

Article nine of the thirty-nine articles of the Anglican Prayer Book states

"Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and is of his own nature inclined to evil."

Now compare that assertion with clause 5 of the B.A.S.F. which states "Adam broke this law (the law of clause 4 which states that "The first man was Adam, whom God created out of the dust of the ground as a living soul, or natural body of life, "very good" in kind and condition, and placed him under a law through which the continuation of life was contingent on obedience") and was adjudged

unworthy of immortality; and sentenced to return to the ground from whence he was taken - A sentence which defiled and became a physical law of his being.”

The wording of Robert’s original Statement of Faith (clause 3 of the 1879 document) has been amended and shortened, but the blasphemy of Augustine and the Roman Church and her harlot Protestant daughters is still clearly demonstrated as a binding belief on all Christadelphians who adhere to the title of Christadelphian, and in fact there are still some ecclesias which require acceptance of the B.A.S.F. before they will baptise candidates.

As the late Brother Brady wrote,

“When one’s eyes have been opened it is truly astounding to re-read Elpis Israel and see how John Thomas’s enthusiastic conviction that human nature of flesh-full-of-sin carries him away and obscures the lack of evidence on which it is based. We can acknowledge with gratitude the tremendous value of the work which he accomplished, but we should be foolish not to recognise, once the fact is pointed out to us, that he failed to perceive and reject what is in fact the worst and most blighting error of the whole apostasy - the teaching that Adam’s sin physically defiled the human race and made it impossible for them to obey God’s commandments. We who have benefited from his pioneer work in bringing so much of truth to light again should be the last to blame him for failure on this one point even though it is so vital, but it would be the worst mistake to allow a misguided sense of loyalty to a man, or a system, or a community, make us false to our reason and to Christ.”

We will conclude this topic with an extract from the Internet, which we commend to all editors of Christadelphian magazines:-

## **The GOSPEL TRUTH**

### **Are men born sinners?**

**By A.T.Overstreet**

#### **Chapter 10 JESUS WAS A MAN**

If the doctrine of original sin is true, one of two things must be true, either Jesus was born a sinner, or he was not a man. Now, the Bible is clear on both points. Jesus was a man, and he was without sin. We know therefore, that the doctrine of original sin cannot be true. It is a myth and a lie - Why is this important? Because the Bible teaches that Jesus was a man and that he came in the flesh. However the doctrine of “original sin teaches that man, his flesh, and his bodily nature are corrupted and sinful because of Adam’s transgression. It is impossible to believe the doctrine of man’s inherited bodily sinfulness without either believing that Jesus was born a sinner or that he was not a man. For if the doctrine of original sin is true, either Jesus was born a sinner or he was not a man! Jesus was a man. He did come in flesh, and he was without sin. Therefore the doctrine of original sin cannot be true. It is a myth and a lie.”

For 125 years, since the encounter between Edward Turney and Robert Roberts, brethren have been trying to get the Christadelphian establishment to face the above facts. Not one member of the C.M.P.A. or the editors of any Christadelphian magazine will acknowledge our attempts, or even answer our questions, Why did Jesus say “I am from above, ye are from beneath”? Why did He tell His disciples “Ye are bought with a price”? Why was the virgin birth necessary? At best they will accuse Nazarenes of doctrines they do not believe in order to avoid Bible Truth and dismiss us as heretics. I have come to the conclusion that they all believe in the old adage, “Where ignorance is

bliss, 'tis folly to be wise" and so they prefer the bliss of their comfortable organisation rather than the wisdom of the Gospel.

**Genesis 2:8. "And YHWH God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made YHWH God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil."**

We are not told where Adam was formed, or when God planted the garden, or whether the garden was 'ring fenced' nor is there any reason to suppose that wild animals were excluded. For Adam was given dominion over such, as was Daniel when thrown into the den of lions, and it is reasonable to assume that when God created the man with both natural (nephesh) life, and spiritual (chay) life then imprinted on his brain cells would be all the necessary knowledge for practical existence. He would understand the principles of husbandry, he would recognise that when his grain was harvested he must store it for use during the next twelve months and so on. It is inconceivable that YHWH elohim would create a mature man to enjoy paradise without the knowledge that we normally acquire in the process of growing up and so the man was placed in the garden "to dress it and keep it" and we read "And YHWH God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." WRONG! That is not what YHWH said! Let me explain:

When translating from Hebrew into English there is a Hebrew idiom whereby doubling the word as both a verb and a noun implies certainty, surely, without doubt, and is termed grammatically the 'infinitive absolute' of which the following examples are taken from a very much fuller and complete treatise in the April 2002 "Shofar" magazine where the writer provides the Authorised rendering followed by the literal Hebrew which we have bracketed in italics.

Genesis 28:22. "Of all thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee:" (*"Of all thou shalt give me tithing I will tithé"*).that

Genesis 37:8. "And his brethren said unto him shalt thou indeed reign over us? Or shall thou indeed have dominion over us?" (*And his brethren said unto him Reigning shalt thou reign? or having shah thou have? dominion over us*).

Genesis 37:10. "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee?" (*Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren Coming shall we come to bow down ourselves to thee?*)

Genesis 37:33. "Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces" (*Joseph is tearing he is torn in pieces*)

Genesis 43:20. "O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food" (*O sir, coming down we came down to buy food*)

Genesis 50:24. "Joseph said to his brethren, I die and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land." (*Joseph said to his brethren, I die and visiting God will visit, and bring you out of this land*).

Exodus 3:16. God told Moses to tell the Israelite elders in Egypt "I have surely visited you." (*"Visiting I have visited"*).

Exodus 11:1. "afterwards he (Pharaoh) will let you go hence; when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you out hence altogether." (*driving he shall drive you out hence altogether*).

Exodus 19:12. "Whosoever toucheth the mount shall surely be put to death." (*Whosoever toucheth the mount killing shall be killed*).

Leviticus 24:16 "And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death and all the congregation shall surely stone him." (*And he that blasphemeth the name of YHWH executing he shall be executed and all the congregation stoning he shall be stoned*).

Deuteronomy 13:15. "Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city." (*"smiting thou shalt smite the inhabitants of that city"*).

Genesis 2:17. "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (*Hebrew: Muth te muth: dying thou shalt die*).

Genesis 2:16. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat." (*Hebrew: akal te 'akal: eating thou shalt eat.*")

The above examples, and there are many, many more in the Old Testament and some in the New Testament, where the word is used both as a verb and a noun and many of them are noted in the margin. But specifically look carefully at the last two examples where the translators, instead of following the normal English pattern of translating the infinitive absolute by the words 'surely,' 'certainly' or 'without doubt' have in the case of Genesis 2:16 rendered "thou mayest freely eat" instead of "thou shalt surely eat" as they do everywhere else. WHY? Why should this one verse admit the possibility that Adam may not have ever eaten of the tree of 'living'? The only answer is that this inconsistency arose because the translators, faithful workmen though they were, were all Roman Catholics wedded to the false doctrine of Augustine's "Original Guilt" and they had to make room for the prevailing sentiment that eating of the tree of life gave immortality to the eater. A basic doctrine still accepted by Christadelphians who believe in the B.A.S.F, as witness the rubbish published in the "Testimony" magazines of June to September 1999 where one. C.Maddocks asserts that "Adam was not permitted to eat of the tree of life" in clear contradiction of what the Scripture does say, yet confirmed as "sound Christadelphian doctrine" by the editor in a personal letter to the writer dated 18th July 2000! And even more recently in a booklet published by the "Endeavour group" entitled "The Legacy of Eden" whose author, in answer to some criticism writes:

"Symbolism does not always conform to our notions of logic. I was dealing with the somewhat ambiguous position of the Tree of Life in the narrative and the questions it raises. If Adam and Eve had continually to eat from it in order to maintain immortal life then why the urgency to expel them before they could eat anymore from it? What difference would one more bite make? If, on the other hand, they had not yet eaten of it then why not? Was it too forbidden? Would one bite really have granted immortality, and would the elohim really have been unable to reverse such a situation? Why did they need the fruit of a tree to keep them immortal if that immortality depended upon a right relationship with God? What was the point of the Tree of Life? The various elements in the narrative do not seem to hold together. Your quotations from Matthew 13:13 and 7:7 do not really clarify the issue – I admit I am puzzled by this part of the story."

There is no ambiguity in Scripture. The Tree of Life was on open access, and as we have pointed out God said in Genesis 2:16 (when correctly translated) "Of every tree of the garden thou shalt surely eat."

This well illustrates the problems that Christadelphians make for themselves when they accept the false doctrine of Original Sin. If the author of the above opinion had read "The Divine Plan - A Re-appraisal of Some Christadelphian Traditions" he would have realised that the Scriptures never make the claim that the Tree of Life confers immortality. That gift of God will only be granted to the faithful, as it was to their Saviour, at their resurrection. I believe the purpose of the Tree of Life in the garden was to maintain Adam and his wife in a non-ageing situation whilst in the garden, to ensure that no enfeebling of their faculties through age prevented them from "dressing and keeping" the garden and exercising "dominion over every living thing" "fish, fowl, and cattle and over all the earth" (Genesis 1:26). As my biologist friend explained, "When elohim created Adam, the particles of dust became 'living cells' of which the mature man possesses some 30 trillion or so, give or take a few trillions. Each differing type of cell has a differing life expectancy beginning with conception of the female ovum in the womb, from which some 30 differing types of cells are created multiplying rapidly, with daily reproduction far exceeding wastage throughout pregnancy and actual birth and until maturity when the process reverses and wastage exceeds reproduction until the body can no

longer sustain life and death occurs. Our hair and nails and outer skin all consist of dead cells awaiting replacement by others thereby proving that some cells have died even before actual birth.” Another fact denied by those articles in the “Testimony” which asserted that Adam had no dying cells until he sinned.

The Tree of Life, according to the book of Revelation produced its fruit ‘every month’ and its leaves were “for the healing of the nations” in the Kingdom. It should be perfectly obvious to all who are not blinded by the pagan theories of Christendom that the purpose of the Tree of Life was to maintain Adam and Eve in a state of physical maturity where the daily production of their living cells equated with the daily wastage as they ate of the fruit. When that was denied and they were thrust out of the garden the ageing process (corruption), with which Adam had originally been created revived and the first pair began to experience the fruits of their transgression. “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow (at the loss of their former idyllic existence in the garden, sorrow is not here to be understood as the pangs of childbirth, to many primitive tribes childbirth is merely a normal physical process) thou shalt bring forth children, thy desire shall be to thy husband. He shall rule over thee.” Now they had to struggle to provide their daily food. Now there were other trees, not just those “pleasant to the sight and good for food.” Now it was a continual battle against thorns and thistles with an ever increasing family to provide for. “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.” Yet this sentence upon Adam only continued until the time of Noah, for we read in Genesis 8:21 that after the flood when Noah built an altar and sacrificed burnt offerings of every clean beast and fowl that “YHWH smelled a sweet savour, and YHWH said in his heart I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Note that the imagination of the heart is from his youth, not from birth as believers in “sinful flesh” such as the editor of “The Christadelphian” profess to believe. Note also that Noah knew the distinction between ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ beasts although no distinction had been mentioned in Scripture at that time!

“His servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey.” There is not the slightest hint in the Bible of any change in the physical nature of Adam. He was still as he had been created “Very Good” in mental and physical form, or ‘in kind and condition’ as John Thomas put it. The only change was in his relationship with his Creator; he had alienated himself from his Creator. The Christadelphian theory that God implanted a ‘bias to sin’ in his physical flesh is the result of that lying doctrine of ‘Original Sin’ embraced by Thomas and Roberts. The simple result of that changed relationship was that the serpent source of their transgression became the symbol of that ‘constitutional’ change of relationship. They were now “In bondage” to that symbol, legally and technically the property of Sin, Satan, the Devil; the personification of that abstraction, with all the rights and obligations as set out in Exodus 21. No longer could they have unfettered access to Deity; their approach must now be through blood sacrifice. The animal skins with which they were now clothed were a continuous reminder, not only that an innocent animal had suffered violent death instead of them, but of that mercy with which their transgression had been covered and contact preserved by blood sacrifice, “mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 3:13). Note their transgression was now metaphorically ‘covered,’ it was not ‘taken away.’ The taking away had to await the nailing to the cross of our Saviour when He was made a sin-offering for us and paid the debt which Adam could not pay. By His crucifixion Jesus Christ released from the bondage of ‘Sin’ all humanity, or as John puts it “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” He surrendered His natural, animal nephesh life, that He might rise in the full glory of His chay life, or if you want the Greek, He surrendered His psuche life (John 10:11), that he might rise in the full glory of His *zoe* life (John 3:16). As our Brother McKinlay has said,

“Zoe is that fullness of life that those in Christ have now and it is held in trust by Jesus” - “He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life (*zoe*) and shall not come into condemnation” (John 5:24). “Ye are dead and your life (*zoe*) is hid with God”

(Colossians 3:3). Our zoe life is written in the Book of Life to be revealed in all its fullness at the return and revelation of the Lord, “For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living (zao), for all (the quick [zao] and the dead), live unto him (Luke 20:38).”

In the course of my 60 years as a Christadelphian, and 5 years as a heretic, I have read most of the attempts by Christadelphians to explain the atonement. All of the editors of “The Christadelphian,” “The Logos,” “The Testimony” and sundry other publications of the popular writers of the last century, Peter Watkins, W.F.Barling, H.Tennant, A.D. Norris, etc., and members of the C.M.P.A., I cannot recollect one of them who recognised the importance of the two types of ‘Life’ with which mankind was created, and the three, or possibly five, different types of ‘death’ mentioned in the Bible. I do not doubt the sincerity of such men, but without such knowledge it is impossible to appreciate the true meaning of the gospel. John Thomas certainly recognised the vital nature of the Federal approach despite the many contradictions in his writings, Roberts is reported to have mentioned it in 1889, since when it has disappeared from the minds of Christadelphian writers.

**“If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then YHWH hath not sent me. But if YHWH make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertaineth unto them, and they go quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked YHWH” (Numbers 16:29).**

The common death of all men at the conclusion of their natural span from old age, or the visitation of the sword, famine, wild beasts, plague or pestilence (Ezekiel 14:12-23) is when we return to the dust from which we were created, “For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other, yea, they have all one breath (ruach); so that a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast: for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are of dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit (ruach) of man that goeth upwards, and the spirit (ruach) of the beast that goeth downward to the earth” (Ecclesiastes 3:19-21). Our natural animal human nephesh/psuche life returns to dust, whilst our ‘spiritual’ chay/zoe life returns to our Creator who holds it in trust for those ‘in Christ’ to be revealed in its fullness when Christ returns to establish His Kingdom and “this corruptible (living saints) must put on incorruption and this mortal (sleeping saints) put on immortality and death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15).

But Moses spoke of another ‘death’ in Numbers 16 when God would make a ‘new thing’ and open the earth to receive the bodies of Korah and his company. (Not their children, for Numbers 26:11 informs us that the children died not). Clearly this was a foreshadowing of that second death at the end of the thousand years according to Revelation 20:6 and 14 and 21:8. This constitutes ‘judicial death’ death for transgression, death on account of sin, the death promised to Adam if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the type of death suffered by Jesus Christ, the Just for the unjust, when He paid the price for Adam’s redemption from bondage to Sin and allowed Himself to be murdered by ‘wicked men,’ and restored that link between man and God which Adam had forfeited by transgression.

There is a third type of ‘Death’ for Jesus spoke of those who were “dead whilst alive” and said, “Let the dead bury their dead,” and Paul said to Timothy “she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”

Some would add a fourth type of ‘death,’ symbolic death, when we are baptised into the death of Christ, but recognition of three types of death, and particularly the difference between ‘judicial death’ as promised in Eden if Adam ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the common death by age or visitations will be sufficient to recognise the distinction of the wonder and love of God when we transfer (at baptism into the death of Jesus Christ) from the law of sin and death to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus so beautifully set out in Romans 5: “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came on all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life, for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offence

might abound, but where sin abounded grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

At this point it may be useful to repeat what Nazarenes understand this central feature of the gospel to be. When Adam sinned he switched masters, for ‘His servants we are to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey’ (Romans 6:16). Henceforth Adam and Eve and all their progeny became servants to ‘Sin,’ ‘Satan,’ the ‘Devil,’ whose only wages are death. We have no choice in the matter because we were all in Adam’s loins when he sinned, even though we may be as personally righteous as Noah, Daniel, or Job, for ‘God hath concluded all under ‘Sin’ that he might have mercy on all.’ Mankind was totally unable to escape that legal bondage until the time came for a near Kinsman to redeem (ransom) us by purchase, a life for a life, a Lamb without spot or blemish not under the same condemnation as Adam for Jesus was never in Adam’s loins. Hence the necessity for the virgin birth. ‘Life’ derives from the male, the female simply provides the egg cell. Jesus shared our flesh and blood; He could be tempted in all points as we are and thereby proved that there is nothing wrong with human nature per se. There are no laws in Scripture which we cannot obey if we so desire. Can you name one? Of His own freewill Jesus purchased our freedom (all in Adam’s loins) whether or not the owner chose to sell as Moses makes clear. He did so to present (reconcile) us to His Father (1 John 2:2) and for the joy set before Him of leading many sons to glory. He surrendered His nephesh/psuche life to rise in the glory of His chay/zoe life, the firstfruits of them that slept. But salvation is not the same as redemption. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Now is salvation come to this house; salvation which Jesus offers to all through baptism into His ‘death.’ “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.” (John 1:12).

And that’s all there is to it, simple, beautiful, satisfying, the pearl of great price which demands our total response, for when there was no arm to save, “His own arm brought salvation” and He gave an “only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

We mentioned earlier that although only one law was given to Adam, “Thou shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil lest ye die” yet Noah apparently knew the distinction between ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ animals when he loaded the ark and subsequently offered sacrifices of clean animals after the flood (Genesis 8:20-22). But Genesis 9 tells us that God removed that distinction after Noah received the promise that while the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night should not cease (Genesis 8:22) for Genesis 9:3 informs us that “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things” but flesh with the (animal) life (nephesh) thereof shalt thou not eat, and surely the blood of your lives (literal Hebrew: flesh in its life (nephesh) its blood not shall you eat the blood of your lives (nephesh), will I require.” It is of course the privilege of the Law Giver to change the law according to circumstances. This time with the permission to eat all flesh but there was to be no ‘dominion’ over the beasts, for chapter 9 goes on to say that “surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life (nephesh) of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he man.” Noah’s righteousness, prophesied by his father Lamech, together with the acknowledgement that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that the imagination of his heart evil continually necessitated a change in the law. “Every moving thing that shall be meat for you” except for the blood which was the ‘life’ thereof. And it was to change twice in the future, for when the children of Israel were selected and brought out of Egypt to be a ‘peculiar people unto YHWH the law at Sinai re-instated that distinction between clean and unclean animals for the ‘holy’ people yet they could give an animal that died of itself, and must have ad the blood still in it, unto the stranger within their gates that he may eat of it, or sell it o an alien (Deuteronomy 14:21), and finally as we are all aware that when Messiah came and salvation was offered to the Gentiles the distinction between clean and unclean was removed again in Acts 10 when Peter was called to Caesarea and had the vision of the great sheet knit at the four corners containing all manner of common and unclean flesh and heard that great voice “What God hath cleansed call not thou common” and although Peter continued to eat with Gentiles except for the one time when his

courage failed and he withdrew himself at Antioch when Jewish Christians came from James as recorded in Galatians 2 it seems that he accepted the rebuke of Paul and recognised that the Mosaic restrictions were now dead, and all meats clean when received with thanksgiving and prayer, so whilst it is true that the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and all that in them is changeth not, yet in His wisdom and purpose the rules of obedience established for mankind to find grace in His sight may be altered according to the times then present.

When I published “The Divine Plan - A Re-appraisal of Some Christadelphian Traditions” in 1998 and was frequently criticised for “rocking the boat” I (unknowingly at the time) repeated what John Thomas had said to his critics “Show me where I am scripturally wrong and I will retract it,” but all they could say was “read what John Thomas has written” or more frequently, Robert Roberts. When I did so I found that the work in question was so full of suppositions and extrapolations from suppositions which merely strengthened my “re-appraisal.” When the Nazarene Fellowship published “The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith - A Handbook for Christadelphians,” we included an appeal for criticism and comments. I had one letter from a now deceased well known brother declining to involve himself in any theological arguments, but advising me that “Combative readers (who would at one time have included myself) will - as I have already learned - be preparing to do battle again.” The Letter was adequately answered by Sister Helen Brady and Brethren Phil Parry and Russell Gregory in the Circular Letter 190, to whom the writer sent copies. Two years on and not one single criticism has been received from any other Christadelphian, although many have thanked me personally for exposing the falsehoods in the B.A.S.F. and some have expressed the wish that they could do something about it.

Sadly it seems almost impossible to change opinions or stimulate action where beliefs have been accepted intellectually and emotionally as truth as one writer has pointed out –

“any challenge to a cherished tenet is liable to almost automatic rejection. The very human desire of all of us to conform to a group which has nourished us and the lifetime pattern of thought learned from sincere teachers we trusted and respected tends to create barriers that secure us against all objections and can blind us to the most obvious truth. When these deeply held beliefs are challenged we naturally feel threatened and defensive - thus there will be angry counter arguments, changing the subject rapidly and all the usual ploys we all use when faced with a difficult situation we wish to avoid, it seems we only accept evidence that fits our prejudice and dismiss as ‘irrelevant’ or ‘already answered’ etc., etc.”

“By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: For this peoples heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, and here with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should turn again and I should heal them.” (Matthew 13:14. R.V.).

Eric Cave. (May 2003)