

You Can Burn This in Ten Seconds...

Eternity Will Not Efface the Facts

DO YOU REALISE....

....that as a Christadelphian you are supposed to believe that Jesus died for Himself? And have you ever found any place in the Bible where it says so? Yet the Birmingham Statement of Faith speaks of Him as “abrogating the law of condemnation for himself” and as “a representative of Adam's disobedient race.”

Do you realise that you are supposed to believe that there is a physical principle of evil in human flesh which makes it impossible for people to keep the Commandments and that it was because Jesus had sin in His flesh that God required Him to die upon the Cross? Has it never occurred to you how utterly foolish and unscriptural this is and what a monster of evil God would be if it were true?

We have never seen it stated anywhere except in Christadelphian literature that Jesus was under condemnation, or that His death was for Himself, or that sin can be literally in the flesh and blood of man. When we learned that these beliefs had been challenged more than 70 years ago and that the courageous souls who scripturally refuted them had been vilified and misrepresented ever since, we realised that Christadelphians were just one of many sects of apostate Christendom and that truth was really of less importance than their organisation.

It is quite true that many who may read this message object as strongly as we do to the doctrine that Jesus was in any sense sinful, defiled, or condemned and that His death upon the Cross was necessary for His own salvation and we are glad that one ecclesia has made a start by adopting a Statement of Faith from which all that rubbish is left out. It is still a fact however that as a Community they believe and teach that people are born with sin literally in their flesh and if you regard yourself as a Christadelphian these evil apparitions are on your doorstep and you must either disown them or take them in and live with them.

CRY ALOUD AND SPARE NOT

If there was any real scriptural defence against our reproaches Christadelphians would hardly resort to physical violence and hooliganism to prevent us distributing literature, as they did at Smethwick on September 37th 1949. They would rather hold us up to the ridicule of the public and prove the superiority of their own teaching. We are not much concerned whether our testimony is welcomed or spurned by such people; fortunately speech is still free and although they would like to take from us the liberty to proclaim what we believe to be the truth, we shall continue as opportunity offers to intrude upon the attention of those who make a great song about reading the Bible and preaching against error, but who become remarkably and uncontrollably angry when anyone ventures to draw attention to a few of the inconsistencies in their own teaching.

Since many people cannot understand how a sincere believer who has once had what Christadelphians regard as “the Truth” can ever have forsaken it, and because those who could and ought to explain the matter prefer suppression and misrepresentation, we offer the following explanation.

The Nazarene Fellowship believe the Bible to be the word of God, wholly inspired and infallible, and when it proves to be in opposition to the writings of Christadelphians, the Statement of Faith, or any other Creed, they follow the Bible.

They believe in the literal return of Jesus to the earth to establish the Kingdom of God and reign in righteousness and peace; they believe in the resurrection of the body and the reward of the righteous and all other things which can be scripturally proved.

Amongst these they believe that Jesus voluntarily suffered on Calvary a death which He neither incurred nor deserved, in order to redeem the life of the race forfeited by disobedience. He paid His brother's debt by the sacrifice of His own life, meeting the claim against Him of a just law and Justifying the mercy of God in allowing a condemned sinner to live.

This is briefly the awful doctrine hated by Christadelphians and nicknamed by them "the Clean Flesh Heresy," "The Free Life Theory," "Renunciationism" and "Substitution." Can you see anything very terrible in it? Does it strike you as a soul-destroying heresy? Is it not rather exactly what the Bible tells us?

DON'T BELIEVE ALL YOU HEAR

We are constantly being told that we teach that the flesh and nature of Jesus was different from that of all other men. If we had ever believed or taught so, then we should deserve some of the epithets we are given, but it is a complete untruth. We believe that Jesus was the same in nature and experience as us, but different in character and origin. We believe that flesh as such is neither clean nor unclean but simply the living material of which human beings are formed. The thing that matters in the sight of God is their relationship and the character which human beings display. The same kind of flesh can manifest good character or bad, according to the behaviour and thinking of the man concerned.

We have renounced nothing but the unscriptural teaching that sin (an abstract word meaning transgression of law) is literally in the flesh of human beings and that this was the defilement from which Jesus could only be cleansed by death.

It sometimes seems that Christadelphian leaders are themselves more than half ashamed of the doctrine, for it is rarely mentioned and then usually glossed over, but it hangs like a skeleton in the cupboard and is only revealed when anyone persistently asks why it was that God made the death of His own beloved and innocent Son the sole means of redemption. Then they produce the astounding explanation that although He was the Son of God, although He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, His flesh was unclean, His nature defiled by sin and fit only for destruction! They say His sacrifice upon the Cross was "a ritual exhibition of what was due to sinful human nature."

But when giving this explanation which explains nothing, they conveniently forget that the body which was put into the tomb was the selfsame body which came forth on the third day! Was it still unclean and defiled? Why did not Jesus say, at the last supper, "This is my unclean body which is to be ceremonially condemned" and "this is my sin-defiled blood which is shed for myself"? How horrible it sounds; yet these would be appropriate words at the memorial table for "Filthy dreamers who defile the flesh."

When the writer, then a member of the Suffolk Street fellowship, learned from former members of the Temperance hall section the implications of Christadelphian doctrine concerning Christ, all the petty squabbling which rends that body became meaningless, it was realised that membership of any section of the community was impossible to one who intelligently believes that Jesus, the only begotten of God, was given as a sacrifice to save sinners. We know that many deplore much of what

has been written by their editors and fellow brethren on the subject, but the fact remains, that the accepted teaching of Christadelphians is that it was right and just for Jesus to be put to death, because He was personally of a sinful nature. That view seems to us so near to blasphemy that we do not see how one who knowingly tolerates it by sharing the name or fellowship of those who hold it can hope for acceptance.

WHAT WE REALLY TEACH

We once asked the simple question, “If human beings are born sinful and incapable of obedience, how can a just God hold them guilty?” We also asked, “If Jesus was the same as us, how did He succeed in living a sinless life?” These seem very simple and reasonable questions, but John Carter immediately wrote of us as “a renegade brother.” So long as he and the rest of Christadelphian expositors can do no better than the shameless assertion that Jesus had to be specially strengthened in order to overcome His innate sinfulness we shall be content for him to call us names.

Is it not the merest common sense to conclude that the attested fact that Jesus was made like us and tempted in all points as we are, yet lived a perfect life, proves that the reason we do wrong is because we do not try hard enough to do right? That being so God is Just in regarding us as sinners and holding Christ before us as an example. His life proves beyond any question that it is not human nature or flesh and blood that is at fault but the relationship and behaviour of men and women. Honest people know perfectly well that they are not compelled to do wrong and when they go astray they must blame themselves, not God, and confess their faults and ask for forgiveness. No one who believes he is born sinful or inherits sin or has a physical principle of sin in his flesh can possibly be truly and sincerely repentant.

It is not however primarily our own transgressions which put us in the need of salvation, though they are involved and are wiped out in the process. If God had called us all to account individually, every individual sinner would have required an individual saviour or would perish without hope. Christadelphians have never understood this aspect of the atonement and yet it is one of the vital factors which make the subject so enthralling. One sacrifice could only redeem one sinner, one debt paid could only release one creditor; one righteous act could only atone for one act of sin (Romans 5:12-19). This is the reason why God regards all the offspring of Adam as involved in the act of rebellion which alienated him; his life was forfeited (but was not taken) and therefore the life which was transmitted to all his descendants was a condemned life. This is not in any sense a physical matter or a change of nature but purely of legal status and relationship and its purpose and object was not to make it difficult or impossible for men and women to obey God but to make it possible for Him to show them mercy and forgiveness. This is proved by the fact that the condemnation which came by Adam is removed as soon as a believer puts on Christ (Romans 8:1).

Now how was it possible for Jesus alone by the one great sacrifice of Himself, to redeem a multitude? It was because Jesus did not derive His life from Adam but direct from God and when He chose to carry out His Father’s plan to save mankind, there was only one possible way to do it and that was by paying the ransom price, a life; His life instead of Adam’s, to that other master, sin. He thus purchased back to God all those who were sold into bondage in Adam.

This explanation brings upon our head the sneers of “legalism,” “the pawnshop,” “taking metaphor too literally,” and so on. We are not dismayed but simply ask our opponents to point out where it fails to agree with Scripture and to show if they can, that there is either truth, reason, justice, love, or mercy in, or scriptural proof for their own teaching.

We certainly believe that Jesus was free and had life in a sense that we have not (Matthew 17:26; John 6:38; 7:29) because His life came from God and not, as the Statement of Faith says (Clauses 8 and 9) from the condemned line of Abraham. Jesus was related to the line of Adam, Abraham and David “according to the flesh” as the Son of Mary, but His title to the promises was on

infinitely higher grounds, being the child of promise raised up unto David's house and out of Abraham's line when it was dry and dead, by the only One capable of imparting life to the dead, even God Himself.

It was precisely because He was free and His life unforfeited that He had in His possession the price of our redemption. This is the true and the only adequate explanation of the virgin birth; if Jesus' life had come from Adam via Joseph He would have been in the same poor, lost and helpless position as we. Receiving His life direct from the Source and retaining His right to that life by perfect obedience, He alone of the human race had the wherewithal to redeem his brethren. Compare this with the Christadelphian teaching that His divine origin endowed Him with superior strength to overcome temptation and you may perceive how wide the gulf that separates us. It would debar Him completely from the common experience of humanity, rob Him of all honour and make the record of His bitter suffering a hollow deception.

We confess without shame and with a deep sense of thankfulness that we believe that Jesus was our substitute and that He bore in our stead the wages of sin. All that is required of us is that we pass through that death in the figure of baptism, thus acknowledging that by sin we were alienated from God and that in strict justice death would be our due reward. Then, when we think of Jesus nailed to the Cross, forsaken and stricken, suffering death in its most dreadful form for our sakes' alone, as our Redeemer, we can truly and thankfully acknowledge His loving self-sacrifice.

It should make you think; to see that Christadelphians to-day like some in Jesus' own day, can hardly find words harsh enough to describe us and our doctrine, but we appeal to you, as you stand before God, to ask yourself if it is not truly the teaching of Scripture and that other the invention of devils.

Any stick will serve to beat a dog, and because he could find no other, W.F.Barling said in "The Christadelphian" that our teaching implied a belief in a personal devil. He has admitted publicly that we deny such a belief and that he had never found it in our writing, but ignorant oafs who have not the sense to read and think independently now state it as if it were a fact proved against us. Sincere people will not believe without evidence all the nonsense that gets about and before you drop this in the fire you should read and think for yourself, if you have the truth it will stand up to criticism and investigation. It is only when there is something to be feared or concealed that people are advised not to read anything outside Christadelphian works.

In conclusion, if you have read this and are satisfied that what you now hold is complete and perfect truth, we are satisfied too and thank you for your patience in reading so far. If, however, your conscience tells you that there is something wrong somewhere, but you prefer the friendship and associations of a prosperous community to a search for truth wherever it leads, no one will compel you. If you choose to continue to support those who teach that Jesus was condemned by His own Father because of His nature, and if you choose to live in daily dread of the uncertain result of a Judgment which only concerns the unfaithful and unbelieving, the loss is yours.

On the other hand you may decide it is better to be a renegade, if thereby you can put your trust in a Saviour who in the days of His flesh was holy, harmless, undefiled and gave Himself freely for you in order that you might not come into Judgment. In such a case, your rightful place is with the outcasts, who rejoice in the assurance that whether they live or sleep, when He returns they will be accepted - not for what they have done but because He gave His life to save them and they have believed and obeyed Him.

Ernest Brady