

BIRTHRIGHT

“Today the Christadelphian community – ‘Brothers in Christ’ – is the inheritor of a noble tradition, by which elements of the Truth were from century to century hammered out on the anvil of controversy, affliction and even anguish. These pages may help us to appreciate a Bible doctrine that God does not establish truth by the counting of heads, but by the trying of hearts, and also to understand why we as Christadelphians today resist the out-stretched hands of broad ecumenical unity and consider as traitors any among us who sell their birthright for this cause.”

THE HISTORIC PROBLEM

The law of Genesis 2:17 said,
“of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest
thereof thou shalt surely die.”

FROM THIS VERSE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING LINE OF THOUGHT:

1. This law meant that they would die immediately upon the trespass – on that very day.
2. This must mean a violent death – and this death, he taught, would be an eternal death, a perishing.
3. But this violent and eternal death was not enacted when they sinned; the slaying of the animal averted it.
4. Further, this sentence was passed down to all their descendants, who when born have this sentence of a violent, eternal death threatening over them and alienating them from God.
5. This inherited sentence of eternal death was given the name “Adamic Condemnation” (even though with the passing of years many other definitions would be given to this phrase).

FROM THIS VERSE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING LINE OF THOUGHT:

6. The result of the transgression was a lust for sin and this lust is “sin-in-the-flesh” or “physical sin”.
7. Thus sin has two forms, moral and physical, and atonement by the blood of the everlasting covenant is required to take away the one as well as the other.
8. The descendants of Adam were in his loins and they are therefore born or made “sinners” without any exercise of will on their part.
9. Therefore all men are liable as soon as they are born to be cut off by death, condemned by God because of the offence of Adam.
10. Sacrifice is as essential to take away sin in its physical, as in its moral aspect; a violent death is the punishment due to the one as well as the other; and physical sin is as powerful to keep closed the gates of the grave as is actual transgression.

FROM THIS VERSE DEVELOPED THE FOLLOWING LINE OF THOUGHT:

11. Baptism into Christ provided justification before God from physical sin as well as from enacted sin.
12. Baptism opened the gates of the grave or their possibility of being opened. There was no possibility of a resurrection from the dead without this justification from Adam's offence that now was in our flesh, this legal sentence of violent death somehow born in our flesh.
13. The result of this path of thought is that no-one unbaptised could ever be raised from death to appear at the judgment seat of Christ. God was bound by His own rule not to raise any other than those baptised (or, in Old Testament times, those circumcised). So the unbaptised would never stand before the judgement seat of Christ, no matter how much they knew about the Gospel. Enlightened rejecters may be punished in this life but after death they are untouchable.