

Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps, set thine heart
Toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest (Jer 31:21)

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN WAYMARK

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"I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer" (Rev 6:2)

"The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable ... " (Jas 3:17)
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3)

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL'S SONS

*In expounding the signification of Apocalypse chapter 7,
Bro Thomas provides a most concise exposition of what it is to be
truly "of Israel" (Rom 9:6). We reproduce this section
for the benefit of our readers:*

John says, that the servants of the Deity were sealed from among, or out of, every *tribe of Israel's sons - ek pases fules huion Israel*. This, of course, is metaphorical - a simile comprised in a phrase not according to the primitive meaning of the words. The real signification of the phrase is the mystery it conceals from the eye of the unsealed—from the perception of the churchman, or "natural man." The Seven Stars, and Seven Golden Lightstands, of Apocalypse 1:20, were not to be taken literally, as what are vulgarly styled stars and lamps. They had "a mystery" hidden in the words; "star" being used to signify in that place, angels, or Spirit-anointed elderships, of the Ecclesia; and "lightstands," the Ecclesias themselves. So in the sentence before us, Israel, tribe, sons, are words used apocalyptically in a metaphorical sense. They each contain a mystery, which is the literal apocalyptic import, or true meaning of their use in this place.

In the prophetic and apostolic writings, "Israel" is used in more senses than one. The first time it was used is found in Gen. 32:28. The divine man with whom Jacob wrestled said to him, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but also Israel; for thou hast power as a prince with *Elohim*, and with men, and hast prevailed." In Ex. 4:22, it is applied to the whole of Jacob's descendants who came out of Egypt under Moses. "Israel," said *Yahweh* to Pharaoh, "is my son, my firstborn." Here it stands for a nation of twelve tribes, which comprised also "a mixed multitude," who were not the fleshly descendants of Jacob (Ex. 12:38). Tried by a law of faith, this nation was partly believers of the promises, and partly not. The believing section, which was always a small number, were the real "Israel;" all the rest of the fleshly descendants were "not Israel;" as it is written in Rom. 9:6: "They are not all Israel who are of Israel: neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children: but in Isaac, O Abraham, shall thy seed be called. That is, they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of the Deity; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." Moses, Phineas, Joshua, Caleb, David, the prophets, and those of their school, were "Israel;" Korah, Dathan, Abiram, Saul, Ahab, Manasseh, and their class, though descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, after the flesh, were "not Israel." The difference between these two classes of the same nation, was purely a matter of faith. The Mosaic Law condemned both classes to death; for "by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified;" "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." "The law was weak through the flesh," in which "dwells no good thing;" therefore the law which was good in itself, became death to those who lived under it: for it is written, "Cursed be every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." No Israelite ever escaped this curse; for, although Jesus

was “without sin,” the law cursed him, saying, “Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree.”

ISRAEL - MORE THAN 12 TRIBES

From these premises it will be seen, that *Israel*, not only signifies the man Jacob, and the Twelve Tribes his descendants according to the flesh, but men of the nation who are *Israel* in the highest and noblest sense of the word—the metaphorical. Hence, in regard to the question, who are the seed of Abraham; who are the sons of Israel; who the sons of the Deity? Christ Jesus interposes, and says, “the flesh profits nothing.”

Israelites will not inherit the blessing promised to Israel, because they descend from Jacob, they must be men of faith, “Israelites indeed in whom there is no guile”—Israelites, the sons of the Deity, who believe into his name; “who have been begotten, not of bloods, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of the Deity” (John 1:12, 13). Therefore it is that, because “the flesh profits nothing”, Israel after the flesh, are not now the people and sons of Deity. They are broken off because of unbelief in the gospel Paul preached. But, they will not always continue a faithless and stiff-necked generation; for “they shall be willing in the day of the power of David’s son and Lord” (Psa 110); and then, “in the place where it was said to them, ‘Ye are not my people,’ there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of *ALL* the living one” (Hos. 1:10).

But, before they were broken off because of unbelief in “the truth as it in Jesus,” efforts were made by John the Immerser, Jesus Christ, and the Apostles; in other

words, by the Spirit of the Deity through them; to manifest a generation of “Israelites indeed,” of the sons of Abraham and Israel, and therefore, of sons of the Deity, by faith, repentance, and immersion:

by faith in the promises covenanted to Abraham, and David, and in Jesus as their promised seed, delivered for their offences, and raised for the justification of all who believe the promises:

by repentance, characterized by a thinking and disposition such as Abraham evinced; and

by immersion, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of sins. Many “of Israel” became “Israel” after this method.

BEGOTTEN BY THE WORD

They were begotten of the will of the Father of Lights by the word of truth, which they received with meekness as the engrafted word which was able to save their souls (Jas. 1:18, 21). But, after all done, compared to the whole nation this was but an election, and that only a remnant. It did not afford Israelites indeed in sufficient number for the kingdom of the Deity. They of Israel “who were bidden were not worthy.” Those servants, therefore, who had the seal in those days, were sent into the highways to gather people together of all sorts that the wedding of the King’s Son might be furnished with guests; and his house be filled.

This was quite a new crisis in Israelitish affairs. It consisted of nothing less than, as it were, raising up children to Abraham

from stones—creating Israelites out of Gentiles upon the same principle that “Israelites indeed” were created out of mere natural Jews styled by Paul “Jews outwardly.” Peter, to whom the opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles was committed, went to the house of Cornelius upon this mission. He invited them to become Israelites in every respect except the accident of fleshly descent, which “profited nothing” in the begetting of sons to Deity. When he recounted what he had done to the brethren, he told them that “Deity put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”

And afterwards, when writing to these newly created Israelites, he says: “Ye as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to the Deity through Jesus Christ.” Again, he says: “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a HOLY NATION, a purchased people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (‘the Gospel of the Kingdom’); who in time past were not a people, but are now the people of the Deity; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy” (1 Pet. 2:5–10).

INWARDLY A JEW

Paul also in treating of the same subject, says, that “he is not the Jew who is one outwardly; but he is the Jew who is one inwardly” (Rom. 2:28). That is, he is not the Jew who is the seed of Abraham in the sense of being heir of the promise,

who is *only a Jew by accident*: to be the seed of Abraham, a man must be a Jew inwardly; he must be sealed in the forehead with the truth which is Deity’s seal: in other words, addressing both natural Jews and natural Gentiles, Paul says: “Ye are all sons of Deity in Christ Jesus *through the faith*,” and here follows the reason: “For as many as have been immersed into Christ, have put on Christ.” In whom “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:26). “They who are of faith, the same,” saith he, “are the children of Abraham.”

“to be the seed of Abraham, a man must be a Jew inwardly; he must be sealed in the forehead with the truth which is Deity’s seal”

GENTILE ISRAELITES

And again likewise, addressing the Gentile element of the Ecclesia in Ephesus, Paul calls upon them to remember that in time past they were uncircumcised Gentiles in the flesh, and consequently, “without Christ, being *aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope, and atheists (*atheoi*) in the world.” But now, all this was reversed when they came to be sealed, and to be constituents of the New Man—“THE ISRAEL OF THE DEITY” (Gal. 6:16): “the One Body.”

They were now “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and familiars of the Deity” (ch. 2:11–19). They had become the adopted citizens of Israel’s Commonwealth or polity. They were Jews inwardly,

“walking in the steps of that faith of their father Abraham which he had before he was circumcised.” They differed from common Jews in not being of the same fleshly descent, which was a matter of no profit; and they differed from them also in being men of faith like Abraham. But the only difference between them and those noblest of all Jews, the prophets and their class, was the accident of birth. Ezekiel, Daniel, Cornelius, Crispus, Gaius, Erastus, and such like, though Jews and Greeks, were yet all “Israelites indeed” through faith—the Jews inwardly, living under the law before the faith came by Jesus, being justified “by faith” in the promises (*ek pisteos*); and the Jews inwardly, living after the faith came, being justified by one and the same Deity, “through the faith” *dia tes pisteos*, in the promises, or “the truth as it is in Jesus” (Gal. 3:23–25; Rom. 3:30; 4:12–16).

ISRAELITISH CITIZENSHIP

Now, the citizenship of the Old Israelites commenced on earth; while the *politeuma*, or citizenship of the New Israelites begins in heavens, *en ouranois huparchei*. The citizenship of mere common, or outward Jews, begins with circumcision—with the flesh. If they omit this, the accident of birth from Jewish parents goes for nothing, they are regarded by the law as cut off from their people, having broken the covenant of *Yahweh* in the omission of the rite on the eighth day (Gen. 17:14). They are neither “Israel” nor “of Israel.”

But the citizenship of the New Israelites, or Israelites of the New Covenant, begins in heavens, and also with circumcision—it begins with faith, with the truth

believed and obeyed, with the Spirit. A Jew, or Greek, comes to “believe the things concerning the kingdom of the Deity, and of the name of Jesus Anointed;” and to fall in love with them above all other things; he acquires a “faith,” in other words, that “purifies his heart,” and “works by love”—he receives the doctrine of the kingdom of the Deity as a little child—with all humility and teachableness; and demands only to know what the Lord would have him to do, that he may do it. He is required, then to be *circumcised in Christ*, to “purify his soul in the obedience of the truth”—to “put off the body of the sins of the flesh *in the circumcision of Christ*.”

The churchman, or mere pious natural man, discerns not these “deep things of the Deity;” but such a Jew or Gentile as we are considering, being “filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” knows that, by being buried with Christ in the one immersion, he puts on Christ; and that when thus invested with him as with a white robe, all his sins are *covered over*, remitted, or washed away; and that he stands “complete in him.” Jesus was circumcised the eighth day, according to the law; he was a Jew; the son of Abraham, David, and the Deity; the Heir of all things; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he is king, priest, and so forth.

FAITH AND CIRCUMCISION

Now, it is only those Jews and Gentiles, the eyes of whose understandings have been enlightened by the word of the truth of the gospel of the kingdom, who can by immersion get into Christ; for men are saved “through the faith,” *dia tes pisteos*;

and “without faith,” which Paul defines as, “the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen,”—“it is impossible to please the Deity.” This, then, is the indispensable prerequisite for introduction into Christ, and completeness in him. Those who are thus qualified in the act of passing through the bath of water, pass into Christ. Before entering the bath, the truth believed has changed their minds, made them “dead to sin,” and “quickened them with Christ” (Rom. 6:2, 11; Eph. 2:5): when they are in the bath, and buried under the water, they are “buried with Christ by the immersion into his death,” which was for sin. Hence, this water burial is their investiture with Christ as with a white robe.

foreskins of their hearts are circumcised, and they are no more stiff-necked” (Deut. 10:16) like many that could be named. “We are the circumcision,” says Paul, “being servants to Deity by spirit (or by the sealing truth) and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in flesh.” By this admirably devised scheme, Jews and Gentiles get into Christ, though at the right hand of Deity and they upon earth; and “their citizenship begins in heavens.”

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The burial is, therefore, a clothing, or covering over by which their sin-nakedness is metaphorically concealed; and they are in that situation in which it may be said of them, in the words of the Spirit, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered over”—*epekalphthesan* (Rom. 4:7). This is the point of time in which they are “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands;” and, as in the circumcision performed with hands, there was a cutting, or putting, off, of flesh, so in the circumcision made without hands, there is a metaphorical putting off of flesh, “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision (*en te peritome*) of the Christ, being buried with him in the immersion” (Col. 2:11, 12).

Being therefore thus introduced into Christ’s circumcision by faith and burial, they are the subjects of “circumcision of heart in spirit, not in letter”—“the

He, being the truth, dwells in their hearts by faith; and having got into him constitutionally by water burial, they continue to dwell in him; so that having come forth from the water-grave, the life which they live in the flesh, they live by the faith of the Son of the Deity, who loved them, and gave himself for them (Gal. 2:20).

Being thus circumcised in their water burial by the truth believed they become Jews in the noblest sense of the word. They went into the bath dead to Judaism and Gentilism, and were born of the water in coming out of it, Israelites indeed, sons of Abraham, David and the Deity; brethren of Israel’s King; heirs with him of all things; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; citizens of the commonwealth of Israel; kings and priests for the Deity—they become all this and more, because Christ is such, and they are “complete in him.”

CIRCUMCISION OF HEART

Hence, circumcision of heart, in the sense explained, is as indispensably necessary to the Israelitish citizenship which begins where Christ now is, as circumcision of flesh was to Israelitish citizenship beginning the eighth day after birth. The two circumcisions developed two Israels - the carnal and the spiritual. While occupying Palestine, the Carnal Israel were the kingdom of the Deity under the Mosaic Constitution; and the throne upon which David and Solomon reigned in Jerusalem was "the throne of *Yahweh*." Deity permitted them to continue in the land so long as the constitution was respected; and there were enough "Israelites indeed" among them, to preserve the nation from putrefaction. These were the real, spiritual, life of the nation—the salt of the land; and when they became insipid; or, when they, as the chosen generation, died off from the arena, the nation became "a carcase," fit only for the talons of the Roman Eagle, according to the predictions of Moses, Daniel and Christ (Deut. 28:49; Dan. 8:10–12, 24; Matt. 24:28).

But, when the Israelitish Carcase was rent and devoured by "the Great Eagle," "THE ISRAEL OF THE DEITY," consisting of Jews and Greeks in other lands, or sections of the habitable, who were Jews in Christ, was still an organized and flourishing community, styled also by Paul, "the Ecclesia, his Body," of which Jesus Christ is the Head; and the "One Body."

This new community figures in symbolic writing, as "The Seven Ecclesias which are in Asia," these seven being representative of all Israelites,

"circumcised with the circumcision made without hands," in all the habitable. This Israel was rooted in Jacob's twelve sons, as the patriarchs of the tribes. "First that which is natural," says Paul, "and then that which is spiritual." This is the order of the Deity's developments in relation to body, world, and nation. Hence, the spiritual body is developed out of the natural; the spiritual world out of the natural; and the spiritual Israelitish nation out of the natural, we Gentiles coming in by adoption through the King of Israel, who himself was first natural before he became spirit. The principle is fundamental, and perceived in the generation of all things—first, the naked grain, or body; then that which shall be fruit-bearing in the field.

THE WALL OF ISRAEL

Jacob was *the wall* of Israel, and his sons his *twelve gates*, in the beginnings of things. Jesus and the Apostles emerged from Jacob through these gates; being descended from Jacob in their line. But said the Spirit in Jesus, "before Abraham was I am." He was "the Root" of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David; and when He came to be manifested in Jesus, in this combination of flesh and spirit, he was "the Offspring" of those patriarchs. While, therefore Jacob was a wall enclosing the whole future nation in his loins, "the Root and Offspring of David," and therefore of Jacob (Apoc. 5:5; 22:16), *is the Jasper Wall, great and high*, "in whom" is contained all "the Israel of the Deity." At the natural gates of the twelve tribes, the apostles stood as so many Angels or messengers (ch. 21:12). They went forth inviting Jews and Gentiles to "enter in through the gates into the city," enclosed within the Jasper Wall (22:14)

to enter into Christ through adoption into the commonwealth of Israel; that in so entering, they might, as precious stones, garnish the twelve foundations which represent the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The apocalyptic Jasper Wall, which constitutes the limit of the Holy City, is Deity manifested in flesh; who, in Zech. 2:5, saith "I will be unto Jerusalem a WALL OF FIRE round about her, and will be the glory in the midst of her." The Chief Corner, or Prince, of this foursquare wall is Jesus. The Deity, before his manifestation in him, said unto him in prophecy, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified . . . It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the desolations of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my (*Yeshua* or JESUS) *salvation* to the ends of the earth" (Isa. 49:3, 6). Thus, the Deity manifested in Flesh is herein styled *Israel*; and in calling him, "my salvation," He is also styled *Jesus*. Now, the spirit in Hosea 11:1, says of him, what is equally true of the whole nation in Moses, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt;" which saying, as a part of its mystery, Matthew says was fulfilled in the child Jesus (ch 2:15).

Christ, then, being Israel, all who "wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb," become Israel also—the metaphorical Israel developed out of the outward, whose polity flourished two hundred and fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. This spiritual commonwealth, I have said, is symbolized during this period by the Seven Ecclesias, which were encamped in the territory of the Great Eagle, an *imperium in imperio*; and symbolized again, in the periods of the first four seals, by the Four Living Ones full of eyes. These all were the spiritual "tribes of Israel's sons"—the Sons of Deity, and brethren of Jesus, constitutionally manifested as such by immersion, as the outward sign. Speaking of this honour, John saith: "Behold what great love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called CHILDREN OF DEITY! . . . Beloved, we are now children of Deity, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2). Then will be "the apocalypse of the sons of the Deity;" and the world that knows them not now, because it knows him not, will be brought into such practical acquaintance with them, that its knowledge of them will never again fade from its remembrance (Rom. 8:19).

John Thomas (Eureka)

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THE JUDGMENT TO COME

*“Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good,
and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas 4:17)*

It is a foundation principle of Scripture (Heb 6:1,2), that the Creator “hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31; Ps 9:8, 96:13, 98:9). That is a simple truth plainly expressed; there is a coming day in which the world is to be judged at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the righteous principles of the Father. Indeed in this place, it is an aspect of the Truth that Paul preached to unrepentant Gentiles, entrenched in their superstitions and beguiled by the sophistry of the flesh. It was to this class that he declared: “we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device. *And at the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness*”. He used the fact of coming judgment as a reason as to why men ought to obey the command to repent.

The doctrine of coming judgment, as this case illustrates, was something which the Apostle taught as part of his Gospel. Indeed, this is confirmed for us in the Spirit’s epistle through Paul to the Romans, where reference is made to “the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, *according to my Gospel*” (Rom 2:16, see Heb 6:1,2). In our day however, things are very different; the doctrine of judgment is a most unfashionable teaching, for men want to hear only good, and not evil concerning themselves, and their manner of life. Men do not want to hear about coming judgments, and so this aspect of things is commonly minimized in preaching activities by those who seek to make the Gospel more palatable to men of the flesh. They teach instead what may be styled a ‘social’ religion focusing upon beneficence towards man - that is, a religion centred around men doing good deeds to other men, and his reward for doing those deeds - rather than to declare the whole counsel of God.

The Bible however, has a very different focus, of which matters of human beneficence is but a small part. It centres on the righteousness of the Great Creator, and His dealings with His creation. It speaks of how shortly after the beginning, man disbelieved the sure word that condemnation would follow rebellion against his maker (Gen 3:1-7). It describes how all men are rightly condemned to the grave because of the inheritance of a transgressing nature (Rom 5:12-19), and it emphasizes that the means of forgiveness extended by Yahweh in his graciousness and mercy involves a recognition, and declaration of His righteousness (Rom 3:25,26) which was slighted in Eden. Indeed, the entire system of salvation arranged by the Deity in His beneficence towards those who would turn from their iniquities to

hearken unto him, is specifically designed for the glorification of His Name. Even so it is written: "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land." Yahweh is magnified by the repentance and faith of those who would draw near to him, and become conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29,30), which is, in fact, His own image (Heb 1:3, cp Gen 1:26). And this is the ultimate purpose of the Creator with man - not the salvation of man itself, for that is but the means whereby that purpose will be worked out - but the filling of the entire globe with His glory (cp Is 6:3), that ultimately, the Deity may be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28).

This being so, whereas the focus of what passes as "the Gospel" taught by many in our day, is Man, and what benefits may or may not come to him, the focus of Scripture is upon Yahweh, and the outworking of His purpose. That is the true Good News that the Bible declares; that His Kingdom will be established, and that men will be subjected to Him (Is 52:7; Rom 10:15). And so whilst it may be thought by some that the matter of Judgment is a 'negative' thing, to be minimized out of a desire to only preach 'positive' things to those around us, in actual fact, it is a just and necessary positive aspect of the Gospel; for the very means of establishing the righteousness of the Deity upon the earth involves the casting down of human rebellion and the clearing away of unrepentant sinners, in order that the earth may be filled with men suited to meet the Father's requirements.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

Concerning the throne of personal judgment, the Apostle wrote:

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor 5:10).

There is then, a time when men shall be called upon to stand before the enthroned Messiah, and give account of the deeds they have performed during their lives. But who will be summoned to the Master's judgment-throne? Who are the 'We' of which the Apostle speaks? Evidently, it includes himself and others - but which others? All those who have been baptized? Or all those who have received the commandment to repent, that they may be judged according to their response to it?

This is an important question, not least because it will have a direct bearing upon the Gospel that we preach. Paul preached judgment as part of his Gospel, even to the extent of using the promise of coming judgment to persuade men to repent: "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor 5:11; Cp Acts 17:30,31). If we wish to be found preaching the same Gospel as Paul, using the doctrines he used to persuade men to repent and submit to the authority of Christ, we need to be sure of what class of men are going to be considered responsible enough to give account of themselves before the Lord of all flesh. Unless we can establish this, we will be in no position to teach men how they stand in relation to their Maker;

whether or not he makes any demands upon them, whether or not they are obliged to respond if so, or whether they can freely disobey with no consequence ensuing.

A THEORY CONSIDERED

There are those who believe that unless a man comes into covenant relationship with Yahweh (whether it be through baptism, or in the case of those before Christ, through circumcision and the offering of sacrifice), he may not be considered accountable, and may not therefore appear before the judgment seat of Christ. According to this position, a man who hears the preaching of the Gospel is under no obligation to obey it; he is free to continue a life of rebellion against his Maker, without having to give account of his decision to reject the Father's love as declared in his Christ. There are, however serious problems with this teaching, some of which we list below:

- It teaches that it rests with man, and not with God, whether he be judged. In the scenario where a man is only held accountable to judgment if he is baptized, he can learn the principles of the Gospel, decide that the Way is too narrow for the exercise of his fleshly desires, and choose to reject the calling of Christ without any fear of there being consequences. In other words, he can choose to rebel, and also choose not to be judged by refusing baptism. He, not the Almighty, decides whether he be judged or not. There is no passage of Scripture where such a scenario is taught.
- It teaches that a partial disobedience against the Deity will be called to account, whereas total rebellion will not. Those who have begun to obey by submitting to baptism, yet who in the end are found wanting, will be summoned to give account of themselves, and experience “the terror of the Lord”; whereas those who deliberately commit themselves to total rebellion, refusing baptism, rather setting themselves totally against the ways of the Most High, will rest peacefully in the grave. There is no passage of Scripture where such a scenario is taught.
- It teaches that the “command” of the Creator for men to repent (Acts 17:30) is not a command to be obeyed, but a mere invitation which men may accept or reject as they please. However, the Scriptures teach that whilst the call of the Gospel is an invitation to love and mercy, it is also a command to submit and obey (Cp 2 Pet 2:21; 1 Jno 3:23; 2 Jno 1:4; 2 Thes 1:8; Heb 5:9; 1 Pet 4:17)
- Most significantly, it teaches that association with the blood of Christ (through either baptism or circumcision & sacrifice) forms the ground of wrath and punishment. Whereas Scripture presents the blood of Christ as the basis of reconciliation and forgiveness (Rom 3:25; Col 1:14; Heb 13:12; 1 Jno 1:7).

A variety of reasons are given for the belief that only men who are in covenant-relationship with the Deity shall be called forth to judgment (ranging from the idea that man is legally condemned to an eternal death by the sin of another man (Adam) and that unless that condemnation is removed he cannot therefore be raised, to simply “there is no point” in raising disobedient men merely to condemn them), but it is a fact that there is no passage in Scripture where such a thing is stated. The teaching that men who are not baptized will not be summoned to stand before the Master to give account of their rebellion is not found in any verse of Scripture. However, the Bible does describe those who will be judged, demonstrating that the basis of condemnation for those rejected, is not association with the blood of Christ, but their personal iniquity:

“the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; that that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (Jno 5:29)

“there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15)

“where are the dwelling places of the wicked? Have ye not asked them that go by the way? And do ye not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath” (Job 21:30; cp Jude 6).

The class of men then, who shall be raised from the dead to condemnation, are the doers of “evil”, the “unjust” and the “wicked”. From these testimonies, it is clear that the basis of their appearance and condemnation before the judgment seat of Christ is their personal wickedness. By contrast, there is no verse of Scripture which states that baptism (or circumcision & sacrifice in the Mosaic era) is a basis for judgment and condemnation.

But not all the wicked shall be summoned before the Great Judge; Scripture teaches that not all men will be raised from the dead to appear there. There is a class of men who shall not be raised to appear anywhere, for any purpose, let alone before Christ for judgment:

“O Yahweh our Elohim, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us: but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name. They are dead, *they shall not live*; they are deceased; *they shall not rise . . .*” (Is 26:13,14).

“Yea, a man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, *they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep*” (Job 14:10-12).

“*many* of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Dan 12:2, i.e. **many** will rise, therefore some will **not**).

THE GROUND OF ACCOUNTABILITY

There are therefore, men who shall are not to be rewarded for faithfulness, nor punished for iniquity. These “shall not rise” - but why? Why are they excused from judgment? The answer is before us. For a man to be condemned for doing evil, being “unjust” and “wicked”, is to imply that he has *made the choice* to do evil, to be unjust and wicked, and is now reaping the consequences of that decision . And in order to make that choice, he must know what is right, yet has decided to do that which is wrong. In other words, they have had opportunity to do good, to be just, and be righteous, yet they have chosen not to be. And indeed, we find this to be in harmony with the facts of Scripture, that a knowledge of the righteousness of God renders a man responsible for his actions in response to it, whether it be in obedience, or disobedience. As our opening quotation states: “to him that **knoweth** to go good, and doeth it not, **to him it is sin**” (Jas 4:17). Those who know to do good are convicted of sin if they do it not - those who know the commandment that Yahweh has given them, yet do it not, shall be convicted as sinners, for their rebellion shall be considered sin to them in the day to come. By the same token, those who do not know the way of righteousness - who therefore have no opportunity to do that righteousness, and be just - will not be held accountable for defying a command that was not made known to them. The Scriptures are quite plain on this:

“the times of this ignorance God winked at ...” (Acts 17:30)

“Jesus said unto them; If ye were blind, ye should have no sin” (John 9:41)

“for as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law” (Rom 2:12)

“ ... the law worketh wrath, for where no law is, there is no transgression ...” (Rom 4:15)

Whilst God winked at times of ignorance, no Scripture states that He winked at times of knowledge. Men who are “without law”, who are “ignorant” are not held accountable for not responding favourably to that which they did not know. Such men, with no understanding of the commandments of the Creator, rather to be raised for the purposes of being punished for disobedience to a law they never knew, shall rest in the grave without hope, and without punishment - like the beasts that perish:

“Man that is in honour, *and understandeth not*, is like the beasts that perish” (Ps 49:20).

Conversely, the Scriptures are equally plain in teaching that those who have received the Light of the Word are accountable as to how they have responded to it, as we have already seen, either in obedience or disobedience:

“Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you” (Prov 1:24-27).

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” (Jno 3:19)

“If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.” (Jno 15:22)

“he that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (Jno 12:48)

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16)

TEACHING THE GOSPEL

Upon considering the above testimonies, it becomes clear why Paul taught coming judgments as part of his Gospel. In fact, he was commanded to do so by the Father Himself: *“He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead”* (Acts 10:42). Therefore, when we find Paul preaching judgment to the heathen philosophers at Mars Hill (Acts 17:31), and again to the Roman Procurator, Felix (Acts 24:25) - who *“trembled”* in fear as a consequence - he was obeying the commandment of Yahweh to include this particular topic in his preaching. And we can readily perceive why; the Apostles were not merely issuing invitations for men to enter into an agreement of service, if it pleased them to do so. They were proclaiming the commandment of the Creator for men to repent - and they proclaimed the consequences of men disobeying that command. Those that *“believeth not shall be damned”*, and so the Apostles warned men of the consequences of their rejecting the Light which shone unto them.

It is felt by some that to speak of coming judgment to men is ‘unloving,’ and ‘unchristian’. It may well be ‘unchristian’ by the standards of what passes for Christianity in our day, which is as pure to the Truth as sewer gas is to fresh air. But it is by no means unloving. On the contrary, it would be most unloving to preach to

men that they can obey the Gospel if they please, but if they would prefer not to, they are free to leave it; and not warn them of the consequences. And by not warning men of what will befall them, those who are not preaching the whole counsel of God leave themselves open for rebuke. As Bro Robert Roberts wrote:

“How terrible it will be in that day, if through looseness of doctrine in this matter on our part, men should find themselves awake from the dead to judgment who did not expect to be there, and who would naturally turn their reproaches against us. “Why did you tell me I was not responsible?” Paul declared himself “free from the blood of all men,” because he “had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God.” In this position we can scarcely consider ourselves if we lull people into a deadly indifference by teaching them that if they choose to disobey God, the worst they have to look for is to be left undisturbed in an everlasting grave. This is not the worst. There is a judgment which shall “devour the adversary” of which every (responsible) soul of man will partake who are “contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness” (Rom 2:8)” (*The Christadelphian*, 1894).

VARIOUS OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

The Bible is emphatic in its teaching of coming judgment. There is both the judgment to come upon the world as a whole, by way of bringing the world into subjection to Christ (Ps 110:6; Ps 149:9; Ezek 39:21; Rev 18); and there is also the personal judgment of those who will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to be judged according to their deeds. The two are distinct, involving different classes of men, yet both are similar in the condemnation of sin, and the upholding of the Deity’s righteousness.

There are those who claim that the promised judgments that formed part of the Gospel that Paul preached are these national outpourings of wrath against the unenlightened heathen who oppose the imposition of Divine Rule upon the earth (cp Rev 17; Ps 2). But this cannot be so - why should Felix the Roman “tremble” in fear of national judgments to be poured out around two thousand years later? Why should the Apostle use the fact of Yahweh judging the earth (Acts 17) as a reason for men to repent, if those men held no relationship to those judgments which would not occur until many centuries after their death? The simple truth is that Paul preached the day of coming judgment to those at Mars Hill as a reason for them to repent, because they themselves would experience those judgments if they did not. And in order for those judgments to have any relevance to those men, they must be among the dead who are raised - among that class of men who “shall be damned” for believing not the word proclaimed to them (Mark 16:16).

Again, others claim that the judgment to come that Felix trembled at, was the judgment of AD 70. But again, this will just not do; the judgment that Paul was commanded to preach was in relation to the Christ being “the judge of the quick *and*

the dead” (Acts 10:42). Therefore, the judgment he spoke in his preaching was that which pertained to the resurrection of the dead. Besides this, why should Felix, as a Roman procurator be afraid of the overthrow of Jerusalem, brought about by the victorious armies of his people?

Some argue that knowing rejecters of the Gospel will not be judged, simply because “there is no point”. However, the testimony of God plainly declares that such judgments will be meted when men are rewarded according to their deeds. We leave those who deny this emphatic teaching of Scripture on the spurious grounds that they fail to perceive the reason of things, to inform the Lord at his coming that there is “no point” in him executing the judgment written. For our part, we believe that the judgment of God is according to truth against them whose wilful rebellion warrants it (Rom 2:2).

And finally, it is sometimes objected that the passages commonly used to demonstrate accountability to judgment, in their context refer to those in covenant relationship, whether they be Jews under the Law, or Gentiles baptised into Christ. Therefore, it is argued, the most that these passages prove is that those in covenant relationship shall be judged. However, we have cited other references, such as Acts 17 which were spoken to unbelieving and disobedient Gentiles. Moreover, even the passages which speak of believers being accountable to judgment do not state that their association with the blood of Christ as the ground of judgment, but rather Knowledge:

“For it had been better for them *not to have known* the way of righteousness, than, *after they have known it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Pet 2:21).

The Scriptures are as clear on this matter as they are on any other first principle of the Truth. And men of faith, who preach the same Gospel that Paul preached will not omit this vital aspect from their preaching, but will warn the wicked to turn from their ways, for Yahweh “hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30).

Chris Maddocks

Note:

This article is penned in response to a public challenge mounted by a prominent member, against an aspect of the Gospel (described in Clause 24 of the BASF) being taught in a public lecture by the present writer. The basis of the challenge was that the matter “cannot be proved from Scripture,” and that “there is no point” in Yahweh raising an enlightened rejecter of the Gospel. Here, we have sought to present the clear and emphatic teaching of Scripture concerning the issue; further comments and questions are welcomed.

THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST (3)

Following a break in order to make space for other items, we now resume our considerations of those called to be with Christ, continuing with Simon Peter

PETER - AN APOSTLE OF JESUS CHRIST

In the last part of this series, we considered the changing of Simon's name by the Lord Jesus, and its significance in relation to his role as being a faithful witness of the ministry of Christ. Upon Simon's introduction to him, the Master promised that his name would be altered to "Cephas", or "Peter" (Jno 1:42); not that his name would be changed from "Simon" to "Peter", but that rather "Peter" would be appended, that he would become "Simon Peter", or as the term signifies, a "*hearing stone*". We looked at the Old Testament background to this, how that a Hearing Stone is one which stands as a witness of certain deeds performed in its presence (cp Josh 24:27). Peter, therefore, in witnessing the things performed by the Master during his ministry, would later bear witness of those things to others, being part of the apostolic proclamation warning of the coming tribulation of AD 70, and proclaiming: "Hearken unto me, ye that follow righteousness, ye that seek Yahweh: look unto the Rock from whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you ..." (Is 51:1,2; cp 2Pet 3). His role then, was to declare to Israel that they also were stones hewed out from the Abrahamic Rock; whose duty was to hear the things declared to them.

But although the Master promised Simon that his name would be thus changed, in actual fact the change did not come until later when he was selected from the multitude of disciples to have an especial role as an apostle. Accordingly, we read that Christ "ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: and Simon he surnamed Peter ..." (Mark 3:16). Why was this?

A possible reason is that it is not until then, that Simon truly became a *hearing stone*. Prior to that stage, he appears to have been almost reluctant to hearken to the calling of Christ, for we find that there were several stages in the calling of Simon and it was not until the final calling of the Master that he forsook all and followed him. It may be helpful to present the various stages as they occur in the combined gospel narratives:

"One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus ..." (Jno 1:40-42).

"And Jesus, waking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And

they straightway left their nets, and followed him” (Mat 4:18-20).

“It came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genessaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And he entered into one of the ships which was Simon’s, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship” (Luke 5:1-4).

The record in Luke proceeds to recount how a miraculous amount of fish were caught by Peter’s nets, despite Peter himself having laboured all night, and catching nothing. Peter’s response is thus given:

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord . . . and Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him”.

We find then, that although Simon was initially introduced to the Master by his brother Andrew, it was on a later occasion when the brethren were labouring to catch fish, that the Master called upon them both to “follow me”. Yet later still, we find Peter having returned to his boat and fishing all night, rather than abiding with the One who had called him. It was only then that Simon Peter (the use of his full name at this point being most significant), actually “forsook all”, and devoted himself entirely to a whole-hearted service to Christ.

This miraculous catch of fish, being the event with precipitated Peter’s forsaking of all things to follow Christ is most interesting for us to consider. On both occasions when the Master called Peter, he was engaged in the toil necessary for daily life; the first he was actually fishing, the second he was washing his net. For a fisherman, the net was the most important tool of his job; it was the very means whereby fish may be caught, either to be eaten or sold. The net was his livelihood, without it the work could not continue, no fish would be caught, and the family would go hungry. At the time of his first calling, Peter also had a family to sustain, including an ailing mother in law, who was sick of the fever (Luke 4:38), and though he were called upon to follow the Master, there would be a natural concern for his family’s well-being - who would provide for them if he forsook his fishers nets? So we find that he continued attending to his nets, and toiled all night in order to obtain the means of providing meat in due season for his dependents.

However, upon the night preceding his second calling, he had obtained nothing. His labours separate from the Lord who had called him, were fruitless - of his own self he could not provide on that occasion. And herein lies a principle that these events were evidently arranged to teach; to seek after physical bread rather than to follow the

Master is not wise. As the Master himself taught the multitude who sought after the physical bread that they may be filled rather than the words which he spake:

“verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you” (Jno 26,27).

Here, the multitude had been filled with bread, and sought the Master in order to obtain more free food, rather than to seek the bread of life that proceeded from his lips. In the miraculous provision of bread in the desert, the people were being taught that he was able to meet all of their needs; yet they overlooked the point that it was the spiritual bread that was important, and the teaching which lay behind the Master’s actions, the principle that “man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh doth man live” (Deut 8:3). Peter, needed to be taught the same principle; that to labour for bread that perishes is vanity when compared to following He who provides all.

THE HEALING OF PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW

The lesson was taught in stages. Firstly, Peter’s mother in law was healed (Luke 4:38-39), which ought in itself have impressed upon his mind that Christ could, and would provide all that was needed. The fever with which she was afflicted was itself a token of the curse Israel were under because of their disobedience:

“It shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of Yahweh thy Elohim to observe all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . . Yahweh shall smite thee with a consumption, *and with a fever*, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish” (Deut 28:15,22).

In healing this ailing woman of Israel, the Lord Jesus both removed the vexation of Peter of having to care of a sick relative - but more significantly, he manifested himself as the One able to deliver from the Curse, as it is written: “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us . . .” (Gal 3:13).

Further, the labour with which Peter sought to obtain bread for his household was in itself a token of the curse that came through Adam:

“in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen 3:19).

Simon in his own circumstances therefore experienced the effect of both curses; the affliction of mortality and the sometime fruitless travail involved in obtaining daily bread. And both of these curses, he was to be taught, could be removed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

But contrast to the multitude who sought Christ only for food, Simon Peter, immediately upon having this lesson impressed upon him by the miraculous provision of the Master, left his nets, and “forsook all and followed him”. The point has often been made that it is highly probable that the fish obtained could have made Peter a wealthy man - yet he forsook it all in order to follow the Master, in the faith that he would not merely provide the meat that perishes, but could also heal the mortality of man, and grant the bread that gives everlasting life. He went forward in confidence that the Master’s words held true; “take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? Or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat 6:31-33).

Chris Maddocks

THE SERPENT IN SCRIPTURE

God has delivered all creation into the hand of man (Gen 9:1-2) for his physical and spiritual benefit. Job appealed to teaching concerning beasts, fowls of the air and fish of the sea to demonstrate the existence of the hand of God in our lives (Job 12:7-9). Similarly, the Apostle Paul directed the Romans to the evidence of creation to help us understand the way God works: “... the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ...” (Rom 1:20). Solomon also directs our attention to the roe, bird, and ant to observe and learn from their diligence and industry (Prov 6:5-9).

The word “serpent” is used 31 times in Scripture, and occurs for the first time in Genesis 3:1. The Hebrew word “*nachash*” is used for serpent; it means ‘*hiss*’, and on a few occasions is translated “*enchantments*” (see Num. 24:1; 2Kings 17:17). The root word has the meaning of *hiss, magic, whispering and prognostication* (Strong’s concordance). In our consideration of the serpent, we will follow the principle enunciated by Paul when writing to the Corinthians – “that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is “spiritual” (1 Cor 15:46).

The serpent was a creature of God’s creation, but is described as being “more subtil” (Heb. *Arum, subtle, crafty* – Young’s concordance) than the rest of the beasts of the field (Gen 3:1). Serpents in the natural state are subtle, crafty and able to

deceive. They are generally well camouflaged and difficult to see; they can remain motionless for long periods of time; they can move slowly and stealthily without capturing the attention of the observer. A visit to a zoo reptile house will illustrate these points. The unwary can be deceived; the serpent has the ability to move at lightening speed to deliver a fatal bite.

The ways that lead to death are described in Scripture in terms similar to those describing the actions of the serpent. The wicked man will find that “his calamity shall come suddenly; suddenly he shall be broken without remedy” (Prov 6:12-15); “with her much fair speech (like the serpent of Gen 3?) she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him” (Prov 7:21-23). We know the details of the condemnation on Adam and Eve (Gen 3:16-19). The Apostle Paul warns us that we must not have our minds corrupted from the simplicity of the Truth as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety (2 Cor 11:3).

In Genesis chapter 3, the serpent was the first to be condemned, its curse being set out in Genesis 3:14-15):

- i. “cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field”
- ii. “upon thy belly shalt thou go”
- iii. dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life”
- iv. “I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman”

Each of these components of the curse is there for us to observe in the natural world before applying it (as Scripture does) to spiritual things.

There are eleven families of snake, giving a total of approximately 2,600 species. There is a natural hostility between this reptile and mankind. The snake will usually hide in the ground or under rocks, when the approach of human beings is detected. Few people like to handle snakes or even look t these cold-blooded creatures; a similar gulf is fixed between the willfully godless and the faithful. Note that God says the enmity is between the serpent and the woman. Hostility exists with the godless rather than the faithful. Our lord came to save sinners; yet it was for envy that wicked men crucified him (Matt 27:18).

The serpent was cursed above all other creatures of the field (but not including fish or fowl). The cattle and beasts of the field had legs and walked, the serpent was to be deprived of this facility. There is evidence (1) that some snakes (i.e. boas and pythons) have the vestiges of hind limbs a bit like claws on each side of their bodies, and have a girdle, which may have accommodated legs.

THE RODS OF AARON AND MOSES

A miracle was performed by God when Moses cast his rod on the ground and it became a serpent, and when taking it up by the tail, it became a rod again (Ex 4:1-5). This was no ordinary serpent, since the miracle was to be a sign to the natural seed of Abraham that “the Lord God of their fathers ... had appeared” to Moses (v 5). This sign was repeated before Pharaoh and his court (Ex 7:10). Why was it possible for Pharaoh’s magicians to apparently replicate, this sign of Moses authority?

There are only a few species of snake which use death-feigning as a defence mechanism. The most unusual of these is the twig snake. If molested or picked up it will lie completely inert, giving the impression of an inanimate object such as piece of wood. Another example of this behaviour is the log-nosed snake (2). The rarity of this strategy among snakes would enable Pharaoh's magicians to convince the Egyptian people of their powers and thus maintain their authority in the royal court.

“SEEING THEY SEE NOT”

Snakes have poor eyesight but they have a sensory system to enable them to track their prey. The system is made up of two small cavities lined with sensitive cells; the cavities are situated in the roof of the mouth and called “Jacobson’s organ”. Dust particles and odours are picked up on the forked tongue and checked for scent in these twin cavities. Snakes and lizards have this facility: “Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (Gen 3:14). The Scripture uses this natural instinct of snakes “licking” or “eating” dust to describe the state of the wicked when they are ultimately subdued by the Lord at his coming. “His enemies shall lick the dust” (Psalm 72:9); “... lick the dust of thy feet” (Isa 49:23); “They shall lick the dust like a serpent” (Micah 7:17).

Snakes are colour-blind, have poor eyesight and are deaf. How well these natural characteristics of snakes fit God’s description of the wicked (Mat 13:14-15)! The eye of the snake is unusual; it is covered with a transparent scale and has no eyelid or sideways-moving nictitating membrane. The eye therefore always appears to be open, even when the snake

is asleep! The Psalmist, comparing the heathen with their idols, says, “Eyes have they, but they see not” (Psalm 135:16). Isaiah also says, when speaking of God’s wayward people, “See ye indeed, but perceive not” (Is 6:9, see also 43:8). The wicked, like the serpent, have poor spiritual eyesight, lacking an understanding of God’s Word. Jesus said of Israel, “they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Mat 13:13).

Jesus makes the contrast is with godly man, “But blessed are yours eyes for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” (Mat 13:16). Abraham had good spiritual eyesight ; he “rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56).

“HEARING THEY HEAR NOT”

Snakes lack external ears that are present in other reptiles and, although they have internal ears, they are largely deaf to airborne sounds, except those of a very low frequency (300 Hz). They do ‘hear’ sounds of a very low amplitude, due to a sensitivity to vibrations transmitted through the bones of the jaw. The natural world shows the appropriateness of the serpent as a symbol for sin. The Psalmist speaks of the wicked as being “like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear” (Psalm 58:4), Micah says, “their ears (those of the nations) shall be deaf” (Micah 7:16).

Deafness and poor eyesight are disabilities of the serpent which are frequently linked in Scripture with sinners (see Is 6:10, 42:18-19 “deaf”, “blind”; Mat 13:15 “ears are dull”, eyes ... closed”). It is consistent with this theme that the protagonists in the Roman world should be characterised as “that old

serpent” ... which deceiveth the whole world” (Rev.12:9).

When the Kingdom is established, these serpent-like deficiencies will be overcome: “eyes ... opened ... ears of the deaf shall be unstopped” (Is 35:5). We must not let deafness and blindness to God’s Word, cloud our understanding of His purpose. “For since the beginning of the world men have not heard nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for them that love him” (Isa 64:4). These verses quoted and many more are speaking in type (e.g. Deut 29:4) or antitype (e.g. Is 29:18) of serpent qualities.

Jesus commended the faithful, in that they clearly are not of the seed of the serpent: “But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear” (Matt.13:16).

“O GENERATION OF VIPERS!”

The snake is not inhibited in its mobility by poor eyesight and hearing. Rattlesnakes and vipers or pit vipers have a sensory ‘pit’ on each side of the head between the eye and the nostril which is sensitive to infra-red radiation. This enables the viper to detect temperature differences of changes as small as 0.002 degrees Celsius (3). This ability enables the viper to strike accurately a man or a mouse in total darkness if necessary, and trail the disabled prey until death. The ability to ‘see’ by scent or temperature difference gives the snake an advantage in darkness over creatures which depend on light in order to see. Those who are sinners prefer darkness rather than light

(John 3:19-21) and, like the snake, are able to plot their own paths unseen by men (but known to God) (1 John 1:5-10). The type is used by John the Baptist and Jesus: “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come?”. (Mat 3:7). Jesus, speaking to the scribes and Pharisees, used serpent typology in Matthew chapter 23. Five times he described them as being blind (v.16,17,19,24,26).

The snake is able to swallow food alive, head first and whole, even when the victim is larger in diameter than the snake’s body. This is possible, as the snake can drop its lower jaw at the back of its mouth as well as at the front, since the lower jaw is only loosely connected to the skull by the quadrate bone. The lower jaw can also be stretched sideways, since the two halves are connected at the chin by an elastic muscle. Sharp, recurved teeth hold the quarry in place while the halves of the lower jaw are manipulated separately. First one side of the jaw moves forward, and then the other, allowing the snake to ‘walk’ its monstrous gaping mouth forward around its food (4).

The Lord Jesus Christ continued to speak in terms of serpent-behaviour when he described the hypocrites of his day as “blind guides, which strain at the gnat, and swallow a camel (Mat 23:24). Lest his hearers should fail to see the serpent-type in God’s assessment of their ways, Jesus concluded by saying, “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mat 23:33). The Babylonians who took Jerusalem in Jeremiah’s day are described in serpent-like terms:

“All thine enemies have opened their mouths against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up” (Lam 2:16, 3:46).

The violence of Nebuchadnezzar to Zion is described in serpent language. “...hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, ...he hath swallowed me up like a dragon (tannin - serpent), he hath filled his belly...” (Jer 51:34-335), see also Zophar’s speech (Job 20:11-16).

Paul writing to the Romans regarding sinners links Psalm 5:9 (“their throat is an open sepulchre”) with snakes in Romans 3:13-14 (“Their throat is an open sepulchre”); with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness”).

The word viper occurs only eight times in Scripture (three times in the Old Testament and five times in the New), and means ‘a venomous serpent’ or ‘asp’ (heb *epheh*), or a ‘poisonous snake’ or ‘adder’ (Gr. *Echidna* – Strong’s). It is interesting to note that the word “viper” in the New Testament refers to a female snake (Youngs). The snake is a type for sin; it is the female, of course, that gives birth and enables the species to multiply. Vipers may bear as many as thirty young each, with a venom system that can be used from birth. It was the woman who was beguiled by the serpent; similarly it is through the woman that our sinful nature is perpetuated. “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent (Ps 58:3,4). Without Christ our sinful nature will kill us, as the snake venom can if we are bitten.

When the Lord Jesus Christ returns he will tread down his enemies as a man treads on an adder (Ps 91:13); the judgements of God will be by a wound to the head of persistent sinners (Ps 68:21).

THE SERPENT BITE

The poisonous serpent bite brings death to its prey. The injection of poison may be through hollow or grooved teeth which can fold back along the roof of the mouth. The Psalmist therefore prays, “Break their teeth, O God in their mouth” (Ps 58:6, note the context in v.4,5). The lies of the wicked are comparable with the poison of the adder. “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent; adders’ ‘poison is under their lips” (Ps 140:3). Just as poison will spread around the body, sometimes killing the victim in minutes, so the lies of the wicked can spread quickly and bring death: “Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death” (Jas 1:15). James uses the serpent characteristics to reinforce the point regarding the dreadful nature of sin: “the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (3:8).

The literal bite of the serpent has been used by God to judge His people (Num 21:4-6, Jer 8:17, Amos 9:3). Yet through faith and trust in God the effect of the injected poison could be overcome (Num 21:7-9). The warning not to fall away is relevant for the faithful today: “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents” (1 Cor 10:9). The saving work of our Lord is likened to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. Jesus has overcome the effect of the serpent bite and has made it possible for us to be saved from our sins. Paul also

provides an allusion to the overcoming of the serpent bite: “O death where is thy sting?” (1 Cor 15:55). A sting is a method used by insects to inject poison through a hollow tube by puncturing the skin; this is an allusion to the poisonous serpent bite again.

Pharaoh’s magician’s rods that became serpents and were swallowed up by Aaron’s serpent rod (Ex 7:12). This incident points forward to the time of the resurrection when the prophetic words of Isaiah will be fulfilled, “Death is swallowed

up in victory” (Is 25:8; 1 Cor 15:54). When our Lord returns, the power to tread on serpents (Luke 10:19) will be given to the elect: “O grave where is thy victory?” (1 Cor 15:55). When the Kingdom is established, the bite of the asp and adder will no longer be possible in the spiritual or natural worlds (Is 11:8-9, 65:25). “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord”.

Peter Moore

Notes

1. Amphibians and Reptiles, Vaclav Lanka & Zbysek Vit, Hamlyn, 1985, p.20.
2. Snakes of the World, Chris Mattison, Blandford Press, 1986, p.93.
3. How Reptiles and Amphibians live, Arthur C Echernacht, Elsevier Pub., 1977, p.96.
4. The Reptiles, Archie Carr, Time Inc., 1968, p.55.

MAN WHO IS BUT DUST

It is a common trait for men of the flesh to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Accordingly, men who glory in the vanities of this life rejoice in their exalted status before other men. Like the Pharisees of old, craving the affection and admiration of others (Jno 12:43), they do and say those things that bring them into the popularity of the masses, rather than what is testified to be right and acceptable before the Creator of all flesh. So it is that men raise themselves to great prominence, receiving the honour and admiration of those whom they have sought to please - yet forgetting their humble origins. And humble they are, for no matter what a man’s pedigree may be, whether he be born into a rich or poor family, all men have a common humble origin, from the dust of the ground. Being formed in the first instance, from dust, their latter end is to return to the dust - hence Solomon mused within himself:

“I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. 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; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.” (Eccl 3:18-21).

Sober men, who are not intoxicated with the flesh-elevating doctrines of humanism, will

consider their own natural state. Not forgetting where they have come from, they look to where they are to return; back to the dust from whence they were formed. And at this level - the material, physical level - men have no natural pre-eminence over beasts. Both are formed from dust, and both will return to dust when the natural course of events are worked out with the cessation of life. This fact is truly a sobering one - though he may ascend to great heights in the estimation of his fellows, and though he may be rewarded greatly in the things of this life, the end of all men is identical to that of mere, brute beasts. "All go unto one place." There, the rich and the poor meet together in a common destiny; "the small and great are there" (see Job 3:13-20), lying together in an undignified state of decomposition as they moulder into dust.

Those who recognise the reality of the situation may well also ponder their true relationship towards their Maker. He is the Almighty Creator, yet they are mere animated bits of clay, for the most part, unable to look beyond their own limited sphere of existence, to the ultimate outworking of the Creator's purpose. The fact of man's lowly material composition ought itself to be the reason of great humility before Yahweh. Hence Abraham, in taking it upon himself to plead for the sparing of Sodom for the sake of a few men of integrity spake: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, *which am but dust and ashes*: peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?" (Gen 18:27).

THE TEACHING OF ENDEAVOUR

This emphatic teaching of Scripture regarding the formation of man from the dust of the ground is brought into question by the June 2002 issue of *The Endeavour Magazine* (a periodical posing as a Christadelphian magazine, yet with the stated purpose of providing a forum for the airing of dogmas long rejected by Christadelphians). It dismisses the belief that the early chapters of Genesis mean what they say as being a mere "fundamentalist approach":

"What has been termed the fundamentalist approach to the Genesis story, stressing above all else a 'literal' reading of it, has been the cause of much unnecessary discord within our community, and the sad thing is that it could have been so easily avoided by accepting what the sciences have revealed to us which need not be seen as in any way incompatible with the teaching of the Scriptures, provided that it is recognised that any talk of the beginning is bound to make use of symbolical and metaphoric language" (Page 40)

So it is claimed. However, in actual fact it is not so; Christadelphians have long recognised that the account of Genesis is an actual account the formation of the earth, and man upon it. The cause of unnecessary discord, has been the introduction of new ideas not in harmony with the Bible, such as the one under current consideration. Maintenance of Truth never causes discord amongst the congregation of lovers of Truth; yet the introduction of errant doctrines and practices does.

The article commences by citing examples of how a metaphorical form of speech is used in Scripture, and continues to present the early chapters of Genesis as being metaphorical, rather than literal. Having swept away a child-like (Mat 18:3) acceptance of the Bible as it stands with the above words, the article continues to present it's alternative teaching, seeking to explain what literal realities the assumed metaphors of Genesis relate to:

“The fact that the earth was well and truly peopled before the Garden of Eden episode took place presents no obstacle when it is understood that the verb used in the original Hebrew of Gen 2:7 is *yatsar*, translated in the AV as ‘formed’, and is not a term exclusively reserved for Creation, in the sense of creation out of nothing.* (For example it can be used of the creation of Israel (Is 43:21).) In other parts it is rendered variously as ‘called’ (as in the case of Abraham), ‘chosen’ (as in the case of Israel), ‘appointed’, etc.

Now we have ample evidence of prehistoric man hunting and gathering and living a nomad existence in caves and other primitive dwellings for hundreds if not thousands of years before the emergence of the Adamic family and many of their cave drawings depict them hunting animals long since extinct until relatively suddenly these Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) people began to be replaced by Neolithic (New Stone Age) people, who replace the hunting and gathering mode of existence with a settled agricultural and stock-raising form of living, which correlates with the calling of Adam ‘from the dust’ (i.e. from the desert of Mesopotamia) into the well-irrigated ‘Garden of Eden’ ‘to dress it and to keep it’. Suddenly, a ‘help-meet for him’ (metaphor ‘close to his side’) was found, presumably from the same source, i.e. the local population, the same people who Cain feared would all want to kill him because he had murdered his brother Abel” (Page 39,40).

Compare this with the account of Genesis, which is allegedly presenting the same teaching in Metaphor:

“And Yahweh Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed ...” (Gen 2:7,8).

And of the formation of Eve:

“And Yahweh Elohim caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which Yahweh Elohim had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the

* However, it should be noted that the theological concept of “creation out of nothing” is not a scriptural teaching in itself. Scripture teaches that the Creator formed all things out of himself (1 Cor 8:6 Gk)

man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen 2:21-23).

THE THEORY CONSIDERED

The claim with which we are being presented then, is that:

1. the formation of Adam from the dust of the ground = “the calling of Adam ... from the desert of Mesopotamia” from an already existent race of men.
2. The formation of Eve from the rib of Adam = the calling of Eve, “presumably from the same source”.

Specific Bible ‘evidence’ for there being men dwelling upon the earth before Adam’s time is the meaning of the Hebrew word *yatsar*; and the fact that Cain was afraid of men slaying him. Let us then, seek to apply the metaphor, to the Genesis account, and assess the evidence before us!

The introduction of Adam into Eden is stated in the Genesis record to be in stages. His formation from dust comes first, after which he is placed in Eden:

“Yahweh Elohim formed man of the dust of the ground ... And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed” (Gen 2:7,8).

Even at a simple level therefore, the metaphor does not fit the literal event, as described. Whereas the formation of Adam from dust is paralleled with his calling from dusty Mesopotamia to Eden, the record presents his formation from dust, and the placing into Eden as distinct events; he is first created, and then placed in the garden. The metaphor does not fit; it would explain the metaphor of Adam coming from Dust (even if very badly; the record presents him as being created out of, not emerging from, dust), but not of his being placed in Eden; to place the two stages as speaking of a single event would be to confuse the metaphor (if it were such). Neither would it explain the metaphor of Adam having the breath of life breathed into his nostrils - this seems to have no counterpart in the suggested literal events described above. Neither would it explain how that if the formation of Eve from the side of Adam is a metaphor of her coming “presumably from the same source” as Adam, why a totally different metaphor is used, suggestive of a derivation within Adam himself (we shall return to this latter aspect later).

A SELECTIVE APPLICATION OF METAPHOR

Interestingly, the proposition being advanced demands that Eden is a literal place. And that Adam is a literal man. And that his wife is a literal woman. And that Cain literally did kill his brother, and literally did fear that men may slay him. Therefore, whilst the argument is presented to us as being an *alternative* to literality - with

literality being dismissed as being the cause of much division - it is important to recognise that in actual fact it requires certain things to be literal, but others not. It is selective, and apparently arbitrarily so, as to what it regards as being literal, and what is metaphorical, or not-literal. The ‘not literal’ events, it would appear, are events presented in Scripture as events not explicable in human terms i.e. the formation of a man from dust, animating the clay figure with the breath of life, and forming a new human from a living rib of the man so formed; events which require the exercise of faith in the abilities of an all-powerful Creator, as distinct from scientifically provable events*.

THE EVIDENCE CONSIDERED

The first piece of Scriptural evidence advanced requires that the Hebrew word *Yatsar* be given a literal significance, and that it speaks of an appointing or calling, concepts which come within the scope of its alleged literal meaning. That again is significant; the literal meaning of the word is utilised as a means of demonstrating its supposed metaphorical sense!

But what of this word? The first point to note is that its stated uses are factually incorrect. As a glance at *Englishman's Hebrew-Chaldee Concordance of the Old Testament* will show, the word is not used of the calling of Abraham. In fact, the sense of ‘calling’ is *not* intrinsically within the meaning of this word; it is not used in such a sense in Scripture (where the Spirit uses other words, to denote this, such as קרא *qara*’ the word which **is** used of Abraham in Isaiah 51:2). Strong gives the word *Yatsar* the following definition:

“prob. Identical with 3334 (through the *squeezing* into shape) ... to *mould* into a form; espec as a *potter* ...”.

Indeed, that is most fitting given the context in which this word is used in Genesis; that of Yahweh forming the bodily shape of Adam from the dust of the ground. The word is used in this sense also in the following verses:- Is 29:16; 64:8; Jer 18:2,3,4,6,19:1,11; Lam 4:2; Zech 11:13 (its context, not its etymology, determining whether it be understood in a literal, or symbolic sense). It is also translated “form” or “formed” 26 times, which is again of interest in the context of its use in Genesis. There is no need to question therefore, that in the Genesis account it is correctly rendered *formed* in the sense of a clay figure being fashioned after the manner of a potter, for that is the very context of the use of this word - which does not intrinsically contain within the scope of its defined meaning the sense of “called”.

The second piece of evidence advanced, is that Cain was fearful that men would slay him. The Scripture record reads thus:

* This is a grave feature in the proposition being advanced; the Creator is presented as being merely a Caller, calling a man out from something already existing (whose origin is unexplained); whereas the emphasis of Scripture is of Elohim forming all things in creative activity).

“And Cain said unto Yahweh, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from they face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that everyone that findeth me shall slay me” (Gen 4:14).

Interestingly, the writer is depending upon a literal construction of this verse to prove his metaphorical application of the earlier chapters in Genesis (which in themselves, are only part-metaphor, being mixed with literality). The Bible itself recounts what other people were around at this time: “the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters” (Gen 5:4). The solution is simple; Cain knew that the family of Adam was growing, and was fearful that one of them would seek to avenge the blood of their brother.

No other evidence is provided from Scripture. Unproven assertions are made, such as: “The fact that the earth was well and truly peopled before the Garden of Eden episode presents no obstacle ...”. But what “fact”? Where is the proof it is a “Fact”? None is advanced. Some evidence is hinted at later, such as: “now we have ample evidence of prehistoric man hunting and gathering and living a nomadic existence in caves and other primitive dwellings for hundreds if not thousands of years before the emergence of the Adamic family,” with reference being made to Palaeolithic and Neolithic “people”. But in actual fact, this is a misapplication of evidence. The “ample evidence” referred to here is that advanced by Evolutionists, as a prop for their God-defying theory designed to undermine the authority of Scripture. The only “evidence” presented therefore, are the claims of men who not only deny the literality of Creation, but whose objective is to provide an alternative to the Bible in it’s account of the origins of men. Being that “the world by wisdom knows not God” (1 Cor 1:21), it seems hardly wise to appeal to ‘evidence’ derived by man’s wisdom to interpret the Word of God.*

THE DOCTRINAL CONSEQUENCES

It is sometimes argued that such matters as these, not being specifically and directly referred to in the BASF are actually non-essential matters of secondary importance. And that being non-essential, such discussion is healthy, and diversity of opinion is encouraged. However, the perilous nature of such reasoning becomes clear, when it is recognized that several doctrines of a fundamental importance depend upon the events of the early chapters of Genesis being an accurate account of what took place.

For instance, the theory before us cannot define a literal counterpart for the formation of Eve, taking her emergence from Adam’s side as being a mere metaphor. It has to “presume” that it speaks of her coming from the dusty regions of Mesopotamia, like

* It is beyond the scope of this article to examine this ‘evidence’, but we highly recommend the book *Science Vs Evolution* by M Bowden where it is most effectively discredited.

Adam allegedly did. However, not only does Scripture give a reason for the difference in origin (in Genesis 2:23-25), it also draws out doctrines to be implemented in human relationships from that difference. For instance, in speaking of the distinct roles of men and women “in ecclesia”, the Apostle states:

“for the man is not of the woman; but *the woman of the man*. Neither was man created for the woman, but the woman for the man” (1 Cor 11:8,9; see also 1 Tim 2:13).

And again, in speaking of the Bride of Adam being typical of the Bride of Christ, as a member of His Body, we read:

“no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the ecclesia: *for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*” (Eph 5:29,30).

“Know ye not that your bodies *are the members of Christ*? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid. What! Know ye not that he which is joined to a harlot is one body? For Two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit” (1 Cor 6:17).

This example is most interesting, for it does demonstrate that the Genesis record does have an allegorical teaching. Not that the events described there are not literal; but rather in those literal events are to be found principles which themselves represent greater things to come in Christ. To detract from the literality of the events of Creation also undermines the doctrines that are founded upon Genesis being literal.

But more seriously, the notion that Adam is merely a representative of an already existing race of men undermines many doctrinal points taught in the New Testament. Genesis portrays him as the first man created. Similarly, the Apostle Paul describes him as “the first man.” And in this place, the literal things concerning the formation of Adam from dust are again drawn upon to demonstrate principles for the believers:

“There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, *The first man* Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (FOOTNOTE:- Notice here, Christ is not “the last *man* Adam”, but the “last Adam”. That is, whereas Adam was the first man, Christ is not the last man, but is representatively a second Adam) ... the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor 15:45-49).

Clearly, to deny that Adam was “made a living soul” as Gen 2 describes, being an “earthy” man, formed from the dust of the ground, undermines the point being made

in this chapter, and destroys the comparison being made with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, if Adam was but one of a whole race of men which existed from times long before him, we would have a major problem in understanding the origin of sin and death - for Scripture depends on him being "the first man" in its explanation of these matters:

"wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . but not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, how much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one . . . therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation . . . for as by one man's disobedience many were made righteous . . ." (Rom 5:12-21).

If Adam were merely a representative called out of a race of men existing from centuries before him - was death found within their ranks? Did they ever sin? The Bible places the introduction of sin and death as being accountable to one man, Adam. Yet to postulate a multitude of other men being alive at that time impacts upon Bible teaching concerning both this, and the means of redemption through one man Christ Jesus, which the Bible places in antithesis to Adam. Those other men are not alive now, for the only evidence of their existence are their dead remains, and the Scriptures testify that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). So what happened to them? Why did they die, since not being descended from Adam they were not born under condemnation through him? The difficulty appears to be insurmountable.

We conclude then, that it is better to believe the testimony of the Creator than be led by the wisdom of men, which has been made foolishness by Him. Although the stated purpose of the theory was to attempt to address some of the apparent difficulties between science and the Bible, it needs to be recognised that it raises further difficulties far more serious than those it tries to solve, and has doctrinal consequences so far reaching that it affects and brings into question the very basis of our redemption.

Chris Maddocks

"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And **hath made of one blood all nations of men** for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts 17:24-26)

*Symmetry -
David the son of Jesse and Jeroboam the son of Nebat*

David and Jeroboam I are exhibited as epitomes of righteousness and wickedness respectively. In their epitaphs, the kings of Judah and Israel are repeatedly compared with these two men. For example: "he did that which was right in the eyes of YHWH, as did David his father" or "he did that which was evil in the sight of YHWH: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin".

However, the association between these two men runs much deeper than mere antithetical benchmarks of morality - a catena of striking parallels is observable. Note the following comparative tabulation:

<i>David</i>	<i>Jeroboam I</i>
An Ephrathite (1 Sam 17:12)	An Ephrathite (1 Kings 11:26)
Servant to the King (Saul) (1 Sam 22:8)	Servant to the King (Solomon) (1 Kings 11:26)
A "mighty man" (2 Sam 17:10), who proved himself a "son of valour" (1 Sam 18:17)	A "mighty man of valour" (1 Kings 11:28)
Received promise of Kingship while Saul on the throne	Received promise of Kingship while Solomon on the throne (1 Kings 11:30-38)
YHWH promised to make him "a sure house" (1 Sam 25:28; 2 Sam 7:11-29)	If obedient, the Deity promised to build him "a sure house, as [He] built for David " (1 Kings 11:38)
David would <i>not</i> lift up his hand against Saul, YHWH's Anointed (1 Sam 24:6,10; 26:9,11,23; 2 Sam 1:14)	Jeroboam "lifted up his hand against the king" (Solomon) (1 King 11:26-27)
A garment rent to signify the departure of the kingship from Saul (1 Sam 15:27-28)	A garment rent signifying the departure of the kingship of the 10 northern tribes from the Solomonic line (1 King 11:29-31)
Fugitive from king Saul who sought to slay him, taking refuge under Achish king of Gath, a gentile monarch (1 Sam 27:1-3)	Fugitive from king Solomon who sought to slay him, taking refuge under Pharaoh, a gentile monarch (1 Kings 11:40)
Established and organised the true worship of YHWH (1 Chron 23-27)	Established elaborate apostate religious system (1 Kings 12:26-33)
Offered sacrifices as a King-priest (2 Sam 6:17-18). A priest after the order of Melchizedek.	Offered sacrifices as a King-priest (1 Kings 12:32-33). A counterfeit Messiah.

Such points are not merely academic excursions; they constitute a veritable exhortatory powerhouse. We have to make the choice now of which way we will walk. The equation is simple: one equals life, the other death.

The golden calves have long been fashioned and set up in the Ecclesia, to which a plethora of brethren repair. It is all so much more convenient is it not? – why make the trek to Jerusalem when Bethel and Dan are so nearby? Such is simply the deceitfulness of sin.

O brethren! Let us nail the counterfeit to the board, rip off the fleece and call a wolf a wolf! Let us stand up and be counted, shunning the politics endemic in the Brotherhood, and not caring a rush whether anyone will stand up with us. Soon the greater Josiah will be here to smash to pieces and grind to powder everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God - within and without the Ecclesia. Where will we be found in that day? At Jerusalem or Dan? We make the answer now.

Paul Moore

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