

CHRISTADELPHIANS

The Christadelphians are a small "Christian" sect that hold that God is one person not three persons. They believe that Jesus was the Son of God because God made him without a father in his mother's womb. They hold that Jesus was not God but many of them regard him as divine since his resurrection in an inferior sense to God. They believe that the Holy Spirit is not a person but a power.

They believe that the Bible is wholly the word of God. Jesus did not die in our place to be punished by God for our sins but to show us what sin deserved and to excite us to mending our lives. He rose again in his human body. There is no everlasting torment and Hell in the Bible does not mean that kind of Hell. Those who have never heard the word of God will rise again to hear it. The wicked will never rise again according to some branches of the movement. The saved are those who know the Bible well and believe in it and they will live in a Paradise Earth. This knowledge, faith and baptism by immersion and good works are necessary for salvation. There is no life or existence after death until the resurrection. The existence of the Devil is denied. Satan is a parable for sin. The movement believes that Jesus is coming again so soon that it is a duty not to get involved in politics. For this putting faith before human needs the sect is regarded by many as fanatical. They reply that there are plenty of unbelievers to take care of politics but the fact remains that if these politicians didn't exist the sect would not help out.

Christadelphians were founded by John Thomas in 1848.

The sect invents its doctrines and then it bends the Bible to fit them.

For example, since the Bible says that Jesus destroyed the Devil by his death and since Paul handed sinners over to Satan with the hope that they would change they say the Devil is a parable for sin and temptation. Jesus destroyed temptation in himself by dying. But destroyed in the Bible does not mean caused to die. And Paul could hand sinners over to Satan when they want to go to him and hope that their having Satan will make them sick of him and bring them back to God. The Bible says we are tempted by our own base desires which they think excludes Satan tempting us. But Satan uses our desires to tempt or to make us tempt ourselves. When the Bible refers to Satan in personal terms it is most likely that Satan is a person.

The sect though it says it believes in the atonement denies the doctrine that Christ was punished on the cross for our sins so that we could get away with them. But the way the cross of Jesus is stressed in the New Testament and in the letters of Paul indicate that it is more important than just an example and a demonstration of how God views sin. The Bible says that Jesus died for our sins as in a ransom. A ransom means that something has been paid or suffered in the place of another.

Christadelphians say that Jesus paid the price of death to free us from sin by his example so he paid his ransom vicariously for us to God. In other words, we needed to learn for ourselves how God views sin but instead of God showing us personally and by punishing us he used Jesus instead. But that is not a ransom.

Jesus must have meant what he was traditionally understood to mean by ransom, Jesus paid his price to the justice of God so that God could free us from sin and have him in our place.

Christadelphians argue that there would be no forgiveness without Jesus' death in the sense that you need to look at him and say he got what you deserved and admit that before God can forgive you. The question is then why does God not give us a vision of Jesus suffering on the cross to make the death as real as possible to us so that we can see the point he is trying to make far more? And why Jesus? Surely any sinner would do? We all see people suffering and dying so why Jesus?

Romans says that Adam made all dead and Christ reversed this and made all alive. Adam credited his sin to our account and Jesus counted his obedience to our account. This is the vicarious atonement for Christ is depicted as reversing the sin of Adam which we suffer for and which weakens us to make us more likely to sin. The stress on Adam's sin shows it is more than just a bad example or the entry of the power of sin into the world for God can still halt that power so the cross must be more than a good example for it bears the same relation to us as Adam's sin did.

The Christadelphians however should be thanked for not teaching the barbaric traditional doctrine that Jesus vicariously justly paid for our sins and got what our sins deserved so that we didn't have to be punished. The innocent cannot pay for the guilty. That is not justice.

The sect interprets texts that say that we will see God figuratively. Why could it not be that in Paradise Earth or wherever we will see God and enjoy him forever? No Bible text says that salvation is not bringing us to God to enjoy and see him

forever.

Many in the sect says that God is a material being and some go further and say he has a human body (page 68, Some Modern Faiths). They take literally the texts that speak of God walking in the Garden of Eden and his condemnation of Gods that do not hear and see. But God walking could mean that God took the form of an angel or man. And we do not understand spirit or immaterial reality so spirit might hear and see without ears and eyes. God is the Father and his Holy Spirit projects all over the universe and holds it in being. If God is material and was not made then why can't the universe be like that? God is not needed. These Christadelphians reject the argument of Catholicism that there has to be a being that has no parts to make matter and which is the reason for its own existence.

Some Christadelphians still say that Jesus did not become the Christ until his baptism in the Jordan (page 70, Some Modern Faiths, Christendom Astray, page 160). A king has to be anointed and they think Christ was anointed by the Holy Spirit then. [The Christadelphian religion used to teach that Holy Spirit was electricity - and we are told by many that religion and science are separate! Do they know much about religion at all?] This is unbiblical for this anointing is never said to be one that makes him a king. Jesus was never crowned. Jesus claimed to be lawful king from birth (Luke 2:11, 25-26). They will say he was just a potential Christ disregarding the simple interpretation of the text.

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