

“UNAMENDED” CHRISTADELPHIANS

A brief explanation

The visitor to this site will have noticed the term UNAMENDED in connection to the name "Christadelphian"- hence the title "Unamended Christadelphians".

The use of the term UNAMENDED is a title of clarification, added when a division took place among the Christadelphian community in 1898. Controversy was sparked among the Christadelphians when serious disagreement broke out concerning whether it was Baptism (accompanied by knowledge and faith) that makes an individual responsible to appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ when He returns, or merely coming to a knowledge of the Truth of God's Word that makes one responsible to the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Up until the late 1800's it had been commonly understood among the Christadelphian Community that only those who had made a covenant with God through baptism (and by animal sacrifice before Christ's sacrificial work) would rise from the dead and appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ at His coming. This is found to be the case in the original **1877 Birmingham Statement of Faith**, which reads under Article 25, Section D- "*That at the appearance of Christ, his servants, faithful and unfaithful, dead and living of both classes, will be summoned before his judgment seat to be judged according to their works*". Up until 1898 it was left as an open question as to whether God, for his own unrevealed reasons, might or might not raise those who understood the Truth but never made a covenant relationship with God, to receive some kind of judgment for not having accepted God's offer of salvation. But still, it was widely understood and agreed upon that such a class of persons would not be raised from the dead to appear at the Judgment Seat (or Greek- "Bema") of Christ. It was believed that the "bema" of Christ is reserved for His "servants".

In 1898 a movement was developed in England (after four years of bitter controversy on the matter) by those who believed that Christ would raise for Judgment individuals who had heard the word of God and rejected it (i.e., the term "The Enlightened Rejecters"). Those involved with the movement wished to make the issue a test of fellowship and worked to amend (or change) the Statement of Faith to state- *"That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it) dead and living- obedient and disobedient- will be summoned before his judgment seat"*.

This group in England succeeded in their attempt to change or "Amend" the Statement of Faith, resulting in the disfellowship of any who would not go along with the change. Those who refused to go along with accepting the Amendment became known as the UNAMENDED, while those who went along with the change were recognized as the AMENDED- later called by themselves as the CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP. In the process of debate over the "Enlightened Rejecter" theory, other basic doctrines surrounding the Nature of Man, the Nature of Christ, Baptism, and Inherited Sin and Condemnation, (under the umbrella of the Atonement) were also (and continue to be) a source of fundamental disagreement. These areas of doctrine that were effected were ultimately recognized by both the Amended and Unamended communities as the primary causes of the division.

The **traditional** portion of the Unamended Community continues to contend that it is only through contact with the sacrificial work of Christ (through the waters of baptism) that there is any hope or guarantee of rising from the dead at Christ's return. (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). Though there are Unamended that believe that God, based upon His own power and not by any laws that He has revealed, **may** raise some outside of covenant relationship to receive some special condemnation separate from the Judgment Seat of Christ, it is agreed that anything beyond what God has clearly revealed (that the "dead in Christ" will be raised) is mere speculation at best and not a test of fellowship. We believe that God has given us a choice to choose between life and death. If we accept His offer of salvation by complying to baptism, then upon our

baptism we must comply to the Commandments of Christ. Upon Christ's return, we believe he will then Judge **His servants** on the basis of whether they have or have not properly conducted themselves. If chosen worthy then immortality will be granted, if judged unworthy of living by the requirements established by God the unfaithful servants will return to the grave to never rise again. (See Statement of Faith, Article XXVI for supporting verses.)

The Unamended do not believe that just because one gains a knowledge of the Truth of God's Word that they become "responsible" to be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ. God has given the choice to all men. If they do not accept the offer of salvation then they return to the dust and receive their reward of eternal death. Because the Scriptures give no evidence to the claim that if a person is somehow exposed to the Truth that they become "responsible" to the Judgment Seat of Christ, we believe that to teach those who may hear the Truth that "if they do not get Baptized that they will be raised from the dead only to be sent back to the grave" is scripturally deficient and an unnecessary tool of intimidation to gain numbers. One must come to accept the offer of salvation not out of fear of being punished, but out of voluntary obedience and faith in what God has commanded. Any other motivation must be questioned as being acceptable for a valid baptism. Though all men are responsible to heed the call of the Gospel Message as Christ stated in John 3:18, if one does not accept or "believe" the call to repentance and salvation he is "condemned already" due to the condemnation of death that all men inherit from Adam.

The sponsors of this web site, in contrast to our Amended counterparts, believe firmly that due to the Condemnation of Death that all men inherit from Adam (Romans 5), it is only by symbolic contact with the Blood of Christ (through baptism) that we can find release from the grave, according to the Laws that God Himself has established and revealed to us through His word (Romans 8:1, John 3:18, II Timothy 1:10).

Republic, Missouri Christadelphians