

# **THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS OF FELLOWSHIP IN THE TRUTH**

**ROBERT ROBERTS**

**&**

## **OTHER ARTICLES**

# THE NATURE AND CONDITIONS

## OF

# FELLOWSHIP IN THE TRUTH

The truth is professedly and confessedly a "narrow" thing. Jesus declares this in saying "**Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.**" This "way" he afterwards speaks of as "**the truth,**" saying, "**Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**"; and also, "**every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.**"

The narrowness of the truth is one of the obstacles to its general adoption. People do not like to be fettered either in doctrine or practice. It is also one of the causes of the active tendency to corruption which has manifested itself among those embracing the truth from the very day it was apostolically established at Jerusalem. It is inconvenient to be under restrictions in our dealings with fellow men in the truth or out of it. If it were a question of choice, we should all prefer absolute freedom. But no one recognising Christ as the supreme teacher can think of freedom in the matter. If we make freedom our rule, we can only have the freedom of those who set Christ aside altogether, saying in the words of the wicked "**Our tongues are our own: who is Lord over us ?**" None who truly know Christ would desire this freedom. All who sincerely accept Christ will recognise his law as paramount, however irksomely it may work in some of its present relations.

It is one of the narrowesses of the truth that it demands of those who receive it that they "**contend earnestly**" for it, even if an angel from heaven oppose it or corrupt it (Jude 3; Gal. 1:8-9); and that they maintain it intact and unsullied among themselves as the basis of association among those who profess it, refusing to walk with a brother who either disobeys its precepts (II. Thess. 3:14; Rom. 16:17), or re-

fuses consent to its teachings in vital matters (II: John. 10; I. Tim. 6:3-5). This policy is so contrary to natural friendliness that it is easy to drift away from it, and to invent theories that will relieve us from its unpleasant obligations.

The controversy on inspiration has forced the reconsideration of this question upon us. We say *re-consideration*: for it was considered and debated in the beginnings of things connected with the truth in this generation, and satisfactorily disposed of for a time. The principal cause of our trouble in the present situation has been the divergence of view that has prevailed at the bottom on this fundamental question. Many who have allowed the entirely inspired character of the Scriptures, have not been able to see the necessity for insisting upon that truth in our basis of fellowship. They have been inclined to leave it as "*an open question*." This is the result of a dim or faulty perception of the apostolic doctrine of fellowship (a common sense doctrine) which requires agreement on fundamentals as the first condition of walking together, or co-operating, associating or fellowshipping together in the prosecution of the objects of the truth. As a brother, writing on the question says

"There is prevalent at the present time a lamentable looseness in regard to what must constitute the basis of fellowship. It arises partly from ignorance and partly from an over-anxiety to increase numbers, and keep together divergent elements. This must inevitably result in serious trouble or general declension. . . . The truth's interest is at stake and no doubt much depends upon our action, as to whether it is yet to be maintained in its purity and simplicity, or lapse into laodiceanism. The crisis is, doubtless, the most acute that has taken place since it was brought to light in these latter days. It has been brewing for past years. You were reluctant to believe it, and laboured to stave it off. A too long course of loose discipline and slackness in dealing with wrong principles in doctrine and practice has, no doubt, intensified the evil and made it all the more bitter, and grievous and hard to bear. I am persuaded that good will result in the, case of those many or few who will outride the storm by keeping a firm grasp of the anchor of the soul, by coming out of this ocean of suffering as gold tried in the fire."

With a view to the thorough ventilation and effectual exhibition of the Scriptural principles of fellowship, we append a double series of propositions in which there is some attempt to formulate them in their bearing upon the question which has been troubling the ecclesiastical assemblies. We should be pleased to receive and publish enlightened criticisms that may be offered thereon; or any other capable endeavour to amplify or illustrate Scriptural principles in the same direction.

## THE FIRST SERIES

1. **"Fellowship with the Father and with His Jesus Christ"** consists in walking in the light, as God is in the light.
- 2: **"Fellowship one with another,"** depends entirely upon our conformity to this first and necessary principle of all fellowship, which John so emphatically lays down in 1 John. 1: 6, 7.
3. **"Light"** is a figure of speech - a metaphor for divine wisdom, true knowledge, and accurate understanding..
4. God is the fountain-head of these incomparable powers. Hence **"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."**
5. His light is manifested to us in three ways first, in Christ; second, in the Scriptures; and third, in His saints.
6. In Christ:--"**I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.**" In the Scriptures:--"**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.**" (Psalm 119:105). In His saints:--"**For, ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.**" (Eph. 5: 8).
7. These points being hereby established, they constitute a chain connecting God and man, not one link of which can be removed, or in any respect impaired without endangering the whole sequence and breaking the harmony of the divine relations to us individually. Take away

Christ and you destroy all possibility of fellowship with God. Tamper with that Bible which He approved, and you equally render divine recognition of you hopeless, while you remove the only means in visible existence among men which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among them who are sanctified; you destroy the foundation of the righteous, and dissolve in so doing the household of Christ.

8. "**Walking in the light,**" therefore,- means "**believing ALL things that are written in the law and in the prophets,**" as Paul affirmed he did (Acts 24:14), as well as the subsequent writings in the New Testament: exercising hope toward God as embodied in "**Christ our hope,**" and "**following righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**"

9. Without the patient and faithful observance of these things, fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is impossible, and in consequence fellowship with one another is likewise impracticable.

## AGAIN

Is it not a commandment of God that we should receive His word - His oracles - the Scriptures - as supreme ? Does not ,Christ enforce it in his "**Search the Scriptures**" (John 5:39) and elsewhere? Does not Paul teach it in many ways, in regard to both the Old Testament and the New ?

Admitting this unavoidable conclusion and reading it in the light which 1 John 2:3, etc., throws upon the conditions of true fellowship, namely, "**And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.**" "**He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.**" Must we not exact Christ's estimate of the Old Testament, and Paul's of both the Old Testament and his own writings, as a necessary condition to be recognised in our "**fellowship one with another,**" if we wish to secure the end for

which we are working, namely, "**fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ**" ?

## THE SECOND SERIES

1. In the accomplishment of its mission among men, the truth acts by separation and association.

(a) It separates men from the world: "**Come out from among them and be ye separate.**"

(b) It associates those so separated: "**Ye are all one . . . forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.**"

It produces these results by the creation of scripturally derived ideas in the minds of those operated upon. By these ideas they are dominated and controlled. They become mentally new creatures, and manifest the change in their altered relations to men and things around them.

2. But the association of those separated by the truth, is governed by conditions that sometimes interrupt that association. Hence, "**Have no company**": "**withdraw**": "**turn away**" - are apostolic commands concerning some who have been actually separated by the truth.

3. The conditions of association relate to two departments of our standing in Christ which may be expressed as conviction and character . . . Unity of conviction and mutuality of conformity to a certain standard of action, are the two conditions out of which association and fellowship, grow, and by rupture of which, it is necessarily interfered with.

4. This rupture may be only partial in either department and yet be sufficient to cause suspension of association in fellowship. Apostolic examples:

(a) Refusal to recognise that Christ had come in the flesh was made a reason for not receiving men who believed in God and the Kingdom, and a number of other elements of truth. b) Idleness was declared a

ground of disfellowship where men had otherwise submitted to the commandments of Christ.

5. That the first condition of association is the belief of the truth, apart from the perception and reception of which, there is no basis of fellowship.

6. That, the truth forming this basis is made up of a number of items or elements, that are each essential to its integrity as a whole.

7. That it is a matter of duty to require the recognition of these at the hands of those claiming association with us in the truth.

8. That we are not at liberty to receive any one who denies or refuses to believe any of them, because the receiving of such would open the way for the currency of their principles among us, with the tendency of leavening the whole community. The elements of the truth are so mutually related that the displacement of one undermines the foundation of the whole.

9. A man himself believing the truth, but willing to wink at its denial among those in fellowship in any of its essential elements, becomes, by this willingness, an offender against the law of Christ, which requires the faithful maintenance of the whole. Faithful servants of Christ cannot unite with such, on the ground that though he hold the truth himself, such a man is responsible for the error of those whom he would admit, and therefore becomes the channel of a similar responsibility to those who may endorse him in fellowship:-"**He that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.**"

10. That it is the duty of the friends of the truth to uphold it as a basis of union among themselves by refusing to receive either those who deny any part of it, or those who would receive those so denying.

11. Paul commands withdrawal from "**any man**" who "**obeys not his word,**" "**delivered by epistle.**" He commands the brethren to hold fast the traditions taught by him, "**whether by word or epistle.**"

12. Paul teaches by epistle that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.
13. We are bound to hold fast by this, and to refuse association with any man refusing submission to this apostolic tradition.
14. The doctrine of partial inspiration is a nullification of this apostolic tradition; and a doctrine consequently, from the holders of which, we are bound apostolically to withdraw.
15. That the highest sanction of reason supports this apostolic obligation, since logically, the doctrine of partial inspiration when worked out, deprives us of confidence in the only access we have to the divine mind in our age.

R. Roberts, 1st September, Christadelphian 1885

## ERROR & ITS TREATMENT.

Dr. Thomas has been nearly 17 years in his grave. The Truth's friends are vastly more numerous than they were at the time of his death. On the other hand, progress has been checked by internal convulsions. The formal renunciation of a vital element of the Truth concerning the sacrifice of Christ, and more recently the formal promulgation of the doctrine that the Bible is only partly inspired and is marred by errors due to the participation of human authorship, have caused division and alienation.

The blame of the dissension lies with those who set the cause in motion, & not with those whom that cause left no alternative but action against it. Suppeness of action might have preserved the union of persons, but it would have been at the expense of purity and spiritual strength on the only basis that can hold people profitably together.

Both defections have been characterized by an animus against Dr. Thomas' writings. Events have justified the Providential arrangements by which their continuous publication has been secured against the hostility of such as have only partly loved or partly understood the Truth which the author of those writings has been instrumental in reviving in our day and generation.

Christadelphian January, 1888

## UNION AND UNITY

*"All speak the same thing . . that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment"-1 Cor. 1:10*

UNITY is a beautiful and desirable thing, but it has conditions that cannot be forced, and it requires no pleas. Where it exists, it asserts itself like a law of nature. Union may require its pleas.

Union has advantages. There has been much talk of late years of "the re-union of Christendom." The scheme is favored by many who would sacrifice oneness of faith (or indeed faith of any kind) for the sake of seeing all sects fused into one church. It was supposed that the Pope himself was in favor of the scheme; so he was, provided all accepted the Roman Catholic faith, in which, so far as theory was concerned, he was more consistent than the rest.

Among ourselves, there was a similar movement 20 years ago. Records of it will be found on pg. 538 of the Christadelphian for 1877-under the heading "Proposal for Reunion." In that case, the cause of disunion was disunity of mind on the subject of the nature and sacrifice of Christ.

The remarks made then are applicable at the present time, when the particular disunion existing is due to disunity of mind on the more serious question of the character of the Holy Scriptures. We remarked then as follows:

"Union and peace are results springing from preceding conditions. Those from whom separation took place would rejoice to accept the restoration of fellowship if it were offered on the basis of truth accepted and error discarded: but they cannot accept it on the basis of a form of agreement which would cover up and compromise the real issue.

"To 'let bygones be bygones' is a reasonable proposal when the

'bygones' are of such a nature as to be sorrowed for and repudiated; but those to whom a return is proposed have no bygones to repent of so far as their course in this particular matter is concerned.

"They acted with a good conscience before God, with sorrow they were compelled to act, but seeing no alternative: and they are in the mind to act so again if necessity call for it--which God forbid. Their position now is the position they occupied then."

"If any desire to take part In this position as the result of a conviction that they have been seduced into a wrong position, those to whom they wish to return will gladly welcome their fellowship in it. But let there be no misunderstanding. **THERE CAN BE NO UNION WITHOUT UNITY.**"

These remarks, just 20 years old, are strictly applicable to the present case. Agreement as to the wholly inspired infallible character of the Scriptures is the very first condition of association on the basis of belief of what they teach. This agreement was broken by the promulgation of a theory of the effect that the Scriptures were partly human and erring.

There were those who accepted this theory and those who could not, and there were those who were disposed to make it a matter of indifference. Cleavage was the inevitable result of such a situation.

The author or authors of the present "plea for unity" are not the only persons "saddened" by the "divisions and estrangements that have taken place," but union without unity is not the remedy for the sadness.

**And UNION WITH UNITY WILL NEVER BE A GENERAL THING TILL THE LORD IS HERE.** He said there would be division even in families about him. And it has been so; and it is not going to stop till he ends it.

The only practicable rule of operation at present is fellowship on the

basis of oneness of mind. It is a rule fraught with embarrassment and pain, but it is not of human appointment and cannot be set aside where faithfulness to the Word of God is not extinct.

To confound this rule with the Corinthian schisms that gloried in particular men after the flesh, is a serious mistake.

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THERE is suggested the appointment of "delegates" to meet and "finally settle the differences which exist," "Delegates" have no power to settle matters of faith, conviction, or duty. You may give them power to engage a hall or enter upon a printing contract, or any other secular matter in which you agree beforehand to be bound by their decision.

*You cannot delegate the decision of spiritual issues. This is wholly a matter of individual responsibility in which no man can bind or absolve another.* When you appoint "delegates" to settle questions of duty, you abdicate individual conscience and set up a spiritual tyranny akin to the councils which have already for ages desolated the world.

The only practicable method of work in an age when God has chosen to be silent is for *each man to judge for himself and as many as are of one mind to work together.*

The proposal to "appoint delegates with full powers to act," and that "their decision for unity shall be final," is the proposal of a man who may want peace (which is a good thing on the right foundation), but who does not understand what he is proposing.

*If oneness of mind be not the condition-precedent of oneness of association, then let us return to the churches and chapels with all speed.* Why stand apart from the orthodox communions, with their many advantageous connections and associations, for the sake of a spiritual fad, if the One Faith is not essential to the One Body?

It is a thing apostolically enjoined, a thing commended by the highest

reason, to contend earnestly for the Faith in its integrity, and to stand aside from all who corrupt it. It is a thing, the absence of which in the first century, led to wholesale corruption, and would in our day have already destroyed the distinctive features of the Truth.

In the arduous battle for the Truth, it is a thing beset with many difficulties, and a true friend of the spiritual order would not increase those difficulties by protesting against it, but would rather *abet and encourage every tendency in the direction of faithfulness in this gloomy and unfriendly age.*

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THEN there is the proposition that "Christadelphianism is not a finality." If this were our opinion, we should be found altogether elsewhere. We would not sacrifice present respectability and present ease for the sake of a thing admitting of uncertainty and requiring further "enquiry."

In this point we totally differ from all our critics. WE ARE CERTAIN WE HAVE ATTAINED TO THE TRUTH, WE ARE POSITIVE, WE HAVE NO DOUBT. The Truth is not with us an object of search, or a subject of investigation, it is a possession and a finality, and this confidence is not a matter of assumption or an idiosyncrasy. - It is founded on a lifetime's incessant daily reading of the Scriptures.

The critics condemn confidence as to the teaching of the Word. They either mean that we never can reach to the full assurance of faith or that their view of the case and not their neighbor's is the infallible one. If the former be their meaning, they convict themselves of belonging to the class condemned in the Scriptures, who are "ever learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth." If the latter, it is a choice of infallibilities, and we do not hesitate to reject theirs.

"Progress" is a pretty word, and "stemming the current of progress" a dreadful crime, of course; but there is progress two ways, and we cannot accept the guidance of the critics as to when the progress is back-

wards and when forwards. The backward progress of things in the first century was pushed forward with "good words and fair speeches, which deceived the hearts of the simple."

We are one with those who hold the Truth as a finality, who do not require to "lay again the foundations;" but who, strong in faith and filled with all wisdom, are engaged in the work, not of discussing the Truth, but advocating it for the development of a people who shall be found in all assurance of faith, looking and preparing for the second appearing of the Son of Man in power and great glory.

Paul commands the brethren to "all speak the same thing," and to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor 1:10). How strangely, by the side of this, does the statement of this pamphlet read: That "certain differences of opinion are necessary to progress," and that these differences are to be "appreciated rather than otherwise." What can we do but hold by Paul and reject the pamphlet?

We can understand the sentiment of the pamphlet as applied to matters of science where knowledge comes from investigation, and investigation is stimulated by conflicting theory, but it is incomprehensible in reference to the faith of Christ except on the hypothesis already rebutted--that this is a matter of uncertainty.

The advocacy of "differences of opinion" as a matter of advantage among brethren will please well a certain class; but it will not find any favor among true saints who have come, and are helping others to

"... come unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . being henceforth no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"

In fact this principle of unity, as opposed to "difference of opinion," distinguishes the true brethren of Christ from mere opinionists, who

have a smattering of the Truth; but who, though "ever learning," are never able to come to a knowledge of it.

*TO THE charge of holding "that the knowledge of Scripture, in the writings of Dr. Thomas, has reached a finality," WE PLEAD GUILTY.*

If we were ignorant or unfamiliar with the Scriptures, or were like those who when they attempt to write or speak, have to look at them through the telescope of dictionaries, concordances, and such like, we should not have ground sufficient to entertain this conviction; but our acquaintance with them in daily intercourse for a lifetime enables us to be confident on the point.

Our reading has not been confined to the Scriptures, or to the writings of Dr. Thomas. We have read what others have to say in many realms of human thought. We have, therefore, all the materials to form a judgment; and our judgment is distinctly to the effect imputed—that, *in the writings of Dr. Thomas, the Truth is developed as a finality, and that they are a depot of the Christian doctrine. In this sense we are "committed to Dr. Thomas."*

Dr. Thomas has been laid aside in the grave for a season; and so long as God permits life and health, we shall defend the mighty results of his labors against all ridicule and opposition from friend or foe. Were he in the land of the living, some who are in hostility would be in a different attitude towards him. When he appears, they will be ashamed.

Meanwhile, God, who used him in the doing of His work, lives to note the gap made by his death, and the results which were not unforeseen to Him. In His sight, and with His help, we shall hold fast to the Truth brought to light by his means; and, please God, will rejoice with him at the near-impending realization of all the hopes of the saints, in the day when bitterness of present warfare will only add sweetness to the hour of triumph.

We shall try to endure the odium which calls this a dictatorial spirit. The clear perception, strong choice, and resolute defence of that which

is true and good is not the offspring of dictation; nevertheless, if enemies or friends choose to consider it so, we must heed them not. It is this spirit that enables a man to say at last

**"I have fought a good fight: I have KEPT THE FAITH!"**

*We recognize in sorrow and compassion, the painful position of all men who love the good things revealed in the Scriptures, and incline to pursue the course that is right, and yet find themselves in a strait between their desire to live peaceably with all men, and their resolution to walk in faithfulness to the Gospel to which they have been called.*

We have from the beginning suffered from this agonising embarrassment, and can sympathise with all who suffer in the same way. This sympathy takes off the edge of the resentment we should feel at the odiums cast upon us by many who love peace and misunderstand our attitude.

At the same time, it cannot relax enlightened determination to persevere in the policy of the past. Dr. Thomas recommended that policy and we have found it the only practicable one; to *GIVE THE TRUTH THE BENEFIT OF ALL DOUBTS, and to accept such co-operations only as uncompromising loyalty to it might allow.*

There are, of course, extremes in the application of this principle to which Dr. Thomas himself did not go, and to which we cannot lend ourselves-where unrevealed details admit of variety in opinion.

But as regards the great general truths involved in "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ," *there is no tenable ground between returning to the churches and unqualified assent to these elements of truth.*

Bro. Roberts, 1898

# **THERE SHALL BE**

## **DIVISION**

THE Christadelphians do not stand off from the general body owning the "Christian" name from any idea that division is better than union. Speaking for ourselves, we mournfully submit to it as a necessity. Union with the great throng would be a present advantage in every sense and way. *But it is not a possibility with any man having discernment of what the Spirit teaches and faithfulness to what it requires.*

There is such a thing as "THE Truth," whether the common run of men know it or not. There is such a thing as "coming out from among" and "having no fellowship with" the indifference and error and evil that prevail, however many may have become insensible to the obligation.

*It is the recognition of these that lead to division, and not any insensitivity to the advantage of union.* The MANY are indifferent: a FEW are faithful. Hence the fermentation. It was Christ's understanding of men, and his foresight of the working of things among them that led him to say

"From henceforth there shall be division" (Luke 12:52-3).

The result is inevitable in an evil world, so long as there is any faithfulness left.

It is insinuated that withdrawal from errorists is an evil thing. This is a fashionable sentiment, but it is not in accord with the mind of Christ, as expressed through the apostles.

Love and union are beautiful. They are the most exquisite manifestations of intelligent life possible upon earth, and the earth will yet see their universal triumph when the purpose of God is finished.

But meanwhile, there are other duties. The loving John, says concerning those who "bring not the doctrine of Christ," that the faithful are to (2 John 10) "Receive them not into their house."

And Jesus, in his message through this same John, commends one ecclesia for acting on this discrimination, and condemns another for not acting on it. To Ephesus (Rev. 2:2):

"Thou canst not bear them that are evil, but have tried them that say they are apostles, and hast found them liars" To Thyatira he says (Rev. 2:20):

"Thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants."

Schism is the result of acting out these principles, and is a GOOD thing if intelligently and faithfully done. It is a painful and apparently "unfriendly" process: but there is no choice with those who would be friendly to GOD first.

The Truth has been an obscure and weak thing from the beginning. From its nature it cannot become popular, because it runs counter to human feeling in so many practical ways not seen at first.

Its true friends know this, and they are not working to obtain public success or even public notice. They are simply carrying out orders. Christ calls for exhibition of the Light, and they exhibit it. Their operations in this respect are necessarily misunderstood by the public which judges from its own motives, and cannot judge in any other way.

The Christadelphians cannot fail, because they are not aiming at what is humanly considered "success." They are simply engaged in doing their duty in the faith of a stupendous, world-stunning success which is impending, and which depends on no human effort.

Christ will shortly show himself on the earth, and put his hand to the work in a way that will startle so-called "Christian" mankind. True Christadelphians plod away with this in view. For this reason, they can-

not be quenched by scorn or crushed by failures of any kind.

The very last things they desire is the attention and patronage of the "public," which looms so large in all ordinary enterprises. Nothing is so dangerous to the Truth as "respectability," because the Truth is a matter of God's importance, while respectability is an affair of man's importance. The two cannot work together.

Bro. Roberts, 1891

## NEUTRALS

IN THIS spiritual warfare, ,Whose weapons are neither lead, nor steel, but more effective than either for putting to flight the aliens, there are neither truce, armistice, neutrality, nor peace.

He that is not with us is against us: and he that gathered not with us scattereth abroad. I, for one know no man in this warfare as a brother and a friend who is NEUTRAL and NOT GATHERING.

A man who is neutral stands by with arms folded and sees the enemy crushing me to death! He believes in the cause I am fighting for, but he calmly views my destruction without any sign of help.

Is such a man my friend and brother? Is he not rather a sympathiser with the enemy? If he helped me, we might prove too strong for the foe; the enemy, knowing this, cannot look upon neutrals in any other light than his friends. And this is just where Christ puts all neutrals in the good fight of faith.

Bro. Thomas.

# **CONTENTIOUSNESS IS NOT**

## **FAITHFULNESS:**

"Tho I speak with the tongues of men and angels, tho I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have all faith so I could remove Mountains-and have not love, I am nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind. Love envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil"-1 Cor.13:1-5.

THESE words will measure us at the last. The law of love and long-suffering is the law of God. The universe is constructed and worked on this principle, in nature & revelation. If we omit it from our spiritual operations, we are out of harmony with the scheme of things, however contentious we may be for points of truth.

"He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for GOD IS LOVE"  
(I John.4:8).

"He shall have judgment without mercy that showeth no mercy" (James. 2:13).

"He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother is in darkness even until now" (1 John.2:9).

Contentiousness is not faithfulness, tho faithfulness has more or less the element of contentiousness, in the sense of contending for the right. Faithfulness is espousing and doing and adhering to the right at all hazards; but in genuine cases it is always in love and patience. When it is allied with `bitterness and anger and wrath and evil-speaking; it is not acceptable to God or any of His children.

When men easily slide into accusation and condemnation of others, especially in their absence, they prove themselves the children of the

flesh, whatever their knowledge may be. The angels are models to whom Peter points. He contrasts them with a certain class in his day, whom he describes as 'presumptuous & selfwilled'- "Who are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them (sinners)' 2 Peter. 2:10,11.

If angels, with such powers of penetration and correct reading, indulge in no railing accusations against undoubtedly wicked men, where should the sons of God in this mortal, erring state-be found in the matter? In the very attitude commanded by Christ: 'judge not, condemn not.' Contend for the Faith, but indulge in no personal railing. Be faithful to the claims, obligations, & injunctions of the Truth, but leave all personal recriminations to the children of the flesh.

Wherever men are prone to rancor and severity of personal judgment, you may be sure the Spirit of Christ is not there, and you know what is written

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Romans.8:9)

Christadelphian November, 1888

## ONE THING ONLY CAN SEPARATE US FROM GOD

*THERE is one thing, and one only, can separate us from God's love. It is this:*

**"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God"**  
(1sa. 59:2).

God will have no regard for those who forget Him or neglect His commandments Those who sink into a state of self-service; who let God slip from their practical recognitions, His Word from their studies, His honor from their concern, His commandments from their lives, will awake to find that where life and death, and men and angels, and

heaven and earth, were powerless to interpose an obstacle between them and the friendly regard of the Almighty, their own folly has done it without further remedy.

God is love; but our God is also a “**consuming fire**” He will not be mocked. He will not be put off with the fag-ends of our service. He demands the **WHOLE** heart and the **WHOLE** life; and he who refuses the call is not his own friend. For there will come a time when the man who has served himself will find he has served a master who can only pay him at last with tribulation, and anguish, and death; while the man who obeys the divine call will at the same period discover that in making God his portion, he has secured the joyful eternal inheritance of all things.

R.R., Feb. 1877

## **THE TRUE CHRISTADELPHIAN**

### **ECCLESIA**

#### **The, Christadelphian Ecclesia must have Love:**

"This is **MY COMMANDMENT**" (says Jesus) "that ye love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12 & 13:34).

"We know that we have passed from death into life-because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14-16).

"**ABOVE ALL THINGS**, have fervent love among yourselves, for love shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).

“**ABOVE ALL. . put on love, the bond of **PERFECTNESS**.**”

"Let us not love in word, but in **DEED** and in truth"

It may be objected that we cannot force love; but it should be remembered that love is a spiritual principle required by the Law of Christ, and it should be our pleasure to obey that Law. If we cannot do this we cannot please him.

### **The Christadelphian Ecclesia must have the Spirit of Christ:**

"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is NONE OF HIS . . as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are Sons of God."

"Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts: IF ye are Sons, then are ye heirs of God!"

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness" (Gal. 5:22-23).

### **The Spirit of Christ is a gentle Spirit:**

"When he was reviled he reviled not again, when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (1 Pt. 2:23).

### **The Christadelphian Ecclesia must have a living Faith:**

"Without Faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6).

### **The Faith that pleases God is a Faith that *works* :**

"..works by Love" (Gal. 5:6) . . "purifieth the heart" (Acts 15:9) . . "overcometh the world" (1 John 5:4).

"Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26).

Robert Roberts The Christadelphian 1887

## **Works of the Flesh not tolerated:**

The Christadelphian Ecclesia, having CRUCIFIED the flesh with its affections and lusts, does not tolerate the works of the flesh as enumerated in Gal. 5:18-21, of which we appropriately mention

"Enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension" (RV). It will be observed that the apostle says with great emphasis that:

"They that do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom."

## **Fellowship in Christ:**

### **The Christadelphian Ecclesia knows that:**

"if we SAY we have fellowship with Christ , and walk in the darkness we LIE ... IF we walk in the Light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another ... and truly our fellowship is with the Father and the son" ( 1 John 1).

She knows that righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness, no concord of Christ and Belial, no communion of light and darkness. She knows that she walks in the light by keeping the commandments of Christ, who says:

"IF ye love me, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS" (John 14:15).

"Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you"

"Why call ye me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not the things I say?"

Christ's brethren have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The tares and the wheat cannot grow together in Christ. They can, and do, in the world.

## **A Spiritual House: The Ecclesia, having a LIVING Faith, is made up of:**

".. lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." It is the

"Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in it, and if any man defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy."

## **Christadelphians are:**

"A people taken OUT of the Gentiles for the Name of the Lord." They are, therefore

"A chosen generation. a royal priesthood, an holy- nation, a peculiar people; - that they might SHOW FORTH the praises of Him who hath called them OUT OF darkness into His marvelous light."

## **The Christadelphian Ecclesia is the Bride of Christ:**

And knows that when her Bridegroom comes she must have on the wedding garment, if she would be presented to him as:

"A GLORIOUS Ecclesia, having no spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but should be HOLY, and WITHOUT BLEMISH"

The "spots and wrinkles" CAN BE OBLITERATED by the righteousness of Christ, who is always our Advocate with the Father: provided-that we confess AND FORSAKE our sins, and pray earnestly for mercy and forgiveness.

## **Her Work and Purity.**

## **The Christadelphian Ecclesia is engaged in the work:**

Of "making READY a People PREPARED for the Lord." And having

a glorious Hope-based on great and precious promises-she will purify herself by:

". PURGING OUT the old leaven of malice and wickedness, keeping the Feast with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Her work is not a work of ignorance and indifference, which says,

"Christ fellowshipped Judas . ."

"Let the tares and the wheat grow together . ."

"Everyone must give an account for himself . ."

"I have nothing to do with what another says or does . ."

"Let us have peace . ."

"You must not judge . . Etc . . "

and this (to be said by) the Ecclesia, or Body of Christ, the "pillar and ground of the Truth," and the "Temple of God" in which His Spirit dwells!!

## Her Warfare

### **The Christadelphian Ecclesia knows:**

She has a great conflict with foes within and without - the world, the flesh, and the devil - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life.

And if she can be the victor in the warfare, through Christ who strengtheneth her, she will receive an eternity of blessed life for her reward. And this the gracious gift of God through Christ.

She knows the gate is strait and the way narrow that leads to life, and though there be few who find it, she is not discouraged. She strives to the end with an honest, sincere, and pure motive. And what she lacks, through the weakness of the flesh, her Redeemer-in whom she trusts - will supply by his all-prevailing righteousness to her unspeakable joy and everlasting blessedness.

Christadelphian, 1887.