

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

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# The Living Way

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**Upholding the Original Christadelphian Faith concerning:  
“The Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12)**

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*“I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat up on him had a bow: and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer” (Rev. 6:2)*

## The Last Words of David

A revised rendering of the Last Words of David by Bro Thomas is instructive to consider by way of comparison with the AV:

“now these words of David, the last, are an oracle of David, son of Jessie, even an oracle of the mighty man enthroned concerning an anointed one of the gods of Jacob, and the pleasant themes of Israel’s songs. The spirit of Jehovah spake through me, and his word was upon my tongue. Gods of Israel spake to me, and the Rock of Israel discoursed, saying: “There shall be a just man ruling over mankind, ruling in the righteous precepts of the gods, and as brightness of morning he shall arise, the sun of an unclouded dawn, shining forth after rain, upon tender grass of the earth. Though my house is not perfect with the Mighty One, yet hath he ordained for me the covenant of the age, ordered in everything, and sure. Truly this is all my salvation, and all my delight, though he cause it not to spring forth. But the wicked shall be all of them as a thorn bush to be thrust away, yet without hand shall they be taken. Nevertheless a man shall smite upon Them, he shall be filled with iron, and a shaft of a spear, but with fire to burn up while standing, they shall be consumed” (2 Sam 23:1-7)

*John Thomas,  
Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, Feb. 1855*

There are a number of most interesting changes from the AV in this passage, one of which is Bro Thomas’s rendering of “Elohim” rendered “God” in the AV as “gods”. His explanation for this rendering is as follows:

“three distinct words, Elohim, YAHWEH, and Ail, in five different places are used in the original, which are incorrectly rendered in the Common Version by Lord and God; and that two of the three being in the singular, and one in the plural, they ought to be so translated for the benefit of **the** English readers and this we did partially in our translation by rendering Elohim by “gods,”: Yahweh by “Jehovah,” and Ail by “Mighty One” ... Christ is one and the chief of ; the future gods of Jacob, who will be all equal to the angels, and associated with them; which angels were gods to Israel, but not objects of worship, under the law; and that David refers to both these classes of Elohim in his oracle”

*(Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, 1861)*

Another, perhaps more significant change is towards the beginning of the citation, from present tense to future tense: i.e. from “he that ruleth over men must be just” to “There shall be a just man ruling over mankind”. This change immediately brings to our attention the true import of the last words of David—that they form a prophecy concerning David’s greater Son, even our Master Jesus the Christ. Messiah is pre-eminently the “just” One who shall reign over mankind, and over Israel in particular. In speaking of how Israel rejected their Messiah, Peter said:

“Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you” (Acts 3:14).

Again, in a similar vein Stephen testified:

“Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have now been the betrayers and murderers” (Acts 7:52).

Though rejected by his people, Jesus, as the Anointed one of Yahweh, shall yet rule over men Justly. Indeed, this Just aspect of Messiah’s rule is picked up again in Isaiah chapter 11, where we are again told that he shall reign “in the fear of God”:

“the Spirit of Yahweh shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of Yahweh: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge the poor . . .” (Isa. 11:2-4).

Here we find the Just one reigning over men—indeed, he is truly the Only Just ruler to govern the nations, for since the fall from grace in Eden, men have always sought their own ends, and not to the glorification of Yahweh. Even David himself trespassed in the matter of Bath-Sheba, despite being a man after Yahweh’s own heart.

Yet Messiah shall not rule alone: his brethren, culled in the most part from the ages of times past shall rule with him. We have this on Apostolic authority, for Paul said: “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world be judged by you are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” (1 Cor. 6:2). We would do well to heed this point in our relationships with each other—we must seek to prepare for judging the world in truth and wisdom; how much more then should we judge righteous judgment in the things pertaining to this life?

David continues to describe the “Just” one thus:

“he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds . . .” (2 Sam. 23:4).

This is a theme picked out many times in Scripture: the sun arising at the dawn of a new day. Malachi describes how “the Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings” (Mal. 4:2). Again, the last words of Moses before his death also speaks in terms of the sun rising:

“And he said, Yahweh came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousand of his saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deut. 33:2).

Notice here, that Yahweh is said to rise up and shine forth—both images taken from the natural rising of the sun in the literal creation. Truly it is written that “Yahweh Elohim is a sun and shield” (Psa. 84:11), and it is his glory that shall shine across all of the earth, illuminating every darkest recess, dispelling every work and shadow of darkness.

Once again, in these things, we see the future role of Messiah’s brethren, for it is testified of those who do His will:

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Mat. 13:43).

Living and reigning with Jesus their elder brother, they shall shine forth with the same glory as he, and collectively constitute the “sun of righteousness” that shall shine throughout the earth.

But notice David’s description of that day, it is “a morning without clouds”. The clear brilliance of the Sun shall be unhindered in that day. There will be no clouds of sin to obscure it, rather all of the earth shall be bathed in the glory of Yahweh covering all the earth as the waters cover the sea.

That day, however, is to be preceded by a night of blackness and darkness. Before the sun is permitted to so shine, there will be first the clouds and rain of Yahweh’s judgments upon the earth. David continues to describe that day as “the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain”

Psalm 72 describes this rain:

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth” (Psa. 72:6).

Notice here, the grass is “mown” or cut down. “All flesh is as grass” (Isa. 40:6) was the message of John the Baptiser, and prior to the establishment of righteousness in the earth, the nations will need to be cut down and blown away as chaff before the summer threshing floor. Then the rains will come to water the earth, providing for the “tender grass” that David prophesied would come in its place

Ezekiel 38 also speaks of rain, in describing the stormy judgments that shall come upon Israel, speaking of the Gogian confederacy:

“Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou, and all thy bands, and many people with thee” (Eze. 38:9).

How glorious it will be therefore, when the survivors of Israel who endure these judgments shall enter into a new age, even a morning without the angst of storm-clouds across the land.

Again, there are spiritual principles to be drawn out from these things. Messiah's brethren are exhorted to carefully consider the foundations upon which they are built, when the stormy winds of life arise against them:

"whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock" (Mat. 7:24-25).

Those who endure the stormy trials and afflictions of life are those who are most earnest in their yearning for the day "without clouds" yet to come. But the exhortation is plain: we must heed the words of Christ, and be built upon Him as the foundation of the ecclesia. Then, no matter how violent the rains and winds beat against us, we shall survive through the darkness of a Gentile Night, to the dawning of a new day.

David continues:

"Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he maketh it not to grow" (2 Sam. 23:5).

Here we have words which are most comforting in their import. David compared this description of the "just" with himself, and saw that his own house was "not so with God." And so it is with ourselves: when we compare our own lives with that of Messiah, it is quite evident that our houses are not so with God either. But the point made here, is that despite this, it had pleased Yahweh to make a covenant with David, the particulars of which are laid out in 2 Sam. 7. This covenant, said David is "all my desire" (2 Sam 23:5). Even so Messiah spake: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" (Mat. 6:33). If all our desire is kingdomward—if we, like David, seek first the things concerning Yahweh's Kingdom and Righteousness we, like him, shall enter into the everlasting covenant—even though our houses be "no so" with Him. That which is our primary objective in life will determine our end, not personal sinlessness. Those who seek after the Spirit shall of the Spirit be rewarded with life and immortality, despite their personal failings. But those who seek after the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, and will be judged according to their deeds.

The rest of David's words, according to Bro Thomas' translation are as follows:

"But the wicked shall all of them be as a thorn bush to be thrust away, yet without hand shall they be taken, nevertheless a man shall smite upon them, he shall be filled with iron, and the shaft of a spear, but with fire to burn up whilst standing they shall be consumed" (2 Sam. 23:6-7).

In these closing words, we have the mutual antagonism between men of the flesh and the "Just" one who shall rule over men. They, it is prophesied, shall fill him with "iron and the shaft of a spear" - which we can readily see was applicable to Christ, whose

side was pierced with a spear (Jno. 19:34). But they, as a thorn bush, were to be devoured by him with the flame of Divine Judgments, being taken “without hand.” Yet again, we have words of instruction for us: The writer to the Hebrews informs us:

“the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned” (Heb. 6:7-8).

We must give heed therefore, to our portion of Yahweh’s vineyard, ensuring that the weeds do not dominate it. The Master’s Parable of the Sower is instructive here: the thorns that can grow up are said to be “the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches” (Mat. 13:22). Things not immediately obvious that they are thorns, but which nevertheless choke the growing seed of the Word. Only those who permit the seed—which is the word of God (Luke 8:11)—to grow and yield its fruit in due time shall be granted an entrance into the Kingdom. Those whose manner of life is contrary to the Truth, whose hearts are filled with barbs of antagonism against the Truth, shall meet the same end as those who sought the destruction of Christ with a crown of thorns being placed on His Head.

What we find then, in considering the last words of David, are words which are prophetic of Messiah, but which also provide comfort and instruction for ourselves also, as we seek to pattern our lives on His. Though we may be rejected by the world around us as he was, nevertheless whatever the worst they might do to us, we can be confident that as David and his Greater Seed, we shall inherit the kingdom prepared for us from the foundation of the World.

*Christopher Maddocks*

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## The Little Horn of Daniel Chapter 8

Daniel chapter 8 recounts for us various particulars of the Medo-Persian and Greek empires. Symbolised by two beasts, each empire was mighty in power, and subdued territories under them. The Medo-Persian empire is depicted as a Ram, and its twofold leadership by two horns possessed by the Ram. Of this Ram it is stated:

“I saw the Ram pushing westward, and northward and southward; so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; but he did according to his will, and became great”. (Dan. 8:4).

But great though this power was, it was no match for the Grecian Goat:

“And I saw him come close unto the Ram, and he was moved with bitterness against him, and smote the Ram, and brake his two horns: and there was no power in the Ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him: and there was none that could deliver the Ram out of his hand” (Dan.8:7).

These two beast-nations are also spoken of in chapter 7 of Daniel’s prophecy, but there in terms of a Bear and a Leopard. Daniel 7 also speaks of an unnamed fourth beast (symbolic of Rome—cp the Iron element of Dan. 2:40), superseding them, a beast from which would emerge the papal system, depicted by a “little horn.” Emerging from this Roman-Beast, this religious power persecuted the saints of old: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came ...” (Dan. 7:21-22).

### ***A SECOND “LITTLE HORN”***

Returning to Daniel chapter 8, we have a second “little horn” referred to - but notice, these are two distinct horn-powers in their own right, and we must be careful not to confuse the two. The Little Horn of chapter 8 again speaks of the Roman Power, but from a different aspect. Whilst chapter 7 seems to place an emphasis on the religious aspect, chapter 8 speaks of the same forces in terms of their military might. That this is so is apparent from what we are told concerning this horn:

“Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down” (Dan. 8:11).

It is evident that “the prince of the host” is Messiah himself, and the circumstances described here can only find a “match” in history in his day. It was the Roman power (albeit at the instigation of the Jews) that crucified Messiah. And it was this same Roman power that caused the sacrifices to cease by the destruction of the Temple and all of its arrangements. In this case, the “fit” proves the connection: this second Little Horn speaks of the Roman power—but not in terms of it’s religion so much, as it’s military power to put Christ to death, and destroy the Temple in AD 70.

### ***THE ORIGIN OF THE LITTLE HORN***

The Origin of the Little Horn as being ultimately derived from the Greek system is described thus:

“The he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it became four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceedingly great toward the south and toward the east, and towards the glorious land” (Dan. 8:8-9).

There are important points to emphasise here: the Horn did not develop independently but was derived from one of the 4 sections into which the Greek empire broke up.

Before we progress further with this thought, another relevant passage is Daniel chapter 11. Here, we again have reference to the break up of the Greek empire into 4:

“... a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will. And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided towards the four winds of heaven; and not according to his posterity ...” (Dan. 11:3-4).

The rest of Daniel 11 progresses to trace the history (in advance) of the relationships between two of these divisions, describing them as “the king of the North” and “the king of the South” respectively. But the chapter does not only describe those things that have subsequently become history from our standpoint: it also describes how at the time of the end there will be further developments between the two kings:

“And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him: and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind ...” (Dan. 11:40).

The “king of the north” has long been identified as being the same power described in Ezekiel as coming from “the utter parts of the north” (Eze. 38:15), also known as the Gogian confederacy of nations. This is the power that shall overthrow Israel, and which shall subsequently be destroyed by the Almighty Power vested in Messiah.

### **THE LATTER DAY LITTLE HORN**

We mentioned earlier that Daniel chapter 8 emphasises the military aspect: nations going to war. And it because of this fact, Bible students sometimes draw the conclusion that if it is the King of the North who goes to war, that therefore the latter references to the Little Horn in this chapter is speaking of the same power—the Gogian, or Russian power soon to war against Israel.

There are however, a number of difficulties with this interpretation. We emphasised earlier that the “king of the north” as well as the “king of the south” both find their identities and origins in the fourfold break up of the Greek Empire. But this “little horn” is not one of the 4 horns referred to: rather, it is derived from it. This is a big obstacle: if the Russian (Gogian) force is the King of the North - represented by one of the four horns, then the Little Horn cannot be the same power, since it was derived from, and was not one of those horn-powers. Simply put, Gog is one of the 4 horns, and as the Little Horn is not, the two cannot be the same power.

We saw in Daniel 8, how that the Little Horn from it's infancy, speaks of the Roman military opposition to the Truth. What the present writer suggests, is that this is the same in it's latter day application. Daniel 8 does not specify a time-period at the end of

which the Little Horn changes it's identity. Rather, it reads as if it is following on, providing a complete picture. Although the symbols are different, certain details are recorded, which parallel the description of the Roman system in Revelation chapter 17.

Verse 24 states: "his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power". And Revelation 17 speaks of how the beast shall not stand in it's own power, but rather ten kingdoms shall "have one mind and shall give their power and strength unto the beast" (Rev. 17:13). Again, Daniel 8 states that "he shall also stand up against the Prince of Princes, but he shall be broken without hand" (Dan. 8:25) - and Revelation 17 states: "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings, and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev 17:14).

### ***A PRACTICAL EXHORTATION***

Having correctly identified which power is symbolised in the second "little horn" of Daniels prophecy, we can see a feature which is most important for us to observe. Daniel 7, speaking of the religious aspect states: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came" (Dan. 7:21-22). It is plain therefore that the Roman system will continue to war with the saints until the coming of Messiah. But how so? In our own day there is no open persecution present, as there have been in previous generations. Daniel 8 provides the answer:

***"by peace [he] shall destroy many"* (Dan. 8:25).**

Not through violence and warfare, but insidiously through protestations of peace. In our age, peace and tolerance for those whose "views" are different to our own is advocated. With the Roman Catholic Church at the head of the movement, ecumenicalism is preached—and even those who should know better sometimes claim that we should be more welcoming of "other Christians" who "share a common heritage" with us, despite difference of practice and doctrine.

The Bible is plain however: those who are part of that great Harlot-system when Messiah comes, shall pass away with it. These are they "whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world". Disbelieving, and disobedient to the true Gospel, they place themselves outside of the scope of it's salvation, and instead ally themselves to a system which is in opposition in every way to the Truth concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.

In these things therefore, we see how the second "little horn" of Daniel's prophecy answers to the military aspect to Rome's opposition to Messiah—and we are also warned of the insidious way in which that power continues to prevail against the saints through methods of peace. Let us be warned therefore, lest we become beguiled, and lose the inheritance promised to those who overcome.

*Christopher Maddocks*

## "Give Attendance to ... Doctrine"

*"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation to doctrine ..." (1 Timothy 4:13)*

Due to the influence of the so-called Ecumenical movement, it is increasingly common in religious circles to minimize those things that set the various sects of Christendom apart from each other. Interestingly, according to Wikipedia, the terms “Ecumenical” “comes from the Greek οἰκουμένη (*oikoumene*), which means “the whole inhabited world”, and was historically used with specific reference to the Roman Empire. The ecumenical vision comprises both the search for the visible unity of the Church (Ephesians 4:3) and the “whole inhabited earth” (Matthew 24:14) as the concern of all Christians.” The link with the Roman Empire is particularly interesting, as the roman catholic position is for all churches to unite together under the authority of the Pope.

Since the elements that divide churches and denominations are almost always to do with matters of belief and doctrine, there is a notable trend towards minimizing the importance of doctrinal differences. Differences of belief are styled “different points of view,” each equally valid and each worthy of mutual respect and tolerance. That is, of course, except the point of view that there is such a thing as “absolute truth” which men and women must believe in order to be saved from their sins. This is seen as “rigid”, “inflexible”, “intolerant”, and even “arrogant”. To claim there is such a thing as Absolute Truth is severely frowned upon at the very least.

A popular illustration of this principle is seen in Lillian Quigley’s book *“The Blind Men and the Elephant”*, which we considered in a previous article back in 2008. She retells the ancient Buddhist fable of six blind men who visit the palace of the Rajah and encounter an elephant for the first time. As each touches the animal with his hands, he announces his discoveries:

“The first blind man put out his hand and touched the side of the elephant. “How smooth! An elephant is like a wall. “The second blind man put out his hand and touched the trunk of the elephant. “How round! An elephant is like a snake. “The third blind man put out his hand and touched the tusk of the elephant. “How sharp! An elephant is like a spear. “The fourth blind man put out his hand and touched the leg of the elephant.” How tall! An elephant is like a tree.” The fifth blind man reached out his hand and touched the ear of the elephant. “How wide! An elephant is like a fan. “The sixth blind man put out his hand and touched the tail of the elephant. “How thin! An elephant is like a rope.”

An argument ensued, each blind man thinking his own perception of the elephant was the correct one. The Rajah, awakened by the commotion, called out from the balcony. “The elephant is a big animal,” he said. “Each man touched only one part. You must put all the parts together to find out what an elephant is like.”

Enlightened by the Rajah's wisdom, the blind men reached agreement. "Each one of us knows only a part. To find out the whole truth we must put all the parts together."

However attractive the logic of this story may seem to some, its flaws when applied to matters of religious instruction are clear:

1. If at best we each only know one part of the Elephant, who can see the whole animal to tell us we are only looking at a part, and not the whole thing?
2. The logic only works in this story if each individual examines his or her part in isolation from the whole. Whereas in religious circles, the various parties draw different conclusions regarding the same parts of the 'elephant'. Take for example the Atoning work of Christ: churches teach he died as a substitute for us, whereas Christadelphians teach that he was a representative man. So in this single issue, it is not the case that the church is validly viewing a different part of the elephant, rather the disagreement is regarding the particulars of the same part.
3. In the story, each man is assumed to be correct in his opinion of the part he touches - whereas in reality, such correctness is highly questionable - it is by Revelation, not by searching that God is found (Job 11:7).
4. The characters examining the Elephant are solely left to their own devices to determine the truth of the part they examine, and each man is assumed to be correct in his understanding of that part he touches. The facts of the case, however, are that rather than being left to our own abilities to find the Truth about the Deity (Job 11:7), we have been provided with instruction in Scripture. The Bible claim is to be the immutable Word of the Living God, "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). So then, the story of a man solely using his abilities to learn an isolated, single, and small aspect of the truth concerning the Elephant breaks down: a closer analogy would be for men to instead listen to one who has seen all the pieces describe the whole to them.

Several times, the present writer has heard this story of "The Blind Men and the Elephant" from the platform, to describe how men come to God with "different points of view," all equally valid and acceptable. The questions arise therefore: Does it matter what we believe? Is doctrine important? And if it is, is it so important that it should divide sincere believers who hold to different doctrinal principles from each other? What does the Bible say?

#### **THE BIBLE SPEAKS**

The inspired writer to the Hebrews describes pleasing God in these terms:

**“without faith it is impossible to please him:** for he that cometh to God **must believe** that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6)

Faith or Belief, then, is an essential prerequisite for pleasing God. But faith in what? Here, it is in two particulars: that God exists, and that it is necessary to “diligently seek him” in order to be rewarded.

In his prayer recorded in John chapter 17, Messiah speaks likewise concerning belief:

“this is life eternal, **that they might know** thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent” (Jno. 17:3).

Eternal life then, is bound up with *knowing* both God himself, and Jesus Christ as one sent by Him. Life eternal being the “reward,” those who would wish to avail themselves of it must give all due “diligence” in seeking to know the things testified concerning God and His Son.

Interestingly, in this same prayer, Messiah describes the Word of God itself:

“Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**” (Jno. 17:17)

There are a number of logical outcomes from this statement: firstly, there **is** such a thing as ‘Absolute Truth’. God’s Word “is Truth”—and absolutely so. Secondly, if anything deviates from that Word of Truth, by definition it cannot therefore itself be ‘truth’. And if it is not truth, it is a lie: a deception or delusion which therefore cannot save. This may fly in the face of the “politically correct” society that is forming around us, but the principle holds true in our age just as much as in ages gone by. The world around us changes in its form and government, but its underlying principles remain the same: “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 Jno. 2:16-17).

Those who desire to join themselves to the One who is “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jno. 14:6), must themselves be lovers of Truth. It is the Truth that saves: those things that are not Truth cannot save. Hence, the Apostle refers to those who “received not **the love of the Truth, that they might be saved ...**” (2 Thes. 2:10). And again, he continues: “... And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned **who believed not the Truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thes. 2:11-12).

This last passage is most instructive, for it indicates that those who disbelieve the Truth will be “damned”, rather than be saved. It follows therefore that it *does* matter what we believe: if we do not wish to be “damned”, we must believe that which is True, and become lovers of that Truth.

## SOUND DOCTRINE

From what we have seen so far, we should be able to readily grasp the principle that the pursuit of Truth is a primary focus for the faithful. True doctrine (or *teaching* as the word means) is important, for it contains the Truth that saves. Accordingly (as per our opening quotation), the Apostle exhorts Timothy: “Till I come, **give attention** to reading, to exhortation, **to doctrine**” (1 Tim. 4:13). And again: “Take heed unto thyself, **and unto the doctrine**; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both **save** thyself, and them that hear thee” (1 Tim. 4:16). To give attention to, and to take heed to doctrine, will “save” both the teachers and the hearers, and is something we should vigorously pursue. By contrast, the Apostle also describes those things which are not truth: “... any other thing that is **contrary to sound doctrine** ...” (1 Tim. 1:10).

The testimony of Scripture is very plain: Believers in Messiah should “be 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, But **speaking the Truth in love**, may grow up unto him in all things, which is the head, even Christ” (Eph. 4:14-15). Notice the expression here: “speaking the Truth *in love*.” There are two aspects of the matter for us to grasp. Firstly, we must speak the Truth—which by definition means that we do not speak error—but also, we must do so “*in love*”. Sometimes the two are set against each other: those who insist on maintaining true doctrine are said to be “hardline”, or “unloving”. To practice the love of Christ is seen as a separate thing to maintaining sound doctrine. As the present writer was told recently, “I’d rather live the principles of Christ than to study them”. But the situation is not either/or. We must do both, for how can we know what the principles are unless we search the Scriptures to find them out? We must “speak the Truth in Love”. Both aspects come together in the walk of the disciple. As the apostle expressed it again: “wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding** what the will of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17). This is the “full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2) which gives wisdom, confidence, and peace of mind to those who walk in it.

## THE TESTIMONY OF ACTS

The book of Acts recounts the preaching of the Apostles, largely to the Gentiles, but also to the Jews. We would expect therefore, to see an emphasis on the importance of making sure that what we preach is right, and this is something we should give attention to. Interestingly, early on a situation arose amongst the new converts, that the Gentile believers became neglected in the provisions made for them. The situation became serious, to the extent that the Apostles had to take control of the situation, and provide a remedy. But what was to be the solution? The attitude of many towards this situation in our own day, would be to say that living the Truth, and providing for the poor is more important than ‘doctrinal correctness,’ and so this should be given priority. However, the Apostles would disagree:

“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, **It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables.** Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest

report, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, ***and to the ministry of the Word.*** And the saying pleased the whole multitude ..." (Acts 6:2-5).

Here, the pressing need for the distribution of temporal things to the rapidly growing ecclesia was dealt with in a way that is most instructive for us. The most important thing was "the ministry of the Word," and that was not to be hindered by the distraction of material things. Certain men were selected to ensure that the practicalities of distributing goods to meet cases of need were met, leaving the others to work in the more important ministry of the Word. The Apostolic remedy was the very reverse to that recommended today!

There are a number of other passages in Acts which demonstrate the importance of ensuring that what we preach is right, which we shall consider as follows:

**Acts chapter 11** recounts the calling of Cornelius, who was instructed to send for Peter "who shall tell thee ***words***, whereby thou and all thy house ***shall be saved***" (Acts 11:14). The plain teaching here, is that "words" can "save". They are not simply ink upon the page: words are the vehicles of meaning, and the words of the Gospel provide the means by which Divine things are communicated to man. Secondly, it is evident that there was a saving message that Peter was going to give. If it doesn't matter what we believe, there would have been no advantage in sending for Peter, as his message would have no purpose, for salvation would be given anyway.

**Acts chapter 16** recounts the words of Paul and Silas to the Philippian jailor, who asked the question: "Sirs, what must I do ***to be saved?*** And they said, ***Believe*** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house" (Acts 16:30-32). The importance of *belief* is again expressed: it is necessary to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" in order to be saved. And it logically follows, that it is the Bible New Testament "Lord Jesus Christ" who saves, not the trinitarian myth set forth by the churches. His is the only Name whereby we "must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The false Christ taught by the churches cannot save: only the Truth can save.

**Acts chapter 17** describes the response of the men and women of Berea to the Word preached to them: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and ***searched the Scriptures daily***, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed ..." (Acts 17:11-12). Notice this, by contrast to those who dispute the importance of doctrine, the Bereans were very keen to ensure that what was being preached to them was indeed the truth. They searched the Scriptures every day "with all readiness of mind" to make sure that what the Apostles were teaching them was correct. If doctrine, or teaching, is not important, the Bereans were wasting their time.

**Acts chapter 20** recounts the final words of Paul to the elders at Ephesus, regarding what he had taught them: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from

the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you ***all the counsel of God***" (Acts 20:26-27). Notice here, the Apostle was not selective in what he taught. He did not leave out some of the more unpalatable aspects of the Truth, such as judgment to come, and the need to be on guard against apostasy. He taught "the whole counsel of God" - and so should we, if we are to do our duty correctly. To teach that which is not truth by definition is not the "counsel of God", and we need therefore to take heed what we say.

**Acts chapter 24** records Paul's confession of what he taught: "this I confess unto thee, that after the way that they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, ***believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets***" (Act 24:14). Hence, a superficial glance at the New Testament is not enough, we also need to believe "all things which are written..." which we cannot do without studying both Testaments.

**Acts chapter 28** describes the teaching of Paul, how that he "expounded and testified ***the kingdom of God***, persuading them ***concerning Jesus***, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23). And again: "Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31). From these words, we gather that the things to do with the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ were important aspects to learn, understand, and believe. We ought also to preach those things "with all confidence" to those who might receive them, and so be saved from their sins.

Sometimes it is claimed that to make the assertion that doctrine is important, is tantamount to "salvation by doctrinal correctness", with our position being caricatured as saying we can only be saved with "100% doctrinal correctness". And this is contrasted with the doing of good works towards the poor etc, which is seen as "practical Christianity". But this is a distortion of the case and a caricature of our position. According to the Apostle, the Gospel is something to be understood and obeyed: "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17 see also Jas. 2:18). It is true that we must manifest our faith through the performance of works in our everyday lives. But it is also true that unless we know the teaching of Scripture, we will be unable to follow it as we will not know what is required of us. To live a life of sin is said by the Apostle to be "contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned" (Rom. 16:17). Like the Bereans of old, we must therefore seek out the wisdom that can only come from a fervent study of the revealed Word. Only by doing this can we benefit from Scripture, and be "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" as it is written:

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ***That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works***" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

*Christopher Maddocks*

## What Were the Urim and Thummim?

The first occasion where the Urim and Thummim are mentioned in Scripture is in Exodus chapter 28, where we find that they were particular items that were placed in the Breastplate of Judgment:

“And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart, when he goeth in before Yahweh: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before Yahweh continually” (Ex. 28:30).

According to HP Mansfield, the Breastplate of Judgment was so-called “because it was used as a means of conveying Yahweh’s decision on any issue. The Hebrew word is *mishpat* and denotes “decision” or a “judicial verdict.”” The Breastplate was therefore a means of communicating Yahweh’s verdict in given situations.

Numbers chapter 27 proceeds to elaborate on this. Speaking of Joshua, we read:

“... he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall **ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim** before Yahweh: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation” (Num. 27:21).

The Judgment of Yahweh is here described as “the judgment of Urim.” Men could ask counsel regarding a particular matter, and they would receive a reply through the use of the Breastplate containing the Urim. The Urim was, therefore, the means by which Yahweh communicated with His people, and as such foreshadows the work of our Master:

“God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ...” (Heb. 1:1-2).

### **“LIGHTS” AND “COMPLETENESSES”**

The word “Urim” literally means “lights”, and the word “Thummim” literally means “complettenesses” or “fulnesses”, both being plural words, and not singular. Again, we see the work of Messiah foreshadowed in these things. Messiah is the light to both Jew and Gentile (Isa. 49:6), and the blessings we receive come “from the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (Jas. 1:17).

Again, of Christ it is written that: “it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1:19), and again: “ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Col. 2:10). We hope to be granted the “inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1:12), and so as an ecclesial lampstand, we “shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15), looking forward to the coming day of glory, when the work begun in us, shall have a completion (Phil. 1:6).

## **2 STONES OR 12?**

There seems to be agreement that the Urim and Thummim were stones to be used for the purpose of communication. But how many were there? A popular opinion is that there were 2 stones contained in a kind of pouch. According to this approach, a “yes”, “no” and “no response” answer could be made according to which stone was withdrawn. Some suggest that one was a white stone, the other black, white for “yes” and black for “no”. HP Mansfield, and others hold to this position.

Brother John Thomas, however, saw the stones as being the 12 stones that were set within the breastplate, and there is evidence for this. Firstly, as we observed earlier, the terms “Urim” and “Thummim” are both plural words—which is a difficulty if we say that each term represented a single stone. This description would, however, be applicable to 12 stones, plural.

Also, Exodus 28, and verses 29-30 recounts the command to Aaron: “Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart”, with verse 30 (cited above) links the Urim and Thummim with this feature. Compare this with Exodus 28 and verse 21 which describes the 12 stones that were placed into the breastplate:

“... and the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes” (Ex. 28:21).

Putting these testimonies together therefore, it would seem that the Urim and Thummim were placed in the Breastplate, representing the names of Israel upon the heart of the High Priest. Each stone would shine with refracted light, which were individually complete, hence the plural terms used. There is other evidence also:

### **HOW DID THE STONES WORK?**

The suggestion that there were only two stones logically means that there would only be “yes” or “no” answers. The Scriptures themselves provide very little information on the actual use of the stones, but the descriptions we do have suggest that whole conversations could take place.

1 Samuel 23 describes the future king David during his flight from Saul. He made enquiry at the Breastplate thus:

“David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, Bring hither the ephod” (1 Sam. 23:9).

The Ephod, of course, would come with the breastplate of judgment, and therefore also the stones that were upon it. David made enquiry:

“O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand?” (vs10-11)

The answer came back—not “yes” or “no”, but a complete sentence:

“And Yahweh said, ***He will come down***” (vs11)

David asked again:

“will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?”

And again, the reply came back as a complete sentence:

“and Yahweh said, ***They will deliver thee up***” (vs 12).

There is also another occasion where the Urim and Thummim were invoked, in 1 Samuel chapter 30, the context being that David’s people had been carried away captive:

“... and David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech’s son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the Ephod to David” (vs 7)

Then David made enquiry:

“David enquired at Yahweh, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? Shall I overtake them?”

And again, the answer came, not as “yes” or “no”, but a complete sentence:

“and He answered him ***Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all***” (vs 8).

So it would appear that when the Urim and Thummim were used, it was not a case of answering “yes” or “no”, but whole conversations could take place. This would indicate that they were not simply two stones giving affirmative or negative answers.

But how did the stones work? One suggestion is that there was some kind of code, with the stones lighting up to give a message. In support of this, the word “Urim” means “lights”, and the judgments that came through the stones is said to be “judgment of Urim” (Num. 27:21). Against this, there is no record in Scripture of such a code being used, or how to interpret the flashing lights.

Another suggestion is that being as that the stones were contained in the High Priest’s garments, when he wore them he was inspired by Yahweh to speak. By this means, a conversation could be held, and a message imparted verbally through the High Priest as wearer of the Ephod.

How the stones worked is not something that is particularly revealed to us, but we can see how that the precious stones shining with complete light foreshadow the work of Messiah and his brethren. They, individually comprise the tribes of Israel of the age to

come, and so it is written that: “they shall be mine, saith Yahweh of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him” (Mal. 3:17). May we be blessed to be part of that glorious treasure, shining forth with Yahweh’s Glory throughout the Ages to come.

Christopher Maddocks

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## The BASF and the Sacrifice of Christ

The question was posed on an online discussion forum:

*“Is it true that the Birmingham Faith Statement believes that Jesus only died for us, not for himself also?”*

One of the answers that followed was as follows:

*“The BASF requires that Jesus paid for our sins. So do verses like these:*

*Romans 4:25 (ESV) who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

*Colossians 2:14 (ESV) by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”*

In our considerations here, we shall consider firstly what the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith actually does say, and then we shall consider this further claim that the BASF “requires that Jesus paid for our sins”.

Clause VIII of the BASF states the following in relation to the promises of God:

“That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him”

The claim is then, that the Lord himself wore our “condemned nature”. Moreover, it was necessary for him to nullify, or abrogate, the resident Law of that nature “for himself” as well as “all who should believe and obey him”.

This is in accordance with the plain teaching of Scripture. Psalm 31 cites the Lord as saying: “Into thine hand I commit my spirit: Thou hast redeemed me, O Yahweh God of Truth” (Psa. 31:5). Hence, the Lord himself needed to be “redeemed”. Again it is said that he “... by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption” (Heb. 9:12, the words “for us” as per the AV not being present in the Greek). And Jesus himself: “...for their sakes **I sanctify myself**, that they also might be sanctified through the Truth” (Jno. 17:19).

Both the BASF and the Holy Scriptures therefore very plainly teach that the Lord had a personal need to be “sanctified” and “redeemed” from the law of sin and death. So it is further written of the Lord God: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant ...” (Heb.13:20). He was, for a time, under the dominion of death, but in his resurrected state it is said that “death hath no more dominion over him” (Rom. 6:9), for he was raised up in victory over it. So Isaiah prophesied: “He will swallow up death in victory” (Isa. 25:8), which victory could only be achieved when he was resurrected and restored to life.

### **DID JESUS PAY FOR OUR SINS?**

As cited above, it was claimed that:

*“The BASF requires that Jesus paid for our sins. So do verses like these:*

*Romans 4:25 (ESV) who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.*

*Colossians 2:14 (ESV) by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”*

However, this is just not true. Nowhere does the BASF require that “Jesus paid for our sins”. In fact, there is no passage in Scripture that states this either! Notice that the proof texts as cited do not claim this: those terms are just not used.

In fact, the reference to Colossians 2:14 as cited, specifically teaches otherwise. It states that salvation is obtained by “cancelling the record of debt” – and by definition, if a debt is cancelled, it is not repaid – it is left unpaid, and the debtor is forgiven the debt. The point is illustrated in Messiah’s parable of Matthew chapter 18, where enforcing a debt is specifically set against forgiving the debt.

In the parable, a servant owed an extraordinary amount of money to the king, and was totally unable to repay it. But what did the king do? Did he enforce the debt, and require that a third party must pay it instead? By no means: “the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt” (Mat. 18:27). To use the words of Colossians 2:14 as cited above, the debt was cancelled, not enforced. By definition, enforcement rules out forgiveness. This can be seen in the attitude of the debtor to his fellowservant who owed him a far lesser amount. He refused to forgive, or cancel the debt, choosing to enforce it instead, “saying, Pay me that thou owest” (vs. 28). And the king, in his wrath upon hearing of this, reinstated the original debt – and the lesson is presented: “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts, forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses” (vs 35).

If a man owes us something, how in practical terms, can forgiveness be extended? If we choose to enforce that debt, and insist that our brother finds somebody else to pay

it for him – is that an exercise of love and compassion? Nay, rather it is to be hard hearted, and lacking in forgiveness. To exercise love and compassion would be to cancel the debt, that it is blotted out altogether. To not exact it from our brother.

To claim that God required his Son to pay our debt denies forgiveness, and is something that neither Scripture, nor the BASF teaches. The debt is forgiven, not enforced, and to say otherwise is a wilful misrepresentation of the facts, which are, as Paul put it: “that God, for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32).

*Christopher Maddocks*

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## Noah – A Preacher of Righteousness

*“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Hebrews 11:7)*

The name “Noah” is said to carry the meaning of “Rest”, or “Comfort”, referring to how through him comfort would be obtained: “he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which Yahweh hath cursed” (Gen. 5:29). In our considerations today, we shall consider Noah as one who saved his house by faith in action and thus provides a wonderful example of loyalty for us to emulate.

Our opening citation essentially has 6 aspects, which we shall consider in turn:

1. By Faith
2. Moved with Fear
3. Prepared an Ark
4. Saved his house
5. Condemned the world
6. Was an Heir of righteousness by faith.

### **1. BY FAITH**

We shall consider this aspect further in our consideration of point 6, but a few observations seem to be relevant here: The Genesis account testifies to the character of Noah:

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a **just man and perfect** in his generations, and Noah **walked with God**” (Gen. 6:9).

To “walk with God” implies a union of mind and purpose, for how “can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3). Micah also describes this immense privilege:

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, But to do justly, and to love mercy, ***and to walk humbly with thy God***” (Mic. 6:8).

To truly walk with God implies a great humility: “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit ...” (Isa. 57:15). It is a great condescension indeed for the Almighty to allow His servants to walk with Him, and it is to those “just” men and women, who “love mercy” and who walk in humility, that he will extend such a privilege.

## 2. ***MOVED WITH FEAR***

It is written that “there is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 Jno. 4:18). But the fear here is a terror, as distinct to a healthy reverence towards God. It is this reverential fear that Noah had, and which must exist in us also:

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably ***with reverence and godly fear***” (Heb. 12:28).

We must not live in a state of being terrified by a fear of God, but rather have “reverence and a godly fear”. If we walk with Him in love, there is no need for terror, but there is always a need for reverence in the presence of the Almighty Creator. There must be no over familiarity in our speech when we pray to Him, but a constant recognition of His Greatness, Power and Majesty.

## 3. ***PREPARED AN ARK***

The Ark that Noah built under Divine direction was the ultimate visual aid. His labours testified to his conviction that the judgments of God were about to commence, and were a sign to those around him. Genesis 6:12 informs us that:

“God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt for ***all flesh had corrupted His Way*** upon the earth” (Gen. 6:12).

The purpose of the Ark was to save from the corruption of the flesh, and the judgments which were to be brought about because of it. In a similar way, the believers are described as “having escaped ***the corruption*** that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:4), through the principles of salvation directed by God. The means by which that salvation might be brought about are not left to human caprice, but is as specified by Divine Revelation. Only by obeying the Divine Command was Noah able to save his household.

## 4. ***SAVING HIS HOUSE***

Peter also describes this aspect of Noah’s work:

“... when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water” (1 Pet. 3:20).

Although the world was ripe for judgment, God “waited” whilst the Ark was made ready – so that just 8 souls could be saved from destruction. But notice that Peter writes that the 8 were saved “by” water, not saved “from” water. Although it was certainly the case that this faithful family were saved from the waters of destruction, being lifted up by the rising waters they were also saved from the corruption that was in the world through lust (as per above).

Noah saved his house through his faith in action. The principle is that exhibited in the proverbs:

“the wicked are overthrown, and are not but the house of the righteous shall stand” (Prov. 12:7).

We also see a case in point in the example of Rahab: “By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace” (Heb. 11:31). But she also saved her household:

“Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and ***thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.*** And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the doors of thy house into the street, his blood shall be upon his head, and we will be guiltless: and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood shall be on our head, if any hand be upon him” (Josh. 2:18-19).

Rahab’s house literally stood when the wicked were overthrown (Josh. 6:22), and so saved those who were in it. In a similar fashion the Ark survived the pouring out of Divine judgments, and so saved those who were in it. Sometimes the question arises as to whether the Lord Jesus Christ had a personal need for salvation – and the case of the Ark is helpful. Did the Ark also have to be saved in order to save those within it? Of course! Even so, Messiah saved himself in order to save those whose are constitutionally in him. Like Noah, he saves his household through faith and obedience.

## **5. CONDEMNED THE WORLD**

Here is an illustration of the purpose of preaching. Not only is it necessary to provide salvation, but it is also to reprove the world by the exhibition of Divine standards. The purpose of the Holy Spirit given to the Apostles was to “reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (Jno. 16:8). The believers, as well as preaching the glad tidings of future blessing must also give reproof: “have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11). There is another day of judgment soon to come upon the earth, and it is the responsibility of Messiah’s brethren to sound the warning. By so doing they shall not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:32), but will survive through the antitypical ark. They look forward to the

future in hope “to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come” (1 Thes. 1:10).

## 6. HEIR OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

The example of Noah demonstrates faith in action. James exhorts: “be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (Jas. 1:22). Had Noah not built the Ark, there would have been no salvation, and no hope for his family. It was necessary for Noah to demonstrate his trust in the warning of God by constructing the Ark. He had faith that Yahweh would bring him through the stormy weather, to a new age beyond. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of those who obey his commandments thus:

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock” (Mat. 7:24-25).

Survival during a raging storm can only be accomplished by doing the commandments of Christ. Just as Noah was saved when the rain fell, and the fountains of the deep were opened up, even so those who build upon the rockbed of Scripture will be saved when the winds of adverse circumstances come. But for those who built upon sand – their house fell: “and great was the fall of it” (vs. 27). The lessons are there for our learning and admonition.

The faith of Noah was counted to him for righteousness (Heb. 11:7, cp Rom. 4, whole chapter). It was not his obedience that counted him righteous – for he could not earn salvation by works. He had no intrinsic “right” to be saved, but by Grace it was so: “Noah **found grace** in the eyes of Yahweh” (Gen. 6:8). He was saved by faith through Grace, providing he did what was commanded of him, to the saving of his entire household of 8 persons.

### A PREACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Peter describes how that God: “spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, **a preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly” (2 Pet. 2:5). He built an ark designed to float on water in the middle of dry land – something which would, doubtless, bring scorn and derision upon him. Virtually all around him disregarded his message and paid no attention to his preaching. Jesus himself compared the situation with the day of his own “coming”:

“as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And **knew not** until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Mat. 24:37-39).

What is particularly notable, is the description that they “knew not until the flood came”. But how is it that they did not know? Noah was preaching to them – and that

with a very dramatic visual aid! But the point is that they blundered on through life disregarding the warnings of an eccentric crackpot (so they thought), so that the day of judgment came upon them by surprise: they “knew not”. Even so it was in the Lord’s mortal ministry. Men continued as if all things were going to remain the same, eating, drinking, marrying and conducting their affairs as if nothing was going to happen. Even so it will be when Messiah comes again: our words of preaching and reproof will go unheeded for the most part, not being taken seriously by the hearers.

But there were three individuals who did listen to Noah. In due time, his sons married three women, who thus became part of the small family of believers:

“in the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, And Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife, and **the three wives** of his sons with them, into the ark …” (Gen. 7:13).

These comprised a family of faith, who would look beyond the day of ridicule and derision, to the day when they would emerge from the ark into the beginning of a new age and world.

#### *A NEW AGE*

When Noah and his family finally left the Ark, they were the only remnant left of the entire human race. For the first time, the world was populated only by faithful men and women – and thus foreshadows the day when once again the earth shall be judged, and will be populated only by those who found refuge in the Christ-Ark. But this harmonious situation was soon sullied by the unsavoury events described in Genesis chapter 9. Sin in the flesh remained strong within even those who were faithful, and so there was another fall from grace, which tarnishes the record of this faithful family which held together for so long whilst the ark was under preparation.

In the life of Noah and his family, we can discern many points of instruction for ourselves. Despite their small number, they remained faithful amidst a crooked and perverse generation. They kept themselves separate from the excesses of the world around them, even though they were disbelieved, and few took them seriously. But they trusted in the Lord’s power to save them from their untoward generation, and from the wrath of God to come upon it. When the rains fell, and the fountains of the deep were broken up, there may well have been many who protested that they led good lives, and did not deserve to die. But the point was, they were not in the ark. The day of opportunity had come to an end, and the door was shut. The world of the ungodly was swept away, and only those who had chosen to embrace the appointed way of salvation were saved. This is “the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us” (1 Pet. 3:21). We cannot plead our own righteousness, but must instead submit to the way of salvation ordained by God. If we are not in the Christ-Ark, there is no other means of salvation. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jno. 3:16). What scope is there for a greater love than that? The Lord has graciously extended an arm of salvation (Isa. 63:5) through the provision of His Son, but unless we grasp hold of it, it will not save us.

It is written that “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgement to be punished” (2 Pet. 2:9). Whilst we live in a world where men’s hearts are failing them for fear, the true believers look forward in hope and anticipation. All that is in the world shall soon come to an end, as the dawning of a new age shall follow the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. We must consider our own standing in relation to these things – and take heed to the example of a small family who held fast to their hope, and were saved by the grace and mercy of their Lord.

*Christopher Maddocks*

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## **“Forsake Not the Assembling of Yourselves Together as the Manner of Some is”**

Once more, we have the privilege of assembling in pursuance of the commandment of Christ, delivered to his disciples before he departed from them into heaven. We may be very thankful that he gave that command, for otherwise, we should have had no scriptural ground for periodical assembly, that is to say, not such ground as would have enabled faithful servants to silence quibblers. But for such commandment, many would have been found to say that it was not necessary, and not obligatory to meet together in a stated and collective capacity, to celebrate the love of Christ. It would appear that there were some of that class in Paul’s day, even among those who believed the truth, for he says “Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is.” So that it had been “the manner of some” in those days to stay away from the assembly, to stay at home, to take it easy, to excuse themselves the trouble of coming out statedly to the meetings of the brethren, under the idea, no doubt, that it was unnecessary for them to attend the meetings, and that they could serve God as effectively in the quietness and seclusion of home as in the assembly. Now, God, in these things is always wiser than we; and the very fact of Christ commanding his disciples to assemble for the purpose of breaking bread, must be taken as proof that it is in itself a wise thing.

A moment’s reflection will show it is so. Our position in Christ requires us to be active and faithful in the discharge of the duties that devolve upon us in ordinary life. We have not to withdraw ourselves from the world; Jesus and Paul distinctly prohibited such a thing. That they might be kept from the evil that was in the world, was Christ’s prayer concerning the disciples. “I pray not,” he said, “that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” Paul also says, reminding the Corinthians of an exhortation he had given them, not to keep company with a certain class of individuals, “yet not the fornicators of this world, for then must needs yet go out of the world.” But if any man that is called a brother, be of the description that he specifies, then we are not to keep his company as a brother. As regards the world, we are to be in it, but not of it; we are to bear our testimony in it, but not fellowship it; we are to serve God in it, but not league ourselves with it; we are to glorify Him by refusing the evil in it, and choosing the good, by bearing witness for

Christ's name before men; that the light of our testimony may perchance entice good and honest hearts into the right way, and thus multiply the jewels which God will make up in the day of Christ's glory.

We could have no such opportunity were we to seclude ourselves in a cloister, as many deluded souls do under the specious idea of giving themselves to God. We must not in any shape imitate their great crime. They err, not knowing the scriptures. They err through the power of philosophy and vain deceit. They think that solitude and bodily inactivity will promote their spiritual interests which they conceive to lie in the supposed immortal soul, which is a mere invention of the philosophy of pagan Greece; and which, by intermixture with the gospel of Christ, has led men off the path of duty in even these little matters. It has made them reason thus: "The body is of no value; the soul is the pearl; the soul is of God I must nurse the immortal soul; and I cannot do this effectually unless I get out of the way of human sights and sounds, and keep the body under by starving it—doing penance, &c."

### **THE RELIGION OF CHRIST**

Now the religion of Christ teaches us the opposite of this. It teaches us to go into the world, to be active like himself—to develop by experience: to learn obedience by suffering. He is the exemplification of what we ought to be; he mingled with men, and was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. It is true he withdrew himself occasionally, and sought opportunity in the retirement and silence of the mountain top, to hold that communion with God which cannot take place in the midst of busy life; and every true son and daughter of the Almighty will resemble him in this, that they will thirst for occasional solitude, to draw deeply from the fountain of spiritual strength and consolation. Yet it will only be to return with greater zest to the work of doing the will of Him who pleases to make use of evil in the development of the highest good. Everyone who realises the position to which we are called in Christ, will appreciate the privilege of retiring from the busy and distracted world, to coolly and quietly contemplate those relations of being which are forgotten and altogether ignored by those who are all the while in the busy stream of life.

Now this gathering together to break bread is one of those opportunities which Christ has mercifully made compulsory. He has not left it to our faithless hearts and undiscerning eyes, to decide what shall be best in such a matter. He knew how we should be beset, without and within. He needed not that any should tell him what was in man, for he knew; and he gave us a very good indication of his mind in the matter, by speaking of a certain class who should receive the word, but in whom the cares and pleasures and riches of the world should choke the word, so that it should become unfruitful. He saw the danger to which we are all exposed in the matter; and that danger is not a small or a remote one. We are of necessity in the world, and engaged in its occupations, and the power of these upon our minds is very great, on account of the strength of things immediately seen and heard, and the weakness of mental discernment; and if there were no counteracting influence brought into play, we should be overcome of the world. We should devote ourselves to merely worldly objects, and be governed by merely worldly motives, and inspired by merely worldly sentiments. But we must overcome the world, and that which overcometh the world, John says is

our faith. "This is the victory that overcometh the world—even our faith."

## **FAITH**

But our faith is a tender plant: it is not a thing that grows with spontaneous growth; it requires culture and constant care; it comes from the outside "Faith cometh by hearing," and "faith is the substance of things hoped for." We hope for them because God has promised them; and we know that He has promised them, because we have been informed—because we have heard. But all knowledge grows dim if it is not renewed, and so does this. We must "keep in memory" the things apostolically delivered. If we "at any time let them slip," we lose our anchor, and drift in the current of mortality, to be dashed to pieces on death's inhospitable strand. To bring to mind, to keep in mind, to renew our faith, then, are the great desiderata. This is the true meaning of edification: the building of one another up in our most holy faith. Now that which gives us the faith in the first instance is that which must keep the faith. The reading that will plant the faith is the reading that will preserve and nurture it. The human mind is like shifting sand in relation to everything—not only in relation to things divine, but things human; though more especially things divine. Human memory is a very feeble thing. The substance of the mind, as it were, is always on the move—always changing, always receiving new impressions, new thoughts. The thoughts and impressions of yesterday are feebler to-day than when first received; and as time goes on, they become feebler and feebler, until we are almost unconscious of them. To keep a thing constantly in the mind, it must be held continually in contact with it in some shape or form. The faces of friends seen daily are not forgotten. Now the truth is our great friend. If we look in its face daily, we shall keep it in mind; but if we live in neglect of it, if we abandon or refrain from reading the scriptures, or assembling one with another, the face of friend Truth will become dim. The impressions that the truth has made upon our minds will gradually fade, until they disappear altogether, and we shall become worldly-minded. What a mistake for any of us to give the preference to any friend above friend Truth. Friend Business, Friend Sociality, Friend Enjoyment, will cheat us at last; but Friend Truth is a tree of life to them that lay hold of her. Happy is everyone that receiveth her; she will never deceive us but be precious and refreshing to our last mortal hour, and crown us with life and joy for evermore.

## *A PLANT OF HEAVENLY ORIGIN*

There is one thing always welling up from within—always active and growing—never requiring cultivation; and that is the disposition that John thus describes. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." These things grow in the flesh, for they are of the flesh, but the other (the faith of Christ) does not. The other is a plant of heavenly origin, and if we do not carefully nurture the good seed from which it grows, it very quickly becomes extinguished by the rank and vigorous weeds which spring with rapid self-growth. So we can see the great wisdom of Jesus in making this a standing institution for his people, that they should assemble themselves together for the express purpose of remembering him; for this is the object. "Do this," he says, "in remembrance of me." All that is in the world greatly helps to dim the feeble image of Christ that has been formed within us by the belief of the truth, but when we are called round the table, we are called to contemplate him anew. And surely we cannot, if we

have received the truth come to the table, without having his image revived before us. We had better not come if this is not the result. Paul teaches a serious responsibility in connection with attendance upon this act, he says: if any man eat and drink unworthily, he is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, that is, if he eats without discerning the Lord's body, not perceiving, not recognising the things symbolised by the bread and wine. Our duty this morning, therefore, is to realise Christ. If it was necessary for the original disciples, who had seen him, who had sojourned in Judea with him, who had witnessed his living acts, and heard his living voice, if it was necessary for them to do this that they might remember him, how much more necessary is it for us, who have never seen him, and in whose minds the only impression of him is that created by the truth, which is a very feeble impression, except where the truth is most devoutly and most earnestly studied and held. Let us, on all such occasions, pass in mental review, the truth we know. Let us bring forth from the mental treasury things new and old. This, however, is only possible where we are "scribes well instructed in the kingdom," and in our day, we can only get into this condition by daily reading of the scriptures. If we neglect to read the scriptures, we shall find ourselves entirely out of harmony with the system of things that will be manifested at the coming of Christ.

### **THE EMBLEMS**

The symbols on the table remind us that we have to fellowship the sufferings of Christ meantime. We may get to the crown afterwards, but at present, we have to fellowship the cross; we have to fellowship the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," who was despised and rejected of men; and this, not merely in the breaking of bread, for that is the easiest part of it, but in the actual shaping of our lives. We fellowship his sufferings to some extent in identifying ourselves with the truth. Many people admire the sufferings of Christ historically, but when it comes to their turn, they act the coward. They cannot stoop to the practical fellowship. The truth is presented, and they say "Yes, it looks like the truth, we cannot gainsay it, but what are we to do? It would isolate us from all society, and cut us off from much usefulness in the world; we should be looked upon as madmen." And they are not prepared for that; they are not prepared to pay the price; they are not prepared to sell themselves to Christ; they like to be part and parcel of the present system; they like to be esteemed of men. It may be that in words they do not reject the truth; but actions are louder than words; they deny Christ before man because of the consequences. We must steel ourselves against this, even if it comes to wandering in sheep skins, and goat skins, and in dens and caves of the earth. If we are to fellowship Christ in his glory, we must fellowship him in his humiliation. If we are to partake of the glory that shall be revealed, we must partake of the suffering of this present time. There are many sufferings connected with the fellowship of Christ, even in our time, and one of them is indicated in the chapter that has been read this morning (Rom. 11).

It is the duty of those who are Christ's to be subject to the powers that be, which, in an exalted sense, are ordained of God. The powers that be constitute the order of things necessary for the present stage of affairs. If there were no rule, anarchy would reign. The passions of men—the selfish instincts of men, let loose, would run riot, and bring about universal confusion like what we see in barbarous countries; and such a state of society would be incompatible with the work which God is doing. He is using sinners

to subdue the earth, and prepare it for habitation; and He is preparing from among those sinners, a family for Himself, of sons and daughters, by a belief and obedience of the truth. Now if there were no such thing as society, with its law and order—if the world was in a state of chaos, as it inevitably would be without the presence and operation of authority among men, God's work would not be done. We could not assemble here this morning, for instance, if there were no authority. We are under the wing of authority. If there were no government, we should be a prey to the violence and hatred of all who oppose us; we should be pulled limb from limb, instead of being allowed to sit quietly here, to meditate on those things which God has revealed. Towards that authority and those governments, our duty is one of submission.

Those who resist the authority resist God. As Daniel says, God setteth up kings and putteth them down. But it may be asked, if the powers that be are ordained of God, why should we look forward with desire to a time when God will destroy them? The answer is, because He has promised it, and because their present use by God is only a controlling of evil, for the furtherance of His own righteous purposes. The wicked are the sword of the Lord. He ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and doeth according to His will; but the kingdoms of men are nevertheless evils of a rank type—necessary evils for the present state—providentially guided for the accomplishment of the divine ends. But why is He going to put aside that which at the present stage meets with His approbation? The answer is, that we use an instrument in the crude stage of any process of manufacture which is quite unfit for the more advanced state of work to be done. That is how it is here: the preliminary part of God's purpose to save the world, requires the organisations called the “kingdoms of men.”

### **THE KINGDOMS OF MEN**

These kingdoms of men have existed for six thousand years; but when the work has advanced to a certain point, He will set them aside, and interpose the kingdom of His Son. He will pull down the mighty from their seats, and Jesus will rule. “The Lord shall be King over all the earth; in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one.” The kingdoms of men will then have been broken to pieces: still Christ's people are at present to be submissive to them. It is impossible that Christ's people can take part in any revolutionary movement. They are prohibited from drawing the sword, and prohibited by the spirit of their calling from taking part in the political movements of their times. They are God's people, “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people,” who are unconnected with the movements of men. They are in the world, but not of it. It is their part to leave the world to do its own business.

Now it is not agreeable to the flesh to conform to this position. The democratic feeling is very strong in human nature. It is the feeling expressed in the words “We are our own: who is lord over us?” Practically it takes the form of patriotism, and makes a man rejoice in being part and parcel of the institutions of the land, and in having the right to exercise the “sacred duty” of defending the soil. More mildly, it makes a man pride himself in the use of the franchise which he calls a “birthright;” and leads him to join with alacrity in the various movements that politicians set a going for the cure of the world on the democratic basis.

Now it is impossible that these sentiments can exist in a breast where the truth reigns supreme. The divine law will extinguish practical politics. It will fill a man with distaste for Gentilism in every shape and form, and substitute the love of God's kingdom, and God's affairs. The politics pertaining to the commonwealth of Israel will become his politics. It is impossible that a Christadelphian can be a patriot or a soldier. "Christian patriotism" is an invention of the flesh. It is one of the "good words and fair speeches" by which the simple are deceived. The political attitude of a Christadelphian is submission to the existing powers, living peaceably with all men, except where the truth is concerned. For the truth we are to contend earnestly, and the weapons of this warfare are mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds; though not so mighty as they were in the days of Paul, when Christ's soldiers were armed with the powers of the spirit. This is our warfare. We are not to touch the conflicts of the world. We are to pay tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom is due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. We are to be the most peaceful of citizens, the most loyal of subjects, so far as deference to authority is concerned. We are to submit to every ordinance of man, where it does not conflict with our duty to God. Our submission, however, is not out of deference to human authority, but from obedience to divine law; we submit because God tells us to submit—(1 Pet. 2:13) as a duty to Christ, not as a compliment to rulers. We must in all things be subject till Christ returns to execute the judgment written.

### **THE WICKED AND THE PURPOSE OF GOD**

God allows the wicked to rule for his own purpose, and we submit to him. He made use of Nebuchadnezzar as his servant, although Nebuchadnezzar knew him not. Nebuchadnezzar thought it was his own hand that was doing what God was causing him to perform. That is just how it is in regard to the nations of the earth; they do not know God, but God is using them. Yet we do not surrender the fact that they are mere usurpers; Jesus did not surrender this fact, though he submitted. The tax gatherer came to Peter (he was evidently afraid to come to Jesus) and said, "Does not your master pay tribute?" Peter told Jesus, and Jesus said to Peter, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take tribute, of their own children or of strangers?" In this, he was drawing a premise concerning himself and those who were his, from the fact that tribute was always levied upon strangers; that it was the nations subject to Rome that always paid the taxes—the Romans themselves being free. Peter replied, "Of strangers." Jesus says, "Then are the children free;" as much as to say "We are the children; they have no right to impose tribute upon us." Yet, though asserting the fact in the shape of a mild protest, he added,

"Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go cast a hook into the sea, and the first fish that comes will have money in its mouth; that take and pay for thee and me."

This is as good a lesson as we could hear on our political duty. As British subjects, we will submit to British law as Jesus submitted to Roman law, the while protesting against the legitimacy of its claim, and standing apart from the machinery of its politics as he did.

As a British subject, a man has to pay a considerable price to become a Christadelphian.

It is more than some people are prepared to do, to not only pay taxes but to surrender their political birthright, and become partizans of “another king, one Jesus,” whose service at present is one of ignominy. But it is a glory and a joy to those who comprehend the duty we owe to the position to which we are called. It is one way of suffering with Christ; it is one way of showing that this is not our time; that we have here no continuing city; that we seek one to come; that like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, being persuaded of the promises, we have embraced them and confess that we are strangers and pilgrims in the earth. There are other worldly drawbacks connected with the service of Christ. Those who receive the truth are mostly poor people, like the disciples of old; and if one may be connected with the rich and the learned, it is a crucifixion and a suffering to have to keep the company of the poor and illiterate; and yet we have to do it—to the poor the gospel is preached. “God has chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him.”

### **BE PREPARED**

There is another feature of the case that involves sacrifice and labour and suffering. Christ has said “Let him that heareth say ‘Come.’” Everyone is not prepared to be a missionary; yet they must: it is an obligation upon everyone receiving the truth, to the extent of their opportunities and abilities, to say “Come.” Now to say “Come” one must labour, do thankless work, spend many toilsome moments, and spend money—some in greater and some in lesser degree—according to opportunity. The majority of people are not prepared for any of these. They are not prepared to put forth labour except in that which will produce some present substantial advantage. They will patiently labour, for instance, for the purchase of some article of furniture upon which they have set their mind, or to procure some distinction; but they are not prepared to labour and spend and be spent for something that brings them no present return, which those who are Christ’s have to do. Above all, they are not prepared to spend money. They do spend money readily enough for that which is not bread; they do lay out their substance upon things that will soon end in the dust; but they are not wise enough to be prepared to invest their money on things which will constitute a treasure laid up where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor where thieves can break through and steal; and which will be brought forth in glory to be enjoyed for ever at the coming of Christ.

Then we are commanded to do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith; we are to give to the poor. This is another thing which few people are prepared to do in the way and in the spirit prescribed. They have no objections to do it, if there is a subscription list, where they can see their name among others; but they do not like Christ’s way of doing it—keeping their left hand in ignorance of what their right hand does. The majority do not care for doing good at all. The majority are not Christ’s people. To do good and communicate we must forget not.

These are specimens of what we are called upon to be and to do in Christ. It is no light matter to become a Christadelphian. Jesus might well say to the people that were following him in crowds, “If any man is not prepared to sacrifice everything for me, he cannot be my disciple.” “Which of you,” says he, “wants to build a tower, and does not first sit down and count whether he is able to do it?” It is no very small matter to believe the truth—though a very easy and pleasant thing. The truth is so clear and so glorious

in itself, that this believing it is the easiest part of our duty; but we may nevertheless fail to become Christ's servants in deed and in truth. It is in the doing of Christ's word that we gain the victory. It is in the keeping of his commandments that we have great reward. In the keeping of these, we must needs fellowship his sufferings, and shall then find his companionship at the table a new and delightful and a very profitable thing.

*Robert Roberts, The Christadelphian page 305–310. 1868*

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## **“In the Beginning ...”**

Theistic Evolutionists claim that God did not create the heaven and earth as described in the Bible - rather He was guiding an evolutionary process of adaptation over a period of millions of years. But this specifically contradicts the Bible. For instance, the Bible states several times that the animals were created “after his kind”, rather than changing their kind to form a different kind of animal.

It is claimed that the Bible Creation account is metaphorical, and not literal. That it was written for simple folk who would have been unable to discern the complexities of modern science. But this will just not do! If the account is metaphorical for simple folk, then it ought to be easy to define what each element of the record represents. But such an exposition has not yet been provided - evidently those who are wise in evolutionary theory are not as clever as the “simple folk” who should have so understood the Genesis account!

It is also said that because the Bible is not a scientific textbook, that the Genesis account is a story about morality, and not about how Creation took place. But like most wrong teaching, this is a combination of truth and error. It is true that the Bible is not a scientific textbook - but it is not true that it doesn't describe how Creation took place. It is written that “the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life...” (Gen.1:7). Here, a process is described - which contradicts Evolution.

This situation before us is clear: we must either believe the Word of our Maker, or believe in Evolution - there is no amity between the two. Rather than to follow the wisdom of men, it is better to rather believe the Creator's own Word of what He did - as Jesus also testified: “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female” (Mark 10:6) We need to ditch the evolutionary text books, and read the Bible to find out how God created the world and everything in it – and His Purpose behind it all. The theory of Evolution can do neither!

*Christopher Maddocks*