

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

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)

***** Special Issue *****

The Bible Versus Evolution

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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)

Evolution and the Bible – Are they Compatible?

One of the challenges to the Truth in these last days, is the increasing acceptance and promulgation of the theory of Evolution. Earlier brethren spoke about this doctrine as presented in their day, and refuted it as being against Scripture teaching. So Robert Roberts wrote:

"The theory of evolution is an attempt to construct a universe without a Creator. It leaves no room for the fall of man, no room for sin, and consequently no room for redemption. If man came from the beast by slow degrees, at what point did he become responsible to divine law? The Bible answers this not with a process of millions of years, but with a direct commanding voice: 'God created man in his own image.'"

The Christadelphian, Volume 18

And again, CC Walker:

"If evolution is correct the Bible does not give accurate description concerning the origin of man, even in metaphoric form, and therefore cannot be the Word of God and should be rejected. Conversely, if the Bible is true, then man most certainly did not evolve, and speculation that he did can be rejected with equal confidence."

The Christadelphian Volume 61

So much for atheistic Evolution, but one of the problems of our day are those who seek to combine Evolution with the Bible. So-called Theistic Evolution does not deny an all powerful Creator, but it does deny how that Creator Himself describes what He did to Create the Earth, and man upon it. In this special issue, we shall examine the claims of Evolution – both Atheistic and Theistic, and demonstrate how for the Bible Believer, there is no amity between Creation and Evolution: they are mutually exclusive. Wisdom dictates that the correct approach is to accept the Creator at His Own Word, and reject the theories of man.

Christopher Maddocks

The purpose of this study is not to examine the scientific evidence for and against Evolution. Neither are we going to examine evidence for the validity or otherwise of the Bible's claim to be inspired by God. Those are separate studies which we consider elsewhere. Rather, our purpose here is to demonstrate that the teaching of Evolution – and its associate Big Bang theory – is in opposition to clear Bible teaching. Demonstrating how they are not compatible, we will consider along the way some logical objections to Evolution and the Big Bang theory, and seek to present the Bible message from the Great Creator Himself, as to how He formed the Heaven and the Earth.

SCIENCE AND FAITH

Very often, Science and Faith are seen as contradictory principles. Take, for example, the words of the prominent atheist and evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins, during a speech at the Edinburgh International Science Festival, on April 15th, 1992:

“Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. **Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence**”

According to this approach, faith only comes into play when there is no evidence for a given proposal. However, this is not Bible faith. The teaching of the Bible is different to this:

“**Prove all things:** hold fast to that which is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone into the world” (1 John 4:1).

According to the Bible then, we must not blindly accept something that appeals to us as being true. We must examine every spirit, or teaching, and “test” them, in an endeavour to “prove all things”. Bible faith is not

belief in the unprovable therefore – it is a belief based upon subjecting a particular claim to testing in order to determine its veracity.

A DEFINITION OF SCIENCE

According to the *Oxford Languages* website, a definition of science is:

“The systemic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation, experimentation, and the testing of theories against the evidence obtained”

This seems to be a fair definition as to what Science actually is. But notice there are 3 elements:

1. Observation
2. Experimentation
3. Testing the theories against evidence

We shall return to these later, but what we shall see, is that evolutionary theory falls down in each of these areas. This can be seen by considering:

SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING?

According to the well-known theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking, the universe came out of nothing – indeed, this is a common feature of Big Bang theorists:

“Because there is such a law as gravity, **the universe can and will create itself from nothing. Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing**, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going”

(The Grand Design (2010))

Again, the theoretical physicist Lawrence Krauss, in his work “A Universe from Nothing” states:

“Nothing can create something all the time due to the laws of quantum mechanics”

And the cosmologist Alan Guth states in “The ‘Free Lunch’ Theory”:

“It is said that there’s no such thing as a free lunch. But the universe is the ultimate free lunch. ... it is rather fantastic to realise that the laws of physics can describe how **everything was created in a random quantum fluctuation out of nothing ...**”

Finally, the physicist Arno Penzias (who is known for his accidental discovery of cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation, which is regarded as evidence for the Big Bang theory), in “Cosmos, Bios and Theos” states:

“Astronomy leads us to a unique event - **a universe which was created out of nothing**”

We saw above how that Science is “the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world **through observation ...**”. However, despite these confident claims, it is a fact that such a thing has **never** been observed! Something out of nothing has **never** been seen by scientists, or anyone else – it is a truth claim that cannot be proven by scientific methodology.

This is important: Evolutionists deny God as Creator, yet replace Him with ... **“nothing!”** They say that God does not exist – but that with which they replace Him literally does not exist – their “nothing” has non-existence as it’s defining feature!

So it is that Big Bang theorists cannot validate their claim through science. The concept that nothing exploded into everything cannot be observed, examined in a laboratory, or be reproduced. Everything that can be observed indicates that all things which begin to exist have a cause, and to claim that cause to be “nothing” is not either scientific, or Bible teaching.

The Bible does not teach that everything came from nothing, despite what some churches say. Rather, it teaches a Creator who produced all things by His Own Underived Power:

“... but to us there is but one God, the Father, **out of whom are all things** (Greek), and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things, and we by him” (1 Corinthians 8:6).

This is in harmony with all of the observable facts of the case – all that begins to exist in creation has a cause, and the ultimate Cause is defined in the Bible to be an intelligent, all wise Creator, Who is infinite in power.

A GRAIN OF SAND

But other physicists teach that all things came into existence from the explosion of a very tiny singularity. So the Institute of Physics (the professional body and learned society for physics in the UK and Ireland) states on their website:

“Most physicists believe the universe was born in a big bang 13.8 billion years ago. In it the energy making up everything in the cosmos we see today was squeezed inside an inconceivably small space – **far tinier than a grain of sand, or even an atom.** Then, this unimaginably hot and dense cauldron – for whatever reason – ballooned at a terrifying rate.”

Others use the comparison of a full-stop, how everything originated from something smaller than the full-stop at the end of this sentence. But again, this cannot be observed, or replicated – it has to be assumed, not proved. Evolutionists sometimes ridicule us for saying that so many animals had to fit inside the Ark made by Noah – yet they themselves teach that all things that exist fitted into something as tiny as a grain of sand! This is indeed a leap of faith, and is not scientific or Scriptural!

THE BEGINNING OF LIFE

The evolutionist G A Kerkut, in his work “Implications of Evolution” lists a number of “assumptions” inherent in the theory. He writes:

1. “The first assumption is that non-living things gave rise to living material, ie. spontaneous generation occurred”

As we have seen, this is something that cannot be “observed” either in a laboratory, or in the world around us – as Kerkut has it, it has to be assumed. Neither can it be reproduced: all available experience informs us that life does not emerge from non-life. Indeed, this is also Bible teaching: all things are Created by a Living God, and life is maintained by His Spirit:

“and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

“... Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return unto their dust. Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psa. 104:29-30).

Whilst Evolutionists sometimes scorn the Creationist reliance upon an All-Powerful God, and the performance of miracles, it should be acknowledged that their position also depends upon miracles. Some of them are as follows:

- Something came from nothing: nothing exploded and became everything
- Order emerged from Chaos: a random explosion brought about order
- Abiogenesis – matter created life by itself (non-living matter becoming alive)
- Information comes from matter: where did DNA come from?
- Consciousness from chemistry – thoughts and awareness arises from chemical processes.

None of these things can be tested from observable evidence, or reproduced in a laboratory. They are essentially all miracles, which do not occur in the observable universe.

THEISTIC EVOLUTION

Sometimes nominal Christians seek a compromised position – they argue that Evolution is the means by which God created life on earth, as opposed to the Creator’s own account in the book of Genesis. Indeed, the Catholic Church holds this position:

“... evolution in nature **is not inconsistent with the notion of Creation**, because evolution requires the creation of beings that evolve ...”

(Pope Francis, during an address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at the Vatican, October 27th, 2014).

Again:

“Today ... new knowledge leads us to recognize the theory of evolution as **more than a hypothesis**. It is indeed remarkable that this theory has been progressively accepted by researchers, following a series of discoveries in various fields of knowledge”

*(Pope John Paul II,
Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences,
22nd October 1996)*

The question sometimes raised, is “Why does it matter?” In short, there are at least 2 important reasons:

- It contradicts the Creator’s own account of what He did
- It denies certain fundamental doctrines of Scripture.

We shall consider these points shortly!

Although there are differences between professors of Theistic Evolution, some of their claims in attempting to marry the Creation record with their theory are similar:

- Adam was taken from an already existent race of men
- Adam was “called” from the dusty regions of Mesopotamia
- The Genesis account is metaphorical, and not meant to be taken literally
- It was written to simple people who could not have understood the complexities of evolutionary theory

We have already considered how that Evolution and the Big Bang theory are belief systems in themselves, requiring miracles for life to exist – and that they cannot be observed or proved by scientific methodology. But what about these claims about the Bible: that it’s record was written for simple people, and is figurative – i.e. metaphor, and not literal? The question that must be asked, is “if the Genesis account is a metaphor to convey Creation in simple terms, because Evolution was too complicated, what do each one of the metaphors refer to?”

It is claimed that the formation of Adam out of the dust of the ground, is a metaphor for him being called out of the dusty regions of Mesopotamia. But if the record is metaphorical, what do the other details represent? Why describe Eve as being formed from Adam’s rib? What is the Garden of Eden a metaphor for? What are the animals and trees representative of? If the narrative was designed to convey spiritual truths to simple people, it should be easy for the wise men of this world to understand the significance of each of the simple symbols used – yet they do not: evidently, they are not as wise as the “simple” people of old!

If the intent was to express things in simple terms, as one writer puts it:

“God could have simply said: “and God created life in the oceans, too small to see, and over long periods of time, they grew larger and more complex, and changed until they eventually developed into plants, then animals, then men and women ... and it was good””

This would certainly have been easier to understand than an elaborate metaphor, which is still not understood by the intellectuals of this world today!

EXEGESIS VERSUS EISEGESIS

As an aside, it should be pointed out that this accommodation of evolutionary theory by believers in God is based upon a flawed approach to the Bible. There are essentially two approaches to the text of Scripture: Exegesis and Eisegesis.

- Exegesis is from the Greek: *exēgeisthai*, which literally means “to lead out”. It is the core goal of the practice to "draw out" the meaning from the text itself rather than imposing one's own ideas onto it.
- Eisegesis is from the Greek *eisēgeisthai*, meaning "to lead in." It involves "reading into" the words to make them support a specific agenda or personal belief.

The preferred method is Exegesis, as it allows the Bible to explain itself. Because Eisegesis reads into the text a meaning which the original Author did not convey, it can be used to support just about any belief system the reader might hold. Certainly, this is the case with those who seek to import Evolutionary theory – and the Big Bang theory – into the Bible text. To make the Genesis account accommodate Evolution by reading into it a particular view is not a good approach to understanding the Bible.

CLAIMS OF THE BIBLE

Although the Bible is not a scientific textbook, it is just not true to say that the Bible does not describe how man was created – it plainly states:

“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

And this is endorsed to be a literal account, by the Lord Jesus Christ himself (Mrk. 10:6). Granted, this description is not couched in scientific language, but it does describe how God formed man. Moreover, the record specifically denies the claim that animals changed over time into different species:

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature **after his kind**, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the earth **after his kind** and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth **after his kind**, and everything that creepeth upon the earth **after his kind**: and God saw that it was good”

(Genesis 1:24-25)

This is something that is observable: animals in nature do not change from one “kind” to another. They were originally created after their own “kind” and can only reproduce into further specimens of that “kind”. There is no known case, whether in a laboratory, or in the real world, where it has been observed for a particular species of animal to change into another species. The Bible is in harmony with observable evidence, whereas Evolution is not!

The New Testament writers also regarded the Genesis account as being literal. Consider the following:

- “The **first Adam** was made a living soul” (1Cor. 15:45)
- “The **first man** is of the earth, earthy” (1 Cor. 15:47)
- “Death reigned **from Adam** to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” (Rom. 5:14).
- “For **Adam was first formed, then Eve**. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:13-14)
- “Enoch also, **the seventh from Adam** prophesied ...” (Jude 14).

Each of these verses present the Creation account as being a literal reality. But there are doctrines fundamental to the Gospel, which also require a literal reading: these we address as follows:

DOCTRINAL CONSEQUENCES

There are various doctrines in the Old and New Testaments which depend upon a literal understanding of Creation. We shall examine three such examples:

- The Origin of Sin and Death
- The Atonement
- Man being made in the Image of God

The Origin of Sin and Death:

The Bible is very clear that death came into the world as a direct consequence of sin – and that sin came into being through the first human pair:

“... by one man sin entered into the world, **and death by sin**; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

“the body is dead **because of sin**” (Rom. 8:10).

The question arises therefore, if Adam was not the first man, then where do sin and death originate? Biblical exegesis reveals that Adam and Eve transgressed a particular Divine Law, and as a consequence became mortal, dying creatures. And that because all men are literally descended from the first human pair, they also inherit a mortal, dying nature. To suggest otherwise is to read into the text a meaning that is not inherently there – eisogesis!

This is an important doctrine – we grow old and die because we inherit a mortal nature:

“Let not sin therefore reign in your **mortal body**” (Rom. 6:12)

“He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your **mortal bodies** by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Rom. 8:11)

“We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’s sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our **mortal flesh**” (2 Cor. 4:11)

This a feature which Evolution cannot explain – whether it be Theistic or Atheistic.

The Atonement:

The Bible’s teaching on a related topic is also clear. The Atonement is also dependent upon a literal reading of Genesis:

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (Rom. 5:18, ESV)

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. 15:22)

“as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:49).

The point is, that men and women are naturally “in Adam”, and can be justified through faith by transferring to become “in Christ” through the appointed way. But this can only be so, if there were a “first Adam” to begin with!

Made in the Image of God:

The Bible is clear that mankind was made in the Image of God:

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27)

“In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him” (Genesis 5:1)

But if there were no original “male and female”, then there is a problem – which underdeveloped life-form was in the Divine Image? It might be argued that it is the final, human form which is in God’s Image, and all the previous lives led up to it. But that would contradict the teaching that in the beginning men and women were originally created in His Image, not some other image, leading up to an eventual Divine Likeness!

It is well recognised by some Theistic Evolutionists that their theory does contradict the Bible. Consider the following from the biblical scholar and evolutionist Peter Enns:

“By saying that Paul’s Adam is not the historical first man, we are leaving behind Paul’s understanding of the cause of the universal plight of sin and death. But this is the burden of anyone who wishes to bring evolution and Christianity together – the only question is how that will be done ... So, although my suggestion here leaves behind the truly historical Adam of Paul’s thinking, so do any other attempts – except those of biblical literalists, who reject the evolutionary account of human origins.”

(The Evolution of Adam, p. 123, Peter Enns)

Here is a plain recognition that Evolution departs from and “leaves behind” the “truly historical Adam of Paul’s thinking” – and those who do otherwise are labelled “biblical literalists”!

Atheistic evolutionists are clear that their belief system must exclude God, even if the Theists aren’t. Hence the evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin wrote:

“We take the side of science [naturalistic] in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfil many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated ‘just so’ stories, because we have an a priori commitment to materialism ... and ... materialism is an absolute for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door.”

Richard Lewontin
“Billions and Billions of Demons,” 1997

An important reason to believe Evolution therefore, despite its “patent absurdity” is because “we cannot allow a divine foot in the door”. In short, Evolution must be believed and promoted, because the alternative is a personal Creator – and that must not be allowed at any cost!

It is clear from the foregoing, that Evolution is a belief system, which remains unproven. Richard Dawkins recognises this. When asked on the www.edge.org website “What do you believe is true, even though you cannot prove it?”, he responded:

“I believe, but cannot prove, that all life, all intelligence, all creativity and all design anywhere in the universe is the direct product of Darwinian natural selection”

This is interesting! This is the same man who we cited earlier as saying:

“... faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of, the lack of evidence”.

How does this apply to his own position? It might be argued that he is referring to evidence, not proof – but that would concede that proof is not needed to validly hold a particular position. There is evidence that there is a Creator – which Dawkins does not take account of in his words.

THE GOD OF THE GAPS

There is a logical fallacy called *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, which is an argument from ignorance. This is “an informal logical fallacy that occurs when someone claims something is true just because it hasn't been proven false—or false because it hasn't been proven true.” In relation to “the God of the Gaps” argument, the following applies:

- **The Premise:** "We do not currently know how Phenomenon X happens through natural causes".
- **The Fallacious Conclusion:** "Therefore, Phenomenon X must have been caused by God".
- **The Flaw:** Just as an appeal to ignorance falsely assumes that "unproven" means "false," God of the gaps falsely assumes that "unexplained" must mean "supernatural". It fails to account for the possibility that a natural explanation exists but has not been discovered yet.

Richard Dawkins also speak of this strategy:

"The God of the Gaps' strategy... What worries thoughtful theologians... is that gaps shrink as science advances, and God is threatened with eventually having nothing to do and nowhere to hide".

(Richard Dawkins, "The God Delusion" 2006)

The claim is, that because a certain thing cannot be explained naturally, that therefore it must be God. Hence the phrase “God of the Gaps” – the existence of God is invoked where there is a gap in scientific knowledge, and as scientific knowledge increases, so the opportunity for belief in God diminishes. Stephen Hawkin famously claimed:

"However, if we discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable by everyone... we should know the mind of God." (A Brief History of Time, 1988)

His conception is that as scientific knowledge increases, men will eventually “know the mind of God”!

Yet the objection is a valid one, and it is disappointing, and concerning to see Creationists use this fallacy. For the Bible believer, this is a caricature of their position – a “straw man”. The reason why we believe in a Creator-God is not because science cannot explain a particular thing. Our faith is not in what Science has yet to explain – we also regard God as being present and active in things which Science can and does explain.

As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “God is not a Stopgap”: He wrote that it is wrong to use God as a "stopgap for the incompleteness of our knowledge". Again, he famously stated that “We are to find God in what we know, not in what we don't know; God wants us to realize his presence, not in unsolved problems but in those that are solved”

GOD OF THE GAPS – TIME!

But Evolutionists also have their own *argumentum ad ignorantiam* theory – time! To turn a frog into a prince is a fairy tale – but implant a long period of time into the mix, and it becomes true! Hence the American Scientist George Wald wrote:

"Time is in fact the hero of the plot... Given so much time, the 'impossible' becomes possible, the possible probable, and the probable virtually certain. One only has to wait: time itself performs the miracles."

George Wald (article "The Origin of Life," published in the August 1954 issue of Scientific American.)

There is no evidence that animals can change their “kind” as we saw earlier, and there is likewise no evidence that the impossible becomes true by time being inserted into a logical gap of evidence. And as Wald concedes in this article, the evolutionist must depend on “miracles” performed by Time!

We cited a definition of Science earlier:

“the systemic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation, experimentation, and the testing of theories against the evidence obtained” (Oxford Languages).

We saw that there are three main points:

1. Observation
2. Experimentation
3. Testing against evidence

But how do the Big Bang and Evolution theories stand up to scrutiny using the scientific method?

1. Something emerging from nothing cannot be observed. Neither can life be observed coming from non-life. Neither can species changing into other species.
2. Evolution and the origin of life cannot be demonstrated through experimentation.
3. All the evidence leads to one logical conclusion – a Creator!

It is clear that the theories (not facts) under discussion are not themselves scientific. They are belief systems, which require faith to accept them. It is wrong therefore, to present this issue as being Science against Faith.

There is another important point. Whereas Evolutionists present Creation as being not scientific, some of the founding fathers of modern science were Creationists. Consider the following:

- Kepler - Astronomy
- Pascal - Hydrostatics
- Boyle - Chemistry
- Newton - Physics
- Steno - Stratigraphy
- Faraday - Magnetic theory
- Babbage - Computers
- Agassiz - Ichthyology

- Simpson - Gynaecology
- Mendel - Genetics
- Pasteur - Bacteriology
- Kelvin - Thermodynamics
- Lister - Antiseptic surgery
- Maxwell - Electrodynamics
- Ramsay - Isotopic chemistry

These were all eminent scientists who accepted that there was a Creator who was the First Cause of Creation.

CONCLUSION

The Apostle Paul taught the following:

“For **the wisdom of the world** is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, **that they are vain ...**” (1 Cor. 3:19-20)

And again:

“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? **Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?** For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:20-21).

The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God – and Evolution proves this. The Bible states of God that:

“... He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made **from one man** every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth” ...” (Acts 17:25-26 – ESV).

This is something that Evolutionists cannot disprove, and it is also the logical conclusion based upon observation, and testing against evidence. It is wise to accept the Creator’s Own account of what He did, and shun the foolishness of men!

Christopher Maddocks

Having considered the logic of Creation, the following articles describe the Creator's purpose with what He Created.

God's Design in the Creation of the World

A wise master Builder never begins to build without a design. This, he drafts after a scale of so much to the foot. This is the extension, or time, so to speak, of the building to be erected. Having well considered the whole, he concludes, that it is the best possible plan that can be devised in harmony with the principles of architecture. It then becomes his purpose, his foreordination, predetermination, or design. All subsequent arrangements are made to conform to this recorded purpose, because it is the very best his deliberate wisdom and ingenuity could devise.

The next thing he does is to gather together all the necessary materials, whether of brick, stone, lime, sand, wood, or aught else that may be needed. If a spectator desired to know what all these crude materials were heaped up together in one place for – the Architect would reveal to him his purpose by submitting the draft of his plan in all its lines, circles, angles, etc.; and he would describe to him such an arrangement of the materials as would impress the spectator's mind with an image of the edifice, though it would fall infinitely short of the reality when perfected. If we suppose the mansion to be now finished, the Architect would then order the materials which were left, as unfit to work into the building, and therefore worthless – such as broken bricks, split boards, sand, and so forth, to be cast out as rubbish to be trodden under foot, or to burn. Thus the edifice is built out of the accumulated materials, according to the outline of the draft, or purpose of the Builder; and the work is done.

THE DIVINE ARCHITECT

Now, the Great Builder of the Heavens and the Earth is God. He either made all things at random, or He did not. Who will say that the Creator permitted chance to elaborate the terrestrial system? The scripture declares that everything was measured, meted out, and weighed, and that the Spirit of the Lord executed His work without any to counsel or instruct Him. As it is written:

“Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him and taught him in the path of judgement, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” (Is 40:12-14).

God then, had in His own mind a pattern, or design, of all the work that was before Him, before He uttered a word or His spirit began to move. This design, or archetype, which placed the beginning and the end of all things before Him in one panoramic view, was constructed in harmony with the principles – the eternal principles of His unbounded realm; which coincide with the immutable attributes of His character. The work He was about to execute was for His own pleasure; for, says the scripture: “Thou hast created all things, and for they pleasure they are, and were created”. But when the work is finished, for His own pleasure God labours to elaborate, what will it consist in? This inquiry we make as spectators of the wonders of creation, providence and redemption. We behold the materials of these departments of Eternal Wisdom, and we ask to what are they all tending? What temple, or edifice, is the Divine Architect raising for His own pleasure or glory? If we turn our thoughts within us, there is no voice there which unfolds the philosophy of His doings; if we soar into the heavens, or descend into the sea; if we search through the high places of the earth – we find no answer; for “Who hath known the mind of the Lord, who hath been his counsellor, or who hath instructed him?” No; if we would ascertain what God designs to elaborate out of the past, the present and the future, we must be content to assume the attitude of listeners, that He may reveal to us from His own lips what He intends to evolve in the consummation of His plans.

God has caused a Book to be written for our information upon His design – His ultimate purpose in the works of creation, providence, and redemption; which are the three grand divisions of His labour, and are

all tending to the development of one great and glorious consummation. This book is termed THE BIBLE.

If we take up a book, how would we proceed to ascertain the end the author had in writing his book? We should read it through carefully, and thus having made ourselves acquainted with its contents we should be prepared to answer the question intelligently and accurately. Why do we not do so with the Bible? God is the Author; Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles are but the amanuenses of the whole. If then the question be put, what end God had in view in the six days' work of the creation; in His subsequent providential arrangements in relation to man and nations; and in the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lamb of God; we proceed in the same way with the Bible in which He tells His own story, and answer accordingly to the light we have acquired.

Now the Book of God is peculiar in this – it narrates the past, the present, and future in all one volume. We learn from the accuracy of its details in relation to the past and the present, to put unbounded confidence in its declarations concerning the future. In ascertaining, therefore, the ultimate design of Eternal Wisdom in the creation of all things, we turn to the end of the Bible to see what God has said shall be as the consummation of what has gone before; for what he has said shall be the permanent order of creation, must be the end He originally designed before ever the foundations of the earth were laid.

Turn we then, to the last two chapters of the Book of God. What do we learn from these? We learn that there is to be a great physical and moral renovation of the earth; that every curse is to cease from off the earth; and that it is to be peopled with men who will be immortal, and free from all evil; that they will then all be the sons of God, a community of glorious, honourable, and incorruptible beings, who will constitute the dwelling place of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, the glory of whose presence will give a brilliancy to the globe surpassing the splendour of the sun. The globe a glorious dwelling place, and its inhabitants an immortal and glorious people, with the presence of the Eternal Himself – is the sum of the consummations which God reveals as the answer to

the question concerning His ultimate design. The following testimonies will prove it.

“The inheritance of the saints in light” (Col 1:12); “An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven” (1Pet 1:4); “I saw a new heaven and a new earth ... and there was no more sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he himself will be with them, their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things (or “Heaven and Earth” in which they existed) are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son” (Apoc 21:1-7). “And there shall be no more curse” (22:3).

Now the creating of all things new implies that the constitution of things that preceded the New Creation was an old system, which had answered the end for which it was arranged in the first instance. This old system, termed by John “the former Heaven and the former Earth”, is manifestly the system of the World, based upon the six days’ creation; for the “former things”, which had passed away in the vision, were the sea, death, sorrow, sin, the curse and all their correlatives. This Old Creation with its constitution of time, then, is but a grand system of means to a still grander and inconceivably more magnificent Creation, which will be of an unchangeable and eternal constitution. The old Mosaic Heavens and Earth are to the New Creation, as the accumulated materials of a building are to the edifice about to be built: and hold the same relation to the New Heavens, as the animal system does to the spiritual. We repeat, then, that the creation of the Six Days, which we have termed Mosaic, because Moses records their generations, was not the end but the beginning, when God commenced the execution of His purpose

which He had arranged; the ultimatum of which was, to elaborate by truth and judgement as his instrumentality, a world of intelligent beings, who should become the glorious and immortal population of the globe under an immutable and eternal constitution of things.

We come now to a very interesting, and indeed, immensely important enquiry, namely, upon what principle, or principles, did God propose to carry out this ultimate design in relation to the peopling of the Spiritual or Eternal World? Was it upon a purely intellectual, or purely moral, or purely physical principle, or was it upon all these three conjoined? For example, He peopled the present animal world by creating a human pair, and placing them under the natural, or physical laws; will He people the spiritual world by physical generation and physical regeneration, or upon some other principle revealed in His word? To these questions we shall endeavour to reply.

As the doings of the Almighty are all for His own glory, we would ask this question: Would it have been to the glory of God, if He had made man a mere machine?- had He made inexorable necessity the law of his nature, which he must yield to, as the tides to the moon, or the earth to the sun? Who will affirm it? The principle laid down in the scripture is, that man honours God in obeying His laws; but this honour consists, not in a mechanical obedience, such as matter yields to the natural laws, but in a voluntary obedience, while the individual possesses the power not to obey, if he thinks best. There is no honour, or glory to God, in the fall of a stone to the centre of the earth; the stone obeys the law of gravitation involuntarily: the obedience of man would have been similar had God created and placed him under a physical law, which should have necessitated his motions, as gravitation doth of the stone.

Does a man feel honoured, or glorified, by the forced obedience of a slave? Certainly not; and for the simple reason, that it is involuntary, or compulsory. But let a man, by his excellencies, command the willing service of free men – of men who can do their own will, and pleasure, yet voluntarily obey him, and if he required it, are prepared to sacrifice their lives, fortunes and estates, and all for the love they bear him; – would not such a man esteem himself honoured and glorified to the

highest degree by such signal conformity to his will? Unquestionably! And such is the honour and glory which God requires of men. Had He designed a mere physical obedience, He would have secured His purpose effectually by at once filling the earth with a population of immortal adults, so intellectually organised as to be incapable of a will adverse to His own – who should have obeyed Him as the piston rod and wheels do the steam by which they are moved ...

The following testimonies will show the principle upon which God designs to people the Spiritual World. “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely; and he that overcometh shall inherit all things”; “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and that they may enter through the gates into the city”; “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God”; “He shall not be hurt by the second death”; “To him that overcometh, and keepeth my works to the end, I will give power over all nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron”; “If thou doest well, O Cain, shalt thou not be accepted?” “These things are written that ye may believe, and that believing ye may have life through his name” – not a miracle; “As many as received him, to them gave he the power to become sons of God, to them that believe on his name; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but were born of God”; “He that believes the gospel and is baptized shall be saved”; “God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour, immortality – eternal life”; but of testimonies there is no end. The law of the Lord is perfect and without a single exception. There are no “perhapses”, or “maybes”; it is not “yea and nay, but amen – so let it be – in Christ Jesus”. The only way to the Spiritual World is in the path of obedience to the law of God.

Now from these testimonies it is plain that to attain the rank of the sons of God in the Eternal World – where indeed all are sons without exception – human beings without respect to age, sex or condition, must believe and obey the truth; for “without faith it is impossible to please God”; it does not except infants, idiots, and pagans; but it declares the principle without qualification. If faith then be required, it is manifest that

God designed to move men by motive, not necessity – but by intellectual and moral considerations.

Behold, then, the conclusion of the matter. There are two Systems, or Worlds, in the purpose of God; the one, the Animal, the other, the Spiritual. Out of the animal, as the aggregate of building materials, God designs to elaborate the Spiritual World, as a new palace in His empire. This new dwelling place of the Divine Majesty is to consist of a sealess and luminous globe, and peopled with myriads of glorious, honourable and incorruptible men, of equal rank and station with the angelic host. The means by which He proposed to consummate this magnificent conception were, first by His creative energy; secondly by His providential arrangements; thirdly, by the moral force of Truth, argued and attested; and lastly, by judgement, and recreative energy in the destruction of the wicked and formation of the New Earth.

The principle upon which animal men might attain to the Angelic Order in the Spiritual World of which we speak, He has laid down as a voluntary obedience to His law under the several constitutions He has arranged. Hence, He created man “free to stand and free to fall” – capable of doing, or not doing, as he preferred; but responsible for the consequences to the extent of the knowledge imparted to him. It is true, God could have ordered things otherwise, and have prevented much present suffering; but He did not, and the best reason that can be given is, that it was not His pleasure.

*John Thomas,
The Ambassador of the Coming Age January 1866*

The Grand Purpose of the Eternal Spirit

THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION

When we consider the decadent, unstable and sometimes violent state of the world in which we live, it is perhaps sometimes difficult to see that amid all the sin and turmoil, there is a Divine Hand at work. That the

Almighty Creator is bringing good out of the evil, and that behind it all there is the outworking of a Purpose which shall come to a glorious crescendo when the earth will be transformed to become a place of spiritual delights and beauty. In this article, we shall examine the Creator's purpose with his Creation as it is presented in His Word. Understanding that purpose more fully, we should be motivated to become a part of it, looking for better days to come, eschewing the evil that is in the world, and preparing for a coming new age of glory. The first point to note is that God created the earth with a particular purpose in view:

“For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he that established it, he created it not in vain, **he formed it to be inhabited**: I am Yahweh and there is none else” (Isa. 45:18).

The earth then, was not created void of purpose: it was formed in order to be a habitable place for men and women to live. But the Scriptures also teach that the inhabitants of the earth were to be reflective of the Divine Image:

“... and God said, Let us make man in our image, **after our likeness**: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Gen. 1:26).

“... and God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, **and fill the earth**, and subdue it ...” (Gen. 1:28).

The men and women who were to “fill the earth”, then, were after the likeness of God: indeed, their original purpose was to show the “image” and “likeness” of their Creator.

A parallel passage in Numbers chapter 14 provides some more information:

“As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord” (Num. 14:21).

Notice: the earth was formed “to be inhabited” by men and women who would “fill the earth”, and here, the earth is to be “filled” with the Creator’s Glory. Putting the two together, we learn that “all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh by being inhabited by those who show that glorious array of Divine Attributes.

GLORY AND GOODNESS

The same teaching can be arrived at when we look at the matter from a different angle: What is the “glory” with which the earth “shall be filled?” Exodus chapter 33 recounts how that Moses asked to see the Glory of Yahweh

“and he said, I beseech thee, ***shew me thy glory***. And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of Yahweh before thee ...” (Exo. 33:18-19).

But what we find, however, is that when that “goodness” passed before Moses, it was not in what Moses saw with his eyes: it was rather in the declaration that was proclaimed to him:

“And Yahweh descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the Name of Yahweh. And Yahweh passed before him, and proclaimed, Yahweh, Yahweh El, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.” (Exo. 34:5-7).

From these verses then, we learn that Yahweh’s “goodness” and “glory” consists not so much of a visible display of shining brightness, but rather the array of attributes that the Creator possesses, and chooses to

reveal. As we have already shown therefore, for the earth to be filled with God's Glory, it will be inhabited with those men and women who display the glorious array of attributes (or, "likeness and image") possessed by their Creator.

THE FAILURE OF MAN

But man failed to accomplish his Creator's purpose. As the wise man lamented: "... Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29). The Apostle also describes the same situation: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Coming short of the Glory, we find that the earth is instead filled with the wickedness of human rule and mismanagement showing forth the image and likeness of king Sin.

By contrast to those who claim that human nature is essentially good, and that there is an element of good in everyone, the Bible demonstrates that human nature is inherently bad:

"We all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath as also the rest" (Eph. 2:3).

"the wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psa. 58:3).

Again, the Apostle contrasts his own experience of his sinful nature with the original "very good" condition of the earth

"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth ***no good thing***: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not ..." (Rom. 7:18).

THE PURPOSE OF GOD—ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRIST

But the Purpose of God with the earth has not failed, although it may seem that way at times. In the Lord Jesus Christ, that Purpose

continued, and in him we see the Creator's Glory manifest in human nature. In the Messiah, we see "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16). He succeeded where all other men have failed. Speaking of our Master in relation to his Father, we read: "who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3). Though he also came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), Messiah accomplished that which Adam failed to do. He displayed his Father's "glory" and "image," and in so doing, provided a way for mankind to avoid destruction, and the purpose of God to succeed. Being united in purpose and character with his Father, Jesus said of himself, "... he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jno. 14:9). Not that he himself was his own father—that is the illogical dogma of Trinitarian mythology. But that he displayed his Father's likeness to glorify Him whilst at the same time bearing sin's flesh.

CONFORMING TO THE DIVINE IMAGE

In order to avail ourselves of the free gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23), we must endeavour to put away our old selves—the Old man of the flesh, and put on a new character, the New man after the spirit. And this involves becoming like Christ:

"... whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to ***the image*** of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8:29).

But how is this conformity to be achieved? The answer is to allow the Word-Seed to germinate within our hearts, and grant us a new wisdom and knowledge of the glory of Yahweh:

"lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge ***after the image*** of him that created him" (Col. 3:9-10).

There are those who decry “head-knowledge” as being undesirable. As it was recently put to the present writer: “I would rather live the truth than learn the doctrine”. But this misses the point that for the Truth to be lived, we need to be “renewed in knowledge”, for how can we perform the Father’s Will if we do not “know” what it is?

So the Apostle continues to describe the future glorious state of the redeemed:

“As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Cor. 15:49).

And again

“we look for the saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body ...” (Phil. 3:20-21).

There is then, a twofold aspect to the process of salvation. Firstly, there is the renewing in knowledge, imparting a “full assurance of understanding” (Col. 2:2) and a wisdom which is able to save, and then Secondly there is the transformation of our mortal bodies to be made literally like the glorious body of Messiah himself.

THE PURPOSE OF SALVATION

As we have shown, the furtherance of the Divine Purpose, and therefore the hope of salvation has to do with things concerning the earth. By contrast to those who would have our souls whisked up to heaven beyond the skies, the Bible promise is very down to earth. So we read thus

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”
(Mat. 5:5).

And as a consequence it is written:

“the righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth” (Prov. 10:30).

What all of the above serves to show, is that the salvation of man is not an end in itself, rather it is but the means by which the Creator’s Greater Purpose will be accomplished. Hence we read:

“[God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but **according to his own purpose** and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began ...” (2 Tim. 1:9).

And that purpose is that Yahweh himself will be glorified upon the earth:

“Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; **that** glory may dwell in our land” (Psa. 85:9)

“... suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:13-14).

A CHOSEN PEOPLE

It has so pleased our Heavenly Father to develop the unfolding of His Purpose by calling out from the nations a remnant who desire to exercise their own freewill to serve Him, and manifest His Glory. Not all the individuals who make up the world will be saved, as the majority choose to exercise their freewill for the satisfaction of the flesh, and have no desire to demonstrate their Creator’s attributes in their lives. “God so loved the world” (Jno. 3:16), not that everyone in it will be saved, but that the world as a whole will be perpetuated and will not be destroyed. Though there be a few in each age and generation who will respond to the High Calling—the “few” that find and walk down the narrow way—the cumulative number throughout the earth’s history will be “a great multitude, which no man could number” (Rev. 7:9). This is the “world” that will be loved by our Father, a world filled with righteous men and women. Accordingly, we read:

“Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His Name” (Acts 15:14).

And again:

“Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a purchased people; that ye should show forth the praises (marg. Virtues) of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9)

SUMMARY

In the foregoing, we have demonstrated from Scripture:

- The Purpose of God is to populate the earth with men and women who display His Glorious Attributes.
- Salvation of men and women is therefore a means to an end, and not the end itself.
- In order to progress His Purpose, God is calling out a people for the Glory of His Name
- The Chosen People will be saved from death and will ultimately fill all the earth.
- At that time, the earth will be filled with the Righteous, with there being no place found for the wicked.

To conclude, John Thomas summarised the situation thus:

“Men were not ushered into being for the purpose of being saved or lost. God-manifestation, not human salvation, was the grand purpose of the Eternal Spirit. The salvation of a multitude is incidental to the manifestation, but it was not the end proposed. The Eternal Spirit intended to enthrone himself on the earth, and in so doing, to develop a Divine Family from among men, every one of whom shall be spirit being born of the Spirit, and that this family shall be large enough to fill the earth, when perfected, to the entire exclusion of flesh and blood.”

(John Thomas, 1858)

Christopher Maddocks