

INVESTIGATOR DEBATE: THE TRINITY

Baptist VS Christadelphian

In 1995/1996 *Investigator Magazine* hosted a theological debate on the unity/trinity of God. The invitation, acceptance, debate and aftermath comprised 19 items totalling 22,500 words. Below is the exchange between John Hutchinson and Jim Luke and the Christadelphian refusal to continue:

WHAT IS TRUTH?
The Bible Challenges Church Teaching

- In the Advertiser 20/3/91 a statement was issued by a group of nine Christian churches. It contained the "TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH".
- Whilst they may be the "Truths of the Christian Faith", they most certainly are not the TRUTHS OF GOD'S WORD, the Bible.
- The eight statements contained **not one** Bible quotation as proof.

THE CHRISTADELPHIANS wish to direct your attention to the Bible, the only basis upon which a faith in God can be based.

A CHALLENGE TO DEBATE

The claims of these religious organisations are false and the **CHRISTADELPHIANS** offer to publicly debate the issues.

The Christian faith teaches: "Jesus Christ is equal with God and part of a trinity of God the Father, God the son and God the holy spirit".
BIBLE TRUTH: God is the Father, Jesus Christ, a his son and the holy spirit is God's power. "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 2:5). "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him... whom God raised up" (Acts 2:22-24).

The Christian faith teaches: "The Holy Spirit is real and is an important part of the trinity".
BIBLE TRUTH: The word "holy" means separate, whilst the word "spirit" means power. The holy spirit was God's power used in various forms. "The holy spirit shall come upon thee (Mary) and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing that is born of thee shall be called the son of God" (Luke 1:35).

The Christian faith teaches: "The Devil (Satan) is real and very much alive".
BIBLE TRUTH: The "Devil" is a Bible term for sin, and it originates in the mind. Jesus told his disciples sin and evil comes "from within, out of the heart (mind) of man" (Mark 7:21). Paul says "sin dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:7).

The Christian faith teaches: "Heaven is the eternal home of believers".
BIBLE TRUTH: God's eternal inheritance for men and women is on the earth. "No man hath ascended up to heaven" (John 3:13). "David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:34). "We shall reign on earth" (Revelation 5:10).

The Christian faith teaches: "Eternal hell fire is the punishment for the wicked".
BIBLE TRUTH: Hell is another term for the grave. "At death there is no remembrance of thee in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5).

The Christian faith teaches: "Jesus died as a substitute for us".
BIBLE TRUTH: Jesus Christ died as a representative for us, and by his example showed how we can gain salvation. "Jesus Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

The Christian faith teaches: "All that believe and trust in Christ have total present and personal relief from the guilt and burden of sin".
BIBLE TRUTH: Eternal salvation, and change of nature, will be granted by Christ following his return to the earth, the resurrection of the dead and the judgment. Paul whose belief and trust in Christ could not be questioned said: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). He answered by declaring: "there is a crown of righteousness which the Lord will give me at that day (his return)" (2 Timothy 4:8).

OUR APPEAL TO YOU: Read your Bible and seek it's truth. Attend a CHRISTADELPHIAN Bible Lecture tomorrow evening at 7pm. See the Religious Section in this paper for locations.

Send for the free 150 page book "KEY TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCRIPTURES"
The Christadelphians, Post Office Box 36, Dale Park, SA 5041

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The advertisement in *The Advertiser* which persuaded the editor of *INVESTIGATOR Magazine* to host a written Bible debate. Seven debaters participated. This article contains the exchange between John Hutchinson (Baptist) and Jim Luke (Christadelphian).

DO THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THE EXISTENCE OF A TRINITY?

John Hutchinson (Baptist)

(From: Investigator Magazine #42, 1995 May)

Thank you for inviting me to this subject. Over the years I have aired various issues with Christadelphians. I refer to their assertion: 'It is very difficult to rid our minds of bias, but it is necessary if we would find the truth' (Who is Jesus Christ? p.15). I ask that you follow that and get bias out of your mind and seek God's Truth.

I respond because at the age of 14 I accepted Christ as my personal saviour, and became a new creation in Christ. I experienced what Paul meant when he said "If any man is in Christ he is a new creature, old things have passed away and behold, all things have become new!" 2 Cor. 5: 17, I was 'born again', and became a partaker in the divine nature. All things, for me, became new in Christ.

Following the exciting experience of sins forgiven, a Christadelphian assailed my beliefs, asserting that I was astray, Churches were all false, and Christadelphians alone, were right. The Trinity has many assailants - Hindu, Islam, Bahai, Watchtower, Christadelphian, Church of God, etc.

Attempting to rationalise the Almighty generates many distortions. We will identify Bible Truth relating to the incomprehensible Deity.

Five Truths

Truth No. 1: GOD IS ETERNAL. 'The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth!' Isaiah 40:28. The eternal God (Elohim) is your refuge and underneath are everlasting arms!' Deut. 33:27. Elohim is eternal. He inhabits eternity, Isaiah 57:5.

Truth No. 2: GOD IS UNCHANGING. God is what he has ever been and will forever be. He is eternally the same. 'I am The Lord, I change not, Malachi 3:6. 'I Am what I Am' Ex. 3:14 (I will be what I will be - Margin). 'For he that cometh to God must believe that he is', Heb. 11:6 - God 'IS'. Truth and error draw swords here. Error insists that God becomes, which opens a floodgate of speculation. Pagan religions have Gods begetting Gods etc. Truth stands fast. God 'is'. HE doesn't 'become' something that He isn't now. He does not mutate or multiply! 'I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God', Isaiah 44:6. 'I am who I am.' 'I am the Lord I change not.'

Truth No. 3: GOD CREATES. 'I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself ', Isaiah 44:24. God didn't employ sub-creators or angels to do his works as was suggested by Plato. Creation exhibits omnipotence. God spoke and it was so. 2 Pet. 3:5; Heb. 1:3.

Truth No. 4: GOD IS HOLY. 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.' Isaiah 6:3. God's holiness is underived and absolute, I Sam. 2:2. He is 'the Holy One', Isaiah 40:25.

Truth No. 5: GOD IS ONE. 'There is no God but one. For although there may be so called gods in heaven (Acts 7:42) and on earth - as indeed there are many 'gods' and many lords' -

yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ; through whom are all things.' I Cor. 8:4-6

There is ONE, ETERNAL, UNCHANGING GOD Who created all things.

Trinity

Jesus said, 'All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit', Matthew 28:18. This text is significant, for in a singular name there are three persons and in Scripture each possesses the attributes of Deity. Notice how they are attributed to the Lord Jesus.

Jesus is eternal. Not only do we read of the eternal Father and the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14), but also of that eternal life which was with the Father in the beginning', 1 John 1:1-2.

Jesus is unchanging. 'But thou art the same, and your years fail not', Heb. 1:12. 'Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever', Heb. 13:8.

Jesus is the Creator. (Heb. 1:10) - 'Thou Lord didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Thy hands'. The Greek for 'earth' here is 'Ghay'—meaning 'soil' or 'solid earth.' The phrase, 'In the beginning' recalls Gen 1:1.

Jesus is Holy. The seraphim encircling God's throne never stop saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty', Rev. 4:8. In the N.T. Jesus is 'The Holy One', Luke 1:35; Acts 2:27. John Thomas, incidentally, describes Jesus as 'filthy'. Eureka Vol. 5, p. 305. The Bible declares him 'Holy' - even in conception! - Luke 1:35.

Father, Son and Spirit are absolute holiness. The three holy's of the seraphim are even more significant than their three sets of wings. 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory,'—Isaiah 6:3. Plurality in unity appears in verse 8: 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts'—Trinity in Unity!
'Baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

John Thomas' teachings

What, then, do Christadelphians teach? John Thomas postulated a solitary Deity—totally alone for a past eternity. An isolate being forever past! Isolation destroys personality. Who can survive 50 years alone?

"Gods" — Fasten your seat belt now for what's next! A Deity 'isolate' becomes "Gods" uncountable — millions of gods who create the universe. He speculates that these gods were once 'animal' like creatures of other spheres, Elpis Israel, p. 187. For John Thomas, there is a process of 'becoming' God and, according to him, Jesus has already processed to "Godhood".

Consubstantial

In Eureka Vol. 5, page 306, Thomas says that Christ was instantaneously changed to 'consubstantiality' to the Father. 'We learn from the Bible that the Deity it reveals has both body and parts, — Jesus is the peculiar nature of the hypostasis or substance of the Theos (Heb. 1:3) In other words, he partakes of the Divine Nature; so that what he now is, is what the Deity has always been.' - Eureka, Vol. 1, p.95.

Dr. Thomas must be followed closely around his theological roundabout or we may miss his road. Think carefully about what these quotes imply. 'Such, then, was Deity before the appearance of Jesus—Spirit, substantial and radiant, substantial in his own person; radiant thence into all the Elohim of his universe, in whom the radiant matter, by the fiat of the Divine Will, became fixed, organic, corporeal, and consubstantial with the Deity himself.' —"He the Elohim"— He the only Deity, by his Spirit, a multitude of mighty ones.' Eureka Vol. 1 page 98. 'Since his ascension, he (Jesus) is consubstantial with Deity, i.e. the peculiar nature he now has is identical with the original substance of the eternal power (Eureka Vol. 1, page 105. 'Behold then the consummation! Mortal and corruptible beings like ourselves become Elohim (Gods) mighty in strength and framers of new worlds', Elpis Israel, page 187.

It's no surprise, then, that Christadelphians deny that they are Unitarian — This is polytheism!

Christadelphian philosophy is that 'God' becomes 'Gods' and humans become God. Animal beings of other spheres becoming God rankles of Mormonism. Thomas actually postulates that we were created by beings who were once animal and fleshly from other regions. Questions are: 'Who is supposed then to have created the fleshly beings that created us?' 'In what ways is Christ distinguished from the 'pre-creation' gods? —or the post resurrection gods?' 'What is meant by the unscriptural term—"The Multitudinous Christ?"'

Plato

The idea of sub-creators derives from Platonic and Gnostic sources and finds no place in scripture. Christadelphian author, Alan Eyre, writes of John Thomas: 'But the writings of his formative period - show close and accurate familiarity with Plato and other Greek writers.' (The Protesters page 186).

Creator!

Let the unbiased compare Scripture. 'I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself.'-Isaiah 44:24. 'Hath not one God created us?' -Mal. 2:10. 'Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?' -Job 38:4. 'The Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.' - Rom 1:25.

Thomas writes: '—and He is the Springhead of many streams, or rivers of spirit which assume "organic forms"—each one is a God in the sense of partaking of the DIVINE NATURE, and being therefore a Son of God.' - Phanerosis, p. 62. Alert readers will recognise affinities with Hinduism here. Also compare Plato: 'Ye Gods, those gods whose maker I am and those works whose father I am, being created by me are indissoluble without my consent.' - Timaeus, p. 56.

God's Name

'Go—and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit.' 'IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER'. 'O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!' Psalm 8:1.

'**AND OF THE SON**' 'Far above all principality and power, and might and every name that is named.' Ephesians 1:21. 'Wherefore God has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' - Philippians 2:9-11. '—for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'

- Acts 4:12. 'But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.' - John 3:18. 'Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.' - Heb. 1:4. 'But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.'" - Heb. 1:8. ' And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.' - Rev. 19:16.

'AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.' 'Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.' - Mark 3:28-29. 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.' - John 14:26. 'Now the Lord is that Spirit, 2Cor. 4:1.

Personification or Person

Some, attempt to depersonalise the Holy Spirit as the Bible or power. THE Bible, however, teaches that the Word of God is the Spirit's sword, Eph. 6:17; and clearly distinguishes between 'power' and 'Spirit', Luke 1:32, Acts 10:38. How could the impersonal be grieved? - Eph. 4:30. I find it incredible that John Thomas refers to the Spirit in Gen. 1:2 as 'Yahweh' himself, and elsewhere as impersonal force or electricity, "Phanerosis", pp. 60-61. Personificationists should hit the brakes before they end up with a God who's merely the personification of power. The Holy Spirit is God - John 4:24; Acts 5:3-4, 9; 2Cor. 3:17, Mat. 28:19.

The Son of God

Dr. Thomas writes 'The Supreme Power has not only a son, but a multitude of sons, and all of them partaking of His nature, or spirit-substance, hypostasis.' - Phanerosis, p. 57.

I think the essential weakness of Christadelphian theology is evident at this point. To Dr. Thomas, Jesus is but one of a multitude. In the Bible Jesus is the 'Only' Son - The Son of God - unique and eternal - John 1:18; Mark 12:6; Heb. 1; Psalm 2:7; Matt. 3:17, 16:16; John 10:36, 20:31; 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:5; 1 Cor. 8:6. He is not 'a' son of God, but God the Son - Heb. 1:8; John 20:27-31; Phil. 2:6,9-11; 1 John 5:20; Rev. 22:13; Mat. 1:23.

LORD. 'Jesus Christ is Lord.' - Phil. 19-11, 1 Cor. 8:6. He is the **head** over every power and authority, Col. 2: 10.

Manifestation. Jesus is not merely 'a' god manifestation, as suggested by J. Ulmann (First Principles, p.7). Jesus Christ is 'God' uniquely manifest in human flesh, 1 Tim.3:16, John 1:1-14. Careful Bible students will observe that Jesus is His own unique manifestation, 1 John 1:1-2, 3:5.

John 5:30 is often quoted by those opposed to Christ's Deity, 'I can of my own self do nothing.' Rarely, however, do they quote the rest of the verse which speaks of his voluntary submission to the Father's will, see Heb. 10:5-7. Please note that now he will not be subject until he has delivered up the Kingdom to the Father, I Cor. 15:28. Christ is 'all and in all', Col. 3:11.

Can God Die? Trinity antagonists point out God's immortality and ask: 'Could Jesus die if he were God?' The Bible says that the one who died was the Lord of glory.' I Cor. 2:8, cf. Psalm 24. Blood shed to purchase the church was 'God's own blood.' Acts 20:28. What about

Dr Thomas' comment on Rev. 1:18: 'But the Spirit never died', Eureka Vol. 1, p. 188. Jesus said: 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'. John 2:19-21. How did he raise Himself? What does it mean—'Put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit'? 1 Pet. 3:18.

Challenge

I challenge Christadelphian authority. While lip service is paid to the Bible, really two authorities have existed. I quote: If such works as "Elpis Israel" and "Eureka" are neglected an essential foundation for individual research and investigation is lacking', Christadelphian Standards, p. 104. 'Let us also treat with scorn any suggestion to hide or shelve the works of Bro. Thomas and Bro. Roberts', Christadelphian Standards, p. 52.

Worship

Whom should we worship? 'At the name of Jesus every knee should bow—and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father', Phil. 2:9-11. 'And let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. 1:6. 'But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever, Amen.', 2 Pet. 3:18, cf. Rev. 1:6. 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing', Rev. 5:12-14. 'Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things', Rev. 4:11, cf. John 1:14. 'Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever', Heb. 13:2 1. 'But unto the Son he saith, 'Thy throne, O God is forever and ever, Heb. 1:8.

Appeal

Dear reader I beg that you eliminated bias as you read my presentation and that your mind has been open to the plain statements of Holy Scripture. Have you personally received The Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord? 'This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners', 1 Pet. 1:15. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

CHRISTADELPHIAN TEACHING ON THE GODHEAD

J LUKE

(From: Investigator #42, 1995 May)

In setting forth Christadelphian beliefs on God, His Son and the Holy Spirit, it should be made clear that the Bible is the only authority recognised, and appeal will be made exclusively to its pages. The Apostles warned that there would be a departure from the faith and that false teachers would set forth fables in the place of Truth (2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Tim. 4:3,4).

The doctrine of the Trinity, which this article will refute as man-made and a fable, teaches that there are three Gods, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, that these three are one, co-equal and co-eternal, Jesus existing in heaven before he was born or incarnated.

Christadelphians, on the other hand, believe there is one God and Father of all, who made all things by His power. He is eternal, invisible and created the world and man for the express purpose of filling it with His glory (Num. 14:21). Jesus Christ is the Son of God, conceived of the Virgin Mary by God's power overshadowing her (Luke 1:35). In all respects he was subject to his Father's will and died in harmony with this will, so that a means of redemption might be opened up in God's mercy for fallen man.

Jesus Christ did not bodily exist before he was born although he was foreordained by God in the promises made to the fathers of Israel and King David, and the precise details of his life and mission were clearly set forth by the prophets of Israel (e.g. Isaiah 53). The Holy Spirit is God's special power by which He accomplishes His will. By it the prophets were inspired to write the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16), miracles were performed (Acts 10:38; 14:3; etc.)

In reasoning against the doctrine of the Trinity it is to be noted Jesus is never called God the Son, but is called the Son of Man 80 times in the New Testament, and 40 times the Son of God. This, from the start sets the issue forth clearly because it demonstrates the true relationship that did exist between Jesus and God, and still does exist. He, Jesus, was and is subject to His Father and sought and seeks to do His will, as an obedient Son.

Jesus himself said that it was life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He had sent (John 17:3). It is not possible to understand, however, the Trinity, as even its adherents acknowledge it to be a mystery. How can you understand a God who is 1 and yet 3, and 3 and yet 1? How can a person exist before he was born? It is not possible for a son to be as old as his father! How can an immortal being become a mortal dying being? All these propositions show how unreasonable and enigmatical the man-made doctrine of the Trinity is. But in the Apostle Paul's mind there was no such confusion: he could say; "But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him" (1 Cor. 8:5)

In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity is not to be found in the Scripture, and it first appeared late in the second century. The Encyclopaedia Britannica points out that its "propositions are not expressed in New Testament terms and that its terms have been derived from Greek and Roman metaphysics". Also Dr. W. R. Matthews said that the Apostle Paul "knew it (the doctrine of the Trinity) not and would have been unable to understand the meaning of the terms used".

Bible teaching on the unity of the godhead is clear and explicit. Consider the following, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might (Deut. 6:4). No less than 6 times in Isaiah 45 we read the emphatic statement: "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (verses 5, 6, 14, 18, 21, 22). If words and repeated emphasis mean anything, God is not 3 but 1. No wonder the Jews find the doctrine of the Trinity a stumbling block, for it is not found or implied in the whole of the Old Testament.

Who is Jesus Christ? Let the Bible speak—he is "the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1). But he was not mere man, and he was not God, nor was he an angel. He was the Son of Man because begotten of the virgin Mary; of the seed of Abraham and David, and he was the Son of God because God caused Mary to conceive by His Holy Spirit Power.

Read carefully the Scripture which reveals this to us:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee (Mary), and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Notice the clear relationship between God, the Holy Spirit and Jesus in this verse. God is clearly supreme. He used his special power, the Holy Spirit to accomplish His will, namely, that Mary might conceive His Son. Clearly this Son was subject to Him, for God would give him the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32).

He is not the Son of the Holy Spirit, but Mary was caused to conceive by this "power of the Highest" overshadowing her. Here the Holy Spirit is defined (see also Acts 1:8; 10:38). There is not the faintest suggestion of "incarnation"—Jesus divesting himself of divine immortal nature and somehow becoming man!

From this we can see that God, His Son and the Holy Spirit are not co-equal. How could one co-equal use another co-equal to beget a third co-equal?! How could they then still remain equal? And if Jesus was born, then he had a beginning, and if so he is not God (1 Timothy 1:17).

Of Jesus God says, "I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth" (Psalm 89:27). Clearly God is the one who elevates him and is manifestly superior. We shall see if we read the scriptures carefully that whenever the Father and the Son are mentioned together the language used **always expresses the Father's superiority and the son's subordination.**

Take, for example, Jesus' early life. We read that he "Increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man". (Luke 2:52) Now this verse shows his desire to find favour with his Father, which language does not make sense if he was equal with Him. Also if he "Increased in wisdom", he must have divested all of this when he "incarnated"! His whole personality and individuality must have been lost for he grew up and accrued wisdom and understanding. But he was not "incarnated" at all. He was born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, and by careful tending and instruction from the Word of God he revealed understanding of His Father's will and a faultless life (Luke 2:46-47; Isaiah 50:4).

Look at the occasion of the Lord's baptism. He was concerned to be baptised for His Father required it—"thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" he told John the Baptist (Matthew 3:15). Why should he be so concerned to obey if he was God? And why should he have prayed to God if he was God? (Luke 3:21). Also be it noted that it was the Father who approved the Son's life. He did this by bestowing upon him His Holy Spirit power. By this power he was able to do the miracles he did and speak words which no other could speak (John 7:40). Also God pronounced him to be "His beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). This is not the language of equality. Clearly the Father is supreme and the Son is concerned to do His will and please Him. As he later said—"He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). So the Son sought to please the Father, and as a consequence the Father was "well-pleased with him". This is the language of humble compliance with the Father's will, in the case of the Son, and approval and pleasure because of obedience, in the case of the Father. The tragedy is that the doctrine of the Trinity has brought confusion where no confusion is.

Looking at the Old Testament prophecies the same relationship is expressed in the language God used to reveal the work of salvation He would bring about through the work of His Son. Jesus did "pre-exist" in one sense—he was indeed the focal point of the promises of salvation revealed in the Scripture from the beginning; he was the "Seed of the Woman" who would bruise the head of the seed of the serpent (Genesis 3:15); he is the subject of the Messianic Psalms and prophecies. In all of these there is no confusion between the "servant" and his "Lord".

Look at Isaiah 42:1, where God calls upon men,

"Behold, my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighted. I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles... I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42:1-6).

Now carefully read this verse. Note all the inter-relationships between the servant and his Lord, and you will clearly see the Son is subject to the Father, he does His will and as a result God delivers him from death, and a way is opened up whereby Gentiles can have access to light and salvation.

Consider also the well-known and remarkable prophecy of Christ's death, Isaiah 53. In verse 10 we are told that "it pleased ("was the will of" RSV) the Lord to bruise him, He (God) hath put him to grief: when thou (God) shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper his hand".

His death was an appointment of his Father, and Jesus obeyed his Father's will and laid down his life, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done", (Luke 22:42). So his own will was dismissed and his Father's complied with because his Father was greater (John 4:28).

It is the Father who has given Christ his power, and exalted him. The Father approved him and raised him from the dead (Acts 2:22, 24). God, in Isaiah 53:11, consistent with this teaching, says,

"by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great..."

Jesus Christ was God's servant, one who puts himself at the disposal of another and did His will. By his understanding of his Father's will he was able to render spotless obedience and destroy the power of sin. By this a basis was laid for the Father to justify sinners. So Christ worked out the Father's will and laid a basis whereby man could be reconciled to Him. The language taken in its natural, straight-forward meaning is free of ambiguity and mystery and enables us to "Know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent".

If we so learn of the Father we shall walk on the path that leads to eternal life (John 17:3).

Reply to Mr Luke

(INVESTIGATOR No. #42)

John Hutchinson

(From: Investigator #45, 1995 November)

Mr Luke, why depart from your opening declaration: 'The Bible is the only authority recognised, and appeal will be made exclusively to it's pages?'

You appealed to 'The Encyclopaedia Britannica' and W.R. Matthews. Even more seriously you appealed to your own reasoning, e.g. you ask, 'How can a person exist before he was born?'

Rationalism

It seems that what you can't understand you don't accept. Human reasoning must ALWAYS be humbly submissive to what the Almighty, reveals. See Job 11:7-8, Isaiah 55:9, Matthew 11:25-7, 16:17.

Question

If Jesus didn't exist before his physical birth then how did he create the earth? Refer back to my comment on Heb. 1:10.

Compare Heb. 1:2 'Through whom also He made the worlds'. (aeons). If Christ made the 'aeons' (ages) then he was prior to all beginnings. cf. John 1:1. Hebrews, however, links 'aeons' to the physical universe. Cf Heb 1:2 with 11:3. - declaring Christ creator of all matter.

Stumbling

You say: 'No wonder the Jews find the doctrine of the trinity a stumbling block.' Haven't you read of the stumbling stone? Rom. 9:33.

The Jews stumbled over Christ's claim to Deity. The Old Testament highlights the Deity of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 40:9,3. Cf Mark 1:3. Isaiah 6:5 Cf John 12:41. Isaiah 9:6. Micah 5:2. Psalm 110:1 cf Mark 13:35-37. Psalm 24:7-10. Zechariah 14:4,9. Mal. 3: 1.

The Jews

The Jews perfectly understood Christ's words. When he said, 'I am the good shepherd!', and 'There shall be one flock and ONE shepherd', John 10:14,16 they recognised Yahweh. Psalm 23:1, 100:3. Ezekiel 34.

Note their remark: 'For a good work we stone thee not but for blasphemy, and because you being a man, make yourself God'. John 10:33.

'gods'

Please study John 10—particularly verses 22-39. Observe how Jesus differentiated himself from those merely 'called' gods.

Christ was sanctified and 'sent into the world'. He was 'The Son of God'. He is 'the good shepherd', the 'one shepherd', 'that great Shepherd of the sheep'.

'The Son of God'

The Son of God declares that He is 'The Son of God'. His sonship is unique and eternal. 8:3, John 1:18, Heb. 1.

I reject as deliberate distortion John Thomas' 'The Supreme Power has not only a son, but a multitude of sons'. (Phanerosis p.57).

Jesus is NOT 'a' son of God. He is 'The Son of God'. Acknowledgement of that is essential to salvation. John 3:18, 20:31.

Multiplicity

Mr Luke, since you say God is not three but one, please explain the statement, 'Not God as a trinity but God in multiplicity' (Key to the Understanding of the Scriptures [by HP Mansfield])

p. 111). Have you asked the Jews about your 'God in myriads' theory? — or creators once animals?

'The True God'

John 17:3 Why wasn't verse 5 quoted, where Jesus himself speaks of glory EXPERIENCED 'before the world was'?

'Sent'

'And Jesus Christ whom you have sent'. Scripture speaks of Jesus being 'sent into the world'—implying from another realm. John 10:36, 3:17, 1:9, 1 Tim. 1:15.

Consider his explicit statement, 'I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again I leave the world and go to the Father'. John 16:28,

Vital Issue

According to John 8:23-24 belief in Christ's eternal pre-human existence is ESSENTIAL to salvation.

Mr Luke, instead of imposing human rationalism upon Scripture, why not accept what the Bible states? Instead of relying on John Thomas, Robert Roberts, Ron Abel, etc., commit yourself to God's Holy Word and be made 'wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus'.

Jesus said: 'I am the bread which came down from heaven'. John 6:41, 38, 33, 58, 62, 46, 50, 51.

In John 6, Jesus who is eternal and eternal life giving, is directly contrasted to the temporal and material manna.

Fables

Mr Luke referred to 'man-made fables'. Was ever a greater fable imagined than animals become creators???

'Behold then the consummation! animal beings such as ourselves become Elohim (gods), mighty in strength and framers of new worlds'. Elpis Israel p.187.

Isn't this the serpents lie? Gen. 3:4-5. - In whom there is no truth! John 8:45.

Animals have not become creators nor do humans become Gods! Rev. 21:3. Christadelphian teaching at this point is bedfellow to Mormonism. Both are serpentine. Gen. 3:4-5.

Obedience

Of the perfect obedience of Jesus to the Father, Mr Luke says; 'This is not the language of equality'.

It is, however, the language of 'condescension'. Phil. 2:5-11.

Jesus

Mr Luke, what confusion you present on page 30! Indeed, Jesus was 'the Son of David, the Son of Abraham' (according to the flesh) Rom. 1:4. Then you say: 'But he was not mere man, and he was not God, nor was he an angel'.

What ever, then, was he???

You add, 'He was the Son of Man because he was begotten of the Virgin Mary'. Where does the Bible say that?

Continuing you say, 'And he was the Son of God because God caused Mary to conceive by His Holy Spirit Power'. Luke 1:35 is the only Scripture given.

Luke 1:35

Luke 1:35 clearly distinguishes between 'The Holy Spirit' AND 'the power of the highest' cf. Acts 10:38. Where does it say 'His Holy Spirit Power'?

'That holy thing' - reference to the essential purity of Christ's nature. cf. Acts 2:27, 1 John 3:5.

'Shall be called the Son of God' - refutes John Thomas 'The Supreme Power not only has 'a' son, but a multitude of sons'.

Please note the future application of these words - 'Shall be called the Son of God'.

Psalm 2:7 'I will declare the decree of the Lord: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee'.

'This day' didn't apply to Christ's physical birth - see Luke 2:22, Acts 13:33, Rom. 1:3-4 and especially Heb. 1:5.

Mary

Never did Jesus call Mary 'Mother'. - always 'Mary' or Woman'. cf John 2:4, Matthew 12:48.

Through Mary the eternal Word (who was Jesus Christ - Rev. 19:13) became flesh. 'God was manifest in the flesh'. I Tim. 3:16 (Textus Receptus), John 1:1,14.

Jesus was declared the Son of God not by virtue of his birth to Mary, but by virtue of His eternal and unique relationship to the Father. John 1:18.

Holy Spirit

Mr Luke says, 'He is not the Son of the Holy Spirit'.

The Bible says that Christ is 'The Son of God'. The Holy Spirit is God - John 4:24, Acts 5:3-4, 9, 2 Cor. 3:17, Matt. 28:19.

The Son of God is God. Heb. 1:8, John 20:28, Rev. 22:13, 1 John 5:20.

Subordination

Mr Luke comments: 'We shall see if we read the scriptures carefully that whenever the Father and the Son are mentioned together the language used always expresses the Father's superiority and the son's subordination'.

Has Mr Luke read Phil. 2:9-11, Eph. 1:17-22, Heb. 1:8-10, Rev. 1:4-6, Heb. 3:14???

Subordination, in itself, doesn't necessarily imply inequality. A son may be subordinate to his father even though superior in strength and knowledge!

Luke 2:52

Again this Scripture speaks of voluntary submission. The Bible refers to 'Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God'. I Cor. 1:24.

How the power of God and the wisdom of God was manifest in humility and weakness is not for us to know. He who created the universe, Heb. 1:4, 10, was cradled in a manger as a babe.

This is the wonder of the incarnation. I Tim. 3:16, I John 1:1-2.

In passing let us note that Christ's wisdom on earth surpassed that of all others. Luke 2:46-47, John 2:24-25, 3:11-13, 4:39, Matt. 11:25-27, 24:36.

Cerinthian

Let's return to Mr Luke's statement; 'He was not a mere man, and He was not God, nor was he an angel'.

What confusion!

Perhaps this reflects Dr. Thomas' confused thinking about Christ: — until birth to Mary there was nothing - only an idea with God. He was born with a filthy human nature and lived as a mere man until about age 30. Suddenly the all powerful Spirit entered him and he became a 'god-manifestation', whatever that is supposed to mean!

Just before his crucifixion the Spirit abandoned him and the god-manifestation ceased—reducing Christ to mere manhood again. Expiring on the cross he is obliterated and then recreated on the third day as a man. He ascended to heaven where he was 'instantaneously changed to consubstantiality to the Father'. (God).

Compare confusion with Scripture: Hebrews 13:8 - note verse 7!

Now

Mr Luke referred to what Jesus was (or wasn't) but he didn't say what he considers Jesus to be now.

Dr. Thomas speaks of animal beings of other spheres becoming Gods and creators. Is Jesus one of these?

The Truth

Let the Bible correct Mr Luke's bewilderment, 'He was not a mere man, and He was not God, nor was he an angel'.

The Bible agrees that Christ was not an angel (Michael or any other) and will never be. Heb. 1.

The Bible, however, is specific. It teaches that Jesus was truly and fully man. John 1:14, Galatians 4:4, Heb. 2.

It also teaches that He was truly and fully God. Is. 40:3, 9. Heb. 1:8, Mark 2:7, John 1:1; 20:28; 1 John 5:20.

The Bible's essential message is that 'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners'. 1 Tim. 1:15. He was 'The Lord of glory'. 1 Cor. 2:8.

The simple and beautiful message of the gospel is that God loved each one of us so much that He gave His only Son to die for our sins so that we could be saved and come to know Him as our personal Saviour and Lord.

'God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us'. Romans 5:8.

True Christianity is a personal relationship between a believer and the risen Christ.

Paul said, 'For me to live is Christ'.

'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved'. Acts 16:31.

CHRISTADELPHIAN TEACHING ABOUT GOD & HIS SON

Jim Luke

(From: Investigator #45, 1995 November)

In the previous article I made very clear exactly what Christadelphians believe about God, His Son and the Holy Spirit. In brief they teach that God is the Creator Who made all things, that He has been from everlasting and He had a purpose with the earth when He created man. God is immortal, dwelling in heaven in light unapproachable to man. He is omnipotent, omniscient and everywhere present by His Spirit which fills heaven and earth.

Jesus Christ is His Son, special and unique, and was conceived by the virgin Mary when God caused His Holy Spirit, (His Special Power) to overshadow her (Luke 1:35). As Mary was of the house of David, Jesus was both Son of God and Son of David as the promise made to King David required (2 Sam 7:12-16; Matt 1:1). Jesus did not exist in person before he was born but was the subject of promise, prophecy and type. The teaching that Jesus pre-existed is therefore false.

The Holy Spirit is not a person but God's Special Power which He gave to the Lord Jesus when he was baptised (Mat 3:16), and which he used to perform miracles etc (Acts 10:38). It was also bestowed upon holy men of old, by which means the inspired scripture was given (2Pet 1.19-21; 2Tim 3:16).

As Jesus came to do the will of the Father and to open up a way whereby God could forgive men whilst His righteousness was maintained, it follows that he bore the relationship of Son and Servant to Him and in no way was he equal to or co-eternal with God, as the doctrine of the Trinity asserts.

I was interested to read the following comment from your correspondent, Richard Rawe, "J Luke is specific & has some interesting arguments, but you would never know he agreed with

John Thomas' views as presented by Hutchinson. I hope he will clarify this." This I would like to do and to point out to begin with that my views are identical with J Thomas'. It is because of the slanted presentation of J. Thomas' views by Mr Hutchinson that such a difference appears. I will now set the record straight for the benefit of your readers in the hope that this endeavour may help them find the true God and His Son Jesus Christ (John 17:3).

J Hutchinson throws in an aside, "John Thomas...describes Jesus as 'filthy'". This is a less than honest reference as John Thomas was dealing with the type of Joshua (Hebrew for Jesus) in Zechariah 3 who was clothed in filthy garments which were to be changed. The filthy garments refer in figure to Christ's mortality which was to be changed upon his resurrection.

John Thomas is not referring to Jesus' character which was indeed 'holy'. So the point is lost and the lesson is that we must be more careful readers lest we misrepresent what others teach.

Mr Hutchinson should read what God says about Himself before charging John Thomas with error when he says he postulates a 'solitary Deity'. John Thomas meant no more than what God Himself says in Isaiah 45:5, "I am the LORD and there is none else, there is NO GOD BESIDE ME..." and I Tim 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the ONLY WISE GOD, be honour and glory forever and ever".

John Hutchinson in his attempt to portray Christadelphians as polytheists has apparently again misunderstood the writing of John Thomas. Polytheism is 'the belief in and worship of many gods.' But Christadelphians believe there is but one God (Deut 6:4 etc), Who will be manifest in others who show forth His qualities. Jesus revealed these characteristics of His Father perfectly and so John declared, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14); and so Jesus said, "I have manifested thy name unto Men which thou gavest me out of the world" (John 17:6).

Jesus demonstrated God's love and ways before his followers with the objective of them also revealing these qualities in their lives (1 Pet 2:21, 1 Jn. 3:3). He looked to the time when his followers would be one with him and the Father and prayed accordingly, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that THEY MAY BE ONE, EVEN AS WE ARE ONE" (Jn 17:22). The Bible teaches that God is 'taking out of the nations a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). The ultimate destiny of the redeemed is to be made like Christ, immortal and incorruptible (1 Jn 3:2, 1 Cor 15:53-54). Then the saints, redeemed from among men, will be "made equal to the angels, and able to die no more" (Luke 20:36). John Hutchinson's confused picture and far-fetched allusions are misleading and mischievous and do not savour of sincere and unbiased inquiry.

Christadelphians believe that God created the world and man but they believe, too, that He has angels who do His will and that these carried out the commandment to create. Hence we read, "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Ps 103:20). We also read that these 'sons of God' were present at Creation and 'shouted for joy' (Job 38:7). Thus God created by His power through the instrumentality of His angels: "And God (Elohim = mighty ones, re the angels) said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...' (Gen 1:26). God communicated with men via his angels, for of God Himself we read, 'No man hath seen God any time' (Jn 1:16, 1 Tim 6:16). These angels bore His Name, spoke for God, and did His will (cp Exod 23:20-23). Even men who taught on God's behalf bore His Name and were called "Elohim" (Jn 10:34, 35; Ps 82: 1; Exod 21:8, 9 the word "judges" in the Hebrew is "Elohim", or mighty ones).

The reference by John Hutchinson to Mormonism and Hinduism are novel, fanciful, and one can only wonder at his reasons.

To suggest that Dr Thomas teaches that Jesus "is but one of a multitude", and not the unique and only Son of God is a travesty and grossly misrepresents what Christadelphians and Dr Thomas teach. This so-called "weakness in Christadelphian theology" is rather a weakness in John Hutchinson's ability to represent what Christadelphian theology truly is.

But John Hutchinson's theology is defective when he alleges that Jesus is His own unique manifestation. In fact Jesus had no special agenda of his own. He came to manifest the Father in every respect. That is why we read that he revealed the glory of the Father, full of goodness and truth, that he manifested the Father's name, that he said he "sought not his own will, but the will of the Father which had sent him" (Jn 1:14; 17:6; 5:30).

As to "Christadelphian Authority", again we have quotations from Christadelphian works which are taken out of context.

Christadelphians regard highly the writings of Dr John Thomas a man they believe God used to bring to light in these last days the truths taught by Christ and the apostles, but they in no respect hold his works to be inspired or "authoritative". The Bible is the absolute authority being true, inspired and infallible and no one, would have affirmed this more than Dr Thomas himself.

Though our words have been in part confused with correcting misleading impression given by John Hutchinson about what Christadelphians really teach, it is hoped that such an elucidation may be helpful to your readers in ascertaining what the Bible truly does teach about God and His Son, and so lead others to "know God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent", which in turn leads to eternal life (Jn 17:3).

Jim Luke

After two rounds of debate Jim Luke declined to go on to round three. The editor of INVESTIGATOR wrote to Bruce Johns — the Christadelphian who had originally recommended Mr Luke — but failed to get co-operation for round 3.

Reprints of relevant letters appear below.

INVESTIGATOR then published a final article by Mr Hutchinson on the Trinity topic.

CHRISTADELPHIANS GIVE UP

(From: Investigator #47, 1996 March)

Mr B Stett
Port Adelaide
SA 5015

1996 February 1

Bruce Johns
Daw Park
SA 5041

Dear Mr Johns,

The first two rounds of the debate on what the Bible says about the unity/trinity of God were informative.

Therefore I'm disappointed that Mr Luke wishes to avoid Round 3. He says: "I cannot see any value in continuing the debate... "

Page 2 of the Christadelphian magazine The Godhead Explained says regarding the Trinity doctrine:

"those who are in error are not in the way of life eternal, no matter how sincere they may be. This is a very serious statement, and many may not like us stating it so bluntly. In fact many may deprecate debating about God as being undignified."

In Round 1 "Anonymous" argued that "life eternal" is not necessarily at stake if the unity/trinity of God is misunderstood. (Investigator 42 p.19) Since, in contrast, Christadelphians do believe eternal life is at stake there is great "value" in continuing and it would be irresponsible to "deprecate debating".

Mr Hutchinson informed me that attempts to arrange a public debate before an audience failed due to disagreement over the venue. A preliminary written debate would also assure much higher quality of information in the public spoken debate if that were still to take place. This would be of "value" to the audience.

In the Christadelphian advertisement reprinted in INVESTIGATOR #40, we read:

"The claims of these religious organisations are false and the CHRISTADELPHIANS offer to publicly debate the issues."

To make this offer and then back out of Round 3 when Round 3 is freely offered shows lack of commitment – even lack of sincerity.

Therefore Mr Johns I respectfully ask you to find out whether Mr Luke will reconsider and prepare Round 3.

Yours sincerely,

CHRISTADELPHIANS REFUSE ROUND 3!

(From: Investigator #48, 1996 May)

Christadelphians
P.O. Box 16
Daw Park
16-2-96

Dear Mr Stett,

In reply to your letter re the TRINITY Debate. Could I first correct 2 statements by Mr Hutchinson. In discussion with us prior to a public debate he insisted 2 points were not negotiable

- A. The venue must be in one of our Halls – not a neutral venue, nor his own church hall.
- B. The only speaker to represent us was to be Mr Mansfield, the editor of the Herald magazine.

It should be obvious why the negotiations broke down.

Mr Hutchinson wasted his first article by totally attacking the Christadelphians and not pressing on with his proof of the Trinity. A comment from one of your readers about this article is interesting & I quote from a list of comments sent to Mr Luke after this edition in May 95. "He (John Hutchinson) leaves us much in the dark and for us to guess as to true specifics of his own views."

In relation to "Anonymous" Round 1, he has adequate information in relation to the subject in Jim Luke's 2 articles which were very positive & scriptural regarding the subject. We stand by our public advert inviting debate with whom & at any time. However it has to be in a neutral venue open to the public not in a church to which some might not come. Further we reserve the right to choose our speaker. I am sorry to report I cannot change Mr Luke's view.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce Johns

REPLY TO BRUCE JOHNS

J Hutchinson

(From; Investigator #49, 1996 July)

In 1992 I received a challenge from Mr. G. E. Mansfield to debate the 'trinity'—publicly in Adelaide. After promptly notifying Mr. Mansfield of my agreement I didn't hear from him.

The Christadelphians, however, wanted to change the debater, the subject and location. (Documentation available)

Mr. Johns says that I wasted my first article by totally attacking the Christadelphians. Didn't he read the positive evidence to the subject on pages 22-23?

Christadelphians, themselves, have relentlessly attacked churches. What about the advertisement of 27.3.93 (Advertiser) which misrepresented and attacked churches in the public eye?

I recall our town being letterboxed with booklets which featured a triple headed Hindu idol on the front cover with a sub-heading: 'Bible Truth contrasted with Church error.'

To me, this was a poor way of discrediting others. Should Christadelphians look to ancient Babylon they may well find examples of 'God in multiplicity' and 'God Families.'

If Mr. Johns is serious about the 'public advert' then why is Mr Luke dropping out of Round Three?

I have never requested a debate with the Christadelphians. They have issued the challenge and I have responded.

JESUS

or John Thomas?

CHRIST

Reply to Mr Luke

John Hutchinson

(From: Investigator #49, 1996 July)

On 27-3-93 the Christadelphians placed a prominent advertisement in The Advertiser attacking Church doctrine and offering to debate the issues. Mr. Luke is now defaulting at Round Three of the 'Trinity' debate in the *Investigator*.

The problem, as I see it, lies in Jim Luke's statement of Round Two : 'My views are identical with J. Thomas.'

In the opening essay I challenged Christadelphian authority, quoting (in context) from 'Christadelphian Standards', 'If such works as "Elpis Israel" and "Eureka" are neglected an essential foundation for individual research and investigation is lacking.'

J. Thomas.

Thomas practised medicine (not a doctor of theology!) who withdrew from Cambellism to form a group that he named 'Christadelphian'.

Sensational and dogmatic predictions eroded his credibility — most of which failed - and some before his very eyes. He forecast a massive Russian victory in the Crimean war. Russia, however, was soundly defeated by Britain, France and Turkey. The millennium was to commence in 1905 and Queen Victoria, who Thomas said was the Queen of Sheba, would come and lay her crown before Christ.

Slanted.

Mr. Luke accuses of a 'slanted presentation'. My quotes, however, came direct from J. Thomas—and in context!!

Filthy Christ.

Mr Luke should be honest. If J. Thomas defined Christ's mortality as 'filthy' isn't that exactly what I said?

If Jesus Christ is 'The same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb 13:8) how can he be 'filthy' in the flesh and 'holy' in the resurrection?

You say that Jesus was 'holy' in character. Nature and character are inseparable. 'A bad tree cannot bear good fruit.'

Joshua.

Where does the Bible say that Joshua was a 'type' of Christ?

'The brand plucked from fire', clothed in filth, steeped in iniquity and accused by Satan types sinners - not the Saviour.

Joshua was saved, clothed and cleansed by God's grace.

Deity.

Mr Luke quotes Isaiah 45:5. But what about Isaiah 43:10? 'Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be after me.' Where do animals become gods here?

Why did you side-step the citations from Phanerosis, Elpis Israel and Eureka?

Agenda of Jesus.

'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' I Tim 1:15 cf Luke 19:10, John 10:10, Eph 5:25-27.

Manifestation.

Jesus was absolutely unique in His manifestation. 1 John 15, 8, 1Tim 3:16 John 1:14. 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.'

Angelic creation.

Here lies the crux of Christadelphianism—sub creators—Platonism—Gnosticism.

I address Jim Luke' s texts.

Psalms 103:20. Where is creating mentioned? Heb 1:14 identifies angelic role.

Job 38:7. Who quotes out of context here? 'Shouting for joy' isn't creating! Verse 4 reveals the creator! 'I laid the foundations of the earth.'

Gen 1:26. 'Elohim' in Gen 1 refers exclusively to the 'Omnipotent Creator' Matt 19:4, Heb 4:5, 2 Cor 4:6, James 3:9.

Angels are creatures not creators. Until Mr. Luke recognises this he is as far from truth as East from West.

Psalm 8:5 shreds such notions. 'Thou (God) hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels.'

Plato.

Again, I remind that Plato speculated sub-creation ideas. Christadelphian, Alan Eyre, says of John Thomas: 'But the writings of his formative period—show close and accurate familiarity with Plato and other Greek writers.' This is self evident!

Dr. Thomas says:

'It is part of the "strong delusion"—to suppose that the Invisible God left the throne of the universe on a visit to this region of immensity, where, like a mechanic building a house, He worked in creating the earth and all things therein... Such a procedure...would have been unfitting His dignity... He has revealed Himself to us as a Potentate, a King, a Lord, etc.: now they who fill such stations commit to others the service of executing their will and pleasure.' Elpis Israel. p. 185

Scripture says:

'He who built all things is God.' Heb 3:4

'All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' John 1:3

'God that made the world and all things therein.' Acts 17:24

'The Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.' Rom 1:25

'That they may be one.'

The text does not say, 'That they may be 'Gods'. Jesus had earlier said that there would be **one** fold and **one** Shepherd. John 10:16. 1 Cor 12:3, Gal 3:28, Eph 4:4-5, fulfil the prayer of John 17.

'Equal to the angels'.

Angels for J. Thomas, however, are 'ex-animals' of other spheres—now mighty gods!!

'Like Christ'.

Yes, but not Christ!

Jesus and multitude.

Again, my question was ignored: 'What is the multitudinous Christ?'

I refer to Dr. Thomas' comments on Rev 1:7 (Eureka 1) where he speaks of the dew and the clouds and says, 'Every resurrected saint will be a dewdrop, sparkling in the star-like glory of a divine refraction.' Then he goes on to say on page 142, 'The power of Deity in every particle of these clouds is the omnipotence of the apocalypse.'

'-his omnipotence will be in the clouds of the Elohim.' p. 143 He refers to a Son of a man who is a 'collective'—'The eternal Spirit incarnate in the saints.'

In Eureka chapter 1 we are told that the Son of man is a 'multitude' and the glorified saints are 'omnipotent.'

Utter Nonsense!

The clouds are not myriads of omnipotent beings! (God incarnations). When the Son of man comes with clouds, I believe he comes in literal clouds for a cloud overshadowed Jesus in his transfiguration and received him at the ascension where it was said that he would return as he went.

The Son of man in Rev. 1 is an individual who says, 'I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen.'

Christadelphianism carefully conceals polytheism. It has 'gods many and Lords many.'

'But unto us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.' 1 Cor 8:6

'For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.'

Please note, '**The man Christ Jesus**'. John Thomas says that Christ was 'instantaneously changed to consubstantiality with the Father'...hence no longer '**The man Christ Jesus**.'

The Bible says nothing about Christ being 'instantaneously changed to consubstantiality to the Father'. It teaches that Christ who is eternally consubstantial to the Father became man. John 1:2,14.

MORMONISM

I'm lost to know why Jim Luke bucks here. Dr. Thomas' speculation of animals of other spheres becoming Gods and creators and speculating that we will be 'Elohim' and 'Framers of new worlds', strikingly parallels Mormon belief.

Why, in the Christadelphian publication "Mormonism" which purports to refute Mormon errors is there no reference to Mormonism's notorious error and aphorism: '*As man now is, God once was; as God now is man may become*'?

Dilemmas confront both groups. In the case of Christadelphians I inquire: Who made the animals who became 'gods' and made us? How far back does the animal-gods succession go? Did the Almighty make animals at some point?

I ask Mormons : Who made "Father God" if he was once a man?

Compare:

Herbert Armstrong. 'God is neither one person nor a trinity. God is a Family into which we may be born and also become God.' From '18 Restored Truths.'

H.P Mansfield, (Christadelphian) '...not God in a trinity, but God in multiplicity. It teaches that God is extending his being that he might create a family of divine beings.' (Lee-Mansfield debate)

Exposing the lie

'Ye shall be gods,' Gen 3:5. The serpent's lie pervades religion today. According to the Bible man will never be God.

'I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God"'. Rev 21:22.

'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end... He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son.' Rev 21:6-7
I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Rev 22:12.

John Hutchinson

To the reader,

I trust that our debate has clarified some issues. I have contended for the scriptural statements that God is the immediate creator of all things, that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God — eternal and unique. To believe otherwise leaves one unsaved. The issues are vital for salvation and you need to get it right.

May I encourage you to read the Bible carefully for yourself without an imposing bias of other literature. My concern is that you, dear reader, come to know Jesus personally and experience a spiritual new birth and be truly saved.

Jesus said; 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture.' John 10:9

Should you be unsure of salvation or have further enquiry about spiritual issues, then feel free to contact me.

May the Lord bless you.

John Hutchinson

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