

## A NON-TRINITARIAN PROTESTANT SECT CHRISTADELPHIANS

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### Özet

Christadelphians, John Thomas (1805-1871) tarafından 1848'de Amerika Birleşik Devletlerinde kurulan bir protestan mezhebidir. "Christadelphians" kelimesi "İsa'da kardeş olanlar" anlamına gelmektedir. Mezhebin en önemli özelliği Tanrı'nın birliği inancına şiddetli vurguda bulunarak Teslis inancını reddetmesidir. Mezhep mensupları, İsa'nın "Tanrının Oğlu" olduğunu söylemekte, fakat "Oğul Tanrı" olduğu şeklindeki ortodoks Hristiyan inancına karşı çıkmakta ve Kutsal Ruh'un ise tam anlamıyla "Tanrının gücü" olduğuna inanmaktadırlar. Christadelphian öğretisi, öldükten sonra dirilme inancını kabul etmemekte; Şeytan'ın olağanüstü güçlerle donatılmış bir varlık değil, yalnızca kötülüğün simgesi olduğunu söylemektedir. En önemli dini pratikleri vaftiz ve belirli periyotlarla Kutsal Kitab'ın okunmasıdır. Eski ve Yeni Ahid'i yegane otorite kabul eden mezhep, kilise yönetiminde ruhban hiyerarşisine yer vermez, kiliselerin kendi kendilerini yönetmeleri gerektiğini söyler. Christadelphian öğretisiye inananlar, İsa Mesih'in ikinci gelişini ve Tanrı'nın krallığını kurmasını heyecanla beklemektedirler. Amerika, İngiltere, Afrika, Avustralya ve dünyanın diğer birçok yerinde mensupları bulunmaktadır.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are many -big or small- religious sects, denominations, movements or groups in Christianity, especially in Protestantism like in the other world religions because Protestantism doesn't have any clergy and ecclesiastic hierarchy. At the same time, there is no a personal authority over the Protestant Church just as in the Catholic Church or partly Orthodox Church. The sole authority in Protestantism is the Bible, Holy Scripture. All of the Christians who know Christianity and the Bible can understand and interpret the sacred books.

Thus, the Bible has been being read and interpreted, so far, by the participants and the members in different methods and ways for a long period of time from the era of Luther and the other Protestant leaders.

In conclusion, various Protestant sects and religious groups have emerged. One of them is "Bible Believing People" called "Christadelphians". In this short article we will attempt to introduce this small non-trinitarian protestant denomination by explaining it briefly.

### I. DEFINITION

The Christadelphians are a small Protestant denomination and a body of "Bible Believing People" founded by John Thomas (1805-1871), an English physician, in 1848 in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Christadelphians are a worldwide community of Bible students whose fellowship is based on a common understanding of the Holy Scriptures and whose aim is to live by faith in Jesus Christ and by waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ onto the earth.<sup>2</sup> They might best be described as a Conservative Christian movement which differs from conventional denominations in their beliefs concerning the nature of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and Satan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Bowker (Ed.), "Christadelphians", The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions, 1977, P.215, E.Royston Pike, "Christadelphians", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Religions, London 1951, p.93-94; S.G.F. Brandon, "Christadelphians", Dictionary of Comparative Religion, Great Britain 1970, p.195; Rosemary Goring (Ed.), "Christadelphians", Dictionary of Beliefs and Religions, Great Britain 1995, p.98; David Woodard, Our Separated Brethren, London 1968, p.155

<sup>2</sup> *Christadelphians-Our Faith and Belief*, [http://www.meta-religion.com/New\\_religious\\_groups/Articles/christadelphians\\_faith\\_and\\_beliefs.htm](http://www.meta-religion.com/New_religious_groups/Articles/christadelphians_faith_and_beliefs.htm), 04.01.2003; *What Christadelphians Believe*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/>, 04.01.2003

<sup>3</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_delp.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_delp.htm), 04.01.2003

## II. NAME

The name “Christadelphians” comes from two Greek words “Christos” (Christ) and “adelphois” (brothers and sisters) and means “Brethren in Christ”.<sup>4</sup> “Christadelphians” (Brethren in Christ) as a scriptural term is found in New Testament in Colossians.<sup>5</sup> After that John Thomas had separated from the denomination called “The Disciples of Christ” with many of the members following him because of disagreement with this denomination, he drew off his own followers under their original name, “The Royal Association of Believers in New York”.<sup>6</sup>

And then, Thomas initially called his followers the “Brethren in Christ”. Thomas gave them the name “Christadelphians” in 1864, meaning “Brethren in Christ”. So, the name of Christadelphians was generally adopted in about 1864.<sup>7</sup>

After John Thomas death, owing to his name, the followers of Thomas called themselves “Thomasites”.<sup>8</sup> During the Civil War in the United States, until they organized to preserve their inner peace against the war, they were mentioned as Thomasites. Later on, they returned to their original names Christadelphians.<sup>9</sup>

The name “Christadelphians” was Thomas’ substitute for “Christian” which he rejected to use, teaching that the beliefs and religious development which it connoted constituted an apostasy.<sup>10</sup> The members of the sect prefer the name to any other, as they hold that “Christian” nowadays means something very different from what it did in Apostolic times. They claim to be

<sup>4</sup> Fred Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, Birmingham, n.d., p.2; Pike, *Christadelphians*, p.93; <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>5</sup> “To the saints and faithful ‘brethren in Christ’ who are in Colosse”. Colossians 1:2

<sup>6</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.macgregorministries.org/cult\\_groups/christadelphians.html](http://www.macgregorministries.org/cult_groups/christadelphians.html), 04.01.2003

<sup>7</sup> Pike, *Christadelphians*, p.94; *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>8</sup> D.Woodard, *Our Separated Brethren*, p.155; F.L.Cross (Ed.), *Christadelphians*, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, 1989, p.278

<sup>9</sup> R. Goring (Ed.), *Christadelphians*, p.98

<sup>10</sup> F.L. Cross, (Ed.), *Christadelphians*, p.278

Christ's brethren, and not a new sect but a revival of the primitive mode.<sup>11</sup> It has been used to distinguish the community for more than 150 years.<sup>12</sup>

### III. HISTORY

#### A. Founder

The denomination was founded by physician John Thomas, On April 12, 1805. Thomas was born from John Thomas and Jane White in Hoxton Square, London. As the son of a Nonconformist minister in an independent church, John Thomas grew up in a household filled with religion and was raised in a Congregational Church. While the family resided in Chorely, England, Thomas began his studies in medicine with the aid of a local surgeon. His medical studies continued later at St.Thomas Hospital when he moved to London, and began writing articles on the subject of anatomy.<sup>13</sup>

Thomas immigrated to the United States in 1832 with his father, who had associated with the Baptists. He set sail on the Marquis of Wellesley from St.Catherine, Dorchester, on May 1, 1832. He would spend eight weeks at sea, performing the duties of the ship's surgeon. During the trip on the ship he went through several terrible storms that threatened their life. The ship ran aground off the coast of Sable Island. Thomas promised God that if he were spared, he would then devote his life to the study of religion. He made it to America and kept his promise. The ship arrived safely in New York and Thomas settled in Brooklyn and then traveled on to his final destination in Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>14</sup>

Here, he associated himself with the Campbellite group who were founded by Alexander Campbell and then known as the Disciples of Christ. In October 1832 he joined the movement and was rebaptized in the Miami Canal.<sup>15</sup> Campbell the leader of Campbellites claimed at that time that Jesus Christ would return to earth in 1866. Thomas believed Campbell and also

<sup>11</sup> Pike, "Christadelphians", p.94

<sup>12</sup> F.Pearce, Who are the Christadelphians", p.2

<sup>13</sup> Pike, "Christadelphians", p.94; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>14</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; M.George Roberts- William W. Sweet, "Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ)", *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, Ed.V.Ferm, Patterson New Jersey 1959, p.159

<sup>15</sup> Pike, "Christadelphians", p.94; Roberts- Sweet, "Christadelphians", p.159; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

taught that the date of 1866 was significant. When the American Civil War began, Thomas along with others believed that the war was the beginning of the Bible “Battle of the Armageddon”.<sup>16</sup>

Thomas joined the ranks of Campbellite itinerant evangelists, and traveled across the eastern United States spreading the word of God. So, he made several preaching tours in America and in the British Island. He eventually settled down in Philadelphia for a short period as a preacher. It was here, on January 1, 1834 that he married his wife, Ellen Hunt.<sup>17</sup>

In 1834, along with his preaching, Thomas became a writer and the editor for the “Apostolic Advocate”, which first appeared in May, 1834. This is where he really began to spread his teachings. As with many of this time he was interested in prophecy and devoted his efforts to understanding prophecy. Thomas was on a search to discover the true meaning of the doctrines of the Bible.<sup>18</sup>

Differences between Aleksander Campbell and Jon Thomas eventually arose. Thomas believed in rebaptism, and the necessity that candidates demonstrate their knowledge of the Bible before baptism. He also believed that “true believers” would be resurrected at Christ’s Second Advent. John Thomas was “disfellowshipped” in 1837 as a result of his alternative education.<sup>19</sup> He left the “Disciples of Christ” with many of the Campbellite group following him. Thomas initially called his followers the “Brethren of Christ”. Thomas inaugurated his “church” in 1838, although some claim the date of 1844.<sup>20</sup> However, the date of 1844 was generally accepted by many scholars as the foundation year of the sect.

In 1839, Thomas moved to Illinois and in 1842, he became editor of a magazine called “The Investigator”. Thomas later moved again and became a practising physician in Richmond Virginia where he began “the herald of the future age”.<sup>21</sup> In 1843, Thomas was introduced to William Miller, the leader of

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<sup>16</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>17</sup> Pike, “*Christadelphians*”, p.94; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>18</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>19</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003; Roberts-Sweet, “*Christadelphians*”, p.159

<sup>20</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>21</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

the Millerites. Miller predicted the Second Advent of Christ would occur in 1843 or 1844, and at this time the millennial age would commence. Thomas incorporated the doctrines of the Second Advent of Christ and its close arrival into his prominent teachings. In 1846, when Thomas traveled to New York City and began a series of lectures, he based his speeches on thirty doctrinal points which would later become part of his book "Elpis Israel".<sup>22</sup> John Thomas was rebaptized in 1847, and then he returned to England to speak on his new denomination and to establish a community of followers there. While he was in England, he wrote the book called "Elpis Israel" which means "Hope of Israel". It is detailed work of his beliefs discussing creation, sin, death, God's law, immortality and the coming Divine Kingdom etc.<sup>23</sup>

He then returned to America and moved his home base from Richmond to New York. Thomas' followers here became known as "The Royal Association of Believers". This community was the first group of Thomas' followers to become independent of any existent congregation. The term "Ecclesia" was used to describe them, instead of "church". In 1861, the Civil War broke out, and Thomas traveled to the South. During the war, Thomas worked on "Eureka" which means "I found It", three volumes explaining Thomas' interpretation of the New Testament Apocalypse. The second volume predicted that Christ would return sometime between 1864 and 1868. During this time, Robert Roberts emerged as the unofficial leader of the communities of followers in Great Britain.<sup>24</sup> In 1862, Thomas returned to England again, his book "Elpis Israel" birthed congregations that followed his teaching.<sup>25</sup> In 1864, the term "Christadelphians" was born. Thomas gave his participants this name and the name of "Christadelphians" became popular in England.<sup>26</sup> He returned to America again.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>23</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>24</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>25</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>26</sup> Pike, "Christadelphians", p.94; *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *The Christadelphians*, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/chrdelp.htm>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>27</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

On May 5, 1868, Thomas returned again to England where he had greater success attracting followers. Birmingham became the center of the Christadelphians in Great Britain, and the followers in this city were known as the Central Fellowship. Before Thomas' death, he made one final tour of the Christadelphian congregations in the United States. He died on March 5, 1871 in Jersey City, and was buried in Brooklyn, N.Y.<sup>28</sup>

### **B. After Founder**

The survival of the Christadelphians after the death of John Thomas, was successful because of the efforts of Robert Roberts. Roberts was only nine years old when he, for the first time, heard Thomas speak, and was fourteen when he was baptized and joined the Christadelphians in Scotland. Roberts spent his life preaching and spreading the beliefs of Christadelphians. Roberts is best known for starting the practice of "fraternal gatherings," or lecture series, the first of which took place in Birmingham, in 1872. This idea quickly spread to North America, as well. The Christadelphians were not destined to remain intact; however, controversies arose which eventually led divisions among the Christadelphians.<sup>29</sup> Christadelphians are divided into two camps on the question of whether all, or only the faithful, will be resurrected at the last day.<sup>30</sup>

In the 1890's controversy began between R.Roberts and J.J. Andrew on the same issue of "resurrectional responsibility." This split the church into two factions called Amended and Unamended. The majority accepted Robert's position.<sup>31</sup>

The Unamended group believe that only the deceased who are "in Christ" will be raised from the dead and have eternal life; the rest will simply remain dead, as unconscious beings. The Amended group believe that all who are responsible will be raised from the dead at the time of the Final Judgment. Those who are not responsible (that is have had no exposure to the Gospel) will not be raised. The righteous will be judged according to their works,

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<sup>28</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>29</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>30</sup> Bowker (Ed.), "*Christadelphians*", p.215

<sup>31</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

rewarded appropriately, and live forever. The wicked will be annihilated, and cease to exist.<sup>32</sup>

Before the split, the entire denomination agreed that Jesus was of fallen human flesh, not "pure flesh" or "clean flesh" or "free life." However, since then, some of the Amended group have adopted the belief that Jesus was born pure. This concept has altered their views of the sacrifice of Christ and the atonement. Neither group believes in a Hell where the unsaved will be tormented forever. This difference of belief led to a schism in the movement within North America. In the rest of the world, Christadelphians follow the Amended belief system.<sup>33</sup>

### C. Today

Today, Christadelphian communities have been established in many countries all over the world. Presently, England has the largest number of Christadelphians in the world and Birmingham is the center of the Christadelphian movement in Great Britain.<sup>34</sup>

Until 1959, there were 134 Christadelphian societies and 3352 members in 24 states.<sup>35</sup> There are currently about 90 Unamended and 80 Amended congregations in the United States.<sup>36</sup> Christadelphians can be found in over 130 countries around the world today. Worldwide, in 1998, two groups had some 850 congregations located in countries throughout Africa, Australia, New Zealand, North America, South East Asia and Europe.<sup>37</sup> There are about 6.500 members in United States and 50.000 members worldwide.<sup>38</sup>

These statistical informations were derived from various sources, because the Christadelphian publishes no statistics as to its membership.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_delp.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_delp.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>33</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_delp.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_delp.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>34</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>35</sup> Roberts - Sweet, "Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ)", p.159

<sup>36</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_delp.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_delp.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>37</sup> *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003; *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr\\_delp.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_delp.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>38</sup> *Christadelphians*, [www.encyclopedia.com/html/C/Christad.asp](http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/C/Christad.asp), 04.01.2003

<sup>39</sup> Cross, (Ed.), "*Christadelphians*", p.278; *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

## IV. BELIEFS

### A. Fundamental Beliefs

Christadelphians share many core beliefs with most other conservative Christian denominations: Inerrancy (Freedom from error) of the book of the Bible, as they were originally written; the Bible as the source of all religious knowledge; the Virgin birth, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ; Salvation through belief and acceptance of Christ as savior. However, they differ noticeably in their belief in nature of God, Christ, Holy Spirit and Satan.<sup>40</sup>

Fundamental to their faith is the principle that what Christ and his apostles taught in the first century was truth, and it is still the truth today. The Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are their sole authority.<sup>41</sup> This group, premillennial in belief, called for a restoration of primitive Christianity, and held that the Holy Spirit was not a person, but an outreaching of God's power in man.<sup>42</sup> They accept Bible as infallible revelation, reject doctrine of Trinity, and they accept return of Christ to establish theocracy for a thousand year. They teach Baptism by immersion only.<sup>43</sup>

Christadelphians claimed to return to the beliefs and practices of the earliest disciples. Christadelphian doctrines include the acceptance of the Bible as inspired and infallible, and the interpretation of Hebrew prophecy and, the Book of Revelation in terms of current and future events. The doctrine of the Trinity is rejected. The core of the Gospel -and naturally of Christian doctrine- is millennialism, and specifically the belief in the return of Jesus Christ in power and great glory to set up a visible worldwide theocracy beginning at Jerusalem, and assurance of this is held to be necessary to salvation.<sup>44</sup>

Eventually, the fundamental Christadelphian beliefs briefly are:<sup>45</sup>

1. The Bible is God's word and the only message from Him. It is without error, except for copying and translation error.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *The Christadelphians*, <http://www.religioustolerance.org/chrdelp.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>41</sup> Pearce, Fred, *Who are the Christadelphians*, Birmingham, n.d., p.1

<sup>42</sup> Roberts - Sweet, "Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ)", p.159

<sup>43</sup> Brandon, "Christadelphians", p.190

<sup>44</sup> Cross (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.278; R. Goring (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.98; D.Woodard, *Our Separated Brethren*, p.155; J. Bowker, (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.215

<sup>45</sup> *Christadelphians-Bible Believing People*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/>, 04.01.2003; *What Christadelphians Believe*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/>, 04.01.2003

2. There is only one God the Father. The Holy Spirit is God's power.<sup>47</sup>
3. Jesus is the Son of God, but not God the Son, and a human being, through his mother Mary.<sup>48</sup>
4. Man is mortal, having no existence when dead.<sup>49</sup>
5. By living a sinless life, ending with his sacrificial death by crucifixion, Jesus has opened the way of salvation from death.<sup>50</sup>
6. Belief and baptism are essential steps to salvation.<sup>51</sup>
7. God raised Jesus from death. Jesus is currently in Heaven, on God's right hand. He will one day return.<sup>52</sup>
8. When Jesus returns, he will raise his "sleeping followers" from death and grant immortality to the faithful who have tried to live by God's precepts.<sup>53</sup>
9. His followers will help him to rule, bringing justice, righteousness and peace to the whole world-the Kingdom of God.<sup>54</sup>

### **B. Bible**

They accept that the Bible is the inspired word of God given by Him to the benefit of mankind. So, the Bible is God's only revealed message and guide to mankind, given to bring responsive individuals to the obedience of faith. It has no mistakes or errors, and that such errors as have since crept in are due to transcription or translation. The Bible is the only source and authority, and they teach that it should be read prayerfully and with care at every opportunity.<sup>55</sup>

The Bible is not one book, but a collection of 66 books. It begins with the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. More books of history follow. Some beautiful books of poetry and then prophecy conclude the first section of the Bible, known as the

<sup>46</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1;

<sup>47</sup> John 17:3; Luke 1:35; Deuteronomy 6:4

<sup>48</sup> Luke 1:30-31; John 3:18

<sup>49</sup> Psalm 6:5; Isaiah 38:18; Acts 2:29,34

<sup>50</sup> Hebrews 4:15; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 15:20-23; Galatians 3:27-29

<sup>51</sup> Mark 16:16

<sup>52</sup> Acts 1:11, 10:40; Romans 8:34;

<sup>53</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20-22

<sup>54</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:23-26

<sup>55</sup> *The Bible*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/thebible.html>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

“Old Testament”. The New Testament begins with four books, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John which give four different biographies of Jesus Christ. The fifth book of the New Testament is “The Acts of the Apostles”. The next 21 books are letters which were written by the Apostles about Christ’s teaching. The final book of the New Testament is “Revelation”, the only book of prophecy in the New Testament.<sup>56</sup>

### C. Trinity

Christadelphians are non-Trinitarians much like Unitarians. The doctrines of Trinity and of the pre-existence of Christ are both rejected. Christ is not God and neither is the Holy Spirit.<sup>57</sup> They says that in popular Christianity the doctrine of the Trinity arose 300 years after the ascension of Jesus as a result of disputes within the Church. The creeds expressing the Trinity were decisions of Catholic Church Councils in the 4th and 5th centuries.<sup>58</sup>

The idea of the Trinity is not found in the Bible. Far from being part of the same being. God and Christ are quite separate. Christ is a mediator according the following verse, 1 Timothy 2:5.<sup>59</sup> For Christ to mediate between God and men he must be separate from God. 1 Corinthians 8:6<sup>60</sup> also speaks plainly of God and Christ as separate. If God the Father and Christ were part of the one being, why would these words have been written? If they were part of the Trinity, why is there no reference to the Holy Spirit here? The only reasonable answer is that God the Father is a totally separate being from Christ.<sup>61</sup>

There are two passages in the New Testament that are used to prove the Trinity, John 1:18<sup>62</sup> and Luke1:35.<sup>63</sup> In reality, both of these show that the Trinity does no exist. John 1:18 states that “No one has seen God at any ti-

<sup>56</sup> *The Bible*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/thebible.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>57</sup> J.Bowker (Ed.), “*Christadelphians*”, p.215

<sup>58</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.8

<sup>59</sup> “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”.

<sup>60</sup> “Yet for us there is one God, the Father, ...and one LordJesus Christ”.

<sup>61</sup> *The Trinity*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/notrinit.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>62</sup> “No one has seen God at any time. The only begetton Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him”.

<sup>63</sup> “And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God’ ”.

me”, it does not say ““No one has seen God the Father”. Therefore Christ can not be God, or any part of God. Luke 1:35 does not speak of the Trinity. Then, it would seem that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Christ. The more logical interpretation of this passage is that the Holy Spirit is simply the power of God, not the third person of the Trinity.<sup>64</sup>

a. God

According to the Christadelphian teaching there is only one God. The Old Testament says: “Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one God”.<sup>65</sup> God is creator of everything. In Acts Paul says “God who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them”.<sup>66</sup> The full story of the creation is in Genesis 1-2.

The commonest description of the nature of God in the Bible<sup>67</sup> is “everlasting”. God describes Himself in the Bible<sup>68</sup> as a God “full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy ...forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin”.<sup>69</sup> The most explicit description in the New Testament that are from the Apostle Paul<sup>70</sup> is “eternal”.<sup>71</sup>

This one God, the everlasting, eternal and creator of the heavens and earth, is not just an impersonal Power. He is a Personality, with a character of His own. He has a definite moral character, in which mercy, longsuffering (slow to anger), goodness and forgiveness play a great part, but always consistent with His “truth”. This portrait of God expresses His “goodness” and also His “glory” of character. God in His nature and character is quite different from man. So, God is “holy” that means He is “set apart” from mankind.<sup>72</sup>

God is called “Father” in Christadelphian teaching. Because in Old Testament times God Had already revealed Himself as a “Father”. “Israel is my son, my firstborn”<sup>73</sup> was His declaration to Pharaoh in Egypt. In the New Testament the supreme manifestation of God as Father is in the person of His

<sup>64</sup> *The Trinity*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/notrinit.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>65</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4

<sup>66</sup> *The Acts of the Apostles* 14:15

<sup>67</sup> See, Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 10:10;

<sup>68</sup> Exodus 34:6-7

<sup>69</sup> Fred Pearce, *Getting to Know God*, Birmingham, n.d., p.2,4

<sup>70</sup> 1 Timothy 1:17, 6:16

<sup>71</sup> F. Pearce, *Getting to Know God*, p.3

<sup>72</sup> F. Pearce, *Getting to Know God*, p.8

<sup>73</sup> Exodus 4:22

beloved Son. Jesus constantly refers to God as “my Father”<sup>74</sup> and addresses the disciples as “Father in Heaven”.<sup>75</sup>

#### b. Jesus Christ

Christadelphians believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but certainly not God the Son, and a human being, through his mother Mary by power of the Holy Spirit,<sup>76</sup> like as mentioned in the Bible.<sup>77</sup> God is one, there can only be one true God. God is immortal, and cannot die. Jesus died. They reject the doctrine of the Son of God was Co-eternal with the father. Jesus was not exist in any form before he was born of Mary.<sup>78</sup> The idea of the “pre-existent” Jesus as “God the Son” in heaven changes the vital experience of Jesus as the independent, responsible Son of man who was also Son of God, and so takes away the true significance of his life and his death as the atonement for sin, achieved once for all.<sup>79</sup> The Gospel of Luke describes how Jesus was born of the young Israilite woman, Mary of Nazareth, by the power of the Holy Spirit and how he died on the cross. So Jesus was born Son of man through his mother, but he was also the Son of God, because he had no human father and God was literally his Father.<sup>80</sup>

Jesus was “without sin” and became in his death on the cross the ultimate sacrifice for sin. He lived a sinless life even up to his death by crucifixion. Some sources writes that Jesus had a sinful nature and needed salvation, he saved himself in order to save us.<sup>81</sup> Bible teaches that man is mortal and sinful due to the sin of Adam and Eve, and due to the nature who

<sup>74</sup> “All things have been delivered to Me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father”. Matthew 11:27

<sup>75</sup> “ Our Father in Heaven, hallewed be your name”. Matthew 6:9

<sup>76</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.8; *Christadelphians-Our Faith and Belief*, [http://www.meta-religion.com/New\\_religious\\_groups\\_/Articles/christadelphians\\_faith\\_and\\_beliefs.htm](http://www.meta-religion.com/New_religious_groups_/Articles/christadelphians_faith_and_beliefs.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>77</sup> Luke 1:30,31,35; John 3:18

<sup>78</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.7; *Christadelphianism* , <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>79</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.7

<sup>80</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.7; Peter Watkins, *The Cross of Christ*, Birmingham, n.d., p.11

<sup>81</sup> *Christadelphianism* , <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

inherited from them.<sup>82</sup> Man became mortal through the Fall, and will become immortal by belief in Jesus Christ's saving power.<sup>83</sup>

How could the death of Jesus mean "saving from sin"? The answer to this question lies in the life and death and character of Jesus. It is clear from the New Testament that Jesus' nature was exactly like ours. The Letter to the Hebrews<sup>84</sup> tells us that he was, like us, made of "flesh and blood". But that means he must have shared our experience in all its aspects. This is just what the Letter to Hebrews<sup>85</sup> goes on to say: "He himself suffered, being tempted...He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin".<sup>86</sup> At the very time that man was doing his worst for God by murdering His Son, God was doing His best for man by using the death of His Son as a means of bringing wonderful blessings to the human race. Two quotations here remind us what the first of these blessings was: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures".<sup>87</sup> "But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself".<sup>88</sup> The death of Christ was therefore God's way of saving man from sin.<sup>89</sup>

### c. Holy Spirit

According to the Christadelphian belief there is only one God the Father. Christ is not God and neither is the Holy Spirit.<sup>90</sup> The Holy Spirit is God's power, not a separated deity or divine personality, but is rather an unseen power emanating from the Deity, filling all space, and by which God is everywhere present. God is omnipresent by the means of His Spirit flowing out from his personal presence. This spirit power is universal in upholding all things in the natural world. It is medium by which God created all things. Holy Spirit is not a separate or other person, but an outreaching of God's power in man which He uses to accomplish His purpose, or Holy will. It is personal in

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<sup>82</sup> Romans 5:12

<sup>83</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.8; Pike, "Christadelphians", p.94

<sup>84</sup> Letter to the Hebrews 2:14

<sup>85</sup> Letter to the Hebrews 2:18, 4:15

<sup>86</sup> Fred Pearce, *Why Baptism Really Matters*, Birmingham, n.d., p.5

<sup>87</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:3

<sup>88</sup> Hebrews 9:26

<sup>89</sup> P. Watkins, *The Cross of Christ*, p.8

<sup>90</sup> J.Bowker (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.215

that it is of God Himself, it is not personal in the sense of being some other person within the Godhead.<sup>91</sup>

Christadelphians say that the Bible doesn't say the Holy Spirit is separated God as a third person of Trinity. It is the power by which God achieves His ends, both physical and spritual. It is always under the control of Father, and later of the Son, and is never represented as acting independently of them, or as an object of worship.<sup>92</sup> For example, Luke 1:35<sup>93</sup> is accepted as an evidence of Godness of Holy Spirit by trinitarians. On the contrary, there is no belief of deity of Holy Spirit in this passage. Then, it would seem that the Holy Spirit is the Father of Christ. The more logical interpretation of this passage is that the Holy Spirit is simply the power of God, not the third person of the Trinity.<sup>94</sup>

#### **D. Kingdom of God**

As it is mentioned above, the core of Christadelphian doctrine is millenialism, and specifically the belief in the return of Christ to earth in power and glory to set up a Kingdom of God beginnig in Jerusalem and spreading throughout the world.<sup>95</sup> Christ will establish his Divine Kingdom in Palestine, with his capital at Jerusalem, and will reign for a thousand years, during which death will contuine but sin will steadily diminish. It will be looked toward a world-wide theocracy centering at Jerusalem.<sup>96</sup> On the Christ's day, Christadelphians will meet in their "rooms" to eat bread and drink wine and sign the hymns of Zion. At the end of the millenium Christ will hand over his power to God the Father.<sup>97</sup>

The return of Jesus Christ to the earth has always been the unanimous hope of the believers from early times up to now. The purpose of the return of Christ will be to re-establish the authorty of God in the earth. Thus, it will be re-education of the people of the world under the new Kingdom of God with

<sup>91</sup> Roberts-Sweet, "*Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ)*", p.159; *Christadelphianism* , <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>92</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.8

<sup>93</sup> "And the angel answered and said to her: 'The Holy Sprit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called tne Son of God'".

<sup>94</sup> *The Trinity*, <http://www.christadelphian.org.uk/wcb/notrinit.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>95</sup> J.Bowker (Ed.), "*Christadelphians*", p.215

<sup>96</sup> Roberts-Sweet, "*Christadelphians (Brothers of Christ)*", p.159

<sup>97</sup> Pike, "*Christadelphians*", p.94

Christ as Divine King. When God's will is understood, peace and justice will come to the earth at last.<sup>98</sup> When the Divine Kingdom of the earth is established, "all kings will fall down before him and all nations will serve him".<sup>99</sup> So "the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea".<sup>100</sup> Thus, when Christ has returns and establishes his Father's authority, the power of the Lord will control the nations.<sup>101</sup>

### **E. After Life**

According to Christadelphians, the faith of the everlasting life after death in the classical meaning is not existent. They deny that a person exists after death and deny the existence of hell, eternal punishment and never-ending life in heaven. When the man die he cease to exist. The only hope of life is by resurrection at Christ's return.<sup>102</sup> The importance of the Lord's resurrection and then human's revival by Him is emphasised in 1 Corinthians<sup>103</sup> in the Bible.<sup>104</sup>

Christadelphian teaching accepts that the widespread idea that man possesses an "immortal soul" and goes on living after death in heaven is definitely not a Bible teaching. The Church of England Commission which produced in 1945 its report named "Towards the Conversion of England", stated clearly that the idea of the immortal soul "owes its origin to Greek sources, not the Bible". The theory was early absorbed into the teaching of the Church from paganism.<sup>105</sup> The soul can be destroyed. Thus, death is not a door opening to a new life. Man returns to the ground.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>98</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.11

<sup>99</sup> Psalm 72:11

<sup>100</sup> Isaiah 11:9.

<sup>101</sup> More information see, Fred Pearce, *Hope for a Hopeless World*, Birmingham, n.d.

<sup>102</sup> *Christadelphianism* , <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *Christadelphians*, <http://www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/crst.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>103</sup> "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming". 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

<sup>104</sup> P.Watkins, *The Cross of Christ*, p.9

<sup>105</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.7

<sup>106</sup> Fred Pearce, *After Death-What?*, Birmingham, n.d., p.6, 15

## F. Satan

Satan is a Hebrew word signifying “adversary”, “enemy”, or “accuser”. He occurs throughout the Bible. In Zechariah<sup>107</sup> it is seen that Satan stands before the angel of the Lord, and God Himself speaks to Satan, rebuking him. Likewise in Matthew<sup>108</sup> Jesus carried on quite a conversation with the Satan the Devil.

Christadelphians believe that Satan is not a supernatural and quasi-deity being with magical powers but is generally another name for sin or lawlessness, whether manifested individually or politically, destroyed only in Christ.<sup>109</sup> Satan is the principle of evil which resides in people and promotes them to sin and rebel against God.<sup>110</sup>

The Devil and Satan had a long tradition in human superstitions about an Evil Spirit, active against God and tempting mankind to evil. The popular understanding of them did not originate in the Bible but in the pagan centuries before the Christianity. Where the Bible writers, under the inspiration of God, have occasionally used these terms, they refer only the evil tendencies of human nature.<sup>111</sup>

## V. PRACTICES

### A. Baptism

The word “baptism” comes from Greek “baptein” or “baptazein” which means “plunge”, “immerse” or “wash”.<sup>112</sup> The Christian initiation rite of dipping in water may have been taken over from the practice of John the Baptist, Christianized by the added words, in the name of Jesus Christ and was

<sup>107</sup> See Zechariah 3:1-2

<sup>108</sup> See Matthew 4:1-11

<sup>109</sup> Hebrews 2:14-15

<sup>110</sup> *The Christadelphians*, [http://www.macgregorministries.org/cult\\_groups/christadelphians.html](http://www.macgregorministries.org/cult_groups/christadelphians.html), 04.01.2003

<sup>111</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.9

<sup>112</sup> Michel Meslin, “Baptism”, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Ed.M.Eliade, New York 1987, II.59; Mustafa Erdem, “Hristiyanlıktaki Vaftiz Anlayışı Üzerine Bir Araştırma”, Review of the Faculty of Divinity of Ankara University, Ankara 1993, XXXIV.131

accompanied by the reception of the Holy Spirit.<sup>113</sup> The baptismal rite is similar to many other ablution rituals found in Islam and a number of religions.<sup>114</sup>

In Christadelphian teaching, baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, after knowledge of God's plan, is essential to salvation. Baptism is necessary for salvation. Christadelphians deny salvation by grace only through faith. A believer receives forgiveness of sins by being baptized. A Christadelphian gains salvation by accepting the Bible and being baptized by total immersion and obeying the commandments of Christ.<sup>115</sup>

The Bible shows that baptism is essential.<sup>116</sup> Jesus said to Nicodemus, the Jewish leader, who came to Him by night: "Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God". When Nicodemus took these words literally, Jesus further explained: "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God".<sup>117</sup> Jesus commanded the baptism to his disciples as he was about to leave them on his ascension to heaven.<sup>118</sup> Then, the apostles interpreted and practiced these instructions in their life and missions.<sup>119</sup> In that case, a man or woman must be baptized to be saved and entering the Divine Kingdom.<sup>120</sup>

So baptism, as it is presented in the Bible, is the most important and significant event. In this way the believer recognises that he needs saving from death and signifies his desire to live in Christ.<sup>121</sup> The baptism of a believer unites him with the son of God as if he died with him, was crucified with him,

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<sup>113</sup> John R.Hinnels (Ed.), "Baptism (In Early Christianity)", *The Penguin Dictionary of Religions*, New York 1984, s.62; M.Erdem, "Hıristiyanlıktaki Vaftiz Anlayışı Üzerine Bir Araştırma", XXXIV.131

<sup>114</sup> M.Meslin, "Baptism", II.59; M.Erdem, "Hıristiyanlıktaki Vaftiz Anlayışı Üzerine Bir Araştırma", XXXIV.131

<sup>115</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003; *The Christadelphians*, <http://www.macgregorministries.org/cultgroups/christadelphians.html>, 04.01.2003

<sup>116</sup> "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned". *Mark* 16:16

<sup>117</sup> *John* 3:3,5

<sup>118</sup> "Go therefor and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you". *Matthew* 28:19-20

<sup>119</sup> See, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 2:36-38,41; 8:12,39; 9:18; 16:14-15,30-33; 19:3-5

<sup>120</sup> F.Pearce, *Why Baptism Really Matters*, p.1-3

<sup>121</sup> F.Pearce, *Why Baptism Really Matters*, p.9

and resurrected with him. Thus, baptism is a new life, like Christ's life after that he resurrected from death.<sup>122</sup>

In Christadelphian teaching, baptism is only full immersion in water.<sup>123</sup> Bible shows this.<sup>124</sup> Christ himself was baptized by being submerged by John the Baptist in the Jordan river.<sup>125</sup> In the same way, the believers in Christ in the apostolic times were baptized by total immersion in water.<sup>126</sup>

Christadelphians says that there are no examples in the New Testament of infants being baptized. In the early Church writings, there are no references to infant baptism before about 150 A.D. Through the centuries since those days, and especially since the Reformation in the 16th century, the practice of infant baptism has been a matter of dispute. The Roman Catholic Church has justified the practice because it was the tradition of the Church "sacramental regeneration". But this teaching cannot be justified from the Scriptures.<sup>127</sup>

### **B. Other Practices**

The most important practice with the exception of baptism among Christadelphians is always to read Bible because they accept that all of the Bible is the wholly inspired Word of God.<sup>128</sup> They therefore read it carefully and regularly. So a widespread custom among them is to read the Bible every day within a reading plan, called the "Bible Companion" which enables them systematically to read the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice each year. Of course, many read much more widely than this.<sup>129</sup>

They may attend one or more evening Bible classes each week. Every Sunday, they attend a service they call the "memorial meeting" or "breaking of bread". This is similar to the "Communion" of some churches. Attendance at this service is the focus of their religious life.<sup>130</sup> At the meeting for the "breaking

<sup>122</sup> P.Watkins, *The Cross of Christ*, p.13

<sup>123</sup> Brandon, "Christadelphians", p.9; Cross (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.278

<sup>124</sup> For example see, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 8:38. "And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him".

<sup>125</sup> Matthew 3:16

<sup>126</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.10

<sup>127</sup> F.Pearce, *Why Baptism Really Matters*, p.9,10

<sup>128</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>129</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.3; *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>130</sup> *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

of bread” on the first day of the week there are hymns, prayers, readings from the Scriptures. The bread and the wine are circulated among all the “brothers and sisters in Christ”.<sup>131</sup>

Like Christ’s early disciples, they also proclaim his messages of life to all willing to hear. And so, they also have Sunday Schools and Youth Groups; a weekend away at a Bible Study camp is always popular with Christadelphian young people. They instruct their children and young people there, and promote the life of faith and prayer, and obedience to Christ’s commands among their members.<sup>132</sup>

Some members travel overseas on missionary work; others care for the elderly in their nursing homes and hostels. They have several monthly magazines to read and write.<sup>133</sup> Since 1864 “The Christadelphian Magazine” has appeared monthly, issued in Birmingham, U.K. It provides informative articles and contains items of news from the ecclesias worldwide.<sup>134</sup>

The Christadelphians are a close-knit community.<sup>135</sup> Thus, members are not permitted to take communion in any other church. Doing so means excommunication. Women are not permitted to preach or pray in their meeting.<sup>136</sup>

Christadelphians don’t participate in war. When the Civil War broke out in USA, they refused to go to the war.<sup>137</sup> They take no part in politics, voting or military service.<sup>138</sup>

They say that, with God's help, they seek to please and obey him every day, striving to imitate Christ who faithfully obeyed his Father. They therefore endeavor to be enthusiastic in work, loyal in marriage, generous in giving, dedicated in preaching and happy in God.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>131</sup> F.Pearce, Who are the Christadelphians, p.1

<sup>132</sup> F.Pearce, *Who are the Christadelphians*, p.2; *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>133</sup> *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>134</sup> F.Pearce, Who are the Christadelphians, p.2

<sup>135</sup> *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

<sup>136</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>137</sup> *Christadelphianism*, <http://www.letusreason.org/Cults19.htm>, 04.01.2003

<sup>138</sup> Bowker (Ed.), “*Christadelphians*”, p.215

<sup>139</sup> *Christadelphians more Information*, [http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians more info.htm](http://www.chooselife.org.au/christadelphians%20more%20info.htm), 04.01.2003

## VI. ORGANIZATION

The Christadelphian church has no ministers or clergy.<sup>140</sup> They are congregational in organization and they don't accept authority of ministers.<sup>141</sup> The community has no salary ordained by ministry, no robes or elaborate ceremonies, nor has it any "head of the church" or legislative council.<sup>142</sup>

Local congregations are known as "ecclesias", the New Testament word for churches, each of which elects its own officers.<sup>143</sup> Their ecclesias organizes their own affairs. Like the "elders" of New Testament times, members are appointed to manage the affairs of ecclesia, presiding at its meetings.<sup>144</sup> Each ecclesia is self-governing. Organization is reduced to a minimum, to rooms.<sup>145</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As it is seen in this short and brief article, Christadelphians are a small and special denomination in Protestant Christianity. They claim that they depend on early Christianity which was lived in apostolic times. They only accept Old and New Testament as a source and authority. Therefore they call themselves "Bible Believing People" but they prefer the name of "Christadelphians" (Brethren in Christ) and are known throughout the world by this name.

On the one hand, they reject the faith of Trinity. On the other hand they emphasize Kingdom of God and wait the second coming of Christ to the earth.

Christadelphians are similar to Judeo-Christians who lived in early times of Christianity and to the Unitarians who live in our time.

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<sup>141</sup> R. Goring (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.98; D.Woodard, Our Separated Brethren, p.156

<sup>142</sup> F.Pearce, Who are the Christadelphians, p.1

<sup>143</sup> Bowker (Ed.), "Christadelphians", p.215

<sup>144</sup> F.Pearce, Who are the Christadelphians, p.1

<sup>145</sup> Pike, "Christadelphians", p. 94

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