

APPENDIX - C

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Charles A. Coates brings out very beautifully the rich evangelical and spiritual symbolism underlying the imagery of the *physical works* of the first four days of Genesis 1, as follows:

“Christ has brought in what I may call the conditions of life, and I think we get them in figure in Genesis 1, so that He might prepare the way to bring life into the world. It is very interesting to see that there are four conditions of life in Genesis 1. For instance in verse 3, ‘God said, Let there be light. And there was light’. Thus, Light is the first condition of life.

If light could be excluded from the earth for a very short time all animal life would come to an end, for light is the first condition of life; and that is the first thing in creation; and that is the first thing Christ brings in.

There is no natural life apart from light, and no spiritual life apart from spiritual light, and Christ brings it in. He brings in the knowledge of God in grace, and that is the first thing I need as a poor dark sinner. What is the good of talking to me about man's intellect? I want the light of God; and where is it? I find it in Christ.

We read in John 1:4, ‘In him was life, and the life was the light of men’. And in John 8:12 He says, ‘I am the light of the world’. And now He is risen and glorified at God's right hand, the apostle Paul can say, ‘Because it is the God who spoke that out of darkness light should shine who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ’ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Beloved friends, light has come in and has come into every Christian's heart. It is the first condition of life. There is no spiritual life if no light. How do you know God? You know him in Christ. Christ is the image of the invisible God. You look at Christ and you see in Him the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in a Man; God revealed in a man and that man His beloved Son. Thank God for it. We are not in ignorance of God; He has made Himself known in His beloved Son. ‘No one has seen God at any time;

the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him' (John 1:18). That is light.

Now look at verse 6 of Genesis 1 'And God said, Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it be a division between waters and waters'. It is really the atmosphere.

God thus created the atmosphere -- first light and then the atmosphere. I suppose every child can see that if there was not an atmosphere there could be no life. We require an atmosphere to breathe.

Now Christ has brought in a new atmosphere for us to live in, and if I may so describe it, I should say the atmosphere of a Christian's life is made up of peace and love. When Christ came into this world these two things, peace and love, came in His blessed Person. Divine peace and divine love came in for the first time. He brought the atmosphere of it. How wonderful that is!

And He then introduced His disciples into that atmosphere of heaven. I have no doubt one thing the disciples knew while with Him was what it was to breathe the atmosphere of heaven. When the Lord asked them, 'Will ye also go away?' Peter answers, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast words of life eternal' (John 6:67, 68). He knew then what it was to breathe the atmosphere of heaven around that blessed Person. But then to have it fully we must go on to resurrection; the ground of peace was not laid until Christ died; but then every disturbing element was removed, every foe defeated, and the blessed Victor comes into the midst of His disciples with that sacred brow decked with the laurels of triumph and says, 'Peace be to you' (John 20:19). It was a new atmosphere, an atmosphere of peace.

What a wonderful thing, thus to be brought into peace! And by whom? By Christ. Who could bring a poor sinner like me into peace but Christ? And He has done it, blessed be His Name! And divine life and love, never known in this world until Christ died (I mean in its fullness), has now come. Scripture says, 'Herein as to us has been manifested the love of God, that God has sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him' (1 John 4:9). Love came out thus, and now the proper atmosphere for your soul and mine is the love of God. That is the atmosphere in which we can live. Christ has brought it to us.

We have not to reach the love by some kind of effort. You may read religious books with this object. There is one entitled The Imitation of Christ written by a man who lived many years ago, where we may read a great deal about the love of God, and which puts people on the line of making effort to reach the love of God. I do not think this of any use; the love of God has been brought to us by Christ and made known to us by His death. And thus it becomes the atmosphere in which my soul can live.

We look now at verse 11: 'And God said, Let the earth cause grass to spring up'... What we get on the third day is the grass, the herb, and the fruit trees, and these were intended to be food for man and beast. That is another condition of life. How long should we live if we had no food? And it is a wonderful thing to see how Christ has brought in divine food for us, spiritual food. And really everything that God has established in Christ is intended to be the food of our souls.

Do you think we could feed our souls on the newspaper? I think some Christians get shriveled up by reading so much of the literature of this world, and thus they lose their taste for divine food. I do not think anyone can enjoy the food of Egypt and the food of Canaan at the same time. If you relish the food of Egypt you will not relish the food of Canaan.

In one word, Christ is the food of His people, and that is the food God gives to us, and He has sent His servants to feed His flock with it. Every bit of divine food is the ministry of Christ in some way or other. He sets before us that blessed Person for nourishment of our hearts in divine intelligence of Him. Is not that a condition of spiritual life? I am sure it is, and if a person does not feed on divine food, he can know nothing about divine life.

One thing more as to the fourth day, verse 16, 'And God made the two great lights, the great light to rule the day, and the small light to rule the night'. That is, if life is to be sustained in nature, everything must be under proper control. Suppose things were not under proper control, suppose the law of gravitation ceased to act for five minutes, what would be the result? The whole universe would go to destruction. The created universe all depends on the law of gravitation, and according to that law, the sun rules the solar system, and everything is held in its place by the sun. The sun rules everything because all the influences that make this world habitable are under the rule of the sun. The seasons, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, are all under the rule of the sun.

Now there is something like that in the spiritual world. Christ is the Sun of the spiritual world. Nothing is right that is not regulated by Christ. It is a wonderful thing to see the place Christ has in it. God has put Christ at His right hand and He is there as the Head of all principalities and powers, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him; and Head over all things to the assembly, which is His body.

He is the great Head and Centre of God's universe, and until our souls come into their proper relation to Christ, we are lawless, because we are not under rule, and if we are not under rule we do not enjoy life. It is one of the conditions of life; there should be rule. We are all thankful in this country for a measure of wise and righteous government. That is why the conditions are so much better than they are in some countries.

Now, what a blessed thing to be under the rule of Christ. You see, Christ has died that He might deliver us from the power of the law that we might be married to Him, and that we might come under His control. That, I suppose, is why the wife is to be subject to her husband; she is under rule in that way, not a legal rule, but a rule of love. In the same way the assembly and the individual believer are under the rule of Christ; hence the first breath of spiritual life is expressed in the words "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22:10). That is a man coming under the rule of Christ.

These then are the things that come out on the first four days of creation: first light, then atmosphere, then food, and then rule; and the next two days are taken up with the introduction of animal and human life. God first made the conditions and then He brought in life. Now Christ is the tree of life because He brings in the conditions of spiritual life. He brings in the light of God, a new atmosphere of love, the food, and then the rule. It is all brought in, in Christ, and Christ is everything"¹.

1: Charles A. Coates, *Miscellaneous Ministry on the Old Testament*, Vol.30, *op.cit*, pp. 9-13.