

THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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of the Holy Scriptures*



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In Search
of the
Perfect
Ecclesia



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IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT ECCLESIA

CONTENTS – 3rd Quarter 2005

- 1 The Politics of the Kingdom of God
- 3 In Search of the Perfect Ecclesia
- 13 Excerpt on the Message to the Seven Ecclesias
- 13 “Legalism vs. Faith” –
A review and warning
- 20 Guilt by Association???
- 25 Preparing to Preach – Lesson 3
- 28 Mr. Wiseman’s Search for the Truth
- 31 An Overview of the World Scene
- 35 Editorial Flyleaf

Back Inside Cover

Fallen Man Driven from the Paradise of God

Back Cover

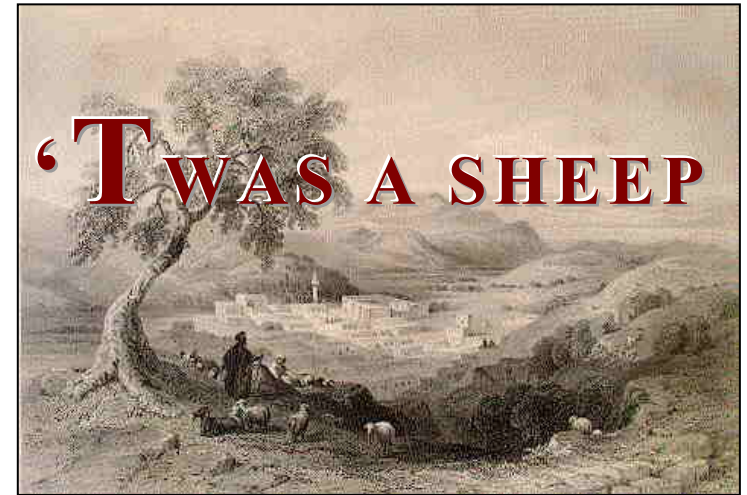
Poem: “Twas a Sheep”

Fallen man driven from the Paradise of God – Part 2

In this second installment regarding the truths depicted by the included picture, we wish to examine the fall of our first parents and the subsequent casting out of the Garden. Adam and Eve were given one simple commandment, to not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. If they disobeyed, their punishment would be death. Although this couple had not experienced death, they must have been taught about this cessation of



the breath of life. We glean this from Gen 3:10, where we read that the couple was “afraid after they heard the voice of the Lord”. What were they afraid of? They had already covered their shameful, naked condition with their man made covering of fig leaves. They must have been afraid of the execution of the death sentence that God would carry out as a result of their disobedience. The Scriptures tells us that the woman was deceived by the Serpent. She succumbed to the weaknesses of the flesh described in I John 2:16 – the lust of the flesh (the tree was good for food – Gen 3:6), the lust of the eyes (the tree was pleasant to the eyes) and the pride of life (the tree would make one wise). She being deceived partook of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, gave to her husband and he also ate the fruit. The Paradise of God was no longer in its original condition. These first humans were no longer in a very good condition. They were now sinners, deserving all that God had declared unto them. We believe that this pair confessed their sins and God, in His mercy, forgave them. We know they confessed, because they were subsequently forgiven. Read I John 1:9 and Proverbs 28:13. God is faithful and has promised forgiveness and cleansing to all who humbly confess and forsake their sins. God provided a better covering for their symbolic naked condition. A lamb was slain, symbolizing the death of the true Lamb of the world. The pair was covered by the skins of the slain lamb, representing the shedding of the blood of the everlasting covenant. Adam and Eve were now in a justified condition from their sin. Why, then, were they driven out of the Paradise of God? Although, now justified from the original sin, they now possessed what Paul calls a carnal mind. Read Romans 8:5-8. The carnal mind is enmity against God and places man in a state of condemnation to death. One possessing the mind of the flesh cannot exist in an environment that God created in a very good state. Adam and Eve must be removed before they took of the fruit of the Tree of Life and live forever with their carnal, sinful mind. This does not mean that they will never have access to the Tree of Life. The Cherubim were to preserve the way to salvation, not to prevent access forever. Here we see the beauty of God’s Word. The way would be preserved “until He comes whose right it is” to re-open the entryway to the Garden of God. The Way would be preserved until the Righteous Judge decides who is worthy to re-enter the glorious Paradise of God. The Cherubim are symbolically still standing at the entry of the spiritual Edenic Garden until that day when “this corruptible shall put on incorruption and this mortal can put on immortality”. Those who will be blessed to wear the garments of eternity must live a successful life of probation and then receive a favorable commendation when they stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ before they enter into the Paradise of God and hear these welcoming words – “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord”. (B.H.)



‘Twas a sheep, not a lamb that went astray
in the Parable that Jesus told,
‘twas a grown-up sheep that wandered away
from the ninety nine in the fold.

And out on the hill-tops in the cold
‘twas a sheep that the good shepherd sought,
and back to the flock and back to the fold
‘twas a sheep that the good shepherd brought.

Now, why should the sheep be so carefully fed
And cared for everyday?
Because there is a danger if they go wrong
they will lead the lambs astray.

For the Lambs will follow the sheep, you know
wherever they wander, wherever they go.
If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
till the lambs are as wrong as they.

So still with the sheep we must earnestly plead
for the sake of the lambs today,
if the lambs are lost what a terrible cost
some sheep will have to pay.

- From the Bible of O.L. Dunaway

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“Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”

Num. 18:5

“Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”

I Peter 2:5

“Thou hast kept My Word and hast not denied My Name”- Rev. 3:8

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THE POLITICS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



The purpose of God in creating the world, and in bringing it to its present political constitution, by checking the full manifestation of the evil that exists, is that He may found a kingdom and empire which shall be literally ‘universal’ (Dan. 2:44; 7:14), and under the government of which all nations may be blessed (Gen. 7:3; Psa. 62:11). The Hebrew nation, established in the Holy Land, will be the kingdom (Ex. 19:5,6; Micah 4:6-8; 5:2; Ez. 37:21-28); and all other nations the empire attached to that kingdom. The Jewish and other nations will constitute *a family of nations*, of which Israel will be the first-born; Abraham, the federal patriarch; and Christ, his seed, THE KING.

This divine family of nations will be so highly civilized that the present state of society will be regarded as dark and barbarous; for then “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Isa. 11:9). The blessedness of this divine civilization is detailed in “the gospel” which is therefore styled “the glad tidings”, or “*gospel of the kingdom of God*” (Matt. 4:23), while the divine civilization itself is “the dispensation of the fullness of times” (Eph. 1:10,21), or “world to come”; styled also “the age to come.” The Bible is full of glorious things pertaining to this, the real “golden age” of the world.

The government of the nations during that period will be such as their necessities demand – just laws and institutions, civil and ecclesiastical; and perfect and righteous men to administer them. To fulfill these requirements, the government of mankind will be committed to Christ, and to those whom He may account worthy of association with Him. The Bible expressly declares that the rulers of the world shall then be immortal kings and priests (Rev. 1:5,6; 2:26,27; 5:9,10; 22:5); so that – strange as it may seem – mortal and immortal men will thus be living contemporaneously upon the earth.

This family of “many nations,” of which God has constituted Abraham the “father” (Gen. 17:5; Rom. 4:13), will continue under one and the same constitution a thousand years, at the expiration of which there will be a change (Rev. 20:6,7; 1st Cor. 15:24-26). Sin – and, by consequence, priesthood and death – will be universally abolished; and the earth will be inhabited by immortals only; for it is written: “The wicked shall not inhabit the earth” (Prov. 10:30). Hence, the final state of things upon our planet will be *a divine monarchy of everlasting continuance*, under which there will be but one nation (Jer. 46:28), and that nation holy, immortal, and comprehensive of all redeemed from among the descendants of the first human pair. When this consummation obtains, the purpose of God in terrestrial creation will be accomplished, even *the peopling the earth with an immortal race, which shall have attained to immortality on the principle of believing what God has promised, and doing what He has commanded*.

In the gospel there is an invitation to all who believe what God has promised, to share with Christ in his kingdom, glory, and joy, which invitation is given *on certain conditions well defined* (1st Thess. 2:12; 1st Cor. 6:9-11; Matt. 25:21). These are – faith in the things covenanted to Abraham and David, and in those taught concerning Jesus, in the Old and New Testaments; immersion into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and thenceforth a life of “holiness to the Lord,” without which no one will be approved and promoted to the honour and glory of the kingdom (Col. 1:21-23).

The establishment of this divine civilization among the nations necessitates the abolition of the present civil, ecclesiastical, and social constitution of the world. The nations and the earth to its utmost bounds are ‘deeded’ to Christ; they are an inheritance and possession made his by a deed registered in the Bible (Ps. 2:8), but for the time being in the hands of regal, imperial, republican, and ecclesiastical usurpers. This patent fact and Bible truth makes a contest between Christ and “the Powers that be” an unavoidable necessity. The divine oracle is: “These shall make war upon the Lamb, and the Lamb (Jesus, ‘the Lamb of God’) shall overcome them:” in other words “*he shall destroy them that destroy the earth*” (Rev. 17:12-14; 19:11-16, 19, 21; 11:15, 18).

This is the doom of the world’s tyrants – destruction, not by popular fury, which is merely an embarrassment, but by the military power of Yahweh’s Servant, even of Jesus, the future Lord of armies, whom He has prepared, and whom He will send into the world again for this very purpose. He will take possession of the kingdoms,

empires, and republics of the nations, “under the whole heaven” (Dan. 7:27), and blend them into one universal empire, which will constitute the secondary dominion, “the first dominion” consisting of the “kingdom restored again to Israel” (Micah 4:8; Acts 1:6).

For one man, even though a Divine man, to take possession of the civil, military, and ecclesiastical power, commerce, and riches of the world, implies *co-operation*. The Bible teaches that this co-operation will be by “the called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 14:4; 17:14), raised from the dead, or, if living at the crisis, “transformed in the twinkling of an eye”. These will be “with him” as his “joint heirs,” and companions-in-arms, commanding the operations of the armies of Israel, whose mission will be, like that of their fathers under Joshua, to subdue “the Powers” combined to prevent their restoration, and the establishing of the new and divine order of things (Jer. 51:19,20; Isa. 41:8-16).

John Thomas (taken from the compilation *Contending For The Faith*).

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT ECCLESIA - EXHORT ONE ANOTHER DAILY

Within the last Sanctuary Keeper magazine, in our search for the Perfect Ecclesia, we discussed the messages to the 7 Ecclesias in very general terms. We discussed the concepts of having ears to hear and that all in the Ecclesia should read and keep the warnings and exhortations made to the different Ecclesias. We also briefly discussed the phrase “I know thy works”. We identified the segments of mankind that were causing problems for the Ecclesias. In the current magazine, we want to look at the details of the condemnations pronounced against the seven Ecclesias and determine how we can apply these warnings to the modern day Ecclesias and the various internal troubles that the brethren of Christ are facing in these last days of Gentile rule.

The Ecclesia at Ephesus – Revelation 2:1-7

THE SPIRIT’S ANALYSIS of this Ecclesia indicates that it was a hard working Ecclesia who was conscious of the need to stand up for the truth and combat false doctrine and oppose those who called themselves Apostles but were not. They patiently endured the trials of their sufferings for their stand against that which opposes the one Truth. These brethren were aware of the warnings of the Apostle Paul that grievous wolves would come out from among them who would strive to speak perverse things (Acts 20:29-30). The word that is translated as perverse in verse 30 means to cause to turn away from. Therefore, we see these brethren constantly watching for anything or anyone in their midst that would cause some of the brethren

to fall, stumble or chase after anything opposed to the Truth of the Almighty. They would be constantly defending the old paths, always seeking to fight the good fight of faith with the spiritual armor that we are commanded to wear at all times. They would be constantly challenging those who spoke perverse things, regardless of the suffering that these spiritual battles would bring into their lives. They could not bear the evil in their midst and they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, or those who introduced humanism into their midst. What a wonderful analysis of an Ecclesia that we all should strive for. If only the Ecclesias of today could be given the same declaration. However, this Ecclesia did experience problems. They had left their first love. This condemnation seems contradictory of the wonderful things that were said of this fighting, hard working Ecclesia. As we understand this condemnation, we must do so in the scriptural definitions of “love”. It is not only the emotional, sentimental definition that exists in the mind of most of the world, including some within the Body of Christ. It is not just affection for someone or something. It is love in practical manifestation. These brethren had lost their original enthusiasm for keeping the commandments of Yahweh. In II John 6, we are told the true definition of love – “This is love that we walk after his commandments”. These brethren were performing their wearisome labor out of duty, and not out of the true joy and enthusiasm that would bring the Father and His Son the glory and honor that they deserve. If this Ecclesia did not / could not return to the level of spiritual love that is commanded from all God’s children, their lampstand would be removed. Brethren, let us pay attention to this warning. Do we want our lampstand to be removed? Do we want the Truth taken away from us?

Another lesson to be learned from this Ecclesia is that both love and hate has a place in the lives of the sons and daughters of God. These Ephesian brethren were commanded to return to their first love, to rediscover the love that brought them to the Truth in the first place. They were to do this and still maintain a hatred of the deeds of those who oppose the Truth. We are commanded to hate every evil way. We cannot hate our brother and love God at the same time – I John 4:20. However, we can hate the things that God hates and those things that are an abomination to him. Psalms 97:10 tells us that God hates evil. Psalms 119:104 tells us that God hates every evil way. Would this hatred not be applied to all of the works of the flesh and to all false doctrines that may be introduced into the Truth? We should always pay close attention to those things in God’s Word that are described as an abomination to Yahweh. We can and should hate the deeds and the works of the Nicolaitanes in our midst, but we have to maintain the spiritual love for our brethren. This is a love that will help all to gain a place in the Kingdom of God.

The Ecclesia at Smyrna – Revelation 2:8-11

This Ecclesia was an active, persecuted, poor and maligned Ecclesia. Within this Ecclesia were members who claimed to be Jews but were of the synagogue of Satan. In this symbolical book, we should think of this as Spiritual Jews, those who are Jews inwardly and not the natural Jew. There were brethren who were opposed to those who believed, taught, supported and endorsed the Truth. They wanted to compromise

the Truth instead of standing up and practicing the things that they claimed to stand for. Here we see another facet of the great enemy of the Truth which is humanism. **Compromise**. Do we see any aspects of compromising in our age? Of course, we do. Webster defines compromise as “a settlement of differences by mutual concessions; a combination of two rival systems, principles, etc., in which a part of each is sacrificed to make the combination possible.” Is this not exactly what we see in the documents that have been introduced in the Christadelphian bodies that try to “bridge” the differences between the Amended body of beliefs with the Unamended body of beliefs? The current NASU document is asking both the Amended and Unamended to agree to disagree to a statement of mutual concessions. Do we want our Ecclesia to be a mixed multitude of individuals who hold different beliefs on critical first principles of saving Truth?

The brethren at Smyrna were not rich in worldly things, but were commended for their spiritual richness. They would be part of those individuals described by the apostle James in James 2:5 – poor in this world, but rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom. These brethren suffered tribulation, as all will, who are actively contending for the truth once delivered to the saints. We are told that it is through much tribulation that we will enter into the Kingdom of God. In this age, we do not face the tribulation from the authorities of the land. We are not like the brethren at Smyrna who were cast into prison by the devil or the civil authorities of the day and had to suffer through 10 years of extreme persecution. In the first volume of Eureka, Brother John Thomas shows us that the ten days mentioned in Revelation 2:10 refers to ten actual years of persecution of the brethren of Christ in the reign of the Roman emperor, Trajan, in 98-117 AD. Where then will our tribulations come from? If we look at the lessons from the Spirit’s message to Smyrna, then we can be assured that those who are spiritually rich will be opposed by those who say they are spiritual Jews but are not. The brethren of Christ are told in Revelation 2:10 to fear none of these things that we may suffer. If we can do this, we are promised a crown of life. Is this not worth enduring through the tribulations of that which we may suffer in this current age of humanism that we live?

The Ecclesia at Pergamos – Revelation 2:12-17

This Ecclesia was located where Satan’s seat was. This is the city that was the headquarters of Roman authority and power in Asia Minor. This may have been the reason for the martyrdom of Antipas. It also may have been the reason for the uprising of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitanes within the Ecclesia. This tells us the danger of how easy it is for the world to influence the Ecclesial members and how important it is to always be watchful of the leaven that may be within an Ecclesia. Christ’s harsh message to this Ecclesia indicates the degree and the extent that this Ecclesial leaven had developed. The commendation to this Ecclesia was again one that any Ecclesia would long for. They held fast the name of Christ and had not denied His faith. How many Ecclesias throughout the ages could this be said? How many Ecclesias today could this be said?

To hold fast and truly understand the name of Christ is to hold fast the family name of Yahweh, for we know Christ was the perfect manifestation of the Yahweh name. Brother Thomas in Eureka, volume 1, red book edition, page 236, has this to say about holding fast to the name. “To understand the Yahweh name in prophecy, is to “know the joyful sound” – to believe “the gospel of the Deity which he had promised before by the prophets in the holy scriptures,” concerning His Son the Christ, made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and constituted the Son of Deity in power according to the spirit of holiness (Romans 1:1-4) and to understand the same name historically and doctrinally expounded, as it is in the New Testament, is to understand “the things concerning the Kingdom of the Deity and the name of Jesus Anointed” of the Spirit (Acts 8:12). . . . Hence, to hold fast the Spirit’s name and not to deny His faith, is to be “rooted and grounded in the faith, and not to be moved away from the hope of the gospel”, as in the case of the Pergamians. They were suffering tribulation for the kingdom and glory of the Deity, to which they had been invited by the gospel of the name they had obeyed. They held it fast as their hope. Page 241 – “To perceive the statement “thou holdest fast my name,” it is necessary to understand the doctrine of that name.” End quote.

To not deny His faith also means to believe that “God is and He becomes a rewarder of those who seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6) and let this belief rule in our lives despite all opposition from those without and those within the Ecclesia. The Spirit commended the brethren of the Pergamos Ecclesia for their constancy in the faith of the gospel. What a wonderful pronouncement to the elders of this persecuted Ecclesia.

There is of course a however. Not only did this Ecclesia hold fast to the name and did not deny His faith, they succumbed to another facet of the enemy of the Truth and that is **Toleration**. They tolerated within their midst individuals known as the Balaamites and also the Nicolaitanes. As opposed to the humanistic concept of **Compromise** that we have previously discussed, **Toleration** appears to be a sin of omission, rather than an active sin of commission through **Compromise**. This sin involves an attitude of just sitting back and waiting for the problem to just go away. It involves an attitude of turning your head so you won’t see the problem that needs to be dealt with. There is neither strength nor courage required to display an attitude of **Toleration**. Anybody can manifest this humanistic attitude. The road of **Toleration** is the easy way to travel. If we take this road, we do not have to address problems with our natural family nor with those who may be difficult to get along with in the Ecclesia. Ecclesias may have a set of fellowship policies and believe that this is all that is needed to hold fast to the name and not deny His faith. The lessons learned from this Ecclesia teach us something totally different. The brethren at the Pergamos Ecclesia were told to repent. What were they to repent from? They were holding fast to the name and not denying the faith. They were to repent from the **Toleration** that was openly manifested by the elders and also by the Ecclesial members. Ecclesias should be constantly watching for any leaven that appears in their midst. We know that a little leaven leaveneth the entire lump (I Corinthians

5:6-7). If the elders of the Pergamos Ecclesia purged out the leaven of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitanes, they would not have received this condemnation. Do the Ecclesias of today face this same problem? Do we agree to disagree? Are we fearful of standing up for the Truth, therefore manifesting a Tolerant attitude and allowing the worldly leaven to take root in the Ecclesia? Let us be as the martyr Antipas - The name means against all. Ecclesias must have scripturally defined polices to guide the Ecclesial meetings and consistently apply these guidelines to all situations. They must stand against all that opposes the Truth.

If the NASU movement continues and if there are some Ecclesias that accept this “bridging” document that undermines the Truth, how will the Ecclesias and Fraternal Gatherings handle the situations that will arise when the brothers and sisters of the Ecclesias that accept the NASU statement of faith desire to attend Ecclesial meetings and fraternal gatherings of those who want to stand fast to the Truthful doctrines of God’s Holy Word? Will this intermingling be allowed? Will the Ecclesias who wish to remain faithful be strong and courageous and deny fellowship to those who have sold their birthright just to be part of a larger community? Or, will these faithful Ecclesias succumb to this humanistic attitude of Toleration because they do not want to stand against their former friends and family members? There may come a time when the faithful Ecclesias and the Fraternal Gatherings may have to publicly state their fellowship policy that would address the third community that will definitely be formed if the NASU process continues.

This line of thought raises the idea of “Guilt by Association” that has lately been discussed in the Brotherhood. The scriptural study of the idea of “Guilt by Association” is a study in and of itself. We will leave that detailed study to another article (*see page 20*). However, in the opinion of this writer, this is an invalid phrase. We are not necessarily guilty of any act just by associating with someone that believes and promotes doctrines contrary to the Truth or who walks in immoral ways. We are guilty because we do not stand up for the truth at all times and we allow the false beliefs and teachings of this individual to permeate throughout the Ecclesia and the Brotherhood. We are guilty because we tolerate the false ideas of these brothers or sisters. We are guilty because we choose to sit on the fence and refuse to stand up and say “This is wrong and is not scriptural”. This is what we are guilty of. Just as the brethren at Pergamos, we will be condemned if we practice the attitude of Toleration. The key word here is practice. This condemnation is against those who continually and constantly tolerate the false doctrines and immoral acts that we see in the Brotherhood. This is what we should be constantly aware of within our Ecclesias and within our Fraternal Gatherings. Let us repent and overcome.

The Ecclesia at Thyatira – Revelation 2:18-29

The formation of this Ecclesia is described in Acts 16. This Ecclesia was characterized by two different groups of individuals. The first group was commended for their spiritual love, service to the Truth and to each other, their faith

and their patient endurance of the things they suffered. The other group of individuals was of the class that the Spirit called “That woman Jezebel”. This woman was used by the Spirit to signify a religious community that displayed the same characteristics as the actual woman of olden times. This symbolic woman taught and seduced the true servants of Yahweh to commit fornication with her and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. These characteristics are something that the elders of an Ecclesia should be ever watchful for. These characteristics are surely something that each individual should strive against. What do we understand these condemnations to mean? How are these principles that oppose the Truth manifested within an ecclesial environment? Fornication indicates unfaithfulness to the one in whom we are espoused. James 4:4 tells us that the sinful act of spiritual adultery arises from a friendship with the world. The true believers are represented as a chaste virgin, waiting the return of their bridegroom. Read II Corinthians 11:1-4. These verses in Corinthians teach us that the chaste virgin will not associate with those who bring or teach another Jesus than the one Jesus taught by the Apostles of old. This same message is taught in Galatians 1:6-9. To eat things sacrificed to idols, symbolically speaking is to permit anything to stand between the true believer and God and Christ. We cannot partake of those things that are opposed to the Truth. When we read and contemplate the divine teachings in these verses, we think of the false principles that have troubled the Truth throughout the ages. Throughout history, we have seen that the apostasy has developed from the woman Jezebel. Those principles of spiritual lies and falsehoods that have been the rallying cry of “Christianity”, so called, must bring our Eternal Creator much grief. We should remember that this false body of religion came from the “Jezebel” community that existed within the true body of Christ during the first century. The lesson for the true believer is that we must remain separate from the world and the influences that are so alluring to the true believer. “Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the God.” – II Corinthians 6:17 – II Corinthians 7:1.

Here again, we see an Ecclesia suffering through the humanistic characteristics of Compromise and Toleration. They must have been a strong Ecclesia, as we read of their commendation in verse 19. He who searcheth the reins and the hearts commands those who are part of this Jezebel class that they had plenty of opportunities to repent and they must take advantage of these. The same is true of the problems facing the Ecclesias of today. There have been plenty of brothers from the time of the revival of the Apostolic Truth that have sounded out the rallying cry against those who introduce false teachings into the One Body of Christ. To those who still cling to some form of humanistic thinking, the Spirit has given plenty of time to repent and put behind those ways of the world that are so alluring. There will come a time, very soon, when there will be no more time to repent. When the Judge

of the whole earth descends to this earth and He sends His holy angels to gather together the saints, the time for repentance will be over. We will no longer have a mediator at God's right hand to intercede for our erring ways.

There may be Ecclesias today that harbor in their midst, the Jezebel group that is referenced in this Ecclesia. What should the elders and members of this Ecclesia do? There are only three choices – 1) We can tolerate the Jezebel influence, 2) we can remove the leaven or 3) we can separate from these modern day Jezebels, who seduce the true servants to commit spiritual fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. None of these actions are pleasant, but one will lead to eternal death (verse 22-23) and those who follow the other two paths, if handled in the proper Scriptural manner, will be allowed to rule and reign with Christ in the great and glorious Kingdom, soon to be established (verse 27-28). Which group will we be a part of?

The Ecclesia at Sardis – Revelation 3:1-6

The message to this Ecclesia indicates that the Ecclesia appeared to be prominent among the other Ecclesias and gave an outward appearance of being a vibrant, healthy Ecclesia. Again, there is a however. In the eyes of the Spirit, this Ecclesia was **Dead**. On page 56 of *The Apocalypse Epitomized*, we find these descriptive words of this Ecclesia – “The Ecclesia was high in reputation before men, but not in the sight of God. It is significant, that in this message, the Lord does not specify any prevailing form of error or false doctrine, and it is probable that the Ecclesia was too apathetic to care. The Ecclesia seemed large and lively to others, yet that was a façade that hid a corpse. It was dead spiritually.” End quote. Brethren, does this describe our Ecclesia? The sad thing about this Ecclesia was that they probably did not know that they were on their deathbed. How true this is with all sin. The sinner is the last to recognize the erroneous path that they are following. We are reminded of the lack of recognition of their sins by the elders and priests of the Israelitish nation of old. The reader is encouraged to read the first chapter of Malachi for a severe indictment of this lack of recognition from the elders of God's nation. We should strive to not fall into this state of spiritual blindness. We must open our eyes, and be forever watchful (Revelation 3:2), be always ready to strengthen the things that remain, remember the simplicity of the Truth, be always ready to hold fast the things of the Truth and repent from the unwillingness to recognize the problems that exist within the Ecclesial Body. This condemnation from Christ resulted from the **Apathy** demonstrated from the elders and members of the Ecclesia. This is another humanistic principle that has invaded the Ecclesias of today. We will talk about this characteristic in more detail in our discussions of the Laodicean Ecclesia.

How do we gauge the spiritual health of an Ecclesia? How do we know if our Ecclesia is spiritually dead? There may be several indications. Have we put aside the first principles of the one Truth? Are the Ecclesial classes and exhortations balanced between the first principles of saving Truth and the meatier things of the Word? Are the Ecclesial elders willing and capable to timely discuss the issues that may impact the individual Ecclesia and the Body as a whole? Is the Ecclesia as a

whole willing to stand up for the Truth in time of need? Or does the Ecclesia fall back to the humanistic characteristics that we have discussed within this article? Is there a lot of turmoil and strife within the Ecclesia? Is there a constant rippling under the surface that everyone is experiencing, but no one wants to address? Are there continual clashes of strong personalities within the elders of the Ecclesia? Are there spiritual subjects that are taboo to discuss because of different opinions from various members of the Ecclesia? We should be looking towards the condemnations and commendations to these seven symbolic Ecclesias for guidance in answering these questions. May we all strive to be part of that small group in Sardis that had not defiled their spiritual garments so that we may walk with our Master in the white robes of righteousness.

The Ecclesia at Philadelphia – Revelation 3:7-13

This Ecclesia appears to be the model for the remaining Ecclesias and the one that would epitomize the characteristics of the Perfect Ecclesia that we are seeking for. There was no condemnation, only words of approval and commendation. The words to this Ecclesia are somewhat similar to the message to Smyrna and to Pergamos. Notice that the Spirit addresses specific comments to those of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews but are not. Neither the Smyrna nor the Philadelphian Ecclesias were condemned for allowing these to come into or remain in the midst of the Ecclesial. These Ecclesias had remained strong and steadfast to the words of Truth taught by the Apostles. The Ecclesia is said to have little strength. This cannot refer to their strength and courage in practicing and defending the Truth because of the commendation received from having kept the Truth and never denying the name of Christ. Some writers state that this means that they had little power, or were few in number without much influence in the world around them and maybe also little influence with the Ecclesias around them. If this interpretation is true, there is a lesson to learn that the size of the Ecclesial communities does not necessarily ensure a healthy, vigorous thriving Body. The health of the Ecclesia, whether big or small, is based on the combined actions of the elders and each individual member of the Body of Christ.

Another interesting piece of the message given to this Ecclesia is that they were commended for keeping His word and not denying His name. This is similar to the message to the Ecclesia at Pergamos. Both were strong in the word, but Philadelphia did not succumb to the characteristic of **Toleration** that Pergamos was condemned for. This indicates that separation from that which opposes the Truth can be done. We must hold fast so that no man can take our crown. The Philadelphian brethren kept the word of patience. This word patience comes from the Greek word “hupomone”, which signifies an abiding under and endurance in the face of difficulties. Thus, we learn that the status of this Ecclesia did not come without much tribulation. The keeping of the Truth, both individually and collectively as a community, is a constant warfare against the evil of the world and the false ideas and precepts that may creep into or develop out of the Ecclesial environment. The 6th chapter of Ephesians encourages us to always wear our spiritual armor and be ready

to stand fast in these later days of Gentile rulership. The faithful brethren of this Ecclesia were exhorted that the Lord would assist them in the day of temptation and that a door would always be open to them. The open door seems to indicate that the keeper of the key to the door has the right and power to let some in and keep some out. We believe that this key of the house of David and the open/shut door refers to the Kingdom of God that will soon be established and the Spirit's selection of who will or will not be allowed to be part of this glorious age. Let us pray that we will become a permanent pillar in the spiritual Temple of God and that we may have the eternal name of God permanently inscribed on us. We will experience these things if we follow the works of this beloved Ecclesia of Philadelphia.

The Ecclesia at Laodicea – Revelation 3:14-22

“Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth”. What graphic words that the Spirit pronounces against the elders and members of this Ecclesia that represents the latter day constituents of the body of Christ. There is no commendation for this complacent Ecclesia. There was nothing in the Ecclesia that the Spirit could work with. There was no possibility in restoring this seventh Ecclesia to true spiritual health. The primary characteristics of this Ecclesia were Apathy and Indifference. This Ecclesia was living a hypocritical life. They thought they were rich and had need of nothing, but knew not that they were indeed spiritually wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. This was the real ground of Christ's rebuke. They knew not their spiritual condition. Quoting from Brother Roberts's Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse, page 23, we read – “Nothing could be more valuable to us than this message as indicating the standard of the Lord's tastes, so to speak, with regard to the attitude of His disciples towards Him. He wishes them to be one thing or the other. **He cannot suffer moderation in the appreciation of spiritual things.** (Emphasis mine) ... He hates lukewarmness; he demands a warm affection towards himself as the incorporation of the things of God. ... It is easier to become Laodicean than to rise to the Spirit's glow”. End quote.

Brethren, what lessons are there for the Ecclesias in this age just prior to the return of our Master? Do we see a spirit of Apathy and Indifference in today's Ecclesias? One lesson to be learned is that if there is a spirit of Indifference, those who practice these humanistic characteristics may not realize that they are in this spiritually blind and naked condition. They may not realize that Christ may soon spue these individuals out of His Mouth. What a fearful condition to stand before the Judge of the Whole Earth and have to answer for any lukewarmness that we may practice ourselves or allow within our Ecclesia. Christ tells those represented by this Ecclesia that he is standing at the door and knocking. This implies an urgent rapping in order to arouse those that are manifesting these attitudes of Apathy and Indifference. These individuals were commanded to go out and obtain a true faith, represented by the gold tried in the fire, to purchase the necessary garments that would cover their spiritual nakedness and eye salve to cure their spiritual blindness. In other words, return to the Truth. Put aside the desire to be part of the world around them. Put

aside their self assurance and complacency. If the Laodiceans of all ages would only repent, they would be allowed to sit with Christ in His Throne when He returns to this earth to establish God's everlasting Kingdom.

The spiritual status of this Ecclesia appears to be a culmination of all of the errors and sins of the other Apocalyptic Ecclesias. What would cause an Ecclesia to develop and manifest these humanistic qualities of Apathy and Indifference? The first step is to lose the energy, vigor and enthusiasm of the first love that brought us to the Truth in the first place. This process involves an attitude of Toleration and Compromise, an attitude of refusing to see the path that an Ecclesia and its members are traveling. It involves a failure to stand up for the principles of Truth and a failure to stand apart from those who oppose the Truth. It involves a fear of doing what is right and scriptural in addressing the modern day issues that impact our Ecclesias. There are many things that can cause an Ecclesia to be viewed by Christ in the manner that the Laodicea Ecclesia was viewed. This is truly disheartening. However, there is still hope for repentance. Christ is definitely at the door, knocking very loudly, trying to arouse those who have succumbed to the ways of the world. Let us listen and hear what the Spirit saith to the Ecclesias.

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT ECCLESIA

In conclusion of our study of what the Spirit saith to the Ecclesias and in our search of the Perfect Ecclesia, I would like to quote from page 64 of The Apocalypse Epitomized – “The messages of the Lord reveals that individuals do not have to succumb to their individual environment. The faithful minority is urged to “strengthen the things that remain”, to become a witnessing group in the particular Ecclesia where they may be found, and so to testify to the teaching and practice of the Truth as to provide an example to others to act similarly”. End quote. This was the objective of this article – to encourage, to exhort, to edify to develop the strength and courage necessary to fight the ways of the world, to separate ourselves from the works of humanism that are so prevalent in the world around us and even within the midst of the Christadelphian communities. Some may complain that this article focuses too much on the negative things stated against the Ecclesias and did not completely address the positive aspects of the seven messages. To this charge, the writer pleads guilty. However, it is these things in which the first century Ecclesias were condemned for that we see in the latter day Ecclesias. It is these very things that are tearing our Ecclesias apart. It is these very things that have a huge impact on the modern day believers. Therefore, it is necessary and required that we discuss these issues within the Body of Christ and not push them aside as if they do not exist. We cannot straddle the fence on these matters. We should not worry about being politically correct. These are matters that are essential to the maintenance and furtherance and continuance of the Truth in these latter days. We must overcome.

Excerpt from a “Sunday Morning Address”

In these letters to the churches there was much to condemn; and we may be sure that if letters came to the churches of our day, we should not be exempt from rebukes and corrections. It is not necessary that such letters should be repeated; they are as good for us as they were for those to whom they were directly addressed, and therefore let us look about and find the things to be repented of, repent and press on for the better.

A fact worthy of our attentions is, that the ecclesias addressed are held responsible for the evils among them. The strength of a chain is equal to the weakest link in its composition. While this would be rather too mathematical to apply to an ecclesia, it is evident that perverse members affect the standing and status of the entire body. “I have a few things against thee,” said the Spirit to the church in Pergamos, “because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel.” The fact that the body is held responsible for the inconsistencies of its members illustrate a principle that runs through the entire scriptures, exhibited more particularly in the history of Israel. The lesson for us to learn from this is that we cannot be individually independent; we have obligations to each other that we must not ignore. In ecclesial matters and in all matters affecting the welfare of the Truth my business is yours and yours is mine. We are brought together in mutual compact under the same name – a name whose honor and reputation are made dependent upon our conduct. Here, brethren, we must face the fact that great responsibilities devolve upon us, commensurate with the great privileges and high honor to which the Truth has brought us into relation. Let us then consider one another, the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak, and the weak striving to become strong.

Thomas Williams, *Christadelphian Advocate*, March 1896

“LEGALISM vs. FAITH” A Review & Warning



WITHIN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS a certain expression has become rather common in its usage within the Brotherhood - the term is “Legalism”. Briefly put, the term in the past has been used to label those such as the Pharisees whose behavior was characterized by fierce allegiance to the Law of Moses. They were more consumed with the “letter of the Law” (that which could not provide salvation) rather than the true spirit of the Law that was designed to teach them the way of salvation through Christ. Along with Divine Law they had added countless numbers of human laws and interpretations in which they rigidly followed and expected all others to adhere as well,

adding an unnecessary and burdensome weight to religious practice. This matter of “legalism” continued on with the influence of the “Judaizers” – those baptized believers in the early days of the Ecclesia who refused to let go of certain rituals that were commanded under the Law – demanding that such practices continue. (Such Judaizing influences and practices can still be witnessed in the traditions and ceremonies of Roman Catholicism and other related religions.) Both the Pharisees and Judaizers held the philosophy of salvation through the works of the Law. These are facts of history that are beyond dispute, but what is of grave concern to us is how the label is now being grossly misapplied within our community.

There can be no question that “legalism”, if it is properly defined, is something that we must avoid. Clearly, we cannot gain salvation merely by works, though works and Divine law play a pivotal role in acceptable service to God. Nor can we place man-made rules on equal footing with Scripture. The Unamended community has for many years been charged with “legalism” by some within the Amended community, as well as by others who have claimed to be Unamended who do not agree with the doctrines we hold in relation to our understanding of clear Divine law and legal principles as found in the Atonement. But now, the charge of “legalism” has been taken a step further and is being used more generally and has turned into somewhat of a straw-man argument – a club in the hands of those within Christadelphia with ecumenical tendencies or with false views of Bible teaching to strike at those who are uncompromising in their beliefs and who hold firm and exclusive views when it comes to fellowship practices. Along with the charge of “legalism” one will also be able to observe the accusation accompanied by the label of “Pharisee” or “Judaizer”.

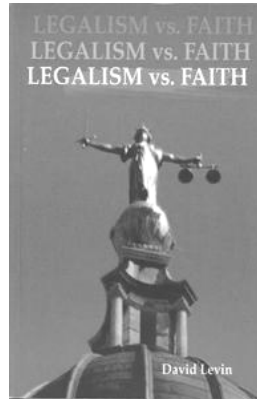
The “legalism” buzzword is not unique to the Christadelphians. If one comes across all the various religious programming on the radio or television it is a subject that is dealt with quite often as the more “cutting edge”, culture sensitive evangelical elements of the world attack the more conservative and traditional components of their denominations. The majority who are comprised of a more relaxed and tolerant mindset continue down the road of ecumenicalism, mainstreaming and humanizing of religious values, and they do not like to be held back by any elements that stand in their way. It is all too apparent that we are facing the same ecumenical influences within our community which are using similar tactics to undermine “traditional” beliefs and standards.

What we wish to call specific attention to in this article is the book “Legalism vs. Faith” by David Levin. It would seem that this has become somewhat of a guidebook in relation to the subjects of Faith, Grace and Law; undermining traditional views and practices within Christadelphia in the promotion of a more liberalizing and ecumenical movement. This book began as a series a few years ago in *The Christadelphian Tidings*. It is a book that has found circulation among the Unamended, especially among our young people – and it is having a devastating effect. Almost every line and phrase of the book is loaded with unsupportable charges and statements, so all we can

hope to do in this consideration is provide some general observations and warnings so that the spreading of such error can be recognized.

The contrast to faith is “not disbelief, but legalism”?

Instead of dealing with error upon its many circular reasonings and false conclusions it sometimes is more beneficial to concentrate on the premise. As a brother use to say, “If you stumble on your premise you will fall flat on your conclusion”. The book is essentially based on the assertion that the enemy of faith is not unbelief but that it is the issue of “legalism”. It props up the matter of “legalism” (defined by the book as the dependence on law and rules) as the ultimate and great rival of faith that is contended against throughout all Scripture. Quoting from under the heading of “Legalism opposite to faith” – “*To put the matter simply, the opposite of faith is not unbelief, nor is the opposite of the Son of God an atheistic sinner*”... “*It is from the base of legalism that the other failings of humanism, licentious, materialism and idolatry – derive.*” (p.3) Quoting from the author’s “Key Points” later in the book (p.81), “*The main contrast to faith is not disbelief, but legalism*”. This would sound logical merely as a theory of man, but it is a premise upon which he builds an elaborate argument that is not supported by Scripture. Great effort is exhibited by the author to use the Jews and their entire history under The Mosaic Law, as well as the writings of the Apostle Paul to support this so called “Scriptural principle”.



The cover of “Legalism vs. Faith”

Appealing to Scripture we see that the opposite of faith is in fact unbelief. Unbelief – the lack or absence of faith – is the weakness that makes allowance for the great evils that the sin-flesh nature can produce. (As we provide the following scriptural proofs it needs to be noted that the author of the book under consideration uses the words “unbelief” and “disbelief” interchangeably.)

- ◆ Matt. 13:58 – Speaking of Jesus’ preaching effort in his “own country”, “*And He did not many works there because of their unbelief.*” Because of “legalism”? No, because of “unbelief”.
- ◆ Matt. 17:20 – Christ himself contrasts unbelief and faith, not “legalism” – “*Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, ‘Remove hence to yonder place...’*”
- ◆ Mark 16:14 – “*Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.*” Christ did not condemn them for “legalism”, but due to the fact that in direct opposition to faith they “believed not”.

- ◆ Rom. 3:3 – Paul speaking of the Jews, “*For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?*” Does Paul contrast faith with the “legalism” of the Jews? No, but with their “unbelief”. Certainly “legalism” (properly defined) was a problem for them but not THE problem that the scriptures show as the opposite to faith.
- ◆ Rom. 4:20 – Speaking of Abraham, “*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*”
- ◆ Rom. 11:20 – Speaking of the reasons why the Jewish branch was “broken off”, “*Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith, Be not highminded, but fear.*” They were not broken off because of “legalism”, it was because of “unbelief”. This principle of “unbelief” is continued in verses 23,30 & 32 of the same chapter.
- ◆ I Timothy 1:13 – Was “legalism” the sin of Paul before his conversion? Let him answer, “*Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*”
- ◆ Hebrews 3:12 – “*Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.*”
- ◆ Hebrews 3:19 – Why couldn’t the Jews enter the land after coming out of Egypt? Was it because of “legalism”? “*So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.*” See also Hebrews 4:6, and verse 11 that reads, “*Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.*”

As we see here, the scriptures bear out the exact opposite of what the author proposes in no uncertain terms. No doubt “legalism” (if properly defined) falls under the umbrella of unbelief, but it does not replace unbelief as the overriding principle of scripture as the author would have us believe in order to promote his agenda.

The book takes the reader on many different tangents and observations that are built upon this false premise - too numerous to effectively deal with in this consideration. To state it plainly, the premise is wrong resulting in a whole series of flawed conclusions.

“Rules, Rituals, and Rewards”

In further defining “legalism”, the author of the book identifies what he calls the “three Rs”: These are “*Rules, Rituals, and Rewards*”, which he presents in a negative light. Though these are three aspects of worship that can be taken too far we have to ask the question – do not the elements of salvation contain these three things? Do we not have “rules” to follow (e.g. the commandments of Christ); do we not have “rituals” that we are to carry out (e.g. the memorial service, baptism); do we not gain “rewards” for serving God acceptably (e.g. The Hope of Eternal Life)? The author states, “*Legalism wants rules so it can follow them and earn a reward. If we are legalists, we want to know the rules, follow them, and exclude those who don’t, so we can appear more righteous.*” (p.4) He comes to a presumptuous conclusion about the seeking after rules. The servant of God in fact seeks to know what God would have him to do.

Self-righteousness (the pride of life) is something we all battle but it does not stand to reason that rules lead to such a problem. Further on he states, “*We naturally want our religion to consist of rules and rituals and rewards instead of the life-transforming experience of true godliness.*” (p.5) First of all, “rules” and “true godliness” are not mutually exclusive principles as the author suggests. Also, in these days when the thinking of the flesh (e.g. humanism) commands the day, we see just the opposite of the latter quotation to be true. The flesh doesn’t want rules, it wants “liberty”. Even Christianity so called has made great strides in breaking down rules and rituals to appeal to the growing free spirit that exists among society today. The flesh does not want rules; it does not want to be told what to do. The scriptures clearly teach, and the human experience bears out that the “lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life” wants free reign to do as it pleases (see Rom 7). Many still desire salvation, but without restrictions. The churches in increasing numbers are doing away with “rituals and rules” in exchange for a casual and unrestricted approach to “worship”. Are we not seeing the same influences permeating the Brotherhood?

Numerous references are made to the word “rules”, strongly emphasizing the concept of rules in a negative context. A lot of time is spent on considering the Pharisees and their obsession with rules by the author in order to support his casting of “rules” in general in a negative light. The problem with the Pharisees, among other things, was not their adherence to “rules” but their propping up of the “traditions of men”, silly and meaningless rules and regulations which had no scriptural basis or value, or rules used as loopholes to avoid commands they found distasteful. They also had lost sight of the meaning and purpose of the Divine Law – putting more emphasis on the physical aspects of the ordinance or command rather than the “spirit” or intended teaching behind them. Such is an easy trap for the flesh to fall into.

Using the teachings of Paul in the epistle to the Colossians (2:20-23) the author of the book strangely claims that the Apostle came to the following conclusions regarding “rules” (p.10):

- ◆ “*Rules don’t work because they only deal with externals.*” ... “*A rule can declare something clean, but a rule can’t make us think clean.*” Though it is somewhat true that “a rule can’t make us think clean”, rules unquestionably teach us the difference between what is right and wrong. They trigger the conscience and prompt us, for one seeking God and His ways, to develop our minds to, in fact, “think clean”. How can we know what is right and wrong if we do not have Divine guidelines to know the difference? And if rules don’t work why do we have the “Sermon on the Mount” and a whole host of scriptural “rules” that help to guide us on the “straight and narrow path”? Why did Christ state that he who even looked upon a woman to lust after her was guilty of adultery – is this not a “rule” to make us “think clean”? Isn’t this a “rule” (along with many others) that deals with much more than just “externals”?
- ◆ “*Rules have an appearance of holiness. It might seem “holy” to abide by a long list of prohibitions. As noted above, however, true holiness can never come from*

following rules. This makes rules dangerous.” ... “*Therefore, rules are worse than useless; they are deceptive and dangerous.*” It is true that people can give the appearance that they are following rules when their motivation may be all wrong, but this is not the fault of “rules” – it is a weakness of the flesh. The comments made by the author are so revealing as to his intent we do not feel that we can add anything more to demonstrate the fallacy of what is being said in this quote. It is hoped that it may be seen as to the destructive path that such reasoning leads if embraced.

We have to comment here that in ecclesial life “rules” have been extremely necessary to uphold “decency and order” as well as to define, based upon scriptural terms, the standards of fellowship. There are matters that do not find an explicit “thus saith the LORD” but based upon scriptural principles rules have been established to clearly represent our relationship to the world. For example - there are no passages of scriptures that state, “Thou shalt not vote”, “Thou shalt not join military service”, “Do not hold political office”, etc. But we know, based upon scriptural principles that these are things that we are to avoid.

Ecclesias, Bible Schools/Gatherings have rules as far as conduct, clothing, etc. and though “man-made” they represent beliefs as to what is acceptable conduct for followers of Christ – Rules that probably but unfortunately had to be developed due to conduct or influences that were being promoted, which were unbecoming to the Body of Christ. The “rules” are not such to offer salvation to those who follow them, but they do reflect badly on the spiritual attitude of those who choose to break them – representing a rebellious spirit. Rules may not provide salvation but they certainly can keep us out of the Kingdom if we ignore them with an attitude of defiance – whether they be perceived as the rules of men (though based upon scriptural principle) and especially in relation to the direct commands of God.

Those who make the charge of “legalism” against their fellow brethren will sometimes do so by trying to undermine what they see as “man-made” rules or statements. In a very real sense they then are the ones who become the “legalists” in trying to find loopholes in standards or positions they do not respect (as did the Pharisees) – wresting scripture, as a lawyer twists the law, to obtain their goal. If certain “rules” are in fact out of line with scriptural teaching then may they be challenged according to scriptural teaching as Christ challenged the “commandments of men” by the use of the Word.

The New Covenant

In the continued attempts at building (rather destroying) his argument in regard as to what the scriptures refer to the “New Covenant”, the author reduces the New Covenant to what he describes as “*imponderables and ambiguities*” (p.87). This sounds very familiar to the cry of “Mystery” that makes up the religions of “apostasy”. He goes on to state that, “*The New Covenant abides in the realm of character, values, and attitudes, intangible to humans, but known perfectly by God.*” Does this not make the hair on the back of our necks stand up? Error wants to confuse, not clarify. Error

likes to propose shades of gray rather than to recognize the very tangible and clearly defined issues of Truth. Error likes to dispose of law, not to abide by it.

The author of the book makes the comment that “*we are not under law but grace*” (p.100). Though we are not under “The Law” of Moses, **we are under law**. Christ being “the end of the law” (Sinaitic Covenant) did not mean the end of law in general under the New Covenant. We (those in covenant) are under “*the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus*”, and as a law of constitutional relationship – disobedience and unfaithfulness to the commands under its jurisdiction will result in rejection and death at the Coming of the Lord. But there is a **balance** involved here in how we are to understand the subject. We are to do what we are commanded but even if we do all that is required of us Christ tells us, “*when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.’*” This should keep our attitude in check and help us realize that though under duty to follow the commands given us we fall short of the glory of God and cannot save ourselves, but that we are dependent upon God for the extension of mercy and grace in obtaining Life Eternal.

A Warning

The book does much to bolster up the “saved by grace” approach to salvation to the point of imbalance while undermining the proper relationship of “rules/law” in God’s dealings with man, along with the vital principles of knowledge, faith and works. The principles of Knowledge, Faith, Works, Law and Grace do not contradict one another but work inseparably together within the Divine framework.

Many more issues that the book raises could be mentioned, but we hope that in this examination it can be seen how the issue of “Legalism” is being misapplied, not only within the pages of the book under review but within our community as well. Take away “rules, “law”, or at least cast them in a questionable light then what are we left with? – Nothing better than what we can find down the street at the local church, or what we find in the moral and intellectual confusion of the world.

There clearly is an attempt to undermine any ability whatsoever to call into question any views or activities that are out of line with long held Christadelphians standards by throwing out the charge of “legalism” at those who are holding fast to such values. This can involve the issue of fellowship, doctrinal and prophetic belief, as well as moral conduct. It is imperative that we recognize the straw-man issue of “Legalism” and how it is being used to undermine the “old paths” of our community. Our defense and offense against this or any other error is firmly stated in the words of Isaiah 8:20 – “*To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*”

A. Thomas

“When the gospel or part of the gospel is represented as so mysterious that it requires the most skilful pen to formulate propositions beyond the comprehension of plain people, it is then and thereby perverted.”

-Christadelphian Advocate, Sept. 1901

GUILT BY ASSOCIATION????

THIS IS A PHRASE that Christadelphians are using more and more in discussions regarding fellowship among the brethren. In this article, we would like to examine this phrase and review various scriptures that may impact the usage and meaning of this phrase. Do we really understand what this term means? Is this a Scriptural term? Are there other phrases that could be used to describe the Biblical doctrines regarding this element of Truth?

How is this phrase being used by modern day Christadelphians? Let us look at a few scenarios.

Scenario #1 – An individual who supports, endorses and/or teaches wrong doctrine and/or practices immoral acts attends a Bible School or visits an Ecclesia away from their Home Ecclesia and unknowingly to the rest of the brothers and sisters at the Bible School or Ecclesia partakes of the Memorial Emblems. Some Christadelphians might say that the faithful brothers and sisters attending this Bible School are “guilty” by unknowingly associating with this individual. Another phrase that is being used is “contamination” by association. We will discuss this again later in the article.

Scenario #2 - An individual who supports, endorses and/or teaches wrong doctrine and/or practices immoral acts attends a Bible School or visits an Ecclesia away from their Home Ecclesia and asks the Bible School Board/Ecclesia Arranging Board to be allowed to participate in the partaking of the Memorial Emblems. The Bible School Board/Ecclesia Arranging Board allows this individual to partake of the Emblems, with complete knowledge of their erroneous beliefs and/or immoral acts.

Scenario #3 – An individual brother or sister voluntarily attends a Bible School or visits an Ecclesia where Amended speakers and teachers are used or there are attendees that do not believe the truths that are held by the Unamended Christadelphians. This brother or sister willingly participates in the fellowship around the Table of the Lord, knowing that there are others around the Table of the Lord that do not believe the same fundamental doctrines.

Which of these scenarios would you classify as “Guilt by association”? Which of these scenarios would you classify as “Contaminated by association”? This writer believes that these two phrases should not be used to describe any of these scenarios. Within this article, we wish to show that the phrases of “Guilt by association” and “Contaminated by association” are non-Scriptural phrases. There is another phrase that we should be using to describe these scenarios. This is “Imputed Condemnation”. Although this phrase is also not found in God’s Holy Writ, the idea is a fundamental truth taught throughout the pages of divinely inspired writings. Studious individuals of the one Truth should never use these erroneous phrases of “Guilt or Contamination by Association”. Webster defines “Imputed” as to charge, attribute, or ascribe, to set to

the account of, to reckon or set down to the account of one what does not belong to him. This is the lesson that we learn from God's Holy Word. We can receive condemnation not only because of the guilt associated with an individual act of sin, but also by tolerating the act of sins of others. This toleration is set to our account just like the actual act of sin is set to the account of the sinner.

The Scriptures teach that we receive no guilt or contamination merely from the fact of being around those who oppose the Truth of the Bible. However, we will receive condemnation by knowingly and willingly adopting a position of continual support, endorsement and/or toleration of those who practice and believe doctrines contrary to the Truth of the Bible. We are to be in the world (we associate with evil every day) but not of it (the brethren of Christ must not tolerate evil or anything that opposes the truth of God). Let us return to our three scenarios.

Scenario #1 – The idea that anyone in the Ecclesia/Bible School would be held guilty for this situation is totally false. In this scenario, the guilt lies with the offending individual who pushes himself/herself on the innocent brethren of the Ecclesia and participates in the Memorial of our Lord. However, if the Bible School Board/Ecclesia Arranging Board knew that this individual was in attendance, they have a responsibility of determining if this individual plans to Break Bread and if so, then to determine if the individual does indeed support, endorse and/or teaches wrong doctrine and/or practices immoral acts. These appointed elders of the Ecclesia cannot be slack regarding this responsibility. If there is not time for this discussion before the Assembly meets around the Table of the Lord, then the Board should request that the individual not partake of the Memorial Emblems until this discussion can occur. Some may say that this is being too harsh and too legalistic to the visiting individual and may offend this individual. Brethren, isn't this the right course to follow rather than to offend some individuals who are long time members of the Ecclesia or long time supporters of the Bible School who do not wish to fellowship those that bring false doctrines to the Table of the Lord?

Scenarios #2 and #3 – These scenarios present situations where brothers and sisters knowingly and willingly participates in the Memorial Service of the sacrifice of the Son of God with those who oppose the Truth of God. These scenarios are examples of the scriptural idea of "Imputed Condemnation". The brothers and sisters that allow and support this mixing of Truth and Untruth around the Table of the Lord are partakers of the evil deeds of those who practice immorality and those who promote false doctrine. Yes, those who are practicing immorality and/or promoting false doctrine are held guilty for their sins and for pushing their false beliefs on others. However, if we believe the historical Christadelphian interpretation of II John 9-11, then we believe that those who allow and tolerate their actions will also receive condemnation imputed to them because of their tolerant attitude. See the examples at the end of this article of earlier expositions regarding the interpretation of II John 9-11. The examples of the first century Ecclesias provide much food for thought regarding

this idea of Imputed Condemnation. (See the article in this issue of the Sanctuary Keeper for more thoughts on these messages to the Seven Ecclesias.)

Are there Scriptural examples of Imputed Condemnation? Of course, there are. Let's look at a few examples of this doctrine of Truth.

Numbers 16, especially verse 26 – This chapter records the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Notice verse 21 and 26. The children of Israel were told to separate themselves from the presence of these three rebellious individuals or they would be consumed in the sins of these three men. They would be condemned by their support, endorsement and toleration of the sins of the wicked ones. Scripture tells us that not all of the sons of Korah were consumed in this destruction from the Lord. Read Numbers 26:11. This indicates that some of this tribe was obedient to the commandment of separation.

Joshua 7, verse 1, 11, and 13 and Joshua 22:20 – We read in these verses of the story of Achan and his trespass in taking the accursed thing from the city of Jericho. The referenced verses indicate that not only was Achan accursed, but the entire nation had sinned and committed a trespass and transgressed God's covenant. How could this be? Is God so unfair that he would condemn innocent individuals who were in covenant relationship with the Almighty God? We know that God is fair and just in all his dealings with His Creation. (Read Deuteronomy 24:16.) Therefore, the entire nation, at least the leaders of the nation, must have known about the sin of Achan. They would have harbored this sinner, therefore bringing God's judgment upon them. They must have supported him in his sin, endorsed his actions and tolerated the sin against God and against the congregation of God. Can we not hear their discussions about this issue? What does one little sin hurt, they may have asked? If they only had understood God's advice that a little leaven leaveneth the whole batch and His commandment to purge out the old leaven.

Romans 1:24-32, especially verse 32 – Verse 32 speaks to those who take pleasure in the depravities of the world. The margin renders the phrase "have pleasure" as "to consent to". Here we see individuals encouraging others who oppose the ways of God, thus becoming confederate with their iniquity and subject to the same condemnation. Brethren must do more than disagree with those who oppose God's Truth; they must take positive action and separate themselves, after proper counsel and discussions with the offenders. If not, we will participate in the condemnation placed upon the opposers of the Truth. We are not indicating that Christadelphia has sunk to the moral wickedness spoken of in this chapter, but the same principle of Imputed Condemnation that was applied to these individuals of the first century is also applicable to any individuals that stand against the Truth and the true believers of any age.

I Corinthians 5:6-7 – Know you not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out therefore the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. What more can be said about our responsibilities in today's Ecclesial life?

II John 9-11 – These verses tell us that if we bid God Speed to those who transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, then we are partakers of their evil deeds and should not invite them into our house. There are different interpretations of these verses. Some may say that these verses only apply to the situation of inviting these sinners into the individual’s house and that these verses are not speaking of the House of God. We must remember that many of the first century Ecclesias held their meetings in the houses of the brethren. Therefore, to invite these sinners into the house of the individual was to also invite them into the house of God. We must not just look at these verses from a social viewpoint. Why would it be wrong to invite those who abide not in the doctrine of Christ to our table, but it would be right to invite them to the Table of the Lord? Should we be more protective of the holiness around our own table than we are of the Holiness around God’s Table? The marginal reference in the Companion Bible tells us that the word transgresseth means “to go before”. The marginal reference continues to say that there were false teachers who claimed to bring some higher teaching beyond the apostle’s doctrine. This indicates that these verses are referencing a spiritual aspect not a social aspect. Let us not take the easy way out and think that these verses are only applicable to our social lives. We have a grave responsibility to maintain the purity and holiness of the doctrines of God. Let us not be slack in this responsibility.

Our article has tried to emphasize that there is a scriptural concept of Imputed Condemnation. This is totally different than the catch phrases of the day in Christadelphian circles – “Guilt by Association” and Contamination by Association”. The Scriptures teach that Christ went among the sinners and publicans of the day. However, he did not endorse or support the acts of sins committed by the sinner. It was His intention to preach the gospel to these wayward sinners. Christ would have fully understood and practiced the commandments of the Law of Moses requiring that individuals who were unclean for various reasons would be cut off from the camp of Israel until their uncleanness was cured. His association with the wayward sinners of his day did not bring guilt upon Him. His purpose in being among these individuals was to preach the gospel and help them understand that the Kingdom of God was among them, in the personage of the future King of the world. He was trying to convince the lost sheep of the House of Israel of the concepts of repentance, forgiveness and that the Law of Christ superceded the Law of Moses. As Christ is our example in all ways, this too, should be the objective of all true brethren of Christ. We must try to convince the wayward brethren of our day of their sinful ways in bringing false doctrine to the Household of Christ and of introducing immoral acts within the brotherhood and of following loose fellowship practices around the Table of the Lord. However, we still must be obedient to the commandments of Christ that require us to purge out the leaven before it leavens the whole body. We still must be obedient to the laws of God that requires the purity of divine doctrines and the Holiness of the Table of the Lord to be maintained at all times and in all situations. Let us be obedient to the Law of Christ that requires us to obey these commandments and all others with the humility, sincerity, and simplicity of our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Earlier Christadelphian Expositions Regarding the Interpretation of II John 9-11
Extracted from Seasons of Comfort – Volume 1 – Robert Roberts – Article entitled “Love and Doctrine”

“As to those who bring not this doctrine, John’s commandment is: “Receive him not into your house, nether bid him God Speed!” This command we can no more evade than any other commandment delivered unto us. The obedience of it may cost us something. It is crucifying to the flesh to refuse friends – some of them excellent people as human nature goes – who in one way or other have been seduced from their allegiance to the doctrine of Christ; but there is no alternative. Friends are but for a moment; the truth is forever; and if we sacrifice our duty to the latter from regard to the former, the latter will sacrifice us in the day of its glory, and hand us over to the destiny of the flesh, which as the grass, will pass away.”

“He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” This applies to all without distinction, and erects a barrier of fellowship with even some who hold the truth; for though they may hold the doctrine of Christ themselves, yet, if they keep up a “God-speed” connection with those who do not, by John’s rule, they make themselves partakers with them, and, therefore, cut themselves off from those who stand for the doctrine of Christ.” End quote.

Extracted from the Christadelphian Advocate – November, 1957 – A Plea for Unity – An Outline of the Scriptural Principles of Fellowship – Alex Kay, Jr.

“The real meaning (of II John 9-11) is that true Christians who tolerate or approve one who holds or teaches doctrinal error are guilty of fellowshiping that error. We recall how that, according to I Corinthians 10:19-21, one cannot fellowship God and idols, or truth and error.... In God’s sight, if we bid the error God Speed we are then in fellowship with the error; and because of this fact, we have ceased to be in fellowship with God, through His Son Jesus Christ.” End quote.

Other historical writings could be produced, but these two show the way that earlier Christadelphians received the commandments of God relating to the concept of “Imputed Condemnation”.

These words of Paul should be our guiding light in these days of diminishing faith, increased toleration and open fellowship with those who promote error and those who openly and knowingly fellowship those who promote error. I Corinthians 15:52 – “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

B. Henderson

“The characteristic of a true Christadelphian is “the obedience of faith” and a “walk worthy of God”; in other words, he first understands the things of the Kingdom of God and Name of Jesus Christ; secondly, he believes what he understands, and loves what he believes above every other thing; thirdly, his “faith, working by love” causes him to be immersed into the Divine Name; fourthly, he walks in the Truth, and is careful to do nothing to its injury; and fifthly, he will not fellowship those who do not so believe and do.” – John Thomas, from *Christadelphian Standards*

PREPARING TO PREACH – Lesson 3

“So what religion are you?” “I’m a Christadelphian.” “Christadelphian? What’s that?” Now’s your opportunity. Someone has asked you to explain what you believe. Can you, right at this moment give a quick summary of your beliefs? Close your eyes, and try to imagine how you would respond.

The Bible tells us in 2nd Tim 4:2, “*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*” This means that we should be ready to explain our beliefs at all times. In a taxi, while tying our shoes, dribbling a basketball, putting a worm on a hook or while cooking a meal with a friend - Anytime.

Most of us hope that we will be around our Bible when a preaching situation comes up, but chances are, that will almost never be the case. What we can do however, is memorize a couple of simple descriptions of our beliefs, and invite our friend to sit down with a bible if they want to know more.

Over the course of my life, I have found that the great majority of people who come into the truth, seem to come in because of friends setting good examples. They see people living their convictions and they want to know more about you, so the first preaching point we can make this issue is to live your beliefs, because if you don’t, no one will ever care what religion you are, no one will care what you believe, and your opportunity to preach is lost.

What do you believe? If you have not already memorized these four lines below, then please do it now. If you have no other preaching method, this is one method that will help you prepare to preach the truth.

What do we believe?

1. We focus on the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.
2. We believe that Jesus will return to the earth to set up a kingdom in Israel that will never end.
3. When he returns, he will resurrect everyone who was baptized (with knowledge) into his name.
4. Those who are judged worthy by Jesus will be given an immortal sinless body, and can live forever.

Write these four sentences on a sheet of paper. Most people when they write things down remember them better, and constantly drill yourself to be able to give these four responses at the drop of a hat. Husbands can help wives, and sisters can help brothers. Try to regularly ask yourself “Christa-What?” when you look in the mirror, and list the four sentences above.

Now, we will continue with our Bible marking notes for sentence #2.

Jesus will return to Israel to set up a kingdom that will never end

The second part of this lesson is to give you some Bible verses to discuss with your friends on the subjects covered by the second numbered item above.

“We believe that Jesus will return to the earth to set up a kingdom in Israel that will never end.”

This verse addresses three issues:

1. Jesus will return to the earth
2. He will set up a kingdom in Israel
3. And it will never end.

As discussed in the last lesson, you can find a blank page in your bible to write your notes, or you can write your notes on a piece of paper. The advantage of writing the notes on a piece of paper, is that they are easy to move from one bible to another, or photocopy if you want to share them with a friend.

The purpose of this article is to give you only a couple of the many verses that cover these subjects. If you would like to see the complete list of Bible verses I have found on any of these subjects, feel free to visit www.learnbible.net/topical/ Subjects: Resurrection and Christ – Second Advent

Jesus will return to the earth

Acts 1:11 - “Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.”

Titus 2:13 - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (14) Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

John 14:1 - “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” **(Some churches preach that people go to heaven when they die and use this verse. Whether before or after they speak to their minister, it’s a good idea to familiarize them with the entire context of this verse)**

1 Thessalonians 4:16 – “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first”:

He will set up a kingdom in Israel

Micah 4:1- “But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. (2) And many nations shall come, and

say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: **for the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.** (3) And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”

Matthew 19:28 - “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Luke 1:30 - And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (31) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. (32) He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: **and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:** (33) **And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever;** and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

There will be no end to His Kingdom

Dan 2:44 – “ And in the days of these kings shall the **God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.”

Daniel 7:13 – “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. (14) And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: **his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.**”

Luke 1:32 – “ He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: (33) **And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.**”

Next issue when we talk about item #3, we will cover the resurrection (the only hope of life after death), the promise of baptism, and why we need to be old enough to recognize our sins and repent of them.

Jack Garvey

“The Kingdom of God is mentioned in every book in the New Testament except Philemon and the 3rd Epistle of John. It is mentioned every chapter of Paul’s 1st and 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians. Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament the Lord’s coming is mentioned 318 times, which is equal to one verse in every 25 verses. The New Testament ends in “Come Lord Jesus”. The Kingdom is the inspiring theme in Old and New Testament. Faith in this Kingdom is the inspiring motive, the guiding star and will ever remain so. With this faith we can deny ungodliness, worldly lusts, etc.” *From a note found in the Bible of O.L. Dunaway*

MR. WISEMAN’S SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH – Is God a “triune” God?

In the last installment the question of whether or not it matters what we believe was addressed. It was then proposed that the nature of the Deity be considered, and it is at this point that we continue:

Then the clergyman arose and said: “God is a triune God; there are three in the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are ‘co-equal’ and ‘co-eternal.’ In proof of this let us refer to 1st John 5:7. ‘For there are *three* that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and *these three are one.*’”

“It seems you have produced some pretty strong evidence,” replied Mr. Wiseman. “I have read this in the Bible: ‘Now he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6); and it is life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.’ (John 17:3); so it seems to me this is a very important subject. To believe in any other god besides the *true* God would be idolatry.”

“Well,” said the clergyman, “I have given you the Bible doctrine of the god-head; and I think it is a sin, or in other words, it is irreverent to pry into these matters.”

But to this hasty remark Judge Reason spoke up: “I am afraid that is only a false way to get out of a difficulty. We read, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *one Lord.*’ (Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29). ‘*One God* and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all’ (Eph.4:6). Now you say the god-head is composed of three co-equals, but in John 17:3, we read, ‘And this is life eternal that they might know thee, *the only true God,*’ and you will see from the context that these are the words of Christ. Now wouldn’t that be one co-equal telling another co-equal that he was the only true God? It seems to me that this would destroy the co-equality.”

“But-but,” stammered the clergyman, “the Bible says, ‘these three are one.’”

“Well,” said Mr. Wiseman, “this is really a difficult subject. It seems to me that there is almost a contradiction. Suppose we take our Bibles and look up this subject, noting carefully the context.” All promptly did so, just as all should in search for the truth.

After a few moments, Mr. Wiseman, in a surprised tone said, that the passage was not in his Bible.

“That is strange,” said the clergyman, “let me see your book.”

It was found to be a New or Revised Version. But why should it be omitted from that?

“Perhaps,” suggested Judge Reason, “this is a spurious passage: there is some reason for it being left out.” Then reference was made to the “Emphatic Diaglott,” a word for word translation of the original Greek, and it was found that the passage was absent from the original.

Then Prof. Judgment in his wise way said: “God is not a trinity of persons, but *one God*; and emphatically, Governor Conscience spoke: “I advise you, Mr. Wiseman, to accept what has been proved.”

Christ

Then Mr. Wiseman suggested that the nature of Christ be considered. One half hour was given to look up references, after which the following passages were read:

“The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, 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).

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

“The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand” (John 3:17).

“Then,” said Prof. Judgment, “we may lay down the proposition, Jesus Christ is not a third part of a Triune God, but the Son of the One God, by begetting of the Holy Spirit.”

To this the clergyman complained that his theological learning was being ignored; and that Mr. Wiseman and his three associates were prying into subjects that can not be understood, and making propositions that are irreverent in their nature. He therefore remained for awhile an attentive listener, though at times he seemed to be restless, shook his head, and raised his hands in holy horror at what was being said.

The above proposition being laid down, Judge Reason stated: “We often read of Christ as the **Son of Man**: and it is therefore evident that he is both Son of God and Son of Man, but not “God very God” as the religious creeds of the world teach: for he himself disavows any such claim. We read: ‘Jesus of Nazareth **a man** approved of God among you by miracles’ (Acts 2:22); ‘One Mediator between God and men, **the man** Christ Jesus’ (1st Tim. 2:5); ‘God sent forth his Son **made of a woman**’ (Gal.4:4); ‘By man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead’ (1st Cor. 15:21); ‘The gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto many’ (Rom. 5:15)”.

“Was Christ of the same nature as we are and was he tempted as we?” asked Mr. Wiseman with somewhat of a surprised, anxious look. Rev. Mr. Orthodoxy shook his head; but Judge Reason turned to Hebrews and read: “In all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren...He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin” (Heb. 2:17; 4:15).

To this the clergyman replied: “It was his **humanity** that was tempted, died and was buried; not his divinity.”

But Judge Reason answered so appropriately: “It does seem to me the **real** Christ escaped temptation and death. If the body was only a temple of humanity in which the **real** Christ was making his temporary abode and it was this house of humanity that was tempted, died and was buried, then the real Christ was not tempted, did not die and was not buried. The Bible says, Christ died – the **real Christ** – and was buried. And it was the real Christ that was tempted ‘in all points as we are.’ ”

Then slowly and deliberately Prof. Judgment said: “Christ was not God very God; he was of man’s nature and dependent upon God. He himself said ‘I can of mine

own self do nothing’ (John 5:30), and again, ‘I go unto thee Father, for my Father is **greater than I**’ (John 14:28).”

Then Mr. Wiseman declared these truths: “Christ is the Son of God by begetting of the Holy Spirit: he is the Son of Man by birth; he was of man’s nature and dependent upon God.” Mr. Wiseman proposed that the subject of the Holy Spirit be considered.

The Holy Spirit

“I refuse to take part in your irreverent speculations,” exclaimed the clergyman. “You have already destroyed the grand, sublime doctrine of the Trinity, the highest and most mysterious doctrine of the Christian religion.”

“Be patient,” continued Mr. Wiseman, “we are in search for the truth.”

“And,” added Governor Conscience, “knowing the truth, we must accept it.”

So after some moments, searching, reading contexts, etc., Judge Reason spoke as follows:

“It is said in Acts 10:38 that ‘God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.’ Now if the Holy Spirit was a third part in a triune God, that ‘highest and most mysterious doctrine of the Christian religion,’ the apostle would be saying one co-equal anointed another co-equal with a third co-equal to impart power. Would not the imparting destroy the co-equality? If the three were co-equal what power would one have to impart to another that the other was not already in possession of? I say this for the benefit of our friend, the clergyman, who holds to what is laid down concerning the godhead, in what is known as the ‘Athanasian Creed’ which asserts that ‘we worship one God as Trinity and Trinity as Unity.’ No wonder the doctrine is mysterious.”

Mr. Wiseman then read, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).” “Now,” he continued, “I will ask a few questions in regard to this testimony and, you, Judge Reason, may answer.” #1: Who was that begot? – Answer: God. #2: What power emanated from God in the begetting? – Answer: The Holy Spirit. #3: What was begotten? – Answer: Jesus Christ the Son of God, who after growing in wisdom and stature was made perfect by the things which he suffered (Heb. 2:10).

Prof. Judgment then dictated and Mr. Wiseman wrote the following truths as the result of the first night’s investigation:

1. It does make a difference what we believe. – 1st Thess. 5:21; Jude 3; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16.
2. There is only one gospel that will save. – Gal. 1:6; and 3:1
3. We must believe in the true God. – Heb. 11:6; John 17:3.
4. God is not a trinity of persons, but one God. – Deut. 6:4; Mark 12:29; 1st Cor. 8:5; Eph. 4:5; John 17:3.
5. Jesus Christ is not a third part of a triune God, but the Son of God by begetting of the Holy Spirit, and Son of Man by birth. – Luke 1:34; Matt. 3:17; John 3:35; Acts 2:22; 1 Tim. 2:5; Gal. 4:4; 1 Cor. 15:21; Rom. 5:15.

6. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but it is the effluence that proceeds from God, as light and heat proceed from the sun. – Psa. 104:30; Job. 33:4; Luke 1:35; Acts 10:38.

-TO BE CONTINUED-

AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD SCENE

“WATCHMAN, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?” (Isaiah 21:11). This passage as found in Isaiah might be better comprehended by the translation – “*how far gone is the night? How far gone is the night?*” That should be the question of the Household in these dim and evil days of Gentile darkness. How far gone is this night? We ask as we await the glorious light of dawn when the “Sun of righteousness” will “arise with healing in His wings”. (Mal. 4:2). That day when Christ and the faithful and chosen multitude of His Household (the “Kings of the East”, or literally the “Kings of the rising of the sun”; Rev. 16:12) will arise in absolute brightness and splendor to establish righteousness and judgment on the earth. (See also Hab. 3:2-5 and regarding the coming dawn for Israel - Isaiah 60:1-3)

As we watch the signs in the “sun, moon and stars” of the political heavens we should be struck with the amazing speed as to which world developments are transpiring which encourage us as to the nearness of our Master’s Return. The rapid unfolding of events and the constant stream of information that is so easily accessible and overwhelming due to the “information age” that we live in often makes it difficult to fully absorb everything that is happening and what relevance such information has on our understanding as “watchmen”. What we wish to do is **briefly** summarize the state of affairs as they now stand in places that the scriptures indicate that we need to watch as the nations are drawn closer to that “great and terrible day of Yahweh”. The areas of concern are namely Israel and the Middle East; The actions of the Dragon, Beast and False Prophet (Rev. 16:13) – in other words Western Europe, Eastern Europe (Russia) and the Papacy; and the Tarshish/young lion powers - Britain, U.S. and related nations.

Israel and the Middle East

The Gaza pullout is reaching a critical point with Ariel Sharon torn between the demands of the U.S., the world community and liberal/secular movement to begin turning over territories to the Palestinian Authority; and then on the other side the more conservative, religious Jews who understand their right to the Land and are doing



Abbas

everything possible to resist government orders to vacate the Jewish settlements. Jews are pitted against Jews in a fight for the future of the Land. Through all of this Israel is “negotiating” with a Palestinian government that is on the verge of disintegration. PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas has virtually no control over the many factions that are found in his own movement of “Fatah” in the West

Bank and Gaza strip. According to an article that appeared on *FrontPageMagazine.com* (6-21-05) it is being predicted that the PA will collapse by the end of this year. Amidst virtually non-control by Abbas, the Hamas terrorist group is gaining both political and military strength. Hamas has no interest in peaceful co-existence; their policy is of the complete destruction of Israel. Interestingly enough, during this time of the exercising of the U.S. backed “Roadmap” to peace there is officially supposed to be a “cease-fire”. But during this so called “cease-fire” Israel is being constantly barraged by mortar attacks and suicide bombing attempts while Israel, under world pressure, is not allowed to defend itself. And during this time Hamas and many other faction groups continue to secretly build up their armament stockpiles. The world’s double standard towards Israel continues to worsen. While Israel pursues peace they get nothing more than the proverbial stone in return.

In a news article that was recently sent to us we read of predictions that Israel is headed in the direction of war with Syria and Iran within the next two years. Syrian belligerence and support of terrorism and the Iranians quest for nuclear weaponry is putting Israel in a very difficult situation. Only time will tell as to how Israel will react to such threats.

In 1st Thessalonians 5:3 is the familiar verse – “For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” In Ezekiel 38 we read of the invasion of Israel by the Gogian/Russian confederacy and there we are told that Israel previous to the invasion will dwell “safely”. The word is from the Hebrew *betach* and is indicated by Strong’s as “*a place of refuge; abst., safety, both the fact (security) and the feeling (trust)...without care, confidence*”. Though Israel will perceive that it is “safe”, such will be a false sense of confidence as evidenced by the following devastating invasion mentioned here in Ezekiel and throughout the prophets. By the context of both Ezekiel 38 and 39 the condition of safety mentioned is **previous** to their rescue by Christ and the Saints – a rescue that takes place (this writer believes) in response to the Gogian invasion.

How Israel will arrive to that condition of a supposed “peace” and state of perceived “safety” the scriptures do not tell us. The scene as it now stands is one of intense turmoil, and the next few months of the current “Roadmap” will be extremely interesting for us to watch.

EU Constitution?

The European community is still reeling from the after shocks following both France and the Netherlands’ rejection of the EU constitution. This does not put an end to the European Union though. The EU is already an economic and political reality, and those nations that voted “no” still have until November 2006 to change the minds of voters. The proposed constitution was to be the final step towards the complete federalization of the community – basically a

United States of Europe, with weakened autonomy of individual nations. The spirit of intense Nationalism was one of the major reasons given for the French rejection, though there is a great deal of irony that goes along with the French refusal especially since they are one of the backbone countries of the EU. For the Bible student it is noticed that the constitution did not give recognition to



EU stamp depicting Europa riding
Zeus transformed into a bull

Europe's "Christian roots". There is currently a great amount of pressure being placed on the EU by the Vatican for such recognition. According to Revelation 17 we see the Harlot (Roman Apostasy) riding on the Beast (Western Europe), therefore having a degree of influence or control over the actions of the Beast – somewhat of a revival of the Holy Roman Empire (Rev. 13). Whatever lies ahead for the EU in the near future (constitution or no constitution) we know that a European Confederacy under

Papal influence will stand opposed to Christ upon His destruction of the Gogian invader and the proclamation of the "everlasting gospel" out of Jerusalem. (Rev. 17:13,14; 14:6)

An interesting side effect of the stumbling of the EU constitution is that Blair and Britain are being blamed for its breakdown. Britain never has adopted the Euro currency and continues to be a thorn in the side of EU objectives due to serious disagreements over federalization, agricultural policies and Britain's demand for a "refund" due to paying more of their share in EU duties. According the *London Telegraph* "factfile" on the EU, it is made very clear that if Britain chooses to vote down the EU constitution that the European continent will use it as justification to push Britain out of the EU community completely. Ultimately, this we expect.

Russia

Under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has come a very long way in the past few years. With a reviving economy being driven by oil and natural gas exports to Western Europe, Russia has virtually been resurrected from what seemed like certain death in the years immediately following communism. But Russia's revival has come at a price, with a Putin who conducts the business of governing more as an iron fisted dictator than a democratically elected president. Many democratic reforms that came with the fall of communism have been reversed and a great deal of government power has been consolidated under



The Hamilton Spectator
6/11/05

Putin's control. An interesting report that came out of the Chicago Tribune (June 05') that appeared in our local paper mentions the fact of a current bill being introduced into the Russian legislature that would open the door for a third presidential term for Putin – current law only allows two. In a recent visit to Germany, Putin who is extremely popular in Russia did not dismiss the possibility.

One thing for certain is that Putin and Russia do not want to be left out of the world political game, especially in the Middle East. Putin's tour of Middle Eastern Countries (including Israel) this past April should be seen as nothing less than a Russian game of political chess. Making overtures of peace and mutual cooperation to Israel on one hand while at the same time offering high tech armaments to Israel's arch enemy Syria on the other. Russia has also been largely responsible in helping Iran achieve nuclear capabilities. A picture that appeared in the Arkansas Democrat (4/28/05) showed Putin posing with one of the chief Rabbis during his visit to Israel, looking down at what appeared to be an opened scroll of the Torah. The irony of such a picture should not be lost on us brethren. The theatrical show of friendship between the two countries now is not what the Scriptures indicate as the end reality.



The Papacy

Much has settled down since Pope John Paul's funeral and the election of the German Cardinal Ratzinger as Pope Benedict XVI. Though in the estimation of many an unlikely candidate, he has certainly picked up where John Paul left off in regard to conservative Catholic policy on social and moral issues. Known in the past as the leader of the modern version of the "Inquisition" he is a tenacious defender of Catholic tradition and refuses to recognize non-Catholic churches on an equal status with Catholicism. But he has and continues to work on "unity" with the Protestant movement and especially with the Eastern Orthodox. On May 29th the pope stated, "I want to reiterate my willingness to take on the fundamental commitment of working with all my energies towards the rebuilding of full and visible unity among all the followers of Christ." Of course such "unity" would be on Papal terms. Due to age and health it would seem unlikely that this pope will have the length of office that John Paul did, but nonetheless the work of the "Harlot" continues under his administration. Benedict XVI will be very interesting for us to watch, - he should not be underestimated.



Britain and the U.S.

As Britain becomes more alienated from the EU philosophy and vision we see Britain and the United States grow closer together, along with increased ties with Australia and India. Though the relationship between Britain and the U.S.

is not perfect, it has proven that the two countries have much more in common interests from a political, economic, and military standpoint than they do with the rest of the world. In relation to Israel, Britain (the Tarshish power and elder “lion”, Ez. 38:13) has begun to warm up to the Israeli state after 50 plus years of awkward relations. Tony Blair’s foreign policy advisor is a Jew – Sir Nigel Sheinwald. But lately, the Bush administration has taken a direction that seems out of character with the posture they have had towards Israel during the first presidential term. In order to push through the “Roadmap” to peace, Bush has called for a return to the original 1949 armistice lines, which would mean a full pullout of all “occupied territories” as well as putting the issue of Jerusalem on the negotiating table – something that Israel has resisted up to this point. Such a position is a reversal of recent U.S. policy and puts Israel in an all but impossible defensive posture while making her more dependent on the protection and guarantees of her Western allies – i.e. U.S. and Britain. Along these lines U.S. has also made moves towards tolerance of the Hamas terrorist organization in anticipation of their growing influence and power within the “Palestinian” territories. As the U.S. continues to struggle in Iraq, a Bush Administration may be eagerly looking for some great “achievement” in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and may be willing to do anything to get it.



FINALLY, in providing this overview we need to stress that anytime we as believers analyze the state of current affairs that circumstances can change quickly. Trying to examine world events as they appear **right now** and how they relate to the Prophetic word can be encouraging and fruitful, but also not exact. In the past, some have made errors (some with more serious consequences than others) in trying to interpret prophecy based upon what were seemingly the most pressing circumstances of that day. Through His prophets, Yahweh has clearly and surely revealed the end to us, indicating where we should focus our attention. Therefore, as the “Dawn” most assuredly approaches - let us continue to “watch”.

A. Thomas

Editorial Flyleaf

Shortly after the 2nd Quarter issue of the Sanctuary-Keeper went to the printers we received the vote tally information for the NASU initiative. Though the NASU committee reports that “Phase 1” of the proposal has been defeated there still is a hint of uncertainty left for the community as to what is next for the NASU initiative. Under the fourth point of the “Committee

Conclusions” they state – “Therefore, the committee will proceed with Phase 2 option b) to work on ‘other proposed means by which the NASU unity initiative may be concluded’. The matters will be prayerfully considered in coming months.” Should not the Unamended community’s rejection of the proposal provided them with the answer as to how the “initiative may be

concluded”)? We would hope that the NASU committee could see that the enterprise has already been “concluded” as far as the majority of Unamended ecclesias are concerned. When faced with such open ended statements it would be imperative for us to continue to be on guard. Whether the NASU committee closes up shop or continues on with a different strategy or name – we know that in one form or another we will be faced with these issues again. *We would be ignoring our history to presume otherwise.*

We wish to make note that in last quarter’s issue we failed to list the Clinton, Arkansas ecclesia as one of the ecclesias that sent out a letter of opposition to the NASU proposal. We wish to apologize for the oversight. It also needs to be mentioned that letters opposing the NASU were also received from the Beulah, LA and Denver-West ecclesias.

Recently we have received several pieces of information regarding the various “Missionary” projects that are being promoted under the Christadelphian name. One of particular note is from the Williamsburg Foundation for Spring 2005. It is clear that nothing changes with WCF as it continues down the path of open fellowship, professionalism and ecumenicalism. On the back of one of the flyers we noticed that donations to WCF can now be made through *The United Way*. We find it very difficult to comprehend how any group under the name of “Christadelphian” can justify such an association.

Along with the newsletter came a DVD called “A Thousand Tongues to Sing!” – a 50 minute long documentary of preaching efforts in Nigeria. It is an extremely

professionally done effort – even with a background soundtrack to reflect the mood. We see little or no difference between this and the procedures used by the Evangelical groups whose bottom line is a plea for funds by the manipulation of emotions. For those who have seen previous WCF presentations (e.g., Russia, India, Ireland), what we speak of will be clearly understood. It is difficult to tell how much or how little these “converts” know of the Truth in that much time is spent watching and listening to the Nigerian Christadelphians sing and little exposure as to what they understand regarding the faith of Abraham.

The presentation actually is documenting and promoting the efforts of the *Christadelphian Bible Mission* (CBM) – an Amended organization. An interesting moment comes on the video when one of the “missionaries” comments on their need for young people to help in their preaching efforts. The comment is made that all you need to know is a “*basic understanding of first principles*” to be a CBM missionary. It should be understood that it takes much more than knowledge of a few basics to teach and nourish others upon a firm and sound foundation. In regards to the doctrinal soundness of the CBM we have one of their newsletters that document the sad death of the child of a Gambian couple. It should be noted that the CBM offered comfort that the dead child (not baptized) would be resurrected to “*enjoy a full, healthy and active life in the Kingdom, free from the suffering he experienced in his so short and tragic life*”. But yet WCF wants us to donate our money to support this kind of teaching – the promotion of false hope?

Due to the connection these “converts” have with CBM/WCF one has to feel sympathy for them as to what kind of “truth” they are being exposed to. (A.T.)