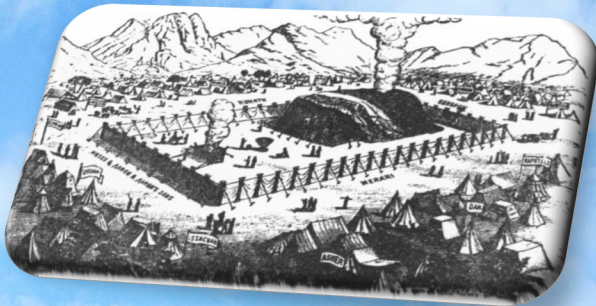


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THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

*A Magazine for the Exposition and Defense
of The Holy Scriptures*



GOD IS OUR REFUGE

**CRIMEA & THE CONTINUED RISE OF
THE IMAGE EMPIRE**

“FOR MEN SHALL BE...”

A MESSAGE TO THE DESIRABLE ONES

IN THE HOUSE OF MOURNING

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

**ARKANSAS BIBLE SCHOOL
STATEMENT**

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

The Sanctuary-Keeper is published on a quarterly basis at \$10.00 per year (U.S. funds). The doctrinal position of this magazine is founded exclusively on the principles of Bible Truth as outlined and defined in **The Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith**. Subscriptions, correspondence and materials submitted for publication should be sent to the editors/publishers – Bobby Henderson (bobdebhend@aol.com) & Aaron Thomas (aaronstaciethomas@google.com) or to the physical address of “The Sanctuary-Keeper”, P.O. Box 13045, Maumelle, AR 72113.

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CONTENTS

- 1 God is Our Refuge
- 9 Crimea & The Continued Rise of The Image Empire
- 16 “For Men Shall Be...”
- 22 A Message to the Desirable Ones
- 29 In the House of Mourning
- 32 The Memorial Supper
- 37 Arkansas Bible School Statement
- 43 Editorial Flyleaf
- Back Cover – Important Bible Teaching



IMPORTANT BIBLE TEACHING

- And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD GOD make coats of skins [skin], and clothed them (Gen. 3:20-21).
- Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous (Psa. 1:5).
- Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice (Psa. 50:5).
- Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the [marked or memorial] graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation (John 5:28-29).
- The priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (Acts 4:1-2).
- Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [in whom] all have sinned (Rom. 5:12).
- For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection (Rom. 6:5).
- There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus... For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8:1-2).
- And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins...But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive (1 Cor. 15:17,20-22).
- For you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world...Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2:1,12,19).
- And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22).
- Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20).
- The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John, Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand (Rev. 1:1-3).

"...it is evident that an Ecclesia is a community of men and women, who have accepted an invitation to the kingdom and glory of the Deity; in believing the promises and testimonies concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Anointed; and in being immersed into him: by which faith and obedience they have been "washed from their sins in his blood; and made kings and priests to the Deity, even to the Father;" and so separated from the body of mankind for the Age to Come. **The Ecclesia of Chiefborns is, therefore, not the Kingdom of God, as church, in the clerical sense is styled; but it is the community of the HEIRS of the Kingdom;** and everyone knows, or ought to know, the difference between *the heirs* of an estate, and the estate itself. Eureka, Volume 1, p. 122

THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF MEN

In taking a general survey of the contents of the Book of Daniel, it may be seen that two great powers are the principal subjects of its predictions. The one is styled the KINGDOM OF MEN (Dan. 4:17) and the other the KINGDOM OF GOD (Dan. 2:44; 4:3; 7:27)...It will be seen that the Kingdom of men has been diversified in its constitution, extent and throne since its foundation by Nimrod to the present time. It has nevertheless been the same Nimroudian kingdom with Babylon and Assyria for its characteristics. (Exposition of Daniel, pp. 7,8)

THE FEET OF THE IMAGE

While the head, breast, arms, belly, thighs, legs and toes have all existed, the feet have not yet been formed; so that it has hitherto been impossible for the colossal image to stand erect as Nebuchadnezzar saw it in his dream...It is therefore, the mission of the Autocrat (of Russia) to form the feet and set up the image before the world in all its excellent brightness and terribleness of form; that all men subject to the kingdom of Babylon may worship the work of its creator's power. (Exposition of Daniel, p. 87)

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE

The Russian Autocracy in its plenitude and on the verge of dissolution is the image of Nebuchadnezzar standing upon the mountains of Israel, ready to be smitten by the Stone. When Russia makes its grand move for the building up of its Image-empire, then let the reader know that the end of all things as present constituted, is at hand. (Elpis Israel, preface)



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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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GOD IS OUR REFUGE

BRETHREN, as all of us can attest to, we are living in a very unique time in the history of mankind. This generation of believers may be witnessing the final implosion of the world around us. The continued cases of gross immorality, wars and rumors of wars, the unleashing of weapons of mass destruction, chemical warfare, sexual depravity, human abuse of all kinds, cohabitation, and homosexuality are all issues that we would expect to see just prior to the return of our Master. We are truly living in a world of darkness that is quickly flying towards a cliff of utter destruction. Many are living in a constant state of fear as to what is coming upon this earth. Our media is constantly feeding us horrible pictures of the depravity of the world in which we live.

As children of Yahweh, we have been blessed to partake of the goodness and mercy of the Creator of the entire earth. Although all of us have experienced the pains and sorrows of mortality and have had to overcome the

ways of the flesh every day of our lives, we have one thing that binds us together and most importantly binds us to our Heavenly Father. God's unchangeable love and mercy that He has provided to His creation is something that we cannot and will not ever comprehend this side of the Kingdom, if we are allowed to partake of the glory of Yahweh at that time. We should be very thankful of the guidance and direction that He provides to us, many times without our knowledge that He and His heavenly angels are working in our life. We have a wonderful heritage of the Truth and a glorious promise waiting to those who endure to the end and keep their garments of salvation as pure and white as possible.

How much longer O LORD? How much more must we endure? We continue to pray that His day is drawing nigh and all of the covenanted will soon wake up one glorious morn and see the messenger of Yahweh at our side ready to escort us to the presence of the Judge of the entire earth. Until then, what must we do? Where do we find the strength to overcome, the strength to remain faithful and the strength to maintain our hope?

Psalms 46 is one of the most beautiful and impactful passages in the Scriptures that reminds us and encourages us about the only source of strength

God is our refuge
and strength,
a very present help
in trouble.

- Psalm 46:1

that we can truly draw upon. As we read these verses, we should experience a sense of calmness, inner peace and assurance that all things are working out as Yahweh has planned, that He is in total control of what we perceive as being chaotic and uncontrolled. Hebrew 11:6 – *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek*

Him.” We maintain our hope because God is – He is our refuge and He is our place of strength. This has been His position throughout the generations.

The first thing that we notice as we open the pages of God's Word to this Psalm is the superscription at the top of the Psalm. In the KJV, it reads *“To the chief musician for the sons of Korah, A song upon Alamoth.”* There are some analysts that believe the superscriptions in the KJV should actually be attached to the preceding Psalm instead of the way it is listed in the KJV. These analysts contend that the phrase *“To the chief musician”* should be attached to the end of Psalm 45. The word **Alamoth** means maidens and refers to the phrases in Psalms 45:9-15, which is speaking of the royal bride and thus should also be attributed to Psalm 45. That leaves us with the phrase of *“The sons of Korah.”* I have read different opinions as to whether this phrase belongs to Psalm 45 or Psalm 46. One writer who thinks that this phrase should be attached to Psalm 45 attributes the authorship of Psalm 46 to Hezekiah. I can offer no definite opinion. It appears to some of the analysts

that I researched that the context of the Psalm can be attributed to the time of Hezekiah's reign when the Assyrian army under the leadership of Sennacherib invaded both Israel and Judah. If we look at the historical account of this time in the lifeline of the Kingdom of Judah, we do see several connections and points of linkage. However, we also could look at almost any historical period regarding the chosen nation of Israel and all of God's servants throughout the ages and see how they would exhibit the faith that is referenced in this Psalm. The Scriptural references to this time of Hezekiah can be found in 2nd Chronicles 32; 2nd Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 36 – 39. As we discuss the verses in Psalm 46, we will reference some of the historical facts of the days of Hezekiah.

All of the true saints of Yahweh must come to an understanding early in their period of probation about the divine concepts of trust, love and humility that is manifested when we realize that we can do nothing without the guiding, merciful and loving hands of our Father. The only strength that we can muster is that which is derived from the Creator of the universe. Psalms 118 is said to be at the midst of all of the chapters of the Bible. 595 chapters before and 593 chapters after. Verse 8 of Psalm 118 is the peg of truth in which all other doctrines and beliefs hangs – *"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."* Connected to this – *"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths"* – Proverbs 3:5-6.



The word refuge in verse 1 of Psalms 46 comes from the Hebrew word *"machseh"* – H4268 – which means *"that to which one flees from danger or from falsehood"*. This is not the same word for refuge that we find in verse 7 and 11 which is from the word *"misgab"* – H4869 – which means an impregnable place such as a fortress, a high place, a secure height, or a stronghold. Why would the inspired Psalmist use two different words in this beautiful Psalm? I think the answer may lie in the different periods of history that are depicted in this Psalm. It appears to me that there are verses talking about the blessings that the children of God enjoy in their probation life. And there are also verses that appear to be describing the blessings in the coming Kingdom.

The children of God in their probationary lives are in constant danger of the evil within us and the evil around us. It is certain that we will have to overcome the strong and constant ways of the flesh. We have a battle to fight and a war to win by using the spiritual weapons that have been chosen for us. There are times that all of us may sometimes think that the battle is lost and that there is no way to continue to move forward in our quest to conquer the flesh or to overcome the evil that surrounds us. We may want to choose to just

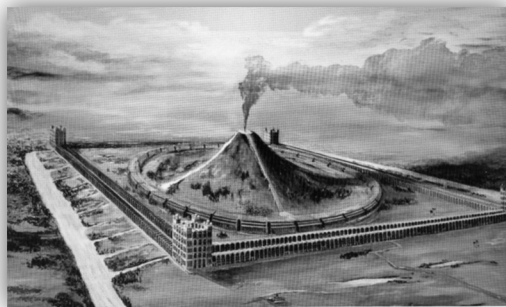
get away from everything, to have no more part of the battle, or to desert our places in the army of the Captain of our Salvation. The strength of the arm of the flesh, manifested in ourselves or in those around us, may be more than we can fathom. It is in moments like this that we gain comfort and strength from passages like Psalms 46. Let us also look at Deuteronomy 20:1. Be not afraid of losing the battle, God has promised to never forsake us or leave us, if we remain strong and faithful warriors. There will always be a remnant of fellow participants in the war against the ways of the flesh that will continue in fighting the spiritual warfare that is required of each son and daughter of Yahweh. All of the brethren of this special remnant will have their dwelling place in Yahweh. They will maintain trust and hope in the God of Israel. We read of this remnant throughout the word of God. In the early chapters of Isaiah, we see the prophet talking to king Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, and instructing him regarding the matter of the impending invasion of the Assyrians – see chapter 10 and in verses 20-23 of that chapter, we read of the faithful remnant who had their stay, their trust upon the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. Isaiah 37:31-32 confirms this principle in the days of Hezekiah. The inhabitants of the Northern tribes probably fled south to the land of Judah and to Jerusalem, the city chosen by Yahweh. A remnant that escapes the destruction of the evil around them would again spring up from Jerusalem, with the fruit of faithfulness manifested.

Why would they flee to Jerusalem? Was this not the city that Yahweh had chosen to dwell therein – the city of David, the city of the future Messiah? We read of a similar message regarding the latter day remnant in Isaiah 4:2. A faithful remnant that make up the escaped of spiritual Israel that partake of the fruit of righteousness that is found in the branch of the Lord – even our Lord and Master. Jerusalem, the city of peace, has been specifically selected by Yahweh for His eternal dwelling place. Here are just a few places where we read of the special place that this city has in God's eyes – 1st Kings 11:32-36, Psalms 132:13-14; Psalms 9:11; and Psalms 48:1-3. We see this symbolism even from a natural standpoint when we read about David's selection of Zion for his dwelling place that would become his capital city (2nd Samuel 5:7).

One meaning for the word Zion is a fortress, or as written in Samuel, a stronghold – First the natural and then the spiritual as we are taught in God's Word. The natural city of Zion (Jerusalem) would be a fortress, an extremely hard place for the enemy to attack if the inhabitants were ever watchful on the city walls. We see the same principle when we contemplate the spiritual aspect of the city of God that we are to flee to in time of trouble or danger. God's protection is over His city and its inhabitants. He has provided spiritual materials to maintain his spiritual protection for the wall around His city and able watchmen throughout the ages having good spiritual vision to keep the population advised about approaching danger. The remnant residing within the God given walls of salvation will always maintain the strength of the walls and the gates and will strive always to keep the enemy out of their midst.

Let us return to our consideration of Psalms 46. As we mentioned earlier, the word for refuge in verse 7 and 11 is from a different word than we find in verse 1. The word in these verses is from a word that means a lofty, high secure place that is impregnable. If we think of this from a spiritual perspective, we should be able to see the glory and the majesty of the Temple of the age to come. We have all seen pictures of this magnificent building that will be the place where all mortals will come to worship Yahweh and His Son and their King. Zechariah 14 describes the physical changes that will occur in the land after the great earthquake brought about when the Lord Jesus stands upon the Mount of Olives.

The land will be lifted up and the temple built upon it and in the midst of the Temple will sit the altar of sacrifice in which the offerings of the day will arise like a sweet smelling savor to the Father that dwelleth on high. Isaiah 2:3 states – *“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up*



to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

This gives us the natural vision of what the Temple area will look like. I think there is also a spiritual meaning that we should envision. The spiritual city of God in the Kingdom Age will indeed be a place where the enemy of sin will have no dwelling place. Those saints of all ages that are constituents of the future spiritual Jerusalem will have been granted freedom from all associations to sin. There will be no more tears, nor sorrow, no more death, no more pain because the former things for those individuals have passed away. Death and sin will have no more dominion for those that successfully turned to Yahweh in their days of probation and sought Him as the only place of refuge. Psalms 46 speaks of the exaltation of the name of Yahweh in that glorious time. Zechariah 8:21-23 speaks of the glory of the name of God that will spread throughout the world. These verses indicate that the Gentile nations of the world will finally recognize that salvation comes from the God of Israel. These verses tie in very well with Psalms 46:11. Notice Zechariah states that the people will seek after the LORD of Hosts and the Psalmist states that the LORD of Hosts will be with us and the God of Jacob, the God of natural Israel will be the refuge (the strong tower) to those mortals of that age who will listen and take hold to the mid-heaven proclamation of the everlasting gospel. The mortals of the world will truly understand “the hope of Israel”.

What a glorious and beautiful and uplifting vision that we read about in Psalms 46. In verse 2 and 3 of this Psalm, we have a vision of the turmoil in the world around us and even within the Body of Christ. Through the natural eye, we are seeing the events that are surely the beginnings of the end of times of the Kingdom of Men. The roar of the waters of the sea of humanity is deafening and growing louder every day. We are fast approaching that day that is described in Daniel 12 as a time of trouble like there never was. The political powers represented by the mountains in this Psalm are continuing to shake such as predicted in the Apocalypse when John describes the political earthquakes of the latter days.

Much closer to home, we see shakings and rumblings within the Household. Brethren who once walked side by side now are taking different paths. We see the basic foundations of our faith crumbling around us. We see Unamended and Amended putting aside the differences that still should separate us and joining in a third party, which some have named the “Mended”. In the last few years, we have witnessed the introduction of new doctrines that are contrary to the old paths of Truth that we hold so dearly. We have seen some in the Household being more critical of those who are trying to protect the old paths than they are of those who have introduced these false doctrines and their supporters. We must still remain faithful and watchful and remember these words of encouragement – *“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”* This thought should dry up our tears of the day and provide healing salve for our hearts broken when we see those that we love drifting apart from us. Let us lift up our heads for our redemption draweth nigh.

Psalms 46:4 speaks of a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. We are probably reminded of Revelation 22 and the pure river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Or we may be reminded of the words of Ezekiel 47 that speak of the river that flows from the Temple of God that will heal the Dead Sea and will heal all that come

in contact with these waters. We may remember the words of Zechariah 14:8 where the prophet speaks of the living waters from Jerusalem; half of them going toward the former sea and half to the hinder sea.

I think that a more critical vision that we should contemplate in this probationary life can



be found in John 4:5-14, especially verse 10, 11, 13 and 14. Living waters are waters that are not stagnant. They are a river of life to those who partake of the life sustaining qualities of these waters. In the spiritual sense, these waters that are provided by Christ is the well of salvation that leads to the gift of eternal life. We can also read John 7:37-38; Isaiah 44:1-3 and Isaiah 55:1-3. All of these verses speak of the eternal blessings that are derived from the source of our strength and from the rock of our salvation. Psalms 36:7-9 speaks of those who place their trust in Yahweh and will drink of the rivers of His pleasures.

The next principle that we wish to review from Psalms 46 can be found in the fifth verse. In the KJV we find the phrase "right early". This phrase literally means "*at the turning of the morning*" or at the dawn of the day. We see the same Hebrew word in Exodus 14:27; Deuteronomy 16:7; and Judges 19:26. In this verse in Psalms, we read of the protection that Yahweh provides to His beloved city. From a natural standpoint, we can see this in 2nd Kings 19:35 and Isaiah 37:35-36, where we read of the death of the 185,000 Assyrian corpses in the darkness of the night. When morning arrived, Yahweh's salvation was provided to the Jews in the city of David. Let us read Exodus 14:27, where we find the exact Hebrew phrase that we find in Psalms 46:5. The enemies of God's people were destroyed in the darkness of the night and when the morning appeared, salvation was evident. When we consider the spiritual aspect of this phrase, our minds are lifted up and our thoughts return to God's ultimate plan of redemption and salvation. As we sing in our hymn and as recorded in Psalms 30:5 and Malachi 4:2 – "*Joy cometh in the morning when the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his wings.*" Peter references this time of redemption and salvation in 2nd Peter 1:19 where we are exhorted to take heed unto the prophetic word until the day dawns and the day star arises.

It will be at the dawning of this great day of the Lord where the corruption and mortality of the wise and faithful, those that have made God their refuge, will be given immortality and eternal life. Their corruptible bodies will now become incorruptible. They will become part of the Redeemed Bride of Christ who have prepared their selves and made themselves ready for this glorious time. They will be warriors in the militant arm of the LORD of Hosts whose purpose is to rid the world of the evil rulers and to destroy the works built upon the foundations of humanism and will instill a system of righteous judgments and glorious leadership and shepherdship. Those that have placed their trust in Yahweh will finally witness the consumption of all that is troubling them in this probationary life. They will experience the termination of all wars and violence and will know what the peace of Jerusalem truly means. Although the heathen will rage and the kingdom of men will revolt against the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and many will not be able to believe the proclamation of the mid-heaven gospel message, there will be a mortal remnant that make glad the heart of Yahweh and will finally make God

their place of refuge and will recognize His Son and His co-rulers as the true world-wide leadership. What a wonderful time that awaits those who trust in the Lord above all things. Those who flee from the face of evil to the fortress of our Yahweh which is God's Truth that provides healing, comfort and mercy to those who always are trying to remain steadfast and faithful and who stand tall against all that are opposed to the truth of Yahweh. As Psalms 46:10 states, Yahweh will be exalted throughout the earth and this exaltation will be manifested through His son, Jesus Christ. Consider Philippians 2:9-11.

Until then brethren, what should we do? In the first part of Psalms 46:10, the inspired Psalmist teaches us to be still and maintain the knowledge that God is our source of comfort and a place of refuge. The phrase "Be still" reminds us of what Moses told the Israelites and can be found in Exodus 14:12-14. "*Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.*" This word does not imply inactivity. The word in Psalms means to sink, relax, to abate, to withdraw, to let drop, to refrain, to let alone. In the context of this Psalm, I think we can see that this means to let go of the sin that so easily besets us; to let go of the worries and concerns that the fleshly way of thinking takes us to. Let us place our reliance on Yahweh and the guidance that He has provided to us and let us take refuge in the shadow of His wings at all times. When the tribulations of the flesh brings us to the lowest low, let us remember the heavenly promises of mercy and love and goodness and shepherdship that is promised to us. We read many times that Yahweh has promised that He will not fail us nor forsake us if we can remain strong and of a good courage (Deuteronomy 31:6-8 and Joshua 1:15). Although the current trials of the Brotherhood are so strong and disheartening, let us remember these words of Isaiah 26:1-3. "*In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee.*"

Although many people will walk down the paths of Truth throughout the generations, there will be some who will be diverted from the straight and narrow way to pursue other interests. Let us keep our eye of faith focused on the promise set before us and walk faithfully with our steps sure and do so with our eyes directly set on He who is our shepherd.

As we have seen, Psalms 46 is a prophetic Psalm but in this age it is one that we should hold dear to our heart and have instant recall during these dark days of our mortality. In order to survive, we have no other place to turn to, do we brethren? God **IS** our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

B. Henderson



& THE CONTINUED RISE OF THE IMAGE EMPIRE

THE last several weeks have proven to be very interesting and exciting to the Household as Russia has once again asserted itself on the geopolitical stage by its takeover and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula on the northern shores of the Black Sea. With the anti-Russian/pro-West revolution in the Ukraine, Vladimir Putin seized upon the confusion as an excuse to secure Russian interests in the region, as one of Russia's major Black Sea naval bases is located in Sevastopol on the southern tip of the peninsula. In the process, the Russians forced the surrender of the tiny Ukrainian navy and have gradually seized Ukrainian military installations in the region. As we write this article (which will no doubt be outdated by the time this goes to print) Russian troops continue to mass in great numbers on the eastern borders of Ukraine's boundary with Russia, and are even threatening post-Soviet states such as Moldavia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and the entire Balkan region. Suggestions have come out of ranking Russian officials themselves of an eventual takeover of Finland. Ukrainian leaders are expressing growing fears that a coming Russian invasion is almost a certainty. And other Eastern European countries, such as Poland, are once again faced with the fears of themselves being under threat.

Brief historical background

We provide a brief historical synopsis of Russia's past involvement in the extremely volatile Crimean and Black Sea region.

- For several centuries the area was inhabited by Tatars. It came under Turkish control in 1475. The Tatars made frequent raids on the Russian (Muscovy) state.
- Russia defeated the Ottoman's in 1774 (Russo-Turkish War – 1768-1774) Catherine the Great forced Turkey to recognize Crimea as independent, and then she annexed the peninsula in 1783.
- The decline and dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, what was called the "Eastern Question", is dated from their defeat in 1774. The label of the "Eastern Question" resulted from the geo-political problems and instability posed by the decline of the Ottoman power (Rev. 16:12). Such questions were not resolved until after W.W. 1, and in prophetic terms is not yet a settled matter as greater troubles await Turkey at the hands of future Russian conquest; a **complete** drying up of *"the great river Euphrates"* so that *"the way of the kings of the east might be prepared"* or in other words, the preparation of final circumstances that leads to Armageddon and the manifestation of the *kings of the sun rising* (2nd Sam. 23:4; Mal. 4:2) – the Multitudinous Yahweh of Armies.
- In 1783 the Black Sea Fleet was established with its principal base in Sevastopol.
- Leading up to the Crimean War, tensions arose between Russia and France over rights to the "Holy Places" in Palestine – i.e. churches of the Holy Sepulchre and of the Virgin in Jerusalem, the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the place of Golgotha. France desired that control be maintained by the Latin/Roman Church while Russia demanded control by the Greek Orthodox. Such control had been ceded to the Greeks by the Turkish Sultan in 1808. In 1852 France was able to obtain keys to the church at Bethlehem and pushed for further concessions by the sultan (now a weakening power) later that year. Russia viewed this as a direct threat to their influence on Ottoman affairs and a threat to their early treaty with the Turks. Russia also perceived itself as the protector of Orthodox Christians who lived under Ottoman control.

- Russia had been expanding southward for over 200 years in pursuit of warm water ports on the Black Sea, and by the 1850s there was no longer a buffer between the Russians and Turks.
- Growing tensions between the Russians and Turks, and the desire for the Turks to obtain support from the British and French against Russian pressure, led to Turkey declaring war on Russia in October of 1853.
- Out of fear that the Russians would overpower and push into Turkey itself, France and Great Britain finalized an alliance with Turkey and entered the war in March of 1854. The war proved to be a *“logistical, medical and tactical failure on both sides”* (Wikipedia).
- Sevastopol was captured by the allies in 1855, and with tiring public support in Britain, and Russia fearing further tactical losses, peace negotiations led to the Treaty of Paris in March 1856.
- The loss of the Crimean War led to Russian realization that their defeat was caused by their backwardness and for the desperate need of modernization.
- The modern states of Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia were directly impacted by this war with the shifting of populations and the rise of nationalistic sentiments.
- Many of the Crimean Tatars were dispersed through Russia after the Crimean War and replaced with Russians – hence the strong Russian nature and sympathies of its current population.
- Crimea became a part of the Soviet Union in 1921, but occupied by the Nazis during W.W. 2. It was transferred to the Ukraine in 1954 and remained with the Ukraine after the Ukraine gained its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991.
- In 1994 (in what is known as the “Budapest Memorandum”) the Ukraine agreed to turn over the former Soviet nuclear arsenal within its borders to Russia, with guarantees from the U.S. and Britain that they would protect the Ukraine from future Russian aggression and with Russian guarantees that they would not violate Ukrainian borders. (So much for western or eastern guarantees.)

In 1997, Russia and Ukraine signed a Treaty in which they agreed to establish to independent naval fleets with the agreement that Russia could

lease major naval bases from the Ukrainians until 2017. In 2009 the Ukrainian government, which was not friendly towards the Russians, refused to extend the lease past 2017. A more Russian friendly administration renegotiated the treaty in 2010 with a lease extension reaching until 2042 and with the option of going until 2047. With the recent revolution and expulsion of the Russian-friendly administration from the Ukrainian government, it is no wonder as to why the Russians would view their Crimean naval/military interests at risk.

A quote worth remembering and repeating

Brethren should be watching present developments intently with the realization that the Prophetic Record is not merely an academic exercise – something in which to look at as merely fulfilled history or as something that belongs to some unforeseen and incomprehensible future – but is being developed and played out before our very eyes as a matter of REALITY by the ingenious hands of the Elohim. We have regularly provided a warning and signpost penned by bro. John Thomas on the back cover of this magazine, and have even used it in another article recently, but it bears repeating: *“The Russian Autocracy in its plenitude and on the verge of dissolution is the image of Nebuchadnezzar standing upon the mountains of Israel, ready to be smitten by the Stone. When Russia makes its grand move for the building up of its Image-empire, then let the reader know that the end of all things as present continued, is at hand”* (Elpis Israel preface).

The Image Empire (Dan. 2) does not yet stand. But we are seeing very significant and highly strategic moves by the part of Gogue to build its Empire. Even political commentators in the press recognize Putin’s intent to rebuild former Soviet glory, though they fail to recognize the full Prophetic destiny and destruction of this northern nation. Such will eventually involve bringing Western Europe into submission to Russia and the uniting of the eastern and western legs of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image both politically and religiously (the control of the flow of Russian oil and natural gas through the pipelines of the Ukraine will no doubt play a part in such a scheme); and the eventual takeover of Constantinople/Istanbul as sitting in control of the entirety of Turkey for Russia’s critical need to be able to have free access to the warm waters of the Mediterranean (the securing of Russian naval and military bases in Crimea provide the stepping stone towards the eventual takeover of Istanbul, which is only 340 miles [290 nautical miles] straight southeast across the Black Sea from Sevastopol.)

The Gogian Confederacy, when it comes against Israel to “take a spoil”, as identified in Ezekiel 38:2,5,6 (as well as Daniel 11:43) will consist of the following: Magog (Germany), Persia (Iran), Ethiopia/Cush (in this writer’s opinion – modern day Iraq), Libya, Gomer (France), and Togarmah (Turkey). The dramatic and awful nature of this force and its day of supreme arrogance and destruction as it dares to challenge God’s people and the Land of Israel is revealed throughout the Prophets, but we read in Joel 2:1,2 – *“Blow ye the*

trumpets in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it..." and in the 3rd chapter, vs. 2- "I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for My People and for My heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted My land."

But before we can arrive at such a point that will usher in the open manifestation of Divine Power and the striking of the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image when it will (as the "King of the North" due to acquisition of Constantinople) "*plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain (Jerusalem); yet shall he come to his end, and none shall help him*" (Dan. 11:45)* – before we can arrive at such a point in God's Plan, there must be a standing of the Image Empire as foreseen by Nebuchadnezzar and interpreted through the prophet Daniel. Russia is not there yet. But we certainly are being blessed to watch the preliminary and dramatic stages of the awe inspiring development of a terrible force that will be so politically arrogant, so militarily brutal and joined at the hip with Roman Apostasy that it is chosen by Deity to be the very pinnacle and maturation/ripening of the The Kingdom of Men, which is to be utterly shamed and destroyed as the direct opposite of the merciful and righteous character of that which supplants it – the restoration of the Israelitish Kingdom under the rule of God's Son and his immortalized brethren. (Dan. 2:44).

There are four main objectives regarding the rise of Russian power that bro. Thomas made note of at the beginning of Russia's Crimean War (1854-56).

1. *To create a war among the powers contrary to their inclinations;*
2. *To develop that war in the west for a special purpose*
3. *To direct the storm against the sovereign power that governs Palestine* [At that time it was perceived that Britain would be the protectorate and ruler of Palestine, which came true for a time, but with Israel as a sovereign nation we now see that the Tarshish powers – Britain and her "young lions" of the U.S., Canada, Australia, etc. - act as an ally and claim "to be willing to protect Israel" in the case of attack. Tarshish interests and Russian interests are at complete odds and we see Russia agitating this at will as we speak – A.T.]
4. *To turn it against Jerusalem and the Holy Land.*

* We hope to deal with the end time application of Daniel 11:40-45 and its inseparable relation to prophecies such as Ezekiel 38/39; Joel 2/3; Zechariah 14; etc. in a future issue of the S.K.

(Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, 1854, p. 272)

Though the Crimean War did not bring about the End Times, the involvement of European nations and conflict with Turkey did provide some foreshadowing of future events. The time was not right for Russia to make its push into Western Europe, or to push southward into Turkey itself and the eventual push into the Land of Israel - but it demonstrated the direction of future Russian ambition.

Putin takes on the West

Though much has been said in recent media reports regarding Putin desiring to rebuild the former Soviet Empire, and this is no doubt true, it cannot be forgotten that there is a powerful religious element in Putin's aggression. Putin is increasingly portraying himself as the defender of the "Christian" Faith and of its values against the moral decline and decadence of the West. It doesn't seem to matter that he divorced his wife and keeps a mistress or that he was formerly KGB and ran its successor, the FSB – services that specialized in propaganda and disinformation. Whatever his true motives, which at the heart is certainly pure ambition and arrogance, he has been able to strike a chord with those of the East who despise and are fearful of the spread of Western hedonism and its anti-religious values – especially as it relates to the militant spread of "gay rights". But it is Putin's championing of Apostate Christianity that will set the Russian nation and its allies on a collision course with Christ and the Saints.



It is this religious element of Nebuchadnezzar's Image that we are to expect, and something that was not a part of the "Soviet era" agenda of Russia. Moscow has long been recognized as the "3rd Rome" as after the immigration of the Orthodox Church to Moscow after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 by the Ottomans, the Czars (title relating to the Roman Caesars) have viewed themselves as the defenders of the Christian faith and protectors of the Holy Land. Along with a coveting of the natural "spoils" of Israel (Ezek. 38:12), there can be no question that control of the so called "Holy Sites" (as it was leading up to the Crimean War) will be an important part of Russia's objectives and a spoil that they will have agreed to share with their ally in Rome (The Pope/False Prophet – Rev.16:13,14) as they lead the "*whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.*"

Decline of the U.S.

With the decline of U.S. economic power and geo-political will, a great vacuum of influence and balance is being created across the globe. The enemies of the West fully comprehend this and there is really nothing that

stands in the way of further Russian aggression towards Europe and towards Turkey and the Middle East. As instability grows in the Middle East the U.S. is distracted by growing aggression by North Korea, China and Russian incursions into Latin America. Russia's brief conflict with Georgia in 2008 appeared to act as a kind of dipping of Putin's toe in the waters of future aggression. Now facing extreme geo-political naivety and ideological self-obsession with social change within the U.S. itself, Putin is seen the world over as the leading force of strength and moral will to be reckoned with. Nations realize and are openly declaring the fact that they can no longer depend on vacillating U.S. support, and that they are on their own to either defend themselves or capitulate to aggressive forces the world over. The U.S. has become a laughingstock around the world (and from within) in its appeasement and capitulation to the recent shows of Russian will in Syria, Iran and now in Crimea and the Ukraine. Putin recognizes this better than most, and is skillfully and prudently playing this to his continued advantage. While the American President condescendingly refers to Russia as a "regional power" acting out of "weakness" - Russia primes itself for further conquest. Which is weaker - the nation that draws lines in the sand to only capitulate and fight back with empty and vague threats, or the nation that is freely exercising its power at will?

What does all this mean for Israel?

In early March, Arutz Sheva posted an opinion piece titled - "Ukraine's Lesson for Israel: 'US Guarantee Worthless'". In it, the argument is logically and clearly presented that the U.S.'s lack of will and ability to stand by their agreements to defend their allies against foreign aggression should send a sobering message to Israel regarding any guarantees in relation to the Palestinian/Israeli "peace process" or dealings with Iran - "*These guarantees are not worth a cent, of course.*"

Such is of no surprise to Brethren who are paying attention to the Prophetic Word. Such "guarantees" surpass any dealings with the Palestinians or Iranians but lead up to the lack of will or inability of the Tarshish powers to rebuff the invading Russian hordes when they come down upon Israel "*like a cloud to cover the land*" (Ezek. 38:9). Though the Tarshish powers will no doubt object to Russian aggression (38:13), and we have Scriptural clues that they will be forcefully pushed out of their strategic positions that would be of help to the Israeli's, we are seeing the stage set RIGHT NOW for their future ineffectiveness as it relates to Israel's protection. And it must be, so that when The Multitudinous Christ comes out of Sinai as the only means of rescue for the surviving remnant of Judah, "*the house of Israel shall know that I am Yahweh their Elohim from that day and forward*" Ezek. 39:22 (also Duet. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Hab. 3:3; Joel 2:20; Zech. 12:7, and many more passages.)

Brethren, let us watch carefully the rise of the Image Empire.

A. Thomas



“FOR MEN SHALL BE...”

IN 2nd Timothy 3:1-8 young Timothy was warned by the Apostle Paul as to the conditions and characteristics of men leading to the last days of Judah's Commonwealth. "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.*" And then continues with the words, "*For men shall be...*" launching into quite an explicit description of the rampant evil to be manifested by men. Though such wickedness has always existed and been manifested to one degree or another, this side of the Fall of Man, we know that such is especially concentrated in these end times shortly before the Return of Christ to "*judge the world in righteousness.*" We also see revealed that these influences would infiltrate the Household as well, leading the undiscerning astray.

For the benefit of our readers we wish to provide, and briefly define and elaborate upon the unambiguous list of adjectives used to define the nature of such "perilous times", as we sometime lose sight of the hard and cutting meaning intended by the Spirit Word that can be blurred by the chosen phrases of the Authorized Version and/or simply taken for granted by our own selves in the attempt to either justify our own fleshly tendencies or the simple apathy and familiarity towards wickedness in all its forms that tends to pull at all of us in these Laodicean times.

1. "***lovers of their own selves***" - φιλαυτοι/philautos - *Too intent on one's self interest, selfish and regardless of the welfare of all others.* Cain demonstrated this self-centered attitude early on, followed by men such as Nimrod, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar (until humbled), Haman, Judas Iscariot and a whole host of others. Such an attitude sets the desires, ambitions and authority of the flesh above God himself and the care and concern of others - and is in direct conflict with Scriptural command. (Mark 12:30,31). This characteristic is at the root of the Apostasy and its proclaimed Bishops of Rome, and the self-promoting and oppressive nature of the Kingdom of Men in general. Social Media has provided the platform in which even the common man can have a stage for his narcissism, drawing attention to every aspect of his life - putting on an exaggerated if not false image of personal importance, popularity, happiness and intelligence.

2. **“covetous”** - φιλαργυροι/philarguros – *Fond of money or material goods and the influence or prestige it brings. In and of itself a form of idolatry. (Matthew 6:19-24; Col. 3:5; 1st Tim. 6:10).* At the prompting of the serpent, Eve coveted the eye opening effects of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil – instilling such lust as a natural characteristic of the sin-flesh nature.
3. **“boasters”** - αλαζονες/alazōn – *Braggart, respecting themselves above all others (Prov. 8:13; 27:2).* As “lovers of their own selves”, they are intent on making sure that others are also aware of their self-perceived “greatness”. They do not listen nor are interested or empathetic to the sorrows or joys of other, but expect to be listened to and to receive supreme interest by others.
4. **“proud”** - ὑπερηφανοί/huperēphanos – *Haughty, those who love to make a show, those who make themselves appear above or better than others (Prov. 16:18; Matt. 6:5).*
5. **“blasphemers”** - βλασφημοί/blasphēmos – *Those who speak evil, slanderously or flippantly of something, especially as it relates to God and spiritual matters. Also can include slander against men. (Jude 4,8).* Apostate beliefs concerning God and His Son are in and of themselves blasphemous (Rev. 17:3). Also, we live in a culture that calls upon God (the so called believing or unbelieving) as a repeatedly referenced exclamatory statement – with no thought or meaning at all. We also live in a culture when even there is a professed belief and appreciation of God, the casual manner in which He is referenced or brought down to the level of flesh as a mere friend/buddy or as hip with the current culture, can provide the most nauseating examples of blasphemy.
6. **“disobedient to parents”** - Γονευσιν απειθεις/goneus apeithēs - *Children that cannot be persuaded; non-compliant to authority. (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3).* We live in a society where there is more of a willingness of parents to follow the desires and whims of their children rather than the children falling into line with the parents. This trend has had a dramatic impact on the Brotherhood itself. As such grow into adulthood they carry the same attitude of non-compliance towards the experience and authority of the ecclesial eldership in general – and cannot be persuaded as to the validity and vital importance of the “old paths”. Many parents in the Household have been all too quick to change spiritual course in order to stay in the good graces of their children. The critical importance of this matter and its relationship to the proper or adverse spiritual development of men was demonstrated under the Law, in that, as Paul pointed out in his letter to the Ephesians, “Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise). That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” (Eph.6:2,3; Col. 3:20).

7. **“unthankful”** - ἀχάριστος/acharistos – *No gratitude, thankless, a feeling of right to the services of others (especially as it relates to Yahweh) yet feeling no obligation – “I DESERVE IT” (Ps. 100:4; Coll. 3:15).* Such are too quick to ask when something goes wrong – “why is this happening to me?” – and then when things go well, there is no sincere recognition to Him by whom all blessings flow. The Book of Psalms (and the view it gives us of the mind of Christ) provides us with the highest concentration and examples of the supreme beauty of thankfulness to our Heavenly Father for the “goodness and mercy” of Yahweh so undeservedly extended to us. (Ps. 8:4; 115:12).
8. **“unholy”** - ἀνόσιος/anosios – *Wicked.* To be “holy” (Gr. *hagios*) is to be set apart from the general course of this world which embraces *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life.*
9. **“without natural affection”** - ἄστοργος/astorgos – *The opposite of what is demonstrated in the affection of parents towards their young and the young towards their parents, unloving, inhumane.* When affection is centered upon one’s self, there then becomes an imbalance and inability to have affection for the things that really matter – love towards God, love towards Christ, love towards the brethren, and the love that is supposed to flourish within a natural family itself.
10. **“trucebreakers”** - Ἀσπονδοί/aspondos – Clarke’s commentary states here, *“those who are bound by no promise, held by no engagement, obliged by no oath; persons who readily promise anything, because they never intend to perform.” (Zech. 8:17).* When we are baptized, we make a covenant with Yahweh through Christ’s sacrifice and in essence, as did the Children of Israel at Sinai at the reading of the Law, declare – *“All that Yahweh hath said will we do, and be obedient.”* Moses answered, foreshadowing our own relationship to the Everlasting or Covenant of the Age – *“Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh hath made with you concerning these words.”* The honoring of covenants/oaths, either with Yahweh or with fellow men, was taken very seriously under the Law (Num. 30:2). Christ himself commands us to let our “yea” be “yea” and our “nay, nay”. No shallow and over-exaggerated swearing – but simply the honor and strength of character to carry out what we have promised to do.
11. **“false accusers”** - διάβολος/diabolos – *A slander, one who attempts to destroy the character and reputation of another by false accusation (Prov. 10:18.)* We sadly live in an environment (within and without the Body of Christ) where it is easier to destroy a person’s individual reputation by impugning their character or personality (“the politics of personal destruction”) – rather than being able to logically and sincerely oppose the principles in which they stand for. But on the flip side, it is too easy for some to falsely accuse others of “slander” when the facts are clearly

demonstrated as to the error of belief or action that one or many may in fact hold or tolerate. The charge of “slander” (and even “hypocrisy”) can unfortunately be used as a diversionary tactic. As those of the world may pull the proverbial “race card” to avoid or divert criticism, so too may some within the Brotherhood be too quick to pull the “slander card” to avoid the same. Let us be very careful not to stand ourselves as “false accusers”, but at the same time we must be careful not to make the false charge against brethren for being guilty of slander. As has been quoted many times before – “*facts are stubborn things.*”

12. “**incontinent**” - ἀκράτης/akratēs - *Without self-control* (Prov. 25:28). This can apply to our emotions as well as to our lusts. If we all had perfect self-control, then we would be without sin. Unfortunately, we lose control of ourselves to one degree or another on a daily basis when we surrender to the impulses of the flesh. So, our daily struggle should act as a sobering and humbling reminder that we need to constantly be keenly aware of the vital importance of self-examination and self-corrective measures (as only found in the commands and instruction of the Spirit Word) and the ever-present danger of our sin nature. Many brethren have suddenly surrendered and given into their weaknesses – finding surrender the desired path of least resistance. It doesn’t take much to surrender to what comes so very naturally to our inherited nature – A heart which is spoken of as “*desperately wicked.*” It is a horrid thing to watch a society that triumphantly surrenders itself to and embraces every form of evil imaginable (and unimaginable). We are forbidden to follow in their footsteps.
13. “**fierce**” - ἀνήμερος/anēmeros - *The opposite of mild/gentle. Indicates to be fierce or savage.* (Prov. 16:32; 2nd Tim. 2:24). We live in a culture that seems to promote/embrace two vile extremes – either extreme effeminacy and surrender of any type of masculinity and male-centered authority; or a barbaric, rage filled self-conscious quest to portray a perverted sense of virility in order to force their will on others (such as Nimrod). But we are told that, “*The meek shall inherit the earth.*” And much has been expounded in Christadelphian writings to explain what true meekness is – which simply indicates a teachable and humble attitude that is submissive to the will of Yahweh and offers a kind and approachable attitude towards all; something that stands in stark contrast to the fierceness described by the Apostle Paul. But such does not negate the principal of spiritual strength and zeal – “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quite ye like men* (i.e., “be manly”), *be strong* (1st Cor. 16:13). Moses, the prime example of meekness in the Old Testament (Numbers 12:3), was humble before Yahweh, and humble in the face of personal attacks waged against him. But, was quite forceful, jealous and zealous in his promotion and defense of the honor of Yahweh – pointing forward to the embodiment of such an approach in Christ.

14. “**despisers of those that are good**” - ἀφιλάγαθος/aphilagathos – *Literally, not lovers of good or good men.* (John 15:8; 1st Pet. 3:14; Philippians 4:8; 1st John 3:13).
15. “**traitors**” - προδότης/prodotēs – *Betray; to give up others to evil for personal gain.* On the world scene we have to look no further than the political or business stage to see the principal of betrayal for personal gain not only continually practiced but also justified – “*the ends justify the means.*” In spiritual matters, our minds are often quickly drawn to Judas Iscariot when considering this characteristic, but we too can be guilty of the betrayal of Christ himself when we deny him in either word or deed (Heb. 6:6; Matt. 10:33).
16. “**heady**” - προπετής/propetēs – *Headstrong, rash, reckless.* (Prov. 4:26; Eccl. 5:2).
17. “**highminded**” - τυφώω/tuphoō - *Literally, to envelope with smoke or figuratively to inflate with self-conceit.* (Isaiah 66:2; Micah 6:8).
18. “**lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**” - φιλήδονος/philēdonos – The pursuit of sensual pleasure is their foremost objective, in place of the love and worship of God.
19. “**having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof**” - μόρφωσις/morphōsis - *The Greek word for “form” (morphosis) indicates the appearance or sketch of something.* Such individuals may have a form of religion or moral standard, but live lives in complete opposition to God’s authority and commands. Christ’s description of “whited sepulchers” may come to mind.
20. “**creep into houses**” - ἐνδύνω/endunō - “*Creep*” (Gr. “enduno”) means to envelop or hide, and as Thayer’s defines – “*literally; to put on, clothe with a garment.*” These are such that wrap themselves in a cloak for the purpose of deception, no doubt under the self-deluded thought of good intentions – in scriptural terms, wolves in sheep’s clothing. By subterfuge they sneak into and within the Spiritual House or ecclesia under false pretense. (Matt. 7:15; Acts 20:29).
21. “**ever learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the Truth**” – *Those apostates who cloak themselves in good intentions in their attempts to fool others are continuously in search of some higher truth, or are trying to improve something that needs no improvement.* This class of individuals (known as “Gnostics” or so called “knowing ones” to the early Ecclesia) is all the while unable or unwilling to grasp the simplicity and clarity of the Gospel message and the obedience it requires. Such is a prominent feature among the so called “wise intellectuals” of the world

(both “religious” and “atheist”), and a growing crisis within the Brotherhood itself (*1st Corinthians 1:23:27; Rom. 1:22*).

22. **“as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth”** – Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses by *imitating* the miracles that were performed. They were themselves IMITATORS of the Truth, using trickery to distract and deceive attention from the Truth itself.
23. **“corrupt minds”** – νοῦς καταφθείρω/nous kataphtheirō - *Perverted intellects*, as characterize such cloaked and deceptive individuals.
24. **“reprobate concerning the faith”** – ἀδόκιμος/adokimos – *The adjective “reprobate” indicates “undiscerning or untried”*. According to Thayer’s it is *that which does not stand the test, not approved*. Its practical application is in the use and authenticity of metals or coins. Such individuals are base metal, unstamped for use – OF NO VALUE in regard to THE FAITH; counterfeit. They are mere imitators of righteousness that cloak themselves in a deceiving garment, leading the undiscerning down the same path of ignorance and apostasy. (*See 2nd Peter, entire 2nd chapter*).

Connected to these identifiers Christ warned the Believers (in Luke 21:34-36) of the fleshly tendencies that would hinder the ability to watch for impending judgments (in the first instance the judgments of 70 A.D. and applicable to these End Times as well). We see in the following a summarization of what was elaborated by the Apostle Paul.

- **“hearts overcharged”** – *To be weighed down or heavy*. To be weighed down with the distractions and enticements of this present life. Hebrews 12:1 commands us to *“lay aside every weight (burden), and the sin which doth so easily beset us...”*
- **“surfeiting”** – The giddiness, headache and nausea accompanied by too much wine.
- **“drunkenness”** – Both of these can be taken literally but are to be understood to a general state of intoxication with the cares of this life and the spiritual apathy such breeds, as well as drinking from the cup of Apostasy (Rev. 17:2).
- **“cares of this life”** – Anxiety or distraction with the affairs of this life.

All of the characteristics listed by Christ and Paul may seem like horrifying qualities of the world around us. But we must understand through the act of self-examination, and knowing that the heart is “desperately wicked”, that all of us are in very real and constant danger of being overtaken by such qualities. Let us heed these warnings in regard to ourselves and to also have the spiritual discernment to reject and not let such things have further influence within the Christ Body.

A Thomas



Reading: Haggai Chapter 2:1-9

In our last installment, we reviewed Haggai Chapter 1 and the prophet’s wholehearted effort to convince Judah to consider their ways, resulting in a quick spiritual turnaround to the glory of GOD and upliftment of the people. In this article we hope to continue by covering Haggai 2:1-9.

Haggai Chapter 2 commences nearly a month after Chapter 1 closed. The people were hard at work on Yahweh’s Temple, and were very blessed for it. However, they needed encouragement and Yahweh provided it through Haggai the Prophet. Verse 1 tells us that Haggai’s message was to come in the 21st day of the 7th month. Was this day just time and chance? - Of course not. The 21st day of the 7th month was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles: (Leviticus 23:33-34, 40-43.)

The Feast of Tabernacles, which was the last of the year, was supposed to be a feast of great joy as we read in verse 40 of the passage. The people were to come together and have fellowship with their GOD. In fact, this feast was a rarity in that all humans from men to women, children to servants, had to come and rejoice in Yahweh and His blessings upon them, as recorded in Deuteronomy 16:13-15. Thus we see that as the children of Judah partook of the Feast, they should have been excited about their work on the Temple. Also, as Zechariah would also remind them, their work was but a token of the future great day of joy: *“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles”* Zechariah 14:16.

Back to Haggai, we find in the next few verses that even though the people had put their hands to the plow with repentant hearts, they were unfortunately still struggling. In Haggai 2:3 we read that they were comparing the house to its former glory pre-destruction by Babylon. In comparison, though they were

trying, their efforts seemed as nothing. This word “nothing” in the Hebrew means “*to be nothing, non-existent, a non-entity*”. In other words, they thought that their work was meaningless and without value.

Sadly, the people were becoming discouraged. In Haggai Chapter 1:13, Yahweh had said He was with them – and He was. Nonetheless, as the people got to work, they saw the results of their efforts as meager and “*a non-entity*”. In this time of despair, Haggai was once again sent to encourage the people to have a forward-oriented vision. Zechariah would also soon be at work: “*The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? For they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth.*” Zechariah 4:9-10. We see here that the people were to despise not the day of small things. In the context of the chapter, Zechariah prophesies about the saints and Jesus Christ before whom the kingdoms of this evil world will become a plain. The people were not to despise their current efforts, as they were respected by GOD and would result in the people having a much greater work in the Kingdom Age.

Ultimately Yahweh desired faithful workmen and not so much the literal work itself. He desired tireless efforts and thankful hearts. Naturally, we may despise the day of small things as well – work in the vineyard, visiting the elderly, attending Bible classes – but we must have a forward oriented vision. I think we would do well to consider how Jesus viewed small, seemingly meaningless things: The poor woman casting in her two mites – “*I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all.*” Luke 21:1-4; “*whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward*” Matthew 10:42. Seeing these examples, we should thus desire to give our all to GOD.

In these days, though, we may sometimes feel that there is so little that we can do to please GOD and Christ, but is that true? We have so little to give in terms of talents, but let us give what we have. We need to follow Christ’s admonition to give the Truth our all: “*Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*” Matthew 22:37.

Haggai’s message then is that we must work in faith even in this day of small things. While at our best we are still unprofitable servants, having done that which was our duty to do, we nonetheless can be something valuable to GOD through our faith. H.P. Mansfield comments that “*There is nothing more calculated to destroy depression or defeatism than faithful activity, but this is only possible when the objects and value of labour are properly recognized*”. We must work in faith then, looking not at the things that are seen, but at those which are not seen and eternal as 2nd Corinthians 4:17-18 encourages us.

Be strong

Back to Haggai Chapter 2 in verse 4, Yahweh encouraged the people to “*be strong*”. As He had done before and would do again, GOD reminded the people that He was with them. As Romans 8:31 says, they should have realized “*If GOD be for us, who can be against us?*” The people of the remnant thus needed to gird up their loins, despise not the day of small things, and continue to put in effort in faith of the future day. As the LORD commanded, they were to “*be strong*”. Not surprisingly, as Haggai sounded the trumpet, his younger companion Zechariah was also there to echo the exhortation: “*And it shall come to pass, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel; so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: fear not, but let your hands be strong*” Zechariah 8:13.

This exhortation to “*be strong*” is found at many other points in the Bible as it is an exhortation necessary for all ages, races and time periods such as Joshua 1:5-9, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:10. From these verses we see that we’re commanded to be strong. However, we cannot be strong by ourselves and so we must learn to trust in true strength which is really from GOD: “*Bow down Thine ear to me; deliver me speedily: “Be Thou my strong rock (Heb. sela – “fortress”), for an house of defense to save me”* Psalms 31:2. Additionally, while we strive for strength we must be patient with ourselves as we press forward: “*Wait on the LORD: Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: Wait, I say, on the LORD*” Psalm 27:14.

Fear ye not

Moving forward, in Haggai 2:5, Haggai reminds the people that they’d been covenanted as Yahweh had delivered them from slavery and they were baptized in the Red Sea, as we could read in 1 Corinthians 10:1-4. GOD’s Spirit had once been with Israel, but was withdrawn due to disobedience. Now Yahweh comforted Haggai’s people that His Spirit was with them again due to their obedience and work in His vineyard. While the power of GOD in miracles was certainly a manifestation of the Spirit, ultimately Yahweh’s words of instruction through the Law and the Prophets – the words of eternal life – were how He’d shown His Spirit: “*Thou gavest also Thy good spirit to instruct them, and withholdest not Thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst*” Nehemiah 9:20. In the New Testament, Jesus echoed the fact that the words of Truth were the Spirit and would provide life: “*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*” John 6:63.

After encouraging them about the presence of His Spirit, GOD continued in Haggai by saying “*fear ye not*”. We see that as long as the people would be strong and work wholeheartedly, GOD would prosper them with His Spirit and they had no reason to fear. Though Samaritan enemies were fighting GOD’s way from without and though apathetic kinsman were fighting GOD’s way from within, they had nothing to fear with GOD on their side.

Just like the phrase “*be strong*”, the exhortation to “*fear ye not*” is also found throughout Scripture. Let us start in Joshua 10:24-25 – “*And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, ‘Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings.’ And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them. And Joshua said unto them, ‘Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the LORD do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.’*” Here we find that if we do not fear man or the flesh, we can be strong and conquer it with GOD’s help. No enemy or trial is too strong for us with Jesus as our covering and GOD as our rock. They can help us. Let’s look at a few more examples of individuals throughout the Bible who were told to fear not. The first time that this concept is recorded in the Bible is with Abram in Genesis 15:1 – “*Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*” In the Psalms, David and other writers frequently wrote about not fearing: Psalms 27:1, 118:6. Finally, let us look at the words of our beloved Messiah in Luke 12:32 – “*Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.*”

Vision for the future

In Haggai 2:6, the prophet’s message begins to shift from the present work to a vision of the future age. Though the people were not to despise the day of small things, they also needed an end picture. Where there is no vision the people perish. The people were supposed to be doing their best for GOD, with wholehearted effort, but ultimately they had to realize the Temple they were building was not Yahweh’s final work.

Yahweh of Armies thus speaks and we should listen – let’s read Haggai 2:6,7 – “*Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.*” In the verse before us, Yahweh speaks of a complete change in world order. While the literal heavens, earth, sea and dry land will be healed from sin’s curse, they will not be shaken in the sense of replacement. However, we know that in the Bible these geographical features represent the spiritual heavens that will be overturned, the people of this earth that will be humbled, and the sea of nations that will fall. Finally, the dry and thirsty land that we live in will be flooded with the water of Yahweh. Let’s turn to some verses on this theme: Isaiah 51:6, 17:12-14; Revelation 15:1-2. From these verses then we see GOD’s message – He will defeat the political and religious systems of today, the Earth will be humbled, and His Saints will stand with His Son as victors over the flesh. Will we be with Him in that day? That was the question for Haggai’s Brethren and ourselves today.

In Haggai 2:7, Yahweh says that He “*will shake all nations*”. This is a theme of the prophetic Scriptures that shows Yahweh will humble the nations at the hands of His Beloved Son. At Christ’s first coming mankind foolishly

tortured and killed him, thus fulfilling GOD’s righteous will. At his second coming they will again come against the Son of God to fight, but this time Yahweh will shake the nations in His indignation. As Jesus did the greatest work of conquering sin at his first coming, now he will conquer the sin-manifesting nations. Please consider: Isaiah 2:12,17-19, Joel 3:16, Ezekiel 38:19-20.

Back to Haggai 2:7, we read that the “*desire of all nations shall come*”. In this verse, the word “*desire*” is a feminine noun meaning “*desirable, pleasant, fine, valuable (things)*”. This noun is in the singular, while Brother Thomas says that the verb “*shall come*” in this verse is actually in the plural. So again you have a singular, female *desire* coupled with a plural verb. Brother Thomas suggests a better translation should be: “*The Excellency of the Nations, they shall come in*”. This, of course, refers to the multitudinous Bride of Christ, the one feminine body made of many that Yahweh desires out of all the nations. If we really think about it, what pleases GOD most of all? Humble obedience and uprightness is the answer. “*They that are of a forward heart are abomination to the LORD: But such as are upright in their way are His delight*” Proverbs 11:20. We see then that Yahweh desires and indeed loves those who have sacrificed their lives to Him and lived with thankful, upright hearts. These are Yahweh’s desirable ones. These are those who will conquer the nations and will shine forth His glory with no more pain, suffering or sorrow forevermore.

This end vision is truly the message that Haggai was trying to relay in his day, and this is what we too should look forward to. Our efforts in the vineyard may seem meager, but we must put our hand to the plow in hope of this future day. We can waste our life on fruitless pursuits or, at risk of being outcast (by the world, or our Brethren?) or even slain, give our lives to GOD as He deserves after the example of our strong and faithful Messiah. Let us look up some more verses on whom Yahweh will choose and the award that awaits them: “*Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.*” Malachi 3:16-18. “*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth*” Revelation 5:9-10.

The future glory

Back to Haggai, once Yahweh chooses His desirable ones, He says in verse 7 that He will “*fill this house with glory*”. As this vision is of the future,

Haggai was not referring to the house that His Brethren were struggling to build. While He told the people to be strong and fear not, and GOD Himself assured the people that He was with them, ultimately the Temple that they were building was not His ultimate place of glory.

In the year 2014, we look back with sorrow as it truly has been a very, very long time since our GOD's glory shined forth on this Earth. We know that it has been long absent because Israel and Judah rejected their GOD, apostatizing the Truth, and as a result we know that GOD's glory was taken from them. If they did not care for GOD, why would His comforting and protective presence be with them? We read of this departure in Ezekiel 11:22.

Even with the rebuilding of the Temple in Haggai's day, Yahweh's spirit never shone forth above the Cherubim again to our knowledge. What a wonderful day it will be when Yahweh's glory comes back to Earth through Jesus His Beloved Son and His Desirable Ones – when His glory will shine forth in the future Temple to be built (Ezekiel 43:1-2). As we await this coming of our GOD's glory, we believe that Psalm 80:1-3 describe what should be our attitude and prayer – *“Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up Thy Strength, and come and save us. Turn us again, O God, And cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”*

All is Yahweh's

In verse 8 of Haggai 2, Yahweh says, *“The silver is mine, and the gold is mine”*. Here Haggai reminds the people that all of the precious things of this Earth are Yahweh's as the Creator and Sustainer. His Creation is so beautiful and yet so much has been wasted on sinful garbage. Finally, at long last, all will be given back to His Name, which is precious. Though the people of Haggai's day may not have built anything miraculous (remember in Haggai 1:8 when they were just asked to bring up wood), if they worked their hearts out they would be Yahweh's “desirable ones” when fortunes reversed.

We read in the prophetic Scriptures that the wealth of the nations will at last be returned to our GOD who deserves it. He does not need silver or gold for glory, but desires the humble actions whereby He will reacquire what is rightly His own. (Isaiah 60:1-9,16-17).

From the passage in Isaiah 60, we see that the forces or wealth of the Gentiles, previously wasted on fruitless pursuits, will be given back to our GOD. Nonetheless, there is actually another type of silver and gold that Yahweh desires even more for in fact these two metals represent the redemption and tried faith of His desirable ones. While the literal silver and gold will go to Yahweh's great Temple in Jerusalem, the faithful redeemed will be part of the greatest building of all, the spiritual New Jerusalem. *While we do not have time to review them, you can look at verses on silver as a sign*

of redemption in Leviticus 5:15 and Exodus 30:11-16 and of gold as faith in 1 Peter 1:7 and Job 23:10.

The glory of the “latter house”

Let us now turn back to Haggai to re-read our concluding topic verse for this article: Haggai 2:9 – *“The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.”* If there has been any doubt in our minds, this verse shows us that GOD's main goal through Haggai was to have the people's vision focused on the future Temple. The Temple as shown to Ezekiel will be amazing, approximately a mile square with an elevated position over the surrounding lands. Unlike the older, smaller Temples that just served the Jewish people, this Temple will serve the entire world by means of an immortal priesthood of GOD's Desirable Ones. Please consider the following verses to center our minds on this future day as the great gift that Yahweh and Christ have provided through their conquering of sin's flesh: Isaiah 2:2-3, Psalm 48:1-2, 11-13.

The latter chapters of Ezekiel go into much further detail concerning the literal house for our GOD's glory. It will be truly magnificent. However, it is the New Jerusalem building of Yahweh's desirable ones that will be His favored means of manifestation where He will show His Glory forever to His perfected Creation.

Haggai continues with Yahweh's message for us to hear by saying, *“and in this place will I give peace”*. The word “peace” here is the Hebrew word *shalom*, which will be spread throughout the globe. First we know the nations have to be conquered, along with the Catholic Apostasy and Her Protestant Daughters, but finally peace will come. The prophets also foretold this peace that the Prince of Peace would bring: Micah 4:3 – *“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.”*

While literal peace is obviously one of our greatest hopes for the Kingdom, we believe that the spiritual peace will be even more glorious, the peace that comes through a knowledge and belief of the atoning Truth then manifest: *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you”* John 14:27. *“I will hear what GOD the LORD will speak: For He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints: But let them not turn again to folly. Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other”* Psalm 85:8-10.

As we conclude this installment, we see that Yahweh's point through Haggai is that GOD is most interested in the spiritual development of His Desirable Ones. The people of Haggai's time may have thought their work was futile or a “non-entity”. However, Haggai showed that everything they

knew and saw would be shaken and in the end a much greater Temple would be built in a much greater time. They – and we – should build in faith of GOD’s blessing, and fear not, for GOD will provide the faithful their places of redemption in the beautiful age to come. If we work faithfully now, we may to have a place then. May we all be so blessed to sing the song of Isaiah 12 together in that future day, with which we’ll conclude: *“Sing unto the LORD; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee”* Isaiah 12:5-6.

David Bryan

IN THE HOUSE OF MOURNING

With several of our brothers and sisters falling asleep in Christ over the past few somber months of winter, we provide the following graveside comments from a bro. Robert Ashcroft at the funeral of a Sister Thorneloe of Leicester, England in May of 1883. This sister died at the age of 24 and had only been married for 18 months. Along with the clear words of comfort that the following provides, we also note it for its clear and sound doctrinal message – where only true comfort and hope may be found.

After assembling at the home of the deceased, her body was conveyed to the gravesite where the following simple remarks were given:

Our sister may be said to have died for a different reason from that which explains the occurrence of death in the case of mankind in general. They die, and return to their dust in harmony with the sentence which was originally pronounced upon their progenitor by whom “sin entered into the world and death by sin.” But *she* rests not beneath that law. She was under it by natural birth, but she has escaped from it by a divine arrangement provided for that purpose, for all the sons and daughters of men who are willing to avail themselves of it. “The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made her free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2). There was, therefore, no legal necessity for her death. Had she “by reason of strength,” been enabled to live until the return of Christ from heaven, she would not have required to taste of death at all, but would have been changed in a moment from a state of mortality

to one of incorruptibility and endless life, at his appearing and his kingdom. We may say, therefore, concerning her, what Martha said to Christ touching Lazarus her brother - “Lord, if thou hadst been here” our sister “had not died.” The reason why the friends of Christ die, is to be found in his absence from the earth, and in the fact that God had ordained that there shall occur no change of nature in any of His people until the arrival of a set time, when it is His purpose that they shall all be glorified together.

Sister Thorneloe is not dead in the final sense. She is only so in the sense of a temporary suspension, for “the dead know not anything.” Illimitable duration elapsed before her birth, without appearing either long or short to her, and the interval during which she will remain in the death-state will similarly to her perceptions be no interval at all. She will suddenly stand again, and for a moment wonder how it is that all her dreadful sufferings have gone! And then the glorious reality upon which she had learned to place her expectation and desire, will dawn upon her consciousness, and she will immediately understand that Christ is once more upon the earth, and that she is one of myriads belonging to various generations who have been re-called to life by his Power.

It may seem that there is a great demand upon our faith in this doctrine of resurrection from the dead. To us here assembled under the distressful circumstances of this day, it may require more than ordinary trust in the promises and power of God to enable us to exercise hope in the direction of a future life. Nature is silent touching any such resumption of being. We interrogate her in vain with the inquiry: - “If a man die shall he live again?” The blossoms of this beautiful season of the year are not the same as those which perished last year. New and perfectly distinct forms of life are continually being produced by the processes of nature from the elemental wealth of the world. How come we, then, to cherish the expectation that the very same identity which disappears in death will be restored, and that our very sister Thorneloe will look on us again, and know assuredly that she is herself?

We have this hope because God has promised that it shall be so, and because He has raised up Christ from the dead, who is the first fruits of them who sleep. We have thus a well-attested historic fact as the foundation of our hope. The thing for which we look has already happened in the case of Christ, and the possibility of the resurrection is placed beyond dispute by what has already transpired. It is to us no incredible thing that God should raise the dead. So far as we are concerned, the resurrection has passed beyond the region alike of the possible and the probable, and takes rank among the absolute certainties which we employ in the regulation of our daily lives.

In this assurance our sister was enabled to rejoice. She had been planted in the likeness of Christ’s death, and in the grave of baptism had terminated her connection with the first Adam, in whom all die, and had established for herself a relationship with the second Adam, “the Lord from Heaven,” to whom God has given jurisdiction over all flesh, that he may bestow upon His chosen ones the great gift of an immortal nature.

Our sister's hope was not directed towards the unreal fancies which are indulged by devout persons of almost all classes. She did not expect that in any sense she would depart to heavenly bliss the moment her last pulse had completed its feeble throb. She knew that she was really and truly going to die, and that she would remain dead until the appearing of the Lord Jesus, with as little consciousness as she had before she was born. The sadness necessarily incident to the approaching triumph of death over early womanhood did not shake her confidence in God's promise to restore her from the desolations of the grave.

The hope of that gospel which was preached by Christ and by the apostles, and by which alone life and immortality have been brought to light, sufficed to soothe and tranquilize her mind in the prospect of dissolution, and amid all the pain by which it was preceded. There is in truth nothing else that can afford substantial solace under circumstances such as were her's. If ever we should like our feet to feel the rock, it is when it becomes evident that we must soon go the way of all the earth. And the only rock there is, is that of Jehovah's promises made to the fathers of the Israelitish nation, and confirmed in the death of His well-beloved son. With those promises our sister had become familiar, and they were her only hope, and the supreme inspiration of her mortal life. She knew the truth, and rejoiced therein, and it was her aim in all things to do the will of God. Those who had opportunities of observing her walk and conversation during her brief probation, could speak with confidence of the varied excellencies by which her character was adorned. Everything else so far as she is concerned has ceased to occupy a position of the least importance. It is for us, the living, to lay this fact to heart. In the natural order our turn will assuredly come, and we know not how soon. But this we know, that when we are lying as is our beloved sister in the cold embrace of death, the only matter that will be of any consequence to us will relate to the manner in which we have occupied the period of our vanity. The resurrection will not give us characteristics we fail now to acquire. No progress is made in the grave in the direction of spiritual mindedness. We appear before Christ with precisely those affinities and dispositions which cleave to us when we die. If we are in love with this present evil world in any degree, let us consider how entirely such love excludes "the love of the Father" who raised up Jesus from the dead, and let us bethink ourselves how mean and vain will all worldly affairs appear when death is in immediate prospect: and how absolutely certain it is that all is ephemeral except those things which are unseen, and which relate to the mighty purpose of God in Christ.

Brother Ashcroft then asked the brethren and sisters to join him in prayer; after which the coffin was borne to the grave and sister Thorneloe was sorrowfully committed to its custody in hope of the day when she will hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth with joy unspeakable to receive the promised gift of

immortality at his hands, who himself has been made alive for evermore, and holds the keys of Hades and of death.

The Christadelphian, July, 1883, pp. 306-308

THE MEMORIAL SUPPER

WE are instructed throughout the Gospels that Jesus, along with the apostles, partook of the memorial supper immediately after they had eaten the Passover. In the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the recording of this event is very brief but yet of significant importance. Let us read of the account from the pen of Paul in 1st Corinthians 11:23-29.

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

We call it the "memorial service" because Jesus said *"This do in remembrance of me."* We also describe it as the *memorial supper* because it was first instituted as a supper shared by Jesus and his apostles. Let's now direct our thoughts to the meaning and symbols in the memorial supper and consider their importance.

The symbols are the bread and the cup. Symbols are used to give a message, a way to encourage us to mentally visualize that which the message is teaching. As noted below, these symbols represent various first principle elements.

THE BREAD	THE CUP
The Body of Christ	The Blood of Christ
The Flesh	The Life
Knowledge (word)	Living (actions)
Doctrine	Walk
Faith	Works

When we list the symbols in categories (bread and cup), we can identify two distinct aspects in the memorial service, each of which complements the other. Therefore, the partaking of the bread and the cup should bring to our thoughts various important contemplations as we partake of these memorials. As was previously noted from Paul in I Corinthians:

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: This is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me” (1st Cor. 11:23-24).

As Paul expands on the considerations involved he provides the following warning:

“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body” (1st Cor. 11:29).

It is clear that we must submit ourselves to the sensitivity of this figurative message. Paul leaves no doubt in his words when he explains to Timothy that he must be a workman *“rightly dividing the word of truth.”* To rightly divide the word of truth is to rightly discern the Lord’s body. It is through this discernment, in conjunction with the correct understanding of God’s word, that we now apply ourselves.

The Bread

The bread is symbolic of Christ’s body. Jesus taught that the believer must eat if he is to have life. *“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you”* (John 6:53).

At the beginning of John chapter six, the account is told of the multitude being fed with loaves and fishes. As we come to verse 26 and 27, we find Jesus rebuking the same multitude because they were seeking him merely to

be fed with *literal bread*, whereas his primary motive was to feed them *spiritual bread*. He proceeds to teach them about manna, which had come down from heaven, “as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat,” referring to that which God had provided.

Jesus goes on to say in John 6: 32-35 - *“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”*

Jesus, who was to be sent by God to feed his people represented the manna, which God provided Israel in the wilderness as a forerunner and type of the true bread. The entire lesson is highly figurative and filled with symbolic meaning. We are to be fed with the word of God which is symbolized by the bread. The balance of the chapter is filled with references to faith in Jesus and belief in the words he delivered. However, the multitude never did understand the spiritual significance of his teaching. *“The Jews therefore strove among themselves saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat”* (John 6:52)?

Jesus saw that they were upset and he recognized that some believed not. Ultimately, they did not receive his words with understanding and belief. *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give thee is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world”* (John 6:51).

This teaching must be understood figuratively. The figure of the bread represents the word of God and also represents the body of Christ. Jesus, quoting from Deuteronomy explains: *“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matt. 4:4). The reference is to living eternally. In our natural state we are under condemnation to death. When we accept, understand, and believe the word of life we plant our feet on the path to life everlasting – a destination that can only ultimately be achieved by the continual consumption (a hungering and thirsting) after the righteousness revealed in that word.

John had written, *“And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth”* (John 1:4). The Word of God (*the declared purpose of Deity*) had been spoken and resulted in the conception of Jesus. Therefore, he was truly and actually the begotten of the Father in a literal outworking of God’s expressed intent, His command of spirit power. This concept, this reality, and this identity is carried through to the very consummation of God’s purpose when Jesus is to be revealed in all his glory. Rev. 19:13 - *“And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.”*

Hence, as we partake of the bread in our memorial service each Sunday morning, our thoughts should reside on these details with thankfulness and admiration. We should hunger for our spiritual food, we should strive to understand and absorb the bread of life (the word of God), for by it we are spiritually instructed and strengthened. Jer. 15:16 - *“Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.”* The thought suggested from Jeremiah is that we should accept and then devour the word, absorbing it and making it a very part of who we are.

The bread represents the body of Jesus, given in sacrifice for his followers. First, it was a body broken by Jesus himself as he conquered all temptations of the flesh and continued in perfect obedience to God; and secondly, as a sacrifice on the stake.

When we partake of the emblems, partaking of his broken body as we eat of the bread, we symbolically declare and remind ourselves that we have resolved to partake of his sacrifice. We have resolved to commit ourselves to God, to live a life of sacrifice, to follow the example of Jesus Christ, and become members of the body of Christ in our baptism. Our belief in him and identification with him is counted unto us for righteousness. We are clothed with his righteousness; the beneficiaries of his sacrificial offering and the giving of his body.

Paul said, *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”* (1st Cor. 12:27). This was said to the Corinthian brethren when they were yet in their probation. We too are members of the body of Christ and if we serve God faithfully we shall be members of the Multitudinous Christ with great glory in the age to come and shall be seen to be identified with him in the fullest sense.

The Cup

Deut. 12:23 - *“Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood is the life: and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.”*

The cup contains the fruit of the vine and represents the blood of Christ. The blood represents the life. The blood of Christ represents the life of Christ poured out as that blood of the *Everlasting Covenant* (*Covenant of the Age*). When we partake of the wine we symbolically partake of the blood of Christ and also symbolically of the life of Christ. The literal counterpart is that we live as Jesus lived, doing deeds of righteousness and suffering for his name in the service of God by our connection in Christ to the Covenants of Promise that His Blood confirmed as the Covenant Sacrifice.

When Jesus was talking to the sons of Zebedee, his disciples, he said to them, *“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with”* (Matt. 20:22)? He was referring to the events to come in his life and he was asking; can you endure what I shall have to endure? This was the meaning of him asking if they could drink of the same cup.

It is important to understand that in the purpose of God, Jesus was to give his life for many and his life was to be given as a sacrifice (first for himself and then for others). Not by drowning or through an illness, but a violent cutting off with the shedding of his blood; even as those typical sacrifices of lambs and bullocks had been given throughout the earlier ages.

As Matthew records the establishment of the memorial supper, Jesus is saying, *“For this is my blood shed for many for the remission of sins* (Matt. 26:25). The many were all those who would come to him, accept his teaching, and be baptized into his name in order that their sins be remitted. To remit means to forego the right to punish, to pardon, to forgive. God has remitted our sins (both of the atoning/justification of our sin nature and the forgiveness of our past sins) because of Christ’s sacrifice, and Paul confirms the need for sacrifice when he states, *“without shedding of blood is no remission”* (Heb. 9:22).

Discerning the Lord’s Body

We conclude from Paul’s words in 1st Corinthians 11 that we are to correctly discern the Lord’s body and to do this we are to have a comprehensive understanding. It is our duty to have the correct interpretation of the word of God and the proper evaluation of the work of Christ with his place in God’s plan and purpose.

We recognize the bread to represent:

- The body of Christ and the flesh of Christ
- The word made flesh and knowledge as contained in the word of God

It is therefore a symbol of spiritual food.

The wine represents:

- the blood of Christ
- the life of Christ
- the means to eternal life

It reminds us that we are required to live a Christ-like life. A life of action in God’s service to complement the knowledge and understanding we have been given of His Plan and Purpose. We have the doctrine represented by bread and walk represented by wine. We have faith on the one hand and works on the other.

Therefore, when we prepare ourselves for the breaking of bread and the passing of the cup and ultimately partake of the emblems each Sunday morning, let us think on these things. For in this service we show our faith in the second coming of Christ and obey these words,

“Ye do shew (i.e. “proclaim”) the Lord’s death till he come.”

Joel Thomas

ARKANSAS BIBLE SCHOOL STATEMENT

Dear Readers,

We have recently received a three page document from the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School (ACBS). The objective of the ACBS document is to re-state the historical fellowship policy of the ACBS. This same letter was sent to many individual brethren, Ecclesial secretaries from which individuals have attended in recent years and to the Christadelphian Advocate magazine.

We fully endorse the position of the ACBS and have included the three page document in this quarter's magazine. The ACBS committee has fully explained the fellowship policy of the Bible School and the reason for restating it at this point in time in the Christadelphian communities. They have also included a historical document that clearly shows that the current exclusive fellowship policy of the ACBS is the same as was practiced as early as 1959. In 1988, the current constitution of the ACBS was put together and agreed upon by the entire Arkansas Christadelphian community. Its fellowship policy reads in part: "Our basis of fellowship is exclusively the principles of scripture as defined in the Birmingham Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith, including the epitomized Commandments of Christ and Doctrines to be Rejected, outlined therein."

The remainder of this introduction to the ACBS mailing are SK editorial comments regarding the principle of being "Exclusively Unamended".

We believe that there will be many naysayers in regard to the re-stated ACBS fellowship policy and the current mailing from the ACBS committee. Brethren, this should not be the case. Are we Unamended Christadelphians, Amended Christadelphians or "Mended" Christadelphians? Do we as individuals have and practice a consistent fellowship policy with those that we break bread with around the Table of the Lord? Do we knowingly and willingly break bread around the table of the Lord with individuals from the Amended or UA08 communities? Do we knowingly and willingly break bread with brethren who teach and believe the false doctrines that have impacted the Christ Body in this day and age? Doctrines such as *Christ is our King now* or *we have eternal life now* should not be fellowshiped nor tolerated among the brethren of Christ. Brethren who see no problems in

"breaking bread" with individuals mentioned in the previous questions do not have an exclusive fellowship policy that they adhere to or that they practice. Exclusive fellowship is almost non-existent in today's Christadelphian Ecclesias and Bible Schools. Many claim that by reading a statement from the podium every Sunday morning that their Ecclesia/Bible School/Gathering meets on the doctrinal principles found in the BUSF, that they have done all that is necessary to show that they are still an Unamended Meeting. These same places will then invite and allow members from the UA08 and Amended communities to teach or to break bread in their Unamended meeting. Brethren, that is not an exclusive fellowship policy. Individuals who go back and forth between an Unamended meeting and an Amended/UA08 meeting are not practicing an exclusively fellowship policy. Even when this statement is read, we as individual brethren have a very grave responsibility to know that we are not breaking bread around the table of the Lord with doctrinal error. Of course, we cannot determine and know the beliefs and actions of all individuals that attend our meeting. But when we do know that there are individuals that have differences in first principle doctrines that want to break bread at our meeting, we have a Scriptural commandment to stand aside from these individuals. Ecclesia shepherds/elders have a responsibility to visit with these individuals before the Breaking of Bread around the table of the Lord and request that they do not partake of the emblems.

We should never forget that the partaking of the emblems of the Lord's sacrifice is our outward means of declaring that we are like minded with Yahweh, His Son and other brethren that we are associating with around the Lord's Table. Are the doctrines of the Amended, the UA08 and the brethren who promote the false doctrines mentioned above in alignment with the true doctrines of Yahweh? If not, then why do we fellowship them at our home Ecclesias or at Bible Schools or Gatherings that we may attend? A deeper question that we should ask ourselves is why do we attend these Christadelphian meetings if we know that there will be errorists at the Table of The Lord? Is it scripturally right or scripturally wrong to break bread around the table of the Lord with errorists? This is the simple question that many do not want to consider because an honest answer will interfere with the desire to maintain a social relationship with any that are called by the name of Christadelphians.

We believe that the ACBS is taking the correct scriptural stand and may be the only Unamended Bible School that will take this strong of a stand. It would be very encouraging to the Body of Believers if other Unamended Ecclesias or Bible Schools would also take the same stand. Where do you stand brethren? Do you maintain an Ecclesial and individual fellowship practice where you strive to associate around the Table of the Lord with only those of like-minded faith? Are you an Unamended Christadelphian or not? Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay. There is no middle ground in the application of the principles of Yahweh. – *The Sanctuary-Keeper Magazine*

Cover Letter

February 25, 2014

Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School

Dear Brethren of the North American Christadelphian community,

Greetings in the Hope of Israel.

This mailing is being sent to all who have attended functions at the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School (ACBS) in recent years. Copies have also been provided to the secretaries of ecclesias from which individuals have attended in recent years, as well as the Sanctuary Keeper and Christadelphian Advocate magazines.

Please find enclosed a re-statement of the ACBS fellowship policy, as well as attachment "A," which consists of historic statements published by the ACBS.

Ecclesial secretaries, please announce this and make it available for the benefit of your local ecclesia.

Any individual desiring to attend the ACBS is welcome to contact the ACBS committee directly should they have any questions about the implications of our position on them personally.

In the One Hope,

The Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School Committee

Enclosures:

Statement of position

Attachment "A"

CC:

Recent attendees of the ACBS, Ecclesial Secretaries, The Sanctuary Keeper and the Advocate magazines

Dear Brethren,

Greetings in the Masters Name.

The Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School (ACBS) Committee at this time finds it necessary to restate the historical fellowship policy of the ACBS. We feel this is necessary due to the misunderstanding and misapplication of the term "Exclusively Unamended" by the community, and because the policy has not been faithfully upheld in recent years.

As early as 1959 the exclusive position of the ACBS has been documented, and through the years it has been re-affirmed a number of times.

In 1988 the constitution of the ACBS was put together and agreed upon by the entire Arkansas Christadelphian community. Its fellowship policy reads in part: "Our basis of fellowship is exclusively the principles of scripture as defined in the Birmingham Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith, including the epitomized Commandments of Christ and Doctrines to be Rejected, outlined therein."

The 1959 statement put out by the ACBS Committee reads in part: "In order to be consistent our fellowship should be with those whose beliefs and conduct, especially in matters of fellowship, are in accord with the principles set forth in this statement of faith. Are we not departing from the real Truth taught by Christ and the Apostles when we fellowship other doctrines? In order to keep the body of Christ pure and clean, and be in fellowship with God, we should be in fellowship one with another. As we stand, we are not in fellowship with one another, and perhaps it follows, we might not be in fellowship with God. We believe the remedy lies in a sincere and more consistent effort to maintain a higher standard of fellowship among the brethren and sisters of Christ, and to this end we will welcome those to our fellowship at the Table of the Lord who accept the principles of the Christadelphian Statement of Faith and who practice a consistent fellowship on that basis of faith."

This is the position which the ACBS has held for many years and the ACBS Committee believes the Bible School needs to return to, uphold and enforce this policy again.

To that end the Committee is restating the historic fellowship policy of the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School,

and recommitting itself to the enforcement of this scripturally sound practice:

Our basis of fellowship is exclusively the principles of scripture as defined in the Birmingham Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith, including the epitomized Commandments of Christ and Doctrines to be Rejected, outlined therein. In order to be consistent our fellowship should be with those whose belief and conduct, especially in the matter of partaking of the emblems of our Lord's sacrifice, are in accord with the principles set forth in this statement of faith. We will welcome those to our fellowship at the Table of the Lord who accept the principles of the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith and who practice an exclusive, consistent fellowship on that basis of faith. Those who do not meet these requirements will be asked to not partake of the emblems during the Memorial Service at the ACBS functions.

Anyone who will partake of the memorial emblems with those who believe and/or teach false doctrine do not fall under the description of "exclusive" and are asked to not break bread at the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School.

The ACBS recognizes that the Amended, UA08, NASU and CGAF communities, as well as the OO and WCF organizations believe and teach false doctrine. Individuals who will partake of the memorial emblems with those who hold the errors of these entities, or any other doctrine subversive to the principles outlined in the Unamended Statement of Faith, are asked to not participate in the Memorial Service at the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School.

In the One True Hope,
The Arkansas Bible School Committee

Secretary/Treasurer – Tommy Azbill	signed 2/25/14
Curriculum Director – Todd Stephens	signed 2/25/14
Grounds Keeper – Darwyn Kuipers	signed 2/25/14
North Little Rock Ecclesial Representative – Robby Bennett	not signed
Clinton Ecclesial Representative Adam Kuipers	signed 2/25/14

Arkansas Bible School Statement, September 1959

"The Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School was founded on those principles of doctrine set forth in the Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith. It seems to the Committee responsible for the conducting of the school that in order to be consistent our fellowship should be with those whose beliefs and conduct, especially in matters of fellowship, are in accord with the principles set forth in this statement of faith. Are we not departing from the real truth taught by Christ and the Apostles when we fellowship other doctrines? In order to keep the body of Christ pure and clean, and be in fellowship with God, we should be in fellowship with one another. As we stand, we are not in fellowship with one another, and perhaps it follows we might not be in fellowship with God. We believe the remedy lies in a sincere and more consistent effort to maintain a higher standard of fellowship among the brethren and sisters of Christ, and to this end we will welcome those to our fellowship at the table of the Lord who accept the principles of the Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith and who practice a consistent fellowship on that Basis of Faith."

The Arkansas Christadelphian Committee

Frank Perry	S.O. Jones	Max Miller	Vernon Shetley
A.S. Rutherford	D.Z. Jennings	D. W. Bughman	Ben F. Scroggin

Under the "general rules" section of the 1959 Arkansas Bible School Constitution #6

"The doctrine pertaining to the basis of fellowship is exclusively the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith".

Preamble to the Constitution of the Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School, 1988

"The Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School is a non-profit cooperative effort of the Unamended community of Arkansas. Our basis of fellowship is exclusively the principles of scripture as defined in the Birmingham Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith, including the Epitomized commandments of Christ and Doctrines to be rejected, outlined therein"

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

THANK YOU

We want to thank our subscribers for your support of another year of the Sanctuary-Keeper. We sincerely appreciate the outpouring of backing through subscriptions and the generous donations that we have received for the 2014 year. We know that the spiritual atmosphere of the shrinking remnants of the Unamended Community is extremely difficult if not toxic in some corners of the Brotherhood, and we hope, Yahweh willing, to provide a light of encouragement through sound doctrine, exhortation and the sure word of prophecy for those who take the time to read its content.

THE ADVOCATE "APPEAL"

This past January the Christadelphian Advocate sent out an *"Open Appeal to Brothers and Sisters in the Unamended Christadelphian Ecclesial Community."* Such prompted us to provide the following thoughts.

We are keenly aware and deeply troubled by the forces at play that are resulting in the rapid dissolution of the Unamended Community and are the very reason that we revived the publication of the S.K. We also perceive that while the challenges are very grave and systemic to the prophesied Laodicean characteristics of these last days, that the scriptures are very clear as to the responsibility to *"earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints"*, and the instructions are very clear as to its execution.

We believe that the role of the watchman is as important as it ever has been. Such a position is not limited by the Matthew 18 model (which is intended for the resolution of personal issues/disagreements among individual brethren or where the offense is not known to others.) But when and where error is openly being promoted there is a responsibility to not only seek the restoration of those in error (whether it be those who promote or merely tolerate it) **but to especially and PUBLICALLY warn others** of the impending danger of leaven that has been introduced as well, to keep such from also falling into error themselves. Such is the Scriptural approach and one in which has served the Household well when faithfully adhered to. But, there seems to be a continued campaign that while it is fine to recognize error and even discuss it in privacy – it is not acceptable to take decisive action in dealing with it publically and in cutting off such leaven from the Christ Body.

And in regard to "restoration" - such does not involve an endless process: *"After the first and second admonition - reject"*. Even the Matthew 18 model has a final end to the process, when after three layers of progression, the non-repentant individual is to *"be unto thee as an heathen man and a*

publican." The longer the leaven is allowed to function within the Household, the certainty grows of continued growth and influence and eventually the changing over of the very ones who were supposedly attempting to restore such an individual long after the **1st and 2nd** admonitions had been exceeded. This sometimes is acted upon individuals, sometimes it involves whole ecclesias where error is tolerated, and sometimes it involves entire like-minded groups - what has been commonly referred to as "block disfellowship" (Duet. 13). The fact seems to be lost that it isn't the errorists that are being worked with, but that as long as the errorists and their supporters are allowed to hang on it is them that are working to change the Christ Body.

We contend that the trouble with the Unamended community HAS NOT been with the activities of supposedly "overzealous" "watchmen"

who have been willing to risk their reputations and relationships with other brethren for the sake of The Truth, **but with the lack** of the "watchman" spirit that is required of all of us. The hands of the watchmen are not to be tied down nor their voices silenced by a wresting and watering down of Scriptural principals in order to appease to the sensibilities of this Laodicean era. When issues are properly dealt with at the most basic and local of levels as soon as they rear their ugly head then there would be no need to warn and involve the larger population of Brethren. But unfortunately, such seems to be less and less the case, as errors are allowed to take root and spread and influence the Household beyond the confines of the local ecclesias; spreading influence through Internet "Social Media", and into our inter-ecclesial functions of Gathering and Bible Schools. To assume that those who have been fighting the battles against doctrinal error (which includes compromises of the Doctrine of Fellowship itself) over the past few years have not been diligent in obtaining the necessary facts through proper investigation, even to the sources in question themselves, is in and of itself the setting up of a straw man argument and a false assumption itself. **And, when brethren are willing to promote their views openly in print (whether electronically or otherwise) there can be no clearer witness to their views.** All too often, what is spoken in "private" conversation can be denied or the original intent of words backed away from when there is perceived consequences. And all too often, erroneous matters promoted in print, no matter how clearly spoken, are too quickly defended by some by saying "they didn't really mean that" or when spoken to they provide a completely opposite explanation of their beliefs. Truly a sad state of affairs when you can't take brethren at their word, or they are not willing to stand behind their words, or they simply are not willing to be fully open in regard to their beliefs (shrouding their true beliefs or intentions in the Apostate creed of "secrecy" and "mystery"), but nonetheless a growing reality that makes "contending" that much more difficult. We are not simply supposed to take brethren at their word when there are serious inconsistencies in their word, or when their words and actions are shifting (1st John 4:1). Facts are stubborn things, and we can't

simply let brethren off the hook or ourselves off the hook of responsibility just because someone gives us the answer they know we want to hear when facts (which should involve thorough investigation) do not support their claims.

We also believe that it is impossible for brethren to be of one mind on "Doctrinal principles" but yet at odds on fellowship. The Doctrine of Fellowship IS A DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLE (Acts 2:42) - and if we are not in agreement on the very foundation of how we are to be united together and how to contend for such unity, then a vital element of what binds us together (koinonia) is in fact absent. True oneness of mind must include agreement on fellowship itself – what it is, and how it is to be implemented.

Finally, the issue of the impact of the UA08 is certainly a critical issue (but not the only one) that continues to threaten the continued existence of any remaining vestiges of the Unamended Community. **Not only are we to recognize the erroneous foundation and doctrinal compromise that is the NASU/UA08 agreement, we must also recognize that participation in such is nothing short of a 3rd fellowship and should not AND CANNOT BE FELLOWSHIPED by those holding fast to the historic foundations of the Unamended Community.** Such is an embracing of doctrinal compromises that are unacceptable, and those who embrace such confusion are not in true fellowship with those who see no Scriptural grounds for its acceptance. Those themselves who are willing to allow the back-and-forth fellowship practices of such show a lack of fundamental understanding or appreciation of scriptural fellowship and themselves pose a serious threat to the continuity of the Truth in Belief and Practice (including the young people, that such always claim a more firm and conservative stand will drive away) as they are enablers (i.e. wishing "God Speed") of those in serious error. Giving lip service to the BUSF seems to be an easy way for many to fool themselves that they haven't changed. And, it also seems to appear that giving lip service to the BUSF while yet shying away from clear lines of demarcation when it comes to fellowship is being used as a misguided way to keep the Unamended Community intact – failing to admit that the doors are being thrown wide open for its final destruction.

Brethren, we must be strong and certain of the foundations in which we stand upon. Various opinions, collaborations (group think), or the continued blowing of uncertain and timid sounds of the shofar will not provide us with the guidance we need. Though the solutions to our troubles may be hard to carry out, the Scriptural solutions themselves are not complicated to understand. Let us heed the continued appeals supplied us in the Scriptures.

WCF POSITION STATEMENT

We have recently been informed that the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation has their “*position on teaching and preaching*” and on “unity” posted on their website. We do not know how long it has been posted, but considering the apostate nature of WCF goes as far back as its inception some

40 years ago in regard to the adoption of ecumenical, open-fellowship, and professional type philosophies and practices – the statement is of no real surprise. What is surprising is that they are going to go on the record with it, as they spent years evading a clear declaration of the obvious. It is as follows:

Some have asked WCF about its position on the following subjects so we include the following statements for reference:

Position on Teaching and Preaching: WCF supports only fieldworkers who agree with the BASF. All fellowship in the mission field is conducted solely on the basis of the BASF and all baptisms performed under WCF auspices are into the body of Christ; specifically into the ‘Central’ Christadelphian fellowship

Position on Unity: WCF supports the unity of the Body, but WCF is not a vehicle for unity. The directors as individuals may participate in the unity process, but WCF as an organization is not actively involved nor do we consider it part of our mission.

Their stated position on “unity” does not mean much, as the WCF board has been made up of Amended, Unamended and CGAF members for years, and now UA08 members. WCF may not be actively involved with so called unity efforts, but by their practices, the example (bad) they have set over the years, and the activities of their members – they have in fact been very much a vehicle for breaking down barriers in regard to the serious compromise of doctrinal principles, including how they relate to historical differences between the Amended, Unamended and CGAF.

At risk of pointing out the obvious – it is sadly ironic that the WCF arose out of the Unamended Community.

OPENING THE DOORS OF OPEN FELLOWSHIP

We received a fellowship position of an Unamended Ecclesia that was decided upon by its arranging brethren and very recently mailed out to its members. We have received a copy of the document from a member of the respective ecclesia; and as are some members of that ecclesia, we are greatly troubled by its implications. It is too soon for us to print the full contents of the statement or to provide comprehensive analysis of it for our readers, hoping that there might be some window for a correction of the problem by the few concerned brethren in the mentioned ecclesia. But we do feel a responsibility to provide a “heads up” at this time, as we see a continued and remarkable shift towards more open fellowship practices within our community, especially as it relates to those involved with or tolerant of the UA08 or the Amended in general.

The crux of the concern falls on the following declaration found within the statement in order to resolve two opposing positions as to whether or not UA08 members should be allowed to not only fellowship but also to speak and teach at their meeting: “*Our long-standing fellowship practice is that we*

welcome at the Lord's table brothers and sisters, in good standing, who accept the understanding of the Bible as it is expressed by the Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith, regardless of whether their home ecclesia uses a different Statement of Faith." We have firsthand information that within two weeks of the sending out of this letter, members of a neighboring UA08 ecclesia were welcomed in attendance at their Sunday meeting.

Considering the fact that a growing number of "Christadelphians" have no qualms or concerns as to what Statement of Faith they fellowship under on any given Sunday, such a statement certainly leaves the door wide open – does it not? Isn't that the whole objective of the NASU/UA08 movement – free movement and fellowship between the Amended and Unamended? And, how can any Unamended ecclesia view someone whose home ecclesia's basis of fellowship is anything other than the principles outlined in the Unamended Statement of Faith as being in "good standing"? If someone is in "good standing" with their home ecclesia that meets on the BASF or the UA08 (which is still essentially the BASF), or any other fellowship - doesn't that automatically put them in an unacceptable standing within the Unamended community?

If the November, 1957 Special Edition of the Advocate on Fellowship is any indicator to reasonable Unamended Christadelphian standards of fellowship, exception is only given to those of the Amended fellowship (and others) who are "individually sound", IF they follow the following reasonable criteria: (1) "Having been baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (2) "Belief (at baptism and now) of the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith" (3) "**Comprehension of and agreement with the original Advocate position on the interpretation of our Statement of Faith as it relates to the nature of man, nature and sacrifice of Christ, and baptism**". And here comes the final point of emphasis – (4) "**Agreement not to return to former affiliates to break bread.**" (pp. 254,255)

The ecclesia in question does expect all of their teachers and speakers to sign a "Speakers Commitment" to "uphold the understanding of the Bible as expressed in the Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith" in the words that they deliver. But no commitment to the principles of the Unamended position is requested beyond that. And there is certainly no request for them to agree to not "return to former affiliates to break bread."

We certainly hope this matter can be reversed before further and more open addressing of this matter is required. Such a leaven such as this will not stop at the doors of this specific ecclesia, but will have an impact on us all.

INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

We recently received the following correspondence from a sister that we thought was quite interesting and wish to share in regard to the subject of salt:

I'm sure that some of this is already known to you but while studying Arabic I came across some interesting facts concerning the meaning and use of salt that relates to the Truth.

In Arabic, the word for salt or salty is also a word for goodness or beauty. Since the Master was speaking Aramaic, which is very closely related to both Arabic and Hebrew, his pronouncement: 'you are the salt of the world' would mean, you are the good and chosen of the world. But it goes further than that.

In the ancient East, bread and salt were eaten together to symbolize a covenant (brit melakh). Salt was used on the Mosaic sacrifices (Lev. 2:13 - 'every oblation of your meal-offerings you shall season with salt; neither shall you suffer the salt of the covenant of your Elohim to be lacking from your meal-offerings: with all your oblations you shall offer salt.')

And in Numbers 18:19 it is written: 'it is a covenant of salt forever before Yahweh to you and to your seed with you.'

For us, it is not difficult to see the relationship between salt and bread, i.e., the covenant relationship between Christ and the body of believers.

Here are other nuances as well. In literary Arabic (and thus related Aramaic and Hebrew), salt is another word for white. In the ancient East salt was used for protection against imagined evil spirits and ill-will. Similar to Ez. 16:4, the Arabs washed newborns in saltwater to protect them and also to make them clever (i.e., clear-sighted).

In light of all of this, the Messiah's statement in Mark 9:49-50 makes even more sense: 'For every one shall be salted with fire and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt has lost its saltiness, with what will you season it?'

From this I assume he is referring particularly to the covenant relationship. If one gives up this relationship, what can possibly replace it?

I also think that there are other shades of meaning, i.e., outside the covenant relationship, we lose clear-sightedness (wisdom) and also Yahweh's protection from the ill-will and evil in this world.

Yours in the Hope of Israel,

The nature of salt is to bite, fret, and make smart. True preaching is a salting that stirreth up persecution. If a man has lost his sharpness in rebuking all unrighteousness...he is condemned of God. — W. Tyndale