

THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



GLORIOUS THINGS

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP

LESSONS FROM ECCLESIASTES

**“QUESTIONS FOR THE UNAMENDED
ECCLESIAS”**

SOUND OBSERVATION

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON
FELLOWSHIP**

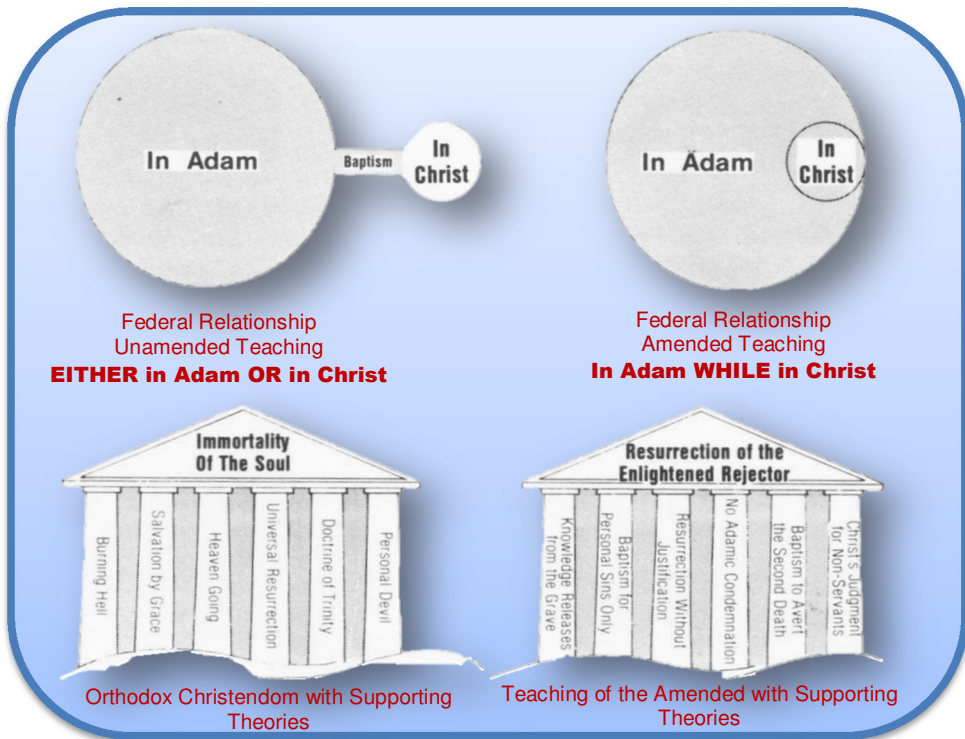
THE RUIN OF DAMASCUS

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 (aaronthomas2@juno.com) or to the physical address of “The Sanctuary-Keeper”, P.O. Box 13045, Maumelle, AR 72113.
Internet Version: www.sanctuary-keeper.com

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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)

**HEAD OF GOLD
BABYLON**

**BREAST/ARMS
OF SILVER
PERSIA**

**THIGHS OF BRASS
GREECE**

**LEGS OF IRON
ROME**

**FEET OF IRON
AND CLAY
NATIONS OF EUROPE**



No Standard?

As soon as society abandons a standard of judgment (which in former days was the Bible) and becomes a society which measures themselves by themselves, the lowest common denominator of morals and ethics will always prevail.

All of us are bound to be influenced by the trends of society around us. We are apt to think that as long as we are not going downhill as fast as the society around us, we are in pretty good shape. This is a very dangerous attitude, because what would have utterly shocked Christadelphians 50 years ago has now lost its connotation of spiritual decline. It is of no use to take comfort in the fact that the society around us is far worse!

Our standard of morality and propriety is not to be measured by the Consensus of Public Opinion but rather by the high standards of the Word of God.

Edward Farrar, "Self Measurement",
from the Compilation - "A Time to Speak"

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The Holy Scriptures*

“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

VOLUME 22

3rd QUARTER, 2012

NUMBER 3

GLORIOUS THINGS

Glorious things, saith the prophet-king, are spoken of Zion, the city of David and the city of God. In the days to come this city of pleasant memories will be no longer known merely as Jerusalem, which signifies they shall see peace, but it shall then be designated by names which express the realization of peace, righteousness, and delight in the presence of the Lord and his fulfilled purpose, to reign gloriously before his ancients. Some of the glorious names of the Holy City from that day forward shall be as follows: “Sought out,” “City of Truth,” “City of the Great King,” “City of Righteousness,” “Faithful City,” “City of Jehovah,” “Beulah,” “Hepzibah,” “Jehovah-sidkenu,” “Jehovah shammah,” the nation shall be called “The Holy People;” the walls, “Salvation;” and the gates, “Praise.” – (Isaiah 24:23; 60: 14,18,26; Jer. 33 16; Ezek. 48:35; Isaiah 62:12.)

God has chosen the city of David as the central place where He will resume His visible operations amongst men; from whence shall circulate, as from the heart of the world, the living energy of righteousness and truth, by which the whole of the nations of the earth shall be enlivened as from inexhaustible springs of goodness and blessing.

The re-establishment of the kingdom of Zion will bring the most thorough

and universal changes upon society that it has ever experienced, both as regards the uprooting of the numberless forms of evil which now afflict the world, and also in reference to the inauguration of many institutions of a healthful and emancipated character.

The kingdom to come again to the daughter of Zion will create good, strengthen virtue, restrain vice, and suppress crime of every hue for a thousand years, and, finally, it will pull up the now thriving tree of wickedness by the roots.

This glorious Zion administration will cause to cease out of the earth many injurious institutions and occupations of men, by which they now fatten upon the vices of a corrupt society, and by which the willing slaves of lust are rendered insensible to the duties of civil life, and still more so to the claims of the divine law.

This Messianic theocracy will be a kingdom of peace, love, brotherhood and goodwill; for which reason there will not be the need there is now for the existence of the trades which flourish in connection with the manufacture of the weapons and appliances now used in connection with military warfare.

Zion will then be the head-quarters of a universal kingdom of justice and equity, dispensed with unerring wisdom and impartial regard to the rights and interests of all. In those days of rectitude and fair dealing, such institutions as prisons, gaols, lawyers, policemen, county courts, bailiffs, and excise men will scarcely be needed. The affairs of the world will then be placed in the hands of “men of truth, hating covetousness” – such as Moses chose. The people, as the Scripture saith, will then be “all righteous.”

In connection with Zion’s exaltation, a time of plenty and prosperity will be inaugurated, extending to the ends of the earth. Poorhouses and almshouses will not be among the necessities of that day of true friendship; benefit societies, insurance companies and debt collectors will not be able to live in that day of wisdom, honour and godly thrift; auctioneers, appraisers and brokers, so needful now, will not be among the utilities of a kingdom in which poverty, and the changeful vicissitudes of commerce, will be abundantly remedied.

This will be a kingdom of integrity, uprightness and enlightened liberality. In those days there will be no need to weaken the bricks by making holes through them to save the clay. The time of shoddy, and bottles larger outside than inside, will be past. Men in that time will give “good measure, pressed down and running over”; which is Christ’s standard of business and duty in every department.

This will be a kingdom of holiness and sobriety, in which will be “gathered out all things that offend.” – (Matt. 13:41). This work which will begin with the house of Christ, will next be extended to Jerusalem; and following that, it will be carried out to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills. The

development of such a lustrous condition of things will involve the suppression or restraining of those things which are now the progenitors and adjuncts of iniquity. For instance, it cannot be imagined that when Birmingham is subject to the Zion law, that there will still be in it the 1,000 liquor shops, the 500 tobacconists and the 200 pawnbrokers which now disfigure it, and testify of crime, debauchery and poverty. No, the times and laws will be changed, and the people too: the sweeping operations of him who once cleared the Temple of thieves and robbers, will suffice to revolutionize the tastes of the Gentiles, and to bring their belly-gods to the earth. – (Phil. 3:19).

This will be an era of trust, confidence and mutual friendliness; burglar-proof safes, iron doors and dog-guarded property will not be the indispensable features of that time; all will then be brothers, having no hostile interests, but joined together in the one common bond of the two great commandments – the love of God and the love of each their neighbor as themselves. This will be the true panacea for all panics, strikes, atrocities, oppression, slavery and animosities of every kind.

This will be a time of restitution, refreshing and fruitfulness in the largest sense. A very paradise the earth will be, blooming with glorious weather, and teeming everywhere with rich golden harvest of every good thing; all nature will, as it were, be in an ecstasy of delight, in which even the east wind may be expected to lose its blighting character and the very “floods clap their hands, and the hills be joyful together before the Lord.”

This will be a kingdom of truth and obedience to divine principles; therefore, there will be no use for Popes, confessors and titled teachers of lies in the name of the Lord. These will be clean swept from the face of the earth, and substituted by true “holy order” of divine appointment – pastors of blessing, who shall feed the people with the knowledge of God.

This will be a kingdom of health and long life, in which hospitals, orphanages and asylums will not be the necessities they are now. In those days doctors and undertakers, and coffin makers, and grave diggers will stand a poor chance of livelihood; and as to “mourning departments,” they will scarcely be in request at all; “for sorrow and sighing shall flee away,” and the inhabitants shall no more say, “I am sick.”

This will be a kingdom of beauty – beautiful buildings, beautiful streets, clean as marble; all the wretched poverty-stricken and unhealthy dwellings, born of human avarice, will come down to the earth. All things will be done well; plenty of money and generous hearts to do everything with. Sweet refreshing nature will not then be banished from the city as now; but, on the contrary, she will be present in all her primitive loveliness, to adorn the broad ways, delight the eye and bring health and fragrance to all.

This will be a kingdom of abounding goodness and purity, therefore adulteration will be suppressed in all departments, and only that which is

wholesome and good for food will be allowed to be offered for sale. Genuineness will be the prevailing character; even the cattle being better fed will yield more nourishing and more tender meat than the ill-fed flesh the poor have to consume now. To live in those days will be a truly glorious portion, even the very prospect of it does the heart good. Everything will be remodeled upon a wise and beneficent basis, and the whole world thoroughly purged of mercenary and unprincipled men. In those days the righteous will flourish and give character to everything.

This will be the reign of wisdom and order; under the divine arrangements of this constitution, men may expect to be exempted from the common run of railway and other accidents, which, in the present time, are due to the straightness of means, lack of wisdom and foresight, neglect of duty, incompetency, overwork, competition and many other like causes; which will not exist in a kingdom where there is wealth enough to do all things well, wisdom enough to do them right, power enough to carry into effect, and love enough to consider the interest of everybody.

This will be a kingdom of wealth and power; every knee shall bow to its glorious king, and every nation on the face of the earth shall acknowledge and do homage to both his person and his invincible laws. All the kingdoms of the world shall become the sovereignty of the one universal Ruler of mankind. They shall bring their wealth and honour, and pour it down at the feet of the mighty Prince of David’s house, who with the riches of the world at his command, and the power of the Spirit under his control, will be qualified to dispense justice to the poor, help to the friendless, mercy to the repentant, and a “feast of fat things” to all the inhabitants of the globe.

This will be a kingdom of rest from the works of sin, nevertheless a kingdom of powerful activities in every good work. It will make an end of sweating toil and the labor of vanity; and introduce, in their place, ennobling occupations with great recompense of reward, and many bountiful seasons of recreation and worship.

David’s tabernacle restored will be the kingdom of God, powerful to eradicate all forms of idolatry from the face of the earth. Men will not then idolize gold and silver, graven by art and man’s device, neither in the form of the human figure nor in the shape of coin, bearing Caesar’s image and superscription. The world will then be taught to use all things to the glory of God and the well-being of the entire community as the first principles of citizenship. The words of wisdom will then be sweetly realized, how that “righteousness exalteth a nation,” and how that “sin is a reproach to any people.”

This will also be a kingdom of glory, honour and immortality, for those who are the “called and faithful and chosen,” who will live again with Christ their head, to rule and bless mankind with every creature good and every heavenly

joy of which flesh and blood is capable.

Summary

The following is a summary of the glorious things concerning Zion:

1. That Messiah will be personally enthroned there as King of Israel and Emperor of the World. – Zech. 14:9; Mic. 4:7; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 60:13; Ezek. 48:35.
2. That “sacrifices of righteousness” will be offered there in connection with Ezekiel’s temple, and the re-distribution of the land among the Twelve Tribes. – Ps. 51:19; Jer. 33:18,11; Ezek. 43:18-27; 48:13,21.
3. That the princes of Israel, in the day of Zion’s exaltation, will be the twelve apostles of the Lamb, made glorious by resurrection and immortality – Matt. 29:28.
4. That the visible glory of God will be present in the Temple, and upon all the assemblies, and upon every dwelling place in Mount Zion. – Isa. 4:5; Ezek. 44:4
5. That sickness will be banished, and patriarchal longevity restored. Isa. 33:24; 65:20.
6. That Israel shall prosper in wheat and wine and oil, and gold and flocks, and everything that makes the heart glad; and their soul shall be like a watered garden. – Jer. 31:12-14; 33: 9; Ezek. 36:10; Hos. 14:5-7; Isaiah 66:12-17.
7. That Jerusalem shall experience health and cure and pardon, and purging from every uncleanness and defilement; and that peace and truth shall abound in their midst. – Jer. 33: 6-8; Ezek. 46:6-12.
8. That judgment and justice and safety and glory shall dwell in the land. – Jer. 33:15; Ezek. 34:25; Mic. 4:1-4; Hos. 2:18, 23.
9. That the desert shall blossom as the rose: her waste places be made like Eden, and the whole city filled with joy and gladness, thanksgiving and the voice of melody. – Isa. 61:3; Ezek. 34:27; Isa. 61:11.
10. That the Twelve Tribes, gathered from every place of the earth whither they have been scattered or led captive, shall no more be two kingdoms, but one nation – head of all others, on the mountains of Israel. – Ezek. 38: 21,22; Isa. 60:10-12.
11. That Zion’s hill shall be a hill of blessing to Israel and all the inhabitants of the world. – Ezek. 34:26; Isa. 25:7.
12. That Zion’s officers will be peace, and her exactors righteousness; and that Messiah shall be forever her glory, her defense, her comfort, her praise, her righteousness, and everlasting joy. – Isa. 60:19-22; 61:1-7.
13. That the character of the rulers is before us in the precepts which Christ enjoined, and which these will all have faithfully observed as their passport to this distinction. – Ps. 15: 24.
14. That the nature of the principles by which the kingdom will be governed and characterized is somewhat illustrated in the institutions of the Mosaic code; but more fully expressed in Solomon’s proverbs, Christ’s discourse on the

Mount, and the apostolic precepts, which will then become the law of the land, and the study and observance of everybody.

15. That the nations of the world will speak one language, obey one king, have one religion and one law, and in time will be one people, having one heart and soul, and seeing eye to eye. – Zech. 14:9,16,17; Mic. 4:2; Zeph. 3:9; Isa. 52:8.

F. R. Shuttleworth (The Christadelphian, June, 1877)

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CITIZENSHIP *Instruction from Psalm 15*

A **CITIZEN** is someone having the right to live in a country because they were born there or are legally accepted as a permanent resident. With that citizenship comes both rights and responsibilities or obligations. By obligations we mean a requirement to take some course of action, whether legal or moral.

In *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas writes that a stranger and foreigner from the commonwealth of a nation or kingdom, can only become a fellow-citizen with that kingdom, by taking the oath of abjuration, fulfilling the time of their probation, and taking the oath of allegiance according to the provisions of the constitution. He writes:

“There are two states, or kingdoms, in God’s arrangements, which are distinguished by constitution. These are the Kingdom of Satan and the Kingdom of God. The citizens of the former are all *sinners*; the heirs of the latter are *saints*....Now, the Kingdom of God has a constitution as well as the Kingdom of Satan... Before sinners come under it, they are characterized as “without Christ, being aliens from the *Commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God (*ἀθεοὶ atheists*) in the world” (Eph. 2:12-13, 19). They are termed “far off,” “strangers and foreigners” (Eph. 2:13, 19), “walking in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart” (Eph. 4:17-18). But, mark the sacred style descriptive of sinners after they have been placed under the constitution of Israel’s Commonwealth, which is the Kingdom of God. “You that were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ;” “through him you have access by one spirit to the Father; and are no more strangers and foreigners, but

fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" — "fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise *in Christ by the gospel*" (Eph. 3:6). We discover in this remarkable contrast a great change in *state* and *character* predicated of the same persons. How was this transformation effected? This question is answered by the phrase "*in Christ by the gospel*." The "*in*" expresses the state; the "*by*," the instrumentality by which the state and character are changed."

Character is what we wish to examine. We can find ourselves becoming disreputable citizens or worthy citizens depending on our response to the obligations of citizenship or we might say the character traits we manifest.

Though only 5 verses, Psalm 15 contains the core elements concerning the responsibilities of a citizen of Zion. In the Psalms we often find an introduction to the words presented. They are not part of the inspired word but were added by the translators. For this Psalm we believe the translator was right on target. In the Oxford Edition, the title for Psalm 15 states "*David describeth a citizen of Zion*". We might call this Psalm a kernel or epitome, for in it we find the basis of all the teachings of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount contained in Matthew. These words describe the blessedness to come on a particular people.

David begins his exhortation with 2 questions: 1) *Yahweh, who shall abide in thy tabernacle?* 2) *who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

The questions are answered in the next 4 verses, but we first need to understand the questions, for they relate to acceptability now and in the age to come. Several of the words in this verse provide the basis for our understanding of the timeframes. The first word is "**Abide – guwr**" which means - to sojourn, dwell for a time or to temporarily dwell. The significance of this word is having no lasting permanency.

Next we have the word "**Tabernacle – ohel**" which means nomad's tent, and thus symbolic of wilderness life, transience, dwelling, home, habitation. This describes the Tabernacle in the wilderness as it was carried by the people of Israel. It was transported from place to place. So both these words express a similar idea of having no permanency. As with the wandering of the children of Israel it was symbolic of a period of probation or a period of trial. For the Jews it was a probationary journey towards a place of permanency in the land that they were to possess. This very much parallels our probationary journey. Paul writes in Philippians 3:14 - "*I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*". Paul viewed his life as a probation journey towards the Kingdom of God. His was a life moving through the wilderness of the kingdom of men.

So this first question speaks to the characteristics of citizenship that we should now manifest in our probationary journey towards the Kingdom of Yahweh.

Now we have the next question. *Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?* Is it a repetition or a change? There is a definite difference in the words used: "**Dwell – shawkan**" or "to reside or permanently stay".

It expresses the idea of permanency, to permanently reside, something that is fixed in a location. It is closely related to another Hebrew word "*shakam*" which means bearing a burden like a pillar. We find an expression for this idea in the words recorded by John in Rev 3:12 - "***Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name***".

Our abiding place, brothers and sisters, is in the Kingdom of God. This thought is supported by the last phrase of this question - "thy holy hill" - **quadash har** or "sacred mountain". Where do we wish to dwell? There is only one sacred mountain. It is revealed by David in Psalm 2:6 - "*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion*". What is implied in these words of the second question is the idea of a lasting inheritance. How much more lasting can it be when spoken in terms of being eternal!

"Walketh"; "Worketh"; "Speaketh"

So what is David asking here? Who is acceptable to Yahweh now in the age of probation, and who will be acceptable to Yahweh in the age to come? To find an eternal dwelling place in His Kingdom? David begins the answer in verse 2 of Psalm 15. "*He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*"

So who will be an acceptable son or daughter in the age to come? David provides us with three words to describe the attributes needed by someone who wishes to have a dwelling place in God's Kingdom - *Walketh*, *Worketh* and *Speaketh*. All of these actions are necessary to fulfill the obligations of a citizen of Zion. The consecration of Aaron and his sons points to these characteristics. In Exodus 29:1, Yahweh tells Moses "*and this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office...*" to hallow, to set them apart, just as a citizen of Zion must separate themselves from the world.

In Exodus 29:20 we read - "*Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about*".

We read in Leviticus 17 that the life of the flesh is in the blood. When shed in sacrifice, it signifies a life given up to God. When Moses put that blood on the right toe, it sanctified their walk in life, their "going out" and "coming in." It instructed them that their "walk" had to be consistent with their calling and

with the instructions they heard, and with the ministerial work that they performed. As David expresses it, it was to be done ‘uprightly’. It was to be complete, wholesome, entirely in accord with truth. We find our Lord teaching the Jews the same thing in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:48 – “be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”.

Next we find the blood of the ram of consecration placed on the right thumb of Aaron and his sons to sanctify their labour which was ministerial in scope. For the citizen of Zion, it is to do righteous works. When Jesus instructed the Jews concerning works, he states of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23:3 – “all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not”.

The Scribes and Pharisees could well tell the people what the law prescribed to do. Do what they tell you, Christ says, but don’t do what they do; for they will not do righteous works. Earlier, in Matthew 5:20 he told the Jews: “for I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven”.

When Moses applied that blood to the tip of the right ear it consecrated the head to Yahweh’s use. Hearing comes by the word of God and the ear must always be open to his instruction that we may speak the truth. Our minds must reflect and ruminate on the word so that it becomes our words. Not words mechanically spoken, but words that reflect our innermost being – from the heart. Yahweh told Jeremiah that “*the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*” Man’s heart in its natural state is not acceptable to Yahweh. In Matthew 12:34, our Lord says this about the Pharisees: “*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*”.

This tells us that there must be a change in anyone who wishes to become a citizen of Zion. So what is the parallel teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount? In Matthew 5 and verse 8 we read: “*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*”.

David understood well the relation of the heart and the mouth. After beautifully expressing the glory and majesty of Yahweh, the revelation of the wonderful things found in his word, he concludes Psalm 19 with: “*let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, o Yahweh, my strength, and my redeemer.*”

Backbiting; Doing evil to our neighbor, Taking up a Reproach

What is the next thing that David says is expected of a citizen of Zion? Verse 3 reads – “*He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour*”.

This first statement should not require much comment if we have carefully considered what James writes in chapter 3 of his epistle. *Backbiteth* in the Hebrew is “**râgal**” and signifies “to go on foot, spy out, move the feet”. Gesenius tells us it signifies to go behind someone’s back to speak falsely against them, to do something to the detriment of someone. Psalm 101:5-8 expresses the firm conviction of what a citizen of Zion does when confronted with such deceit in these days of probation. These verses from the Rotherham version reads “*He that uttereth slander in secret against his friend, him, will I root out; one of lofty eyes, and of an ambitious heart, him shall I not be able to endure. Mine eyes, shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me,—he that walketh in a blameless way, he, shall attend me. There shall not dwell in the midst of my house, one who worketh deceit,—he that speaketh falsehoods, shall not be established before mine eyes; morning by morning, will I uproot, all the lawless ones of the land, that I may cut off, out of the city of Yahweh—all the workers of iniquity*”.

In verse 7 of Psalms 101, we read of one who “worketh deceit”. This is contrasted in Psalm 15 and verse 2 with one who worketh righteousness. Works of deceit are not only done to brethren but are done to Yahweh as well. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 4:2, warns about handling the word of God deceitfully (Greek - *doloo* – figuratively adulterate). Such shall not dwell in the house of one who wishes to be a citizen of Zion.

Backbiting, deceit, and slander is a habit of the tongue and is entirely destructive. It is the opposite of speaking truth from the heart. It is a matter of self-discipline in controlling it. What is in the heart? Remember, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

What else is required of a citizen of Zion? “*Nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor*”. We note that in these last two statements of this verse we have the word neighbor. They are not the same words. In the first case it is: “**rêa/rêya**” and means “friend, companion”. The second word for neighbor is: “**qârôb**” or “**kaw-robe**” which means to be *near* (in place, kindred or time) or allied, kinsfolk (-sman).

When we are speaking in terms of a citizen of Zion, this is expressive of our brothers and sisters in two aspects. They are our neighbors in the sense of being a friend and they are our neighbors in the sense that they are close relatives.

The phrase “*Nor doeth evil to his neighbor*” refers to injury in any way, whether by word or deed. The idea is, that one who will be admitted to dwell on the holy hill of Zion, is one who does no injury to anyone; who always does that which is right to others, and that, brethren, is the definition of agape.

David continues in Psalms 15 with the phrase “*nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor*”. We have the word “reproach” which comes from the word Cherpâh or *Kher-paw’ from the Hebrew word h2778* which means “rebuke, reproach, shame”. It comes from a root word which means “to pull

off, to expose, to strip of dignity”.

This citizen of Zion is slow to believe evil of another. They do not grasp at it readily as if they had pleasure in it. It will never come to their mind to start such a reproach, nor will they readily credit it when it is stated by others. They will only believe it if the evidence becomes so strong that they cannot oppose it. Our carnal make up is not this way. To the flesh, nothing is more acceptable than critical accusations of others. With a willing heart, we readily embrace reports which impute bad conduct or bad motives. Think of the contrast and great change that is required of us. At one point we may have delighted in gossip and in slanderous reports of others. We found pleasure in the alleged failings and errors of our neighbors. We gladly lent an ear to every detail, and contributed our input in circulating such things, adding to such reports as they passed through us. But now we sincerely rejoice on hearing everybody well spoken of, and do all that can be done consistently with the truth to check such reports.

The citizen of Zion *taketh it not up*, they will not tolerate it. It shall not be spread by them. We cannot prevent the detractor from passing it on, but it is in our power not to take it up: and thus stop the progress of the slander. Our Lord's direction concerning this is given in Matthew 7:12 – *“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”*

Despising the wicked; Honour to those who fear the LORD; Upholding of oaths

What else does David tell us of a citizen of Zion? We read this in verse 4 – *“in whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”* Rotherham translates this first phrase as *“despised in his sight, is the reprobate”*.

A "vile" man is a very wicked man that is reprobate to every good work. He is as the dross, as the chaff, and as salt that has lost its savor. Such as these are sometimes in high places. Psalm 12:8 tells us *“the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted”*. Such are greatly esteemed by men of the world, but such are an abomination to Yahweh, and if so then, they should be despised by his people. Let them have riches, honors, and wisdom among men. How did Mordecai treat Haman? Esther 3:2 reads – *“and all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence”*.

How did Elisha treat Ahab, king of Israel? II Kings 3:13-14 records these words – *“And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, what have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, nay: for Yahweh hath called these three kings*

together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, as Yahweh of armies liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee”. Those who keep company with, and express a delight and pleasure in such sort of persons, will by no means have a place in the house of God.

The sentiment here is the same as in Psalm 1:1 – *“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful”*. By contrast, those who have the covenant of grace in their hearts, and serve Yahweh with reverence and godly fear; these are the ones the citizen of Zion will honor. They will be esteemed, and be well spoken of with respect and decency towards them. This is not self-righteousness but a departing from evil, from that class of person and that way of life. The citizen of Zion judges others by their conduct. He tries no man's heart. He knows men only by the fruits they bear; and thus he gains knowledge of the principle from which they proceed.

What does Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount on how to differentiate? *“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”* Matthew 7:15-20.

What else does David tell us of this citizenship? *“He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.”*

For the citizen of Zion, covenants are sacred. Having given their affirmation to the terms of citizenship, having put on Christ, it is a sacred commitment. They will not break it or depart from it, but they will to the best of their ability observe it. They will walk uprightly, and work righteousness, and speak the truth in their heart. Their love and fidelity to it is unwavering so that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from their Lord and his promised kingdom.

Rotherham renders this phrase *“he hath sworn to his neighbor and will not change”*. The citizen of Zion is just to their word. They are faithful to their promises. They exactly fulfill all the obligations they make unto others. They are honest and upright in all their dealings. In Matthew 5:37 our Lord states: *“But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”*

Handling of Debts; Injustice against the innocent

Finally, of this citizen, David writes in verse five: *“He that putteth not out his*

money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

"He that putteth not out his money to usury." Usury here means interest on a debt and we might not think much of such an event as putting money to usury, but in this case it is done to the poor and defenseless. This word usury in the Hebrew is "*neshek*". It comes from a root word which means to strike with a sting as a serpent. Usury is carnal in its origin and abominable to the citizen of Zion. The design of this statement, and the law on which it is founded, is, to forbid all oppression of the poor, all covetous practices, and to encourage liberality and charity. Those who are covetous and oppress, are not fit to become citizens of Zion. It would almost appear that this was of particular concern to Yahweh in that we find reference to it in Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Ezekiel. It occurs multiple times in Ezekiel and perhaps the reference in chapter 18 best expresses the intent. Yahweh states that "but if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right (vs. 5)" and as the prophet continues in verse 7: "*And hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly...*" He, saith Adonai Yahweh, is just, and he, Adonai Yahweh concludes, shall surely live.

In addition to this we are told that the citizen of Zion will not "*taketh reward against the innocent*". Again we look to the Hebrew to understand the significance of what is being stated. The word reward here signifies a bribe. We should give consideration to what a bribe is. We have all heard in the news of someone found guilty of taking a bribe, and we should all understand the implication, it is a perversion of justice. So the one whose character is that of a citizen of Zion will not be a party to or a witness of a perversion of justice against the innocent. Isaiah makes a similar comment on the subject in Isaiah 33 starting at verse 14: "*The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?*"

Again the analogy is the same as the questions that David asks. The word dwell here is "*gur*" which we examined earlier in Psalm 15, it signifies a temporary dwelling. So the question is asked "*who shall abide the fiery trial, and be counted worthy to ascend Zion's holy hill?*" The burning judgment of the Olahm will purge all but destroy many. The answer is given in Isaiah 33, verses 15, 16: "*He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.*"

"To dwell" in this passage is "*shakan*, which means "to reside or permanently stay". So Isaiah indicates that the citizen of Zion despises usury or the gain of oppression, whose hands would never be a party to a reward, a bribe, or a perversion of justice. Yahweh summarizes what is required in two words in Micah 6 "do justly".

Concluding thoughts

Finally brothers and sisters, David summarizes his thoughts, "*he that doeth these things shall never be moved*". The word **doeth** is not passive. If the citizen of Zion will keep, labour, maintain, observe, be occupied with, practice these obligations as described in verses 2, 3, 4 & 5 of this Psalm, David says "*they shall never be moved*". The Hebrew here signifies *shall remain for the Olahm*, the hidden period, the kingdom age.

As our Lord brought his discourse in the Sermon on the Mount to a close he ends it on the same point. With all the instruction he has given in Matthew chapter 5, 6 & 7, he states in chapter 7 and verse 24: "*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, (the same thought that David expresses in Psalm 15) I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not (it was never moved) for it was founded upon a rock*".

The mind of David and the mind of Christ are the same. Psalm 15 is but an epitome of the Sermon on the Mount. Paul has a simple way to state this in Philippians 2 and verse 5, "*let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*"

So here we have the obligations - requirements which must be fulfilled by a citizen of Zion, manifested in an upright walk, in works of righteousness, in speaking the truth from their heart. He that doeth these things shall never be moved. How do we compare with these characteristics, positively or negatively? We have time to work on these characteristics, but precious little time in our probationary journey. Why was it that our Lord was never moved from the path of righteousness? What was it that enabled him to manifest the characteristics of a true citizen of Zion? More so, how can we successfully manifest these qualities of character, these obligations of a citizen of Zion? The answer can be found in Psalm 16 a messianic Psalm. This is the means by which we can successfully manifest the characteristics of a citizen of Zion. We read in verse 8, "*I have set Yahweh always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*"

Lou Locklear

"We cannot afford to please men, nor parties. Numbers may have charms, but in the trial of faith every brother must look to his own responsibility, every sister to hers." – T. Williams, Advocate, May, 1905

LESSONS FROM ECCLESIASTES

PART 2 – Ecclesiastes, Chapter 4

IN this fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes the wise man Solomon sees oppression, lust, greed, fraudulent behavior, and wrong doing. He sees the tears of the oppressed and that they had no comforter as they endured the afflictions of those in power. He shows that co-operation and fellowship are essential for survival, and lastly he speaks of the fickle nature of public favor, and concludes that all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 – *“So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive. Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.”* The word “oppressions” in verse one is derived from a primitive root “ashaq” meaning, to defraud, to violate, to gain by deceit, or to do wrong.

Those living under such conditions, says Solomon, had no comforter to take pity, to console, or avenge. He then goes farther and says the dead and those yet to be born are better off for not having to endure the oppressions that the preacher speaks of.

In verse 3 he uses the phrase this *“evil work that is done under the sun”*, and we get the idea that Solomon is referencing all humanity, and I think he probably is. But as we consider these words, the better lesson might be if we consider tying these sayings a little closer to home. We see the truth in what is being said here, the poor have always been taken advantage of and the proud, the egotistical, the ambitious, the powerful, always look to gain the upper hand; and desire the high places, the roles of prominence, and places of stature. They desire to be leaders and rulers of men, and we understand that whatever happens “under the sun” bears an unseemly resemblance to the lives of the people of God.

During the time of Christ, the leaders of Israel, namely the Scribes and Pharisees, were guilty of the oppressions as described by Solomon. In Matthew 23:3-7 and verses 25-27, we find these words. Verses 3-7 – *“All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men:*

they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.” And in verses 25-27, Christ states – *“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.”*

It seems as though the words of Christ were prophetic of the era of the early Ecclesia, as the brethren were forced to endure the afflictions of the Pharisee when they became leaders in the Ecclesia. I Timothy 1:5-7 reads – *“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned. From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, neither where of they affirm”*. I’m reminded of what a wise brother once told me, he said *“They simply don’t know what they don’t know”*, they just talk to hear themselves speak.

There is a time promised when the oppressions of men, both of they which are “under the sun” and those which are under the authorship of Christ, will see the comforter or the avenger. These future events are prophesied in Amos 3:9-10 – *“Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed in the midst thereof. For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.”* Psalms 72 also foretells these things.

In Revelation chapter 6, there is described the overthrow of Paganism and the establishment of Christianity as the new Roman state religion under Constantine during the years of 312-324 AD. As Bro. Thomas points out in Eureka, these events typify a greater earthquake when the Lord Jesus will establish a new government conceived in righteousness, a time when the oppressed will be avenged. In verse 15-17 of Revelation 6, we find the following – *“And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?’”*

The oppressions that Solomon spoke of concerning those “under the sun” will cease to be, and for those whose faithful hearts long for the appearing of their Lord, they not only will be avenged, but they shall be the avengers as well.

Envy

Ecclesiastes 4:4-6 – *“Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit. The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh. Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.”* In these verses, Solomon speaks of men who can labor and toil to execute a good work, but before he can take satisfaction in his labor, he is robbed of the pleasure by those who would be jealous and envious and who establish a rivalry as a means to dampen the good works of others. The wise man said in Proverbs 14:30 – *“A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones”*.

Even Pontius Pilate could see the jealousy and envy in the leaders of Israel as they delivered Jesus to be condemned before him. Matthew 27:18, speaking of Pilate, says, *“For he knew that for envy had they delivered him”*. I Corinthians 13:4 says – *“Charity suffereth long, and is kind, charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up”*. Clearly charity or love was not a characteristic manifest in the hierarchy of Israel. Today as we work in our respective Ecclesias, and as we examine ourselves we should ask for charity and ask to be purged of envy. Envy is the enemy of the Ecclesia.

Contentment

Ecclesiastes 4:6 – *“Better is a handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit”*. The virtue of contentment is something many of us are lacking in, especially me. It’s something the scripture exhorts us to manifest in ourselves. Proverbs 15:16-17 – *“Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith”*.

In 1st Timothy 6:6-12, Paul explains there are things wherein we should be content, but he also says to fight the good fight of faith. So at the same time we seek contentment, there are other things that should be pursued with relentless determination, those things involve the integrity of the truth, and therewith there can be no compromise.

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 – *“Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun. There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken”*.

From the perspective of those “under the sun” we see many men whose lives are completely engaged in the accumulation of things that are designed to satisfy the lust of the flesh, giving little thought to the simpler yet more satisfying things of life, things like peace of mind, love and being loved, fellowship, companionship, stability, hope, faith, etc. The list of things like these is long and not easily attained yet they are the essence of life.

Many times men will wake up to what they have let pass them by, and in retrospect they realize their entire life has slipped away and it’s too late to accumulate the real values of life. This should remind us of the timetable in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, and the limitations time has imposed upon us.

The pursuit of riches is vanity and vexation of spirit, it’s empty and it’s meaningless. For unenlightened man this is a difficult and almost unpenetrable concept. The key word, of course, is enlightenment. For those who understand that there is an appointed time and a purpose for man and life, the issues of companionship and fellowship take on a whole other meaning. Were it not for the fellowship found with those of like precious faith, and the resulting Ecclesial existence, I dare say that the survival of the truth would have been considerably more difficult.

As Solomon said, two have a better chance of survival, *“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up”*. Then he goes on to say that *“a threefold cord is not quickly broken”*. There then is wisdom in companionship. The wisdom of fellowship and wise council thereby is seen when brethren assemble as seen in Acts 15:6, where the Apostles gathered in consort to consider a matter of doctrine. At this time, certain of the sect of the Pharisees, that believed, claimed it was needful to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses. Verse 6 says, *“And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter”*. Their conclusion is seen in the letter sent with Paul and Barnabas which is seen in verse 24 – *“For as much as we have heard that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying; ye must be circumcised and keep the law, to whom we gave no such commandment”*.

This kind of Ecclesial problem would continue to trouble the true believers for centuries to come, which is why Paul exhorts the brethren to, *“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”*. For the real problem was spiritual wickedness in the Ecclesia.

Wisdom

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16 – *“Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will no more be admonished. For out of prison he cometh to reign; whereas also he that is born in his kingdom becometh poor. I considered all the living which walk under the sun, with the second child that shall stand up in his stead. There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been*

before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit."

In this last section of chapter 4, there is represented an old foolish King, who had occupied the throne for so long that he thinks himself infallible, who no longer accepts advice nor considers the opinions of others; he is set in his ways, obstinate, and self-deluded. A good example comes from Solomon's own son, Rehoboam, which we read about in I Kings 12:6-19. This King of Israel did in fact seek council to increase taxation, but he rejected the wise council of the elders of Israel, and sought out those who would tell him what he wanted to hear. Yet he was unable to carry out the planned heavy taxation, as Israel rebelled against him. It seems that Rehoboam was unable to inherit much of his father's wisdom and understanding. So as Solomon said, the cycle of ruler ship and leadership continues from one to another, but the moment of their popularity soon wanes, and yet another arises to take his place.

Application to the modern Ecclesia

We understand the context of this 4th chapter of Ecclesiastes and how it deals with the things that are done "under the sun", that is, things that concern man in general. So as we've looked at some of these things we've attempted to make a connection that would apply to the truth and our own experiences in it. For if there is no connection here to the believer, what real value is there?

During the beginning of this dissertation, with regard to those being oppressed, we made the comment, that whatever happens "under the sun", bears an unseemly resemblance to the lives of the people of God, to our small microcosm, that is, the world of the modern day Ecclesia.

It appears evident, at least to me, that the truths we hold and our understanding of them, has been assailed and compromised on many fronts over the years. There seems to be a replaying of history happening right before our eyes. As Solomon explains, the cycles of life and events continually repeat themselves. Even the definition of time lends itself to this conclusion:

"A non-spatial continuum that is measured in terms of events which succeed one another from, past, through present, to future"

We've all heard the quotation from George Santayana that claims - *"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."* The sad thing about us is that we read the historical accounts of Israel's failures almost every day of the world, but somehow it just doesn't register. I often think as I read about these things that there isn't any way we could do the evils that Israel committed in the sight of God. I guess I was wrong in that. Are we not told that the events in Israel's history were given as examples for our learning and admonition?

We want to take a look at a few examples in the history of Israel that might give us something to think about. We ask the reader to decide if any of these

things apply to us.

During the era of the prophets; Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel, the nation of Israel was filled with the abominations of idolatry and wickedness. They not only had defiled themselves, but they had defiled the land, the cities, and even the habitation of Yahweh, and as a result, the longsuffering of God was about to come to an end. Israel had ignored the Law and the prophets and had heeded the false prophets. There was no choice except to destroy the land, the city, the temple, and the people. The exiles that were taken to Babylon would manage to escape these impending calamities, along with some that would be scattered, but for the most part the Kingdom of Judah was about to come to an end, and the first 24 chapters of Ezekiel deal specifically with that period of divine judgment in 586 BC. If we combine the idolatry of Israel, the failed ruler-ship of its kings, and the teachings of the false prophets who made the word of God a lie, it's certainly no wonder that they provoked the anger of Yahweh.

Some of the vilest atrocities committed by Israel are spoken of in Ezekiel chapters 8-11. Verses 5-6 of chapter 8 speaks of an image of jealousy set up at the gate of the altar in the outer court of Solomon's temple. Verses 7-12 tell how the rulers and elders worshipped Egyptian gods, creeping things, and abominable beasts in the darkness of the temple. Verses 13-14 of this chapter tells of the women who wept for Tammuz at the north gate of the temple, Tammuz was the Phoenician God of fertility. Verses 15-16 speaks of the priest of Israel who worshipped a sun god from the porch of the temple.

These things so defiled the temple that the Glory of Yahweh departed, as seen in Ezek. 10:3-5 - *"Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court. Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD'S glory. And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh".* So the point is that the rulers, the elders, and the priest of Israel, by these vile and abominable acts, had caused the people to err and be led astray.

Let us now look at Jeremiah 28:1-4, 11, 15-17. Hananiah is only one example of prophets who lied and spoke *smooth things and prophesied deceits*. In Ezekiel 11:1-3, we find that Jaazaniah and Pelatiah were also among those who spoke lies. Vv. 2,3 - *"Then said He unto me, 'Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city: Which say, 'It is not near; let us build houses: this city is the caldron, and we be the flesh.'"*

Odd as it may sound, the cauldron here represents Jerusalem, and Israel as the flesh. The elders felt there was safety in Jerusalem, when in fact it would be the place of, famine, pestilence, and death for a third of Israel.

Ezekiel 12:22 & 27 - Verse 22 - *"Son of man, what is that proverb that ye have in the land of Israel, saying, The days are prolonged, and every vision*

faileth?” And in verse 27 – “Son of man, behold, they of the house of Israel say, The vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off”. Here, even the words of Ezekiel were being misrepresented.

Speaking of false prophets, John Allfree makes this statement on page 138 of his book on Ezekiel. “It must be emphasized that the basic problem in Israel which gave rise to the careless attitude, ‘the days are prolonged, and every vision faileth’, was not the false prophets, but the attitude of the people toward the word of God. False prophets are the result of an unhealthy congregation, and not the cause of it.” Ezekiel emphasizes this very thing in chapter 14, but this in no way excuses the false prophets.

Let us read Ezekiel 13:1-10. “And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! O Israel, thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the LORD. They have seen vanity and lying divination, saying, The LORD saith: and the LORD hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word. Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination, whereas ye say, The LORD saith it; albeit I have not spoken? Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith the Lord GOD. And mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies: they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD. Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.”

The use of the phrase, “untempered mortar” indicates an unstable, insecure aspect to the construction of a wall. In fact the word “untempered” means to apply slime with frivolity, foolishness, and unsavoury workings. And it has its spiritual application in false teachings and false doctrines.

So whose responsibility is it to refuse oppression, to deny audience to foolish prophets? Whose job is it to stand in the gap?

During the era spoken of by Ezekiel, God said in Ezekiel 22:30, “I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none”.

Who today will stand in the gap? Shall we give heed to seducing spirits? (1st Timothy 4:1) Or shall we be as the Bereans who searched the scripture daily, whether those things were so? (Acts 17:11).

1st John 4:1 - “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” False teaching happened repeatedly to Israel, it happened in the first century Ecclesia, and that resulted in the development of the Man of Sin. During the past 160 years we’ve seen the demise of many Ecclesias, because of such problems. **So shall we learn from history, or will we be doomed to repeat it?**

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 - “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Tommy Azbill

LAMENTATIONS

“It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. “The LORD is my portion,” saith my soul; “therefore will I hope in Him.” The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled with reproach. For the LORD will not cast off for ever: But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. To crush under His feet all the prisoners of the earth, To turn aside the right of a man before the face of the MOST HIGH, To subvert a man in his cause, the LORD approveth not.”

“Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when the LORD commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the MOST HIGH proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, turn again to the LORD. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.”

Chapter 3:22-42

“QUESTIONS FOR THE UNAMENDED ECCLESIAS”



In January of this year, representatives of the Book Road and London Ecclesias (Amended) were given a presentation by brothers Ron Waye, Ian McPhee and Doug Finlay in regard to the “*Unamended perspective on the issues pertaining to the UA08/NASU unity agreement.*” There has been a great detail of turmoil and confusion created within the Amended community as a result of the UA08 efforts in regard to the doctrinal beliefs and leanings of those on the Unamended side of the UA08 and in regard to fellowship – more specifically, questions as to why those on the Unamended side feel that they can go back and forth in fellowship between the BASF and BUSF and why they can’t simply let go of any connections with the BUSF and the bridging nature of the UA08/NASU documents and fellowship exclusively on the BASF, if in fact they are of one mind with their Amended counterparts. (Something in which sound Unamended brethren have been arguing for years in response to those claiming “unity” with the Amended; i.e. “*Just go the way of the BASF and leave us alone.*”)

The Book Road and London meetings articulated these concerns in a follow up response dated May 7, 2012 to the “representatives of the Unamended Ecclesias”, which were the brothers listed above. In a 28 page letter titled “*Concerns and Response to the Unamended Written Presentation of January 25, 2012.*” In the response, the two Amended meetings clearly demonstrate the fundamental doctrinal differences between the Amended and Unamended communities in regard to Adamic Condemnation – more specifically the issues of *inherited legal condemnation; legal physical and moral defilement; and inherited alienation.* As would be expected, the nature of Christ is heavily addressed in the response. The issue of Resurrectional Responsibility is also considered along with the issue of proper Fellowship Practices. The full content of this letter can be found on the internet at:

<http://comeletusreasontogetherstudyday.com>

Though we find ourselves at complete odds with our Amended counterparts in regard to the fundamental doctrines that divide the two communities, we commend Book Road and London for their clear and honest addressing of the issues, and we do find ourselves in complete agreement with their firm position on fellowship – “*that true fellowship is predicated upon a common understanding of the ‘one faith’ and of being of ‘one mind and one judgment’ when it comes to fundamental first principles of Truth. We do not believe that*

UA08/NASU in its present form is consistent with the first principles of truth...”

Much could be said about the various arguments put forward in the letter in regard to the points raised in order to defend their Amended view, as well as their attempts to hold up brethren J.J. Andrew and Thomas Williams as the sources of fundamental error – but we do not have the space to deal with 28 pages of their argument. But, the response under consideration did provide a closing summary under the heading of “**Questions for the Unamended Ecclesias**” of twenty one questions that does allow scope to more succinctly reaffirm our Unamended understanding as well as demonstrating the profoundly fundamental differences that do in fact exist between our two fellowships. Since the questions are clearly directed towards those UA08 ecclesias from the Unamended side, there are several questions that are not applicable to those of us that reject the UA08/NASU movement, but we provide them for context. We take opportunity to provide answers to those questions that are in fact pertinent to our beliefs as an exercise in the reaffirmation of our convictions.

“Questions for the Unamended Ecclesias”

1) **What is your understanding of “clean flesh”?**

Our Answer:

It is clear from the questions that follow that their understanding of “clean flesh” is quite different from ours, and not in harmony with the scriptures and bro. Thomas’ clear explanation in Elpis Israel in regard to the Two Aspects of Sin (more on that a little further on). And though they view the phrase “clean flesh” as doctrinal error, it can be demonstrated that their beliefs regarding sin are in fact very much “clean flesh” in nature.

We answer that “clean flesh” would indicate *the erroneous view that the natural state of man from his birth is completely free of inherited uncleanness or defilement due to sin and that the only kind of uncleanness or sin that can be attributed to man is due to his own personal sin. If he is “clean” from the moment of his birth, then there is no form of condemnation resting upon him due to the sin of Adam, and therefore there is no need for atonement due to any legal and/or physical defilement.*

What do the Scriptures teach? It is clear from the Scriptures, and has been contended by Christadelphians well before bro. Williams or bro. Andrew, that man is in fact born in an inherently unclean/defiled condition and is under CONDEMNATION due to the sin of Adam in the Garden.

- **Job 14:4** – “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.”
- **Job 25:4** – “how can he be clean that is born of a woman?”
- **Psalms 51:5** – “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”
- **Lev. 12:12** – Here we read of the provision under the Law in which provided purification for the mother after the birth of a child for the

very reason cited by David in the 51st Psalm – that which the mother gave birth to was unclean.

- The Law is full of the constant lesson in regard to the uncleanness of the flesh as an inherited condition, apart from personal transgression: The Law of the Burnt Offering, sin offering required for leprosy even though leprosy is a disease of the flesh; atonement required for inanimate objects in the tabernacle service, even though they obviously would have no “personal sin” that require such atonement.
- **Rom. 3:9** – “*for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.*” Also Gal. 3:22 – “*But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin...*”
- **Rom. 5:19** – “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned.*” When the Greek phrase *eph ho* (A.V. “for that”) is properly translated it is seen that death does not pass upon all men due to their own personal transgressions as a result of a proneness to sin (as contended by the Amended), but that the sin of Adam itself as a one-time act resulted in a sentence or condemnation upon all humanity. This argument does not rest upon the interpretation of one Greek phrase but is confirmed in the entire context of the 5th chapter of Romans, culminating in the **19th verse** – “*For as by one man’s disobedience many were made (CONSTITUTED) sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made (CONSTITUTED) righteous.*” Man is physically unclean and legally under condemnation to a perishing death from his very birth, due to the Sin of Adam. By his natural birth he is under FEDERAL or CONSTITUTIONAL relationship to Adam and all the negatives that come with that.

Other Scriptures to keep in mind:

- **Rom. 6:6,7** – “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.*”
- **Rom. 7:20, 23, 24** – “*sin that dwelleth in me*”, “*the law of sin in my members*”, “*who shall deliver me from the body of this death*”.
- **Col. 2:13** – “*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him...*”
- **Heb. 10:22** – “*having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*”

If it be contended that “clean flesh” is a credible doctrine, babies should not die before they have an opportunity to personally transgress, as the Scriptures plainly teach that “*wages of sin is death*” (Rom. 6:23), and that “*sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*” (James 1:15). Why then do babies die? To

answer “because man is mortal” is not enough, in that such begs another question – *Why is man mortal?*

With “clean flesh” doctrine we also run into an extremely critical problem with Christ’s sacrificial death. Christ was without moral transgression, and if he therefore was of a “clean flesh” nature he would not bare the diabolis nature in order to destroy it; giving him no connection to those he came to save by merely becoming a substitutionary sacrifice, completely separated from any benefit from his own sacrifice as having no personal need for it and making his death a miscarriage of Divine justice.

2) What is accomplished by baptism? Is baptism a covering, atonement or justification of Adamic or racial sin, or as is sometimes referred to ‘sin in the flesh’?

Our Answer:

- Baptism provides justification from sin – but there is a twofold justification that must be understood. 1) There is atonement/covering for our sin flesh nature (Rom. 5:18,19); as well as the forgiveness of personal sins (Rom. 3:23-26).
- We come out of Constitutional/Federal relationship in Adam, and come into Constitutional/Federal relationship with Christ (Gal. 3:27,28; 1st Cor. 15:22). Allusions to this are also found in the following passages - Eph. 1:7,11; Col. 1:12,14; Rom. 8:16,17; Gal. 3:26-29.
- We are freed from the legal sentence of Condemnation (Gr. *katakrima*) to a perishing death that we inherit from Adam (Rom. 5:12, 14, 15, 16, 17; Rom. 8:1,2).
- We are given the promise/surety of resurrection through Christ. 1st Thess. 4:14 (those who “sleep in Jesus”, the “dead in Christ”) 1st Cor. 15:13-24; Acts 4:2; John 11:25 – “*I am the resurrection and the life*”; 1st Peter 1:3.
- We pass from a state of alienation before God to a position of reconciliation and deemed “Sons of God”. Sin creates a breach between man and God – whether it be the un-atoned, sin flesh nature and/or personal transgression (Eph. 2:3,12; Gal. 4:4-7; Rom. 8:16,17).
- We become adopted Jews as the spiritual seed of Abraham and Heirs of the Promises (Gal. 3:27-29; Eph. 4:4-7; Rom. 8:16,17).
- Directly connected to the Abrahamic Covenant, we are offered the hope of eternal life which is preceded by resurrection through the operation of the blood of the Everlasting Covenant (Titus 3:5-7).
- And, we have access to God through a Mediator (Heb. 4:14-16; 1st John 2:1).

3) What do you believe is THE basis of responsibility to judgment? Is it (i)

covenant relationship or (ii) knowledge and calling?

Our Answer:

We must first ask – what “judgment” are we talking about here? Early brethren who believed in the resurrection of unbaptized, “responsible” individuals did not originally place such individuals at the Judgment Seat (bema) of Christ but a separate judgment in regard to basis, time and place from the Household. As Bro. Roberts stated in 1869 – *“Their class will probably be dealt with at the end of the thousand years, as they form no part of the household of faith who are to be the subjects of the judgment instituted at the coming of Christ.”* But with previous changes in understanding, culminating in the 1898 amendment to the Statement of Faith, the amended placed the “responsible” (both unbaptized and baptized) to appear at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Clause 24, BASF). So, the question seems to clearly be in regard to the Bema of Christ at his Return.

It is our belief that it is both “knowledge” and “covenant” that are necessary to bring one to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Without the appropriate level of knowledge (and resulting belief/faith) there can be no covenant relationship. To deny the role of covenant is to eliminate the role of the Abrahamic Covenant in regard to The Resurrection and eternal life, and by critical extension eliminates Christ’s role as “the resurrection and the life”. It was “by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant” (Hebrews 13:20) that Christ himself was raised from the dead. Resurrection through Christ and Christ’s Judgment Seat (where Christ will judge our works “whether they be good or bad”) are inextricably linked. Psalms 50:4,5 – *“He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His People. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.”* (Gal. 3:22 & 2nd Thess. 2:13 in regard to the necessity of belief and faith in the truth.) Also, the only two references in the Scriptures in regard to the Judgment Seat of Christ make distinct mention of the “we” (Roman 14:10 and 2nd Cor. 5:10), which are clearly addressed exclusively to the saints.

4) **Are you prepared to withhold fellowship from ecclesias that do not subscribe to the same basis of fellowship, i.e. the same doctrines and precepts as contained in the BASF?**

Our Answer:

This question is not applicable to the Unamended ecclesias who have flatly rejected the NASU/UA08 effort – but it does demonstrate the kind of attitude that we should have towards those who participate or tolerate those who have adopted it. To be more clear, our question for each other within the Unamended community should be, *“Are you prepared to withhold fellowship from ecclesias ... as contained in the BUSF?”* This is how the UA08 signatories declared their position in May of 2009 – *“A number of ecclesias have declared their rejection of NASU and of our ecclesias due to our support for NASU, finding the expressions on doctrinal issues fundamentally*

unacceptable. Accordingly, we are no longer in fellowship with these ecclesias. We continue to consider members of other Unamended ecclesias to be in fellowship with us, provided they do not declare their rejection of our ecclesial position.”

5) **Do you believe that “sin” is used to mean both the unclean (defiled) nature...with its carnal inclination and actual transgression?**

Our Answer:

Our answer to this is an emphatic YES. Elpis Israel, p. 129 (Logos Edition) – *“The word sin is used in two principal acceptations in the scripture. It signifies in the first place, “the transgression of law,” and in the next, it represents that physical principle of the animal nature, which is the cause of all its diseases, death, and resolution into dust. It is that in the flesh “which has the power of death;” and it is called sin, because the development, or fixation, of this evil in the flesh, was the result of transgression. Inasmuch as this evil principle pervades every part of the flesh, the animal nature is styled “sinful flesh,” that is, flesh full of sin; so that sin, in the sacred style, came to stand for the substance called man.”* (emphasis added)

And then on the following page, *“Sin, I say, is a synonym for human nature. Hence, the flesh is invariably regarded as unclean.”* And further, in regard to Christ himself, *“Sin could not have been condemned in the body of Jesus, if it had not existed there. His body was as unclean as the bodies of those he died for; for he was born of a woman, and “not one” can bring a clean body out of a defiled body...”* (emphasis added)

6) **What do you believe are the false teachings of JJ Andrew and Thomas Williams? Can you please show in the NASU where these false teachings are refuted?**

7) **Can you show us where the UA08/NASU teaches that Clause 24 of the BASF is a first principle and should be made a test of fellowship?**

8) **Please explain 1st Cor. 15:21-23**

- a) **What does it mean “in Adam all die”?**
- b) **What does it mean “in Christ shall all be made alive”?**
- c) **Specifically speaking are these verses in relation to judgment or immortality?**

Our Answer:

First of all, the premise must be laid down as to what the terms “in Adam” and “in Christ” mean. Do these indicate a physical state of being or are they terms of relationship? When it is understood that these phrases speak of relationship – FEDERAL/CONSTITUTIONAL RELATIONSHIP – any confusion regarding them is made clear. The following passages speak to the present constitutional nature and benefits of being “in Christ” (Gal. 3:27, 28; Eph. 2:13, 19, 20; Col. 3:9, 10; Rom. 5:19).

The context of 1st Corinthians 15 matters, as it is an argument set out to prove the reality of Christ's resurrection and its inseparable connection to the hope of resurrection.

- **"In Adam all die"**: Very simply - those who remain in constitutional relationship with Adam also remain under the sentence of death (*katakrima*, Rom. 5:17-19). They are not in covenant, they are not connected to Christ's resurrection and therefore there is no promise of *anastasis* held out to them. If the phrase "in Adam" also includes believers as well, where else in the scriptures do we read that the believers "die in Adam"? To die "in Adam" holds no hope or promise of future life.
- **"In Christ shall all be made alive"**: For those related to Christ's resurrection through baptism (covenant) they will be brought forth from the grave by the same means as Christ - through the operation of the "blood of the everlasting covenant" (Zech. 9:11; Heb. 13:20). Though those "in Christ" still suffer the consequence of death they have received a legal pardon from the condemnation that would hold them there.

Again, these are terms of relationship and are not terms of physical condition. Though, they are terms that have physical consequences.

"OUT OF ADAM INTO CHRIST – When does this take place? At baptism. In what sense do believers then pass out of Adam? In the same sense that they pass into Christ. Is it accompanied by any physical change? No; the change is one of relationship; Adam ceases to be the federal head of baptized believers, and Christ takes his place. What is the immediate effect of this? That the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them instead of the 'disobedience' of Adam; whereby they cease to be accounted 'dead' (2nd Cor. 5:14) and are made 'heirs according to the hope of eternal life' (Titus 3:7). What is the effect in relation to the future? That death, as the result of Adam's 'disobedience' cannot prevail over them. 'By one man came death' (1 Cor. 15:21). How? 'Through the offence of one' (Rom. 5:15). When, therefore, the relationship of any toward that 'offense' is altered their relationship towards its consequence is altered. In what way? By keeping them from entering the grave? Not necessarily; but, should they enter, by bringing them out."

J.J. Andrew, *The Blood of the Covenant*, pp. 30,31

9) Under the UA08/NASU, Unamended ecclesias agree to fellowship at non-UA08 Central ecclesias outside North America on the basis of the BASF (i.e. use the BASF as the basis for inter-ecclesial fellowship). What prevents the UA08/NASU Unamended ecclesias from agreeing to this basis within North America (including Ontario), since such acceptance would remove a notable stumbling block to the UA08 among Amended ecclesias.

This is a good question, and one that some on the Unamended side have essentially asked for years. If the BASF represents to the "unity" people a good enough expression of faith in some circumstances, why not just adopt it (i.e.

just go completely over to the Amended) all the time? - removing a great deal of confusion and frustration for both the Amended and Unamended sides

10) Please explain Romans 8:1,2

- a) What does it mean to be in Christ?**
- b) What is the condemnation spoken of here all about?**

Our Answer:

We have already covered this extensively in previous answers, but again we say that "in Christ" is a term of constitutional/federal relationship. The condemnation mentioned in Romans 8:1,2 is the same condemnation (or Gr. *katakrima*) discussed in Romans 5. Paul's exposition comes full circle here when he clearly affirms that "*there is now no condemnation (katakrima) to them which are in Christ Jesus.*" The legal sentence of eternal death has been lifted for those who are connected to the sacrificial blood of Christ.

The Amended cannot tolerate the principal of inherited condemnation, because they perceive that such keeps their "Enlightened Rejecter" permanently in the grave and away from the Bema of Christ. This is the confusion that is created when one tries to bring the "E.R." before the Judgment Seat of Christ and on the same basis as the believers, as contended for in Clause 24 of the BASF. We would think that a return to the Truth in regard to inherited condemnation could be reached by the Amended if they were not so determined to bring unbaptized "rejecters" to Christ's Judgment Seat.

11) One of our concerns is that an Unamended member who agrees with Thomas Williams teachings could assent to the NASU while retaining the belief that Adam's sin alienates all men from God at birth and that baptism removes this alienation? Can you show us in the NASU where this teaching is clearly rejected?

A serious fundamental difference is clearly demonstrated in this question. And the NASU/UA08 people are willing to either deny or sweep such a critical principal under the rug? The Amended (at least these two BASF meetings) deny the inherited sin condition and the legal condemnation that comes with it. And therefore, they deny the resulting inherited alienation/estrangement that men are born under – especially as it relates to Christ's physical/legal relationship to sin that was in need of atonement.

12) Please explain Genesis 2:17:

- a) Was a literal death required within that very 24 hour period (i.e. day)?**
- b) Or is it better translated "dying thou shalt die"?**

Our Answer:

Unamended Christadelphians have held both opinions on this passage for over 100 years, and many others before the division of 1898 held the latter view – with no serious consequences in being able to correctly understand the

Atonement. This writer feels that the grammatical and Scriptural proof supports an immediate death or “cutting off”, and that such a view better supports and explains a correct view of the Atonement, but certainly in and of itself is not a point of contention or of fellowship.

The phrase as it appears in the A.V. reads – “*for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die.***” The bolded phrase itself is a figure of speech known as *polypton*. The grammatical structure is known as an “Infinitive Absolute.” From “A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew” (by J. Weingreen) we quote, “*The Infinitive Absolute expresses emphasis when it immediately precedes the finite verb, and duration when it immediately follows it*” (p. 79). In this case, the Infinitive Absolute (“surely”) precedes the finite verb (“die”). So therefore, the phrase is one of emphasis and does not itself indicate a process of time; with the timing of such a death specified by “*in the day thou eatest*”.

Examples	
‘he will indeed (or surely) keep’	emphasis
‘ he will keep – continually’	duration

Bullinger’s marginal note regarding “thou shalt surely die” also indicates that the phrase is for emphasis. The following similar passages are provided that demonstrate this grammatical rule – (Gen. 20:7; 26:11; Ex. 19:12; 21:12,15,16,17; 31:14,15; Lev. 20:2,9, 10,11,12,13,15,16,27; 24:16,17; 2nd Sam 12:14 – and many other references).

Though Adam and Eve did not physically die that day, there was in fact a cutting off that very day as an animal was slain and Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21) were given coats of skins to cover their exposed, unclean condition. Before their sin they were deemed very good, but now their moral and physical existence was tainted with the uncleanness of sin and unacceptable before Yahweh (Hab. 1:3). In providing skins an animal had to be slain and blood shed in the process. The animal sacrifice could not provide justification from the Edenic Penalty in and of itself as it had no moral or physical relationship to the Adamic transgression – but the Edenic sacrifice was in fact typical of the sacrifice that God would provide through the offering up of His only begotten Son. In Rev. 13:8 – “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” **In and of themselves**, animal sacrifice had no **inherent efficacy** – as we are told in Hebrews 10:4 – “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin*” – whether it be this Edenic sacrifice or all other animal sacrifices that would follow. BUT they did provide a provisional efficacy due to their figurative connection to the ultimate sacrifice – Christ – who as a descendant and representative of the Adamic race would himself be cut off

(Isaiah 53:8; Daniel 9:26) through the shedding of his blood, fulfilling the divine justice required by the Edenic Penalty and providing the means of escape from death.

If the Edenic penalty represented a process of decay eventually leading to death then why would this same process have not been sufficient for Christ if he would have lived a life free from sin and died of natural causes? The fact of the matter is that shed blood was required as representing the cutting off of life. In witnessing the animal sacrifice Adam and Eve would have understood that it should have been them; but were being taught, along with the promise of The Seed, of Divine Mercy. But also that God would not set aside Divine Justice against sin and that an individual would be provided to satisfy the requirement of the penalty while at the same time mercifully providing the means of redemption – to fulfill God’s purpose to fill the earth with His glory. The death of Adam and Eve would have not accomplished this. The sin in the Garden did not hinder or derail God’s plan and purpose, it merely provided a different track or path to the fulfilling of God’s purpose (The Way of the Tree of Life) as opposed to if Adam and Eve had been obedient to the Divine Command.

13) **Please explain John 12:48:**

- Is it speaking about AD70**
- Is it speaking about Resurrection to the judgment seat of Christ?**

Our Answer:

The passage reads: “*He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*” We feel that the verse can validly be argued both ways. We, personally, have written a note in our margin that “the last day” is in reference to 70 AD when the Jewish Commonwealth was destroyed due to their rejection of Christ. But neither view supports the idea of the resurrection of “enlightened” Gentile rejecters of the word (which is being implied by the question). In either explanation, it has to be remembered that the intended audience of these words were the Jews who directly rejected “the word”/ “the light” that was before them. As the people of the covenant, to whom the Holy Oracles were given, and to whom Christ was directly and personally sent in public declaration of word and miracles (Matt. 15:24) – the Jews were responsible to accept their Messiah and his message. But in regard to the Gentile rejecters of the Truth – it has no bearing.

14) **The UA08/NASU places no restrictions on continued fellowship by Unamended UA08 ecclesias with the larger Unamended community. You have stated this will continue indefinitely. Is this still your position?**

15) **Your written understanding (Jan. 23,2010) of the Final Clarifications is that they are not part of the doctrinal basis of the UA08/NASU. Amended authors of the UA08/NASU said they were. Do you**

anticipate changing your view since such acceptance would remove a notable stumbling block to the UA08 among Amended ecclesias?

- 16) In the past you have not supported the idea of adding a third clarification stating that signatories to the UA08/NASU reject the teaching of Inherited Legal Condemnation, while at the same time stating you have the same beliefs as the Amended community. Do you anticipate accepting this additional clarification in the future since this would remove a notable stumbling block to the UA08 among Amended ecclesias?
- 17) In October, 2007 you withdrew from reunion discussions because (quoting from your Jan 23, 2010 presentation), “We have no desire to give reason for brethren to be involved in further schism, as our desired outcome has always been, and remains unity, not further disunity. Accordingly, we feel it is no longer in the best interest of true peace and unity to continue with this process. Therefore, effective immediately we are standing down from this process and have no plans to initiate any further action.” Given these statements, what has changed in the position of your ecclesias that now allows you to not only participate in, but to promote “further disunity” within the Amended community by promoting the acceptance of the UA08/NASU, without addressing the provisions that prevent its widespread acceptance?
- 18) Why are you reluctant to join the Central community? This is fundamental to the concept of reunion and follows the pattern of the Suffolk St. reunion, involving the identical doctrinal issues in England. It helped significantly in assuring the Central community that there was a common understanding of doctrine and fellowship practice. Your refusal to join the Central community presents a major stumbling block for a successful reunion and casts aspersions on your assertion that you share the same beliefs as the Central community.
- 19) Would you accept the BASF becoming the touchstone statement of faith for both parties and the UA08/NASU (with ambiguities removed) being an explanatory document, consistent with previous reunions?
- 20) Do you now believe that the understanding of the Gospel (that level of understanding determined by God alone) is the basis for resurrectional responsibility at all, baptized or unbaptized?
- We have answered this in question #3.
- 21) Do you reject both the teaching that our sin biased nature is separate aspect of sin requiring atonement, and that this is the prime reason for baptism without which they will not be raised from the grave?

To deny or reject that our “sin biased nature is a separate aspect of sin

requiring atonement” is in fact clean flesh doctrine. The old saying “if it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck” is extremely applicable here. The Amended, and the UA08 leaders cringe when they hear the charge of “clean flesh”, but that is exactly what we have inferred here in this question. To deny that our nature (and by extension, Christ’s nature) is in need of atonement represents fundamental error and is at odds with the Truth and Unamended doctrine. And, we have more than a “sin biased nature”, which is wording that goes along with the Amended idea of sin by metonymy, but we in fact inherit a nature that is itself viewed by God as sin, is unclean and under condemnation (as was demonstrated by our answers to earlier questions).

Concluding Thoughts

We may grow weary of continued “reunion issues”, and certainly it should be obvious that the division and confusion created by the constant attempts at reunion without true unity is something that negatively impacts the Amended as well as the Unamended. This side of the Kingdom, these matters and doctrinal issues will never go away and they will continue to erode away a once vibrant Unamended Community. And though exasperating, we can never lose the energy or zeal for the opportunities we have to defend God’s saving Truth in response to the continual efforts to compromise it – whether it be in life saving doctrine or fellowship.

A. Thomas

SOUND OBSERVATION

From the other side of the Christadelphian divide

From the October Logos, reader feedback section (emphasis added):

“I’ve been recently perusing the book ‘The Atonement’ (not recommended – S.K.), and came across the terrible Edward Turney controversy back in 1873. Much could be learned from that controversy and when Brother Roberts finally wrote his ‘Fellowship Statement’ in *The Christadelphian*, November, 1873, to resolve the matter once and for all. Further delay no longer became an option but action was needed to be taken in order to stop the festering sore from spreading any further. **If only brethren and sisters could learn from our experienced pioneers in settling matters that affect a fundamental principle, how much sorrow and heartache could be saved if not prevented! It took only three months before Brother Roberts decided to act** and it certainly was sufficient time to allow some brethren and sisters to gather their faculties from such a whirlwind controversy as that presented by Edward Turney concerning the nature and sacrifice of Christ. **This brings me**

to the point of the NASU/UA08 controversy which has now been brewing for over 18 years and has done harm and no good whatsoever. The UA08 controversy affects fundamental truths that Brother Roberts would no doubt have never tolerated for so long and which would have been unimaginable back in his day. He states: *“There has been time enough for the settlement of mature conviction, since this mischievous [clean flesh] controversy was originated three months ago. Further delay would only hinder our edification, impede the inquirer, and disgrace the truth. I, therefore, ask you to join me in a general declaration of withdrawal from all who deny that Jesus Christ was God manifest in our mortal nature. I ask you to do so in a manner that will enable us to give peaceable effect to our convictions, avoiding the turmoil of further discussion, which we may well dispense with after the thorough canvass of the question which has taken place, and which could lead to no good result, while it could not fail to be painful to many, and perhaps productive of some things that would be regarded with displeasure by the Master of the household and the Higher than the highest.”* Hence, three months was long enough and any further delay would have disgraced the truth.

“In order to resolve the ongoing turmoil of this UA08 controversy, **should not Central brethren and sisters** (Especially the Unamended brothers and sisters – S.K.) **of their particular ecclesia present the matter once and for all to all the members of said ecclesia and state clearly and unequivocally that they will not tolerate such a mishandling of the Word of God by this UA08 controversy and withdraw from those who either believe it themselves and endorse it and those, though not believing it themselves, yet tolerate those who do?** (Are there not other similar issues plaguing the Unamended community, apart from the UA08, that need to be handled in the same way? – S.K.) Wouldn’t this settle the matter once and for all? The UA08 is like sounding brass and has done nothing but create rifts and uncertainty in its long wake of 18 years and where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work saith the Spirit (James 3:16). **I hope more and more faithful ecclesias will come forward with their uncompromising stand against this mischievous controversy, not regarding personal acquaintance whatsoever,** as Brother Roberts stated again: *“A first-principle is openly rejected and assailed. Our foundation is called in question, as to which we are bound publicly to take positive ground, regardless of consequence to individuals. We must, in this matter, know no one after the flesh. Our partialities, on the ground of personal acquaintance, must never stand in the way of our duty to that gospel of our salvation wherein we stand, and wherein only is friendship of any account* (S.K. – Not enough emphasis can be made on this point). *Let us decide on our duty first, and let the consequences take care of themselves. Our declaration will bear unfavorably on no one unless he be unfavorable to the truth, and in that case, he and nor our decision, will be responsible for the result.”* May all those who have the same conviction and sentiment and who

desire to uphold the truth in its entirety and in its purity say Amen! AND may they act upon that Amen is my earnest prayer.” G.S. (Canada)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON FELLOWSHIP

IT had been our hope to close the subject of fellowship with a final installment of “The Doctrine of Fellowship” in the 2nd Quarter. But, there have been further developments that require additional comment on the matter.

Some of the biggest issues we currently face involve acceptance or tolerance of UA08 ecclesias or individuals and the “Judaizer” heresies and their consequences; and lax or open fellowship policies in general. Complicated by the Laodicean sense of apathy, Ecclesial unwillingness to take clear stands – backed up by firm fellowship policies, general tendencies toward humanistic thinking, the stifling of decisive opposition through political correctness, and outright worldliness; issues have been allowed to carry on through endless and fruitless process (if not simply ignored), without the quick and decisive action as demonstrated by bro. Roberts in the previous article – and we are now paying the price.

THE OCTOBER, 2012, ADVOCATE

The difficulties and compromises surrounding the matters of fellowship are not improved by the Advocate’s latest commentary in the October issue, which offers a *“Joint Letter – Preserving Our Bible School Heritage”* signed by the Advocate Committee; later followed by a reprinted article *“Fellowship – Human or Divine”*, by a Charles French and reprinted in the mid 1950’s by bro. D.W. Bughman **and fully endorsed by the current Advocate Publishing Committee.** It is the latter article that provides the highest level of concern for the confusing and mixed message it conveys, but both will here be subject to some comment.

Article #1 – “Joint Letter”

The first article provides a series of guidelines – *“a code of brotherly conduct”* – in how Bible School Committees, prospective teachers, those who are critical or concerned with the Bible School, and for those who “attend and support Bible Schools.” This is no doubt a response to the unfortunate controversy that surrounded the Kentucky Bible School’s decision this summer to depart from their historical practice and invite a teacher who is a committee

member of the WCF and a member of a UA08 Ecclesia. The Advocate states, *"This year we have witnessed actions, whether intentional or not, that were provocative to brethren."* Who is guilty of being "provocative", the Advocate does not say.

There are a total of 16 points of "counsel" for all involved. And though we appreciate the desire to be thorough we perceive that some serious and obvious points are either being missed or ignored. We refer the reader directly to the October Advocate for full context.

Though we too fervently desire the preservation of our Bible School Heritage, our Bible Schools (and Fraternal Gatherings) can only be as strong as the ecclesias and committees that sponsor them; and of equal importance – those who attend. It therefore can be expected that as the strength of the Household becomes compromised, and as ecclesias individually fail to remain steadfast to doctrinal principles and its application in regard to fellowship – that we would also see a declension in the soundness of our inter-ecclesial functions, such as Bible Schools, Gatherings, etc. When problems/errors are not dealt with at the grass-roots or primary level of action (i.e. in the individual ecclesias), we therefore see bad decision making, carelessness or general Laodicean apathy carried over to and reflected in our larger, inter-ecclesial events. And, if the Truth is not being **robustly** and **uncompromisingly** promulgated and defended **DAILY** and **WEEKLY** in our homes and in our ecclesias, then the whole conversation in regard to the value and continuance of our Bible Schools (once a year events) is a moot issue. Bible Schools are becoming a week long snapshot of our Laodicean diversity and tolerances; and where the robust nature of our Unamended Christadelphian Heritage is watered down, disagreements and critical issues facing our Community are swept under the rug or prohibited from discussion as "controversy" or "too negative", and fellowship standards loosened for the sake of social tranquility. **The real and critical issue is not in the preservation of our Bible School Heritage, but rather the preservation of the Truth in our homes and in our individual ecclesias**, which as a result will help to preserve our Bible Schools.

Matthew 18:15-17

The Advocate draws upon Matthew 18:15-17 as the "basis" of their "counsel". Though admitting that the passage has "specific reference to offenses against individual brethren", they proceed to attempt to force the issue by asking the rhetorical question as to whether or not the model can also "*serve as our model for addressing offences against the household or the Truth?*"

If it be thought that Matthew 18 is to be applied to larger issues that face the Brotherhood, this begs additional thought as to how the procedure laid out by Christ can possibly be fully implemented. **There are four specific steps** that are mentioned by Christ, and if we insist that Matthew 18 is to be applied in regard to "offences against the household or the Truth" it stands to reason that

the protocol must easily be applicable **and executed in all phases**. But it is not, because that is not how the passage is intended. The first step is to go to the perceived offender in a private way (vs. 15). **This no doubt is sensible when facts are in need of being clarified or ascertained, or if the matter is still in its infancy - no matter if it is a personal offense or larger issue affecting the Brotherhood.** But as was pointed out in the 2nd Quarter S.K., when the error is not done in secret and is open for all to see, the secretive nature of **Step 1** has already been blown and **the larger group is already either aware of the problem, or is in risk of being adversely affected by the problem IF NOT WARNED and called to action.** Even if repentance can be achieved by a more private approach and council, it is still necessary that the offender(s) make a public repudiation of their error/mistake as others are already aware of the problem. If the offender(s) refuses to receive and act upon the council, then what is the next step? The matter is already known to the larger group, so how is the reciting of the matter to "*one or two more*" even possible? **Steps 2 & 3** are then thrown into disarray. And, if repentance is not achieved by the private and then more public approach of one or many, then what is to be done about **Step 4**? – the cutting off.

Now in the case of the Kentucky Bible School, private efforts towards resolution were in fact extended to the KBS committee both BEFORE and AFTER they went public with the Bible School announcement – but to no avail. What then? Is a personal refraining from going to that school enough (Advocate – p. 243, point #3), or is something more required by the larger Christ ecclesia? We desire not to single the KBS out as it is not the only Bible School that has serious troubles in regard to their selection of teachers/speakers – but it is clearly a recent case that the Advocate is drawing upon.

"Counsel to Bible School Committees"

It should be clear that the kind of individuals a Bible School or Gathering asks to teach is a reflection of the beliefs and standards of that school, the committee and ecclesia that sponsors it. The Advocate proposes serious care in this matter and the finding of teachers that "are committed to the understanding of the Bible as reflected in the Unamended Statement of Faith." And, the Advocate also advises a "background check" of a brother that a committee is not familiar with to make sure that he is in "good standing" in his home ecclesia. **But no mention is made of whether or not the ecclesia itself is in "good standing" or committed to Unamended principles of doctrine.** Brethren, this is no small point, especially in regard to ecclesias that have adopted the UA08 or tolerate false doctrines. Do we consider ecclesias **and** individual members who have either adopted or are tolerant of the UA08 as being in GOOD STANDING? Do we view ecclesias **and** individual members with "open fellowship" policies or practices as being in GOOD STANDING? Do we view ecclesias **and** individual members who are active in a different fellowship altogether as being in GOOD STANDING? Do we view ecclesias

and individual members that accept or tolerate false doctrines or practices in general as in GOOD STANDING? Are we to expect that a brother who is associated with an ecclesia that falls under the preceding descriptions and or is themselves personally involved with them is in fact “committed to Unamended principles of doctrine”? (More on this in our comments on the 2nd article.) Do we view participation with, if not actual leadership in the WCF and its promotion of foul doctrines and practices as something that warrants a GOOD STANDING – ecclesially or individually?

“Counsel to Teachers”

Under bullet point #2, it would appear that too much is left in the decision making process to the prospective teacher as to whether they should or should not teach after an objection is made. If a doctrinal or moral issue is raised that is valid, after a brother has agreed to teach/speak, then it would seem that there is little deliberating that needs to take place – **the committee** should rectify the situation as soon as possible. The invited teacher is the guest in the matter and the source of the problem, and just as easily as they were invited so just as easily should they comply with a withdrawal of the invitation. The previous bullet point demands that the matter remain “private” – but surely this must be realized to be an impossible expectation in some cases where the falsehood or practices that the invited teacher promotes or tolerates are an open matter and of greater impact upon the community than just the Bible School itself.

“Counsel to Brethren Whose Conscience Leads Them to Intervention”

It is advised, in bullet point #1, that if one is concerned with a choice of a teacher or subject matter that they should, “go to the teacher and take up one’s concern (Matthew 18; Gal. 2:11).” **If this is a personal concern with that individual**, this is something that should have already taken place, regardless of their invitation to teach somewhere. But in the case where a brother is openly entrenched in promotion, representation or tolerance of a position that is not in harmony with the Unamended Position in regard to The Truth (in other words – NOT ONE OF US; whether in belief or practice or based upon the ecclesia they attend, the Fellowship they belong to, an organization they belong to, or falsehood they teach), **the real issue is not with the brother himself anymore BUT WITH A COMMITTEE UNWISELY CHOOSING SUCH AN INDIVIDUAL to represent their beliefs and values at their Bible School.**

Did Paul go directly to the fornicating brother in 1st Corinthians 5, when the matter had been “reported commonly”? No, he did not. But in an epistle, that would be read by all Believers everywhere, he rebukes the ecclesia for their tolerance and prideful defense of the erring brother and pleads with them to reject him on this basis – “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (1st Cor. 5:6)?”

“Counsel To All of Us Who Attend...”

Under bullet point #2, it is stated, “*When objections or allegations to a brother, ecclesia, or Bible School are raised and circulated publicly, we should be very wary of them until we know that they have been tested following the course prescribed by our Master in Matthew 18.*” Again, if the matter is not already an open or public issue then there is nothing to disagree with in this statement. But where the matter is already something that is open and not merely a personal grudge or observation then why should brethren be wary of the warnings and objections that are being publicly raised? If a brother, like in the case of KBS, is openly a member of the WCF and/or of an UA08 ecclesia, or is promoter of doctrinal error, etc. – what is there to be “wary of” in regard to the concerns and conclusions that everyone should have already arrived at? If someone who is openly Catholic or Baptist is invited to teach at one of our Bible Schools, should brethren be “wary” of public warning, objection and condemnation of such a thing, even if the first two steps of Matthew 18 have not been followed? This may seem to represent an extreme example, but do we not already know that if one is directly associated with or openly endorses the principles and values of WCF, UA08, various false doctrines, or of a liberal bent towards the Truth in general for example; that it doesn’t take personal one-on-one investigation to find out that there is a serious problem with such an individual or ecclesia, and a Bible School that would host such an individual? **If we are to follow the Advocate’s advice in forcing the Matthew 18 principle, the watchman’s duty to warn is either squelched or brethren who are in the dark due to the secretive nature of addressing these issues are being encouraged to view any TIMELY warnings with dismissive suspicion.** Where has spiritual discernment gone, brethren? “*I counsel thee to ... anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see* (Rev. 3:18).”

Final thoughts regarding the “Joint Letter”

It is time to swipe away political correctness and to exercise good spiritual sense, and recognize and oppose wrong when it presents itself. It is not a complicated matter. The “Joint Letter” provides some closing comments that essentially build a straw-man argument that is very disconcerting.

“*We must not believe that an injudicious choice or action makes an individual or an ecclesia no longer brethren. We become brothers and sisters through a valid baptism. That is an honored calling bestowed by God, not by man. No man can take away that status from another* (p. 244, last paragraph, emphasis added).”

When and where, might we ask, is this being done in the Unamended Community? In Galatians 3:14,15 we read, “*And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*” This clarifies something extremely important in regard to the

reaction that some may have when they see brethren withdraw from other brethren. Just because certain brethren are willing to follow the scriptural command to withdraw spiritual fellowship from, and even social connection with such individuals who are in error – such does not indicate that they believe that they have the authority to nullify someone's (or a group's) Constitutional status in Christ. Even though fellowship has been disrupted, there is no disputing the fact that they are still "brothers" or "sisters", if they in fact at one time walked in the light of the Truth. And it does not mean that the goal of restoration is being abandoned. The act of withdrawing from fellowship is in and of itself an act designed for eventual restoration (a restoration to the right way) as has been scripturally demonstrated in previous articles of the S.K. How many times does the Apostle Paul make mention of delivering those in error *"unto the Adversary, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus"* (1st Cor. 5:5; 1st Tim. 1:20)?"

But, there comes a time when the efforts to reach out to those in error are rebuffed; and when reaching out/help is rejected you can't keep pounding it on them. You ALWAYS leave a door open for a possibility of their repentance/change of course, but you can't keep rubbing it in their faces if a decision has been made on their part to justify their position and move on.

We find it ironic that the "Joint Letter" closes with a reference to Jeremiah. The prophecies of Yahweh through Jeremiah are some of the most outspoken, condemnatory words delivered to the Children of Israel due to their apathy, compromise with the world, doctrinal error and the very Laodicean qualities that they displayed. There was nothing private or secret about Yahweh's message, delivered through Jeremiah's public denunciations in regard to the sins and errors of the people. Jeremiah was even commanded not to pray for the people (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11). Jeremiah lamented the fact that he was called to be *"a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth"* (15:10). Nevertheless, Jeremiah was faithful to his calling, as we are to be.

Article #2

"Fellowship – Human or Divine"

The stated reason for supplying this article by Charles French (re-printed by bro. D.W. Baughman), the Advocate Committee declares, *"Bringing these truths to the fore is our primary intent here, and we humbly appeal to our readers to thoughtfully consider the principles set forth in this article and their relevance to our circumstances today – a generation after they were penned."* Exactly what "circumstances" the Advocate has in mind and how they perceive such circumstances they do not say.

In their introduction and unqualified endorsement of the article, the Advocate Committee states that, *"his treatise does not address the implications*

for community fellowship when a believer departs from the teachings of the Truth or walks disorderly, the focus here concentrating on the higher aspects of our fellowship with our Father and our Lord." If only the article did in fact concentrate *"on the higher aspects of our fellowship with our Father and our Lord"*, we would not take issue with it. But the article does trample on certain fundamental aspects of community fellowship that needs to be critically questioned AND rejected. And it is very alarming that the Advocate would choose to promote the article. The fact that the article has the appearance of an endorsement of bro. Baughman (whose "Eden" chart we re-print in every issue of the S.K.) does not improve the value of the defective and erroneous arguments presented in the treatise.

We completely agree with the premise that fellowship begins with *"walking with God and His Son"*, and that such fellowship can be immediately broken by sin, whether it is known to others or not. We also can endorse the statement, *"that the severance of Fellowship with Christ does not depend upon a human resolution or withdrawal, or some published note."* But the arguments then go down a slippery slope in the efforts to counter a perceived evil.

On page 258 it is stated, *"During the past fifty years there has been a noticeable hardening of opinion on the part of leaders in the Brotherhood that fellowshiping is something which can be conferred or removed by human agency."* We cannot speak specifically to what Charles French had been exposed to in the early part of the 20th century, but we can say that the field as we see it now provides no evidence that anyone believes or even infers that man can take away someone's fellowship with God and Christ. BUT, as fellowship represents commonality, and as we claim to hold The Truth, we are bound to associate with those who share the same fundamental doctrines and values (in belief and in action – united in the **"same mind and same judgment"**). Conversely, the Scriptures are extremely adamant to *"reject"*, *"have no company with"*, *"receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed"*, *"let him be accursed (anathema)"*, etc. those who do not comply with the Gospel of Christ. So there is an extremely important element in regard to the Truth that **IN FACT requires involvement** by "human agency" to both promote and guard the matter of fellowship.

The writer goes on to make a very outlandish and Truth nullifying statement. Please consider carefully what is being stated here – *"Many do not perceive here a great error which is BASIC, and that is, that the conditions governing fellowship in the days of the Apostles ARE NOT WITH US TODAY. That is to say, we HAVE NOT the Spirit to discern as in their day. I will speak of this later."* **Most certainly** we do not possess the Holy Spirit power within ourselves, let us be clearly understood on that. BUT, we do have the result or record of the work of the Holy Spirit in the WORD OF GOD (2nd Tim. 3:16). **It is from that Word that we derive the ability to discern!** (Acts 17:11; Heb.

5:14). This is an extremely flawed assertion put forward by C.F. It goes along with what we hear in modern times that “no one really can know what The Truth is” or “since no one can really know, it doesn’t really matter.” If we cannot “discern” the guidelines for fellowship, then how can we possibly “discern” Truth from Error? How can we know The Truth at all? How can we justify standing apart from “Christianity” at large? The writer of the article opens up here a faulty premise; a corrupt seed of thinking that if allowed to go unchecked nullifies any claim that we might have to fellowship with God and Christ by not being able to discern what the “light” is in order that we may walk therein, and to associate with those who also walk in that “light”.

The writer/article continues – “Thus, we find today, differing kinds of ‘fellowship’, such as the ‘Berean fellowship’, the ‘Temperance Hall section’, the Suffolk St. Meeting, and so on, which are so very reminiscent of those long ago, who said, ‘I am of Paul’ – ‘I am of Apollos’. Yet these same brethren and sisters serve ONE LORD, and ONE CHRIST JESUS, and many are pleased to speak of this Service as ‘OUR FELLOWSHIP’.” It so happens that the Suffolk St. meeting was associated with Clean Flesh doctrine (and originally with Partial Inspiration). So how can all the parties here mentioned be viewed as serving “ONE LORD, AND ONE JESUS CHRIST”? A “clean flesh” Christ is a different Christ than believed by those who do not accept clean flesh doctrine. Let us put the Unamended community at large in the mix here. Is there not something fundamentally different about the Unamended position that has kept us separate from the other divisions of Christadelphia? Do we not view our position on the Atonement as something that defines the boundaries of the fellowship/commonality of belief that we are willing (out of scriptural conviction) to fellowship with? Or do we hold our hands up and just say that we cannot discern or define the Biblical doctrines of what is acceptable to fellowship or not acceptable to fellowship?

But, the writer/article goes even further, revealing the full impact of his thinking in regard to the absence of the Holy Spirit in our day:

“Because very few have challenged this idea, it has now almost become an accepted fact, so many brethren and sisters overlook the VITAL difference in apostolic times and our days, and the (Spirit) THEY HAD THEN.

*“That wondrous Spirit endorsed the apostles’ appointment; it guided them, rebuked them, and supervised their fellowship. It convicted Ananias and Sapphira; it openly selected Saul (Paul) and gave counsel to them. **How then, in its absence today, can a believer refuse a believer, and ecclesia cut off ecclesia? Where is the divine warrant?**”*

Brethren! – if this kind of logic is accepted and followed, it completely contradicts the arguments made in the “Joint Letter” by the Advocate Committee regarding the Unamended Position as a Basis of Fellowship. If this logic is applied, this means that there can be no refusal of fellowship to anyone!

How can the Advocate claim, in their introductory remarks to Charles French’s article, that the article “*does not address the implications for community fellowship when a believer departs from the teachings of the Truth or walks disorderly, the focus here concentrating on the higher aspects of our fellowship with our Father and our Lord*”? If the author is in fact just dealing with the “*higher aspects of our fellowship with our Father and our Lord*”, then the context of his argument is not very clear.

He goes on – “O Brother, or Sister, why do you not stop to think deeply over this latter-day claim to inspiration in the matter of “our fellowship”, for that is what it amounts to. The basic fact – that the Spirit is absent should not be forgotten. Instead, what is thought to be fellowship is more often a matter of MEMBERSHIP, and the ROLLBOOK is not a passport to the Kingdom. It is but a beginning. Ultimate fellowship will NEVER BE KNOWN UNTIL THE JUDGMENT declares it.” Fine, and we appreciate this observation to a point, but those who have held and continue to hold conservative views in regard to fellowship are not claiming “inspiration” in any way, shape or form. And even though we are without inspiration – again, **we do have the Inspired Word** that directs us in the criteria for fellowship and how to deal with breaches in that fellowship. If not, the Body of Believers, united in fellowship, as founded upon the Apostles Doctrine is without any defensive measures to preserve The Truth and the resulting fellowship/commonality associated with it. **The kind of arguments presented in the Charles French article, if applied, leave the Body of Christ as a defenseless city – the gate being left wide open.** We understand that C.F. may have been addressing serious misapplications of fellowship during his time – but at the same time he falls into his own errors in opposing them.

“How many children of brethren and sisters have turned away, disgusted because of the continual bickering and striving about non-essentials and ‘our’ fellowship?” We hear this same cry today. **But what are “non-essentials”? -** The Atonement; The Nature of Man/Christ; Eternal Life; The Kingdom of God; Fundamentals of Prophetic Interpretation; Morality? These are the areas of fundamental concern that have been the cause of “striving” and withdrawal, both now and in the past. As long as the Truth is held, promulgated and defended there will be controversy. The Truth, by its very nature is controversial and is always under attack – from without and especially from within. If we sincerely love the Gospel Message, as is asked by the Apostle Paul – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?” As was told us recently in regard to the humbling remarks of an unbaptized student of the Word to the affect – “If you believe you have the Truth, you should be willing to fight for it.” Complaints regarding controversy (which bro. Thomas Williams so well addressed in the past) show a grave misunderstanding as to the nature of our calling. We cannot run towards strife and bickering and we are not to be its source, but where Truth and fellowship around that Truth is under attack there is a requirement to firmly oppose it as long as is necessary. Our young people

are to be brought up “*in the fear and admonition of the LORD*”, and should also be educated that any “strife and bickering” does not nullify the surety and beauty of the Gospel Message. But we cannot use “the children” as an excuse to stifle an uncompromising “*contending for the faith as once delivered unto the saints.*”

There is more: “*As for ‘mass-withdrawal’ which has often been practiced in the Brotherhood, this is entirely unscriptural and utterly opposed to the teachings of Jesus, which places salvation on an individual basis. IT IS NOT COLLECTIVE, Yet, withdrawals from ecclesias en masse have been carried out, and remain as a blot on the Brotherhood. Not only so, but this procedure is Roman in origin for it was practiced by the Popes in centuries gone by.*” If the Advocate wants to hold this up as a standard that they can endorse, then they are making it clear that we cannot refuse fellowship to ANYONE no matter what the group endorses, and they are going against the fellowship positions that the Advocate once promoted and defended. (We have provided many examples from our quotations of bro. Thomas Williams and other editors in previous articles on the Doctrine of Fellowship.)

At one time in our community there was reference to ecclesias that were either in “good standing” or “not in good standing”. The November, 1957, Special Edition Christadelphian Advocate on the subject of fellowship makes particular reference to the complicated matter of “large divisions”. In regard to the false influence that shepherds of the ecclesia can have it is stated, “*If attempts to restore the ‘shepherd’ who has gone astray fail, then withdrawal or dis-association is the only alternative which remains. And on the basis of 2nd John 9-11 there is Scriptural authority for withdrawing from a whole Ecclesia if the ‘sheep’ have endorsed the erroneous stand of their ‘shepherd’* (p. 255).” Special exception is given to “*individually sound*” members of an ecclesia “*not in good standing*”, **IF** there is “*agreement not to return to former affiliates to break bread*” (pp. 254,255 – emphasis added).

The article by C.F. goes on to say – “*Jesus said, ‘My peace I leave with you’. Where is it today? Instead, we witness this attitude of exclusiveness, and that between brethren. It often makes one wonder whether some brethren really understand what the Gospel of Jesus is.*” This is how an earlier editor of the Advocate would have responded to this kind of statement - “*... we were rebuked by a brother for coinciding with those who maintain ‘a doctrine of separatism’. What is the truth, but a system of ‘separatism’? Its first and last work is to separate. It begins by separating the ‘good and honest hearts’ from a wicked and adulterous generation. It ends by separating the just from the unjust at the judgment seat of Christ. Men bent upon maintaining the purity of the truth will not be frightened nor taunted off from their foundation by ever so much babble about ‘casting out’ and ‘separatism.’ They will keep their faces Zion-ward; press on in the strait and narrow way, let the enemies of the truth spit, jeer and throw stones as they may.*” (Thomas Williams, The

Christadelphian Advocate, October, 1891)

The remaining comments of the reprint are attributed to bro. Baughman by the Advocate, but they were NOT written by him (though a few words, phrases are inserted by him) and were actually a part of Charles French’s original article. We understand that there were great difficulties surrounding the Arkansas Bible School in the mid 1950’s for bro. Baughman to adopt it, but the article must be judged based upon its own merits (or lack thereof) and not in the intentions that may have or have not been intended by bro. Baughman in reprinting it. He (C.F. and not D.W.B.) states, “*Let it not be thought that this is a plea for loosening spiritual ties.*” This is a misleading statement, in that the principles laid out by Charles French **clearly promote** a “loosening of spiritual ties”, whether intended or not.

It is extremely unfortunate, and damaging to our Community for the Advocate to revive, endorse and promote the article in 2012 as some kind of solution to present problems. The Advocate would much better serve the Unamended community, and help clear the confusion and misunderstanding of fellowship if they were to draw from their own roots – such as the editorship of bro. Williams as well as the November, 1957, Advocate Special Edition. Such resources provide Scriptural solutions and not those views tainted by human sentiment and laxity. Apart from doctrinal and moral issues that are dividing us, it is the Doctrine of Fellowship itself and how to implement its principles that is about to splinter our faltering Community once and for all. – S.K.

THE RUIN OF DAMASCUS



ONE of the greatest privileges that a believer has in Christ is the revelation of the Divine purpose, thus confiding in him “*things which must shortly come to pass*” (Rev 1:1). It is given to produce fruit; and that is brought forth when others embrace the truths thus given.

1 Cor 14:3 reads “*But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.*” The spirit of prophecy has an end result in mind; to uplift and edify so that we can lift up our heads for our redemption draweth nigh; to exhort on the urgency of our time and the imminence of Christ’s return; to identify (correctly) the key events which precede His coming, so that we will not be caught unawares, and, to comfort all of us that this is without a doubt the Truth, by validating

fulfilled prophecy that can only be explained via a Divine hand. Jesus speaks of this very principle when he says in John 14:29 *“And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it comes to pass, you may believe.”* The Apocalypse is the “Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass...blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.”

Prophecy is essential for faith. It is the validation of truth; the fulfillment of specific events foretold in advance, that when believers witness such events they might believe, be comforted, and walk in conviction. Christ is the acid test of this principle. The joy set before him enabled him to persevere in spite of his own countrymen (the people called out to bear his Father’s name); his own brethren desiring and facilitating his very crucifixion. When the structures collapse around us we can fall back on the assurance and inevitability of God’s Kingdom, promised to be established through the revealed and fulfilled Word of prophecy.

Looking out onto the prophetic scene we ascertain very few (if any) prophecies that require fulfillment ahead of Christ’s return. If one remains it may well be the prophecy which pertains to the “fall of Damascus” in Isaiah chapter 17. Regarding Damascus and Syria, we look to Isaiah’s prophecy concerning the destruction of Damascus, *“Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap”* (Isa. 17:1). This destruction was accomplished historically by the Babylonians in 600 B.C., but as the historic event is then used in connection with the end time chastening of Israel (as was the historical), that is, the *“evening tide trouble”* of verse 14 before the dawn of Messiah’s rise into the political heavens, we have every reason to believe that the city will once again be involved in a calamity that brings *“all nations”* into the fray. Hence, *“when they shall say peace and safety, then...”* The results are plain to see in the balance of the prophecy and it appears we are witnessing this very event at this present writing.

Subsequent to the destruction of Damascus *“the glory of Jacob shall be made thin”* (vs. 4); Israel shall be as a tree shaken so violently that only a few fruits remain (vs. 6), *“because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation (Yahweh), and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength (Messiah - vs. 10), “yet gleaned grapes (A remnant) shall be left in it (vs. 6). This is the “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jer. 30:7), when nations under the banner of Gog (Ezek. 38/Dan. 11) will invade the land, identified in Isaiah’s prophecy as those “which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters but God (manifest at this time in the multitudinous Christ) will rebuke them” (vs. 12-13).*

The United States’ hedging against Assad’s government, and the continual build-up of tensions on both sides (Iran/Syria-Israel and the West) is evidence that the prophecies of the latter days are coming to fruition. It appears inevitable that Assad’s government will fall, not unlike the fate other Middle Eastern governments have experienced over the past year in what is now referred to as the “Arab Winter”. The



escalating factor that draws attention to Damascus is the not-so-idle threats of Assad to use his chemical weapons in a final stand to punish his attackers. In response to such a scenario those weapons are now being strategically moved from their store houses and will be vulnerable in transit. Just as incendiary is the possibility that those weapons could fall into the hands of Hezbollah or other anti-Israel terrorist organizations for use against Israel. Either option at present is untenable to Israel and her national security interests. Therefore the destruction of Damascus may be the only solution to these materializing scenarios. At the same time (because Yahweh’s hand is in all the earth) we are beginning to witness a growing antagonism between Russia and Turkey (Gogue and Torgarmah). Will the King of the North, the latter day Assyrian, Gogue, the Autocrat of all the Russias be embarking upon his descent into the Land? How nigh is our redemption and the salvation of Israel? All things however remain in the hand of the Almighty and His Elohim.

Though all of these things are carefully choreographed for us as events that are surely to come to pass, the lynch pin that is purposely absent from each of these related prophecies is the exact timing. This may only be discerned with the eye of faith by a keen awareness of what is transpiring in the political heavens which is melded by the Elohim in accordance with the Word. The fact that believers will have been called to the judgment seat well in advance of these final events falling into place (because they will be the primary participants in the battle against the Gogian confederacy) is strong evidence that our Lord is nearer than we may think! Moreover, as these events are transpiring at such an alarming rate is indeed evidence that the Elohim are mightily at work, forging the political aerial into the exact position necessary for Messiah’s return.

Again it must be stressed that as watchman, though we see the destiny of nations spiraling into place as required by the Divine blueprint, we WILL NOT BE HERE to witness the last events this side of the Bema of Christ. In other words, there are no more events that need to be fulfilled prior to our being taken to the judgment seat (that itself, perhaps requiring a number of years to complete). By such time the work of the Elohim will be complete, and the work of the multitudinous Christ will have begun, first to avenge Jerusalem and the “tents of Judah” and thereafter wrest the political heavens from the vast sea of usurpers and re-establish the Throne of David in the Earth. The cup of iniquity in the earth overflows. Let us now be ready with our lamps lit and full of the oil of the Word, and our spiritual garments unstained by a world that knows not the strength of the God of Israel!

Tom Northey

