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THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



TAKE, MY BRETHREN, THE PROPHETS: AMOS

**THE CERTAINTIES OF TODAY
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT
KING UZZIAH**

SIN: ITS ORIGIN, EFFECTS & DESTRUCTION

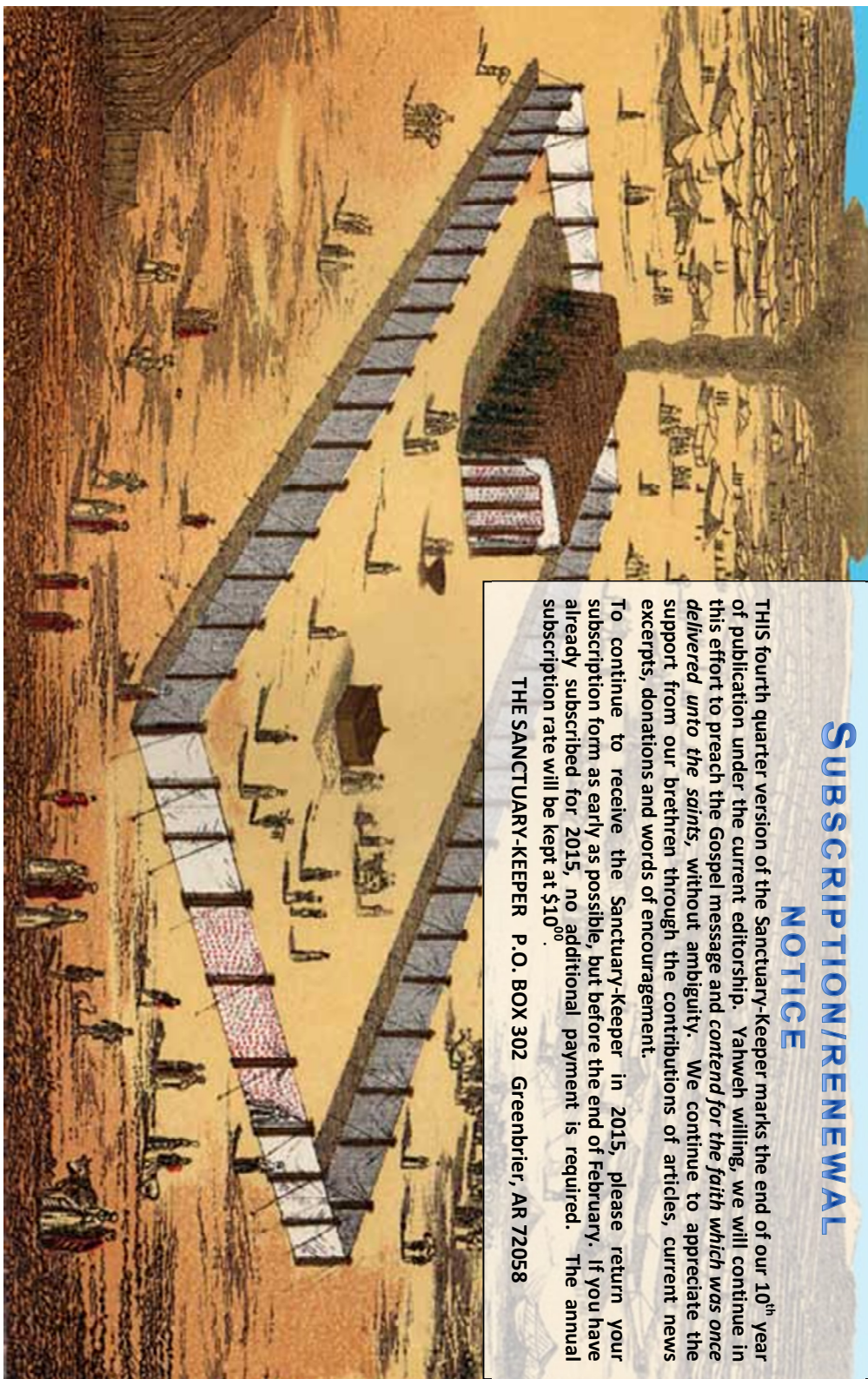


SUBSCRIPTION/RENEWAL NOTICE

THIS fourth quarter version of the Sanctuary-Keeper marks the end of our 10th year of publication under the current editorship. Yahweh willing, we will continue in this effort to preach the Gospel message and contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, without ambiguity. We continue to appreciate the support from our brethren through the contributions of articles, current news excerpts, donations and words of encouragement.

To continue to receive the Sanctuary-Keeper in 2015, please return your subscription form as early as possible, but before the end of February. If you have already subscribed for 2015, no additional payment is required. The annual subscription rate will be kept at \$10⁰⁰.

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“COMMENDATION of ECCLESIAS”

Just before this issue of the SK goes out to print, we have been informed that the January, 2015 issue of *The Christadelphian Tidings* magazine reports an announcement titled “Commendation for Unity – North America September 2014”. After reviewing its contents (which can be seen online at www.unitycl.org), it simply appears to be a further cementing and formalization of the “unification” process on the part of the NASU/UA08 signatory groups. It clearly confirms – as if there would be any doubt - that the Amended side is certainly in the driver’s seat. The Unamended Meetings are listed as “**Commended Ecclesias**”, which include: *Bloomington, Champaign County, Chicago, Guelph, Huntsville, Marion, Picton, Rockford, Schooley’s Mountain, and Toronto North*. The “**Commending Ecclesias**” grant their approval and are Amended Meetings listed as: *Barrie, Brampton, Hamilton Greenaway, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, Niagara, North Bay, Orangeville, Ottawa, Peterborough, Shelburne, and Toronto East*.

Included in the document, which outlines their basis of agreement, it makes an appeal to “Likeminded Unamended Ecclesias” – “*The Commending and Commended ecclesias encourage likeminded Unamended ecclesias to join this effort to unite the body of our Lord, to the glory of our heavenly Father. We understand such decisions take time. We will engage in a process of meetings with interested ecclesias to encourage them to share with us in unity. We regretfully accept decision of ecclesias that have declared their rejection of the 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 pray they will reconsider so that we may enjoy full fellowship to encourage and strengthen each other in our walk toward the Kingdom. Unamended ecclesias which accept this Commendation will be welcomed joyfully and this news will be sent to the Christadelphian Tidings Magazine for publication to inform the community.*”

But in regard to the issue of fellowship, they provide an exception for the Unamended under the section of how the “process” will move forward. The announcement states – “*Addressing the fellowship situation is critically important to all brethren in North America, Amended and Unamended alike. Some Amended Ecclesias are concerned about what they perceive as open-ended fellowship procedures. Other ecclesias feel that fellowship lines have resolving themselves, as certain Unamended Ecclesias withdraw fellowship from the Unamended ecclesias that have embraced unity on a NASU basis. The Commended Ecclesias believe they have spiritual obligations to other Unamended Ecclesias, with whom they have had fellowship for generations. They don’t feel there is scriptural rationale to initiate withdrawal of fellowship if acceptance isn’t achieved by a given date. Their conscience compels them to reach out patiently, especially when the positions of many of these ecclesias are not yet fully known.*”

It is conscience and CONVICTION (not merely “feeling”) that compels the editors of this magazine and those with whom we do have fellowship/commonality with to continue to reject any efforts that continue to expand the reach of “unity” so called, in the further development of what the late editor of the SK (bro. Jim Stanton) rightfully identified as “The Christadelphian Church of the Open Door.” That those who are a part of the NASU/UA08 movement or even those who tolerate and fellowship such are of “one mind” we do not doubt, and such belong together in their blissful “unity”. But it is not a “one mind” based upon a sound premise, and they are certainly not of one mind with those still holding to the “old paths”. No matter what their claims in writing are, those who have carefully kept themselves abreast of the doctrinal issues surrounding Amended-Unamended disputes and the mode of operation of those bent on unification no matter the consequences or damage, are able to (upon a firm Scriptural basis) unhesitatingly reject such overtures and those that promote or even tolerate them. – S.K.

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

Num. 18:5

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

I Peter 2:5

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

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THE CERTAINTIES OF TODAY

“Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.”

Numbers 6:23-27

Each day that we are blessed to arise from our nightly rest, we have certain tasks to perform throughout the day. Each of us will perform some of these tasks exactly as we performed them the day before and the second day before and the third day before and so on. We shave, we take our shower, we pick out our clothes for the day's activities, we comb our hair, we look in a mirror to see if we are “put together” properly and we prepare our breakfast. We do not even think about how we do these tasks, we just do them. They are engrained into our minds and become part of who we are. It is certain that if

we are blessed to see another day, we will do these same things each day and probably in the same manner and the same order. They become a reality, something certain in our life.

After the performance of these day-to-day tasks, we may believe that everything else in the day is unknown and uncertain. We have all heard this famous quote that is attributed to Benjamin Franklin – **“In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”** This quote probably presents the thinking of the world. Brethren and young students, do we conduct our life with the principle of this quote as a foundation principle of our lives? Does this quote reflect our manner of life, our thoughts and actions? Are we unsure of and do we have anxieties about many things in this life? I hope not, because if we do, then it reflects a mind that is not focused on Yahweh’s revelation of the ways and means in which His plans and purpose for His creation are being brought to fruition. There are many more realities and things certain to occur in each and every day of our feeble and mortal lives than the things that we mentioned in our previous comments.

Let us bring our minds to some of these certainties of our lives. Some of these may sadden us and there are some in which we may rejoice. We ask our readers to look up all of the verses listed below.

- **It is certain** that with each new breath that we take, we grow older and closer to the end of our life. We know that mortal man cannot stop this process of the decaying body.
- **It is certain** that in this life, each of us will continue in sin. Romans 7:18-23.
- **It is certain** that in this life, each of us will continue to allow the words and actions of others to influence us to act and respond in a certain manner. Another famous quote which is attributed to Isaac Newton goes like this – “For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction”. It is certain that each of us will consciously or unconsciously react to every action done in our sight or every word spoken in our presence. Our reaction may be to ignore the deed, to walk away from those in our presence, to mentally turn away from the deed or to mentally refuse to hear the words spoken in our presence. Or our reaction may be to join into fellowship and association with those in our presence. Our reaction may be a sharp retort from our unguarded lips in response to what someone has said or done to us. Or it may be the opposite reaction. We may manifest an attitude of compassion and mercy and exhibit a desire to offer wise counsel. Ephesians 4:29.
- **It is certain** that we will have many opportunities every day to manifest the love of the Father, His Son and the Gospel message, or come to take the opposite approach and manifest the love of the world and those around us. There are two contrasting paths that we can take when we react to the influences of others in our life. The correct path is found in Micah 6:8 -

“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” The incorrect path is found in 1st John 2:15 – *“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”*

- **It is also certain** that **OUR** words and deeds will have this same influencing power over those that we are around. Are we a good and positive influence over our family, friends, companions and associates? Do we try to persuade and influence others to join with us in our deeds and to gain followers and supporters for the actions that we perform? Or, do we try to persuade and convince others of the actions that God requires of us? There is certainly a distinction between following an individual and following the commandments of Yahweh. 1st Timothy 4:13, 15, 16.
- **In this life, it is certain** that we will allow the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye and the pride of life to have control over our lives at some point during each day.
- **In this life, it is certain** that the dangers of humanism will continue to influence each of us every day.
- **In this life, it is certain** that the Body of Christ will continue down a path of apathy and lethargy and spiritual blindness until we are in a position where it can be said – *“Nevertheless, when the son of Man cometh, shall he find the faith on earth?”* – Luke 18:8.
- **In this life, it is certain** that the world in which we live will reflect the values of those individuals who lived in the days of Noah – *“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* Genesis 6:5
- **In this life, it is certain** that the world will also continue down the path taken by those who lived in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, where the people were entertained by the gross immoral acts that characterized those evil days.
- **In this life, it is certain** that the tendencies of all men, including ourselves, will be like those who lived in the days of the Judges – *every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*
- **In this life, it is certain** that the existing state of Israel will remain in ignorance of their Deliverer and Messiah and continue to rely on the perceived strength of their own forces and power for protection from their enemies.
- **In this life, it is certain** that the Russian bear, the great enemy of God’s people of Israel, will continue to increase in power, strength and influence. They will assemble their confederates and think and act upon that evil thought of invasion of the land and people of Israel.

Yes, indeed, there are things certain in this life of which we need to be aware. The weaknesses of our mind and flesh and the evil and wickedness of the world around us may make us cry out in sorrow and grief - as Paul did, "*O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*" (Romans 7:24).

If we turn to Luke 18:29-30, we find the answer to this question and find a strengthening promise that will help us to overcome these unpleasant certainties of our life. The message of these two verses is clear and straightforward – If we follow God and put His Kingdom above all else, we will be extremely blessed both in this life and in the life to come during the Kingdom Age.

What are the assured and certain blessings that we receive in this life? A good understanding and strong belief in these promised blessings is what helps us through each day, does it not? When we are depressed because of the weaknesses of our flesh, or because of the continual assimilation of the Brotherhood into the ways of the world, or due to the worldly evils that lurk around us every day, let us always try to remember our manifold blessings which we experience, sometimes unbeknownst to us at the time that they are provided. For those who are truly seeking God's Kingdom, who are striving to walk faithfully down the old paths of Truth, who are striving to remain separate from, evil and who are striving to mortify the deeds of the flesh, the following blessings are assured and certain to be offered unto us.

- **Psalms 34:7** – “The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear him, and delivereth them.”
- **2nd Corinthians 6:18** – “*I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*”
- **Galatians 3:26** – “*For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*”
- **Psalms 6:9** – “*The LORD hath heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer.*”
- **Psalms 84:11** – “*For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*”
- **Matthew 11:28** – “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”
- **Ephesians 2:13** – “*But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*”
- **Colossians 1:14** – “*In Christ, we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.*”
- **Matthew 6:33** – “*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*” (Speaking of the natural blessings that we need to sustain us in this life).

- **Deuteronomy 31:6** – *“Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee.”*

There are so many more verses that we recall that describe the assured and certain blessings in this life, for those that are striving to follow the commandments of our Lord. How blessed are we amongst all of the nations and peoples of the world? 1st Corinthians 15:58 – *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

If we remember the covenant and remain steadfast and immovable, then we will truly reap the blessings described in our previous reading from Numbers 6:23-27 – We will be blessed, kept and protected by the Lord and he will be gracious unto us and will give us peace.

Let us now look at the certain and assured blessings in the life to come for those who have remained faithful in their days of probation.

- **Isaiah 64:4** – *“For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.”*
- **1st Corinthians 15:49** – *“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”*
- **Job 19:25-26** – *“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”*
- **Revelation 3:5** – *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”*
- **Revelation 3:21** – *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.”*
- **Daniel 12:2-3** – *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”*
- **Matthew 5:5** – *“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”*
- **Galatians 3:29** – *“And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*
- **Matthew 25:21** – *“His lord saith unto him, Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”*
- **2nd Timothy 4:8** – *“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”*

There are also certain and assured blessings that await God's special people of Israel and for all peoples that survive the tribulations and judgments that God will bring upon this evil and wicked world. Here are a few verses that depict the future and certain blessings to God's Chosen People of Israel.

- **Ezekiel 34:11-12** – *“For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.”*
- **Ezekiel 36:24** – *“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”*
- **Ezekiel 36:33-35** – *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited.”*
- **Ezekiel 39:22** – *“So the house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God from that day and forward.”*
- **Ezekiel 37:21-27** – *“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God. And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”*

There are also future and certain acts that all Gentile peoples will experience.

- Speaking of the confederacy of Gogue – **Ezekiel 39:4-5** – “*Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee: I will give thee unto the ravenous birds of every sort, and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. Thou shalt fall upon the open field: for I have spoken it, saith the LORD GOD.*”
- **Daniel 2:44** – “*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*”
- **Zechariah 14:16-17** – “*And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.*”
- **Zechariah 8:20-23** – “*Thus saith the LORD of hosts; It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*”
- **Psalms 72:11** – “*Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.*”
- **Revelation 11:15** – “*And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*”

As we read and consider these verses and others that are similar, we must believe that there are many things happening in this age and the Age to Come that are certain to occur. Though this day may be dark and distressing, let us never lose faith or hope. Neither let our courage wane nor our desire to be with Christ and God in the Future Age diminish. There are blessings that are certain to be offered to us if we remain steadfast. There are prophecies that are certain to be fulfilled regardless of our position before Yahweh. **Psalms 103:12-16** tells us that there is a set time to favor Zion; **Act 17:31** tells us there is an appointed time set for Christ to judge the world in righteousness; and **Romans 13:11** tells us that our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. These hopes of tomorrow will soon become the certainties of today. Let us be prepared for that Great and Mighty Day and remember these words from

Romans 8:28 – *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”.*

I would like to conclude with the words from a poem that I found many years ago. I am not sure of the original writer of this poem or when it was originally penned. However, I have found it very strengthening and edifying through the years and hopefully each of us can remember the lesson from the poem. This poem was also included in an earlier issue of the Sanctuary Keeper:

Courage Brother

Courage brother, do not stumble,
Though thy faith be dark as night,
There is a star to guide the humble
Trust in God and do the right.
Lest the road be rough and dreary,
And its end far out of sight
Foot it bravely, strong or weary
Trust in God and do the right.
Perish policy and cunning
Perish all that fears the light,
Whether winning, whether losing,
Trust in God and do the right.
Trust no party, sect or faction,
Trust no leaders in the fight,
But in every word and action,
Trust in God and do the right.
Trust no lovely forms of passion,
Foes may look like angels bright,
Trust no custom, school or fashion,
Trust in God and do the right.
Simple rule and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward might,
Star upon our path abiding,
Trust in God, and do the right.
Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight,
Cease from man, and look above thee,
Trust in God and do the right.

There is one final verse for our consideration – Luke 21:28 – *“And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.”*

B. Henderson

TAKE, MY BRETHREN, THE PROPHETS: *AMOS*



THE book of Amos contains many lessons relevant to the modern day ecclesia. We hope to briefly consider some of these lessons, though we will only scratch the surface of the exhortation that could be drawn from these 9 chapters.

Amos was a man of humble origins, as we see in the opening verse of the book. He was a herdsman of Tekoa in Judah. This was a location approximately 10 miles south of Jerusalem.

As with any shepherd or herdsman, Amos would have been accustomed to the simplest of living standards. His days would be spent navigating the terrain and protecting the flock from predators, and his nights would be spent under the stars. It was from such a crude lifestyle that Amos was called by Yahweh and instructed to head north to Israel.

Amos prophesied in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, and Jeroboam (the second), King of Israel. His prophecy was directed primarily toward Jeroboam's nation. Though Jeroboam was an unfaithful king, he was blessed with successful military campaigns. During his reign, the enemies of Israel were pushed back, and the borders of the nation were extended. (2 Kings 14:23-29)

So it was that Amos was sent into such an ostensibly successful, confident, and comfortable community. And what was his message? Congratulations? A commendation? A pat on the back for doing the best they could? - By no means. This rough herdsman of Tekoa was introduced to the nation with the pronouncement of a series of coming punishments. Chapter 1:3 – 2:3 contain judgments upon 6 Gentile nations. In Chapter 2:4, Amos' attention is briefly turned to Judah: *"Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked: But I will*

send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.” (Amos 2:4-5)

Coming punishment

The remainder of the book is focused on the northern Kingdom of Israel. We read in 2:6-8: *“Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes; That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the same maid, to profane my holy name: And they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.” (Amos 2:6-8)*

From this passage we gather the reason for the nation’s coming punishment: They perverted justice; they persecuted the righteous and poor among the people; they rejoiced in this persecution and sought after it (*“Pant after”*, i.e., long after or eagerly desire—to see the dust of mourning on the head of the poor); they perverted the way of the meek; they participated in incestuous adultery; they engaged in idol worship at the expense of the poor. The Law prohibited the retention of garments laid to pledge overnight, and forbade sleeping with them. (See Ex. 22:25-27; Deut. 24:10-13.)

We do well to contrast the state of affairs that Amos beholds to the instruction given to the nation by Yahweh. *“Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?” (Isa 58:6-7). “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” (Isa 1:16-17)*

Amos continues by bringing to our attention in 2:11-12 that the people did not value the Word of Yahweh when it was given to them, and they despised the sanctification to which it called them. We can be guilty of the same transgression. Do we value the Word of God when it is proclaimed to us? Do we observe our anti-typical Nazarite vow? (See *The Law of Moses* pp. 278-287) Or, do we prefer to cater to the flesh rather than the Spirit-Word? Would we possibly even dare to demand certain parts of it not be declared in our presence?

In Chapter 3 we are told clearly why Yahweh devotes so much time and energy to the nation of Israel. *“Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying, You only have I known of all the families of the*

earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:1-3)

This nation was His chosen people, though they had departed from Him. Disciplinary punishments were to be meted out upon them in the desire for fellowship to be restored. As it stood, the nation and Yahweh were not in agreement, and therefore they could not walk together. In order for two parties to travel together, they must be agreed upon their speed, direction, and destination. The nation was out of sync with God altogether in these areas.

This principle holds true universally. It is not reserved to fellowship with God. Agreement must precede walking together, or fellowship, between any two or more parties. As it pertains to the Truth, agreement upon its fundamental principles must precede fellowship among the brethren of Christ. Where this agreement is never established, or ceases to exist, walking together (fellowship) should necessarily cease.

The principles of fellowship

In the consideration of fellowship and withdrawal, we fear that too often we fail to focus on the greater implication of the withdrawal or cessation of fellowship. We are speaking of the Divine aspect. When we receive warnings from brethren (such as those given to Israel by Amos) concerning the cessation of fellowship, do we consider that the brethren giving the warning, in all likelihood, consider us to be so far removed from the straight and narrow way as to put us outside the boundaries of fellowship with God?

Amos 3:4-8 speak of the many warnings being uttered to Israel and the punishments to befall their continued unfaithfulness. It is here revealed that both the warnings and the punishments are Divinely ordained: *“Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”* (Amos 3:6)

Evil, in the sense of adversity and affliction in many forms, is Yahweh’s artillery against sin. He creates it inasmuch as it is His punishment for sin. Sometimes He brings it by direct intervention, while at other times evil is the natural result of the sinful behavior in which a person or people is engaged. The extent of the nation’s transgression is made explicitly clear in 3:10: *“For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces.”* (Amos 3:10)

Immorality leads to the corruption of discernment. We cannot escape this fact any more than Israel. Jeremiah speaks of this effect of sin as well: *“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish (marg. “stupid”) children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”* (Jer. 4:22)

We become what we think about. The things to which we dedicate our time and energy are the things in which we develop capability. Israel had turned themselves over to sin to such a degree that they excelled in the wisdom

of how to do evil, but in the process they had forgotten how to do good. Thus they received the instruction of chapter 5:14-15. (Compare also Isa. 1:16-17; Psa. 34:14; 37:27; Rom. 12:9; 6:11-13; 1 Pet. 3:11.)

In Chapter 4 we are shown Israel's joy in their transgression, which included the oppression of the needy and abundant idolatry. (4:1-5) The chapter continues by showing the oft repeated warnings that have been proclaimed in the nation. Four times in this chapter we are told the response of Israel to each of the warnings: "*Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith Yahweh.*" (Vss. 8, 9, 10, 11) In consequence, the nation is given the ominous warning "*Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*" He is defined in the following terms. (Vs. 13) "*For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name.*" (Amos 4:13)

If nothing to this point had shaken the nation out of its slumber, a warning such as this should have. Israel was about to face the judgments of the Omnipotent Creator, Yahweh, God of Armies. Nevertheless, they would not be stirred. This is a warning to which we also should take heed, for Israel's God is our God, and it is He who we must also prepare to meet. Let us heed his warnings and return unto him when they are received, lest we suffer a fate similar to that of Israel.

Chapter 5 begins with the last of the three distinct warnings, which were also seen in chapters 3:1 and 4:1: "*Hear ye the word.*" The nation is here warned of their depleted strength. Though proud and confident in their superior military might under Jeroboam 2, this strength would be turned to impotence by Divine judgment. Yet even at this late stage, Yahweh encourages the people to repent and return to Him. (See 5:4-8, 14-15)

Despite all the warnings, Israel would not turn back from their evil ways. Their comfort and confidence led to the development of a hatred for any who would interfere with the status quo. We read in verses 10 and 13: "*They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.*" "*Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.*" (Amos 5:10, 13)

From Israel's perspective, peace had become the absence of any criticism of their unrighteous behavior, rather than being the consequence of a strict adherence to the right ways of Yahweh. ("*Great peace have they which love thy law.*" See also Pr. 3:1-2; Isa. 32:17) Even the upright became fearful of uttering the Truth due to the prevalence of evil in the nation. Yet, the faithful cannot cease from protesting evil, as is evident from Amos' continued testimony. The faithful will always possess enmity for the ways of the Serpent, and they will antagonize the apostasy without rest. Writing of this class of faithful antagonists to the apostasy, Bro. Thomas says:

"Antipas, or the faithful witnesses, were 'the rest among the Thyatirans who had not acknowledged the depths of the Satan as they speak.' Antipas still retained his original position in 'all the ecclesias,' which, although teeming with 'false brethren' both in the presbyteries and among the multitude, had not yet been 'spued out of the mouth of the Spirit.' Antipas was the remnant of the Woman's Seed contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints against all 'the depths of the Satan as they speak,' which in their logical effect upon the minds of Christians perverted the gospel; and made it of no effect in regard to justification and practice."

"But among the Laodiceans the Antipas are not found. Their existence is a supposition, as, 'If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me.' The Satan was triumphant there, and the faithful witnesses reduced to such an insignificant minority as to be noticeable in the prophecy only as an hypothesis."

"A few did hear the Spirit's voice among the Laodiceans, and became fugitives in consequence. They were no longer found in 'the churches,' but in their own peculiar place, 'in the wilderness..."
(Eureka Vol. 1 Pg. 335, 336)

It is only by constant protest and abstinence from fellowship that it is possible for one to maintain their garments while in the presence of apostasy. This Amos did. However, such activity over an extended period of time can grow quite wearisome to the saint. For this reason, Christadelphians exist as a separate unit from the various sects of so-called "Christendom." At one time, Christadelphians did not want to be identified in any way with the errors of false Christianity. It would be counter-productive to remain in a congregation with which we could not have fellowship, and against whom we had to maintain a constant protest. This is not the purpose of the Memorial Service. To take this consideration a step further, it is worth noting that the early Christadelphians did not simply form a separate congregation, while maintaining the nominal identification of Churches of Christ or Baptists. A clean separation was made, forming an entirely new community. This community was able to enjoy fellowship with one another and encourage one another in its common faith. If it were to be shown that the community known as the Christadelphians had departed from the Truth just as all other protestant sects, would the modern Antipas remove itself from association with the Christadelphians, as its historic counterpart removed itself from the Laodicean community in the 3rd and 4th centuries? Certainly it would, for as Bro. Thomas rightly observes, *"among the Laodiceans the Antipas are not found."* Brethren of the Antipas type are not found among the Laodiceans, regardless of whether they be of the Catholic, Campbellite, or Christadelphian variety.

Comfort, Confidence & Self Satisfaction

Chapter 6 again recounts the comfort, confidence, and self-satisfaction in which the nation dwelt. (6:1-6) This condition is the subject of Yahweh's censure – *“Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive,” “I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces.”* (Amos 6:7, 8)

Consider for a moment the description found in verses 1-6. Think about how abhorrent and disgusting such a lavish display must have been to Amos, the humble herdsman of Tekoa. What a contrast to the simple lifestyle to which he was accustomed!

When we look around the world today, we see society has much in common with the conditions of Israel in that day. Immodesty and extravagance are celebrated. No small portion of television programming is filled with such things that follow the mundane day-to-day activities of those who live in ease and luxury. We should all strive to abhor such behavior as much as Amos and Yahweh did when it was done among Israel.

The vanity of the nation's existence in circumstances such as those described in vss. 1-6 is exhibited in vss. 12-14. A simple metaphor is employed here for instruction. To plow upon rock is a useless endeavor. So also to seize power by the perversion of justice and righteousness is to gain control over nothing, for Yahweh will ensure justice is executed. Judgment was soon to be executed, and it was to begin at one of their recently captured strongholds—Hamath. (Cp. 2 Kings 14:25)

The metaphor of plowing upon rock may also be applied to Israel. They had hardened their hearts as rock, and punishment was imminent. Yahweh was about to cease His work with them in an attempt to get them to bring forth fruits of righteousness. It has been rightly said that the person who cannot be cultivated as the earth will be cast aside as a stone.

Chapter 7 introduces us to three visions, revealing judgments to come upon the nation. Upon the intercessory pleadings of Amos, Yahweh repents of two of the forms of judgment, yet the judgment of the plumb line stands. Yahweh had built the nation up under the guidance of Moses and Joshua as a sound and sturdy wall built with a plumb line. Now, many years later, came the time for examination. Hence, the man is seen standing upon the wall with a plumb line to determine where it had shifted and bulged over the years. This would reveal how far it would need to be demolished in order to start the rebuilding process. The judgments to be executed against the nation would thus be measured and exacting in order that the nation might be brought back in line with Yahweh's truth. The judgment would require the declaration of vs. 9: *“And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”* (Amos 7:9)

A false charge

The narrative of the coming Divine judgment is suddenly interrupted by the interference of a false priest by the name of Amaziah:

“Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land. Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: But prophesy not again any more at Bethel: for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court.” (Amos 7:10-13)

Amaziah, who was likely a priest of the calf idolatry in Bethel, (1 Kings 12:32) attempted to provoke the king to take action against Amos. He accused Amos of conspiring against the monarchy, a violation worthy of expulsion at the least, and execution in many cases. Conspiracy, treason, and sedition are all often considered capital offenses. Treason, to this day, is a crime punishable by death in the United States. Amaziah likely wanted to see Amos executed, but at the very least he wanted him expelled from the area. He wanted Amos silenced by any means possible. In contemporary language, Amaziah's spiritual descendants will use terms such as “witch-hunt” or “vendetta” to accuse those who protest the apostasy as Amos. Some will say those who follow in Amos' steps “have an axe to grind.”

The accusation against Amos was false, just as the similar accusations against present day spiritual watchmen are false. There was no conspiracy, witch-hunt, vendetta, or axe to grind; there was simply a forthright declaration of the judgments of God as they related to the apostasy Amos found in the land. The prophet was simply proclaiming the requirements of Yahweh to his generation, and warning of the consequences should his words not be heeded.



But what was the response of the idolatrous priest? *“The land is not able to bear all his words.”* The words, however, were not Amos' words, but Yahweh's. These words could have been hearkened to, but obedience would have upset the comfort and social scene to which the people had grown accustomed. The discomfort resulting from obedience would not be nearly as severe as that to be experienced in the certain destruction to come upon them for disobedience, but it upset this comfort sooner, and required active participation and humility on the part of the nation.

Make no mistake – we have the spiritual descendants of Amaziah among us today. This writer was personally told that it would be impossible to have an inter-ecclesial function (Bible School, Gathering, etc.) if we require faithfulness to the truth and exclusive fellowship upon its principles. It has been claimed that it would be impossible to obtain teachers and that no one would attend such a function. In other words: “The Unamended community is not able to bear such words!” In similar manner, those who seek faithfulness to the truth and attempt to practice fellowship exclusively upon its principles have been accused of being on a “witch-hunt,” “vendetta,” or having “an axe to grind.” (i.e., a “Conspiracy”) If claims such as these be true, what does this say about the Unamended community? As with Israel of old, the certain destruction awaiting unfaithfulness to Yahweh is a far greater price to pay than the temporary discomfort to be experienced on account of faithfulness to the Word.

The desire of Israel, as expressed through Amaziah, was that Amos not speak Yahweh’s words in their hearing any longer. Rather than bring themselves into agreement with God, the people reject His prophet. Amos responds to Amaziah in 7:14-15: *“Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet’s son; but I was an herdman, and a gatherer of sycomore fruit: And the LORD took me as I followed the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.”*

It is as if Amos were to say “I would have been content to have remained in my previous lot, but Yahweh appointed me to a job.” He did not shrug off the burden laid upon him by Yahweh. In this, Amos is a wonderful example to us. Do we not all at times have burdens unexpectedly and apart from our own fault or choice laid upon us? Let us not complain, but humbly accept the work given to us.

A coming famine

Chapter 8 continues the visions given to Amos. This leads into a condemnation of the greedy and materialistic mentality of the nation. It is revealed that the people were keeping the Sabbaths only for show, longing for the opportunity to engage in their deceitful business practices and persecution of the poor again. (8:5)

Amos continues by warning of the coming famine and drought in vss. 11-14: *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. In that day shall the fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.”*

These events would appear to fulfil the desire of the nation as expressed by Amaziah – “*prophesy not again any more...*” Yet, Yahweh declares that when the prophets did cease from the land, the nation would desire His word and seek it, but not find it. This situation, when it transpired, would be the practical demonstration of the relationship between two parties, which are not in agreement. Such do not walk together. (Amos 3:3) Thus Yahweh declared, “*I will not again pass by them any more.*” (Amos 7:8, 8:2) If such a situation could come upon Israel, who enjoyed the presence of divinely inspired prophets, is it not reasonable to consider the possibility that such a day of famine of the Truth itself could come upon the Unamended Christadelphian community? Can we learn from this example, or must we stumble into the same pitfall?

The final vision

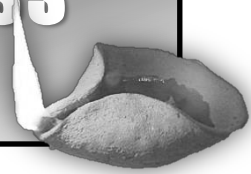
The 9th and final chapter begins with Amos’ 5th and final vision. This is expounded upon as describing the complete and inescapable destruction coming upon the Kingdom, while promising the careful preservation of a remnant of the people. “*Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.*” (Amos 9:8)

After eight and one half chapters of rebuke, threatening, curses, condemnation and pleading for reform, Amos is given the promise of the glorious future restoration of the Kingdom of God. This will be accomplished under the careful direction of Christ in fulfillment of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. It is for this purpose that the people are preserved, though the Kingdom is destroyed. The arrival of this day is all our hope and desire, and it must remain firmly planted in our minds if we are to overcome the present evil world.

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” (Amos 9:9-15)

Adam Kuipers

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



Continued from the 3rd Quarter

Feb. 15

My Dear Mother:

I have been trying to avoid coming in contact with Mr. Evans, but I find that he has secured employment in the shop where I work and I cannot help meeting him very often during the day. However, I do not think he will trouble me much; he has worked near me three days now and has not yet mentioned the subject of religion. He appears to be a quiet sort of man, and extremely anxious to please his employer. He is certainly very intelligent for a man in his position, and it does seem strange that he should have been led into such a belief as he appears to hold.

Religion seems to me to be the most important of all things, and nothing else seems to be worth writing about.

Feb. 20

My Dear Mother:

Curiosity overcame my good resolutions to-day, and I had a short talk with Mr. Evans in regard to future rewards and punishment. I am surprised to find that he does not even believe in the immortality of the soul. I supposed everybody believed that doctrine except infidels and Adventists.

Evans reasons this way: How can God reward or punish people before the judgment? Again, if we say that they have been judged and are now enjoying felicity in heaven or misery in hell, where is the necessity of a resurrection? And if we say that all are brought forth for final judgment does it not imply a possible doubt as to the correctness of the first decision?

Not being posted upon the subject, I did not attempt much reply to Evans' arguments; notwithstanding, I cannot accept his conclusions because I can see plainly enough that if the immortality of the soul is a delusion then all beliefs founded upon that doctrine fall to the ground.

Why, just imagine! The whole work of all Christian churches consists in saving precious immortal souls, and if Evans tells the truth there are no souls to save, and their work is all in vain. And what becomes of the doctrine of going to heaven at death, so comforting when our dear friends pass away? Also the everlasting torment of the wicked becomes an impossibility, for how

can their torment be endless if they are not immortal? And still again, what becomes of that old serpent, the Devil or Satan? His kingdom in hell is taken away and his occupation gone if Evans is correct.

Of course I cannot admit for a moment that he is right. The church of God is not so far away from the truth as that, still I have a feeling of pity for the man because he seems to be so sincere and he is really a good man in every other respect. He tells me that he was once a Methodist, and actually thought he had the blessing of Perfect Love for a time. What a fall! Well, I shall pray for him, and who knows but what I may be the instrument in God's hands of bringing him back to his first love? If he would only not depend so much upon "reason"; but still, it seems as though true reason and the truth ought to harmonize. Of one thing I am determined. I shall study my Bible more thoroughly, so that I may be able to give a reason to those that ask me, for the faith that is in me.

Feb. 26

My Dear Mother:

Last night I paid a visit to our pastor, and in the course of our conversation I asked him what proof could be produced from the Bible as evidence of the soul's immortality. He looked quite surprised and simply inquired why I asked.

I replied that I had been told that there was no Bible proof for the doctrine; that I had searched diligently but thus far had failed to find a single passage where the phrase "immortal soul" occurred. He looked thoughtful a few moments and then said quietly, "'An enemy hath done this.' Now, dear brother, let me give you a little advice. I know that somebody has been poisoning your mind with false doctrines, and if you will listen to me you will quietly drop that person's acquaintance, whoever he is. There are many such persons who have become unsettled in their belief and who are themselves drifting towards infidelity as fast as possible. They like nothing better than to unsettle the faith of others. They are messengers of the Evil One himself, and your safest plan is to avoid them as much as possible. Pray for them, do good to them, but on no account allow yourself to argue with them."

"But it does seem so cowardly," I interposed, "for me to be so silent and helpless when my holy religion is called in question. It does not seem right that persons who do not believe as I do at all are able to handle the Scriptures so skillfully that I am put to shame. If I have the truth why is it not better for me to study so that I may be able to defend it with the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God, rather than be so unarmed and helpless in the presence of error?"

"My dear brother," said he kindly, "I see how you feel and do not blame you. I have no desire to restrain your ardor in defense of the faith. I will now speak more plainly so that you may apprehend my point of view. The fact of the matter is that the Bible is a peculiar book. It was written by various men, in various languages and in various ages of the world. It is full of figurative

language and idiomatic expressions which are very puzzling, and, I may almost say, unintelligible to the ordinary English reader. Ignorant men like the Adventists, Christadelphians and others have seized upon such expressions, and, by taking them literally, have produced some strange and fantastic theories; and as this class of men are usually very familiar with the Bible, they succeed in turning many honest and well meaning people away from the old paths. No doubt many of these people are sincere and devout Christians and I hope to meet them in heaven, but as a rule they are uneducated and narrow-minded, and their energies are misdirected and dissipated in building up new sects and in proselyting from other Christian churches instead of working in harmony with us for the salvation of precious souls. Now perhaps you can see that a theological education is absolutely necessary for a proper understanding of the Bible, and that the proper course for uneducated people to pursue is to rely upon the teachings of men who have been licensed to preach the word of God, and to avoid entering into arguments with those who seek to draw you away from the church."

Our conversation was interrupted at this point, and I went away thinking deeply on his words. What he says seems reasonable enough, but somehow I cannot feel entirely satisfied. How often we have been told that "the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," and that we have the "right of private judgment" and yet most of us seem to depend entirely upon a class of authorized interpreters of God's word. And then again, if a theological education is such a sure preventive of error why is it that the theologians cannot agree among themselves? How are we to know which set of theologians is right? How can we take Paul's advice and "prove all things" if we are to accept without question the teachings of the theologians? I could understand Mr. Wilson's advice from the Catholic point of view because they claim to prove an uninterrupted succession of authorized teachers and teachings from the time of Christ. Of course I do not mean to say our pastor is wrong. No doubt his advice is good and that I ought not to trouble him with such questions; especially as it cannot possibly make any difference what we believe so long as we have faith in God, and trust in the precious blood of Christ for salvation.

It has just occurred to me that Mr. Wilson did not touch upon the question about which I went to see him. I will speak to him about it again at the first opportunity.

March 1

My Dear Mother;

I did not enjoy our holiness meeting today as much as usual. The only reason seemed to be that my mind had become somewhat diverted from seeking after the second blessing by reasoning upon the ideas suggested by Mr. Evans. I must try to banish such thoughts from my mind if I am to make any progress in my Christian experience. Our leader noticed that I looked troubled and questioned me about it as we were walking home from the

meeting. I then told him of my unsuccessful search for the phrases “immortal soul” and “never-dying spirit” in the Bible.

“If you wish to retain your experience and grow in grace,” said he, “do not, on any account, trouble yourself with such questions. If I had done so I would not now be enjoying the blessing of Perfect Love. When people come to me with their theories I just let them in at one ear and out the other. Just give all your doubts to Jesus and seek for full salvation with your whole heart and the blessing will surely come.”

I think I will try to follow his advice, I know he is a good man and filled with the Holy Ghost. His face shines like an angel when he is talking of his experience. God would not so bless him if he is altogether wrong, as Mr. Evans would like to prove. I think I will pray more and give Mr. Evans a wide berth for awhile, and perhaps the Lord will make his face to shine upon me.

W.H. Clough, *The Christadelphian Advocate*, September, 1900

“By what means shall a community, based on the truth, preserve the truth in purity in its midst?”

“Obviously by the means indicated by Paul and John, that is, by exacting of all who are in it an implicit adherence to the things, facts, principles, points, tenets, or whatever else they may be called, which go to make up the truth in its entirety, and by refusing to associate with those who oppose or refuse to endorse any of those elements. Some recommend in opposition to this the employment of argument with those who may be in error. As a preliminary process, common wisdom and humanity would dictate this course; but if an ecclesia is to go no further than argument, how could its existence continue? An effort should doubtless be put forth to reclaim those who are in error; but, where those efforts fail, dissociation by withdrawal is natural and inevitable.

“The ecclesia is not a place for argument; it is for worship in agreement. When a man requires to be argued with, his natural place is outside, and if he will not go outside, separation must be enforced by withdrawal on the part of the rest. Division is the inevitable concomitant of an uncompromising adherence to the truth. Peace purchased at the cost of compromise is doubly dangerous. The truth is the standard and must alone be allowed to rule. All doubt ought to be solved in its favor. This is the principle of action to which study will ultimately lead. The action of separation is not an act of judgment against those from whom we separate. It is an act of self-vindication: an act by which we discharge a duty and wash our hands of evil. The truth has gradually emerged from the fables in which for centuries it had been lost, and only an inexorable policy on the part of those receiving it will preserve it from a recurrence of the disaster which drove it from among men shortly after the days of the Apostles.”

Robert Roberts, *My Days and My Ways*, chpt. 33



KING UZZIAH

An overview of his reign



WE would like to draw your attention to King Uzziah with the hope that you will come away from this lesson with a better understanding of the King himself and the path he ultimately chose. Was Uzziah a good or evil king? Did he follow the path of righteousness or did he pursue the interests of the flesh? And finally, we would like you to pay special attention as to when Uzziah ruled and connecting it with present day Israel to see if you can draw any similarities between then and now.

To begin, let's introduce ourselves to Uzziah by turning to **2nd Kings 15:1,2** – *"In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem."*

You may say, that's not Uzziah, that's a man called Azariah. Well, it's the same individual. When you look at the record in Chronicles, he's called Uzziah and a little bit later in this same chapter of II Kings, he's also referred to as Uzziah. **2nd Kings 15:32** – *"In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign."*

One of the things we've learned by reading those verses is that we have a king who has two names. He's called Azariah on some occasions and he's called Uzziah on other occasions. Is it possible that his name changed? Perhaps he started off being called Azariah and then later was called Uzziah. It's not uncommon in Scripture for this to occur.

As recorded in Chronicles, he is always called Uzziah. We never see the other name mentioned at all. It is quite possible his name changed, so perhaps we should look at the meaning of his name and see what difference there is between the two.

Question: What does Azariah mean?

Answer: "Yahweh helps", "Yahweh has helped" (2nd Kings 15:1)

If we have a name that ends in “iah”, it includes the name of God. It’s Yah, God’s covenant name. We wouldn’t call a child by a name that ends with “iah” unless we had some regard or respect for the God of Israel. As a parent, there would be a desire for the God of Israel to have some influence upon this new born child. Therefore, it would appear that this king had Godly parents from the beginning. *“God has helped.”*

We see in the name of Uzziah that which compliments the name of Azariah – *“my strength is Yahweh”*, as the receiver of God’s help.

Circumstances leading to his reign

Question: How old was Uzziah (Azariah) when he comes to the throne?

Answer: 16 years old

What we would like to do now is find out what the circumstances were when Uzziah came to the throne to be King. Remember, he was only 16 years old.

Question: Over which kingdom was Uzziah going to reign?

Answer: Judah, the Southern Kingdom

Let’s now turn to 2nd Chronicles and read of the account of Uzziah. But before we learn of Uzziah, we need to first find out a little about his father. In **2nd Chronicles 25:25-28** we learn about the last few years of Uzziah’s father’s reign. *“And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, behold, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.”*

Now note what happens in verse 27. This man, Amaziah (Uzziah’s father), initially did the things that God wanted him to do as king over Judah. However, there came a point, for whatever reason, that he decided he wasn’t going to follow the things that God wanted him to do. It was at that time when he lost popularity with the people. And so the people (halfway through verse 27) made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem. It was at this point he had to leave his capital city and flee for his life to Lachish. The reason Amaziah fled to Lachish was because it served as a highly fortified city. He fled there because he thought that it was a city he could hold. He had his own favorite troops by his side and they would surely protect him. Within the city of Lachish, Amaziah should be able to withstand any attack his people might bring against him.

Well, Amaziah was wrong. Let's read verse 27 and 28 again. *"Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there. And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah."*

So much for Lachish being an untouchable fortress. It's under such circumstances that Uzziah came to the throne when he was 16 years old. In fact, it was the people that killed his father that put him on the throne. Just imagine those circumstances. Do you think it would mean that if you were king, you could do what you wanted to do? No. The people had said, in effect, *if you don't do what we want, then we'll do the same to you as we did to your father.* Meaning, we will kill you and bury you with the other kings. Uzziah was 16 years old. A very difficult task coming to the throne under those circumstances. So what does one do if they are only sixteen years of age? Well, let's just see just what it was that Uzziah did...this 16 year old king.

2nd Chron. 26:1,2 - *"Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers."*

God, through Uzziah, strengthens the Kingdom

Question: What was the first thing Uzziah did as king?

Answer: Built Eloth

Question: Where would Eloth have been located?

Answer: Eloth is located at the southernmost part of Israel.

If you go to Israel today, it is now the city called Eilat, which is a vacation resort. Now Eloth was a place that Uzziah restored. With that being said, you only restore something that has formerly been destroyed. The indication is that this city, perhaps recently, had been destroyed and now Uzziah was going to rebuild it.



Question: What advantages would there be to Judah to repopulate and rebuild Eloth, the southernmost city?

Answer: To have access to the Red Sea for trade purposes.

Consider any goods that are coming from the East, from India perhaps. Think of Solomon's time when they brought all sorts of commodities into Israel from far off countries. Eloth would be a major port to bring in goods from other countries. What Uzziah is building first of all is Israel's southernmost port. You can see what was in his mind in doing that. What Uzziah wanted to do is to increase the

prosperity of the land and if he could control the imports and control the borders then the land was going to regenerate itself. The goal is to send goods out and be able to bring goods in. It would seem as if that was the reason why he rebuilt the city called Eloth in 2nd Chronicles 26.

What else does Uzziah do? **2nd Chron. 26:3,4** – *“Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.*

We are told in verse 4, that he did right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah did. Remember, we discovered that at the beginning of Amaziah's reign (Uzziah's father), he did what God wanted him to do. However, it was only when he stopped doing those things that the people rebelled and chased him to Lacish, and killed him. They brought his body back to Jerusalem, and buried him there. 2nd Chron. 26:5 – *“And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.”*

So the people were there as a threat. Indicating, *if you don't do what we want you to do, then we are going to kill you as we killed your father.* It seems as if Uzziah said, *I am going to do what God wants me to do and at least for a time, that coincided with what the people wanted him to do.* What we see Uzziah doing is building up again the prosperity of the nation.

Question: We didn't go into great detail of Uzziah's father's life, but what was it that Amaziah did that angered the people?

Answer: Something extremely foolish. What Uzziah's father did when he forsook following God, said, I'm king over Judah and I can see the kingdom of Israel to the North. Well, to better strengthen this region, I, the king of Judah should also reign over Israel.

So Uzziah's father sent his troops against Israel when Israel, at that time, was a much more powerful nation. The army was routed, the soldiers were killed, and the king came back to Jerusalem in absolute disgrace. That's why the people turned against him, because he decided to embark upon a military strategy that was wrong from the very beginning. Now Uzziah was doing the things that God wanted him to do and the people were content for that to happen.

Question: Even though his father failed at military activity, does Uzziah undertake any military activity?

Answer: Yes, however, not against Israel in the north.

Let's look at where he goes. 2nd Chron. 26:6-8, *“And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among*

the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah; and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly."

The Philistines were Israel's traditional enemy. They were always there and as the prophet Ezekiel said, like thorns in their side and pricks in their eye. And so Uzziah goes against the Philistines and is actually fairly successful against them. He doesn't remove them completely but he is able to control them, and continues to control them by building villages in Philistine territory and placing his own people there.

So Uzziah chooses to battle with the Philistines in order to get them under control. You can imagine how this made the people back in Judah feel. You can walk tall if the Philistines are under control and that is exactly how the people in Judah felt.

Consider the two things King Uzziah has accomplished thus far.

- 1) Rebuilt Eloth
- 2) Contained the Philistines

Uzziah has rebuilt Eloth. The southern trade route is now open. They can send their goods out and they can bring goods in. Suddenly the shops are full of all the things they want, they have all the things they need, and probably a lot of things they don't need as well. But the goods they like are all coming into Israel at this point in time.



Question: How was King Uzziah able to be so successful?

Answer: Verse 7 of 2nd Chron. 26 tells us – *“And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims.”*

God helped him against the Philistines. That is interesting isn't it? *“God helped him.”* Do you remember the name we looked at in Kings? Azariah, means *God helps*. So, here is a play on his name ... *God is helping* him against the Philistines, and Uzziah is *strengthened* by such help. Why? Because he's doing what God wants him to do. So he helps him against the Philistines. However the verse goes on (Vv. 7,8)... And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah; and his name spread abroad *even* to the

entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

You can mark out on a map the territories just referenced. The Philistines are towards the West, on the Mediterranean Coast. You then have the Arabians towards the Southwest and the tribe of the Mehunims come around to the South and then we are told in verse 8 about Ammonites who were towards the East.

- Uzziah had secured the southern port
- He had neutralized the Philistines
- The Arabians said, *we'd like to make peace with you*
- The Mehunims in the South were in the same situation
- And the Ammonites made peace with Judah and send gifts to him

What happened here with king Uzziah is that the nations all around were saying the following: *We can see there is a strong king in Judah, a powerful king, a king who is prepared to take measures to build up his own country. Rather than get into a fight with this king of Judah, the easiest thing for us to do is to enter into a peace treaty with him.*

That is exactly what these surrounding nations do. It's as if King Uzziah secured the borders of his country by entering into peace with all of the territories around and he has entered into peace on his terms. He is a king who is worshiping God and doing what God wants for God's people. God is helping him. Let's read verse 8 again. *"And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly."*

His name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt. So even as far away as Egypt, the people began to hear of a strong king in Judah and took notice of him. However, even though that was happening, Uzziah didn't become complacent. Someone who will give you a gift one day, can also stab you in the back the very next day. You never know ... it can happen very easily, and that could have happened here with Uzziah. However, Uzziah was not done building up Judah. So what did he do? Let's read verse 9. *"Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them."*

Uzziah refortifies Jerusalem

He decides he's going to fortify Jerusalem. He needed to do that because when his father executed the ill-fated attack against the northern kingdom of Israel, the army of Israel came down and destroyed part of Jerusalem. So Uzziah says, I now have to rebuild Jerusalem. But notice, it wasn't the first thing he did. The first thing he did was to secure the borders. But now he is able to build up his own territory. And so he builds towers in Jerusalem and those towers were obviously for the purpose of fortification. King Uzziah could put soldiers on them and they could look out and see if an army was coming. These towers were a point of lookout to protect the city.

Despite all the fortification that takes place in Jerusalem, even that is not enough. King Uzziah was not finished yet. **2nd Chron. 26:10** – *“Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.”*

He builds towers in the desert

Question: Why would he build towers in the desert? One builds towers around a city because they are trying to protect the city. But, here is the desert and all of a sudden there is a tower coming out of it. What is the point?

Answer: For protection and to watch over their territory – in the desert great distances could be monitored.

So, he still had concerns that people were going to invade and had built towers as watch points. But why would you want to protect a wilderness? **2nd Chron. 26:10** – *“Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.”*

He doesn’t only build towers, what is the next thing he does? He digs wells.

Uzziah digs wells

Question: Why would he dig wells?

Answer: Because of the need for water.

Question: Why is water needed?

Answer: It’s a wilderness so there is a need for irrigation. Why should he wish to irrigate a wilderness? - Because he wanted to grow crops. We can see exactly what king Uzziah is doing.

Here he was king over a nation that hadn’t been able to hold its head up among the nations round about. He wants it to be a proud nation, a strong nation, a prosperous nation.

- So he has secured the sea port
- he’s secured the borders
- he’s fortified the capital city
- he’s built towers in the desert
- he’s now going to irrigate the desert so it will blossom like the rose

Let’s read verse 10 once more (**2nd Chron. 26**) – *“Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel (Heb. – “fruitful fields”): for he loved husbandry.”*

Question: What is husbandry?

Answer: The care, cultivation, and breeding of crops and animals

There are people who really like horticulture. They enjoy growing things, and it is revealed to us that Uzziah was such a person. He loved the things the ground produced. He planned all of the irrigation systems, he built his towers, he had his flocks and his cattle, and the ground brought forth abundantly. Judah became known as a place where the ground flourished with the crops it produced.

However, King Uzziah was still not done. What was the next thing he did? 2nd Chron. 26:11. *“Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains.”* And verse 12 – *“The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.”*

He dealt with the commerce, he dealt with the agriculture, and he dealt with the fortification. Now in verse 11 we see a different side of Uzziah. He now has an army of fighting men that go out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of the scribe.

We will pick up at this point (God willing) in our next installment in the next quarter of the S.K.

Joel Thomas

“INHERITANCE” – TO SEIZE BY FORCE

In Joshua 15:14, we are given the account of Caleb’s great act of faith and spiritual courage when he *“drove thence the three sons of Anak, Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak”*; in order to seize upon Hebron for his promised inheritance. Such typifies the work of Christ and the Saints when they seize upon their God given inheritance out of the hands of a world that will not simply nor humbly surrender their perceived sovereignty (Dan. 2:44).

The word used in in Joshua 15:14 – “drove” – is from the Hebrew “*yarash*”, which means *to seize, dispossess, take possession of, inherit*. **It indicates to seize or take by force.** Interestingly, this is the same Hebrew word used in such references as Psalm 25:13 – *“his seed shall inherit the earth”*; Psalm 37:9,11,22,29 – *“the meek shall inherit the earth”*; and Isaiah 57:13 – *“he that putteth his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain”*; etc.

After the example of Caleb, and as is allegorically and emphatically demonstrated in the account of Joshua and the Israelites in their conquering of the Land, the saints will not simply be handed the earth as their possession, but will – as a matter of exceeding privilege, honor and joy – take possession of it by force under the authority of the antitypical Joshua (i.e., Yeshua the Anointed). Isaiah 66:15,16 – *“For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots (the saints in cherubic manifestation) like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.”* A. Thomas

SIN: ITS ORIGIN, EFFECTS AND DESTRUCTION

The following article originally appeared in the August, 1876 *Christadelphian Magazine*, which was followed by an additional two installments - that, Yahweh willing, we hope to provide in following quarters of the S.K. We believe it to be among the finest of expositions in regard to the matter of constitutional sin and Christ's atoning work in relation to it. It also provides further evidence that what we historically understand as being the "Unamended position" in regard to this subject matter was not some kind of new development or doctrine during the 1890's, but that the Unamended position was (and still is in some quarters) a firm and resolute continuation of early Christadelphian belief in regard to the consequences and removal of Adamic Sin. As this series of articles was a rebuttal to erroneous Renunciationist/clean flesh heresies that were being promoted by Edward Turney in the early 1870's; errors and controversies surrounding such still continue with us today and have made significant inroads into Unamended thinking. Therefore, though this article and those to follow are of considerable length, it is worth the reader's serious attention to revisit and carefully study this subject matter as to retain needed and critical clarity on an extremely fundamental matter. — S.K.

“FOR this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” So says the Spirit of God through the apostle John, in his 1st epistle, the 3rd chapter, and the 8th verse; and the statement, viewed in a comprehensive manner, embraces the *whole* of the mission of Jesus Christ: for what was the work which he accomplished during his life upon earth but a constant endeavor to destroy the works of the devil, whether by the preaching of the truth, to remove from men's minds the error which was the work of the devil, or by the curing of diseases which had resulted from sin, which is therefore termed “healing all that were oppressed of the *devil*.” — (Acts 10:38)? What was the object of the death that he suffered on the cross but to “destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the *devil*” — (Heb. 2:14)? What was the object of his resurrection but to deliver him from the power of the *devil*, which — as “him that had the power of death” — had brought him into the bondage of the grave? What is the object of his present mediatorial work but that his brethren may

obtain the forgiveness of their sins, which are, in however limited a sense, the work of the *devil*? What is the first part of his mission on his return from the right hand of the Father but to deliver his faithful brethren *completely* from the power of the devil, from whose clutches they are not entirely free as long as they are in mortal flesh? What will be the next part of his work but “*to bind the kings with chains, and the nobles with fetters of iron*” (Ps. 149:8), or, in the language of the Apocalypse (20:2), to bind the *devil*, for a thousand years? What is the object of his thousand years’ reign but to “*put all enemies under his feet*” (1st Cor. 15:25), and to deliver the nations of the earth from the power of error and disease, which are emphatically the works of the devil? And what is the object of that reign but to destroy “*the last enemy*” – “*death*” (1st Cor. 15:26), which is one of the works of the *devil*, and to “cast” the *devil* into “*the lake of fire and brimstone*” (Rev. 20:10), so that he and all his works may be forever destroyed from the face of this beautiful earth, which, because of sin, has been cursed and blighted, and its inhabitants alienated from their Creator, for six thousand years?

Thus we see that the destruction of the devil, or, in other words, of sin and its consequences, includes the whole work of Jesus Christ from beginning to end. It is not, however, with his mission in this extended view that we purpose to deal in our present remarks, but rather with that part of his work which relates to the destruction of sin in its moral and physical aspects in regard to himself and believers in past and present dispensations. Before dealing with the taking away of sin, however, we will consider the *origin* and *effects* of sin; for we cannot rightly understand the former until we understand the latter: it is impossible to understand how sin is taken away unless we understand what sin is.

There are two kinds of sin – moral and physical. There is no dispute about the former; all believers of the Bible are agreed that it is the transgression of the law. But it is asserted by some that there is no such thing as *physical* sin. The fallacy of this assertion will, perhaps, be best evident from the following passages: - Rom. 7:16,17 – “*If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me;*” verse 20: “*Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*” How can transgression of a law be said to dwell in a man? Rom. 6:12: “*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*” To “reign” and to be “obeyed” are the same thing: for *sin* to reign in the body, and the *lusts* to be obeyed, are the same thing; therefore “sin” is here used as synonymous with “lusts.” No doubt James (1:15) says, “*Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin,*” but he is there speaking of transgression; and the fact that lust is there spoken of as the cause of sin is no proof that lust itself is not elsewhere, and from another point of view, termed “sin.” Would it be correct to say, “*Let not transgression reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it* (i.e., obey transgression) *in the lusts thereof?*” Evidently not; and if so, “sin” must, in this passage, signify something other than transgression; and what can that be but what we have termed “physical sin?” The lusts of the flesh can appropriately be termed “sin” because they are the result of sin, and also the cause of sin, and “sin in the flesh” has, not inappropriately, been termed

“constitutional sin,” because it is what the Scriptures term “sin”, in the organization or constitution of man.

In order to simplify the matter, we will divide our remarks on this part of the subject under four heads, viz.,

1. That sin in the flesh was not in existence before “the Fall.”
2. That it originated with the Fall.
3. That it is the cause of actual transgression.
4. That it has the power of death, or, in other words, leads to, or is the cause of, death, even apart from actual transgression.

#1 “That sin in the flesh was not in existence before the Fall.”

It is stated in the last verse of the first chapter of Genesis, after God had finished the creation, *including Adam and Eve*, “*and God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was **very good**.*” Thus Adam and Eve, after their creation and before they had sinned, were pronounced by Yahweh “very good.” To what element or aspect of their being did this refer? It could not refer to character, for at that time they had developed none: it must therefore have had reference to their *mental and physical constitution*. Let us now turn to what the Scriptures say of the flesh, or, in other words, of the mental and physical constitution of one in whom dwelt sin in the flesh. In Rom. 7:17,18, the apostle says: “*Now then it is no more I that do it, but **sin that dwelleth in me**: for I know that in **me** (that is, **in my flesh**,) dwelleth **no good thing**.*” By his flesh he of course meant his mental and physical constitution, his whole being, for he uses it as synonymous with “*me*;” and he thus states it to be the opposite extreme of “very good.” This is quite in harmony with the language of the rest of the Scriptures concerning sin, which, whether moral or physical, is throughout spoken of as a *bad* thing, as something which cannot by any possibility be correctly described as “very good.” Seeing, then, that Adam and Eve are described before the fall as being “very good,” it is evident *that they could not have had sin in the flesh at that time*.

#2 “That sin in the flesh originated with the Fall.”

Seeing that it was not in existence before the Fall, and that it is in existence now, it must have originated either at the Fall or since that event. It will not be contended by any one that it has come into existence *since* the Fall; and indeed if such a suggestion were made it would be sufficiently answered by pointing to the fact that actual transgression – which, as will hereafter be shown, results from sin in the flesh – has existed from the very beginning. Therefore if sin in the flesh did not exist before the fall, and it has not come into existence since, we are shut up to the conclusion that it originated with that event.

It may be well, however, to deal somewhat minutely with the facts connected with the transgression of our first parents, in order to show the difference between their condition before that event and the condition of their descendants ever since,

and also – as far as is recorded, or as far as we may infer from the facts stated – to point out the change that took place in Adam and Eve through their transgression.

The most important point of difference between the condition of Adam and Eve before they sinned and the condition of their descendants is in regard to *the cause of temptation*, and this difference may be thus defined – that in the case of Adam and Eve before their transgression temptation *originated* solely from *without*, whilst in the case of their descendants it originates from *within* as well as from without, and indeed chiefly from within. It may be objected that all temptation has relation to things which are external to us, and therefore that all temptation comes from without. But even if it be the fact that all temptation *has relation* to things external to us, does this prove the fallacy of our statement? By no means; for the question is not whether that which forms the *subject* of the temptation is within or without, but whether the *suggestion* comes from within or without. It is true we are sometimes tempted to sin by the suggestion of another person, but all must admit that the suggestion, in most cases, comes from ourselves, from the sinful lusts within us; as we read in James 1:14: “Every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed;” and, as Jesus says, in Mark 7:21-23: “*From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness;*” oh! what a catalogue! – “*all these evil things come from within.*” Our experience and observation fully confirm the truth of these words, for we know that from day to day men do these things of their own idea, without any suggestion from their fellow-creatures. Paul, in Gal. 5:17 says, “*The flesh lusteth against the Spirit,*” and James (4:1) says, “*From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?*” And again, verse 5, “*The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.*” We do not need any external *suggestion* to raise within us *envious* feelings: they arise within us in consequence of our sinful nature. And so in regard to other things in relation to which we are tempted, such as those enumerated by Christ in the passage quoted from Mark: the *object* to which the temptation has relation may be outside us, but the *suggestions* or promptings to commit sin almost invariably come from within.

Now let us look at the temptation of Adam and Eve, or rather of Eve, as the details in her case are recorded more minutely than in that of Adam; and we shall find that in her temptation the suggestion to sin came *not from within*, but from *without*. That this must, of necessity, have been the case is apparently indicated by the fact of God placing the serpent there, and giving it the power of speech to enable it to tempt or try her. As God’s plan of operation is – as may be gathered from His own records of His dealing with mankind – to use just such means as are necessary to effect His purposes, we can hardly suppose that, if there had been something within Eve which would have tempted her, God would have placed such a creature as the serpent there for that purpose. Hence we might infer, from this circumstance alone, that before the Fall Eve’s nature was not such as to tempt her, apart from the suggestion of an external intellectual being.

When we come to the facts of the case, we find them in complete accord with this inference. There is no record of either Adam or Eve having had any idea of disobeying God's command before the suggestion was made by the serpent. They apparently never thought of doubting the truth of the statement that if they ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge they would die, and they had therefore abstained from eating of it. Consequently, upon the first remark of the serpent, Eve replied by quoting the statement of the Elohim: she said, "*We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*" – (Gen. 3:2,3). Up to this point she appears to have had no idea of doubting the truth of that statement, or of *disobeying that command*. It was only when the serpent approached her with his subtle and deceitful reasonings – "*Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*" – that she seems to have entertained the idea of eating of the fruit, for the narrative proceeds (verse 6), "*And **when** the woman saw that the tree was **good for food**, and that it was **pleasant to the eyes**, and **a tree to be desired to make one wise**, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.*" Thus it was *when* she *saw* these things that she transgressed, clearly implying that she had *not* perceived them *before*. She had believed the Elohim before; but the Serpent, by making these statements, deceived her, for, as the Apostle Paul says in 1st Tim. 2:14, "*The woman, **being deceived**, was in the transgression;*" and then "*she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*" How was it they had not eaten before? The fruit – the *object* to which their temptation and sin had relation – was there before their eyes: why did they not partake of it? The answer is, that up to that time they were "very good:" they had no "sin" or sinful lusts, in their nature. Undoubtedly they had faculties which rendered them *capable* of sinning, but there was evidently no *impulse, tendency* or *inclination* to commit sin until another being came and made the fatal suggestion to which they yielded.

Here, then, we see the difference between our first parents and their descendants: that while the former needed an external tempter before they had the inclination to sin, the latter are tempted by the sinful lusts in their nature. How is this great difference to be accounted for, except on the hypothesis that through the transgression of our first parents there was implanted in them that principle which in the Scriptures is styled "sin in the flesh," and which has been transmitted from them to all their descendants, so that it has become a law of their nature?

A question has been raised as to whether Adam and Eve had sin in the flesh at the time they *mentally resolved* to eat of the fruit, or whether it was implanted in them *by the eating of the fruit*. This question is not one deserving of much discussion, especially as it is not defined in the Scriptures, and as a solution of it – were it possible to arrive at a positive conclusion on the point – would not materially affect the general question under consideration. If sin in the flesh existed *before* the *eating* of the fruit, it is evident that it must have originated with the *mental yielding to the promptings of the serpent*, inasmuch as it was not in existence before the temptation, as we have already seen. If, on the other hand, sin in the flesh originated *with the*

eating of the fruit, it is still more evident that it originated with the Fall. It appears to us that the two things – i.e. the mental resolve and the actual transgression – should be viewed as one act. Sin – i.e. such sin as takes the form of outward action, as in the case in point – is ***action begun in the brain***; and there cannot be actual transgression without there being first of all a mental resolve to sin. The suggestions of the serpent set at work the mental faculties of Eve, and gave them a sinful direction, and she then resolved to eat of the fruit. She would not have eaten of the fruit unless she had first resolved to do so: therefore the eating was but a carrying-out or continuation of the mental resolve.

But although we have not distinct evidence as to ***the exact point*** at which sin in the flesh first existed, we have evidence that a mental change was produced in Adam and Eve by the eating of the fruit, for it is stated that they had a sense of nakedness after that act, and nothing is said about it before. Moreover “*the Lord God*” – or the Elohim – attributed their sense of nakedness to that act, for when Adam said (Gen. 3:10) “*I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself,*” the Lord God said, “***Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?***” clearly implying that the eating of the tree would actually produce that feeling. Observe that it was not simply that that they were ***ashamed*** to face the Elohim after their transgression, which might be ascribed simply to the knowledge that they had disobeyed God; but they had also a consciousness of nakedness, a feeling of shame at being naked, which manifested itself in their making clothing of fig-leaves to cover themselves with; and ***this feeling is specifically ascribed by God to the eating of the fruit.***

Seeing, then, that this change was produced by the transgression, we may fairly conclude that other changes were produced by the same means, and that the implanting of sin in the flesh was either produced or completed by the eating of the tree, the serpent’s suggestions first setting in motion or inflaming the faculties, and the transgression fixing in them that inclination, tendency, or impulse to sin, which is called “lust,” or “sin in the flesh,” and which has been hereditarily transmitted to their descendants. The question whether sin in the flesh is a literal physical element, which was introduced into the human organization at the Fall, or whether it is simply a disturbance of the balance or inflaming of the mental faculties, giving an inclination to sin, is not a matter of vital importance, for, whichever it be, the things we have affirmed of it are equally true.

We now come to the third point, viz.,

#3 “that sin in the flesh is the cause of actual transgression.”

This has been to some extent demonstrated under the second head, in showing that we are tempted by the lusts of the flesh; but it may be well to deal with the matter a little further. In Rom. 7:11, Paul says, “*Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me;*” and hence, in verse 13, sin, that is, sin in the flesh, not actual transgression, is said to be “*exceeding sinful*”, or literally,

“an exceedingly great sinner.” Again, in Rom. 7:17, *“Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me;”* and the apostle reiterates the statement in verse 20: *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.”* Here the apostle speaks of *something in him, called sin, which led him to transgress*. Whence came this physical sin but by inheritance from our first parents? Paul was no different from other men in this respect: all the descendants of Adam have inherited it, and all who have attained to years of knowledge have been tempted by it, and, with one exception, have yielded: it has been the cause of their transgressing. To such an extent has it become bound up with flesh and blood – part and parcel of human nature, that the apostle calls it *a law*: he says, in Rom. 7:21-23, *“I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another LAW in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the LAW of sin which is in my members;”* and again, verse 25, *“So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the LAW of sin.”* Thus sin has become *corporealised*, and in that respect so inseparably connected with flesh and blood, that it may almost be used as an interchangeable term for flesh and blood, or human nature. Hence we find flesh and blood, or human nature, in its present condition designated *“sinful flesh”* or *“flesh of sin”* (Rom. 8:3), *“the body of sin”* (Rom. 6:6), and *“body of death”* (Rom. 7:24); whilst sin in the flesh is variously designated *“the lusts of sin”* (Rom. 6:12), *“the motions of sins”* (Rom. 7:5); *“the law of sin in the members”* (Rom. 7:23,25), *“the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2), *“our old man”* (Rom. 6:6), and *“the old man.”* – (Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9). In the latter passage we find the phrase, *“the old man WITH his deeds,”* showing the distinction between physical sin and the actual transgression of which it is the cause. If sinful acts are the “deeds” of “the old man,” “the old man” cannot signify the same thing, but must be that which is the cause of the “deeds,” viz., the lusts of the flesh, or sinful flesh.

It is of great importance, in considering this question, that we should apprehend the fact that by the Fall of our first parents sin became – what it was not before – *corporealised*, that it obtained a body, so to speak, and thus that it became inseparably connected with the human race whilst under its present constitution, which has been appropriately termed “the constitution of sin.” Hence men are by their very nature and constitution out of harmony with God, so that their thoughts and ideas are opposed to His, as we read in Rom. 8:7; *“The carnal mind [and all men are carnal at first] is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”* (The mind of man requires to be subjected to the truth before it can be brought into harmony with God.) And so, as this arose through the sin of Adam, it is said that *“By one man’s disobedience many were made (or constituted) sinners.”* – (Rom. 5:19.)

A recognition of this will throw considerable light on the subject of the condemnation of the human race in Adam. As Adam after his Fall possessed this fallen nature, it was inevitable that all his descendants would also, they being but a perpetuation of himself, what we may call “chips off the old block.” God of course foreknew this, and therefore decreed the condemnation of the whole race federally in

their head, while still leaving the way open for the redemption of some of them through one in whom the power of sin should be destroyed, from whom the condemnation should be removed.

#4 “*That sin in the flesh has the power of death, or is the cause of death, even apart from transgression,*”

that is, either that the human race is condemned to death because all are contaminated with it, *or* that it works death by a physical operation in the human frame. Let us turn to Hebrews 2:14: “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, [literally, him **having** the power of death,] that is the devil.*” Now what is this devil, or, as it is in the Greek, *diabolis*? We reply that it is sin in the flesh. It has been suggested that it is actual transgression, or that it is the jurisdiction or condemnation of the law. These latter definitions, however, are assumptions, for which no Scriptural evidence has, to our knowledge, ever been adduced. Let us examine its use in other parts of Scripture, to see what it generally stands for, and if we find that it is not in any other passage applied to transgression, but always signifies either sin in the flesh generally, or some particular embodiment of it either in individuals or systems, we may fairly conclude that it should be so understood in this passage. We would just premise that as we are here writing principally for those who have discarded the popular belief of a superhuman, immortal devil, we shall not stay to consider that idea, but *assume* (what has elsewhere been abundantly proved) that as the very notion of the very existence of such a being is unscriptural, and incompatible with the revealed purposes of God, no passage in Scripture can refer to such a being.

The word *diabolos* occurs 38 times in the New Testament. It is generally, though not in every case, translated *devil*.

1. We have it applied to a system six times, namely:

Matt. 25:41	everlasting fire prepared for the <i>devil</i> and his angels
Rev. 2:10	the <i>devil</i> shall cast some of you into prison
Rev. 12:9	that old serpent called the <i>devil</i> and Satan
Rev. 12:12	the <i>devil</i> is come down unto you
Rev. 20:2	that old serpent which is the <i>devil</i> and Satan
Rev. 20:10	the <i>devil</i> that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire

2. We have it applied to an *individual* or *individuals* ten times, namely:

John 6:70	one of you [Judas] is a <i>devil</i>
Eph. 6:11	the wiles of the <i>devil</i>
1 st Tim. 3:6	fall into the condemnation of the <i>devil</i>
1 st Tim. 3:7	fall into reproach and the snare of the <i>devil</i>
1 st Tim. 3:11	not <i>slanderers</i> (devils) [speaking of deacons' wives]

2 nd Tim. 2:26	recover themselves out of the snare of the <i>devil</i> , who are taken captive by him at his will
2 nd Tim. 3:3	<i>false accusers</i> [referring to “men.”]
Titus 2:3	not <i>false accusers</i> [speaking of “aged women.”]
1 st Peter 5:8	your adversary the <i>devil</i> as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour
Jude 9	Michael the archangel contending with the <i>devil</i>
3. We have it in two passages used in such a way that it may be understood in reference to either individuals or sin in the flesh, namely:	
Matt. 13:39	[in the parable of the tares] “the enemy that sowed them is the <i>devil</i> ”
Luke 8:12	[in the parable of the sower] “then cometh the <i>devil</i> , and taketh away the word out of their hearts.”

But although the precise meaning here is not very clear, there can be no doubt that it refers to either individuals or to sin in the flesh, and not to actual transgression.

4. In the remaining 19 places we think it will be apparent that *diabolos* does not mean either actual transgression or the condemnation of the law. We have it nine times in the account of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness, namely:

Matt. 4:1, 5, 8, 11

Luke 4: 2, 3, 5, 6, 13

Now it would be absurd to speak of anyone being tempted by actual transgression, and especially Christ, “who did no sin.” Therefore the devil here, whether it was an individual or the impulses of sinful nature, with which Christ, in common with the rest of the race, was tempted, was clearly not transgression, which conclusion is sufficient for the purpose of the present argument.

The remaining ten passages are as follows:

John 8:44	“Ye are of your father the <i>devil</i> , and the lusts of your father ye will do.” The word “lusts” here, as well as the context of the passage, points to sin in the flesh as the devil referred to.
John 13:2	“And supper being ended, the <i>devil</i> having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.”
Acts 10:38	Jesus healed “all that were oppressed of the <i>devil</i> ,” that is, suffering from diseases pertaining to sinful flesh, not oppressed with <i>transgression</i> .

Acts 13:10	Paul says to Elymas, “Thou child of the devil ,” that is, one obeying the lusts of the flesh, just as a child of wisdom is one who obeys the dictates of wisdom.
Eph. 4:27	“Neither give place to the devil .” This is synonymous with Rom. 6:12: “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,” i.e., let not the lusts of the flesh reign in you: do not give way or “give place” to the workings of sin in the flesh.
James 4:7	“Resist the devil ” is akin to the previous passage (Eph. 4:27) and means, subdue the lusts of the flesh.
1 st John 3:8	Devil occurs three times here: “He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil .”

The first clause “He that committeth sin is of the **devil**,” is similar to John 8:44, “Ye are of your father the devil,” where we have seen that devil signifies sin in the flesh. In the second clause, “for the **devil** sinneth from the beginning,” it cannot refer to transgression, for it would be absurd to say that transgression sinneth. And as to the last clause, “that He might destroy the works of the **devil**,” from what has already been said on this passage, we may take it that it signifies sin in the flesh in individual or corporate manifestation.

1st John 3:10 – “*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil.*” Here **devil** evidently means sin in the flesh, as the Apostle contrasts those who obey its lusts (“the children of the devil”) with those who obey the precepts of God (“the children of God”) If **devil** meant **transgression**, the contrast would rather be between the children of the devil and the children of **righteousness**, inasmuch as transgression would be more appropriately contrasted with righteousness than with God; whilst if devil means sin in the flesh – that which prompts to the doing of the very reverse of what God enjoins – we can see great appropriateness in the contrast between children of **God** and children of the **devil**. The fact, then, of the contrast being between the children of God and the children of the devil indicates that devil here signifies, not transgression, but sin in the flesh.

The foregoing are the whole of the passages in the New Testament where **diabolos** occurs, except Hebrews 2:14, and we thus see that in every other place where the word is found, it signifies, not transgression, but either sin in the flesh or some embodiment or manifestation of it, and that in no instance can it be clearly shown to signify transgression. In the face of this, can it be contended that in Heb. 2:14 it has quite a different meaning? Even were there any ground for such a conclusion in the passage itself, we might well hesitate to give it a meaning here which is nowhere else attached to it in Scripture. But even an examination of the passage itself will show that there is every reason for giving it the same meaning here as elsewhere.

Let us suppose for a moment that *devil* does here mean *transgression*, and examine the passage on that supposition. But, first of all, let us look at verse 16: "For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham." (We have put the italics as in the Common Version.) This translation is clearly defective. It is open to doubt because of the many italics supplied; and as it stands it implies the pre-existence of Christ. The marginal translation – "For verily he taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold" – is clearly the correct one. The "he" here must therefore refer, not to Christ, (as the Common Version makes it), but either to *death* or *the devil* (in verse 14). That it does not refer to *death* is evident from the fact that *death* is there as a subordinate member of the sentence, the principal member of the sentence being *the devil*. The phrase, "him that had the power of death" is only an explanatory clause qualifying "devil," and it can be omitted without affecting either the grammatical or real sense of the passage, as will be seen by reading the verse omitting this clause: "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy the devil." If, then, "he" does not refer to death it must refer to "devil." The application of the word "he" to *diabolos* is explained by the fact that in the Greek *diabolos* is either masculine or feminine but not neuter, and therefore it would be incorrect to speak of it as "it," and thus, when used in a general sense, the masculine pronoun *he* (in preference to the feminine) is necessarily applied to it.

Having so far cleared up verse 16, let us turn back to verse 14, to see whether "devil" there can mean transgression. Let us read verses 14 and 16, on the supposition that it does (omitting verse 15, which is not necessary to the connection): - "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is TRANSGRESSION;... *for* verily TRANSGRESSION taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham TRANSGRESSION taketh hold." This would be equivalent to saying that Jesus Christ (for it is of him the apostle is writing) was made in flesh and blood for this reason, - that transgression takes hold of the seed of Abraham, and therefore, that *because* he was one of the seed of Abraham, *transgression would take hold of him!* If it be said that transgression took hold of him in the sense that the transgressions of others were laid on him, we reply that even if this were a correct way of putting the matter, the transgressions of others did not take hold of him *as one of the seed of Abraham*, but *as the Lamb of God*. Now, whatever it was that "took hold" of Christ, it took hold of him *as one of the seed of Abraham*; therefore it cannot be transgression.

Now let us read the passage on the supposition that *devil* is the other meaning suggested, namely, "the condemnation (or jurisdiction) of the law;" thus: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of the flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, *the condemnation of the law*; ... *for* verily *the condemnation of the law* taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham *the condemnation of the law* taketh hold." This would be equivalent to saying that

Jesus Christ was made in flesh and blood for this reason, that the condemnation of the law takes hold of the seed of Abraham, and therefore that *because* he was one of the seed of Abraham, the condemnation of the law would take hold of him not simply for others, but *personally as one of the seed of Abraham*. The condemnation of the law, however, came upon him, not as the seed of Abraham but as the Lamb of God, for he was free from it all his life until he hung upon the cross. But the devil that took hold of Christ, took hold of him *as the seed of Abraham*; therefore devil here does not mean “the condemnation of the law.” Thus we see that neither of the alternative meanings suggested for the word *devil* will stand even upon a mere consideration of the passage itself, and we are therefore driven back to the conclusion already arrived at, that devil here, as elsewhere, must mean either sin in the flesh or some particular embodiment of it in individuals or systems; and as it cannot here refer to the latter, it must mean sin in the flesh. This conclusion is very strongly confirmed by a consideration of the meaning of the word *diabolos*: for, according to lexicographers and its Scripture use, it does not mean a slanderer, a false accusation, but a slanderer, a false accuser, - not something done, but one who does; not an act, but an actor; and therefore (in relation to the matter under consideration) not a transgression, but a transgressor, - that which transgresses or leads to transgression. And, in view of this, to what can the word be more appropriately applied than to sin in the flesh?

In the light of this definition, we may read the passage as follows: - “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is sin in the flesh... for verily sin in the flesh taketh not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham sin in the flesh taketh hold.*” We have it established, then, that *sin in the flesh has the power of death*. In what way does it possess that power? It may be suggested that the only way is by leading men to commit transgression, and thus bringing upon them the punishment for sin, which is death. But although sin in the flesh *has* the power of death in that way, that is not the way referred to in this passage; for just as it has been shown that, if *devil* here means transgression, it amounts to a statement that transgression took hold of Jesus, and therefore *that he was a sinner*, so the same conclusion follows if we say that the way in which sin in the flesh is here stated to have the power of death, is by leading men to commit sin. Any interpretation which would involve the conclusion that Jesus was a transgressor must of course be instantly rejected, and for that reason we must reject the suggestion that the sense in which sin in the flesh is here said to have the power of death is by leading men to commit transgression.

With a view of making the matter still plainer, let us put the argument in another form. The statement in verse 16, that the devil or sin in the flesh takes hold of the seed of Abraham, signifies, in light of verse 14, that sin in the flesh *has the power of death* over the seed of Abraham; and, as Jesus was one of the seed of Abraham, this statement must apply to him. To put the argument in the form of a syllogism:

1. The devil or sin in the flesh has the power of death over the seed of Abraham;
2. Jesus was one of the seed of Abraham;

3. Therefore sin, the flesh, had the power of death over Jesus.

Now, as it cannot be said that sin in the flesh had the power of death over Jesus Christ by leading him to commit sin, the only way in which it could have had this power over him must have been because he was, as verse 14 states, a partaker of the same nature as “the children,” that is, either because sin, the flesh, is the *means* of death by a natural operation producing physical decay ultimating in death, or else because men are condemned in Adam on account of their fallen nature, and that, as the reason of the condemnation of the nature is its being tainted with sin in the flesh, sin in the flesh is said to have the power of death over the nature.

It is objected that as the Apostle only mentions “the seed of Abraham,” and not the seed of Adam, he cannot be referring to something which affects the whole of the race, as sin in the flesh does, but that he must be dealing with something which has relation to none but the seed of Abraham. Let us then see why, though refering, as we contend, to something which affects the whole of the race, the Apostle only mentions *part* of the race. What is meant by “the seed of Abraham?” It must mean either, (1) the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, or (2) those who become the seed of Abraham by faith. – (Romans 4:11).

(1.) *If* it is the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, we have a sufficient reason for the Apostle mentioning them rather than the seed of Adam, in the fact that he was writing to some who were the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, for the epistle is addressed “to the *Hebrews*,” and we have another reason in the fact that it was to the Jews that Christ came, and that his mission had in the first place special relation to them.

We may remark, in passing, that if by seed of Abraham the Apostle means the *Jews*, it cannot be maintained that “devil” means transgression, for amongst them there were many infants, and, as they did not commit sin, transgression could not be said to have had the power of death over them; neither can it mean the jurisdiction or condemnation of the law, for there were many amongst the fleshly seed of Abraham who were never under the jurisdiction of the law, and did not come under its condemnation, as, for instance, those who lived and died in Egypt before the law was given. But if “the seed of Abraham” here referred to are the *Jews*, it must include both infants and those in Egypt, for the Apostle speaks of the seed of Abraham generally, and not of a part only.

(2.) Supposing, on the other hand, by “the seed of Abraham” are meant those who are such by faith, we can still see a reason why the Apostle refers to them, and not to the seed of Adam, namely, *because it was the seed of Abraham by faith that Jesus died to redeem*. – (Gal. 3:29). And to such we believe the Apostle refers. This is quite in harmony with the whole passage, as an examination of both the preceding and subsequent verses will demonstrate. As this may be a point of some importance in a subsequent part of our argument, we will endeavour to prove it before proceeding further. If we refer back to the 10th verse (Heb. 2:10), we shall see that the Apostle there commences to speak to those whom God purposed to redeem through Christ: “For it became “Him for whom are all things, and by “whom are all things, in bringing *many* “sons unto glory, to make the captain of “*their salvation*

perfect through sufferings.” In verse 11 he speaks of them as “they who are *sanctified*” and as “*brethren*” (of Christ.) In verse 12 they are again spoken of as “my [Christ’s] *brethren*, ” in a quotation from Psalm 22:22, where we read: “*I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.*” This psalm is eminently a Messianic one: see verses 1, 7, 8, 18, all of which are in the New Testament applied to Christ. The first part of the psalm, down to verse 21, refers to his sufferings, whilst the remaining verses evidently refer to his future glory when amongst his ransomed brethren as “the governor among the nations.” – (verse 28.) The 22nd verse, then, has reference to the Messiah praising God, not amongst his brethren after the flesh (the Jews), but amongst the seed of Abraham according to faith. Again, in the 13th verse of Heb. 2. they are referred to as “the *children* which God hath given” to Christ; in verse 14 as “the *children*, ” and in verse 17 as “his *brethren*.” From all these expressions it is abundantly clear that it is of the brethren of Christ by faith that the Apostle is writing. It will also be apparent that those referred to as “children” and “brethren” are the same as those termed “the seed of Abraham;” for in verses 14 and 15 the Apostle states that Jesus “took part” of “flesh and blood”—the same nature that “the children” are “partakers” of—in order that he might destroy the devil, and “*deliver them who were subject to bondage*, ” that is, “the children;” and then he continues, in verse 16, “FOR verily he (the devil) taketh not hold of angels, but of *the seed of Abraham* he taketh hold.” The fact of this verse commencing with *for* indicates a connection with the preceding verses; and the statement it contains is a reason for what is previously stated. The logical connection is evidently this, that Jesus destroyed the devil, in order to redeem “the children,” *because* the devil takes hold of the seed of Abraham, or, in other words, *because* the “seed of Abraham” are under the power of the devil. Now if “the children” and “the seed of Abraham” are not the same, there is no meaning in the Apostle’s argument. The brethren or children and the seed of Abraham are therefore precisely the same, and, as we have seen that “the brethren” are those who are such by faith, it follows that “the seed of Abraham,” of verse 16, are not the fleshly descendants of Abraham, but those who are his seed by faith.”

Seeing, then, that in the whole of this passage the Apostle is discoursing on the redemption effected by God through Christ, and of those for whom Christ died, we can see a very good reason—without resorting to the assumption that “devil” means: “transgression,” or “the condemnation of the law,”—why the apostle refers to “the seed of Abraham” rather than to the seed of *Adam*, and that there is no reason to conclude that the devil to which he refers is something which has relation *only* to the seed of Abraham, and not to *all* the descendants of Adam. Sin in the flesh affects all the latter, and the seed of Abraham being part of them, it necessarily affects them. What affects the whole must affect any part of that whole. Therefore, to understand “the seed of Abraham” as being those who are such by faith, in no way affects the conclusion already arrived at with regard to Jesus Christ, for he was pre-eminently the seed of Abraham by faith, and he is, therefore, included in those of whom the apostle is speaking in verses 14 to 16.

The argument of the apostle is this: that the seed of Abraham were affected by, or under the power of, sin in the flesh, and therefore, that Christ was made of the same nature – exactly like them, in order that he might be so affected by it, or under its power, and thus be in a position to destroy it in himself, and then deliver them from its power. Moreover, seeing that it was, as stated in verse 14, the *purpose* of God that the devil, or sin in the flesh, should be destroyed *through the death of Christ*, it must be admitted that this was actually done *by that means*. Indeed, if sin in the flesh has not been destroyed actually in Christ, it has not been destroyed at all, for it has not been destroyed in any others; therefore it must have been destroyed *in him personally*. But unless it had had the power of death *in him* it could not have been destroyed *in him*; therefore it must have had the power of death in him. But if it be that sin in the flesh has the power of death only by leading to transgression, then it is clear it had not the power of death in Jesus Christ, but only in others. Moreover, Jesus could not have destroyed that which had the power of death in others, but not in himself, *by HIS death*, and therefore on that supposition we should be forced to the conclusion that he has not destroyed it at all. But it is clear from this passage that Jesus has destroyed it by his death; therefore the logical conclusion is that sin in the flesh had the power of death in Jesus Christ, and that as it had not that power by actual transgression, it was by virtue of the law passed in Eden, which affected, not Adam only, but all the race; and therefore that sin in the flesh has the power of death in all Adam's descendants, even apart from their individual transgressions.

This was the statement we made at the head of the present division of our remarks, and it is a truth the recognition of which entirely removes a difficulty felt by some in connection with the doctrine of condemnation in Adam, namely, in regard to the death of infants, of which no consistent explanation can be given in harmony with a denial of that doctrine, inasmuch as it cannot be said that *they* die on account of their own sins, for they cannot commit sin. It has been said that they die because they are mortal, through a natural law operating in their constitutions; but then no consistent explanation is given for the existence of this natural law. It also explains the death of those outside law, as to whom the same difficulty arises as in the case of infants. If it be said that those outside law die because of things they do which, though not a transgression of any given law, are nevertheless undoubtedly displeasing to God, this is a direct denial of the Apostle's statement that "*sin is not imputed when there is no law.*" – (Rom. 5:13.) If, on the other hand, it be said that they die on account of natural physical law of decay, this brings us no nearer the primary cause than in the case of infants, for it gives us no reason why God has set in motion, or permits the operation of, this natural law; it gives us no consistent reason for its existence, but represents God as acting, if not in a haphazard and chance way, at least in an unsystematic manner. These difficulties, however, are, we submit, entirely removed when we look at the matter in the light in which we have presented it, namely, that the death of all the descendants of Adam is the direct result of his sin, they having inherited his fallen nature, and being condemned federally in him. In connection with the apostolic exposition of this matter in Romans 5, we have the death of those outside law specially accounted for. After saying, in verse 12, that "*as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon*

all men, for that (margin, in whom) all have sinned,” he says (verse 13) “*for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*” If the Apostle had paused here, some might have said that those who have no law given to them ought not to die, as God does not impute their sins to them; but he continues, (verse 14), “*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,*” that is, those who had not transgressed any law given to them. The explanation of this statement is evidently that given in verse 12, that because of Adam’s sin “*death passed upon all men,*” both those under law and those not under law. In the remainder of the chapter the Apostle states the matter still more definitely in a series of contrasts between Adam and Christ; but as those verses have been made the subject of extended comment in previous numbers of the *Christadelphian* during the present year, we need not dwell upon them here.

It may appear that we have laid too much stress on *physical* sin, and that this tends to lessen the heinousness of actual transgression. But this is not really so, and, so far as it may appear to be so, the appearance is only due to the fact that the existence of physical sin is denied by some. We would not in any degree diminish the enormity of the offence of transgressing God’s commandments, and indeed the view we have presented does not by any means do this, for it shows the evils that have resulted from the sin of the first man, and how his transgression made a breach between man and his Creator which has existed ever since, and which can only be repaired by the Deity Himself, by the means provided in “*the last Adam.*” All admit the existence of moral sin, which is primarily a transgression of a given law (1st John 3:4), and secondarily, things committed by those not under law, which, if they were under a law, would be a transgression thereof, in which sense it is used in Romans 5:13. It would be useless to set to work at any length to prove this, which is so generally admitted; but as physical sin is denied, it was necessary to demonstrate its existence, origin and effects; and we have dealt with it at this length before dealing with the putting-away of sin, because it is impossible to thoroughly understand the abolition of sin, unless we know exactly what sin is: before we can thoroughly understand the redemption effected by Christ, we must understand exactly what we need to be redeemed from.

A. Andrew

“...the system of truth as revealed in the Scriptures is so beautiful and so harmonious that if any one element is not viewed in the proper light it will throw the whole system out of balance. It is so fitted together in all its parts that you must have every principle correct in order that there be harmony and beauty.”

Thomas Williams, *Selected Works*, p. 313

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

MT. SHERMAN, KY ECCLESIA

Brother Hugh Shelton fell asleep in the Lord November 7th 2014 at age 84.

He is survived by his Sister-Wife of 60 years Sister Maureen Burd Shelton, a son and daughter-in-law Brother David and Sister Donna Shelton, a daughter Sister Carol Shelton, and a granddaughter Sister Brittany Shelton. He came out of "the world" 27 years ago largely due to the association with the Burd family and other members of the Household that he came to know and respect; causing him to examine the scriptures closely and then to accept God's commandment by putting on His name in baptism November 22nd 1987.

Brother Terry Smith conducted the funeral service with comforting words of the resurrection at Christ's return. May his sleep be brief and may he soon be welcomed into that glorious Kingdom that we look and long for.

Maureen B. Shelton

MISSISSIPPI UNAMENDED ECCLESIA STATEMENT

December 26, 2014

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

The brothers and sisters of the Mississippi Unamended Ecclesia, extend greetings to all ecclesias. Our ecclesia is semi-isolated with occasional visitors from various areas and we meet with the BUSF Monroe, La. Ecclesia when we have opportunity. There are currently four members in our ecclesia. Age is beginning to make its impression on our small group.

Our basis of fellowship in Mississippi has not changed since the beginning of our ecclesia, which in our family, actually reaches back at least 6 or more generations, beginning in South Carolina finally settling in Louisiana. As members of Christ's Ecclesia, our family (and ecclesia) has earnestly sought to respect and honor the essential nature of true fellowship for all these years. The current and apparently unrestricted trend towards apostasy in the Ecclesia of our Master, has stimulated our ecclesia to seek to verify our beliefs related to the one and only Gospel. After our study we are even more convinced of the validity of the TRUTH as taught by the pioneers and brothers even up unto our day. Our fellowship is based exclusively on the BUSF and therefore we accept the system of prophecy and the standards for our daily walk as taught from the early days of the TRUTH. We accept THE TRUTH, which forms the foundation of our spiritual reasoning, daily conduct and most crucial, fellowship at the Memorial Table.

With this in mind we must say that we accept the principles behind the Arkansas Unamended Bible School's recent statement about fellowship at the Bible School. As stewards of the Ecclesia our fellowship activities should be sincere. Any decisions about our individual basis of fellowship should in no way contradict the established principles already in place at any particular meeting or Bible School. Individual fellowship standards that we bring to any meeting we attend, should not be doubted when our association with Christ is concerned. Some Christadelphians who claim to be earnestly contending for the faith, may innocently or intentionally ignore the facts concerning the very purpose for an assembly of brethren. We all, through Love of the Father and the Ecclesia, must seek to remain very strict conservative brothers and sisters in Christ as we continue to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and the Kingdom soon to come. We depend on the pioneer brothers for spiritual support and occasional insight as we continue to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. These have been sincerely believed for generations and we stand firmly behind those brothers and sisters who today are currently striving with all diligence in these very last days of the Ecclesia, to withstand the apostate attack on our ecclesias and young people.

We intend this letter, to confirm beyond doubt, that our Hope is based exclusively on the BUSF, its doctrines to be rejected and the commandments of Christ. There can be no variance in our principles and we welcome all who wish to sincerely meet with us on these truths.

In closing, we wish to add that this letter was absolutely not intended to say anything that is any way offensive or shows a lack of respect for the Household of Faith, individually, or the Household in general. We write this too, as an attempt to encourage true spiritual fellowship knowing that through our purity and sincerity we are "kept by the power of Yahweh through faith unto salvation..." 1st Peter 1:5. Sincere and pure Love is the common denominator for those who believe in the Hope of Israel and that live in Christ, this is the stimulus for this letter.

Our prayers for all in the Truth of the Hope of Israel,

The MISSISSIPPI UNAMENDED CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIA

Brother Ronnie & Sister Robbin Sanders

Brother Thomas & Sister Elizabeth Sanders

ERASING ISRAEL OFF THE MAP

Bro. Lou Locklear recently forwarded on to us a news report that reads as follows:

Publishing giant Harper Collins began 2015 by publicly apologizing for selling maps of the Middle East that omit Israel. The company insisted that erasing Israel from maps were necessary since displaying the reality of Israel's existence would be "highly offensive" to their customers in the Middle East region. The Israel-scrubbed maps were simply reflecting "local preferences".

It's not only Harper Collins maps that present a world without the Jewish state. In recent years, numerous cultural exhibits, historians, and religious works have all worked hard to erase any trace of Israel and Jewish history there. Here are some examples of the quest to rewrite history – without the Jewish state.

It seems there is no limit to the degree that the world is going to in order to delegitimize Israel. It would be laughable if it all was not so very serious.

“BLOOD MOONS”

We appreciate the correspondence and input received regarding the article that appeared in the 3rd Quarter, 2014 S.K. as to our disagreement with the so-called “Blood Moons Prophecy” theory, as put forward by the Evangelical movement and as is being promoted by some Christadelphian writers as well. One brother sent us a link to the torahcalendar.com, which has put together some very interesting chronological information and that also takes a very dim view of the “Blood Moons Prophecy” theory. The website contains quite a bit of interesting and detailed information, but like all efforts of the world, it is wise to approach such things with a sense of discernment and caution.

We did have a lengthy stream of correspondence with a brother who took great exception to our reference to the “Blood Moons Prophecy” theory as “evangelical superstition”. He was insistent that the reference in Joel 2:31 to “*the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*” should be taken as a sign to be revealed in the literal sun and moon. He also contended that the reference to the sun and moon in the Olivet Prophecy (Matthew 24:29) are also to be taken literally and are still yet future. We believe that we demonstrated clearly that the sun and moon are used extensively in the Scriptures as symbols of Civil and Ecclesiastical powers. In regard to Joel, it is symbolic of the judgments and destruction of the Northern Gogian Invader (the sun) as well as the “darkening” of the Apostate religious system (the moon) that it champions. In reference to the Olivet Prophecy, a correct view of what is already fulfilled history and what is still future is extremely critical. We highly recommend bro. Thomas’ work “*The Last Days of Judah’s Commonwealth*” for further study of the matter. Let it be understood that the reference in the Olivet Prophecy to the darkening of the sun and moon, as well as **the falling of the stars from heaven** are in reference to the extinguishing of Judah’s Commonwealth as a result of the events of 70 A.D. The brother insisted that the reference to the sun and moon in the Olivet Prophecy were literal and future, but that the reference to the falling stars was symbolic. He also rejected the quotes from brothers J. Thomas and T. Williams as representing evidence of their rejection of looking to natural heavenly objects and phenomena for our prophetic signs. We did not come to an agreement.

THE WORLD SCENE

All we can say in this short space is that these are truly thrilling times! Increasing and belligerent vitriol towards Israel; the spiraling condition of the U.S. in economic, military and diplomatic will; plummeting oil prices that are making Russia extremely volatile and building towards confrontation against the West – viewing itself as the world’s leader of moral superiority; a Pope who is spewing out “frog like” sentiments quite freely; and a Middle East in confusion. Brethren, hold fast to our long held prophetic expectations and WATCH the signs in the Political Heavens.