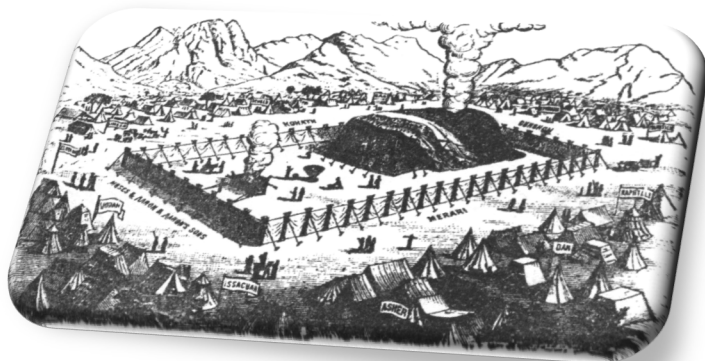


# THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



**WILL WE ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE?**  
**LESSONS LEARNED FROM PROVIDENCE**  
**OUR HISTORIC POSITION AS CONSCIENTIOUS  
OBJECTORS**  
**“THE MOST HIGH RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN”**  
**THE TIME OF JACOB’S TROUBLE**  
**IN ADAM AND IN CHRIST**  
**“NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS”**  
**EDITORIAL FLYLEAF**

The Sanctuary-Keeper is published on a quarterly basis. The doctrinal position of this magazine is founded exclusively on the principles of Bible Truth as outlined and defined in *The Christadelphian Unamended Statement of Faith*

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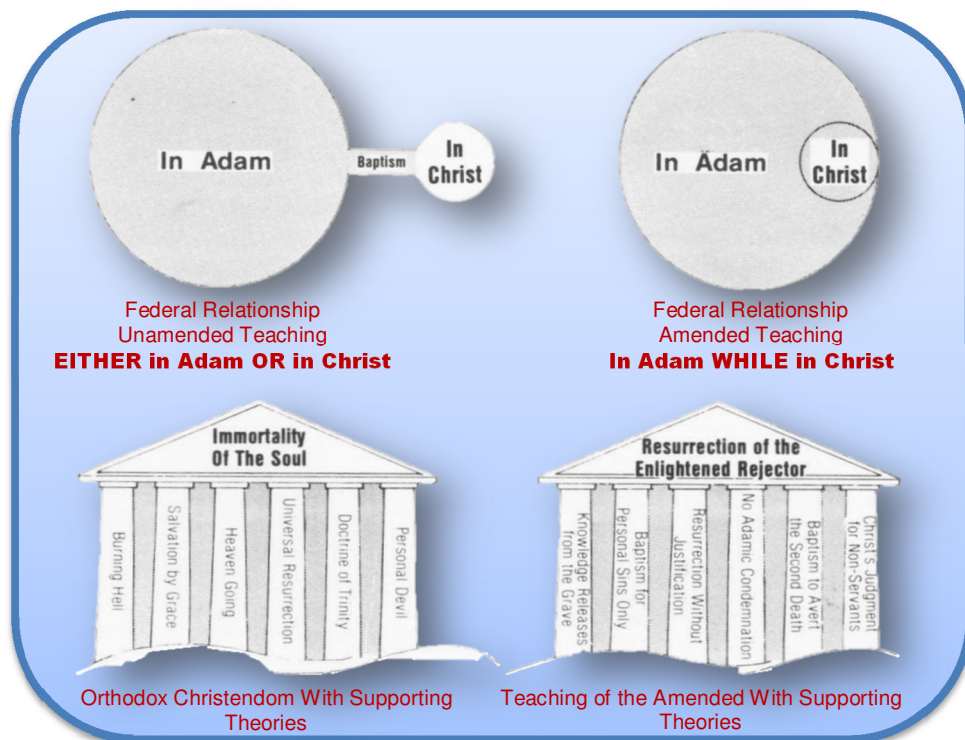
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### THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF MEN

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

### THE FEET OF THE IMAGE

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

### THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE

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

**HEAD OF GOLD  
BABYLON**

**BREAST/ARMS  
OF SILVER  
PERSIA**

**THIGHS OF BRASS  
GREECE**

**LEGS OF IRON  
ROME**

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



# "They Spake Often One to Another"

**Malachi 3:16**

A faithful remnant, having demonstrated that they genuinely "feared" Yahweh, continually "conversed with one another" (Rotherham). It should be noted that they did not hold conversation with others (vv. 13-15), because "others" were not at all interested in discussing the things of God, since the remnant were not willing to compromise the things they believed. A great gulf had developed between two parties within the ecclesia. United during the period in which they were bonded together under the leadership of Nehemiah, they now no longer had much in common! The attitude of the two groups toward the principles of the Truth was so different that there was no true fellowship between them. It would appear from the text that by the time Malachi rose up to speak, the faithful remnant had become more or less isolated from the majority. No doubt the remnant had tried, like Malachi, to restore their brethren to the way of the Truth, but had been repelled and renounced. No "door of utterance" was left open to them. To the faithful ones, no doubt it was something like "the days of Noah" and the "days of Lot" (Luke 17:226-30). They could no longer hope to eradicate the doctrinal and moral corruption that had eaten into the heart of God's people. They could only strive to maintain their own integrity before Yahweh; to try and manifest lives of holiness and devotion to the things of Deity, for which they held such a wholehearted love, the result of clear understanding and commitment. This brings us to the great tragedy of the book of Malachi. "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of the many [the majority] shall wax cold..." (Matt. 24:12).

From the *Expositor* Series, p. 226  
submitted by sis. Jane Baldrige



# THE SANCTUARY – KEEPER

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

*“Ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar”  
Num. 18:5*

*“Ye are...an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices.”  
I Peter 2:5*

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

VOLUME 21

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## WILL WE ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE?

**“I** charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2<sup>nd</sup> Tim. 4:1-4).

The ecclesia of Paul’s time was exposed to challenges which tested their faith. There were nominal believers who for one reason or another turned from the Truth. No doubt there were those who, like the parable in Matthew 13:3-8, could be termed “stony places” where they had not much earth, for forthwith they sprung up, but could not endure the scorching of the sun because they had no root. The lure of the enemies of the Truth is strong and constant. The Word assures us time and again that we must guard against regressing into the old habits and tastes that we forsook upon accepting the Truth. The capitulation to a life of no religion was not peculiar to Paul’s day; it is seen in all generations

from Eden to our day.

But the warning sounded by Paul to Timothy concerned the defectors who wanted to change the Truth. The old paths may have seemed dull and unappealing; it is possible that many changes in the social or educational developments of the day caused believers to think that they needed an ‘updated’ system of truth, something more in keeping with the times. Paul or Timothy or Luke or Mark may have been plain men, not sophisticated, not impressive in the wisdom of the world about them and some believers may have yearned for a more cultured atmosphere, one that would impress observers by its appearance rather than its substance. This seems to be the case in point in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4. The wording is a little confusing in verse 3, and first reading might attribute the itching ears to the teachers rather than the declining ecclesia. When studying a part of the Scriptures it is good to compare other translations or commentaries to aid our understanding. I have consulted the Diaglott, the Revised Standard Version, and J.B. Phillips Translation, and all of them are helpful in describing the attitude or lack of spiritual vision demonstrated by those to whom Timothy was urged to preach the Word.

Phillips renders verses 2-4 this way: *“Preach the Word. Never lose your sense of urgency, in season or out of season. Reprove, correct, and encourage, using the utmost patience in your teaching. For the time is coming when men will not tolerate wholesome teaching. They will want something to tickle their own fancies, and they will collect teachers who will speak what they want to hear. They will no longer listen to the truth, but will wander off after man-made myths.”*

True believers have always been critical of hired pastors whose interest in speaking nothing but the truth may be suspect. Is it possible that ecclesias of our time can, in effect, be guilty of the same thing when they discourage emphasis of sound doctrine? We must make certain that the things that gladdened David’s heart also gladden our hearts, or it is possible that we are electing an ‘updated’ version of truth.

It is noticeable and worthy of restatement here that the meaning of the word, doctrine, is teaching. Some have a limited idea of what doctrine is. It is just as much a doctrine of the Bible that we abstain from fleshly lusts as it is that resurrection is limited in its scope. Notice that Timothy is urged to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, all of which are actions usually associated with what we commonly refer to as conduct. Conduct is an integral part of Bible doctrine or teaching, even though we may view it as the result of our belief as opposed to belief itself. *“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son”* (2<sup>nd</sup> John 9). I think we will agree that to abide in the doctrine of Christ includes the respect and observance of moral codes delineated by him.

The instruction in Jeremiah 6 suggests that the people of that day may have had similar attitudes about modernizing their religion. Speaking of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the prophet says, *“As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness: violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds... Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it... For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely... Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.”*

God’s remedy for this waywardness, which seems to have a parallel to those in Timothy’s time having itching ears, is given in these words: *“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”* Unfortunately, the response was, *“We will not walk therein.”*

Another thought is suggested by the ascription of covetousness to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. We generally think of covetousness as desiring another’s property, wealth, good fortune. But I wonder, if we have the desire to be like the religions about us, to imitate their methods of appealing to itching ears, are we not covetous of them or their seeming success? The churches of Christendom are striving to outdo one another by erecting more elaborate buildings, providing more forms of recreation and social activities, becoming involved with the politics of the day, and such like.

We err grievously if we set our sights on conforming to this type of thinking. *“Better is an handful with quietness, than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit”* (Eccl. 4:6). Our handful with quietness can come with the contemplation of Deity’s teaching, the old paths that reach back to Eden and the promise of the woman’s seed. Truth never changes, otherwise it would not have been truth in the first place. If the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread (Acts 2:42) was the Truth which the early ecclesia continued stedfastly in, that should be our aim.

We have heard it said that the basic Christadelphian presentation of the Truth is dull and uninteresting, that we need a gimmick to help in the presentation. I suppose we should take note of the criticism if we are dull and uninteresting in either talking or living the Truth. Ideally, even though our opponents disagree with our set of values, we would like to leave them with the assurance that we are supremely interested in the things of our faith. When Paul appeared before Agrippa to answer for the things whereof he was accused of the Jews, he used no gimmick, only the presentation of truth. *“King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuades me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds”* (Acts 26:27-29). If a convert

is tricked or gimmicked with anything less than a factual presentation of the gospel and its power unto salvation, then he is not yet converted.

This accusation caused us to look up the meaning of the word, gimmick. The complete definition is too lengthy to reproduce herein, and we suggest you consult your dictionary if you feel that what is given is inaccurate. This is taken from Webster’s Third New International Dictionary: *“gimmick, n, (origin – unknown): a mechanical device used to cheat or deceive; gadget; a decisive or strategic element or feature that is purposely hidden, unobtrusive, or not immediately apparent; a new angle of approach; a novel or unconventional twist.”* The word is also used as a verb meaning to alter or influence by means of a gimmick or similar device or method.

If we are to endure sound doctrine, we do not need the aid of gimmicks to strengthen our faith or to persuade others to convert. Rather than heaping to ourselves teachers to suit our own likings (RSV), better it is that we abide by the unswerving, unchanging word of the prophets and apostles. Did Paul use gimmicks? *“As his manner was, Paul went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ* (Acts 17:2,3). *“After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth... And he reasoned in the synagogue every, Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks”* (Acts 18:1,4). *“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews”* (Acts 18:19). *“And he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee”* (Acts 24:25).

There is one device for presenting the Truth, and that is the Word of God, and it is not deceptive. It may not say what every man wants it to say, nor will it make pleasant reading to those who are unwilling to be broken by its edicts. But it is God’s communication to fallen man, a communication that presents only truth and a hope for life beyond this temporary existence. It is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12). It is immutable, unerring, perfect, wise, requiring no editing by man. It is the source of our doctrine, or teaching. Any professing to be a teacher must teach according to this Word, honoring it above all other teachings or communications from whatsoever source.

One of the blasphemous outgrowths of the theory of evolution is that man has no moral responsibility to a Creator. To deny a divine creation of man is to deny not only the physical creation as given in the book of Genesis, but also the fact that Deity has spoken, or even has the right to speak. Evolution has not proven its assertions, but the Bible has been proven true. It is proven in the

history of the Jewish nation, it is proven in the prophetic dates coming to pass, it is proven in the relationship of man to death, it is proven in the unique awareness of what are the noble and virtuous qualities latent in obedient men and women as well as their propensity to sin. The Bible truly speaks, and it speaks powerfully. Our ears should never itch for teaching other than this.

Are we true or counterfeit? Do we aspire to uphold sound doctrine, or are we looking for ways to acquire teachers who will tickle our ears and eventually turn us to fables? Are we content to be right with a few, or would we rather be wrong with the majority? Are we willing to hear what the Word wants from us, or would we rather devise a new angle of approach with a novel or unconventional twist, subverting the Truth? We must assess our attitude of endurance. Review the reading of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, and be encouraged in holding fast to the form of sound words enunciated by the apostle Paul.

Anything that seduces us from enduring sound doctrine may be personified as the devil, or diabolos. Bro. Thomas, writing in Eureka, volume 1, page 211, says,

“This, then, is Paul’s Diabolos, which he says ‘has the power of death’; which ‘power’ he also saith is ‘sin, the sting of death.’ The Diabolos was a man-killer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because the truth is not in him. When he speaks a lie he speaks of his own things, for he is a liar, and the father of it (John 8:44). And ‘he that committeth sin is of the Diabolos, for the Diabolos sinneth from the beginning’ (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:8). All this is perfectly intelligible when understood of Sin’s flesh, in which dwells no good thing, and which of itself can neither do right nor think aright. Man’s ability to do either is derived from a higher source – *from the truth indoctrinated into him*. When this is declared and reasoned into him, and he comes to understand it, to believe it, and to love it, a power is set up within him called ‘the law of the Spirit of life, which is counteractive of ‘the law of sin and death’, and brings the man to ‘the obedience of faith’, by which he is manifested to be skillful in the word as a son of God.”

The words of Titus 2:1,7,8 are appropriate in summation: “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine...In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.”

James Stanton

(from the compilation *We Have An Advocate*)



## LESSONS LEARNED FROM PROVIDENCE

**P**ROVIDENCE is defined in the dictionary as, “*Divine guidance or care.*” It exists in the life of the Believer though the source remains unseen. Brother Roberts, in defining the concept of Providence, wrote, “*Providence consists of the divine regulation of natural circumstances; and the principles upon which this regulation takes place, can only be learned from the scriptures of Truth. All who commit their way to God in a scriptural manner are included in the operations of the only Providence that exists in the universe – that is, the control of natural circumstances by angelic agency; in an unseen manner, however, and without any apparent interference with natural ways. Outside this control, all is chance; for there is such a thing as chance, but chance is controlled when the purpose of God requires it. This control is exercised in accordance with the ‘charge’ which the angels receive from the Creator. Where no such charge exists, things happen naturally, or according to the mechanical relations of things in nature. He knows all and can control all; but He does not influence them where His purpose does not call for it. In this sense multitudes of occurrences are not of God. Some things He does; some He does not. Here is the sphere for the operation known as Providence.*”

Brother Roberts’ definition is a fitting introduction to the subject of Providence that will be considered in this article, the understanding of which will profoundly affect how a Believer understands events that take place during his/her lifetime and how they will react to the various circumstances that are encountered throughout their lives. The thoughts contained in this article will be subsidized with those of Robert Roberts contained in his book, *The Ways of Providence*.

Brother Roberts states in his definition of Providence that “*it is the divine regulation of natural circumstances,*” that is not obvious to the mortal populous. The need for this oversight and control by Yahweh becomes obvious when recognizing that He has instituted a divine Plan for this dispensation, the fulfillment of which is manipulated by divine intervention when necessary. If there was no Plan, then there would be no need to regulate and control that Plan. Since He has a specific timeline for the completion of His Plan, including precise events that must occur during the outworking of that Plan, it therefore becomes necessary for Him to direct events in order to accomplish His Purpose at the appropriate times. As Brother Roberts correctly identifies, this is accomplished by angelic means, the means by which Yahweh carries out His divine purpose during this dispensation. As is written in Heb. 1:7, “*And of the*

angels he saith, *Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire,*” and in verse 14, *“Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”* The word, “minister (Strong’s 3010),” indicates a servant who is carrying out the will of his master, giving a clear indication of the role that the angels fulfill at the present time – they are the means by which Yahweh’s Plan is accomplished on the earth and the representation or manifestation of the Deity. Bearing His immortal nature, they are able to work tirelessly but joyfully in completing Yahweh’s Will.

Though sinful human nature is impatient and desirous of immediate results and instant gratification, the Will and Plan of Yahweh is fulfilled slowly and with great deliberation and oversight, prompting Bro. Roberts to write the following: *“Here we have to ponder the gradualness of the divine operations, and the faith required of those who are the subject of them.”* He later writes that, *“as Dr. Thomas used to say, ‘God is never in a hurry: He has plenty of time.’ There is but little of the flash-of-lightning order in His works in the past, and this is the lesson for the future.”* As stated, it is therefore imperative that the Believer become acutely acquainted with the concepts of long-suffering and patience while waiting for the completion of the Divine Plan and the glory that will be revealed at that time. In regard to this recognition, Isa. 25:9 states, *“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”*

Solomon writes in Ecc. 9:11 that, *“the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.”* Though this is true concerning those outside of covenant, it does not apply to the covenanted Believer, for the life of the Believer is not left to happenstance, but is providentially directed by angelic hand in accordance with the purpose of the Almighty. Though many times the Divine Hand of Yahweh is unrecognized by our finite minds and goes unnoticed because it is not apparent to us, we will do well to recognize that this is far from reality. In providing example of this point, Bro. Roberts writes, *“Let us think of ourselves as in Egypt 80 years before the promised deliverance. God was remembering the promise and disposing events in preparation for its execution. What evidence was there of this? None to be seen with the ordinary eye. To the ordinary eye, everything seemed to be in the most unlikely form for the realization of Israel’s hope. But God was at work without speaking or making His hand manifest.”*

The understanding that the angels are constantly at work in leading and guiding the life of the Believer should not only result in constant introspection of the events in one’s life and the constant endeavor to understand the lessons to be learned, but should also result in the wonderful, *“peace that passeth all understanding,”* that Paul writes of in Phil 4:7, as the Believer realizes that the

events of his life have specific purpose and meaning. As Brother Roberts concludes regarding this topic, *“There are events that are divinely caused, though apparently having only a human origin, and the perception of this fact enables us to commit our way to God, and accept natural occurrences as the guiding of His hand.”*

Of course, Providence should not be confused with what mankind calls, “fate,” which is the belief that one’s life is predetermined and cannot be changed. Rather, the order of Yahweh’s Plan for this dispensation is that all men possess Free Will to either follow His Ways and to receive the promised blessing or to reject Him and receive a perishing death. Again, Bro. Roberts writes in regard to this subject that, *“Men whose actions the angels have to guide, are allowed the unfettered exercise of their wills in a given direction, by regulating the circumstances around them. If you set fire to a house, you cause all its inmates to leave, without interfering with their free will. So the angels, by disposing circumstances, can influence men to act in a certain way without interfering with their volitions. Such a mode of carrying out the work entrusted to them makes their work a delicate and interesting one.”* An understanding and recognition of concept of Providence, therefore, encourages the Believer to act in:

1. **Faithfulness**, because we know not the outcome of events and how they apply to our lives,
2. **Patience**, especially in trial, recognizing that many times we fail to understand the manner in which Yahweh is working with us for our edification,
3. **Prayerful Consideration**, in an effort to determine the Will of Yahweh and the desire for guidance to know how we should react to it,
4. **Faithful Action** as the Believer attempts to work out his salvation with fear and trembling. These character traits should result in
5. **Peace**, in the understanding that as Rom 8:28 states, *“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”*

With these five attributes established, we will endeavor to demonstrate them in the lives of Faithful Believers who attained these characteristics by recognizing the outworking of Providence in their respective lives, beginning in the Old Testament with Abraham and Joseph and concluding in the New Testament with the examples provided in the lives of Paul and Christ.

## Abraham

Psa. 34:7-8 states, *“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those who fear him and delivereth them. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusteth in him.”* As stated earlier, because the Believer does not know the ultimate outcome of events that occur during his lifetime and the

manner in which the angels are continually working in an effort to bring him “*nigh unto God*,” it is essential to develop a strong faith that results in a complete trust that the Lord is working with purpose regarding him. In regard to this subject, Bro. Roberts writes, “*Consequently, those who fear the Lord may go forth with courage, careful only to do so in faith, and not seeking to discover the angel’s hand, which they cannot do. Keep the commandments, and trust though you do not see.*” These are very insightful words in regard to how the Believer is to act while recognizing that the unseen hand of Yahweh is providentially working throughout his life. It is ours only to be faithful to the Lord, especially in trial, for we know not if ultimate good will be the result of a time of calamity and trouble. Let us consider how Abraham acted in faith throughout his life, with complete trust that Yahweh was working with him and affecting a positive outcome, even though he was unaware of the purpose behind various events in his life and was unsure of how times of trial and difficulty were molding and shaping him into an acceptable servant and an heir to salvation.

As Heb. 11:8 states, “*By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing where he went.*” The simplicity of this verse should not diminish our appreciation of what the Father of the Faithful did when called by Yahweh. Due to his exceptional faith, Abraham was able to leave all that he had known – family, friends, religion, and the comforts and ease that resulted from living in one of the wealthiest and most advanced cities of its time. In obedience to the calling of Yahweh, he chose to lead a simple nomadic lifestyle because he had been promised a future inheritance that would not be granted until after his death and resurrection. He did not know how he would provide for himself and his family or exactly where he would live. Furthermore, his initial act of faith in leaving Ur of the Chaldees was followed with trial when a famine arose in the land. Nevertheless, Abraham did not question or doubt Yahweh, but instead simply reacted to the situation by sojourning into the land of Egypt until the famine had run its course.

Though he faced (and failed) trial when he told Pharaoh that Sarah was his sister, the LORD providentially protected and preserved them from harm during this time, and they were ultimately blessed by His hand, as Gen 13:2 states, “*And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*” When Sodom was overtaken and Lot was taken captive by Chedorlaomer, king of Elam and the confederacy of nations allied with him, Abraham did not question why or doubt the motives and Ways of Yahweh. Rather, his complete faith in Yahweh prompted him to gather 318 of his trained servants to pursue and overtake this mighty host, restoring both captives and spoil, while refusing to receive payment of any kind for fear that the abundance of his household would be attributed to something other than the blessings of Yahweh. Abraham could not have fully understood at that time the magnitude of his actions, for the record of his victory over these nations and his bringing of tithes to the King-Priest

Melchizedek would be a perfect latter-day description of the victory of the Messiah over the nations that confederate and seek the destruction of Israel, thereby ushering in the Millennial reign of Christ. This account of his life has been a great source of comfort and assurance to many generations that followed him throughout history. Such is the way of Providence, being many times unapparent to the recipient of it, but being very useful in the outworking of Yahweh’s Divine Plan.

## Faith and the Promised Seed

The necessity for the Faithful to demonstrate patience while waiting for the LORD to fulfill His Will and the consequences for failing to do so is remarkably displayed in the case of the provision of the Promised Seed. Though the entirety of Yahweh’s promise to Abraham and Sarah was contingent upon the provision of an heir, the faithful husband and wife were made to wait 20 long years of constant sojourning before the promise was fulfilled. Sarah’s impatience led her to take matters into her own hands, and she therefore provided Hagar as the means by which she sought to fulfill the long-awaited promise, the results of which were nothing short of tragic, not only for Abraham but also for his progeny throughout history.

It is not our intention to harshly criticize Sarah, as it is understood that she would have witnessed the cessation of her child-bearing years, leading her to believe it was necessary that she ensure the fulfillment of the promise by her own devices. In doing so, Sarah failed to heed the scriptural concept of patient and faithful waiting for the fulfillment of the Plan of Yahweh as spoken of in Psa. 37:34: “*Wait on the LORD, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*” The words of Paul found in Heb. 10:36-37 declares a similar concept, stating, “*For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.*” It is important to note that Paul speaks of the necessity to exercise patience while waiting to witness the revealed Will of Yahweh. However, while waiting for Providence to be fulfilled, he declares that it is also necessary to, “*do the will of the Lord,*” while in a similar manner, the reference in Psalms states the necessity to “*keep His way.*” In displaying impatience in regard to the Promised Seed and circumventing the Will of Yahweh that was at work, Sarah showed a lapse of faith that anything is possible with God and belief that the laws of nature are under His control.

As stated in the onset of our classes, action is always required on the part of the Believer, but only when it is *faithful* action. In *The Ways of Providence*, Brother Roberts writes regarding this subject, “*In our expectations of divine cooperation, we must adopt the means which He has appointed as the way of getting at the results desired. If God gives men opportunities, He expects them to discern and enterprisingly use them. This is His way of doing His work. He could do it all Himself: but then His sons would have no share in the results.*”

*They are laborers with God. It is a co-partnership of divine appointment with the glorious result that at the last, 'both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together (John 4:36).' God will finally admit us to His joy by requiring us first to take part in the work by which the joy will be wrought out."*

Certainly Sarah could be deemed as enterprising by seeking to accomplish the Will of Yahweh in regard to the provision of the Promised Seed by her own methodology. However, her methodology was not in accordance with the Will of Yahweh and therefore it was destined for failure. In this instance, Sarah appears to have neglected the most important step in the process of working with the Lord in an effort to achieve the desired outcome because she failed to *engage in sincere prayer* to Yahweh in regard to the matter. 1 John 5:14 states, *"This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us."* It is therefore imperative that before we act, we seek the guidance and direction of our Heavenly Father before continuing in any action. The baptized believer is in the greatly blessed position of being able to inquire, through the mediatorship of Christ, of the King of the Universe who knows all and has power over all. How foolish it is to ignore or disregard this great privilege and to take action without first seeking the wisdom that is from above!

The result, as exemplified in the case of Sarah, Hagar, and Ishmael, may be nothing less than disastrous. The ultimate banishment of Ishmael and Hagar caused great heartache to Abraham, who desired that the promised seed would be realized through the lineage of Ishmael, as he exclaims in Gen. 17:18, *"Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!"* Later, in Gen 21:11, the record states that, *"the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son."* The fact that Sarah's lapse of faith, patience, and prayer in this instance has led to great difficulty and pain that exists even to this day should be an adequate demonstration of how important it is that the Believer seek to display these traits at all times throughout their lives. On this subject, Brother Roberts writes, *"A good opportunity is no justification for doing a thing if that thing be wrong by any of the laws of God. God works by means but not by wrong means; and therefore in judging of His will in our affairs, we must always have Paul's question before our eyes: 'Lord, what wouldst Thou have me to do?' We may be quite sure that it is not His will that we should in any position or circumstance do what He has forbidden, or leave undone what He has commanded. Our safety therefore lies in making ourselves constantly familiar with His commandments. By this we shall be protected from false interpretations of 'providence,' and enabled to walk wisely in all the changing phases of life."*

### Sacrifice of Isaac

Perhaps there is no stronger example of Abraham's unwavering faith, conviction, and patience than in the account of his intended sacrifice of Isaac, the identified Promised Seed. As is the case with the outworking of

Providence, Abraham did not know or understand exactly how the event would ultimately conclude. He did, however, understand a vital lesson that the Believer is expected to learn: that it must be our desire to simply follow the Will of Yahweh *in all things, great and small*, and we must trust that He will keep and preserve us ultimately to a joyous conclusion, whether during this time of probation or in the kingdom age. Regarding this Trust, Brother Roberts writes, *"The Lord is with you while ye be with Him. If ye seek him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you (2 Chron 15:2). The Scriptures abound with similar declarations. They make the course of every earnest man clear. Seek the Lord in the reading of His word, in prayer to Him, and in doing of those things He has commanded; and He will guide your way in the darkness without any apparent interference, and cause all things (yea, even evil circumstances) to work together for your good, namely, your preparedness for an entrance into His glorious kingdom."*

In Gen. 22:1 & 2, the account states that, *"God did test Abraham....and he said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."* We must not allow our familiarity with this passage to mitigate the power of the words found therein! Abraham had been instructed to sacrifice the long-awaited and beloved son that had been promised and received. He had dismissed Ishmael some time previously and was now commanded to kill Isaac, a young man who surely had demonstrated his faithfulness and godly character throughout his young life. Abraham's reaction to this directive demonstrates how completely he had come to learn and understand the Providential Ways of Yahweh, for verse 3 reveals that he responded in complete and unwavering faith in that he, *"rose up early in the morning,"* gathered the appropriate materials, and *"went unto the place of which God had told him."*

The record discloses that he did not procrastinate or question, as is human nature when faced with an undesirable task, nor did he seek to run from the commandment of Yahweh, as did Jonah. Instead, though he knew not the ultimate fulfillment of Yahweh's divine Ways, he recognized, as should all Believers, that it is imperative that he follow the commandments of the LORD and completely trust Him even when the circumstances initially appear evil. When there is recognition that the LORD has never left or forsaken those who love Him and seek to do his commandments, then acting faithfully in His Will does not seem so overwhelming a requirement. Abraham trusted that the seemingly grievous trial would yield a prosperous and glorious end. As is the nature of our merciful Heavenly Father, once the intended lesson is learned and the clay has been sufficiently molded and shaped by the potter, the trial is then removed and the Believer is spared any unnecessary harm. This is precisely the case in this instance. To this point, Brother Roberts writes, *"When trouble comes, do not think it is not from God because it is natural. It may not differ from the trouble of other men in apparent origin and form, but it differs from*



*theirs in being under an invisible supervision which aims at a result, and will say, at a certain point, 'Thus far and no farther'.*"

It should be noted that it was not just the faith of Abraham that was being tested during this trial but also that of Isaac, who is described in the account as submitting, not just to his father Abraham's will in allowing himself to be slain, but also to the will of Yahweh. In this manner, he became a type of the Messiah who faithfully lay down his life in sacrifice while submitting to the Will of his Father. In addition, he showed his worthiness to be called that faithful Seed who had been promised to Abraham.

Gen 22:10-11 states that, "*Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Yahweh called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said Here I am. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me.*" Of course, Abraham did not blindly and ignorantly persevere through this trial, but rather did so because he was equipped with the exact knowledge of the Plan of Yahweh that enabled him to walk faithfully. Proof of this is spoken of in Heb. 11:17-19 which states that it was, "*By faith,*" that, "*Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which also he received him in a figure.*"

The intended result of the trial having been accomplished and the lesson learned, the LORD then reiterates the blessings given to Abraham, because as stated in verse 18, "*thou hast obeyed my voice.*" Brother Roberts writes regarding this trial that, "*The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear Him, and directs their way without any open or apparent interference with the natural order of things. What is due to a man's own thoughts and what to angelic supervision, a man cannot by his own reasoning discriminate. He need not attempt it. His part is simply to fear God, do His commandments, commit his way to Him, in the full and cheerful confidence that 'all things work together for good to them that love God, and who are the called according to his purpose.'*"

This Abraham did in earnest, so that it is little wonder that he is called the Father of the Faithful and those who desire to be part of his faithful family must similarly believe and act as did Abraham. In regard to this, Gal. 3:6-9 states, "*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*"

In regard to ways of Providence, Abraham displayed great faith, though he did not know the outcome of the events of his life nor how Yahweh was working with him. Nevertheless, he believed without wavering, though the circumstances would have caused many great anxiety and distress. Instead, he demonstrated his understanding of the concept found in Rom. 5:3-4 that states, "*But we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.*" It is this experience and hope of a future blessing, coupled with his complete and steadfast faith in Yahweh that enabled him to, as it written in Heb. 11:13, "*die in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, was persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that he was a stranger and pilgrim on the earth,*" while awaiting that "*heavenly country,*" that had been promised.

## Summary

When we consider our outline of the character attributes that an understanding of Providence is meant to teach the Believer, they are all evident in Abraham's life:

1. **Faithfulness** and complete trust in the Lord, though he did not know or understand the ultimate outcome of the events that transpired throughout his life,
2. **Patience** in waiting for the Will of Yahweh to be revealed, as well as longsuffering and perseverance while going through trial and difficulty,
3. **Prayerful Consideration** and contemplation of the Will of Yahweh in an effort to understand and react to all occurrences in his life,
4. **Faithful Action** in an effort to not just know the Will of Yahweh, but take action in accordance with His revealed Will, and
5. **Peace** in the understanding that Yahweh was constantly involved in his life, guiding and directing him to the best outcome.

The result of the lessons learned through the molding and shaping during his lifetime will lead to the glorious reward in the kingdom age when the "*friend of God,*" will put on an immortal nature and enables him to live evermore with the Father. (Yahweh willing, this series will continue with a consideration of Joseph in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter S.K.)

Arthur Sankey

*"The holy men of old, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the alien; these men were all pre-eminently believers in the providence of God: indeed this fact is the key to their success (Heb. 11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Chron. 34:27,28; 20: 3-18)." F.R Shuttleworth, Feb., 1875 Christadelphian*

## OUR HISTORIC POSITION AS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

**S**INCE the era of the Vietnam War, we have been living without an active draft, the government having preferred a volunteer means of filling its military quotas. Consequently, young Christadelphians may feel no urgency or concern for facing a most sober requirement as their parents and especially grandparents were required to. In actuality, to face a draft board should require no more preparation and consternation, than to face a jury duty inquiry if one is consistent in ordering their lives as a sojourner. This is our expected state of readiness whether a brother or a sister.

It is critical for the end time believer to understand the **sojourner** principle. In **Hebrews 11:13** we read, *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises but having seen them a far off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth.”* Abraham made a significant point of purchasing a burial plot from the children of Heth because he made no claim to the land although he had lived there for sixty-one years. Reading from **Genesis 23:4**, *“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you; give me a possession of a burying place with you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”* **Leviticus 25:23** enlarges the principle: *“The land shall not be sold for ever; the land is mine, for ye are strangers and sojourners with me.”* David acknowledges this principle in **Psalms 39:12**, *“Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears, for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my father’s were.”* David like Yahweh did not lay claim to Israel because of the prevailing wickedness of the serpent system in control of the earth, and because Christ-denying Jewry in Israel was not ready to receive Him. The time for ownership is when Messiah returns and establishes his capital city that Abraham looked for *“which hath foundations, who’s builder and maker is God.”* **Foundations** (#2310: foundations, beginnings, first principles of an institution or system of truths, and rudiments of Christian life).

Historically, Jesus established the principle for not using armed force during our dispensation. When standing before Pontius Pilate (a representative government official), he stated, *“My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from here”* **John 18:36**.

World is *kosmos* and is rendered - “worldly affairs, the aggregate of things earthly, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures which stir desires and are

obstacles to Christ”. Jesus’ words do not rule out armed resistance by his servants in total as in the term *pacifism*, but rather command that they are to abstain from armed force for a duration of time, or until He returns to re-establish the Kingdom of God. In light of the definition for “world” this will require force. *Pacifism* is a term derived from the Latin word for “peace making” and has been applied to a broad spectrum of positions covering nearly all attitudes toward war and aggression of any kind. Although this umbrella term covers all positions of non-violence, Christadelphians have long understood that we are “objectors of conscientious” to killing and to military service of any kind until Christ directs otherwise. Church historians refer to this position as “Interim-Ethic” believers. **Interim-ethic** believers fall into a narrow and specific class, specifically those who believe and understand that scripture clearly teaches that Jesus commanded us to be nonviolent for a specified period of time. The second Psalm depicts the battle drama of establishing Christ’s rule and the New World Order. In the meantime, we may only wield the sword of the spirit-word... and we are expected to use it.

Prior to 180 A.D. there are no records of Christian soldiers in the Roman Army. This, not surprisingly, coincided with the belief that the Kingdom of God was to be a future manifestation on the earth and that it would be established upon Christ’s return, not before. **As the belief in a literal kingdom on earth became muddled through spiritualization and viewed as an allegory, the stance on military service also began to relax.** In addition to the **Interim Ethic** position (the Christadelphian position), there emerged the **Just War** position and its out-growth movement, the **Crusader Position**. The Just war or “justified war” position is the prevailing position today among Christians and society in general. Most situations can be justified!

Under Constantine, who closely identified the interests of the Empire with the interests of Christianity, (Roman Catholicism), “Christian” soldiers became increasingly common. This was a logical drift as the **Catholic Church claimed to be the Kingdom of God on earth**. In other words, “the church” (now the corrupted ecclesia) came to be regarded as the present spiritual kingdom which trumped the original apostolic doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ upon his return to the earth. With such a kingdom now in power, *“and that man of sin...sitting in the temple of God showing himself that he is God”* (II Thes.2v.3-4), and with enemies on all sides, ever threatening, logically the faithful were justified to defend the order. **Thus, Revelation 12:10 is to be understood from the perspective of Constantine’s Catholic followers, “And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven (the Catholic political heavens), now is come salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ...”**

Needless to say, the Catholic Church seized upon the Just War option early on to solidify its power and to propagate her terror during the prophetic forty two months. **The Crusader position** may be regarded as a unique sub-set of the Just War. There were seven altogether, with four primary ones, beginning in

1095 and ending in 1270. The Crusades were armed pilgrimages marching to Jerusalem under the banner of the cross, and with Papal blessing, to free Jerusalem from Islam. (See Schaff's *History of The Christian Church* for in-depth on this interesting era.)

In the Middle Ages the endorsement of the Justified War, and the Crusades had completely erased any secular reservations about the use of armed force against anyone regarded as antagonists of God, and politically, the Holy Roman Empire. All those who opposed the "Man of Sin" in any way, including non-participation in his armies, was targeted for relentless persecution. Because "Yahweh has never left Himself without witness" the Truth was not allowed to be snuffed out. As taught in **Revelation 11**, the "Saints of the Altar" survived in little enclaves enjoying the "cover" of the two witnesses. The works of Alan Eyre in his books *The Protesters* and *Brethren In Christ*, documents the struggles of various believer groups. The Waldense community studied the Bible diligently and held to a strict conscientious objection to any armed conflict including participation in politics. Tragically, the persecuted Waldense abandoned their pacifism beliefs by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in order to ward off mounting persecution and faded from history.

Other notable groups were emerging who adhered to the Interim Ethic or the totally non-combatant C.O. understanding and position. The Anabaptists (re-baptizers) in 1527 met to issue a confession of faith in which they stated that nonresistance was mandatory for all who followed Christ. At that time the Anabaptists most resembled our Christadelphian position. From the Colonial Period on, a number of peace groups emerged with different emphasis on religious and political positions: the Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, Dunkards and the Church of the Brethren.

The Civil War brought the first national conscription act in March of 1863. Lincoln's administration allowed for conscientious objectors to pay a commutation fee of \$300 in lieu of military service. The other option was to find someone to serve in one's place! At this time Bro. Thomas (1805-1871) was organizing groups of conscientious objectors in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain. He simply stated, "*Be not enrolled...rather go to prison.*" While in Britain in 1849, he attended the **London Peace Society** where he proposed the following resolution: "*A Bible Christian must not fight in the absence of the captain of his salvation. War between nations was both essential to God's plan (an institution of divine appointment for the bruising to death of the serpent power) and valuable as an instrument for defending liberty and truth against despotism and superstition.*" Needless-to-say, this proposal was rejected by the Society.

During the Civil War Dr. Thomas crossed enemy lines to encourage many young brethren on either side to "*Positively refuse, under any circumstances whatever, to shed the blood of their fellow men in the service of any of the sin-powers of the world...*" **We may thank Bro. Thomas for his solidifying our**

**early name of Brethren in Christ to Christadelphian (Christos adelphos) and for its register with our government as a bona fide church organization opposed to armed participation of any kind. This then qualified the Christadelphians under the revised Act of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1864, as a "recognized peace church."**

World War I brought conscription into force again. The Military Service Act of 1916 stated that only members of religious bodies that had, **before the outbreak of the war**, declared conscientious objection, could be exempted from service. Depending upon the locale and the whim of the "powers that be" C.O.'s were subject to much verbal and often physical abuse, including work camps and prison. During **World War II**, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 further defined the recognized C.O. position. Civilian Public Service camps (CPS) were run by many "peace groups" such as the Mennonites, and the Quakers. Those like the Christadelphians "*who refused to put on a uniform*" were often subject to much abuse. Two exemplary Christadelphian works are *Test Case For Canada* by E.R. Evans, and later *Ye Are Strangers and Sojourners*.

With the Vietnam War, the Supreme Court in 1965, ruled that conscientious objectors need not believe in a Supreme Being. This opened the flood gates to secular objection to war for ethical and moral grounds in addition to religious. By now, the Christadelphians had established a solid, religious-based position on conscientious objection recognized by our government.

In 1950 the U.S. Government Printing Office published the following: "Christadelphian members always applied to the Government to be relieved from military duty in consequence of religious and conscientious scruples. In order that they might be identified, they adopted the name Christadelphian. They have consistently maintained that their faith prohibited participation in the armed forces...*the Christadelphian church as a whole was perhaps the most strict of the non-resistance groups*...they did not work against the war; each one simply took his individual stand...a very definite stand was taken by this church..." This brethren is our position today, nothing has changed since Jesus stated before Rome, "*my Kingdom is not of this kosmos otherwise would my servants fight...*" **John 18:36.**

## Conclusions

Historically, the nation of Israel was sanctioned to wage war, even to the extent of annihilation by Yahweh. Jesus established the new protocol for our dispensation by stating the divine prerogative in John 18:36. **He then continued... "if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight..."** Consequently, for the interim until Christ returns, we are regarded by the authorities as **Interim Ethic** conscientious objectors. We are not blanket pacifists. As Sojourners, (resident aliens) we walk circumspectly thru this age. Historically a sojourner was regarded with suspicion and often discriminated



against. Today, in our humanist societies, the responsibility is ours; render unto Caesar and walk circumspectly amongst the dainties of Egypt. It is critical to have a solid understanding of the Kingdom. The early practice of *spiritualizing* the Kingdom in order to make it an acquisition now, along with the dogma of *heaven going*, opened the flood-gates to justify participation in war to preserve Christian Kingdoms. Today this is the **Just War** (justified war) position. Lastly, the likely hood of being called for Jury Duty is much greater than the need to take a C.O. stand, but the mind set and the mental preparation are the same... *"my Kingdom is not of this world."* (Abridged from an article in the Truth Gleaner, *Conscientious Objection and These Times*, Volume IX, Issue No. 3. Bro. Don and Tom Northey for the Christadelphian National Service Committee)

### THE POLITICAL/MILITARY POSITION OF EARLY CHRISTIANS AS RECORDED BY EDWARD GIBBIN IN "THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE"



*"The Christians were not less averse to the business than to the pleasures of this world. The defense of our persons and property they knew not how to reconcile with the patient doctrine which enjoined an unlimited forgiveness of past injuries and commanded them to invite the repetition of fresh insults. Their simplicity was offended by the use of oaths, by the pomp of magistracy, and by the active contention of public life, nor could their humane ignorance be convinced that it was lawful on any occasion to shed blood of our fellow-creatures, either by the sword of justice or by that of war; even though their criminal or hostile attempts should threaten the peace and safety of the whole community. It was acknowledged that, under a less perfect law, the powers of the Jewish constitution had been exercised, with the approbation of Heaven, by inspired prophets and by anointed kings. The Christians felt and confessed that such institutions might be necessary for the present system of the world, and they cheerfully submitted to the authority of their Pagan governors. But, while they inculcated the maxims of passive obedience, they refused to take any active part in the civil administration or the military defense of the empire. Some indulgence might perhaps be allowed to those persons who, before their conversion, were already engaged in such violent and sanguinary occupations; but it was impossible that the Christians, without renouncing a more sacred duty, could assume the character of soldiers, of magistrates, or of princes."* (Emphasis added), Vol. 1, p. 375.

## "THE MOST HIGH RULES IN THE KINGDOM OF MEN"

### Fundamentals of Prophecy

**T**HE fourth chapter of Daniel records the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, it's interpretation by Daniel, and record of its historical fulfillment. The symbols provided in this chapter build upon the things revealed to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel from the previous dream of the great image of dissimilar (diverse) metals, of which Babylon was interpreted as being the "Head". In this dream an enormous tree provided insight to future events that would effect the nation of Babylon, the succeeding nations that comprise the Kingdom of Men and Nebuchadnezzar as an individual. In general, this vision's purpose was to transform a man of pride and self-esteem to one that recognizes that *"the Most High rules in the Kingdom of Men."*

As the prophet Daniel continued to serve in the courts of Babylon, he did not let opportunities slip by to profess the magnificence of Yahweh's power to his appointed king. It is evident that at the time Nebuchadnezzar recounted this vision of the Tree, Daniel and Yahweh had already witnessed the Truth to Nebuchadnezzar on several occasions. The principles that were taught to Nebuchadnezzar were:

#### Yahweh is All-Wise

Dan. 2:28 – *"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these"*

#### Yahweh is All-Powerful

Daniel 3:28-29 – *"Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. (29) Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."*

#### Yahweh is Supreme

Daniel 4:34-35 – *"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to*

*generation: (35) And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"*

#### **Yahweh's' kingdom would excel beyond that of Babylon**

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.**

Although, this elementary principle of Yahweh's dominance over Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom was delivered to Nebuchadnezzar, he remained a head strong and prideful man. Immediately after the Tree Dream was told, Daniel pleaded with Nebuchadnezzar to *"break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor."* But, we know that the pleadings were in vain, and he soon allowed his Pride of Life to manifest itself. Daniel 4:30 - *"The king spake, and said, 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?'"* Daniel 5:20 - *"But when his heart was lifted up, and his mind hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him."* This attitude and self-centered character that Nebuchadnezzar manifested has been common to all rulers, authorities, kings, emperors, and dignitaries of the Kingdom of Men. To correct this disposition was and is the whole purpose of the Tree Dream.

We have recorded in Daniel chapter 4:11-13 a tree of magnificent height, and that *"the leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it."* Yet, the tree did not abide forever, and was hewn down by an Angelic Watcher. No longer were the beasts able to abide under it, nor could the birds take lodge in the branches. Yet, the stump and roots of this great tree were to remain in the earth, to be bound with a band of iron and brass.

As this may seem to be the end of the dream as applied to the tree now seen as a banded stump, quickly, as dreams so often do, the dream becomes personal to Nebuchadnezzar. Now it depicts Nebuchadnezzar as being placed outside of the comforts of his majestic palace, wandering in the wet dew, and feeding upon grass as a beast of the field. This is not an overnight camping trip, or



excursion to see the wilderness outside the walls of Babylon. This was to be a seven year humbling of the most powerful man amongst the Kingdom of Men. The entire dream has a motive, a lesson, a purpose.... (v.17) *"to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."*

Nebuchadnezzar was bent on understanding the dream, and exclaimed to Daniel, *"This dream I king Nebuchadnezzar have seen. Now thou, O Belteshazzar, declare the interpretation thereof, forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom are not able to make known unto me the interpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit of the holy gods is in thee."* Daniel, due to his faith, belief and knowledge of Yahweh's plan, quickly came to an understanding of the dream and was hesitant to reveal the message to Nebuchadnezzar.

Approximately 20 years earlier, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied against Egypt and used the symbol of a lofty cedar tree to represent the Assyrian monarchy. Daniel would have been familiar with this prophecy, which would allow him to quickly discern the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's Tree dream. Consider the similarities of the dream as found in Ezekiel chapter 31. Ezekiel 31:3-6 - *"Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high with her rivers running round about his plants, and sent out her little rivers unto all the trees of the field. Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied, and his branches became long because of the multitude of waters, when he shot forth. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and under his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations."*

In the verses just quoted we see the Assyrian illustrated as a mighty cedar tree similar to the great tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, under which all the surrounding nations took refuge and protection. But, the hand of Yahweh saw fit to abase the Assyrians because of their pride. Ezekiel 31:10-11 - *"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; **Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness."***

This prophecy was provided to the Pharaoh in Egypt that he, too, might learn from the example of others. Human arrogance and pride leads to the corrective hand of Yahweh. For those nations that look to elevate their own selves and do not put their trust in Yahweh, He shall abase them, and as in the case of Assyria, never allow their nation to return to their former greatness. ("Ezekiel", John Allfree, pp.302-305)

The same application is to be applied to the interpretation of

Nebuchadnezzar's tree dream. His kingdom and his personal authority was likened to a mighty and lofty tree – A tree that provided lodging and protection for the beasts of the field and fowl of the air. **The beasts and fowls in this dream represent nations and dignitaries that found support and protection from the Babylonian empire;** all being subject to or under the influence of the great Nebuchadnezzar. Such prominence was prophesied earlier to Nebuchadnezzar in the interpretation of the Image dream. Daniel 2:37-38 – *“Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold.”*

The use of beasts to represent the subordinate nations of Nebuchadnezzar was also prophesied by Jeremiah. We read of this in Jeremiah chapter 27: 6-8 – *“And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant; and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And all nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come: and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.”*

The prophecy of the hand writing on the wall to king Belshazzar, documented by Daniel, offers further proof that the prophetic word was fulfilled before the eyes of Nebuchadnezzar, i.e. He saw that these beast nations were subordinate to him as provided by Yahweh. Daniel 5:18-19 – *“O thou king, the most high God gave Nebuchadnezzar thy father a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honour: And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, nations, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down.”* And for another example, consider the night vision of Daniel chapter 7 in which four diverse beasts rose from the Great Sea. The scriptures provide the following interpretation to the prophet Daniel, *“These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth (Daniel 7:17).”*

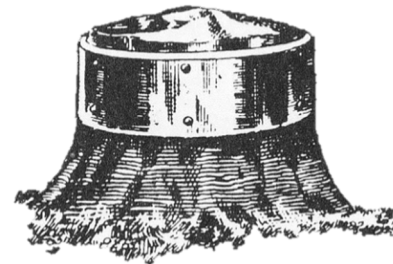
Returning then, to the tree dream, we find that Nebuchadnezzar was to have his kingdom exalted before him with all nations in obeisance to him until a “watcher, a holy one,” which should “come down from heaven” and hew down this great tree kingdom (Dan 4:13-14). Who then is this holy watcher? The Hebrew word for watcher denotes an angel, yet the root word indicates “the idea of opening the eyes; to wake (literally or figuratively)” or one that is vigilant. This watcher describes duties and responsibilities of the angelic hosts.

Angels are provided as ministering spirits, keeping a watchful eye upon the believers and the course of the nations and their leaders. Consider the following verses: Proverbs 15:3 – *“The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”* Hebrews 1:13-14 – *“But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”*

In the tree dream prophecy the angelic watcher is limiting the influence and power of Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian kingdom as represented by chopping down the magnificent tree. This restrictive hand of Yahweh as executed by the Angels was a concept understood by the Apostle Paul. Consider the words addressed to men of Athens on Mars Hill, *“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.”* (Acts 17:26)

### Banding of the Stump with Iron and Brass

Although Yahweh had pre-appointed the time or duration of the Babylonian kingdom, He still allowed remnants of the tree to remain in the earth, i.e. The stump was left and then branded with iron and brass. (v. 15) Yahweh in these symbols teach us that the pagan and religious teachings that found root in Babylon continued to influence those that dwell upon the earth long after the political demise of the Babylonian empire. These teachings, rituals, and false doctrines would eventually creep into the true ecclesia and become adopted by the rulers and common people of the Roman and Grecian empires – Thus answering to the band of iron and brass protecting the tree-stump left in the earth.



Earlier in Nebuchadnezzar's first dream he was introduced to the elements of brass and iron (Daniel 2:39-40) which were interpreted to be a *“third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise.”* Daniel again witnessed the element of the brass when he was given the vision of the four beasts. We find the record in Daniel 7:19 – *“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet.”*



It is interesting to note that history supports the interpretation of the dream. The centers of influence on Christianity can be traced through the cities of Rome and Constantinople. *“When the Ottoman Turks occupied Constantinople in 1453 then a Grecian city, and the headquarters of the Greek Catholic Church, they extended their religious influence throughout Macedonia and further south. Constantinople was changed into an Islamic center, and Greek Orthodox churches were converted into Mosques. The headquarters of the Greek Catholic Church was driven from Constantinople, and set up in Moscow, which became known as the Third Rome. But Greek Catholicism with Roman Catholicism remained as a band of brass and iron around the Babylonian stock and root. The pagan teachings of Babylonian worship had been superimposed upon Christianity in the days of Constantine, and were openly incorporated in the theology of both Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches.”* (Expositor Series on Daniel, p. 99)

We note that the dream now moves to a personal application to Nebuchadnezzar as it begins using the third person singular pronouns “him” and “his” in verses 15 and 16. The proclamation is that Nebuchadnezzar would undergo a change of heart, but first he would be driven from his position of authority and caused to roam with the beasts of the field for a period of seven years. In modern day terms, this condition would be termed lycanthropy, which is *“a mental illness when one believes that he or she has transformed into an animal, and behaves accordingly”* (Wikipedia). The whole purpose of driving Nebuchadnezzar out of power was to humble him before Yahweh, *“to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”* (Daniel 4:17)



Daniel had tried to warn Nebuchadnezzar about his pride and we know from the verses considered earlier, that Yahweh's preeminence over man was proclaimed to Nebuchadnezzar on two previous occasions. Yet, as time passed by, twelve months after the tree-dream was given, *“The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.”* (Daniel 4:30-31) Nebuchadnezzar was then driven out of his kingdom for a period of seven years.

This seven year period causes us to reflect upon the seven times of trouble

that was proclaimed against the Israelites for their disobedience. Leviticus 26:18-24 – *“And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass: And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits. And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number; and your high ways shall be desolate. And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.”*

A “time” as seen in both the Daniel and Leviticus accounts has been adopted by Bible students to define the period of one Jewish year or 360 days. The product of 7 and 360 equates to \*2520 day/years. This number of 2520 has historical significance when compared to the dates of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. In 604 BC Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem. Move forward in time 2520 years from 604 BC and we are brought to 1917 AD, the year in which the Ottoman Turks were driven from Jerusalem by British General Allenby. This period of Seven Times, or 2520 years defines a period in history where Jerusalem was always under the †authority and lordship of gentile nations. Since 1917, the stage was set for Jews to recapture control of the land of Israel and Jerusalem. This period of 2520 years is scripturally defined as “the times of the Gentiles” as denoted in Luke 21:24. *“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.”*

The period of Gentile lordship is symbolized by the condition that overcame Nebuchadnezzar. He acted as a beast of the field, characterized by an aggressive, self-centered, ruthless mode of living. Those ruling in the Kingdom of Men (v.17) during this period of Gentile times have portrayed these attributes, and the prophet Jeremiah described this condition of the nations as “mad”. Jeremiah 51:7 *“Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD'S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.”*

\* Let the reader note that the period of 2,520 years is **double** the period of 1,260 years that is referenced in Dan. 7:24-26; 12:5-9; Rev. 11:2,3; Rev. 12:4. [S.K.]

† The 2,520 year time period as referenced in Leviticus 26 and Daniel 4 indicates the beginning of the end of the dispersion of Israel (1917 AD) as imposed by Gentile power and long held control of the Land of Israel, but does not mark the end of the Kingdom of Men in its religious and political manifestation (which has yet to be destroyed at the hands of the Christ-Stone power when it comes against the People and the Land in a grand confederacy [Ezek. 38; Joel 3]). [S.K.]

The word “mad” in Jeremiah 51 is from the Hebrew, (Strong's 1984) “hâlâl: to make a show; to boast; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; mad.” These are the attributes that define the nations who have drunken from the Babylonian wine, by adopting her pagan rituals and false doctrines. In the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse, the very symbols are used again: beasts, wine, drunkenness, and Babylon. Revelation 17:1-5 – “*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom **the kings of the earth** have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth **have been made drunk with the wine** of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon **a scarlet coloured beast**, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having **a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness** of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, **BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.**”*

The scriptural evidence is clear that links the Babylonian system with the drunkenness, filthiness, and abominations in which the nations of the earth participate, all of which culminate in the apostate teachings upheld by the Catholic Church and her daughters, defined as modern day “Christianity.”

Although, the tree dream seems to provide a severe punishment upon Nebuchadnezzar for his arrogance and self-esteem, we see that Yahweh is gracious to him and abides by His word. After the period of seven years he was re-established in his kingdom. This was recognized by Nebuchadnezzar: Daniel 4:34-35 – “*And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*”

Just as Nebuchadnezzar changed his attitude and humbled himself before Yahweh after his punishment, so will the nations in the future age that are humbled by Christ and the Saints. We see from Daniel 7, that the nations that once were associated with this beast system, are not completely destroyed by Christ and the Saints, but submit to the authority of Christ. Daniel 7:11-12 – “*I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away: yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.*”

The concluding words of Nebuchadnezzar give us foresight to know what

shall happen to the hearts of men in the Kingdom Age. Daniel 4:36-37 – “*At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and **brightness** returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me. Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.*”

First consider the word brightness in verse 36. It is the Hebrew word *zeev* (Strong's 2122) and denotes cheerfulness, splendor or countenance. Nebuchadnezzar's sanity was seen in his appearance; an external as well as an internal or mental improvement. This again points toward the future age when the beastly mentality of the nations, characterized by wickedness, blasphemy, crime and violence will be suppressed and righteousness will abound. Jeremiah speaks of this day. Jeremiah 3:17 – “*At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD; and **all the nations shall be gathered unto it**, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: **neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.**”*

### Does the Tree Dream of Daniel 4 teach of Christ?

Daniel 4:17 “*This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.*”

It is the last phrase of this statement that draws our attention to Christ. “The term 'basest' signifies lowliness (see Ezek. 21:27; 1 Cor. 1:26-30). The statement can be literally rendered: ‘the lowest one of men He will set up over it’. Rotherham renders it: ‘one low among men’; the Septuagint has: ‘him who is set at naught by men’. The statement, therefore has reference to one individual who will ultimately be set over mankind. This one is the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Expositor, p. 102)

The true example of humility is found in Christ, the Son of God. “*In all things he was meek and lowly, and entirely submissive to the will of his Father*” (Matt. 11:29; Phil. 2:5-8).

“In revealing to Nebuchadnezzar God's ultimate purpose, Daniel implied that if the King wished to retain his rule he must emulate such characteristics (see v. 27). So must all who would rule with that lowly one in the day of his exaltation (see Prov. 16:32). This verse, therefore, contains the basic purpose of Bible prophecy. It not only summarizes the plan of God for the nations, but reveals the attitude of mind necessary in those who would reign with Christ. Moreover, it teaches that the Most High rules at the present time and guides the destiny of nations. It also proclaims that His purpose ultimately is to set up in power over the kingdom of men one who meantime has been set at naught by mankind. That one is the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Expositor, p.102)

## Conclusion

In summary, then, we have Nebuchadnezzar having come to a recognition of Yahweh's dominance in the affairs of men and extends his praise and honor to Him. May this be a lesson to each of us. Though we may not have the lavish luxuries and assets as did Nebuchadnezzar, we need to learn from the example before us, to praise and thank Yahweh for all things that have been provided unto us. Never allowing the Pride of Life to overcome us as did Nebuchadnezzar. We should take care that we be not amongst those that have allowed the influences of the Babylonian banded tree stump to take root in our spiritual life or doctrine. We await the advent of our redeemer to bring an end to the Gentile rule over the earth. Until that day, may we be comforted with the words of this prophecy, vs. 17 – *“This matter is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones: to the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.”*

Robby Bennett

## THE TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE

### Jeremiah 30:7

**THE** time of Jacob's trouble has become a point of contention among modern Christadelphians. Some brethren believe that this era is in the past and that the modern nation of Israel will no longer face any more severe trials; while others believe that this time is still future and the nation of Israel will still have to endure God's judgments and refining process for the deliverance of a Remnant. Lord willing, we will look at this subject in detail sometime within the next few issues of the Sanctuary Keeper. Until that time, we would ask our readers to consider the following verses in relation to this subject. Any input on these verses will be reviewed and considered as preparations for this future article continues.

Isaiah 4:2-5; 10:20-25; Isaiah 14:2; Isaiah 24; 27:12-13; ; Isaiah 60:14; Jeremiah 30:7-11; 46:28; Ezekiel 20:33-38; 22:17-21; 36:33; Ezekiel 38-39 (see 38:16; 39:4-5; 39:10); Amos 9:9-10; Zephaniah 3:11-13; Zechariah 13:8-9, 14:1-2, Malachi 3:2-3; Matthew 8:12

There may be many other scriptures that teach us Israel will be subject to Yahweh's judgments as long as they remain unfaithful to their Creator. We believe that they will remain faithless until they are able to see the wounds in the hands of their Messiah whom they rejected 2000 years ago.

Please email any comments on these verses listed above and any other verses that may need to be considered on this thorny subject. The email addresses are located on the inside front cover of the magazine. – B.H.



## “IN ADAM AND IN CHRIST”

*Fundamental Considerations*

From Bro. Thomas Williams  
August, 1895 Christadelphian Advocate



**BROTHER** writes in *The Christadelphian* that he has been pondering over the two phrases “in Adam” and “in Christ” and that he finds an amount of haze has recently been developed around them which he thinks he can dissipate by a few simple reflections. Among these haze-dissipating reflections he gives the following: “Though saints are ‘in Christ’ it is only in a preliminary sense. Christ is glorious nature. No one can be in Christ as he is in Adam till he is of Christ's nature. This is a self-evident truth. The inference to be drawn from it would clearly be that the phrase ‘in Christ’ cannot have the same import as the phrase in Adam until a future event takes place. \*\*\* At present our being in Christ is, and can be, only a state or condition of relationship.”

Now the question is, Where is the “haze?” It must be that it is in the brother's imagining that some claim we are now in Christ in the sense of being of His physical nature. When he says that we are in Christ in the sense of state or relation, he is saying what those he pretends to be opposing have been saying all the time. Where is the “haze?” To tell us that we are not in Christ physically is as consistent as to tell us that the moon is not made of green cheese. It is to deny what no sane man ever affirmed. Where is the “haze?” It is nowhere else but in the brother's imagination. He has persuaded himself, and is trying to persuade his readers, that those he pretends to oppose teach that we are not in Christ physically. This is purely haze of his own making; and if he succeeds in “dissipating” it he will probably cease putting his brethren in a false light. Those being opposed have said and repeated that baptism puts us into Christ in the sense of relation and that we must wait for the redemption of the body. It is “haze” that has prevented this from being admitted and caused some to say that it is a mistake to claim that baptism puts us into Christ. Now does this brother and those he is united with in “dissipating haze” admit that baptism puts us into Christ? He says: “Though saints are ‘in Christ’ it is only preliminary.” What does this mean? Does it mean that we are in Christ or that we are not in Christ? Are Paul's words to be taken as they are, or are they to be supplemented by the words “only preliminary?” He does not say “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ only preliminary have put on Christ



only preliminary.” The “only preliminary” is the “haze” that needs “dissipating.”

The phrase “in Christ” is a phrase denoting the relation we come into by baptism into the One Name; and when we thus “put on the new man” we “put off the old man;” and therefore the inference is not that the phrase “in Christ” cannot have the same import as the phrase “in Adam;” but it is that it expresses relation in both cases; “in Adam” expresses one relationship and “in Christ” expresses another. When the latter is put on the former is put off. Hence the attempt on the part of this brother to confine the phrase “in Adam” to nature and exclude relation, and to apply the phrase “in Christ” in a two-fold sense is a total failure, unless mere assumption makes it a success. “In Adam” expresses relation to a sin constitution, and “in Christ” expresses a relation to the constitution of righteousness. If for convenience you wish to apply the phrase in the two-fold sense we have no objection; but you shall not insinuate that those you oppose believe that the phrase “in Christ” means not to the baptized more than relation; at least you shall not without having your insinuations and sophistry exposed.

When the writer says, “It is a serious blunder to interpret the phrase ‘in Christ’ otherwise than one of relationship” he insinuates that those he is opposing have made the “serious blunder.” Let him or anyone else quote a sentence to justify this insinuation if they can. They cannot. He cannot. Then why put brethren in such a false light and try to make them out simpletons?

“By baptism into His name,” says the writer, “we are brought into a relation of reconciliation or favor.” Just so; this is what those you are opposing have said all the time. Now where is the issue? What you have been opposing? No sooner than this admission is made, however, the writer falls back into the pit he for the moment had escaped and says: “It would be wrong to interpret it (‘in Christ’) as expressive of present results.” Here is the haze that surely needs dissipating. We are first told that to be baptized into Christ is to be brought into “a relation of reconciliation or favor with God,” and then we are told that baptism into Christ brings “no present results.” Why is it these men will not see that there are present results of a character that calls for our deepest gratitude? To be in “a relation of reconciliation or favor with God” instead of being in Adam under condemnation is surely a present result of baptism. What mean these contradictory statements that we do in Christ become reconciled and yet “in Christ” expresses “no present results?” If it means that there are no present physical results then there is the same insinuation that some are stupid enough to say that there is a physical change; and to contend against such a silly thing that no sane man ever dreamed of claiming is beyond the dignity of a fair-minded man. The fact that those the brother is opposing have been placed in the false light of claiming that there are present physical results by baptism into Christ is proof that they cannot find a point to attack them on in the position they really and truthfully take. Their position is simple as the truth and it does

not require minds of supposed high grade to comprehend it. They simply say that Adam’s sin brought condemnation and alienation and mortality upon the whole race; that as we are born in Adam we are related only to him in alienation and under condemnation. This is our *relation*; and in addition to this we are mortal as the result of the sin that brought the relation. Then, on the other hand, they claim that when we “put off the old man and put on the new man” by baptism we pass out from the *relation* to condemnation and alienation and become related to Christ, in whom we are in a state of relation of reconciliation and favor – not alienation and condemnation. Then, when Christ comes, the mortality we inherit from Adam will be swallowed up of life. Surely this is easily understood, and is in perfect accord with Dr. Thomas’ way of stating it in “the Revealed Mystery,” which we have given several times, but which it is claimed does not mean what it says. It does mean just what it says and it is the truth; and if it were not for “haze” it would be accepted without so much “interpretation.”

Here it is again in the doctor’s own words: “In this life, then, there are two states in relation to God and the children of Adam – the one *a state of sin* and the other *a state of favor*; the former is occupied by ‘constitutional sinners’ of all ages, from the babe to the old man, of every shade and variety; and by illuminated transgressors, whose sin is not only constitutional but voluntary; and the latter state is composed of persons who *were* not only constituted sinners and voluntary transgressors, but who, by obedience to the laws of God and to Christ, are constituted righteous. In regard to the righteous, they are delivered from the fear of death, because, having obeyed the Truth, they have passed from death to life; but this is not the case of constituted sinners and intelligent transgressors. These are both under the sentence of death eternal.”

If this is not enough to dissipate the haze from before our brother’s eyes, let him ponder over the following from “Twelve Lectures,” pages 95,96:

### THE LINE CLEARLY DRAWN

“Abraham the idolater was his own; his own to live like the insect of the moment, his own to die and disappear in an irrevocable grave. Abraham, the called of God, was no longer his own, but bought with the price of God’s promises. He entered upon a higher relation of being. He was exalted to a higher destiny, and had imposed upon him Godward obligations unknown to his former condition. Success or failure in the ordering of his life was of greater moment than before. Faith and obedience would constitute him the heir of the world and the subject of resurrection to immortality; unbelief would make him obnoxious to a severer and farther-reaching displeasure than fell upon Adam. In this respect the children of Abraham by faith – that is, those ‘who walk in the steps of the faith which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised’ (Rom. 4:12), who being Christ’s are Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:29), through believing the gospel and being baptized into Christ, are like their father. By nature children of wrath, even as others, they were in the days of their ignorance ‘without God

and without hope in the world' (Eph. 2:12), 'strangers from the covenants of promise' (ibid), 'aliens from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them' (Eph. 4:18), living without law, and destined, as the result of that condition, *to perish without law in Adam; inheriting death without resurrection – death without remedy; having neither the privileges nor the responsibilities of a Divine relationship* (italics ours). But when called from darkness to light by the preaching of the gospel they are 'not their own.' They neither live nor die to themselves as formerly. They have passed into a special relationship to Deity – extra Adamic – in which their lives, good or evil, come under Divine supervision, *and form the basis of future accountability* (italics ours) unknown to their state of darkness at which God winked. *This is neither more nor less than the responsibilities of Abraham transferred to them* ON BECOMING HIS SEED BY ADOPTION (emphasis ours).

"The law of faith, established by the promises made to Abraham, constituted a center, around which responsibilities of this description developed themselves. All who acquired Abraham's faith came under Abraham's responsibilities." Here the line between "in Adam" and "in Christ" is clearly drawn, and the present results of passing from one to the other fully shown without any haze to dissipate.

EDITOR (Thomas Williams, pp. 175-177)

### **David's blessing of Yahweh at the dedication of the materials to build the Temple**

David said:

*"Blessed be Thou, LORD GOD of Israel our father,  
for ever and ever.*

*Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power,  
and the glory (beauty), and the victory (strength),  
and the majesty (honour);*

*for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine;  
Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head  
above all.*

*Both riches and honour come of Thee and Thou reignest over all;  
and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.*

*Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee,  
and praise Thy glorious name."*

1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 29:10-13

## **"NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS" *Who is your master?***

**B**RETHREN, we are living in momentous times and are witnessing events that our pioneer brethren and prophets of old would have been thrilled beyond expression to see. World events have been happening so rapidly and on such a scale that the media has trouble keeping up with them. We should be trembling with excitement and anxiously reading God's Word with the understanding that He has given to us as we contemplate and prepare to stand before our Great Judge at His Tribunal. Are you excited? I know I am. The Apostle Peter warns us in **2 Peter 3:11** "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*" Those last four words should really get our attention: "*holy conversation and godliness.*" Our conversation is our manner of living, our lifestyle. It is to be holy, or set apart from the world. We should be living our lives as far from the world as we can and to keep ourselves separate. We are to have godliness or God-likeness. We should be trying to display God-like characteristics in all aspects of our life. We should be fleeing from the world and its influences as far as we can get. Granted, we have to live in the world but we don't have to be partakers of its evil deeds and influences.

We have two texts to consider in our consideration: **Matthew 6:24** – "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" **Luke 12:34** – "*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*"

Concerning the text in Matthew 6:24 the word "man" comes from the Greek word in Strong's 3762 **Ουδεις/ oudeis** and means "man, woman, or thing". The word "serve" has to do with being a slave or enslaved to whether voluntarily or involuntarily. A slave could in no way have two masters. It would be impossible for the slave to be in two places at once and to be performing the tasks required of him by two different masters or owners. In your work environment, have you ever had two different managers or bosses each telling you to do something the way he particularly wanted you to do something? I know that has happened to me. It really does not work – one boss will be happy with you, while the other will not; which puts you in an awkward position. At that point, you have to make a choice which of your bosses you are going to please. You might have to go to each of them and clarify the differences of the

requests. This principle also applies to us in our service to our Master. Are we going to serve Him, or are we going to serve the flesh. It is impossible to do both. **Romans 6:16** “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*”

We all make choices every day of our lives. Our lives are full of choices and decisions. When faced with a choice, we have to make a decision. Some of us make good decisions and some bad decisions. Moses gave the children of Israel stern warnings in **Deuteronomy 30:19** “*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*” They had the choice to serve God or to serve the flesh; to choose life or death. Joshua also warned Israel that they had to make a choice. **Joshua 24:15** “*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*”

The apostle Paul tells us **1 Corinthians 7:23** “*Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants (or slaves) of men.*” Backing up a verse, we read “*For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*” Christ purchased us with His own blood. **Acts 20:28** “*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the ecclesia of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*” When we made the choice to take on the saving name of our Lord, we became His slaves. It is up to us whether we are going to be faithful servants or not. Who is our master? To whom will we be faithful?

The second scripture that we are considering, which is related to this one in Matthew, is **Luke 12:34** – “*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*” Most of us have either savings accounts or some type of investment account to lay up in store wealth for our future life when we retire from work. Christ also used this type of analogy regarding our salvation and our future as servants in His Kingdom. If we put our wealth into risky investments, we may lose what we have put into them. **Matthew 6:19-21** – “*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*”

We have to make sure that we place our investments into programs that are safe, secure, and will yield enough return to provide for our future. In like manner, we must invest what God has given us into His service. When we invest in a retirement program, our goal is a secure future. Our goal in our spiritual life must be the Kingdom of God. The apostle Paul makes reference to

this goal and a runner in a race. **1 Corinthians 9:24-27** – “*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*”

Paul did not regret losing things in this world – status or wealth in the world meant nothing to him. He states in **Philippians 3:7-14** – “*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*”

As he states, whatever righteousness he might have had in this world was meaningless. The righteousness which came from Faith in God was most important to him. He considered the things of this world as refuse and did not regard what he lost in this world to be anything. What he had in the past or things he had done in the past, he says that he put behind him and forgot them. What he considered to be the most important thing was that goal that was before him: That “*mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*”

Our government has provided for us some form of future wealth that is designed to help us after we reach retirement age and are no longer working. It is called Social Security. To be eligible to be in this program, we have to meet certain requirements. We have to be citizens of this country. We have to contribute a certain percentage of our income into Social Security. We finally have to be of retirement age before we can begin to draw from that source. God has also given us a security in His future Kingdom, but there are requirements for us to fulfill. One of the requirements that we must meet is to overcome the flesh. This is not easy. We are flesh. The flesh is what drives us in the world. Part of the flesh that we have to deal with is pride. Pride is a major stumbling block for a lot of us, if not almost all of us. The Apostle Paul again gives us some excellent thoughts of his on fighting his own flesh in **Romans 7:14-25** “*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal (or flesh), sold under*



*sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 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: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.”*

Can we relate to the struggle that Paul had? I know that we can because we deal daily with our own flesh. We know the right thing to do, but we don't always do it, and then, afterwards, we regret our giving in to our flesh. The flesh is often our master and we are slaves to it. The flesh is probably the biggest obstacle for any of us to deal with. Our everyday actions are based on our flesh and most of the time, we just react according to the what the flesh dictates to us. Paul tells us to be lead by the Spirit and not by the flesh. We know how difficult this is. Being flesh, we want to do things our own way and we find ways to justify what we want to do.

We have a good example in scriptures of an individual that loved God, but often he let his flesh dictate his actions. David was a man after God's own heart in the Spirit, but as with us, the flesh often got in the way. We have some of his thoughts regarding his struggles in the Psalms. Here is a good example. His main enemy here was his flesh. **Psalms 143:1-12** – *“Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy (flesh) hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate. I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands. I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah. Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee. Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me. Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. Quicken me, O LORD, for thy name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of*

*thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.”*

After his most notable failings of the flesh with Bathsheba, he has these thoughts: **Psalms 51:1-19** – *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.”*

Are we any different than David or Paul? No. Whether we be young or old, we have a daily struggle with the flesh. We know the right thing to do. We need to keep this in our mind that our Master knows of our struggles with the flesh and if we turn to him, he will give us the help and strength to endure and will forgive us if we ask and are truly repentant.

**Hebrews 2:14-15** – *“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, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* Christ struggled with the flesh also but was strengthened by the Spirit to resist it. He knows our struggles and if we ask, he will give us strength also. We also read in **Hebrews 4:15-16** – *“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

We read of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness in **Matthew 4:1-11**—*“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”*

Who or what tempted Christ? It was his flesh and his natural desires and tendencies. He dealt with the same struggles that you and I deal with each and every day. **James 4:7** — *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* The devil is our flesh. James tells us to not give in to the flesh but to resist it. That is what Christ did and as he is our example and that is what we must do also. The children of Israel were told in **Deuteronomy 10:16** to *“Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”* The Apostle Paul also tells us in **Romans 2:29**, *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”* The heart is referring to our minds. We need to cut away the flesh from our hearts and no longer be led by it.

Christ was asked by a young Pharisee which was the foremost commandment that we should follow. We read of this in **Matthew 22:37-40**, *“Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”* If we have purged away the flesh from our hearts and have replaced it with the true agapean love, we will be serving our heavenly Father in the manner that is pleasing to him. The Apostle John tells us **2 John 1:5-6** *“And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.”*

When we came through the waters of baptism, we made a covenant that we would have a new master that we would serve. We rejected our old master, the flesh, and made a commitment to serve our new master, our Heavenly Father.

We still have choices in our lives and we make choices every day. As Joshua told the children of Israel, *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve... as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”* Where is your heart? Where is your treasure? Who will you choose to serve? Who is your master?

Bobby Cox

## EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

### PROPHETIC “PARADIGM”

The June issue of the Christadelphian Advocate provides a guest editorial under the title of *“Paradigm Pressure”*. The object of the editorial seems to address what it perceives as prophetic inflexibility or bullying taking place by those who are “entrenched” in a prophetic view heavily influenced by bro. John Thomas upon those who may vary from bro. Thomas in their prophetic understanding. Though there are certain aspects of the editorial we can agree with, we wish to offer some cautionary thoughts on the matter.

First of all we must state that we have never been comfortable with the term “paradigm”. Webster’s defines “paradigm” as, *“a philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated; broadly: a philosophical or theoretical framework of any kind.”* It has tended to be somewhat of a fashionable word in recent years used in the fields of education and business (and has found its way into the vocabulary of Christadelphian exhortation/exposition as well) included in the overused phrase *“paradigm shift”*, to indicate changes in philosophies or realities (or the effort by those with certain agendas to promote such a “shift” from earlier positions of practice or belief).

When talking about the truth, should we ascribe words to it that indicate that which is *theoretical* or *philosophical*? Is the Truth merely a theory or philosophy that is subject to change or evolve over time, or is it something more stable? Of God himself we are told in James 1:17 that there is *“no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”* Of his son Jesus, *“the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.”* As the word/logos (God’s declared purpose) emanates from a never changing Deity and is manifested through His Son — it therefore stands to reason that Truth is far superior to a *“philosophical or theoretical framework.”*

In addition, can the specific subject of “prophecy” be classified under what would be considered truth or “The Truth”, or is it something which is to be deemed as something set apart from The Truth and as “*theoretical*”? In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Epistle of Peter, the first chapter, the Apostle is exhorting the believers as to the “knowledge” that is given to the believers in regard to God, His Son, the Promises, the way in which to walk in such knowledge and the “sure word of prophecy” (vs. 19) to guide their way. Here the prophetic message is referred to as “*a light that shineth in a dark place.*” Peter makes it very clear that “*prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*” (vs. 21). Prophecy cannot be “*a light*” if it is some kind of theoretical supposition or hypothesis – in which the outcome is only an educated guess. A light illuminates our path, it helps us to discern our surroundings as well as to see what lies ahead of us before we get there. There is no guessing, no tripping or bumping around in the dark for those who have illumination – naturally or spiritually/prophetically speaking. As the subject of prophecy is so intertwined in our Hope we have to conclude that it is much more than something based upon a “paradigm”, but belongs to the unchanging and unwavering Truth. We are told in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 2:9,10 that “*it is written, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”*” And this is the part that is often left out when this is quoted, “**BUT God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit** (His spirit word that is available to us): *for the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”

There has been a great deal of “pressure” on the Truth on many fronts within the past few years to change with the times; “pressures” or “paradigm pressures” in their own right to adopt beliefs and practices not in harmony with traditional Christadelphian understanding across the spectrum of what is our Christadelphian heritage. **THE TRUTH** (a term that Christadelphia is starting to shy away from) has been embraced, widely agreed upon and zealously defended over the years, not because of allegiance to the work of one man or a few, but because such beliefs were seized upon with great joy and thanksgiving as representing an illumination of Biblical Truth as opposed to the gross darkness of Christendom. Because of this it would be hoped that a degree of understanding would be extended to those who are firmly “entrenched” in their positions, due to years of study and examination of the Scriptural evidence in all aspects of what we call the Truth. Though alternative prophetic views might be put forward, it should be expected, based upon the passion and zeal with which we are to cling to what we have learned (2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:15), that resistance will be experienced when alternative views are put forward.

Let it be noted that we have observed as much vehement opposition and pressures (sometimes hateful and slanderous charges) made against those who hold more “traditional” views (whether they be prophetic or otherwise), as has been charged against those of a “traditional” viewpoint in their opposition to new ideas and teachings. Be careful in accusing those of “traditional” views of

“pressure” when those who are promoting changes in belief are applying their own “*paradigm pressure*” upon others.

**ALL OF US** have and continue to be influenced, and indebted, to one degree or another by writers/speakers external to the Holy Writ. If any kind of trust is to be given to bro. Thomas or any other Christadelphian sources, it is because of their ability to gain our confidence with a proven skill to truthfully expose and harmonize scriptural teaching. And we should be extremely thankful for the rich resources that we have! **Our point of agreement with the Advocate editorial is when allegiance to a writer/speaker outweighs our ability to reason what is according to the truth and what is not** – where the individual or manmade influence, and bias that creates in us, becomes the final authority or vehicle of belief on a matter, rather than the Berean spirit of scriptural investigation. **But this sword of caution swings both ways, and that which we must be very honest with ourselves about** – whether it be an unbalanced allegiance to Bro. Thomas OR unbalanced prejudice against bro. Thomas’ work. Or, to be negatively influenced by the “paradigms” of charismatic but unsound brethren; holding certain brethren as far intellectually superior, undo respect and authority given to academia, reliance on mainstream Christendom theological resources or an unbalanced and inflated view of one’s own intellectual background and reasoning power. Such can prove to be disastrous premises in which to build our spiritual understanding.

There is a great deal of confusion that is in the Unamended Christadelphian community due to the pressures of change that we have mentioned – especially on the prophetic front. This goes along with the predicted decline of the Household previous to Christ’s return in all aspects. Where there was once wide spread agreement on prophetic principles and interpretation (though always with minor degrees of disagreement on certain details), now there is utter confusion and rancor. Have we seen an improvement; more clarity of our prophetic understanding with more recent interpretations; or along with other areas of Scriptural belief have we seen further dilution and fog? Can we provide a clear and unified message within the Household, to our young people or to the alien in regard to the chain of events that are going to come upon this earth? Can we provide a clear picture and visual path as to make sense of the current geo-political situation and where it is headed? With a unified voice? – we cannot.

We will be the first to admit that where the thoughts of bro. Thomas or any other writer can be proven wrong or a more correct way of viewing a matter can be exposed, then by all means – **THE TRUTH SHOULD TRUMP ALL.** There are some things that we might find disagreement to, here and there, in all of our early writers. But there is a dangerous premise that is often put forward in recent years to the effect that *since bro. Thomas lived over 140 years ago that there was much that he could not see, but that we have a better handle on, and that say if bro. Thomas were alive to-day he would have changed his mind.*

This is in and of itself a faulty premise and “pressure” that must be avoided. Such promotes a prejudice in approaching a consideration of bro. Thomas’ prophetic works with a pre-conceived idea that he has to be wrong on things or that he could only view prophecy based upon the current geo-political circumstances of his time. It can even foster the idea that a study of bro. Thomas or other early expositors is a waste of time. Let us critically study the prophetic word with the help of our pioneer works, and before we disagree with or criticize what bro. Thomas may have believed, let us not approach it based upon a false premise in the back or forefront of our mind that his prophetic views are outdated (with the obvious exception of predicted dates for Christ’s return, which ALL brethren over the years have missed). Bro. Thomas himself stated in regard to a rule of prophetic interpretation – “*Men should never prophecy of the future from present appearances*” (Elpis Israel, p. 396). Unfortunately we have some who do just that, with knee jerk reactions to any event that transpires in the Middle East, which requires constant backtracking, updating and reevaluation – hardly illumination but a bumping around in the dark.

Now the point of our editorial remarks is not to defend bro. Thomas, **FOR IT IS THE TRUTH THAT WE ARE REALLY INTERESTED IN.** But, it must be understood that the scriptures were the same for him and earlier brethren as they are for us. The “light” of the prophetic word (like God Himself) never changes. Prophetic principles of interpretation, the intended nations and peoples who were the objects of certain prophecies, the “*who, what, when, where, and why*” are laid out in the scriptural record – and it is our great privilege to come to an understanding of these things. News events, seemingly important at the time, come and go – but the illuminating glow of the Prophetic Word never changes. It is true that with the passing of time that many prophecies become fulfilled and witness to the veracity of God’s Word, and that geo-political circumstances come together to lay out a more clear path as to how Yahweh is ingeniously working to lay the ground work in bringing about His Prophetic Word. And no doubt, earlier brethren would have been thrilled to see certain things transpire over the past many decades as it would have enhanced certain details of the prophetic framework that they were able to see and hope in – but nothing to the point of “proving them wrong” or forcing a rethinking of prophetic understanding.

Some point to the establishment of the nation of Israel (which our early brethren expected) or the rise of “militant Islam” (the Muslim issue is something that bro. Thomas did in fact address) as game changers that require a rethinking of our prophetic understanding. But many brethren were able to joyfully see (or now live it as historical fact) the events of 1917 or 1948, and have watched the unsuccessful warfare of Muslim nations against an outnumbered Israeli state – and were only encouraged and strengthened in the soundness of long held prophetic understanding in what Christadelphians (The latter day revival of Apostolic Truth) were able to see with spiritual clarity; that which no other religious bodies could make sense of.

In summarization, we understand that as a matter of conviction some have come to different views on various points of prophecy that are not in accordance with more traditional beliefs. And while the advice is sound as to not let an imbalanced appreciation of bro. Thomas’ work cloud a clear weighing of evidence or to unduly pressure others, let great care be taken in judging the mindset of those of a traditional prophetic conviction that may reject and oppose new prophetic viewpoints – whether it be individuals or ecclesias. It may actually be in cases that they have weighed the evidence, and find newer views scripturally and factually lacking. And let great care also be taken by those who wish to promote or accept alternate prophetic views to not be guilty of their own “paradigm pressures”, by marginalizing or slandering those who choose to hold fast to and defend the long held “traditions” they have been taught and embrace as a matter of sincere belief.

### CHRISTADELPHIAN FEMINISM

In the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2009 Sanctuary-Keeper we reported on the “One Voice” movement out of Australia that was working on the premise that traditional views of sister’s roles are outdated and that sisters should be allowed to speak, teach, offer public prayer and to have leadership duties. They now have taken their agenda directly to the ecclesias by sending ecclesial secretaries a copy of the book *All One In Christ Jesus - Bible Teaching on the Work of Men and Women in Christ's Service*, by Averil & Ian Mchaffie. The book is clearly a promotion of the very ideals that were previously warned of. The spirit of Feminism wants to come to an ecclesia near you.

### ALL EYES ON SEPTEMBER

Our attention is focused on the month of September, as the UN is set to vote on the matter of “Palestinian Statehood.” At the present it would seem that the issue is a non-starter. While most 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries will be supporting the official creation of a Palestinian State, new states are only created through a Security Council decision, and the United States has already emphatically declared that it will veto such a measure (though we will see). Some European countries have expressed their opposition, and even Jordan has come out against the creation of a Palestinian State. Israel itself has made it clear that if the Palestinians themselves move towards a unilateral declaration of Statehood, that the Oslo Accords would be nullified freeing Israel of the responsibility of collecting Value Added Tax on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. The enormous monthly cash transfers to the Palestinian Authority would cease, and the Palestinian Authority would collapse in the matter of a week.

The question is, what degree of violence may erupt in the Palestinian territories if/when the measure for Palestinian Statehood is nixed, and how will populations around the world react? It will be very interesting to see how this plays out and what, if any immediate ramifications Israel will have to deal with.

