

# THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



Vol. 16

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – 2006

No. 3

## *In Defense of Our Providential Heritage*

- *Our Providential Heritage* -
- *A Book Review* -
- *Christ is our Mediator* -
- *The Songs of Asaph* -
- *Contend, Continue, Stand, Watch & Warn* -

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## IN DEFENSE OF OUR PROVIDENTIAL HERITAGE

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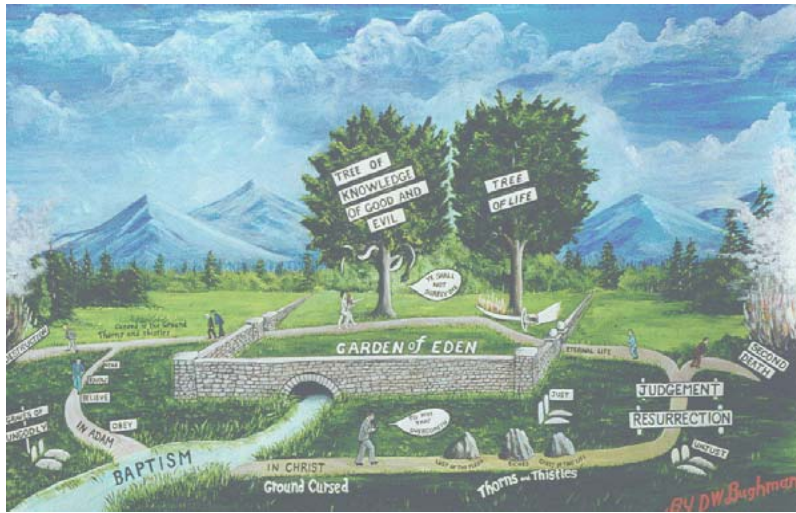
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“Consolation” – A Poem

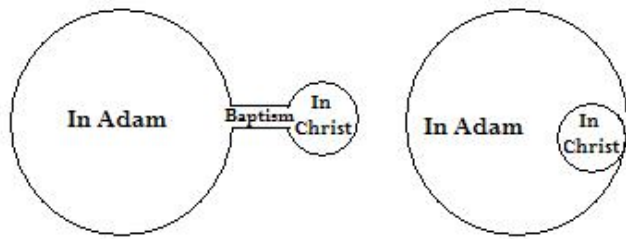
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Lord willing we hope to continue with the “Preparing to Preach” Series in our next issue.

## The Way of Salvation Illustrated

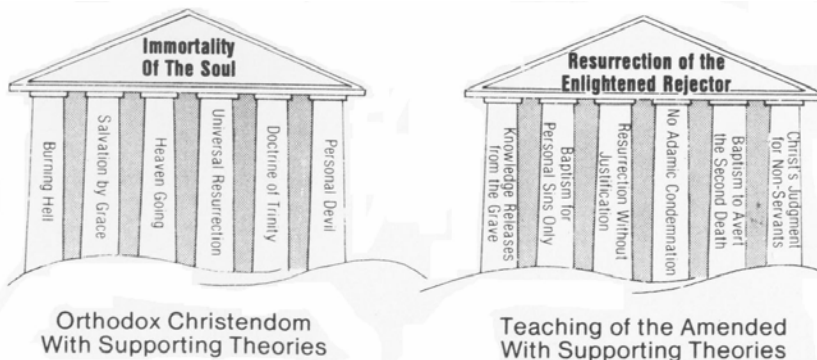


By D.W. Bughman



Federal Relationship  
Unamended Teaching  
**EITHER in Adam OR in Christ**

Federal Relationship  
Amended Teaching  
**In Adam WHILE in Christ**



# Consolation

Mourning pilgrims on the journey,  
To the city of our God,  
Think not hard, when you are chastened  
You must feel Yahweh's rod.

He has said my son's I'll chasten,  
So to prove their love to me,  
If under this, they do continue,  
Sure, my glory they shall see.

Gracious Father, keep our pathway,  
As we struggle through the fight;  
Be our strength, our every comfort;  
Be our armor, and our might.

May we look to him, once lowly,  
Tempted in all points like we  
Follow on, that we may know him,  
Know him and his glory see.

Looking unto him, that leads us,  
Unto him, our heavenly light,  
Unto him, the Christ, Yahweh,  
Unto him, the light of Life.

God in mercy, cheer thy children,  
As in sorrow they do bend,  
Lift them up, beneath the burden,  
Comfort to their sorrow send.

Patience then, thou mourning pilgrim,  
For the morn of Life draws near,  
When the dead shall raise to glory,  
God will wipe away the tear.

Pray we God, that this is our portion  
In that glorious age will be,  
When the saints, shall rule the nations,  
When the blessing they shall see.

When the children of the promise,  
Made to Abraham of old,  
In the Christ, the gift, made certain,  
Certain sure, as prophets told.

By R.W.C.  
October, 1885 *Christadelphian Advocate*

# THE SANCTUARY – KEEPER

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The Holy Scriptures*

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

*Num. 18:5*

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

*I Peter 2:5*

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

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## OUR PROVIDENTIAL HERITAGE

It has been the accepted view of Christadelphians that the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God was rediscovered and restated in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Bro. John Thomas. In the early 1800's there were various movements away from the teachings of the established church back toward the simplicity of the first century, linked with greater interest in the Bible, and a hazy conception of the return of Jesus to the earth.

Against this background, Bro. Thomas set out, with a sharp black and white outline, a complete picture embracing the teaching of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. This clear basis for the “One Faith, One Hope, One Baptism” was first put into writing in the book *Elpis Israel* in 1849.

The mortality of man, the hope of resurrection, the inheritance of the land of Israel according to the covenant made by God to Abraham and David, were blended into a harmonious whole, with the Messiah (Jesus Christ) as the central figure, the One divinely appointed to be the Saviour of mankind and Lord of Lords and King of Kings of this earth.

Bro. Thomas has left us what can be properly described as a providential *Deposit of Truth*. It comprises a *total system* explaining and expounding the Divine Revelation as it is unfolded in the pages of the Holy Oracles. In many respects it can be likened to

a balance sheet inasmuch as the various items of doctrinal belief must and do ‘balance’ the one with the other.

Just as in a balance sheet, if you delete or change the value of a debit without a corresponding change on the credit side of the ledger, you end up with an unbalanced statement and one which is consequently incorrect. As a simple example: If one denies the doctrine of the mortality of man and affirms the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, one immediately destroys the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

Similarly, if one affirms the doctrine of the dead being resurrected in an immortal condition, one destroys the doctrine of the necessity of appearance before the Judgment seat of Christ where the performance of each individual who has joined in the Abrahamic covenant at the time of baptism, will be appraised and approved or disapproved. Only upon a favorable verdict being rendered, will the individual be bestowed with the Divine Nature.

In fact, all of our articles of faith form a marvelous self-balancing system of Truth. If one doctrine is deleted or debased, a ‘domino effect’ is created which has an adverse or nullifying effect on other doctrines. It is for this reason that our beliefs were conveniently set forth by our pioneer brethren in the form of a Statement of Faith. Such a Statement provides a touchstone by which subscribers thereto can test their own understanding of Scriptural principles, as well as the beliefs of persons with whom they are in fellowship at the Lord’s table, to determine if such are in conformity and uniformity therewith.

This precious Deposit of Truth, which we have inherited, is a gift of unspeakable value. Our understanding of Scripture is not only different but is in opposition to the teachings of the churches of Christendom. We are not Christians in the common usage of that term. The word “Christian” covers such a wide range of beliefs and practice that it gives offence to nobody. It is for this reason that Bro. Thomas adopted the name Christadelphian. It was to distinguish that system of belief and practice from *all other* sects and denominations of Christendom and also to demonstrate that *salvation is not to be found in the teachings of these other groups*. Upon examination, it is virtually the rule that one or more doctrines or practices of other groups overthrows a vital principle of saving Truth and hence destroys the harmonious, self-balancing system of revealed Truth, which is the Christadelphian heritage.

In view of the evident proximity of our Lord’s return, this is no time to water down our standard of beliefs. We should beware of brethren whose cry is: This doctrine held by Christadelphians is irrelevant, redundant and unnecessary and therefore it should be struck from our Statement of Faith.

*Edward W. Farrar*

*March, 1986*

*Taken from “A Time to Speak”*

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## “THE JUDAIZERS – Another Gospel”

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### *A Book Review*

This article is presented with the objective of enlightening our readership to some of the erroneous doctrines taught in the book entitled “The Judaizers – Another Gospel”. This book is written by an Unamended Christadelphian brother. We believe that many of the teachings of this book are in opposition to the Truth of God’s Revealed Word. Due to the fact that this book is being offered for sale through the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation and is being endorsed by some within the Christadelphian community, the editors of the Sanctuary-Keeper magazine believe that it is important to all who may be exposed to the “Judaizers” book to understand the false doctrines that this book is presenting to the readers and supporters of the “Judaizers” book.

After reading extracts from this book that were published in another Unamended Christadelphian publication over the last couple of years, the author of this SK article thought it necessary to read the entire “Judaizers” book. After a full reading of the book, the author of this article found many more areas of concern regarding the doctrines being taught within the book.

We believe that all who support and defend the One Truth in which we have been called should have deep concerns regarding the teachings of this book. Although we do not recommend reading this book for edification, we believe that all should take the time to read and understand the teachings of the “Judaizers” book in order to provide guidance to our young in the Truth and to those who may pick up this book and get a false understanding of what Christadelphians believe is the Truth. In these latter days, there are definitely better ways to spend our time as we seek God’s Kingdom in this evil world that we live in. However, we ask the Brotherhood to gain an understanding of what is being offered for spiritual food by some brothers who are in high esteem in these days leading up to the return of our Master. It is our responsibility and privilege to be alert and perform the duties of a Watchman for anything that would distract the children of God from their walk in Christ. Again, we ask our readers to read and purview the “The Judaizers – Another Gospel” book and we ask that you read this book with **CAUTION**. This book should create a lot of concerns for the Brotherhood.

Some of the erroneous doctrines that are being taught in the book and the various scriptures that are used by the author of the book are summarized below. Within this specific SK article, we will not try to refute these false doctrines. We have included other articles in this edition of the SK and if necessary in future issues to address these

issues noted below and Lord willing, to present what we believe is God’s Truth regarding these basic and fundamental concepts of the One Truth.

One of the primary issues that the “Judaizers” book presents to its readers is the **concept** that in a sense that we have eternal life now in this age. The author of the book has separated the concept of eternal life and immortality. The issue of eternal life now was addressed in the December, 2005 special edition of the SK and also in the latest edition of The Doctrinal Insight periodical. Therefore, we will not repeat sections from those two magazines in this summary of things that are being taught in “The Judaizers – Another Gospel”.

**Please take notice that the issues that are presented below are not supported or endorsed by the Sanctuary Keeper.** They are presented for the consideration of our readership so that they can see how far from the Truth that some Christadelphian writers, speakers and Bible School Teachers want to take their supporters. The italicized text below indicates direct quotes from “The Judaizers – Another Gospel” book.

### #1

**In the “Judaizers” book, the author teaches that Christ is King now and the Kingdom of God is in a sense established now for the believers – Pages 142-152**

The Scriptures that the author uses to support his belief that the Kingdom was established at Christ’s first advent are – Matthew 3:2; Matthew 12:28; Matthew 21:43; Matthew 13:24-25; Matthew 13:44; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 16:16; Luke 17:20-21. (SK – We ask our readers to look up all of these verses that are quoted and see if they support what the “Judaizers” author is trying to teach.)

Quoted from page 144 – *“The foregoing passages definitely show that the Kingdom of God is used in non-future sense. The most natural and obvious explanation is that in some way, shape or form, the Kingdom of God does exist now, without distracting from the future application of the Kingdom of God”.* End Quote.

On page 146, the author makes this statement in regards to Ephesians 2:12 – *“If we are not citizens of the Kingdom of God now through the covenants of promise, we will not be citizens of the Kingdom of God in the future. With Jesus as the King, we change citizenship from the Kingdom of Men to the “commonwealth of Israel.” This change of citizenship is not something future, but something that happens when we believe and are baptized.”* End Quote.

On pages 146-148, the author uses Ephesians 2:4-7, Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3 to make this statement – *“All three passages convey the same sense in which we are in the heavenlies. Our names are written into the Book of Life = we are in Christ = we are in the Kingdom of God.”* End quote.

On pages 147-148, he uses Matthew 19; Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14; Matthew 5:3 and Luke 6:20 to equate the kingdom of heaven and the Kingdom of God. Again, he wants to show that if we are in “the heavenlies” now then we must be in the Kingdom of God now. He makes this statement about these verses – “*In emphasizing the current location in heaven and source of power for the Kingdom of God to his Jewish audience, Matthew was preparing them for the impending destruction of both their nation and their focus of worship – the temple in Jerusalem. In other words, this special message to Jewish believers reassured them that the Kingdom of God was not going to be destroyed, but was secure in heaven with Christ the King until such a time as it would be revealed in power on earth.*” End quote. (SK – If we believe these statements of the author, then we would have to believe that for the Kingdom of God to be destroyed that it had to exist at that time, which would mean that Jerusalem had to be established as the capital city at that time, that the righteous laws of God had to exist at that time, that there were a body of immortalized co-rulers at that time, that the Jews were existing in peaceful conditions in the land promised to their Fathers, etc, etc. The logical progression of the author leads the student of the Bible down some paths farther and farther away from the One Hope.)

On page 149, the author continues: “*The present existence of the Kingdom of God has a powerful influence on us. We get very excited when we think about the Kingdom of God that is coming on the earth. How much more excited should we be when we realize that membership in this Kingdom is ours today!*” End quote.

He continues on the same page – “*Another change that comes about because of your new understanding is in how you pray. Before we might have prayed “Lord, grant us a place in your kingdom” or even “grant us a small place in your kingdom.” Once the concept has been grasped that your name is written in the Book of Life and you have a place in God’s Kingdom, such words become inappropriate. You don’t ask for something that you have already been given. Your words change to give thanks for the gift that God has given to you and for strength to walk worthy of this exalted position.*” End quote.

In the section of the book entitled “When Did Jesus’ Kingdom Start?” on page 151 - 152, the author presents his viewpoints as to when Christ became King. His two choices for when Christ became the King is either at the resurrection of Christ or when Christ was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His Baptism.

The verses that he uses to support this belief are: Luke 19:38; Matthew 21:5; Matthew 2:2; John 18:37; Hebrews 7:1-2.

## #2

**The author of the “Judaizers” book takes a new and different approach as to the role of Jesus in our prayers. In the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book, he explains how he wants to challenge and dispel (words used by the “Judaizers” book – emphasis SK) traditional Christadelphian views on how prayer works. On page 293, he puts forth some answers as to what he thinks most people would answer if asked**

**this question – “What exactly is Christ doing now?” The responses that he thinks that most people would answer are quoted below.**

- 1) “*Jesus acts almost like a translator. We pray to God and Jesus passes on the message. The reasons for this fall into two categories. First, our unholiness will not allow God to receive us directly. Second, Jesus takes our prayer and “adjusts it” or “fills in the blanks” to make it appropriate for God’s Hearing.*
- 2) *Jesus pleads our case before God. In a labor dispute, often a mediator is brought in to negotiate a settlement. In this instance, Jesus pleads for God’s mercy for us because He knows what we are going through. Then Hebrews 4:15 is quoted.*
- 3) *Jesus is waiting for His return to earth (Acts 3:21). Technically speaking, “waiting” is doing something, but is certainly not the most active of pursuits.*
- 4) *Jesus is in charge of the angels. Since they are “all ministering spirits sent forth to serve on behalf of those who are to obtain salvation” (Heb 1:14), Jesus would be very busy directing them.” End quote.*

He devotes the rest of the chapter to the first two supposed responses as they deal with prayer, the subject that he is addressing in this 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book. In this summary of the book, we will sum up the views that the author presents in regard to the first two items listed above.

### **Jesus is Not a Prayer Translator – page 294**

From page 294 – “*One of the main problems we have with the view that Jesus translates our prayers to God is the fact that Jesus states that he will not do it. John 16:26-27 is quoted – where Jesus states “At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” In addition to the main point that Jesus will not pray to God for us, we see the reason behind it – God loves us so we don’t need Jesus to perform that role.*” End quote.

Continuing, the author states, “*If God hears all prayers – then the act of mediation must be something other than acting as a passer of prayers.*” End quote.

### **Jesus Does Not Plead Our Case – Page 294 – 303**

The author is teaching that the suggestion that Jesus pleads with God on our behalf has several problems. Quoting from the pages listed, we read these statements. Page 295 – “*Why does Jesus need to ask God to forgive us? First of all, Jesus himself has the authority to do so.*” End quote. Matthew 28:18 and Matthew 9:6 are quoted. The author of the “Judaizers” uses the logic that if Christ could forgive sins while on earth during His first Advent, then He could certainly have that authority when God “put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things – Ephesians 1:22”. He then asks, “*If then, Jesus has the authority to forgive sins, why would he need to lobby for our forgiveness with his Father?*” End quote.

Continuing with the words of the “Judaizer” book, he states – *“This brings up the next problem with the Jesus pleading for us scenario. Does it strike us as true that Jesus is either more strict or more lenient than his Father?”* End quote.

He continues – *“There is one verse in the New Testament that would seem to give us the idea that Jesus is more merciful.”* Hebrews 2:17 is then quoted where Christ is said to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. The author then makes this statement – *“The idea is put forward that since God cannot sin or be tempted, Jesus had to be created mortal and subject to temptation so that he might be merciful. In other words, Jesus knows what it is like to be human while God does not. Therefore, Jesus is more merciful.”* End quote. In order to be fair to the brother, it does not appear in the context of the quote that the author believes this, but, in his opinion, this is what others may say. (SK – Have you heard Christadelphians believe or teach this preposterous idea?)

Continuing with quotes from the author on page 296 - *“Most of the theories about what Jesus is doing now come back to an untenable position; namely that there is a problem with God. In this instance, God’s problem would be that He cannot understand us and therefore needs His son to do so for Him.”* End quote. (SK – Again, since the chapter that we are quoting from was written by the author to challenge and dispel traditional Christadelphian teachings regarding the role of Jesus in our prayers – we ask the question – Where would one find in mainstream Christadelphian writings that we believe or teach this nonsense?)

### Praying in Jesus’ Name – page 305 - 307

This is the next subject that the author has chosen to offer his words of advice and guidance. He quotes from John 14 - *“And whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.”* The author states: *“The first thing that needs to be pointed out is the obvious. Jesus never says in the verse that praying in his name is the same as performing the “prayer passing” function. Somehow we have associated praying in the name of Jesus Christ as the same thing as him taking our prayers and passing them on to his Father. As a matter of fact, the context seems to bear out a different point altogether. Jesus says that if we ask in his name “I will do it”. He does not say I will pass it on to my Father and He will do it. He says “I will do it”. End quote.*

*“If offering a prayer in Jesus name is not asking him to pass it on or endorse it, what then does it mean? Simply put, offering a prayer in Jesus name is the recognition of your position in him. Because we are in Christ, we have a privileged position.”* End quote.

The author continues. *“We have to relearn what it means to pray in Jesus name. The addition of “in Jesus name” to the end of the prayer is not required anymore than a valid prayer requires an “amen”. What is required is the recognition of the believer that we can “come boldly unto the throne of grace because of Christ. ... To say that we absolutely must say “amen” and “in Jesus name” is to invalidate most of the*

*prayers in the Scriptures. Think of all of the prayers in the Bible that do not end in “amen”. Think of all of the post-ascension prayers in the New Testament that do not end with “in Jesus” name.”* End quote

*“The point of praying in Jesus name is the same lesson of Acts 4:12. To recognize this and all the doctrinal, attitudinal and moral requirements included in being associated with that name is to pray in the name of Jesus. ... A prayer in Jesus name will manifest all of the characteristics of Jesus which is represented in his name. We should pray in Jesus name just as we “do” in his name in Col 3:17. This is attitudinal rather than verbal.”* End quote.

## #3

**A third area of teaching that the author presents in the book that differs greatly from what Christadelphians have understood the Scriptures to teach is that those who are called to the Judgment Seat of Christ will not have to account for the things that they have done. See Chapter 5 of the “Judaizers” book.**

The author believes that many people dread the return of Christ instead of yearning for the return of our Master. He believes that there are basic erroneous views that people believe that would cause them to dread and have a fear of the Second Advent.

On page 174, under the section entitled *Some Erroneous Views*, he puts forth two different viewpoints that he thinks many in the Brotherhood hold.

In the first viewpoint that he presents to us, the author quotes from Matthew 4:22 and thinks that many believe, because of this verse, that Christ will parade our worst sins before our friends and acquaintances like on a grand movie screen.

The second scenario that he presents to his readers is that many believe that we stand before Christ with our good deeds and evil deeds placed on a scale and balanced against each other to see if they have earned their spot.

For clarity sakes, these views are not presented as doctrines of truth by the author of the “Judaizers” book or as his beliefs. He is stating that these views may be the reasons why many dread the Judgment Seat, instead of looking forward to it. (SK – However, have we ever heard these far out viewpoints presented by the majority of the Brotherhood? Me neither. So, then why is it necessary to devote so much time to this concept that has not been historically taught by Christadelphians?)

However, in the attempts to refute these two erroneous views that he presents to his readers, he goes on to make some statements that does not follow the teachings of the Bible. On page 174-175, he makes these statements. *“We are told that God forgets our sins, but then we are told that everything must be given account for. Why do you have to give account for something that has been forgiven and forgotten?”* End quote. (SK – This may be true for those sins that we have truly received forgiveness, but it is only through the eye of faith that we believe that we have

received this forgiveness. We have not received forgiveness for those sins that we have never asked forgiveness for or for those sins that we have asked forgiveness for but continue to commit. The Judgment Seat will bring confirmation to those things that we believe through the eye of faith including the forgiveness of past sins.)

On page 175, he continues with a quote from Acts 24:15. *“Paul taught ‘that there will be a resurrection of both the just and unjust’ (Acts 24:15) In light of these teachings,”* the “Judaizers” author states, *“it seems to me that there are two types of judgment scenarios, one for those who will be given immortality and one for those to be condemned. I do not mean that they will be at separate times or places, but that the nature of the judgment itself will be predicated on the eventual verdict.”* End quote.

On page 178 under the section entitled God Forgives and Forgets Our Sins, we find these comments. *“You can’t have God forgiving and forgetting your sins and then bringing them back up at the Judgment. Either He has forgiven and forgotten or He hasn’t. The following Scriptures demonstrate that God in fact forgives and forgets our sins.”* He then quotes from Ezekiel 18:21-23, Isaiah 43:25, Isaiah 44:22, Isaiah 55:7, Hebrews 8:12. *“Therefore, he states, the faithful saints will not be subjected to a recounting of their past misdeeds.”* End quote.

On page 180, we continue to read – *“There are two classes of ‘believers’ at the judgment seat of Christ. They are variously called the just and unjust, the wheat and tares, and the sheep and goats. For disciples that have demonstrated true growth or hypocrisy, humility or waywardness, and have effectively sorted themselves out in advance. The evaluation is thus a simple task for the judge-king, with a come in/cast out decision and a blessed/cursed outcome.”* End quote.

Page 181 brings us these comments. *“The implication of the above verses”,* where he quotes II Corinthians 5:10 and Romans 14:12, *“is that self righteous hardhearted people and humble, merciful people will be judged very differently. This is not to say that the righteous will not ‘give account’”. The Bible tells us that they will. But they will have nothing to account for in the sense that all of their sins will already have been forgiven. They will only hear the “well done” scenario rather than “I never knew you” assessment of past sins.”* End quote. (SK – Again, this concept seems to ignore sins of omission that we never ask forgiveness for, or for sins that we never repent from. This concept put forward in “The Judaizers” would take away the presence of all mercy at the Judgment Seat as there would be no need for it to be provided if all sins were forgiven prior to our standing before the “Bema” of the Lord. Then, logically, we could ask, what is the purpose of the Judgment Seat? Why then aren’t the “righteous” raised immortal and why are the unjust raised at all?)

As we conclude this rather lengthy summary of the book under review “The Judaizers – Another Gospel”, our thoughts should return to the basic principle of this book. The author believes that the concept of legalism and Judaizers is a very serious problem within the Brotherhood. On page 26, we read these statements. *“One Brother approached me after hearing me begin a series of lectures on this subject*

(legalism - SK) and asked, *“Do you mean to imply that the Christadelphians have these problems?”* My response to him was that I do not mean to imply that the Christadelphians may have these problems. *Quite to the contrary, I wish to state clearly and for the record that Christadelphians do (emphasis – the author of the Judaizers book) have these problems and that they are severe in nature.”* End quote. Throughout the remainder of the book, the author proceeds to teach that if Christadelphians hold forth certain beliefs, including many traditional beliefs in contrast to his ideas that we have summarized in this article, that he would consider these individuals legalists and Judaizers and in belief of another Gospel other than the one that the author of the “Judaizers” book believes.

The author of the Judaizers book closes many chapters of the book with a section that he calls “Judaizer Traits in Our Midst?” I have listed a few of these for the consideration of our SK readers.

- Page 226 – He implies that we may manifest Judaizer traits if we “*get involved in technical, detailed debates*” on these subjects
  - What will be the basis of resurrection?
  - What does the feet and toes portion of Nebuchadnezzar’s image represent?
  - What is the correct understanding of Jesus and his relationship to the flesh?
- Page 284 – He states that these are Judaizer traits.
  - See baptism as a ‘chance’ for the Kingdom
  - Believe that Baptism is a ‘good start’ to a life of good works.
- Page 314 – Thinking prayer in Jesus name is mandatory to make a prayer valid.

The author’s objective within the book appears to be pointing out how mankind, including Christadelphians, has changed their relationship to the Deity into a system of mechanical and ritualistic acts of worship. If anyone worshipped Yahweh in this manner, we couldn’t argue with this premise. If the book stopped with this premise and only offered encouraging words to those who may worship Yahweh in a mechanical and ritualistic manner, many Christadelphians would not have a problem with this book. However, in the opinion of the author of this SK article, the Judaizers book has crossed the line of spiritual truth regarding the issues discussed in this article and other issues that are addressed within the book. As stated earlier, we ask our readership to judge for them selves about these matters.

Brethren, we must leave you with this question – Who is teaching “Another Gospel”? The author of “The Judaizers – Another Gospel” and his supporters or our pioneers in the Truth throughout the ages and brothers and sisters of the current age who believe and teach that we do not receive eternal life until after the Judgment, and that Christ will not become King until He returns to this earth to “restore all things”, and that Christ is our mediator, our Great High priest who does seek God’s mercy for

us when we sin and that we do have to account for our unforgiven sins at the Judgment Seat?

We have a grave responsibility to live the Truth, to maintain the Truth and to help others in their struggles with all of the things that would pull the believer away from walking in the Light. Let each and everyone of us fulfill our role as a watchman on the wall of the Truth. Our salvation may depend on how we maintain this role. The edification and strengthening of all, especially our young babes in the Truth, definitely depends on our willingness to “Always be ready to give an answer for the hope that lies within us”. These Scriptural words of advice are applicable to our relationships outside the covenant, but it is also most especially applicable to addressing false doctrines within our midst. Let us always be as Joshua – strong and courageous.

*B. Henderson*

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## CHRIST IS OUR MEDIATOR

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The Lord Jesus Christ abides continually in an immutable relationship between his Father and those called out of the Gentile world according to his purpose. This relationship exists by divine prerogative as manifested in the purpose of Yahweh. The absolute immutability of this relationship is certain because Yahweh’s purpose and Christ’s mission encompasses his work as priest, prophet and king. Scripture tells us that each role is imbued with its own essential qualities and functions as personified in the Lord Jesus Christ. As heirs to the blessings of the sons of God, our hope is bound up in the unchangeable essence of Yahweh’s plan. Christ, our forerunner, has entered into the most holy. There he abideth continually; high priest of the order of Melchizedek.

As we are aware, his name, Jesus Christ, derives from the Hebrew and Greek and are descriptive of his mission and purpose. *Jesus* (Greek *Iesous*) is the transliteration of the Hebrew *Yahshua* (*Joshua*) and was actually a common name among the Jews although spelled somewhat differently. Literally it means “Yahweh is salvation” or “Yah is the saviour.” *Christ* is the Greek *Christos*, “anointed” or as translated in the Septuagint, *Messiah*. These names have far greater significance than any common usage that can be placed on them because of the distinctive features of Christ’s character and mission. “*Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21). The truths explicit and those foreshadowed in these words to Joseph from the angel are the foundation upon which the great principles of creation are based.

As Christadelphians we are stewards of that truth. The apostle Paul says we are “*the pillar and ground of the truth.*” As stewards our charge is to testify to the justice and mercy of Yahweh as developed in the pages of his Spirit Word. Our responsibility

to Him lies in a general authority to proclaim the facts and doctrines of His word in all veracity and sincerity and to live lives emulating His son. His word is unchanging and His purpose sure. We can know that even before God laid one atom upon another to initiate the process of creation, His Word, His Logos, was there; perfect in every detail and complete in love. And, in the fullness of time this was made manifest through the work of His son; “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*” I Tim. 3:16.

God’s Truth is eternal and does not require alteration to fit modern thought and opinion. His promises are the standards of our faith. Faith underlies hope just as the promises of God, by necessity, underlie both faith and hope. A person hopes for something when he believes in the certainty of the promise. And, to paraphrase another brother, faith and knowledge precede hope as surely as understanding is the great requisite to salvation.

### Challenges to Accepted Truth

Lately, there has been presented to the Christadelphian community what amounts to nothing more than human opinion not consistent with the Bible regarding some particular essential elements of the Truth. This is disturbing because these misguided ideas have been represented as being traditional Christadelphian teaching. We should know that established doctrinal Truth as revealed by God in his Spirit word is not open to alteration. We should be wary of attempts at this because understanding the Truth is not merely a question of perceived morals or opinion based on human thinking. Mere opinion in the realm of scriptural principles exists where knowledge is lacking or uncertain. Opinion, based on the capricious thinking of the flesh rather than the purity of scriptural doctrine, seems to be used more and more these days to confront challenges to the truth or diminish the straightness of the path. This is dangerous and is actually the reason for the multitude of denominations (the apostasy) in the world. So we should be cautious of publishing or promoting new ideas that depart from accepted truth or have the insidious potential to change our beliefs. Some of the most dangerous ideas can be those that have the apparent sound of harmless reasoning but are actually abaddon in disguise; destruction.

Established Bible truth on the other hand is specific, resolute, definite and uncompromising. Bible truth is not open to condescension or flippant vernacular to “lighten up” a serious subject. The Truth is antagonistic to fleshly opinion and the thinking of the world. Because living the Truth means we have to sacrifice certain fleshly things in our lives and therefore our lives in the Truth may be difficult at times. These difficult times do not justify the tendency to seek comfort in fleshly notions or pleasing platitudes. The Truth is not a matter of opinion but a matter of faith and belief of what God has promised.

Paul applies the generalities of this concept to walking in gentile darkness when he says in Eph. 4: 17, 18: “*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the*



*understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”*

On the other hand, in that same epistle, the practical unity and saving efficacy of true knowledge and understanding instead of opinion (mere thinking of the flesh) is illustrated in his description of believers: *“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 1:18-20).

If we precede from the premise that what we know and believe is the saving Bible truth and we can support that belief with scriptural proof, then any departure from that truth would be error. The Bible contradicts itself only in human opinion based on prejudice or misunderstanding. *“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side”* (Matt. 13:19).

#### Jesus the Anointed

Jesus is the Messiah; the anointed. Like Elisha (I Kings 19:16) he was anointed to be a prophet. Like Aaron (Exodus 40:13) he was anointed to be a priest and like Saul (I Sam. 15:1 and David (I Sam. 16: 1-12) he was anointed to be a king. As brother J. J. Andrew reminds us: *“He was not anointed with oil, but with its antitype, the Holy Spirit; thereby indicating that the functions which he would have to perform would be far superior to theirs. That Jesus was to fill these three offices was clearly foretold by Moses and was believed by faithful Jews before his appearance.”* Jesus taught as a prophet; offered sacrifice as a priest; and will reign on the earth as king. As mentioned, each role of office has its own characteristic features. Each has its individual constituent complexity and each is essential to the unity of the complete character of the Lord Jesus Christ. We would like to consider an aspect of his role as priest and the thoughts expressed here are not different from what has been believed by Christadelphians from the beginning of our history. We believe this is the same truth taught by the apostles and revealed to mankind in the word of God and is in total disagreement with the newly expressed opinion of some nominal Christadelphians.

Two orders of priesthood are mentioned in the Bible; the Melchizedec and the Aaronic but it is not our purpose to discuss these in detail at this time. However, we do want to mention that the principal duties of the high priest of the Aaronic order were to offer gifts and sacrifices and to bear the names of the tribes of Israel before Yahweh. His was the responsibility to enquire of God by the Urim and Thummim, to consecrate the Levites as priests and to make atonement in the Most Holy Place once a year. All these responsibilities of office and the office itself were types of Christ. He was not a member of that priestly order but we know that all the various ordinances

and operations connected to the administration of the Mosaic Law were typical of him and his mission.

We know from scripture that Jesus united in his person the functions of a priest with the requirements of a sacrifice; a thing which has never been done by any person, before or since. We know too that scripture is quite clear about the fact that the necessity for either a priest or a sacrifice in any community is evidence of the existence of sin. But we can take great comfort in the fact that scripture also tells us: *“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. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted”* (Heb. 2:14-18).

#### One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

The Bible recognizes only one “denomination” and only one God. *“One Lord, one faith, one baptism”* (Eph. 4:5). The Bible also very clearly states an irrefutable principle of salvation: *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”* (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 2:5).

Christ’s role as mediator does not end (as has been suggested) when we are baptized into his name. In his office of high priest, Jesus Christ is the mediator of the new covenant in that by his death certain ones who are called out of Gentile darkness might receive the promise of eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:14, 15). *“But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself”* (Heb. 7: 24-27).

The priesthood of Christ is one of the clearest teachings of scripture. We would ask that these additional scriptural references be consulted in support of this statement: Heb. 3: 1; 4: 14, 15; 5: 10; 6: 20; 9: 11; 10: 21,22; I John 2:1. There are many more. As true of all his roles, his priesthood carries with it certain characteristics, functions and benefits. The priestly functions are not to be confined to his present position at the right hand of God. He will continue to act as a priest after his return to earth and he reigns over a kingdom of priests. *“... Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them*

both” (Zech. 6:12-13). As mentioned, the present position of Christ as high priest is typified in the functions of the Aaronic priesthood. The high priest under the Mosaic law did not offer atonement and act as intercessor for the whole world but **only** for the house of Israel. These priestly actions were efficacious **only** for those who were obedient to the law. The Aaronic priest had to offer the blood of sacrifices frequently, each time he interceded for the people. “Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption...” (Heb. 9:12). Jesus, the antitype of all these things, has now entered heaven itself to appear in the presence of God on our behalf, that is for the members of his household. This principle is faithful to the types ordained by God. Therefore, John can say, “And if any man sin (that is, of those to whom he is writing), he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” I John 2:2. The “whole world” referred to in this verse is not the world in general but the world (kosmos) of believers. We know that this is the same world spoken of in John 1:29, “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (See also John 3:16; 3:17; 6:33; 12:47 and 1 Cor. 4:9; 2 Cor. 5:19). We understand that this is the world of the redeemed as taught and believed by Christadelphians since the revival of the Truth in the eighteenth century. Christ is priest (mediator, advocate, intercessor) only to his household.

It is always helpful to look at the scriptural meanings of particular words, so in this case we have used several authoritative reference works to explore the words, mediator, intercessor and advocate. It is also helpful to try to restrict ourselves to the meanings intended in the original and refrain from attaching modern connotation to these words. Although in some case this is acceptable and helps in understanding any hidden nuances of a word.

Scripturally and temporally an intercessor is one who goes between two groups or persons to help them work out their differences and come to agreement. A mediator usually is a neutral party, a go-between, intermediary, or arbitrator who brings about reconciliation in a hostile situation when divided persons are not able to work out their differences themselves. A mediator can also be the negotiator of an agreement. After the agreement is made, he can then witness to its content and serve as the administrator or guarantor to make sure its provisions are followed. A mediator needs legal authority and recognized power to function effectively. The intercession of Christ is a function of his office as Priest and refers generally to the aid that he extends as mediator between God and mankind. In a particular sense Christ is represented as drawing near to God and pleading in behalf of men (Rom 8:27; Heb 7:25), and thus, in harmony with the idea of intercession, He is called our Advocate (1 John 2:1).

### Ministry of Reconciliation

Literally, the word “intercession” means “to come between” (*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*). Simply put, in the Bible, intercession is: “The act of petitioning God or praying on behalf of another person or group” (*Nelson’s Bible*

*Dictionary*). Of course, some of the earliest occasions of a person acting as an intercessor were in the persons of Abraham for the city of Sodom and Moses for Israel. Successful intervention depends greatly upon the righteousness of those who are the subject of the intercession. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine” (John 17:9) “The effectual fervent prayer of a **righteous man** availeth much” (James 5:16). Jesus Christ is **not** the mediator, intercessor and advocate of those who do not belong to him and are not seeking to obey him (1 John 1:6-9). The reason for this is that God will not tolerate sin; and since death and sin are irrevocably linked, He will have no dealings with sinners (John 9:31). This is another immutable law of divine prerogative and this fact is the basis for the institution of a priesthood.

The apostle Paul characterized the ministry of our Lord as “the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). The prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah or Christ would make “intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:12). Being “at the right hand of God” since his ascension, Jesus Christ is precisely positioned to make “intercession for us” (Romans 8:34). The intercession made for by us by Jesus Christ is ongoing, “seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for” us (Hebrews 7:25) or as one of our early brethren expresses it: “This intercession is an essential part of his mediatorial work.” “The ministry of reconciliation” pertains to making “reconciliation for the sins of the people”—not the world that does not know God. (Hebrews 2:17). We cannot presume to alter or take away from the unity of the whole any one element of Christ’s priestly functions without greatly damaging the efficacy of his divinely appointed office.

Although the word mediator is not found directly in the Hebrew Bible the word “daysman” is mentioned in Job 9:33: “Neither is there any **daysman** betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.” *Yakach* is the Hebrew word in the text and technically carries the meaning of an umpire or to chasten or rebuke. However, the ancient word *Yeuma* (Hebrew and Aramaic) actually contributes to the base concept of mediator as used in the Old Testament. The subject is complex but one item is worth mentioning that may have bearing on a proper understanding of the OT teaching. *Yeuma* and its application comes from the field of ancient commerce. One school of thought traces its use as related to a broker of business deals and contracts. An example given is that of a wine broker who, as *yeuma*, and therefore representative of both the merchant and consumer bears the burden of loss if a vessel breaks while in the possession of the consumer. The thought is not primarily that of *yakach* but denotes the continuously active office of setting at right an injured relationship. An ongoing process that enhances the initial work of the umpire. (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*).

Jesus Christ is our mediator and advocate with God. What is an advocate (Grk. parakletos, “paraclete”)? According to Unger, in scripture, an advocate is one who pleads the cause of another. The term is applied by Jesus to the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7), where it is rendered “Helper” [NKJV] [“Comforter” KJV]; and by

John to Christ himself (1 John 2:1). The word advocate (Latin *advocatus*) might designate a consulting lawyer or one who presents his clients case in open court; or one who, in times of trial or hardship, sympathizes with the afflicted and administers suitable direction and support. The Jews were unfamiliar with the role of an advocate until they came under Roman rule and had to use advocates or lawyers to more effectively represent their cases in court proceedings. Our Lord is our “advocate” effectively pleading our case in heaven. (1 John 2:1). Those who have become related to God through the mediatorship of his son have need of his advocacy because of our flesh, the adversary (Romans 7). Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation and represents us before his Father in heaven. He has made peace between God and man and he is the one and only mediator in this relationship. He makes reconciliation because of his perfect atoning sacrifice. The Greek order is not “*and one mediator,*” but “*one mediator also between God and man.*” There is a legitimate, divine order in the exercise of this office.

Jesus Christ is mediator, intercessor and advocate only for certain individuals of our race (Romans 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:9; Revelation 2:10). Jesus Christ **is not** your mediator, intercessor and advocate if have not come to a knowledge of the Truth of God and you do not believe he is the Son of God, have not repented of your sins and have not been immersed in water (baptized) for the justification of sin (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16).

### Heedless Questions

Some question accepting the details as we understand them of Christ’s priesthood with its mediatorial and intercessory functions. They say that this implies the idea of Jesus pleading with his father. They say that this is inconsistent with the fact that it is the Father himself who has made access to grace possible through his love. They suggest that this implies that Deity needs to be appeased. Some say that Christ is more perfectly an advocate from the Father to mankind, rather than an advocate to the Father for us. Therefore, some say, Christ’s brethren no longer need to offer prayer through him to the Father. These same individuals, exercising a shallow and strictly technical rationale, declare that the mediatorship of Christ only involves those who are outside the ecclesia in that his mediatorship is limited to a “sharing of the word with the people.” Once the word is delivered, mediatorship ceases. This line of thinking is not new. And, there is a very limited amount of truth in these suggestions but they are defective in that they omit vital levels of first principles of truth that must be understood to properly discern the facts. The pressures of the world and subtleties of fleshly thinking combined with a less than proper understanding of the Spirit Word can be detrimental to our spiritual attitudes and our eternal destiny. This has to seen as the chief reason for any departure from this fundamental truth. A quick survey of Christadelphian web sites and current publications in print is just one good indicator of inexpedient influences on the body of Christ.

Interestingly enough, the editor of the Christadelphian *Ambassador of the Coming Age* addresses these same ideas in the January 1, 1869 issue. What follows is

primarily a paraphrase of some of his remarks that we must accept as Bible truth. A truth that has been accepted by Christadelphians even before the publication of this article.

God is forgiving and kind. His nature is the very definition of love. These are obvious first principles of truth. It is also a first principle that in certain relations, God is a consuming fire. He is “*angry with the wicked*” (Psa. 7:11); “*He cannot look on iniquity*” (Heb. 1:13). “*He is of purer eyes than to behold evil*” (sins flesh) and “*he will by no means clear the guilty.*” This hostile disposition, as the editor of the *Ambassador* comments, has its foundation in benevolence because God’s object and all His operations are designed to do away with ignorance and misery. This disposition, however, finds expression in the fact that the wages of sin is death. And so the priesthood was an early institution (probably antediluvian in origin) in the relationship of God to man. Its existence illustrates an irrefutable principle practically illustrated more than once in the course of Bible history. God will not (and this is the key to understanding the topic we’re discussing) hear or deal directly with offenders, but will be entreated concerning offenders only by those he regards with favor. There are numerous examples in Bible history having to do with Moses, Job, Jeremiah and others in this same regard.

The same principle concerns Christ and his mediatorship but it is related to different matters. The intercessions of the Old Testament record had reference to the limited penalties concurrent with their time (“*a figure for the time then present*). They were instrumental in securing immunity from the temporary evils of mortal life but they had no effect in regard to eternity. (At this point we would recommend that the reader read and study *The Law of Moses* by brother Roberts and *The Blood of the Covenant* by brother J. J. Andrew). The high priest under the Law carried the same condemnation as the people and so he offered the blood of the sacrifices first for himself and then for the people. To deny that this type is fulfilled in every detail in the Lord Jesus Christ is to deny Bible truth; a very serious matter indeed. The high priest under the Law even though he could obtain a hearing (mediation) for himself and the people in front of Yahweh, was ineligible as mediator for eternal matters. But, we must remember, his was the type of the great mediatorial work in the Lord Jesus. Christ was and is the literal counterpart of the living high priest: mediator, intercessor and advocate only to his own people. He accomplished this by rising from the dead and entering the divine presence being fully qualified to intercede on behalf of his people.

God looks only to Christ. He is the fruit of the prophecy in Genesis 1:26: “*And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” In this God’s purpose was accomplished. . Man cannot alter God’s purpose or try to make it express things it does not and cannot encompass. No man can come to God except through the man, the mediator He has ordained (John 14:6). Certain ones have been given to him through prayer and he has power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to those who are his after the will of his Father. The sons of Adam are at enmity with God but

God's relation to the children of Adam is changed when the old man is cast off in the waters of baptism. Through baptism a new legal relationship is established between God and man based on the essence of divine principle. The immutability of God's counsel is manifested in the fact that the mediator abides continually in the presence of God to make intercession for the sins of those who now belong to him. Since, as Paul tells us, the weakness of flesh continues, then mediation must continue. If the vessel is weak and tends toward failure the mediator performs the function of his office and restores the integrity of the bearer of the Word. As our advocate we know that "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" This is Christ; who as high priest possessed by the spirit with all its qualities and necessary functions, sympathizes with our infirmities having experienced them himself and "*he ever liveth to make intercession for us.*"

### Christ Mediator over his Household

It is a contradiction in terms and a great error to speak of the Gentile world as being interceded for or mediated for by Christ. There are those with an honest and good heart, who having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Who knows if their prayers are mediated to God before immersion? Most likely so but all we know is that there is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart and all things will be revealed by Him at the appropriate time. The scripture is quite clear. To deny this is to deny divine prerogative. All we know is that God sees only those who have come to him through the mediatorship of Christ. We have already given scripture that testify to this truth. He intercedes for those who come to avail themselves of his intercession, but no one else. It was only for those transgressors who brought the typical sacrifice to the priest at the door of tabernacle that the priest interceded. His mediatorial function will be exerted only for the benefit of those who make confession in prayer and supplication for divine forgiveness **in the name of Jesus Christ**. Israel did not worship the High Priest. They sought the Increate God of their fathers **through** the High Priest. They worshipped outside the most holy while the priest interceded within. The people, in the name of Christ, worshipped God; and Jesus in the presence of God makes intercession for his people. God hears him and on account of his personal will, condescends to the blessings sought by his people.

To quote brother Roberts: "There is nothing in all this to clash with the fact that God is gracious to our worthless race. His love is shown *in establishing an arrangement by which we have access to His favor and life for evermore.*" The outworking and the simple existence of His love cannot violate any other attribute of His being or will. His love, on the contrary, works in harmony with all his laws and methods. This is exactly what His love does in the Lord Jesus Christ. "*To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*" (2 Cor. 5:19). The method of reconciliation was by sacrifice and mediation. He has appointed a mediator to "*make intercession according to His will.*" We seek for pardon for sin now in daily unceasing prayer.

The judgment seat of Christ will witness and administer the results of our prayer; the results of our sincere supplication through our mediator. We will not know until then if our prayers have been heard. God knows now. He knows them that are His but it is not permitted for us to know the secrets of His counsel towards his people until the day appointed when all will be disclosed by the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To close this discussion I would like to again quote brother Roberts from the 1869 *Ambassador*. "It would be a fatal mistake to overlook and improperly discern the priesthood (with its attendant functions) of Christ as now accessible to the household through prayer. The Truth would be of no use to us if we did. The intercession of Christ is necessary to our salvation : and we can only set it in motion in our individual behalf by individual prayer. To live in disregard of this would be soon to decay from our places in the true vine, and finally at this coming to drop as withered branches to the ground, to be bundled up for consumption with all other fruitless branches, for any cause cut off."

Ronnie Sanders

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## HERITAGE EXCERPTS

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In connection with the previous articles we provide a few quotes that we recently came across from early in our Christadelphian history that provide some interesting and very clear and "black and white" perspective to some of the errors that are currently being promoted within our Community. The thoughts come out of the 1869 *Ambassador of the Coming Age*. (Emphasis has been added)

From the article *A Present Christ vs. A Future Christ*, which deals with the complaints of a Quaker regarding Christadelphian teaching in relation to Christ's future role (p.16):

Regarding works and our development after baptism:

*Their relationship (the believers) to things promised is all through Christ, and is first a question, not of morals, as Mr. Sewell rightly says, but a question of allegiance to the Christ, involving faith, repentance, or change of mind, baptism, or immersion in water, and a subsequent development of righteousness or well-doing, which is the works, according to which, every man sustaining this relationship to Jesus will be judged.*

A few pages later in a different article (p.21)-

*Now, salvation is obtained by faith and works. Not by faith only, nor by works, but by both."*

Back to page 16 regarding Christ as a king and mediator-

*Jesus is not king, in fact, but only as yet King-anointed. He is heir of a kingdom, for which also he has like David been anointed for some time previous to his ascension to the throne. At present he is waiting the preparation of the situation; he has gone "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return...Christ is now a high priest over the household of God, but not a king."*

It continues further-

*Christadelphians by no means deny a present Christ in the Bible sense of such a phrase. The word of Christ signifies anointed, and is indicative of an appointment to a kingdom (Luke xxii. 29), or of an ordination such as Paul refers to in his preaching to the Athenians, where he says God hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained (Acts. xvii. 31) A present Christ, therefore, in the Bible sense of such a thing, involves neither more nor less than the present existence of an anointed one, to whom has been given authority to execute judgment, and to adjudicate upon the affairs of the world in the coming age, and who, meanwhile, has entered into the presence of God on behalf of his waiting people for whom he intercedes before the Father as the high priest of his household."*

Comment:

These quotes are not provided as the final say in the matter, and much more scripturally and historically are available for consideration. The sentiment has been expressed by some before that "the writings of dead men" hold no weight. Most certainly the deposit of writings that we have from our Christadelphian heritage **cannot** be placed on the level of Scripture, but besides the helpful guidance they provide us in our study of the Scriptures they surely provide for us context and comparison as to where we are as a Community today in relation to the revival of Apostolic Belief in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. If we choose not to take advantage and listen to the efforts of sound brethren throughout our history then we cloud our view of the shifts that are taking place in Christadelphia – similar shifts that resulted in the corruption of Truth that led to the establishment of total Apostasy by the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

As the first article mentioned – we have "a deposit of Truth". Isn't it better to learn from and compare with Bible in hand the Biblical Truths promulgated, defended and so well articulated by "dead men" rather than to follow both the subtle and grievous errors and gross confusion being promoted by men who are alive with us today? This does not alleviate the absolute responsibility we have to be able to reason and make conclusions from the Scriptures – "rightly dividing". But, does the death of a man negate the Truths that he once expressed? Such "dead men" used the Scriptures as their guide but the claim is used by those who promote error in these last days that they are the ones that are using the scriptures. Clearly there is a monumental difference in interpretation and application of Bible teaching between early Christadelphia and a growing number of current Christadelphians. The Truth is still Truth whether it is found in the writings of dead men or among the living – the same goes for error as well. Who do we find ourselves in agreement with? - S.K.

## THE SONGS OF ASAPH – Part II

### *A Declaration from Yahweh's Sanctuary*

*With special emphasis on the scriptural exposition of the  
83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm*

#### STRUCTURE OF THE PSALMS OF ASAPH

It is always helpful to understand the context of a passage to glean a clearer understanding of what was intended by the writer. Thus, the Psalms of Asaph should be considered as a distinct group regarding Yahweh's Sanctuary in relation to man. Focusing for now upon the name Asaph in particular, meaning *collector and gatherer, consumer, and destroyer*, we should not be surprised to find such a pattern in the psalms bearing his name. Indeed, this appears to be the case considering the following outline of the Song of Asaph in total:

**Psalm 73** – *Introduction* - The Sanctuary in relation to man.

- 1. Psalm 74** – *Israel consumed and scattered* – the Enemies in the Sanctuary
- 2. Psalm 75** – *An appeal to receive Yahweh's instruction, to be re-gathered and exalted* – Yahweh speaking from the Sanctuary
- 3. Psalm 76** – *Israel's (Yahweh's) enemies defeated* – Yahweh breaking forth from the Sanctuary
- Psalm 77** – An appeal to Yahweh in the day of Trouble
- Psalm 78** – An exhortation to the people to open the blind eye and deaf ear to the instruction of Yahweh's parables.
- 1. Psalm 79** - *Israel again Consumed and scattered* – the Enemies again in the Sanctuary.
- 2. Psalm 80-82** – *A final appeal to receive Yahweh's instruction and to be re-gathered and Exalted* – Yahweh speaking from the Sanctuary
- 3. Psalm 83** - *Israel's (Yahweh's) Enemies defeated in finality* – Yahweh breaking forth from the Sanctuary

Given this suggested outline we can see the makings of a song with a repetitive theme to be used in the worship of Yahweh to remind Israel of their privileged position and yet a warning of the responsibility that comes with that position. Again and again the Psalmist directs the singers back to historical events which tell of Israel's failures and faithlessness, whilst reminding them of Yahweh's abundant mercy and ability to save the repentant servant. The Apostle Paul draws upon this same principle in his letter to the Corinthians in an appeal to them and to us *not* to follow after the

same manner of folly “to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (I Cor. 10:6-11). At this level therefore, the historical references in the Song of Asaph are for exhortation and direction in the way of Truth and righteousness. But history is also prophecy in the song of Asaph, each account building upon the next until the end of the matter is revealed in Psalm 83. Let us now consider some elements of the Songs of Asaph as a whole by which we may gain insight into the conclusion.

### HISTORY IS PROPHECY IN THE SONGS OF ASAPH

**Psalm 74:13-15:** In this Psalm of the enemies who defiled sanctuary, the Psalmist looks back upon the destruction of the serpent system in Egypt from which Israel was delivered, and then looks ahead at the future defeat of Babylon by Cyrus the Great. It was Cyrus who dried up the Euphrates river as a figure of the latter day overthrow of mystical Babylonian, “that old serpent” (Rev. 20:2) out of whose dragon mouth has developed the spirit of humanism that at length gathers the nations to Armageddon (Rev. 16:12-16).

In **Psalm 76** we are given a brief look at David’s overthrow of the Jebusite fortress and the proud hearted who were occupying the place that Yahweh had chosen as His possession, and thus they were spoiled by Joab’s stealthy ascent, unseen until it was too late. This overthrow of the Jebusites is then used as a foundation to amplify the message for when Yahweh arises in judgment to save the “meek of the earth”, and when in His mercy, He will yet restrain His full wrath that a remnant might be saved to inhabit the kingdom. This is foreshadowed by a number of the Jebusites, such as Ornan, who became proselytes and subjects to the king of Israel.

**Psalm 80: 8-19:** Again, the Psalmist makes a sweeping panoramic view across the history of Israel from their coming as “a vine out of Egypt” to conquering the land under Joshua in verse 8; to establishing the kingdom in verse 9-11 when “the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars”; the Babylonian spoiler that broke down the hedges in vs. 12; the Roman domination of vs. 13 (also referred to in Psalm 82 and quoted by Christ in John 10:34); the future development of the fourth beast system or Papal Roman suppression the truth as a “wild beast” in vs. 13; the nation depicted as Yahweh’s vineyard from which he expected fruit, and Messiah’s advent as the “branch that thou madest strong” in vs. 14-15; the 70 AD burning up of the fruitless vine that cut off of Messiah in vs. 16; the exaltation of Messiah, “the man at thy right hand” and second advent in vs. 17; the final restoration (quickening) of Israel after they call upon Yahweh for deliverance in vs. 18; and finally, Judah is saved in vs. 19.



The Enemy in the Sanctuary

**Psalm 83:** The Psalms of Asaph culminate in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm with the final and overwhelming defeat of the enemies of Yahweh’s Sanctuary. All that has gone before has a connection with the sum total. As with previous psalms of the Levitical book, the

Psalmist draws upon history as a foundation to say something about the future course of Yahweh’s plan. The fact that the overall theme of the songs of Asaph are dealing with Yahweh’s enemies, or those who are enemies to His plan and purpose, raises the bar significantly regarding the scope of the message. Moreover, the transgression of these enemies resides not only against natural Israel, but “against Thy hidden ones”, that is, those who are related to Yahweh’s Sanctuary. While these hidden ones that have carried out Yahweh’s will in the past and present consist of the Elohim (angels), in the future these hidden ones (whose lives were hid with Christ throughout their lifetimes) will consist of the multitudinous Christ, the redeemed, apocalypsed in the earth.

Before we move forward, let us first review what we have found out so far:

- Asaph and his descendants were singers and composers of music for use in the temple worship. They were specialists in percussion instruments, which were also used for organizing troops for warfare.
- The Psalms of Asaph comprise a majority of the psalms of the third (Levitical) book of the Psalms.
- The Psalms of Asaph in general are about man in relation to Yahweh’s Sanctuary, with specific relevance to those related to it by the everlasting covenant.
- The Psalms generally draw upon historic events that foreshadow the future.
- Psalm 83 in particular is the last in a series of songs that celebrates complete victory over Yahweh’s enemies.
- Psalm 83, as with previous psalms, has a historic context that bears upon the future.
- Psalm 83 is identified as being written to the chief musician upon *Gittith*. This last and seemingly insignificant notation has tremendous implications of which we hope to mention within the scope of this article.

### THE STRUCTURE OF THE 83<sup>rd</sup> PSALM

Now lets discuss the structure of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm itself. The historic context is critical to understanding the message. The historic context of this psalm may be found in 2 Chronicles 20. Here is recorded the miraculous destruction of the confederacy of Moab and Ammon, and with Edom in a lesser degree, that conspired to destroy Israel while in a weakened condition. This took place in the days of Jehoshaphat [*Yahweh hath judged*], king of Judah (871-847 B.C.) by Yahweh’s unseen army (or hidden ones of the Sanctuary) as recorded by Jahaziel of the sons of Asaph. Psalm 83 was most likely written to commemorate this historic event. It is a type of the future army of “hidden ones” that will sweep out of Sinai and will overthrow the Gogian confederacy and further subdue the entire globe for a single purpose: “that they may seek thy name, O LORD” (Psa. 83:16). We would encourage the reader to take the time to read the entire Chronicles account, but here are the critical verses for review:

<sup>1</sup>It came to pass after this also, that the children of **Moab**, and the children of **Ammon**, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. <sup>2</sup>Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazontamar, which is Engedi. <sup>3</sup>And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah... <sup>13</sup>And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. <sup>14</sup>Then upon Jahaziel [beheld of God] **the son of Zechariah** [Yah has remembered], **the son of Benaiah** [Yah has built], **the son of Jeiel** [carried away of God], **the son of Mattaniah** [gift of Yah], **a Levite** [united] **of the sons of Asaph** [Gathered], **came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;** <sup>15</sup>And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for **the battle is not yours, but God's** [Elohim]. <sup>16</sup>To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz [blossoming]; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel [founded of God]. <sup>17</sup>Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you... <sup>21</sup>And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. <sup>22</sup>And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. <sup>23</sup>For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another. <sup>24</sup>And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. <sup>25</sup>And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much... <sup>28</sup>And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD. <sup>29</sup>And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel. <sup>30</sup>So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about." (2 Chron. 20:1-3; 13-17; 21-25; 28-30).

Given this historic setting with Israel in a weakened and vulnerable condition, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm tells the story as presented in the following outline:

- I. An appeal to Yahweh to reveal His power (to come out from the Nave)
- II. The enemies are judged as conspiring against those of the Sanctuary (Hidden Ones).
- III. Identity of the confederated enemies of the Sanctuary

Confederated Enemies of the Sanctuary		
	Name	Meaning from Strong's and Young's Concordance
1	Edom	(H123, H119) - Red, Adam, to show blood
2	Ishmael	(H3458, H8085) – Attention, consider, hear intelligently
		(H3458, H410) – Strength, might
3	Moab	(H4124) - Water from a Father
4	Hagarenes	(H1904) Wandering
5	Gebal	(H1381, H1379) - to twist as a rope, to bound by a line, border, to set bounds
6	Ammon	(H5983, H5971) - A people, tribe, attendants, my flock
7	Amalek	(H6002) - Warlike
8	Philistines	(H6430, H6429, H6428) – roll, (as in dust), wallow self
9	Tyre	(H6865, H6876, H6864) - A rock or stone, pressed hard, as a knife, a flint, sharp stone.
10	Assur	(H804, H833) – To be straight, level, happy, honest, prosper, blessed.

**Summary on this point:** Ten is a symbolic number representing ordinal perfection. In this case, the cup of iniquity of Yahweh's enemies has come to the full. In the near future the confederated kings of the Roman habitable (i.e., Europe; Dan. 7:20-25) will give their power unto the Beast, particularly under the direction of the Papacy, and shall make war upon the Lamb for "one hour" or a period of 30 years (Rev. 17:12-13). These future enemies are represented by the historic enemies of the past (Edom, Moab, and Ammon) who likewise failed in their effort to overthrow Judah. An acrostic arranged from the individual meanings of the names of these enemies of Israel (as they appear in order within Psalm 83) may reveal a significant warning and blessing that harmonizes with the Psalm as a whole. We will leave this for the reader's personal study to develop.

The present state of affairs in the Middle-East sets the stage and the tone for the coming conflict of Gentile against Jew (and by implication, against Yahweh's Sanctuary). Whilst the Jews re-gathered out of the nations and planted upon the mountains of Israel stand as an ensign of the coming Kingdom of God on the earth (Isa. 18:3), likewise the perpetual hatred of Israel is a precursor to the mindset of the goat nations in a global context against Christ and the Redeemed when they are revealed upon Mt. Zion with the proclamation of the Mid-heaven Gospel, "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7).

1948, 1953, 1967, 1973, 2006: The mind of enmity against Israel by the sons of Adam has not changed over the last century, yet Yahweh's hidden ones (the Elohim in this case) have thwarted all the best laid plans of Israel's enemies. They have been unable to oust the Jews from Eretz Israel. In the future, following the destruction of the Gogian confederacy, the nations of Europe will likewise have "one mind" and will give their power to the false prophet in Rome in an effort to secure their own destiny against the assumed "anti-christ" that they falsely identify in Jerusalem. Despite their best efforts, they will likewise fail to unseat the Lord of all the Earth. The prophet Habakkuk writes, "they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me: their rejoicing was as to devour the poor secretly" (Hab. 3:14). Habakkuk gives an answer to their belligerence as he continues "Thou [multitudinous Christ] didst walk through the sea [of nations] with thine horses [armies, cp. Rev. 19], through the heap of great waters" [where the whore sits – Rev. 17:1] (Hab. 3:15). We would note that Habakkuk's prophecy ends with "to the chief singer upon my stringed instruments". This singer, we believe, is intended to be Messiah himself.

**IV. The impending destruction of the enemies of Yahweh's Sanctuary is compared to other significant historic events from the vantage point of the writer (Jahaziel – 9<sup>th</sup> century B.C. as recorded in 2 Chron. 20) when Yahweh's hidden angels intervened on the occasion and wrought a great victory for Israel.**

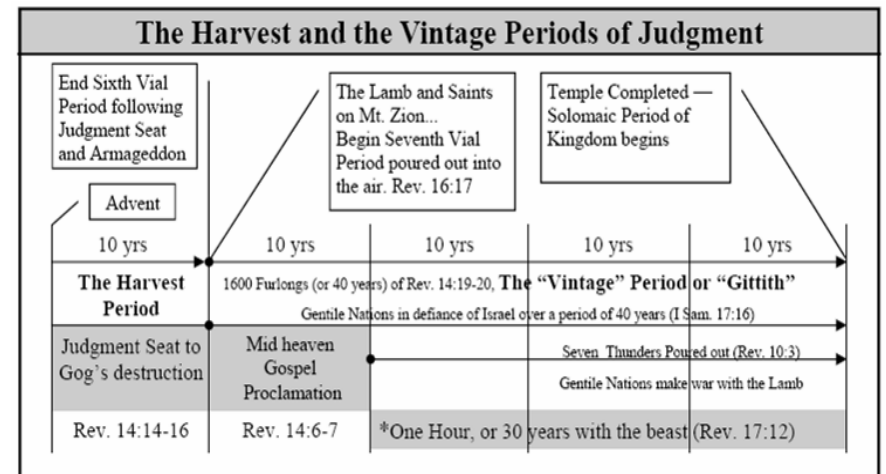
- 1. First historic reference:** Gideon's miraculous victory over the Midianites, "Do unto them as unto the Midianites" is referenced in Psalm 83:9. Also the slaying of the princes of Midian in Psalm 83:11 is recorded in Judges 6-8. The meanings of the names Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah, and Zalmuna tell the story of Israel's faithlessness and the results of sin in the following progression: *Crafty and deceitful* leads to *impure (yellow) doctrine and wolflike characteristics*, leading to *slaughter* by appointed enemies when Yahweh leaves them *without protection*. There is a parallel to these circumstances in the land of Israel today. Endless compromise with men of serpent constitution continues to weaken Israel and make her more vulnerable (without walls, bars or gates) in the eyes of the Gogian invader of Ezekiel 38.
- 2. Second historic reference:** Deborah, Barak, and Jael's miraculous defeat of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, and the 300 chariots of Sisera is referenced in Psalm 83:9. This account is recorded in Judges 4 and 5. Again we are presented with a parable of the Gogian destruction where Deborah (*orderly motion*), Barak (*lightning*) and Jael (*sure-footed*) and the faithful army of Israel act out the part of the multitudinous cherubim/Saints, defeating the invading host with an overflowing flood of destruction (Judges 5:20-21). Moreover, the parable also touches upon the "mother of Sisera" in the Song of Deborah as a type of the "mother of harlots" (Judges 5:28-30).

**Summary on this point:** As Psalm 83 does not indicate a victory over Israel but only the *thought and intent* of her enemies to destroy her, we must conclude that the overall message transcends the initial Armageddon phase of Yahweh's judgments and

is specifically directed at the final epoch of victory over the nations at large. This is the "Winepress" or "Vintage" period of judgment (Rev. 14:19-20) during which the overthrow of the confederate nations under the influence of the Papacy, the enemies of Yahweh's Sanctuary, is consummated. This destruction will be as swift and decisive as the previous overthrow of the Gogian confederacy upon the mountains of Israel (the "Harvest" period of Rev. 14:15). Thus the final Winepress period of judgment is compared to the previous Harvest period (Armageddon) to which the whole world will be witness as an historical event (Ezek. 39:21), even as Jahaziel makes reference to historic battles that likewise are typical of Armageddon. This pattern is born out by the subtitle of the Psalm.

**V. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm has a subtitle that reads "To the Chief Musician upon Gittith".**

*Gittith is a reference to the autumn feast of tabernacles and particularly the time of treading out the grapes in the winepress. There are three psalms bearing this title: 7, 80, and 83. Gittith is from the Hebrew root gath and signifies judgment in the winepress of Yahweh. This is significant.*



In the latter days Yahweh begins to bring His judgments upon the earth. Heretofore, those judgments have been carried out by the hidden Angels under the direction of Christ from the Nave or Sanctuary of the Deity, which is currently at the right hand of God in Heaven, hidden and unseen by man. In the near future, however, a great and dramatic change will occur. The location of the Nave will be reconstituted upon the earth by an unstoppable host coming out of Sinai. The initial phase of this process is apocalyptically identified as the "harvest" (Rev. 14:15) and will encompass the march of the Rainbow Angel, the destruction of Gog upon the mountains of Israel, and will culminate with the sons of Zion triumphant over the enemy in Jerusalem where Christ will announce himself to the nations afar off as Lord of all the earth (Rev.



14:6-7). Without coincidence **these events are foreshadowed in both of the historic references given from the Book of Judges.**

This announcement, following the miraculous defeat of the Russo-Gogian hordes of armies that had invaded the land with a mind to destroy Israel, will infuriate the Papal See (Dan. 7:8) and her confidants, and with indignant pride and great swelling words she will “*make a tumult*” and will take “*crafty counsel against thy people*” (Psa. 83:2-3). Thus, having been placed under spiritual sedation by the Papal Lucifer, the goat nations will garner their forces in their second attempt to “*cut [Israel] off from being a nation*” (Psalm 83:4). In this they will utterly fail, since while they are mobilizing for war a second period of judgment will break upon them unexpectedly and stealthily, as a Jehu breaking in upon the prideful Jebusites unawares. This is apocalyptically identified as “*The great winepress of the wrath of God*” (Rev. 14:19).

The prophet Joel speaks of both the harvest and vintage periods in his prophecy of the latter days to which the nations are summoned:

<sup>9</sup>*Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: <sup>10</sup>Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. <sup>11</sup>Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. <sup>12</sup>Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. <sup>13</sup>Put ye in the sickle, **for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the [wine] press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.** (Joel 3:9-13)*

## **VI. The Seven-Fold destruction of the enemies of the Sanctuary.**

The great winepress, when it is come to the full, is said to fill a space of sixteen hundred furlongs (Rev. 14:20). This we believe to be the equivalent of 40 years (the square root of 1600), during which the last plague, within which are seven thunders, will be poured out by the Cherubim Saints. The seven last plagues, or vials themselves, have been pouring out since at least 1790 by the direction of the Elohim. These, in addition to the seven thunders, may have a direct correlation to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm as seven distinct judgments. These seven judgments may also be subdivided into four groups of like character. Certainly this gives us an answer that the ones carrying out these activities are the Israel of the Deity, the Seven Spirits incorporate with Christ in nature and purpose.

1. **Make them as a wheel** (vs. 13 – a tumbleweed).
2. **As the stubble before the wind** (vs. 13 – chaff)

Isaiah compares the destruction of the Gentile nations that “*rush like the rushing of many waters*” as being blown away “*as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing [tumbleweed] before the whirlwind*” (Isa. 17:13). Likewise Daniel describes the enemies of the stone

power as becoming like “*the chaff of the summer threshingfloors, and the wind carried them away*” (Daniel 2:35).

3. **As the fire burneth the wood** (vs. 14)
4. **As the flame setteth the mountains on fire** (vs. 14, cp. Isa. 30:30).

This “wood” is where the Babylonian Lion (Jer. 5:6) and the wild boar, or Rome, developed their power base (Psalm 80:13). This is not a “wood” well watered and green, but a mangled thicket of bushes and briars entangled with the vine of the earth. Mystical Babylon has developed through various sin-systems nurtured under the constitution of evil rulers of men, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, spread abroad by the Greeks and Romans, and currently presided over by Mr. Ratzinger, Mr. Putin, Mr. Chirac, Angela Merkel, George Bush, Tony Blair and so on. These political “mountains”, however, will be melted by the fervent heat of the sword of Yahweh unsheathed in the mid-heaven: “*Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood*” (Isa. 34:3; cp. Psa. 46:6, 97:5).

5. **So persecute them with thy tempest** (vs. 15; cp. Isa. 28:2)
6. **Make them afraid with thy storm** (vs. 15, cp. Nahum 1:3)

This storm cloud of immortalized Saints will develop from the South of the Holy Land (Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:3; Isa. 63:1), and will quickly ascend and envelop the unsuspecting players in the battle of Armageddon. Many of the prophets of Israel saw in vision this gathering of strong ones that will dispel the current smog of superstition, worldly power and greed and supplant it with the Kingdom of God. Nahum 1:3 records that Yahweh has “*His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet*”. Likewise Ezekiel’s vision of the Cherubim in chapters 1 and 10 carries many of these “storm” attributes such as lightning, thunder, and fiery judgment after which appears the rainbow in the cloud in the day of rain (Ezek. 1:28). This is representative of the judgment of Yahweh (via Christ and the Saints) preceding the time when teaching (rain) will be possible. At present the odious misrule of man is such that they “*have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*” (Rev. 11:6). But after the Cherubim storm is unleashed from Sinai, these present powers and potentates will be for ever swept away. For then the way of righteousness, and the everlasting covenant symbolized by the seven-fold spectrum of the bow, will be manifested throughout the earth: “*But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Yahweh*” (Num. 14:21).

John received a vision of this cloud in its final development in Revelation 10, just prior to the release of the seven thunders. Seven being the number of perfection and the number of the covenant, we are made to understand that when the seven judgments emanate from the Ark of the Covenant revealed in the political heavens (Rev. 11:19), that this judgment will be complete, final and irrevocable.

7. **Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek Thy name, O LORD.**  
(vs. 16).

It is Yahweh's desire that man should seek Him out, not willing that any should perish. But man in his rebellion, being ignorant of the Divine perspective, is ever willing to walk headlong to destruction. As we look upon these seven judgments from Yahweh, one uninformed might get the picture of an unjust and vengeful God bent on the destruction of everyone. But nothing could be further from the Truth. Throughout history Yahweh has sought out a remnant to bear His name. It is man's naivety and belligerence that leads him to destruction, not any form of unjust judgment on God's behalf. Israel stands before us as the prime example. In Isaiah 65:13 it is made clear that Yahweh's servants "*shall eat, but ye [disobedient Israel] shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed*". Yahweh shamed and humbled Israel in the past and will do so again in the future (Ezek. 39:23-26), so that a remnant will seek Him out as revealed in Zechariah 13:9. This principle will likewise operate in measure upon the Gentile nations at the time of the end "*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*" (Dan. 4:17).

The prophets Isaiah and Zechariah likewise reveal this principle of the Hope of Israel being offered to all nations following the removal of the political heavens of the present:

<sup>1</sup>**Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD:** look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. <sup>2</sup>Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him. <sup>3</sup>For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.

<sup>4</sup>Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people. <sup>5</sup>My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. <sup>6</sup>Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished. (Isa. 51:1-6).

And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. (Zech. 14:16)

**VII. Those who pour out the last of these judgments, the seventh vial, into the air** (Rev. 16:17) are not angels in the traditional sense, but are the redeemed, those judged worthy by virtue of their works and character that they have developed by the in-working of the Word over a lifetime of dedication to the Truth.

<sup>6</sup>And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. <sup>7</sup>And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever" (Rev. 15:6-7).

This seventh angel described with "Saint" attributes, having come out of great tribulation (Rev. 7:14) and refined as gold and fine linen, is representative of those "hidden ones" who carry out the final chapter in the history of the kingdoms of men. After a fashion of the Elohim that fought Israel's battles in the past, they will transfer and confer the ownership of the kingdoms of men to the Christ and his associates. This fact is witnessed to by the prophets Daniel and John.

*"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Hitherto is the end of the matter"* (Dan. 7:27,28).

*"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever"* (Rev. 11:15).

The sounding of the seventh angel is inclusive of the seven last judgments poured out upon the confederate kings of Papal Europe that we believe to be patterned within the 83<sup>rd</sup> Psalm dedicated to the "winepress" period of Yahweh's Judgment. While this period is similar to the previous "harvest" or Armageddon phase, it gives no space for success on the part of the enemies of the Sanctuary. While Gog and his host are successful insofar as removing the "kingdom of Saul" in its present state of faithlessness, and so purging Israel, the confederate kings of Europe and the Papal Lucifer are given no such opportunity for success. They are thrown out of the political heavens without warning even as Constantine overthrew the Pagan Dragon power to the earth, yielding to it no hope of victory against his legions of faithful soldiers. "*Even so, come Lord Jesus*".

Bro. A. B. Bryan

(Next and final installment: "Dispelling Myths" regarding Psalm 83).

## CONTEND, CONTINUE, STAND, WATCH, & WARN

In the third verse of Jude we read the familiar statement – “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” These are extremely encouraging and often quoted words and by the emphatic nature they convey it is important for us to consider exactly what they teach us.

The phrase “earnestly contend” comes from the Greek word *epagomizomai* which according to Strong’s means “to struggle for”. We understand that a struggle requires a profound degree of energy and effort and implies that there is an opposite influence or principle that we must contend or wrestle with. We are all too familiar with our daily and almost moment by moment struggle with the failings that arise out of the weakness of our flesh nature; a weakness that constantly acts as an opposite influence against our attempts to develop and act upon a love for God through obedience to His laws – “*oh wretched man that I am!*” (Rom. 7). In Acts 14:22 we read of the exhortation of Paul and Barnabas to the ecclesias in “*exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.*”

Continuing along this line of thought to *contend* for the faith and *continue* in the faith, we read in 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:15 – “*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*” Like in Jude 3, we have another emphatic phrase that should be closely noted. The phrase “stand fast” is from the Greek word *steko*, and means “to be stationary, i.e. to persevere.” In a world that is constantly changing and denies the existence of absolute truth, or if such truth exist no one can really know it – the scriptures exhort us to be *unmovable* upon the foundation of Divine teaching. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58 – “*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.*”

Much of our energies are used in the struggle and tribulation that is instigated by our own sin nature, but it also becomes necessary to *struggle for* the Faith against influences and tribulations that undermine the spiritual health of the collective Body of Christ as well – evils that threaten to extinguish the light that The Faith emanates. Paul passionately warned the believers of apostate influences that threaten the Household: “*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch.*” (Acts 20:29-31) So in our struggle to continue in the faith (THE FAITH) we are commanded to “watch”. Such grievous wolves did not wait for the death of Paul to make their move. He referred to their growing influence in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 11:13-15, “*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.*”

Along with such watching comes the grave responsibility of warning others. Ezekiel 3:17 – “*Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word of My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked, ‘Thou shalt surely die;’ and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.*” (See Prov. 11,12). The apostle Paul along with a lengthy list of prophets and faithful men recorded in the Scriptures carried out this command along with sounding the warning so that others may not be deceived as well. To carry such a duty does not allow one to win any popularity contests. Error does not like to be exposed and those who are complacent to error do not want the stagnate, useless waters of perceived peace to be stirred. This puts the watchman in a very difficult position if the approval of men is a guiding force in their life. Yahweh exhorted Ezekiel with these words – “*Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.*” (Ezek.3:8,9) And to the prophet Jeremiah – “*gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.*” (Jer. 1:17).

So to briefly review, the Scriptures provide very clear guidelines in our duties to The Faith - that we are to *struggle for it*; *continue* in it; *stand fast* or *unmovable* in it; *watch* for it; and *warn* others against its enemies.

### The challenges to being “Unmovable”

As we have briefly mentioned, to follow the instructions given to us puts us in a very difficult position at times both in our relations with the world as well as within the Brotherhood. The world has always been a vain and wicked arena in comparison with God’s standards, but in recent decades we have seen that there has been a remarkable decline in what little decency that existed. The world is in a confused state regarding its beliefs and values. Things once viewed as unimaginable or wicked by even the world’s standards just a few years ago are now embraced if not celebrated (and we need not list them here); while those who cling to more traditional and wholesome standards are ridiculed, discredited, if not themselves accused of being evil, bigoted, extreme, etc. The world has been turned upside down – which the scriptures warn us to expect.

The shift in beliefs and values in these last days views evil as good and good as evil. This phenomenon is mentioned in the scriptures – “*Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*” (Isaiah 5:20) This occurrence is easily observable in the world, but is it not also being made manifest in the Brotherhood as well?

We are seeing modifications in Christadelphian belief, as dealt with earlier in this issue of the S.K. We are also seeing compromises in how Believers relate to the world in our status as “strangers and pilgrims.” The tolerance, apathy or blind eye to the introduction of humanistic/post modern values has interfered with our ability to remain

*unmovable* and to clearly and openly oppose error when necessary, without unpleasant consequences to those who wish to remain firmly rooted in the “old paths” of Christadelphian belief and practice. Beliefs, values and actions that were once considered “good” and the norm in our community are increasingly being labeled as themselves “evil”, “extreme”, “radical”, “mean spirited”, “Judaizing”, “legalistic”, “divisive”, etc. We have to understand that if our goal is to put God before men then contending for the faith in the prescribed manner is not going to be in harmony with men’s emerging definitions of “good”. *“They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.”* (Amos 5:10)

We hear brethren talk about “not going to extremes” and the need to remain “in the middle” or “moderate”. In scriptural terms being moderate in the sense of being doctrinally and spiritually **balanced** is of the utmost importance. And, we cannot let one man’s error push us the opposite direction into a position that is scripturally unsustainable – i.e., “extremes beget extremes”. The problem here though lies in the fact that “the middle” has become an unanchored and drifting standard as definitions of what is considered “the middle” change as it slides further away from our “providential heritage”. As more and more error is tolerated “the middle” (what some may refer to as “fence sitting”) then is pulled further in that direction to compensate for the widening spectrum that the tolerance of, or the lack of action against error creates. For those who are not willing to move with the changing standards they are then left further over onto one side of the spectrum to be viewed as “extreme” or as “trouble makers” by those willing to move for the sake of creating some kind of “middle ground”. A position that was once viewed as the standard or as “balanced” 10, 20 or 100 years ago now finds itself in an ever increasingly despised situation.

The political world defines itself as being to the right or left, or to the “extreme” of either one of these directions. One is considered as conservative while the other is liberal and there are also those who claim to be in the middle or “moderate” while at the same time claiming to be “conservative”. Unfortunately we see the same thing playing out in the Brotherhood. Being that the Truth is the Truth and unchangeable in all its attributes and requirements, and that it is spoken of as the “**straight and narrow way**”, and that we are all to be of “*one mind*”, it is not very encouraging that such a variety exists in Christadelphian belief and practice to warrant the use of the political spectrum to define what is taking place. Our responsibility is not to be “conservative”, “liberal” or “moderate” as far as man defines them in that these descriptions are changing and changing rapidly. Our responsibility lies in being on the side of **The Truth** no matter how “extreme” some may view it. To refer to a verse that cannot be quoted too often or too loudly – “*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.*” But what was the answer of the people to Yahweh’s pleading? “*We will not walk therein... We will not hearken*”.

#### **Dealing with error in our efforts to contend**

In the World’s Redemption, brother Williams states that, “*The Truth is such a perfect system that it will not admit of the introduction of one error without making*

*confusion*”. It has to be understood that it is the introduction of error that creates confusion and division. Error should not be viewed as an “iron sharpeneth iron” element - error is not iron. Error has always been on the attack against The Truth, but if our ability to effectively deal with error when it arises is compromised then the battle has already been lost. There seems to be a serious lack of consensus or urgency within the Brotherhood as to what is to be done when error (either subtle or profound) is introduced. Hesitance, fear of disapproval, the misapplication of Matthew 18, the subject of “judging”, changing views on what love is, lack of agreement on the importance of various doctrines, misunderstandings on fellowship, etc. has left us in a compromised situation in dealing with the challenges that face the Brotherhood as a whole.

The scriptures are not vague in regard to these matters, and thankfully Christadelphian brethren throughout our history were certainly not derelict in their duties against error. We have not the space to quote, but we will provide a few passages that are often overlooked for the readers personal consideration: Ps. 82:2; Prov. 28:4; Rom. 16: 16,18; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:11-13; 6:1-6; Gal. 5:12; Eph. 5:11; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 3:6, 14,15; Titus 1:13; 2:13; 3:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 1:19-20; 5:20; 6:3-5; Heb. 12:15; 2<sup>nd</sup> John 10, 11; Jude 22,23. Our duty is clear, error must be dealt with and the soundness and purity of Truth contended for – both in our personal lives as well as in the collective Body of Christ.

#### **Upholding**

In 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:22 we read, “*Prove (examine or test) all things; hold fast that which is good*”. Like the matter of dealing with error, the scriptures are very extensive in providing exhortation in the matter of upholding the Truth in our attempts to contend for the faith. Please peruse the following passages: Jer. 48:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 16:13,14; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:2; Coll. 2:8; 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 5:21; 2<sup>nd</sup> Thess. 2:15; Heb. 13:9; James 3:17; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:3-7.

In concluding our thoughts, upholding the Truth with love (agape) is a critical factor. Love for God and His Son – “if ye love me keep my commandments”. Love for the “great and precious promises” that have been revealed to us. Love for the Truth in opposition to error – love “*rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.*” And love for our fellow brethren in watching out for anything that might stand in the way of their gaining the future gift of eternal life. Like the Ephesians (Rev. 2:2) we should follow their example, an example that was commended by Christ for not tolerating error and for patiently contending for the faith. But, we cannot afford to leave “our first love” in the process, for which the Ephesians were condemned. In fighting, contending to uphold the form of doctrines known as The Truth we have to be careful that we do not treat it as mere theory, but that we are animated by it and put ourselves, as stated by bro. Thomas in Eureka, in an “original mode of thought and disposition”...“to do the first works”. We cannot lose affection for the substance of our hope which is the result when fighting for the Truth becomes an end in and of itself. It is possible for one to believe the Truth, even tirelessly contend for its doctrinal principles, but yet be void of a sincere motivation to think and act in way that is fully pleasing to God. Let us exercise great care.

Brethren, the road ahead of us is not going to be easy. With all determination let us *contend, continue, stand, watch and warn*; holding fast to our Providential Heritage.

A. Thomas