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THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



What is Aionion Life?

- ALSO -

BEING CHRIST-LIKE

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

“WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF
YAHWEH?”

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

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"The KING OF THE JEWS will first manifest his presence, not to the world at large; which will not know of his being there, or, if told the fact, would not believe it; but to those, whom the blood of the covenant brings before his tribunal."

"All who have made a covenant with Yahweh by sacrifice, and in any way related to "the Covenants of Promise," will be gathered (Psa. 50:5) and stand before this; but it will only be the chosen few, "the called, and chosen, and faithful," who will be admitted to share in the honor, dignities, and glory of the name of Yahweh in Jerusalem enthroned" (Jer. 3:17).

— John Thomas, *Eureka*, Vol. 5, p. 234

"The reader will remember that before the Judgment Seat of Christ in the wilderness of Teman, there were two classes of saints in Christ Jesus constitutionally...the constitution and destiny of these two classes, though originally built upon the same foundation, is widely divergent...the judicial inspection of his household, having separated the refuse and the vile from those "accounted worthy to obtain of the *aion*, and the resurrection;" the rejected, by virtue of the sentence pronounced upon them by Christ, saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the *aionian* fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels," forthwith enter upon their journey to the place of exile or torment; or, in the words of Jesus, "they go away into *aionian* punishment;" while the righteous, by their being quickened, enter into *aionian* life."

— John Thomas, *Eureka*, Vol. 5, pp. 315,316

THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF MEN

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

THE FEET OF THE IMAGE

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

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE IMAGE

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



SUBSCRIPTION/RENEWAL NOTICE

THIS fourth quarter version of the Sanctuary Keeper marks the end of our 9th year of publication under the current editorship. Yahweh willing, we will continue to strive to preach the Gospel message, contend for the one faith when necessary and present articles regarding the hope of Israel in matters related to prophecy, walk and doctrine. Contending for the faith is not an easy task, but it is one that all brethren of Christ must be willing to do in these last days of Gentile times. We appreciate the support from our brethren who have contributed articles, current news excerpts, and donations so that we can continue to distribute a magazine in these troublesome times that may encourage, edify and strengthen the remnant of faithful brothers and sisters in these last few days before the return of our Master and soon coming King.

For the past few years, we continued to mail quarterly magazines to all brethren who were on the previous year's mailing list, regardless if subscription forms were returned or not. We will no longer be able to do that for 2014. If you wish to continue to receive the Sanctuary Keeper in 2014, please return your subscription form as early as possible, but before the end of February to assure the delivery of the first quarter magazine. The annual subscription rate will be kept at \$10.00.

We pray that our efforts will be ceased by the call of our Saviour during the coming year.

The Sanctuary-Keeper
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THE SANCTUARY – KEEPER

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

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

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

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

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WHAT IS AIONION LIFE?

Editor's Note: We are printing the following article in its full content in a single issue rather than breaking it into several installments. The reason for this is we believe that the nature of its content and the valuable resource it provides on this very vital and fundamental matter should be found in one place for easy and future reference - As well as providing the whole argument in its complete context, rather than in a protracted, fragmented manner.

THERE exists today within the Christadelphian body a fundamental error regarding the doctrine of *eternal life* (Gr. *aionios zoe*) and the import of its correct discernment as regarding fellowship and our own salvation. While not denying the future Kingdom Aion to come and the unending (immortal) life that the redeemed will enjoy in that future blessed Age, there are those who believe that *eternal life* (*aionios zoe*) is something that we also possess now, as supposedly evidenced in such phrases as “*hath eternal life*” or “*hath given to us eternal life*” (John 6:54; 1st John 5:11). Thus, the gift

of eternal or *aionion* life is believed by some to be the period of our probation in Christ rather than *only that life* which is from above, to *only be given to the faithful* following the Judgment seat of Christ. Is this true? Is our probation in Christ the subject of the gift of life that Yahweh has given to us?

The purpose of this article will be to examine the subject of eternal life (*aionios zoe*) as found in the Scriptures and to offer a conclusion that what we believe is consistent with the whole of Bible teaching and as believed by Christadelphians for the last 165 years.

Let us state at the outset that the author believes that the doctrine of *aionion* (eternal) life is a first principle truth of the Bible concerning the gift of God to be bestowed upon those so blessed to be judged faithful at the judgment seat, and is not the subject of our walk in Christ Jesus. Thus, its bestowal upon a believer is the result of the *obedience of faith* having been demonstrated, and not a gift granted at baptism either in whole or in part. It is a doctrine that is given much attention to by Moses, the Apostles, and our Lord, of whom John, in particular, recorded a great deal concerning Jesus’ teaching on the **hope** of *aionion* (eternal) life. Our first point of reference then is John 10:27-29:

*“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them **eternal life** (*aionios zoe*); and they shall **never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.”*

Here, our Lord clearly equates *aionion* (eternal) life with “never perish”. Unfortunately, this doctrine which has been quite clear to Christadelphians for over a century and a half, has been clouded by skewed reasoning which supposes that we have “*aionion* life” now and then “never perish” in the future. But such an interpretation placed upon this and other similar passages that we will examine is indeed a “new thing,” and thus a clear departure from the understanding and intent of those who not only organized the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, but pioneered the emergence of truth from the fog of platonic superstition.

The passage above (specifically verse 28) is clearly referenced in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith, Proposition 26, as relating to the hope and reward of the faithful; that for which we look and long for, not something we already have or attain to at baptism. Indeed, in a search of Christadelphian writings, including Bre. John Thomas, Robert Roberts and Thomas Williams, we have not found a single instance where the concept of “*aionion*” or “eternal life,” has ever been understood as relating to our present probation, or as being “in Christ;” and in such cases where it was so used (either within or without the Body), it was publically repudiated as fundamental error.

Aion –from both the Old and New Testaments

The Greek word *aionios* (Strong G166), from the root *aion* (Strong G165) carries the meaning of “an *age*; by extension *perpetuity* (also past); by implication the *world*; specifically (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or

future): - age, course, eternal, (for) ever.” It is the equivalent of the Old Testament *olam* (Strong 5769), usually translated “for ever” or “everlasting,” meaning, “concealed, that is, the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future) that is, (practically) eternity”. The connection between the two words, *olam* and *aion*, is illustrated in John 12:34,

*“The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that **Christ abideth for ever** [eis aion, or “into the age”]: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?”*

“Out of the Law” means out of the Old Testament, or specifically Psalm 89:36-37 from which this passage is quoted, thus:

*“His **seed shall endure for ever** [olam], and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be **established for ever** [olam] as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”*

Another instance occurs in Hebrews 5:6,

*“As he saith also in another place, **Thou art a priest for ever** [eis aion, or “into the age”] after the order of Melchisedec,” which is quoted from Psalm 110: “The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever [olam] after the order of Melchizedek.”*

In these passages, among others, we see an illustration of the fact that the *olam* of the Old Testament, of which Moses and the prophets speak, is the *aion* of the New Testament of which the greater than Moses and the Apostles speak, all from the same source, Yahweh; and concerning the same promise, The Hope of Israel; all to be granted at the same time, the Kingdom of God, to the same people, those counted for the seed; and upon the same principle, the obedience of faith. This will be demonstrated clearly and often as we continue our study.

Now you may have noticed within the definition of *olam* and *aion* the aspect of past or future. We can understand the “past” aspect in the general use of the term in identifying the Mosaic *aion*, for example – a period of time that expired in AD 70 “in the end of this world” (Matt. 13:40; cp Luke 20:34-35; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 1:21). However, the grand object of the Gospel record in the use of the phrase *aionios zoe* (eternal life) has not to do with the Mosaic *aion* of the past, which could not bring life, nor is it the subject of our present probationary life in Christ (in which period we are brought under great tribulation and testing of our faith), but has specifically to do with that peculiar period of time to which all the promises of God relate, that is, the Kingdom *olam* or *aion*; the *hidden period* spoken of by all the prophets concerning Israel’s restoration to glory, the Age to Come, the restitution of all things, and the revelation of the Son of man at his coming and his kingdom. This is the object of *aionios zoe* (eternal life) - not the present mortal veil of flesh and blood, but an *immortal life* of promise still future to our day.

Aionion life is one of the most fundamental truths of Scripture – our hope and belief in great and precious promises. This was the faith of Abraham. Thus, to make light of it, or to suffer the wresting of scripture in a wrong application,

thus robbing them of their intended meaning, is to let the leaven of error in the house. This is a regrettable state of affairs and can only lead to a further watering down of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip” (Heb. 2:1).

“Do you believe you have ‘Eternal Life’ now?” is not the right question.

Getting at the truth of a matter can be a difficult thing because sometimes brethren simply fail to ask the right questions. With regard to this subject in particular, those who believe they have “aionion life now” will reject the use of the English translation “eternal” because they rightly equate the English word “eternal” with the principle of “immortality,” and, of course, they do not believe they are immortal. Thus, to ask one who believes in present possession of aionion life if they have “eternal life now” is as much to ask them “do you believe you are immortal now?” which, of course, they do not believe.

So what is the right question? Ask someone who believes that they have aionion life now to explain their interpretation of John 3:36; John 6:40; John 6:47; John 6:54; John 10:28; John 17:2; Acts 13:48; Rom. 6:23; and I John 9:3-15, etc. Unless brethren are willing to do so, with Bibles open, they will never be able to get at the heart of the matter. Only after a diligent effort is made to rightly divide the Word, will the Truth be found, and, hopefully, a correction made. If this is not possible, the Truth demands that Christadelphians remain separate from the error and those who insist upon it. Simply stated, it is not reasonable to allow a fundamental error in first principle doctrine to continue at the Lord’s Table if we have any expectation to maintain a viable light stand for the Truth in these last days. Anything short of this would not reflect the obedience of faith that Yahweh desires, “...and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Cor. 6:14).

But what if no Scripture were offered in support of this theory and one simply believed they had aionian life? Does it therefore pass the muster so long as no particular reference is displaced from its proper context? Let us consider an example: What if it were claimed that Abraham had aionian life? This is an actual assertion that has been stated publically. How can this be? What Scripture in the Bible proves this “new thing”? Has Abraham been raised to a life to inherit the land of promise and to partake of the blessings, honor and glory, immortality and incorruptibility of the Kingdom which are the very substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen? For this, we believe, is the *only* aionion life ever spoken of in the Bible. If Abraham had aionian life, then upon this basis it could be said that every covenanted believer that ever walked the earth has had their own personal “aionion life”. To make such a supposition, whether specific references are given in its support or not, is to introduce a false premise which obscures the true meaning of the principle where employed by the inspired writers of the Bible. These writers, moved by

the holy spirit, used the phrase, *aionios zoe* (Eternal life KJV) as applied **only** to our future Hope for immortal life in the Kingdom Age, not a present possession, not our probation. As such, any teaching that obscures or detracts from the simple Truth is unacceptable doctrine and is inadmissible among the fellowship of the Saints.

But where the doctrine is allowed to stand can we imagine that brethren would continue to use the words “eternal life” freely in the manner in which Christadelphians have always rightly understood it? Would they rather avoid its use altogether in prayer or exhortation for fear of offenses? Would those using the term be accused of provoking offense? Can we imagine any lecture, exhortation or Bible class in such an ecclesia where the subject could be covered without the seed of doubt and error being thrown into the midst: “But how do you know what *aion* this is speaking of?” “How do you know that verse is future, *aion* is just an age,” “*aionios* has nothing to do with immortality” and so on and so on? In such a case the ecclesia would have surrendered right reason in deference to the one who is astray, and error will have triumphed over the Truth.

The Honor of Kings

In Psalm 25:2 it is recorded that, “*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.*” What “matter” are we searching for? What was the joy that was set before our Master for which he endured all things? The now? The present? Or is it that which is concealed – the hidden period of the Kingdom *aion*? Decidedly, it is the latter. Why should this be a significant distinction for Bible students? Consider the words of Paul to the Corinthian brethren (from the Emphatic Diaglott):

“Besides, the Momentary Lightness of the Affliction, works out for us an excessively exceeding aionion Weight of Glory; we aiming not at the Things which are Seen, but at the Things which are not Seen; for the Things which are Seen are temporary, but the Things which are not Seen are aionion” (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

Clearly stated, that which is seen now in this present mortal veil of flesh, which flies away like a vapor, is not aionion life, but is temporal (Gr. *proskairos* – for the occasion); rather, *aionion* (eternal) life is that which is *not seen* or “concealed,” because it requires the scriptural eye of faith to discern in its future manifestation. Continuing in chapter 5 of Paul’s epistle to the Corinthians (Emphatic Diaglott):

*“For we know, That if the Tent of our Earthly Dwelling be taken down, we have a Building from God, a House not made by hands, **aionion, in the Heavens**. For indeed, in this we are groaning, earnestly desiring to be invested with That Habitation of ours which is from Heaven; and surely, having been invested, we shall not be found destitute. For, indeed, Those Being in the Tent are groaning, being oppressed; in which we desire not to be divested, but invested, **that the Mortal may be absorbed by Life** [zoe]”* (2 Cor. 5:1-4).

In the balance of these verses recorded by Paul, *aionios zoe* (eternal life) is clearly connected with a change of nature, “*that the Mortal may be absorbed by Life*”. What life? Life now? That in which we groan under the weight of mortal affliction? Nay, but life peculiar to the Age to Come “*not made with hands, aionion in the heavens*”. As such there is no legitimate separation of *aionion* life from a change in nature, or immortality. While being different words in the Greek, one (*aionios/aion*) pertains to the hidden period of promise, which is the consummation of the everlasting covenant, and the other (*aphtharsia*, or *aphthartos*) pertains to the nature which one must possess in order to enter in to it. But, in either case, **aionion life and immortality are inseparable from one another**, for they are inseparable from the glory and honor to come as Paul writes to the brethren in Rome:

*“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for **glory and honour and immortality** (aphtharsia), **eternal life** (aionios zoe)”* (Rom. 2:7).

The Truth’s literature for over a century and a half has been consistent in this interpretation, as seen in *The Revealed Mystery, Part II, a discourse on Eternal Life* and in *Phanerosis*, by Bro. John Thomas, as well as clearly taught in *The World’s Redemption*, Chapter XVI by Bro. Thomas Williams. These works can assist us in our learning if we are but willing to submit ourselves to the Word, to exercise the “honor of kings” and to search it out for ourselves. We each have a clear choice to make.

A debate on the meaning of Eternal Life

While living on his farm in Amelia County, Virginia, in the late 1830’s, Dr. Thomas debated leaders of the Campbellite community (of which he was still a part) on this very question: Did man possess eternal life at present or was it a matter of promise? The Campbellite leadership held the former position, and the Dr. held the latter position. The Dr. later compiled his notes from several debates and published them as a formal discourse in the pages of *The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*. Even the name of Bro. Thomas’ publication was a clear declaration of his own understanding of the matter – the *Hope for life* in the Kingdom Age. The material, being of the Truth, is still as fresh today as when it was written, and is available in a booklet by Bro. Thomas entitled, *The Revealed Mystery – or Hidden Wisdom of the Deity, a Discourse on Eternal Life*. In this work, following a summary of Christianity in the Bible, Dr. Thomas makes four propositions and quotes 38 verses on the subject of eternal life prefaced with this principle:

*“The possession of intellectual, moral, and physical powers by man in full, perfect, and unending manifestation [Eternal Life] **is the subject of an assurance** [Promise] **made previous to its realization.**”*

Having set the stage, Bro Thomas begins his argument by placing before the reader the theme of the Gospel writers on the subject thus:

1. 2 Tim. 1:1 - Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, on account of **the promise** of life which is by Christ Jesus.

2. Titus 1:2 - Paul, in *hope* of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, *promised before the times of the ages*—who has now manifested His word (of promises), at the proper season, by the proclamation with which I am entrusted.
3. Heb. 7:6 - *Abraham holding the promises*.
4. Gal. 3:16 - To Abraham were the *promises made, and to his seed*—who is the Christ.
5. 1 John 2:25 - This is the promise, which *He has promised to us*, even eternal life.

“Now,” writes Bro. Thomas, “from the first of our proofs we perceive, that it was on account of **this very promise** that Paul was constituted an apostle of Jesus Christ. It teaches us that the life promised is by Jesus Christ; that is, that it was manifested by him. In a subsequent part of this chapter, Paul terms the promise the purpose and favor of God, ‘given before the times of the ages;’ and given too ‘through Jesus Christ,’ or the seed of Abraham (according to proof No. 4), ‘and now (in his day) made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ; who has indeed vanquished death, *and brought life and incorruptibility to light by the Gospel*, of which Paul was appointed a herald and an apostle.’ Had not the promise of eternal life to ‘all the families of the earth’ been made, there would have been no ‘Apostle and teacher of the Gentiles;’ for it was on account of this promise of life that he was appointed ‘by the will of God.’ Furthermore, he says that ‘the light which is the light of man’ is developed in the Gospel, which he (Paul) preached; consequently, *the gospel is the true interpretation of the promise of life made before the ages of the law*.”

“But Paul says, that *eternal life becomes a matter of hope by virtue of a promise*, which God made ‘before the times of the ages.’ But what period is thus indicated? It is agreed pretty generally, that the times of the Mosaic law are signified, inasmuch as the period of that dispensation or constitution of things, was distributed into ages of fifty years, termed jubilees. It was *before the setting up of the kingdom of Israel, then, that God made the promise of eternal life*. But it may be asked, how long before, and to whom did He make the promise? These are important queries, and ought to be answered with precision.

“Paul says, that the (*diatheekē*) will or promise was made 430 years before the Law of Moses was delivered, and that it was made to Abraham and his seed, which is the Christ; see proof 4. Of these, Abraham was the holder of the promise, and his seed, the Christ, the subject of the will; for Paul terms the promise—‘the will concerning the Christ’—*Diatheekē eis Christon* (Gal. 3:15-17; Luke 22:20; Heb. 10:10). These phrases, then, ‘The will concerning the Christ’ and ‘The promise of the eternal life,’ are one and the same; for the eternal life

and the Christ are the same; for John in guarding his brethren against idols says, ‘We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, that we might know him (the God) that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his son Jesus Christ: *this is the true God (the father) and the eternal life (His Son)*’ (1 Ep. [John] 5:20). Besides, Jesus styled himself ‘the life’ as well as the way, the truth and the resurrection.”

This exposition by Bro. Thomas, of which we have only reproduced a glimpse, clearly sets forth the truth that *aionion* (eternal) *life* is a matter of promise, and that this embodies the whole of the subject. If we but examine the promises to the fathers of Israel, of which the following is a progression from Old to New Testament, this truth becomes even more abundantly clear.

Olam to Aion:

Pointing the way to the Kingdom Age to Come

In the following passages we have inserted the original Hebrew word, *olam*, or Greek, *aion*, where it falls in the text. It will be readily seen that the subject is the same throughout: our precious Hope!

- **Gen. 9:16** And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the **olam covenant** between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* upon the earth.
- **Gen. 13:15** For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for **the olam**.
- **Gen. 17:7-8** And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an **olam covenant**, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an **olam possession**; and I will be their God.
- **Gen. 17:19** And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an **olam covenant**, *and* with his seed after him.
- **Gen. 48:4** And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an **olam possession**.
- **Exo. 32:13** Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit *it* for **the olam**.

These first six passages reveal the core of our Hope – that which specifically relates the Covenants of promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: the *Olam Kingdom*, the hidden period separated from the times of the Gentiles by Divine intervention in the person of Jesus the Anointed and his brethren. This promise was further expanded to David concerning the throne of the kingdom reigning over Israel as follows:

- **2nd Sam. 7:16** And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for **the olam** before thee: thy throne shall be established for **the olam**.
- **1 Kings 2:45** And king Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for **the olam**.
- **Mic. 4:7** And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and *the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for the olam*.

Approximately five hundred years later, the angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary and informed her of Micah's prophecy concerning the son she would conceive and that he would "*reign over the house of Jacob for the olam*," this being translated in the New Testament as the *aion*, i.e., the Kingdom Age, thus:

- **Luke 1:33** And *he shall reign over the house of Jacob for the aion*; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

In these passages we clearly have the future period of the kingdom *olam* and *aion* set forth as one and the same. Those who seek a part in this glorious age cannot do so in this present mortal veil of flesh and blood, for then how would the nations be overturned and how would the nations be ruled over by righteous administrators enforcing the "rod of iron" of their Lord's reign? A *change of nature* is therefore required by those judged worthy in order to enter into that blessed *aion* with power and glory, and this change of nature is the *aionios zoe* (eternal life) of which all the gospel writers speak. Continuing in Mathew's Gospel:

- **Mat. 19:29** And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit **aionios zoe**. (cp. Luke 18:30)
- **Mat. 25:46** And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into **aionios zoe**.
- **Luke 1:54-55** He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy; As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for **the aion**.

Again, here we see the specific connection, purposed by the Spirit, of the promises to Abraham in the Old Testament with the "aion" of the New Testament to which the righteous shall attain.

- **Luke 18:30** Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the **aion** to come **aionios zoe**.
- **John 3:16, 36** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have **aionios zoe**....He that believeth on the Son hath **aionios zoe**: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.
- **John 4:14, 36** But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water *springing up into aionios zoe* And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and *gathereth fruit unto aionios zoe*: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.
- **John 5:24, 39** Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath **aionios zoe**, and shall not come into condemnation; *but is passed from death unto life*.... Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have **aionios zoe**: and they are they which testify of me.
- **John 6:27, 51, 54** Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto **aionios zoe**, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed....I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for **the aion**: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for **the zoe** of the world....Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath **aionios zoe**; and I will raise him up at the last day. (cp John 6:40, 47)
- **John 6:68** Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of **aionios zoe**.
- **John 12:25, 50** He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto **aionios zoe**.... And I know that his commandment is **aionios zoe**: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.
- **John 17:2** As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give **aionios zoe** to as many as thou hast given him.

Pausing here a moment to consider what John has recorded in these passages for our learning, we understand that *aionios zoe* is something that we are progressing toward. But it is conditional. It is a gift to be granted to Christ's brethren if, and only if, there is a manifestation of the Word in them, springing up in their mental faculties and causing them to produce the fruit of the Spirit. This is the evidence of faith, without which none shall receive aionion life.

- **Acts 13:46, 48** Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of **aionios zoe**, lo, we turn to the Gentiles....And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to **aionios zoe** believed.

This passage in Acts brings up an important question: If aionion life was something the Jews already possessed as those under probation of the Mosaic covenant, then how could they be deemed "unworthy" of that which they already possessed as a matter of fact, and which is supposedly not over with until the end of one's probation? Would their aionion life end, now that they had been deemed unworthy? Was their aion probation over? Certainly to answer in the affirmative destroys the very false theory that is being espoused; that aionion life equals covenant relationship, whether faithful or unfaithful. Rather, aionion life is that for which we strive for as Paul explains to the brethren in Rome; it is a precious gift predicated upon a tried faith.

- **Rom. 2:7** To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, **aionios zoe**.
- **Rom. 5:21** That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto **aionios zoe** by Jesus Christ our Lord.
- **Rom. 6:22-23** But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end **aionios zoe**. For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* **aionios zoe** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thus far we have reviewed how the meanings of the Hebrew *olam* in the Old Testament, and the Greek *aion* in the New Testament are both pointing to one and the same end – the Kingdom Age upon the earth when Jesus Christ reigns upon the Throne of David in Jerusalem. This is the "Age to Come" or "Hidden Period" spoken of by Moses and all the prophets which has been revealed only to those who have the "eye of faith." To all others it remains a mystery and cannot be perceived. Thus, it is not hidden to Yahweh's servants, but hidden only to the world – children of darkness - who cannot perceive it.

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1Th 5:5).

We have referenced a number of verses in both Testaments where the words *olam* and *aion* are used, respectively, and how this theme of aionion life runs throughout the Scriptures. We will proceed by looking at three references in the Book of Daniel, each of which carry forward by way of the One True Gospel – that is, the Things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ - and are expressed by the message of Jesus, the apostles and all the epistles to the first century ecclesias concerning the hope of aionion life.

- **Dan. 2:44** And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for the **alam (Chaldee for olam)**.
- **Dan. 7:27** 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 **alam kingdom (Chaldee for olam)**, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.
- **Dan. 12:2** And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to **olam** life, and some to shame *and olam* contempt.

These verses in Daniel form the backbone of Bible Prophecy and cry aloud the central theme of the Gospel – the hope for aionion life, i.e., the Things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus the Christ who has opened the door thereto. Now, to carry this forward to the New Testament writings, we also find a connection of the "olam life" spoken of in Daniel, to which some shall awake, with the *resurrection of life* taught by John, thus:

- **John 5:28-29** Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

What is this resurrection of life spoken of by John? Our life now? Our probation? No, it is that which is ours by promise, to be determined, however, through the obedience of faith. In the following references we will find that this principle continues to reign true: ***Aionion life is The Hope of Israel.***

- **Gal.6:8** For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap **aionios zoe**.

- **2 Thes. 2:16** Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us **aionios** consolation and good hope through grace.
- **1st Tim. 1:16** Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to **aionios zoe**.
- **1st Tim. 6:12, 19** Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on **aionios zoe**, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.... Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on **aionios zoe**.
- **Tit. 1:2** In hope of **aionios zoe**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the [Mosaic] world began [i.e. the promises to Abraham].

Here we see again the fact stated by inspiration that the hope for aionion life, the reward of the righteous, is a promise that was established before the Mosaic Aion began, that is to say, by promise to the Fathers of Israel. These were justified by Yahweh's Grace, who, by faith, wrought righteousness. Likewise those of the first century, as well as all believers since that time, are justified through Jesus Christ in the hope for eternal life.

- **Tit. 3:7** That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to *the hope of aionios zoe*.
- **Heb. 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the **aionios** covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be glory eis aion, aion*. Amen.

These verses are critical for us to understand with regard to the grand plan of redemption instituted after the fall in the Garden of Eden. *Aionios zoe* is the end result for which the atonement at the beginning was purposed, which was afterward revealed to Abraham and his seed and confirmed by a covenant of promise. Therefore, these three are inseparable: the doctrine of the atonement (or the blood), the covenants of promise and aionion life, so much so, that the offering of Christ is styled, "*the blood of the aionios covenant*." They are as cause and effect, working throughout the life of a believer in which the Truth has been manifested, and this manifestation is styled "*the obedience of faith*" by Paul.

- **Rom. 16:25-27** Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the [Mosaic]

aion began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the **aionios theos**, made known to all nations for *the obedience of faith*: To God only wise, *be glory through Jesus Christ for the aion*. Amen.

Continuing forward from Peter to the Apocalypse:

- **2nd Pet. 1:10-11** Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the **aionios** kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- **1st Jn. 1:2** For the **zoe** was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that **aionios zoe**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.
- **1st Jn. 2:25** And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even aionios zoe*.
- **1st Jn. 5:20** And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and **aionios zoe**.
- **Jude 1:21** Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto **aionios zoe**.
- **Rev. 14:6-7** And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the **aionios** gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 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.

Here, we have exhibited in the covenants of promise to the fathers of Israel, manifested to us through the messenger of the covenant and perfect covenant sacrifice, even Jesus the anointed, the doctrine of eternal life (*aionios zoe*) to be universally glorified in the world to come. It is a promise and reward that rests with the Christ to give unto every faithful servant of God following the resurrection if so approved at his coming and his kingdom, and not before.

The transition of the subject from the Old Testament (*olam*) to the New Testament (*aion*) in association with the covenants made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David, ratified through the promised seed (the Christ) made manifest to us (the heirs, as those in Christ are counted for the seed), could not be made more clear and basic than the above pearls of truth linked together upon one

central theme: *the hope of Eternal Life*. The recognition of these truths was one of the first major points of division that led to the separation of the Christadelphian Body from the throngs of Campbellism and their “kingdom now,” “Christ is King now” and “we have eternal life now” trilogy of superstition. We are very grateful that Bro. Thomas did not allow this point of truth to go to the wall without a fight, because when these errors were exposed, it began the process of separation from apostasy and eventually brought forth a body of believers; the Christadelphians. But now for some reason, these errors have begun to creep back into the house from which (with Yahweh’s help, no doubt) it was so thoroughly swept clean for so many years.

Sadly, among the Campbellites were those who wrested some of these same Bible passages believing that they had *eternal life now* in context with their erroneous belief of having immortal souls. This false creed has taken many forms over the course of time, including the evangelical doctrine of “once saved, always saved,” as well as the current form being espoused by some Christadelphians today who have wrested the same passages believing that they have an *aion of life now in Christ Jesus* relating to their probation. In any case, there is one common principle that exists in the Bible which destroys this theory, thus: Nowhere in either the Old or New Testament writings is the Hebrew word *olam* (meaning concealed, or hidden period or age) or the Greek word *aionios* (or *aion* – meaning a set time, or period of time) specifically called out with respect to one’s probation under the law of Moses or in Christ Jesus as a present possession, morally or constitutionally, but only with respect to God’s Kingdom, whether the first, belonging to the Mosaic Olam, which was overturned due to unbelief, or the second, that which will be restored to Israel at our Lord’s coming under the law of Christ. Rather, what all of these passages we have reviewed have to do with is our hope for life in that future *aion* or period of time, or age, called the Kingdom of God. Moreover, possession of eternal life (*aionios zoe*) is predicated upon certain *conditions of obedience to God*, and not before. (Evidence: **Matt. 19:16; 19:29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 18:18, 30; John 4:36; 10:27-28; 12:25; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; I Tim. 6:12; I John 3:15; Rom. 6:23; Gal. 6:8; 2 Peter 1:10-11**).

With the above passages in mind, the so-called “present possession of aionion life” definition that is being placed by some upon specific passages of the Bible cannot be sustained by a thorough comparison with like passages which clearly set forth the subject at hand as our “hope” and a “promise” predicated on obedience, not our present possession by virtue of having been baptized. Therefore one cannot inherit this life for the Aion, or Kingdom Age, without the benefit of having succeeded in a trial of one’s faith that, if successful, will culminate in a change of nature, when, if by the blessing of the righteous judge, this corruptible shall put on incorruption. Plainly speaking, as concerning immortality and aionion life, you cannot have one without the other – it is impossible. While it is true that there is not an exact English equivalent for the Greek word *aion*, the King James translators did not make a profound

error in translation by rendering “aion” as “eternal” but, rather, explained in “plain English” that which is the fact: to obtain aionion life is to live forever. Thus to speak of obtaining this “aionion life” when emerging from the waters of baptism, when no test of faith has occurred, nor a change of nature has taken place, is a gross absurdity, a presumption made in stride with present spiritual kingdoms and Davidic thrones in heaven! Have we as individuals forgotten the very foundations upon which we as a community of believers have stood for all these years? The Christadelphian body emerged from these false creeds of Campbellism 165 years ago and some are now entangled again by doctrines that are devoid of hope and that cannot save.

How are such departures from the Truth to be dealt with? First we try to reason, and if we succeed we have gained our brother. *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth”* (2 Tim. 2:25). But what if our friend will not yield to reason? Can we ignore the error without the Truth suffering harm? Is it reasonable that those who have changed their beliefs be allowed to impinge upon the sacred fellowship of the faith once delivered to the Saints without so much as a question? If so, what other doctrines that were once considered sacred will afterward be allowed to “let slip?” If Bro. Thomas had maintained a position such as this, it is quite doubtful that we would have the Truth today, much less, exist as a community. What has happened to the principle of Hope? Have we as a community become so dulled in our senses with our “instant everything” conveniences that we must also seek to change the ways of God and deceive ourselves into believing that we can have eternal life now as well? Are we saved by that which we have now? What saith the Scripture?

“We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom. 8:24)

The doctrine of Eternal Life is a First Principle Truth

Should someone be baptized who, upon examination, declared their belief that eternal life (*aionios zoe*) was their present possession? Is this a doctrine, which, like the Kingdom of God, the reign of Jesus Christ upon the Throne of David, the nature of man, the nature and sacrifice of Christ, the unity of God and so on, has but one acceptable answer: a doctrine concerning which we cannot accept deviations from our declared Statement of faith (BUSF)? If so, and we affirm that this is the case concerning the doctrine of eternal life, then deviations from a correct form of doctrine are deviations from first principle Truth.

We have already quoted two Scriptures concerning the doctrine of eternal life that are referenced in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith. What did the authors of that statement believe eternal life meant? An examination of the Statement of faith itself is sufficient to provide an answer. Below, we have listed instances where the Hebrew word *olam* (H5769), and Greek words *aion*

(G165), *aionios* (G166) and *zoe* (G2222) occur in the Christadelphian Statement of Faith.

Proposition I:

- **Isaiah 26:1-4:** “¹In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will *God* appoint *for* walls and bulwarks. ²Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. ³Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind *is* stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee. ⁴Trust ye in the LORD *for* ever: for in the **LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting** [olam] strength.”
- **1st Timothy 1:17:** “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be honour and glory for ever and ever* [eis aion aion]. Amen.”

Proposition II:

- **Luke 1:33:** “*And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever* [eis aion]; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Proposition V:

- **2nd Corinthians 5:2-4:** “²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: ³If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, *that mortality might be swallowed up of life* [zoe].”

Proposition VI:

- **John 3:16:** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him *should not perish, but have everlasting life* [aionios zoe].
- **2nd Timothy 1:1:** “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, *according to the promise of life* [zoe] which is in Christ Jesus,”
- **Titus 1:2:** “*In hope of eternal life* [aionios zoe], which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
- **1st John 2:25:** “And this is the promise that *he hath promised us, even eternal life* [aionios zoe].”

Proposition VII:

- **Psalms 89:34-37:** “³⁴My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. ³⁵Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. ³⁶His seed *shall endure for ever* [olam], and his throne as the sun before me. ³⁷It *shall be established for ever* [olam] as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.”

- **Isaiah 51:8:** “For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but *my righteousness shall be for ever* [olam], and my salvation from generation to generation.”

Proposition VIII:

- **Daniel 7:14:** “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: *his dominion is an everlasting* [alam –Chaldee for olam] dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.”
- **Romans 5:21:** “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace *reign through righteousness unto eternal life* [aionios zoe] by Jesus Christ our Lord.”
- **Hebrews 5:6:** “As he saith also in another *place*, *Thou art a priest for ever* [eis aion]; after the order of Melchisedec.” (cp. Psa. 110 - olam)
- **Hebrews 5:9:** “And being made perfect, he became *the author of eternal* [aionios] *salvation* unto all them that obey him;”
- **Revelation 1:18:** “*I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, *I am alive for evermore* [eis aion aion], Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”
- **Revelation 11:15:** “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and *he shall reign for ever and ever* [eis aion aion].”

Proposition IX:

- **Luke 1:33:** “And he *shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever* [eis aion]; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Proposition XII:

- **Hebrews 9:15:** “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called *might receive the promise of eternal* [aionios] *inheritance*.”

Proposition XVI:

- **Acts 13:48:** “And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as *were ordained to eternal life* [aionios zoe] believed.”

- **Romans 2:7:** “To them who by patient continuance in well doing *seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life* [aionios zoe]:”

Proposition XVIII:

- **Psalms 21:4** (OSF): “He asked life of thee, *and* thou gavest *it* him, *even* length of days *for ever and ever* [ad olam].”
- **Hebrews 5:9** (OSF): “And being made perfect, he became the *author of eternal* [aionios] *salvation* unto all them that obey him;”

Proposition XIX:

- **Daniel 2:44:** “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and *it shall stand for ever* [olam].”
- **Daniel 7:13-14:** “¹³I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: *his dominion is an everlasting* [olam] *dominion*, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.”
- **Revelation 11:15:** “And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and *he shall reign for ever and ever* [eis aion aion].”

Proposition XX:

- **Daniel 7:13-14:** “¹³I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: *his dominion is an everlasting* [olam] *dominion*, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.”

Proposition XXI:

- **Micah 4:6-8:** “⁶In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted; ⁷And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and the LORD *shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever* [ad olam]. ⁸And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee

shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

Proposition XXII:

- **Isaiah 60:15:** “Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through *thee*, *I will make thee an eternal* [olam] *excellency*, a joy of many generations.”
- **Micah 4:7,8:** “⁷And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: *and the LORD shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever* [olam]. ⁸And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

Proposition XXIII:

- **Daniel 12:2:** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, *some to everlasting life* [olam chay], and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt.” (Cp. John 5:29).
- **John 6:39-40:** “³⁹And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, *may have everlasting life* [aionios zoe]: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Proposition XXVI:

- **Psalms 37:29-30:** “²⁹The righteous shall inherit the land, and *dwell therein for ever* [olam]. ³⁰The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment.”
- **Proverbs 10:25-30:** “²⁵As the whirlwind passeth, so *is* the wicked no *more*: but the righteous *is* an *everlasting* [olam] foundation. ²⁶As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes, so *is* the sluggard to them that send him. ²⁷The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened. ²⁸The hope of the righteous *shall be* gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish. ²⁹The way of the LORD *is* strength to the upright: but destruction *shall be* to the workers of iniquity. ³⁰The righteous shall never be removed: but the wicked shall not inhabit the earth.”
- **Daniel 7:27:** “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* [olam] *kingdom*, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

- **Daniel 12:2:** “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, *some to everlasting life* [olam chay], and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”
- **John 10:28:** “*And I give unto them eternal life* [aionios zoe]; *and they shall never perish*, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”
- **Romans 2:7:** “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, *eternal life* [aionios zoe].”
- **2nd Corinthians 5:1-4:** “¹For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, *an house not made with hands, eternal* [aionios] *in the heavens*. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: ³If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, *that mortality might be swallowed up of life* [zoe].”
- **Galatians 6:8:** “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit *shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting* [zoe aionios].”
- **2nd Peter 1:11:** “*For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting* [aionios] *kingdom* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

TOTAL OCCURRENCES: 40

It should be made perfectly clear, by an honest examination of these propositions and the accompanying verses, that there is no instance where these Scriptures are cited as something that we possess now. Moreover, those who would still insist that such a view is not conclusive should at least be honorable enough to admit that they no longer hold with the Christadelphian Statement of Faith such that any pretensions to the contrary may cease.

The doctrine of Eternal Life is a matter of fellowship

We are convinced that the belief in present possession of aionion (eternal) life by the misapplication of said scriptures (thus robbing them of their true import -- the *Hope* of Israel) makes fellowship at the Lord's table impossible with one who holds such a belief, whether newly baptized or having changed one's mind on this teaching at some point in time after baptism (2 John 1:10-11). Given all the above, we are very concerned that the message of the Apostle John, who gives a stern warning concerning a misapplication of this fundamental doctrine, is being taken far too lightly by some. Consider what the apostle recorded by the Spirit concerning anyone who does not believe the record that God has given us regarding the hope for aionion (eternal) life:

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, [aionios zoe] and this life [zoe] is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have aionios zoe, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (1 John 5:9-13).

The gravity of the warning of this passage is not our personal judgment, but it is the conclusion of the Spirit Word, and there is no circumventing it. This is a very serious matter as there cannot be two right answers to the meaning of *aionion* life. The strength of the principle of eternal life evidenced throughout the Scriptures make it abundantly clear that the object of this principle cannot be both *now* and *future*; it is either one or the other, in this passage, and consistent throughout the Bible.

The confusion that has now arisen to shroud the Truth exists with regard to the apparent present tense of the verbs “hath given” and “have” in the KJV translation. “God Hath given” (*theos didomi*, Strong 2316 and 1325) means “to give, bring forth, bestow, grant,” while “have” (*echo*, Strong 2192) can mean “to hold, possession, ability, contiguity, relation or condition” and is used in the New Testament in both a literal or figurative mode. Here it is figurative of that which is given by a promise, and that promise is conferred upon the holy seed through Christ. Taking both of these together, we understand that the Bible speaks with surety concerning many things that are yet in the future as though they were already accomplished, e.g., “*God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were*” (Rom. 4:17). A clear example of this principle may be found in Revelation 11:15, thus:

“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever [eis aion, aion]” (Rev. 11:15).

Unlike the allies of the Pope, we understand that the fulfillment of this passage is yet future to our time and lies with the manifestation of the Kingdom of our Lord at the overthrow of said kingdom of men when they become his footstool. Therefore, these verses do not confer authority to Rome, nor its pretended throne, over all principalities and powers as the Catholics assume by the apparent present tense of the verb “are become” (Strong 1096, *ginomai*, “to cause to be”).

This identical principle rests with the subject at hand, eternal life. Though absolutely certain to be the possession of the faithful, its bestowal will be commensurate with the manifestation of the kingdom and the exaltation of Christ's brethren as kings and priests over the earth. It is just that simple! A

practical demonstration of the present tense use of “eternal life” with a view toward the change of nature to be given to the faithful occurs in John 10:28:

“And I give unto them eternal life [aionios zoe]; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of my hand.”

“I give,” present tense, it would seem on the surface, but the aim of John’s message is clear when he adds, “and they shall never perish,” indicating that such is the pleasure of the Eternal Spirit to give unto those who are faithful at Christ’s coming and his Kingdom. Oh give us the purity of the deep and refreshing waters of life of Yahweh’s Truth to be made manifest to all spiritually minded men, even for the *aion* of *aions*!

The Life is in Him Now, Not in You

We would now like to briefly turn our attention to a quotation from *The World’s Redemption* on the subject at hand and particularly with regard to the present tense use of the phrase “eternal life” given in such passages as the above quotation from I John 5:9-13. Brother Williams was also in contention with those outside the Body (and some within) who were clinging to orthodoxy and would not relent. To them he explains:

“Now the words ‘hath life’ are clearly explained by the apostle Paul when he says: ‘Ye are dead, and *your life is hid with Christ in God.*’ It is yours so long as you believe in and are faithful to Christ; but you must hold thus fast to Christ in order to have the life, for the life **is in him now, not in you** [see 1 John 5:1]. ‘When Christ, *who is our* [insert aioninan] *life*, shall appear, *then* shall ye also appear with him in glory’ (Col. 3:3).”

The Old Testament type to which the Apostle Paul and Bro. Williams refer is the Tabernacle in the wilderness in which was contained the Ark of the Covenant, inside of which was the Golden pot of manna. Now that the Ark of the Covenant is representative of the Christ in the immortalized state is not in dispute. Paul writes concerning Jesus, “*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (literally, mercy seat) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God*” (Rom. 3:25). The Apostle Paul explains the type as related to the manna, which did not corrupt, hidden within the golden pot beneath the mercy seat and inside the Tabernacle where none could see, as representing eternal life “*hid with Christ in God*”. The “life” was hidden in a figure of the incorruptible manna. As such, this “life” cannot relate to the life which we have now which corrupts, but can only relate to the promise of that which will not corrupt, if so approved to enter into the golden state of the Kingdom Aion with a change in nature – incorruptible, immortal.

To summarize this point, *aionion life* in the figure of the incorruptible manna was contained in the golden pot representing the result of tried faith and,

as expressed by Bro. Williams, it was “**in him now** [i.e., in the Christ-Ark held in store in heaven], **not in you.**”

This reaffirms the previous explanation by Brother Thomas: that by covenant relationship we are **heirs**, Christ holding title to eternal life (*aionios zoe*), but do not yet possess it. We are related to it by virtue of Christ’s blood which, in a figure, was taken into the Most Holy and sprinkled upon the mercy seat (beneath which the incorruptible manna was stored unto the day of its antitypical revelation) on the Day of Atonement. Aionion life is therefore *a promise predicated upon the obedience of faith* of those in Christ Jesus; those who have come under the “pardon of life” coupled with a righteous walk, rendering them as vessels fit for the Master’s use at his coming and his Kingdom and may be adequately summed up by the phrase, “*the Hope of Israel.*” When baptized into this hope, our names are recorded in the book of life, and our character, through the impress of the Divine Word, is kept in memory by God. This, our hope, is eternal, indivisible, and incorruptible despite whatever man may do to us because it is under the protection of the Christ-Ark who holds *the promise of aionion life in his name*. Again, we must stress, this *life* is in *his possession*, in the Christ-Ark, not in us.

Given this divine pattern laid out in the type before us, we can no more receive *aionion life* now as our present personal possession than could the Israelite approach the holiest of all in the Tabernacle and eat of the incorruptible manna. But when the Christ Ark is revealed in the political heavens, then it shall be opened unto his faithful brethren, and they shall eat:

“*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it*” (Rev 2:17).

Manna literally means “a whatness” or “what it” because its ultimate object was not seen by the man of the flesh. Thus, it is synonymous with “*olam*” and “*aion*” in the sense of that which is *concealed from sight* or understanding, that which cannot be grasped without the eye of faith. It is faith that gives us the proper vision of the future Kingdom Aion and keeps the spiritual man steady within the turbulent world about. Any teaching that detracts from this hope and spiritual vision must be cast out of our midst as it is a danger to the foundation of our Faith (2 John 1:10).

Conclusion

To summarize, we believe that the doctrine of eternal life (*aionios zoe*) is a matter of promise and forms the basis of our sacred hope (as Christadelphians have always believed). The doctrine of aionion life is a *first principle truth* which is taught consistently throughout the books of Moses, the prophets, the Gospel writings and epistles of the first century ecclesia. Thus, far from being an insignificant detail in the outer orbit of Christadelphian doctrine, much to the

rather it is at the very core of the Truth. Moreover, God is not the author of confusion, so there is no reasonable argument for suggesting that one passage on the subject relates to the now and the next one to the future. We cannot dismiss departures from the Truth of the matter as insignificant or inconsequential, for such is a path to confusion and error that will open the gates to further departures from the one faith.

We believe, therefore, that aionion life concerns the *THE HOPE* of *ISRAEL*, as God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living (Mark 12:27). We believe that this *HOPE* is the *HOPE OF LIFE* to be given to the faithful for the Kingdom Aion (Age) to come and beyond, which "life" cannot be possessed by any person presently, either constitutionally or morally, but currently as only a matter of promise, "*for we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not [the Kingdom aion], then do we with patience wait for it*" (Rom. 8:2-25).

Brethren, this is not a mystery, it is plain Truth: "*The righteous are raised to eternal life, to possess, in all the Age, the Kingdom of God restored again to Israel, with the government of all nations thereunto annexed*" (Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, bound volume for 1854, pg 68). This is the promise offered to those of faith, such as righteous Abel, from the beginning of time. It has been made manifest by the bruising of the serpent's head by our Lord and Savior who *hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel*, and we either stand for it or against it, there can be no middle ground

A. B. Bryan

APPENDIX

Additional thoughts on the Subject by past Christadelphian Writers

The World's Redemption – Bro. Thomas Williams, Chapter 16

Speaking in reference to 1 John 5:12: "*A drowning man will snatch at a straw, and finding defeat inevitable on every hand our opposers will sometimes say: 'Well, we will grant your claims for conditional life and that it is for the righteous only, and we will still hold you to the phrase 'hath life'--that is, that the believer hath eternal life as an actual possession; for the text says: 'He that hath the Son hath life.'"* Very well; stick to the text, the whole of it, and not a garbled part of it, and we shall soon see the fallacy of your present actual possession theory. You now want to have it that every man who

believes in Christ is in actual possession of eternal life. Now suppose there is a "falling away from the truth and a giving heed to fables," does the actual possession cease to be actual possession? For when one departs from the Truth and "falls away" and "crucifies the Son of God afresh and puts him to open shame" (Heb. 6: 6), surely such an one "hath not Christ;" and the text says, "He that hath not the Son of God hath not life." Is it that one can come into actual possession of eternal life and then lose possession; and, if his sin is not unto death, repent and again come into actual possession, and so on and so on? No sane man would accept such an absurdity, and a theory that so enslaves one as to shackle him with such chains of darkness and folly had better be relegated to the darkness whence it came."

Christendom Astray - Bro. Robert Roberts. Lecture 5

"Everlasting punishment" is affirmed of the wicked; but this does not teach eternal torment. Aionian translated "everlasting," does not necessarily import unending perpetuity. Of aion, age, from which it is derived, Parkhurst observes, "It denotes duration or continuance of time, but with great variety." Aionian, therefore, means age pertaining, without fixing duration, which is determinable by the scope of that of which it is affirmed. In the case before us, it is spoken of the punishment of the wicked. As we know, from other parts of Scripture, that the punishment of the age of retribution terminates in death, we are enabled to see the "aion" of the punishment is only coextensive with the duration of that punishment.

Some imagine that the application of this principle to the phrase "eternal life" destroys the hope of immortality, by making it a thing of possible terminability. If there were nothing beyond the phrase "eternal (aionian) life," we should have an uncertain foundation for the hope of endless life. We should in that case simply be informed that there was an age pertaining life—a life pertaining to the coming age of God's intervention in human affairs, but should not, by the phrase, receive any information as to the nature of that life or the extent of its duration. But the case stands not in this uncertain state. We are explicitly informed by other testimonies, that while aionian punishment ends in death, the life to be conferred in that same aion is inextinguishable. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world . . . neither marry nor are given in marriage; NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels" (Luke xx, 35-36). "There shall be NO MORE DEATH" (Rev. xxi, 4). "They shall never perish" (John x, 28). "He will swallow up death in victory" (Isaiah xxv, 8). "This mortal must put on IMMORTALITY (I Cor. xv, 53). If immortality had an end, it would not be immortality. Aionian life is unending life. We know this, not from the use of the word aionian, which would tell us nothing on the subject, but from testimonies like those quoted."

Bro. Thomas Williams, Rectification (in Selected Works) Pages 12-13

"Now we need not here spend much time on the philology of the words "eternal life," it is more satisfactory to study the doctrine of the terms.

Presently we will give the original words and their meanings which stand for "immortal" and "incorruptible," simply asserting here, that "eternal life" doctrinally means life manifested in and through incorruptible bodies. In Rom. ii. we are, in substance, told, "If you will seek for immortality, I will give you eternal life." If "immortality" is superior to "eternal life," and the latter only means life for a thousand years, then we are asked to seek for a superior thing and only promised an inferior thing. Reason rejects this as absurd, and concludes that since we are exhorted to seek for "immortality" and promised "eternal life," the one must be involved in the other, or, in substance, both mean the same thing; and therefore to receive "eternal life" promised is to receive the "immortality" sought for."

"The most instructive and satisfying way to find truth is to compare scripture with scripture. We can be assured that to receive eternal life is to receive immortality thus: Christ is immortal (this is admitted), when He appears "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." In the resurrection we shall be made "equal to the angels" in that we shall "die no more." In the resurrection, this mortal shall put on immortality; and at the same time "eternal life" is received; therefore "immortality" and "eternal life," doctrinally and in essence, mean the same."

***phi·lol·o·gy**
[fi-lol-uh-jee]

noun

1.
the study of literary texts and of written records, the establishment of their authenticity and their original form, and the determination of their meaning.
2.
(especially in older use) linguistics, especially historical and comparative linguistics.
3.
Obsolete . the love of learning and literature.



BEING CHRIST-LIKE

WE want to start this exhortation by asking a question. *Why were we created by our creator?* The answer is, we were created to know God, to love God, and to serve God. Now, each of those three things right here entails of a whole lot. It takes a lot of study and knowledge to know God, a lot of faith and proper actions to show forth your love for God, and a lifetime to serve God. We are told in the Bible to keep God's commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all our heart. How do we do this? This is the next question we want to ask. It is a really big question with a really big answer. No one kept God's commandments better than Jesus. No one cleaved to his father more than Jesus and no one served God with all his heart more than Jesus. No one knew God better than His son and no one loved God more than his son. We have the Perfect example in the bible to show us how to do these things. If we follow the example of Christ and are Christ-like, we will accomplish everything God created us to do. The topic I want to speak on this morning is how to be more Christ-like. What are some characteristics or attributes that we can build or some things we can do to be more Christ like so we can better serve our Creator.

Keeping the commandments of Christ and being baptized.

Keeping the commandments of Christ and being baptized are two ways that we can be more Christ-like. These are the first two things we wish to consider that relates to being more Christ-like. Jesus tells us the following in John 15:10 – *"If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love."* Jesus tells us here to keep his commandments.

Turn to Mark 16:16. *"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."* We are told by Jesus here to believe and be baptized in order to be saved. This is a commandment of Christ. When we are baptized, our Adamic condemnation is removed and we are no longer under the law of sin and death. We are promised a resurrection and a judgment. When we believe and are baptized, we suffer a symbolical death, burial, and resurrection that is LIKE the one Christ suffered. Paul tells us in Romans that the law of spirit of life in Christ Jesus is what sets us free from the law of sin and death (8:2). Paul also states the following in Romans 6:4, *"Therefore we*

are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

This is a likeness that we must have if we are to keep the commandments of Christ, as Christ told us to do earlier in the book of John. This is also a likeness we must have if we are to have a hope of salvation. What better way to be Christ like than to share this new covenant that was established by God through the shedding of His Son's blood. If you are not baptized and you want to follow the commandments of Christ and be Christ-like, you must consider baptism. In order to be Christ-like, we are commanded to have a relationship with Jesus Christ. This relationship is a covenant relationship and we receive this relationship through baptism. Once you are baptized, and this covenant relationship is formed and you have followed this commandment of Christ, you will show forth a love for Christ and for God; and they in turn will show forth a love back to you. This is true for all commandments of Christ that we keep. Turn to John 14:21 – *"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."*

We have many of the commandments of Christ printed in our statement of faith. One thing we can do to be more Christ-like and follow the commandments of Christ, is to try and read all the commandments of Christ in our statement of faith each day. Keep these commandments fresh on your mind and you will be better able to fight off the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. Keep a small version of the statement of faith handy at all times and when you get mad or upset or tempted, take it out and read the commandments of Christ. This is a great way to show forth our love for Christ and for God and to better serve them.

We have considered the essential act of baptism and keeping the commandments of Christ. What are some other ways to be more Christ like?

Building our faith

One way is to build our Faith. Turn with me to Romans 10:17. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Jesus overcame the world through his faith in God. If we want to overcome the world like Christ did, we must build our faith. This is a key element to being Christ like. Turn with me to 1st John 5:4 – *"For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."* The way of the world is death. When we come into covenant relationship, we have a chance to overcome death and overcome the world. We have to first have faith before coming into covenant relationship. God made a covenant with Abraham after he displayed a tremendous amount of faith. We must also make a covenant with God, through Christ by displaying our faith. Baptism shows forth faith in Christ. Please turn to Hebrews 11:8 – *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an*

inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Abraham through faith obeyed God and went on a journey, not knowing what lay ahead of him each day on his journey. We must also set out on a journey through faith and follow the example of Christ. This is a daily journey where we put off the old man and put on the new man in Christ Jesus. Just as Abraham probably faced all kinds of fiery darts and obstacles in his path on his journey each day, we too must face these fiery darts in our journey or our daily walk. Please turn to Ephesians 6:16 – *"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."*

What about the faith Jesus had? Can you imagine it? He was born in Adam, just like we are and was tested more than anyone, yet he fought off these fiery darts with his faith in his father. He did not have any personal sin the whole time he was tested and tempted. He was always about his Father's will. Are we always about our Father's will, or are we just about our own will? Is our faith in our father or is it in ourselves? We must build our faith to be like the patriarchs mentioned in Hebrews 11, and also to be like Christ. How do we build our faith? Studying the word of God and prayer are two essentials to building our faith so that we can be more Christ-like.

Studying, Prayer and Devotion

To be more Christ like we need to set aside time each day for devotion to God. We should end our day with a prayer and try to go to bed at an early time so that we can rise in the morning at an early time and start our day with a prayer and then have a short time of devotion where we can have our daily reading before we go to school or work to start our day off right. Turn to Luke 22:45,46 – *"And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."* Now turn to 1st Timothy 4:13 – *"Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."* Now turn over to 2nd Timothy 2:15 – *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."*

We should try to study and read at least thirty minutes a day and then try to advance to an hour. Thirty minutes in the morning when you awake and thirty minutes in the bed before you go to sleep. This will help to renew our faith and keep us from being faint. It will help to develop in us a Christ like character. 2nd Cor. 4:16 – *"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."*

We live in some truly evil times. The world is running to and fro. Homosexuality, crooked politicians and mass shootings are at an all time high. Every form of sin and temptation is readily available through new technology: phones, television, computers, handheld devices, etc. The absolute manifestation of the three frog like spirits is upon us today. Everything that was once considered right, is now considered wrong and everything that was once looked at with shame is now put on a pedestal and considered right.

Ephesians 5:16 tells us that we need to learn to redeem our time because the days are evil. We need to make our time precious so that we can develop our Christ like character. James tells us to earnestly contend for the faith. We should pray for how to gain victory in the areas we are battling. We are told to pray without ceasing. Jesus always did this. He was constantly praying. Prayer empowers us to resist temptation. Studying and Devotion gives us the power to renew ourselves daily in this war that we are engaged in.

Speech

Now we want to address the matter of our speech with one another. Speech is a very important characteristic of Christ that we should consider if we want to be Christ-like. How do we communicate and talk to each other. How did Christ talk to others. We should follow his example to make our speech like that of Christ. We are told in Ephesians not to speak corrupt communications out of our mouth, but to speak words that edify. Turn to Deuteronomy 5:11 – *“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”* This is something Jesus would never have done. If you are around anyone that talks like this, or you hear someone take the name of the LORD in vain, get away from that person and don’t hang around them. The more you allow yourself to associate with someone that talks like that, before long you will pick up their form of speech. The flesh is weak. If someone from down south moves up north or vice versa, the accent of the foreign place is slowly acquired by the person that moved. I have seen that happen to people before. It’s the same thing.

Please turn to Matthew 12:36-37 – *“But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”* When I read these verses, it makes me think that sometimes those that don’t speak up when they should need to speak up and talk more, and those that are too talkative need to say less. Sometimes a person can keep himself out of a lot of trouble if he will only say that which is necessary and important and only things that Christ would say and not say things that Christ would not say. There is also a time to speak up, such as when false doctrine enters into the ecclesia. We cannot allow ourselves to be silent by sticking our heads in the sand and not saying anything. Think about the verses in Matthew. It states that we will give account for every idle word we speak in the Judgment.

Now turn to Proverbs 17:27,28 – *“He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”* When following the example of Christ, we should try not to be the center of all conversations, but encourage others to be part of the conversation; realize that there are always two sides to every story you are told; don’t believe or repeat all that you are told; refuse to listen to or repeat

gossip; try to steer conversations toward spiritual things; and walk away from sinful conversations.

Temperance and Humility

Two other characteristics of Christ that we can work toward when developing a Christ-like character are temperance in hobbies and things we enjoy. Some examples are eating, sleeping, shopping, games, working, talking, sports, social networking and media, cars, and any other kind of hobby that can take up too much of our time! Turn to Philippians 4:5 – *“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.”* We are to mind the things of the Spirit – not the pleasures of this world and of the flesh. Now turn to Romans 8:5 – *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”* Christ was always about his Father’s business and after things of the Spirit. We likewise cannot allow our flesh to take us over. Now turn to Romans 8:13 – *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”* In order to live, we must be baptized and live a spiritual walk that casts out our fleshly desires and focuses on things above rather than things beneath. That’s temperance.

Now, let us consider Humility. This was a characteristic of Christ that we need to develop that can be just as hard to develop as temperance. One thing we need to do is not to ever put ourselves on a pedestal. We need to learn to be unseen and unknown, unspotted from the world. Existing in it, but not partaking of its evil ways. When speaking of humility we should shun the praises of men, and seek God’s favor – not man’s. We should love to be instructed, and not dress to be noticed. Remember – God will judge you the way you judge others. Don’t think more highly of yourself than you should. Jesus was humble, and we have to learn to humble ourselves. We should never allow ourselves to believe that we know it all. When we realize that we know very little and are weak, we become wise and strong. God will reveal to those who humbly approach him and who seek after righteousness. *Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.*

Turn to 2nd Corinthians 12:10 – *“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”* Now turn to 2nd Cor. 3:5 – *“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.”* We are capable of nothing except for that which God allows us to do. We should take credit for nothing, but give all the glory to God.

Self-Examination

Another way we can develop a Christ like character is through self-examination. One thing we can do is make a list of personality and spiritual weaknesses and work on getting better in these areas and work out our spiritual weaknesses. Turn to Philippians 2:12 – *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have*

always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” We are told to work out our salvation in this verse. Making a list and working on our weaknesses is one way to do this. We should also pray for understanding and guidance in these areas. We should know what our greatest weakness is and the top five areas that we need to work on. We should examine our spiritual progress in prayer at the end of each day. Turn to 2nd Corinthians 13:5 – *“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”* If we can work on ourselves through self-examination each day, we can help to control our thoughts. Our thoughts are what get us into trouble and cause us to bring out our sin nature and to ultimately sin. Sin is manifested in a three part process – THOUGHT, DESIRE, ACTION. So, when we sin, either the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life creeps in as a thought. So, how do we control our thoughts?

Thoughts

As mentioned earlier, Christ was always about his Father’s will and his thoughts were on God. How do we control our thoughts as Christ did? The mind is a battleground. We are told in 2nd Corinthians 10:3 that *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.”* This implies that the war is in our mind. Jesus knows our thoughts and so does God, so we need to be careful what we think. We must fix our thoughts to be on things above rather than things beneath through some of the characteristics such as devotion, prayer, and self-examination that we have already considered. We must learn to watch our speech and not to think out loud and speak whatever thoughts come to our mind. We are told in Proverbs 29:11 to keep our thoughts and not to utter what comes to mind. Turn to Romans 12:2 – *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”* How did Christ control his thoughts? If you study the Bible, you will see that Christ always memorized Scriptures and would answer certain questions by replying - *“Have you not read?”* Christ had to have constantly been meditating on the word of God, memorizing Scripture, and praying without ceasing to control his thoughts. Lust and pride are always trying to draw us away and when we have thoughts, we should try to quote scripture to ourselves in our own mind. I believe that memorizing scripture and prayer are the answers we are looking for when trying to control our thoughts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we should strive to follow the Savior’s supreme example. The Sermon on the Mount was the greatest exhortation ever given. We should read it at least once a week. It includes Jesus speaking on such things as the *beatitudes, salt and light, the fulfillment of the law, murder, adultery, divorce, eye for an eye, love for enemies, giving to the needy, prayer, fasting, treasures*

in heaven, anxiety, judging others, the narrow and wide gates, seeking God, true and false prophets, true and false followers, and wise and foolish builders. Reading the Sermon on the Mount can help us to be more Christ like and combat our daily struggles. The Sermon on the Mount is found in Matthew chapters 5-7.

To conclude, turn to Matthew 22, beginning at verse 35 – *“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all they soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”* These were the two greatest commandments confirmed by Jesus. If we are to be Christ like, we are to live by these two commandments. In order to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves – we need to work on all the things mentioned previously. They include keeping the other commandments of Christ, being baptized, building our faith, prayer, devotion through study, controlling our speech and thoughts, working on our temperance and humility and always examining ourselves. If we do these things we will be more Christ-like and more likely to keep the two greatest commandments spoken of by Christ.

Sam Dew

CHRIST’S CHARACTER

One quality of the character of Christ which distinguishes from all other, and which precludes the possibility of its origination in the human mind, is its sinlessness. The greatest literary genius has never yet conceived and described a perfect character. In all human character there is want of proportion. One excellency is sacrificed to another. One is meek in spirit, but without power of purpose; another is tender in heart, but wanting in faithfulness; while the third is bold in faith, but lacking in gentle-mindedness. But Jesus maintains the beautiful balance of His character throughout. He makes no mistakes. He rectifies no irregularities. In all the circumstances and relations of life, He is perfect, entire, wanting nothing. Moreover it will be observed that His beautiful character is made up of elements seemingly incongruous. There is a gentleness with power; a meekness with dignity; a holiness that abhors sin, with a compassion that compassionates the sinner; a forbearance which is generous to faults and failings; with a justice which rewards men according to their words; a courage that braves danger with a prudence which is careful of self-preservation, a majesty without distance; a love of solitude without any tinge of asceticism or moroseness or frowning upon human enjoyments – all blend in an image of spiritual grandeur and beauty which mind never conceived and which language fails to express.

“The Pains of Death”, *Life and Works of Thomas Williams*, pp. 139,140

LESSONS FROM THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

The Sabbath Day

THE Sabbath was given for the benefit of man as rest leads to greater productivity. But practicing the laws of the Sabbath had virtually disappeared in the time of Nehemiah. The rules and regulations of the Sabbath (Ex. 20: 8-11; Ex. 31: 12-17; Lev. 23: 3) and the consequences of the law of the Sabbath being broken (Ex. 16: 27-30; Num. 15: 32-36) had long since faded from the collective memory. Nehemiah had the representatives of the people make a binding agreement that they would not buy from the neighboring people on the Sabbath (Neh. 10: 31). Yet, when he returned after a few years' absence, Nehemiah found that some violated the Sabbath and he rebuked them (Neh. 13: 15- 18). He eventually ordered the gates to be shut in the newly rebuilt walls as the Sabbath began, not to be opened until the Sabbath was over and put his own men on guard at the gates (Neh. 13: 19). In the New Testament, we find all of the Ten Commandments restated and expanded with the exception of the Sabbath commandment. Many of Jesus' healings took place on the Sabbath and he even referred to himself as Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2: 28).

We have been delivered from slavery (to sin) and have been sanctified through Christ whom He raised from the dead. We too must be ever mindful of the Sabbath and keep it holy, as through our baptism, we have made a binding agreement to obey the Word of God. On the Sabbath day, we must rest from the things of the world that worry us. We must figuratively shut the gates in our lives to the worries and turmoil of the world that beset us the other six days of the week. We must come apart, rest and refresh ourselves with spiritual renewal. Likewise, we must shut the gates in our ecclesias that allow those among us to "sell" the churches' doctrines to us as if they were truth. We must shut our gates, both figuratively and literally, to maintain the purity of the Truth and the purity of the Sabbath. But not just the Sabbath day itself must be kept pure. H. P. Mansfield also touches on this in the Christadelphian Expositor: Exodus: "So also with the followers of the Lord. They keep the Sabbath as did the priests in the temple by constantly striving to do the will of God every day, rather than limiting this to one day in seven. Thus they try to rest from works of the flesh every day whilst striving to do the will of God (Heb. 4: 4-11)." (p.

261) Do we, as Mansfield noted, make every day the Sabbath? Do we try to do God's will every day? Do we bring Him to mind every day or just on Sunday? Do we see Him over our shoulder every day? Writing many years before Nehemiah, the prophet Isaiah recorded words which may have provided much comfort to Nehemiah as they can to us. *"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, **The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.** If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."* (Isaiah 58: 11- 14).

Other Lessons from the Chapters

Although much of the content of the book has been addressed in the thematic studies, other lessons can be gleaned from a review of the chapters. This review reveals lessons on: the care of the poor, the appointment of our ecclesial leaders, the importance of knowing First Principles, and the acknowledgement of the importance of being separate from the world and of our service to Yahweh. There is also information about the binding agreement made by the chief officials and the people which could be equated to the binding agreement we make upon our baptism. Lessons are also included on support of our brothers who become our leaders and the importance of maintaining the "old paths."

Chapter Five touches on a subject that has not been covered previously, the care of the poor. Nehemiah pointed out that during his time as governor he did not take the food allotted to him or place a heavy burden on the people in the form of taxation, as previous governors had. But, he provided for those who ate at his table provisions out of his own stores. We should be ever mindful of those in the brotherhood who are in need and should provide for them as the bounty with which Yahweh has blessed us allows. Never should we expect recompense or should we be prideful of our "supposed" higher state. The Scriptures are filled with examples from Proverbs to the teachings of Christ regarding this matter. James spoke of this: *"If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"* (James 2:15- 16) as did John: *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"* (1st John 3:17). We must look after those in the brotherhood in need of help - be it financially, spiritually, physically, or emotionally. Likewise, the Lord's parable

of the Good Samaritan shows us to look outside the brotherhood for opportunities as well.

Although Chapter Seven consists mostly of the names of the exiles who returned, the opening verses name the leaders who were appointed by Nehemiah to be in charge. One man, Hananiah, is noted as being appointed because *“he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most men do”* (Neh. 7: 2). Likewise, we must appoint as leaders and keepers of the Truth those who have integrity, using Paul’s instructions in 1st Timothy 3: 1-10 and Titus 1: 6-9 as the guidelines. They must be charged with keeping guard over what has been built.

Ezra joins Nehemiah in the account recorded in Chapter Eight as the people assemble and Ezra reads the Book of the Law of Moses. It is noted that the people *“listened attentively”* and that those reading to the people *“made it clear and gave the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read”* (Neh. 8: 8). And the people wept upon understanding how far they had strayed. The people had become so ignorant of the Law that they had not even realized that in this seventh month that they were supposed to be celebrating three great feasts of the Lord. They were in time for the Feast of Tabernacles and made proper preparations. For the entire seven days of this feast, Ezra read from the Book of the Law and as for the people, *“their joy was very great”* (Neh. 8: 17). The lesson for us is that Yahweh’s Truth must be constantly stressed. The First Principle (corresponding to the Book of the Law) must be reviewed frequently and all our people, especially the children, should hear. We must show correct respect for the Word of God in dress, attitude and behavior. We must feel God’s presence in our lives and must have reverence for His word that has not changed. We should grieve as did the people in Nehemiah’s day when we see the Law of God brought down by being ignored or diluted with the teachings of the world. We should react with joy whenever we have the opportunity to hear the word of the Lord expounded while assembled with our brethren.

It was in this same seventh month that the great assembly of the people gathered to confess their sins in the account recorded in Chapter Nine. It is noted that those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners and that one fourth of the day was spent in the reading from this Book of the Law, while another fourth of the day was spent in confession of sins and worshipping the Lord their God (Neh. 9: 3). The bulk of the chapter consists of the prayer the Levites gave which recounted His gracious loving kindness and compassion on this nation from the time of Abraham to their current state. We too should separate from foreigners (those of the world) for as the Apostle Paul tells us: *“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”* (Ephesians 2:12-13). That is what we are - “called out” ones and we should not want to

contaminate ourselves with the people and especially, the teachings of the world. The idea of spending a fourth of our day in reading the Bible and a fourth of the day in confession and worship may seem overwhelming. After all, we must sleep, eat, and work to support ourselves and our families. But what about our leisure time? Is it spent in front of a television, playing a sport, reading books or magazines? Do we read the Bible every day, either using the Daily Reading Chart or in a system we have devised? Do we make this reading or study our first priority when that leisure time arrives or do we put it off until the end of the day when we are tired and sleepy? *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* (Matthew 6:21). We need to constantly remind ourselves of the greatness of God and His promises which never fail.

As a result of the acknowledging of God and the confession of the sins recorded in Chapter Nine, the leaders, Levites, and priests made a binding agreement which is covered in Chapter Ten along with the names of those who sealed it. It also included the rest of the temple attendants and all who had separated themselves from the neighboring people for the sake of the Law of God (Neh. 10: 28). They agreed to follow the Law of God and to obey carefully all the commands, decrees, and regulations of the LORD. As we have separated ourselves from the world by our baptism into Christ, we too must make a BINDING agreement to follow the LORD. We cannot let associations within the community or without in the world draw us away from following the LORD’s commands and His doctrine. If we make this binding agreement, we must give up those associations which would lead us astray (marriage out of the Truth, a loosening of the restriction on Fellowship, for example). We should, as far as we are financially able, support our ecclesia or Bible School for all treasure belongs to the Lord. He has only loaned it to us (Neh. 10: 39).

As in previous chapters, at first glance, Chapter Eleven seems to be just a list of names of the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem. However, lots were cast *“to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities. And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.”* (Neh. 11: 1-2). Do we commend those who make the effort to engage in deep studies of the Word for our edification at meetings or in our reading materials? As those in Nehemiah’s time who volunteered to live in Jerusalem, these brothers have “volunteered” to make great sacrifices of their time and using the skills granted them by Yahweh have tried to steady our steps in the Truth. They do not deserve our condemnation, but rather our commendation. They should be uplifted as they try to keep us true to God’s word.

Again, Chapter Twelve includes lists of names, these of the priests and Levites who went up with Zerubbabel and Joshua many years earlier. Our focus, however, is on the ceremony at the dedication of the new wall of Jerusalem. The order of the celebration is given with two large choirs singing their thanks as they marched along the wall and it is recorded that *“that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.”* (Neh. 12: 43). But in the midst of this

account is one brief statement: “*with the musical instruments of David the man of God,*” (Neh. 12: 36). We are also told that the singers and the porters kept the service of God, according to the commands of David and Solomon (Neh. 12: 45-46). “*For I am the LORD, I change not*” (Malachi 3:6) The Truth does not change. Hundreds of years had passed since David had established these rules. Surely there were new instruments to be used; maybe someone had a better idea about organization and distribution of the daily portions to the singers, gatekeepers and Levites. But David’s rules were maintained. We should adhere to the “old paths” and not be led astray by the winds of “new” doctrines or new technology which deceive us under the guise of “appealing to the young people”. Parents who have raised up their child in the way he should go should continue to encourage their child to maintain the Truth. Consistency in a parent’s belief will provide an example for consistency in a child’s belief.

Concluding Thoughts

Nehemiah is a man of action and a man of prayer, a man who perseveres in the face of opposition and who does not compromise with the enemies of God, a man who upholds the commands of God and maintains the “old” way of doing things because it is God’s way. The temple was built, but the wall was in ruins. Nehemiah removed the rubbish, salvaging what he could and discarding what was useless. Nehemiah built a wall to protect the city and God’s dwelling place therein.

We must be men of action and men of prayer. We need to persevere in the face of those who would compromise the Truth for a more open brotherhood. We need to uphold the commands of God and maintain the “old paths”. We have been given the most precious gift of the Truth and we must remove the rubbish from our lives, discarding all that is useless. We must focus our lives, as did Nehemiah, on the things of Yahweh. We must not give up the task of preserving the Truth.

Nehemiah built a wall. We too must build a wall to protect the Truth and not be distracted by those who try to discourage us or attempt to sway us from that Truth. The opposition will try to deter us and call for compromise. They will spread rumors and pretend to be looking out for our interests. But like Nehemiah, we must persevere because we too are “carrying out a great project.” We must not go “down” if it means descending from the heights to which the Truth has taken us.

“And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?” (Nehemiah 6:3)

Submitted by one of our readers

Source Materials for this series: Mansfield, H. P. The Christadelphian Expositor: Exodus. Logos Publications / Mansfield, H. P. Making Prayer Powerful. Logos Publications, 1974/ Tennant, Cyril. The Book of Nehemiah.

“WHO SHALL ASCEND INTO THE HILL OF YAHWEH?”

PSALM 24

T HIS 24th Psalm is titled by Bullinger’s commentary as “*Messiah – The Chief Shepherd in Glory*”. It is considered to relate, in the first instance, to the entrance of the Ark into Zion, which is recorded in 2nd Samuel 6 and 1st Chron. 15 & 16. In the first attempt we are told that after Israel and more specifically Jerusalem had been miraculously delivered from a massive Philistine invasion, that “*David arose, and went with all the people that were with him from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God (Elohim), whose name is called by the name of the LORD of hosts (He who will be armies) that dwelleth between the cherubims.*” We know that due to a careless but well intended effort, the first attempt by David to bring up the Ark to Zion ended in God’s anger and tragedy. But with more thoughtful adherence to the requirements of God’s Law, the 2nd attempt some three months later was a most joyous and heralded event.

But the Psalm itself, more directly points to a future time, a day of great victory, celebration and joy. Understanding that Christ himself is the antitypical Ark, and more specifically, mercy seat – the ultimate type of this event finds fulfillment in the antitypical Ark, Christ himself in cherubic manifestation, entering the gates of Zion in military triumph as the “*King of Glory...YAHWEH strong and mighty, YAHWEH mighty in battle.*” Rather than fighting off the Philistines, Christ and his redeemed multitude will have defeated the invading Gogian forces and will approach Jerusalem and its embattled Jewish remnant to emancipate the city and its residents and to usher in the restoration of the Israelitish Kingdom. As The King approaches from the mount of Olives, newly divided after Christ has set foot on it (Zech. 14), it is stated to the city (vs. 9), “*Lift up your heads, O ye gates; Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; And the King of glory shall come in.*” Isaiah 52:7, 8 provides further information regarding this glorious event – “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that*

publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, "Thy God reigneth! Thy watchman shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."

But, before this glorious prophetic scene is described in this 24th Psalm, a question is asked regarding the character qualifications of those so blessed to partake in this glorious event, the deliverance of the Antitypical Ark to His rightful resting place of Zion – *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the YAHWEH? Or who shall stand in His holy place?"* The description that follows, no doubt in the primary sense, represents the beautiful and glorious character of the King of Glory himself. Christ who was during the days of his flesh, and even more so now in the days of his perfection, the absolute example of holiness and moral perfection – the mystery of Godliness revealed in a moral life clean and pure from the act of sin, in complete victory over the overwhelming influences of the sin-flesh, unclean and condemned nature that he possessed.

But the fact that this glorious description is applicable to more than just Christ himself is found in verse 6, where after the question is answered we are told, *"This is the generation (class or circle) of them that seek Him, that seek Thy face, O Jacob (or 'O God of Jacob')"*. In addition, we are told that this King of Glory is spoken of as *"The LORD of hosts"* – or *He who will be armies*. It is a great multitude that will accompany Christ, the antitypical ark, in the salvation of Zion. A multitude that will no doubt include David himself who was involved in bringing the literal ark up to Zion, and who will witness with joy and celebration the bringing up of His descendant to His rightful place. It is this class of people that have molded their characters after the example of their elder Brother, and who have sought after the God of Jacob.

More specifically, what is the answer to the question? – *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who shall stand in His holy place?"* There are four qualities provided in this passage but there are other similar passages that provide us with even more detail in answer to this question. In the 4th verse of this 24th chapter we are told – *"He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully"*.

Clean hands

Hands themselves indicate labor or activity. Hands are used extensively in the Scriptures in regard to both hands used in the labor of righteousness as well as in use for wicked purposes. In Psalm 26:6 we read – *"I will wash my hands in innocency"*, while in verse 9, 10 *"Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men: In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes"*. The use of "hands" appears five times in the proverb concerning the Virtuous Women in the explanation of her righteous activities in the work of the Household – a type of the Ecclesia. We know that Christ's hands were set

about to always do the will of the Father, even in the activity of the miracles of themselves. All was done for the glorification of the Father and His purpose.

A pure heart

A pure heart indicates the motive behind the action. In Joshua 24:14 we read – *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth"*. In Matthew 5:8, as part of the beatitudes, Jesus stated – *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"*. Christ contrasted the kind of hearts that exist, and the actions that stem from them. In Matthew 12:35 – *"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."* In Matthew 15:19 – *"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."* And from the prophet Jeremiah, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"* To conquer the natural tendencies of the heart, then, is no small task but nonetheless a requirement to be counted as part of the special class of individuals allowed to ascend unto Zion – the seat of spiritual and political victory, eternal reward, and perfect fellowship with God, His Son and all of the Redeemed. Christ overcame the natural tendencies of the heart, overcoming the temptations of lust that proceed out of the heart – *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life*. And though we often fail, we are to overcome the heart in that it is the source of our affections – whether it be the things of God, which will lead to righteous action that is pleasing to God; or if it be the things of the flesh, which are self-serving and that lead to sin and death.

Not given to vanity

Regarding vanity: Solomon observed that *"Vanity of vanities"...* *"all is vanity"* in relation to the labors of man. *"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"* In identifying the sins of Israel, 2nd Kings 17:15 records that they, *"rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that were round about them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them."* The word vanity itself can indicate uselessness, or moral corruption - Those things that have no use to Yahweh and His purpose, or those things which completely oppose His will are to be classified as vanity. In contrast to this, Christ stated, *"I do nothing of myself"* and, *"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise."* To not lift up the soul, means to not lift up or devote our lives to the pursuit of vanity – whether in our natural lives or in our spiritual lives. We are to be devoted to the glorification of our Heavenly Father – He, who through the gift of His only begotten Son, has provided us with escape from eternal death and hope of never ending reward and blessing in the Coming Age. Our lives are not our own. Matthew 10:38, 39 - *"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not*

worthy of me. *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*"

Not swearing deceitfully

The final qualification listed here in Psalm 24 is in regard to not fulfilling our promises – to swear "*deceitfully*". Num 30:2 "*If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.*" To swear "*deceitfully*" is to make a promise without the intention of fulfilling that promise. The promise is made out of convenience for that moment, for the purpose of personal gain. Zechariah 8:17, "*And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all of these are things that I hate, saith the LORD.*" To swear deceitfully is to intentionally lie, which usually involves someone else being negatively impacted. It is the mark of dishonesty and the complete lack of decency and honor.

What doth YAHWEH require?

This is the class or circle of individuals that will accompany the King of Glory in his triumphal ascent up to Zion. There are other Scriptures which provide us with similar, but added information in regard to the character of this class of individuals and the character of Him who is their Leader. God does not leave us guessing as to what manner of person He desires.

- **Micah 5: 8** – "*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*"
- **Deuteronomy 10:12, 13** – "*And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes, which I command thee this day.*"
- **Isaiah 66:2** – "*but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.*"
- **Isaiah 66:3** – "*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; He shall dwell on high: his place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off (or "far stretching").*"

It is our supreme hope to be counted in that class of individuals that God and His Son find well pleasing. We are not without example as to what fulfills the high expectations of our Heavenly Father. That example is seen in perfection in a life lived out in perfect obedience to His commands – He who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners. He who worked continuously without fail, with clean hands and pure heart; who lifted himself not unto vanity and never swore deceitfully or with false intentions. He served God obediently, even unto the death of crucifixion. So therefore, He will fulfill the glorious role of the "King of Glory". "*Who is the King of glory? YAHWEH of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah.*"

A. Thomas

INWARD PEACE

The Truth can give peace, and in this peace it can preserve a man amid all the troubles and turmoils of life. Not that he will never know trouble. A righteous man cannot be in this present evil world without knowing trouble: but there is a trouble that is OUTSIDE and a trouble that is INSIDE – as regards causes.

Christ's troubles were great, but they were all outside: inside, peace was his experience: "My peace" as he called it. So it will be with his brethren. They may know trouble among men, but in their own hearts towards God, peace reigns.

But even this peace is a thing of conditions; and it is the conditions we have to watch. When have we the greatest peace? Is it not when we see the most clearly and believe the most heartily the things declared to us by the Truth? It is the vivid sense of those "things" that imparts peace.

Robert Roberts