

The Messianic Kingdom

Thus in the Messianic restoration of the Kingdom of Israel and throne of David the constitution of things will be:

1. A universal government that shall reach to the “uttermost parts of the earth” and bless all nations with a reign of “peace on earth, good will toward men and glory to God in the highest.”
2. In a special sense, as constituting the subjects of the kingdom proper, the twelve tribes of Israel will be blessed by the reign of their once rejected but then accepted Messiah, whose righteous and beneficent laws shall be administered by the twelve apostles.
3. The dynasty of the kingdom will be Israelitish, through the tribe of Judah, in the Royal line of David, which by Divine right belongs to Christ, and which through Him will be shared by all the true “Israel of God” or Israel after the spirit.
4. The King supreme will be Christ returned personally to the earth to rule on David’s restored throne, and to be Lord and King over all the earth.
5. The Royal house will consist of the twelve apostles in particular, and of the redeemed, immortal saints who shall be made “kings and priests to reign on the earth.”
6. The territory of the kingdom proper will consist of the Holy Land, or the land of Canaan promised to the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as described in the words, “From the river of Egypt, unto the Great River, the river Euphrates.” But the territorial dominion of the kingdom will be co-extensive with the utmost bounds of the earth.
7. The capital of the kingdom will be the “City of the great King,” - Jerusalem to be restored and rebuilt in splendor to be the center from which shall issue laws that shall make her indeed what she is in name - the city of peace.
8. The laws of the kingdom will be from God, and will therefore be wise and good, for the greatest welfare of mankind and the glory and honor of Him by whom the world’s redemption is planned and unfolded.

Through this grand consummation will be fulfilled the never failing promise of God, “As truly as I live all the earth shall be filled with my glory,” and our prayer will be realized, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Thomas Williams, *The World’s Redemption*, pp. 136,137

THE SANCTUARY-KEEPER

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



Leah

ALSO

WITH OR AGAINST THE CURRENT?

THE SLAVE/SERVANT ATTITUDE

“BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS
ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE...”

GOD’S ATTRIBUTES

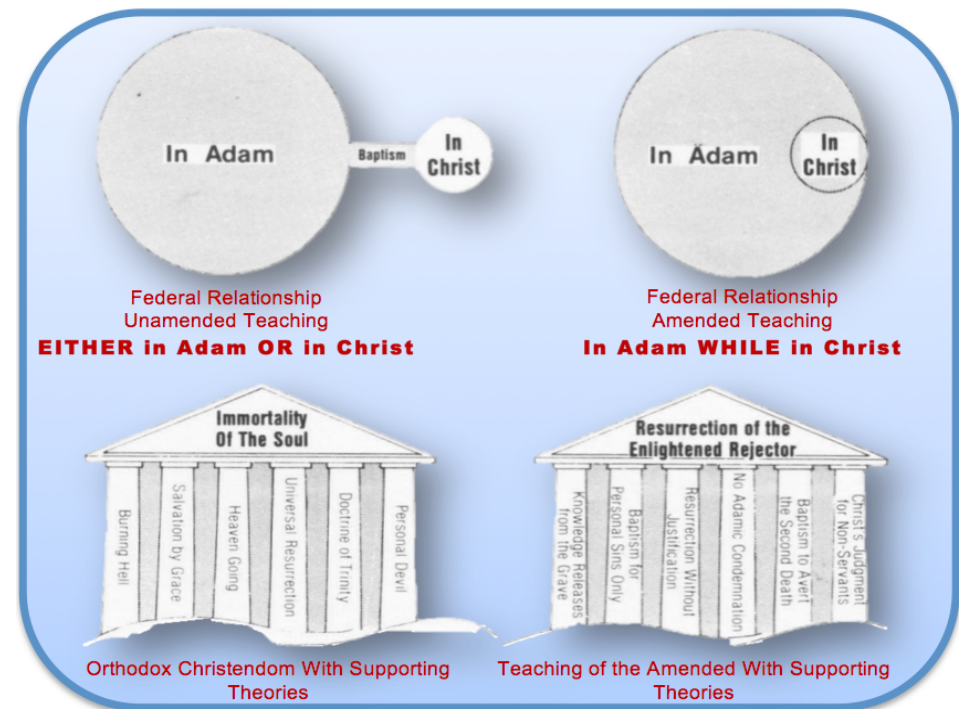
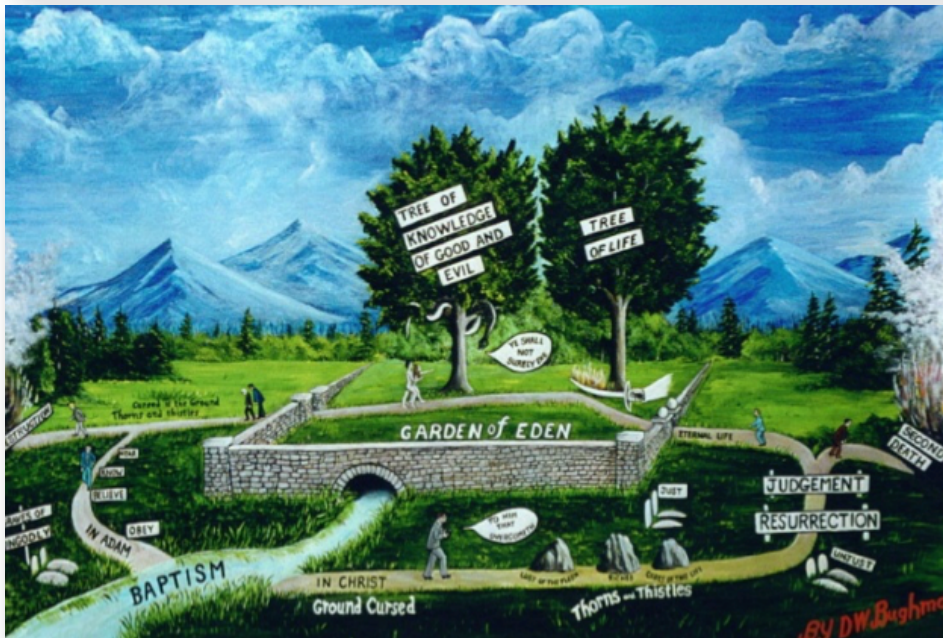
THE KINGS OF THE EAST
FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

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THE ORIGIN AND EXTENT OF THE KINGDOM OF MEN

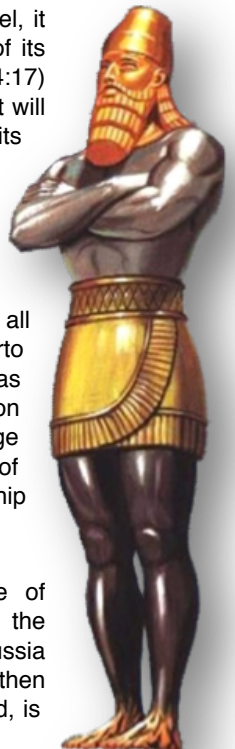
In taking a general survey of the contents of the Book of Daniel, it may be seen that two great powers are the principal subject of its predictions. The one is styled the KINGDOM OF MEN (Dan. 4:17) and the other the KINGDOM OF GOD (Dan. 2:44; 4:3; 7:27)...It will be seen that the Kingdom of men has been 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 present constituted, is at hand. (Elpis Israel, preface)



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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WITH OR AGAINST THE CURRENT?

EDITORIAL COMMENT

IN describing the downward trend of the Adamic experience, in regard to nature as well as moral standard, bro. Thomas Williams occasionally used the example of a stream of water. Adam was considered the fountain head of that stream with the force of gravity ever pulling that stream lower and lower until it emptied out into the ocean. The point being, that the trajectory of the ever corrupting Adamic experience naturally flows negatively downward and not upward, unless great effort is exerted to swim (or paddle) against the natural current. This is one illustration of many used by bro. Williams that has been imprinted into our mind. Please keep this in consideration as we continue with these thoughts.

As we soberly ruminate over the spiritual downward spiral and divisions that have taken place within Unamended Christadelphia over the last few years we believe it is critically important for us to ask a few questions as we assess the consequences of the stands that have been taken and consider our responsibilities moving forward.

1. Why is the Household disintegrating?
2. Who or what changed that resulted in such sharp divisions of belief and practice?

3. Can anything be done to heal the divisions that exist?
4. What responsibilities do we have and what actions must we pursue in contending “for the faith once delivered unto the saints”?

#1 - Why is the Household disintegrating?

How have we arrived at this point where the Unamended community is in disarray, division and without any clear sense of what it stands for or where it is going? Some might respond that such a question is too complex to untangle. Others will simply place the blame on those of us they deem as “too rigid”, “too extreme”, “too harsh”, “too unloving”, too “spiritually shallow”, or who are labeled as “Thomasites” or “Andrewites”. Such are blamed for the state of confusion and division that currently exists. Many of us scattered about find ourselves in a most hated and despised position as we attempt to maintain, if not return, to an earlier position of belief and practice viewed as outdated, inconvenient, and unattainable by most.

The matter is not complicated. The general society in which we live has been in an intellectual and moral free fall for decades (actually since the fall of Adam). Christadelphia, increasingly unwilling to remain separate from this world, has followed in its footsteps, first tolerating and then embracing the philosophies, viewpoints, changing social norms, and amusements promoted by the world at large to one degree or another. This has been the continual cycle of this earth since the beginning. Truth restored is inevitably corrupted and then lost as the thinking of the flesh supersedes God’s commandments. The Truth, in its intellectual and moral purity has been compromised as the world and the Truth are at complete enmity with each other, but yet we continually attempt to strike a balance between these two great enemies. Some have rightfully and negatively referred to this as “one foot in the Truth and one foot in the world.” This has resulted in the following:

- **Some have desired to make Christadelphia more respectable in the eyes of the world.** This has manifested itself in an attempt to minimize our separateness from the trends and interests of the world. It also has been seen in the desire to be more like the churches around us in regard to ecumenicalism, through the establishment of professional global missionary and charity organizations. The rise of WCF and Onesimus in the 1970’s had a profound impact on the Unamended Community, as jea exerted influence over the young people to achieve their goals. They succeeded.
- **A general push towards success in this world through education and career.** Though we most certainly are to be diligent in work and not slothful (Prov. 19:24; 1st Timothy 5:8; 2nd Thes. 3:12), our pursuit of work should simply be a way to provide for our necessary things while showing ourselves as dependable and conscientious to the eyes of the world as a result of our spiritual conviction. But when our position as Christ’s servants is crowded out in both time and affection by our love of mammon (Matt. 6:24) we have a spiritual (Laodicean) crisis on our hands. Unfortunately, this is an area in which we can easily fool ourselves into thinking that the Truth is important to us... when it really isn’t that important. Is The Truth at the VERY CENTER of our affections, and the focal point of our daily time and energies? Be careful how you answer

this. Do we live and breathe it, or is it something akin to an occasional hobby to which we merely have a sentimental attachment; or, even worse - is it a grudging sense of inconvenience upon our time and mental energies?

- Due to the hyper distractions of work and play for individuals, families and ecclesias, **we see a decrease in careful attention to God's Word and a critical lack of familiarity with the writings of our early/pioneer brethren** in both young and old alike. This creates a vicious and downward cycle that compromises conviction and therefore compromises conduct and the ability to discern the "straight and narrow way." Gross ignorance has been the result. This has led to an inability to properly understand and articulate the most fundamental Doctrinal Truths in both belief AND practice as well as to be able to discern and effectively counter error in its subtle infancy or whenever it rears its ugly head. Many have been all too willing to unload their spiritual responsibilities, zeal, Berean spirit, understanding and effort upon the shoulders of others in order to pursue more enticing distractions for themselves.
- **The continual adoption of humanistic thinking in how we interpret the Scriptures in both belief and practice.** There are those who are very well studied, but in the wrong things - rejecting the scripturally solid expositions and conclusions of our earlier brethren while substituting modern philosophies and theology. These are the modern day Gnostics and false prophets. They have convinced both themselves and others that modern times require modifications and changes to long held beliefs and practices which they deem as simply outdated or inconvenient.
- **Emphasis upon social fellowship with fellow Christadelphians as a group of friends, rather than fellowship based upon a specific commonality of very precise principles of Belief and Conduct.** We live in a hyper-socially centered society which is powered by ease of transportation and instant and CONSTANT communication. It is about seeing and being seen, loving to be loved, being accepted, being validated or "pumped up". It is emotion based and not rational. As God's Word is less understood, and the straight and narrow way is pushed aside in favor of the broad way, claiming association as an "Unamended Christadelphian" becomes more of a sentimental brand than a descriptor with actual meaning. Therefore, in order to preserve the associations within the Unamended community, some have chosen to compromise Doctrinal accuracy and moral principles, content with holding together a social organization founded on likability, fun and good feelings while under the false pretense of mutual spiritual welfare.

What we have summarized is addressed in 1 John 2:15-17 - *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* We are not pointing a finger, but merely stating a fact. Our community individually and collectively has made compromises over the years, and in many aspects embraced the world and is now tragically paying the price. The impact was minor at first, but in the last few years we have seen the exponential manifestation of the negative ramifications.

#2 - Who or what changed that resulted in such sharp divisions of belief and practice?

This really isn't the best question to ask, as it leads to a circular game of finger pointing, but we believe it does need to be addressed. We first will state that as a community, we all have changed and have been changing in a downward trajectory for many decades for the reasons addressed in the previous question. The revival of Apostolic Truth reached its peak in the early days of the zeal, excitement and dedication of its renewal. It was joyously embraced and promulgated by those who were extraordinarily blessed to pass from "darkness to light". If one is familiar with the writings of brethren such as John Thomas, Robert Roberts, and Thomas Williams and have read early periodicals such as *The Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*; *The Christadelphian*; and *The Christadelphian Advocate* - they will note an eloquence of thought and feeling within the articles and correspondence that reveals how truly thankful and convicted Brethren were to have "THE TRUTH" revealed, and how absolutely central The Truth was in their lives. **IT WAS EVERYTHING TO THEM**, as they had little else.

Such is not the case today. So, as a community we have all changed. It has often been gradual. Like floating down a stream it is almost impossible to tell that a drop in elevation has occurred unless we use some kind of guide or point of comparison in which to chart the change. The stream of the Adamic race continues to be pulled downward by gravity, and the only guide we have are the Scriptures and the precedence of earlier brethren in faithfully working to abide by God's Word.

For some, this downward trajectory could no longer be tolerated, as the change was becoming noticeably more rapid and treacherous. As the sales-like campaign towards "reunion" and open fellowship with the Amended carried forward against decreasing resistance; as the false "Judaizer" philosophies and doctrines raised little concern or began to be embraced; as general worldliness, once unimaginable by Believers, was finding tolerance and acceptance; and as error of belief and action was increasingly viewed as not a barrier to fellowship around the Table of the Lord - some were able to see the spiritual disaster that was unfolding and understood that something in fact did have to change. No longer could they, in good conscience, "go with the flow".

Some raised their voice in protest but were quickly deemed as impetuous disturbers of the peace, while some made moves to secure their ecclesias and establish a clear distinction of belief and fellowship practice in opposition to the growing errors and tolerances. Others were left with no choice but to remove themselves from ecclesias that either embraced error or refused to take substantive action. Such have been strongly criticized, opposed and denounced for **REASSERTING** (not inventing) a stand that puts decisive boundaries upon doctrinal belief and fellowship and separates them from the desires and tolerances of the majority. They have not only chosen to stop flowing downward with the stream, they have attempted to change course and paddle upstream to original positions against the heavy force of the current. Such creates great resistance and turbulence.

We have heard individuals claim, on both sides of this divide, that they themselves have not changed. It may be that not everyone has changed their

beliefs. However, changing external and internal forces have tested the true feelings and positions of brethren and have brought them to the surface. As circumstances required action, some have acted while many others have not.

If there is any fault to be had on the side of those who have chosen not to “go with the flow”, is that things were allowed to digress as much as they did without stronger opposition and action earlier on. This made the act of doing the right thing that much more difficult and painful as time transpired. If we have chosen to pursue a return to the “old paths”, it in fact does require a change on our part as this will take us in the opposite direction to the general flow of Unamended Christadelphia at this time.

#3 - Can anything be done to heal the divisions that exist?

Quite simply - no. There is a right path and there is a wrong path. There is no compromise with the downward flow of falsehood and worldliness. Very few perceive that there is a problem at all. For those who do see a problem but do not share a sense of urgency, they either do not seem to perceive the dire nature of the situation or they are not interested in the struggle necessary and the probable loss of old friends and even family in the process. The problem, as they see it, is with those who have taken an exclusive stand and are currently out of association/fellowship with the rest who are more inclusive in their views.

The only solution for real unity is if there were to be a wholesale acceptance by the Unamended Community to “seek” after the “old paths”. If we could all agree to repent and collectively turn back to our Christadelphian Heritage, to turn back to the Apostolic faith in its simplicity and purity of thought and action, and to forsake the world then we would have reason to rejoice. But, we cannot even agree as to what those principles are. At the risk of sounding pessimistic, it is quite realistic to conclude that things have gone too far down stream. *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?”* (Amos 3:3).

#4 - What responsibilities do we have and what actions must we pursue to move forward in contending “for the faith once delivered unto the saints”?

Are those who have chosen to stand apart from the errors and tolerances within Christadelphia perfect? **No!** and they have never claimed to be so. Are those who have chosen to stand apart from the errors and tolerances free from the guilt of some of the negatives we mentioned in our first question? **Absolutely not!** The negative influences of the world and general Laodiceanism have affected us all. Have there been inconsistencies in trying to apply the standards of the “old paths”? **Yes.** The last few years have been a test of spiritual application that has strained the resolve and consistency of even the strongest of brethren.

A remnant has taken a stand not to progress any further down the stream of apostasy and worldliness. But, simply refusing to slide any further is not sufficient if we have not learned some lessons as to how we got to this point in the first place. We must stand fast, and in some aspects return to the

foundations of our Christadelphian heritage which have been laid before us, and shine as a light of truth and hope in a dark world. **2nd Thessalonians 2:15** - *"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught..."* **Colossians 1:23** - *"continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel..."* **James 3:17** - *"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle (modest), easy to be intreated (not obstinate), full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."* **Acts 14:22** - *"continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."*

We are entrusted with a most profound responsibility. Are we up to the task? At this point do we really have a choice if entrance into the Kingdom of God is truly desired?

An elder brother, who is not supportive of recent stands that have been taken to preserve the Truth, recently told us that such a position regarding doctrinal purity and fellowship exclusivity was "unsustainable". This troubled us as we considered the difficulties that do exist in maintaining the Lightstand. Had we made a mistake? Then we considered the course that the elder brother was content to defend. A path that continues to compromise, ignore, tolerate and embrace positions and practices out of harmony with Scriptural command, once unimaginable to early Brethren. Therein lies the "unsustainable" and disastrous position, making the maintaining of the Lightstand of Truth an impossibility.

Now, in all honesty, we are not a completely united group ourselves. To take the stance we have, in the face of great opposition and slander requires great determination and independence of mind. Unpleasant things have been endured. But that same strength of determination can also be our biggest weakness if it turns to pride and the thought is generated that we can face this new Unamended Christadelphian reality on our own terms. Among this remnant there are differences of personality, differences of emphasis and interest upon various doctrinal issues, residual feelings of distrust, respect of certain groups or individuals over others, remaining threads and longings for social ties with those who do not agree with us, different degrees of perception as to how sustained and difficult this struggle will be, and a modern mindset tainted by the poisons of humanism that is extremely difficult for us to shake. Sustainability is not in question when it comes to the unmovable nature of THE TRUTH itself, but whether or not we can overcome the shortcomings of our flesh natures is the critical question. A house divided cannot stand! 1st Cor. 1:10 - *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak THE SAME THING, and that there be NO DIVISIONS among you; but that ye be PERFECTLY JOINED TOGETHER in the SAME MIND and in the SAME JUDGMENT."*

We have a great responsibility before us. Nothing can be done without the good graces of our Heavenly Father (Psalm 127:1). We can either work to build each other up in the most holy Faith (Jude 20-25) in both the promulgation and defense of the Truth, and communicate with each other (Malachi 3:16) in all good will, self sacrifice, and transparency of intention. Or, we can simply go our separate ways - every man for himself, each of us doing what is right in our own eyes. Which will it be brethren? Are we in this for ourselves or are we in this to glorify Yahweh's name? We perceive that the answer to this last question will decide our fate. - SK

LEAH



THIS drawing is of Jacob, Rachel and Leah. Although it is not scripturally accurate as to the setting it does present in a visual form, character traits of each sister. As you examine the two sisters, which best reflects the character of Rachel and which one the character of Leah?



The account of Leah and Rachel has many lessons for us. We seem to focus on Rachel and put Leah in the background as a side note, which is how she was treated for much of her life. We find many lessons in the strengths and weaknesses manifested by these two sisters that we can readily apply to ourselves. Believers have for a long time seen a typical aspect in these two sisters which tend to be based on the events that occurred rather than on their personal character. Leah was forced upon Jacob by law, thus she is made to represent the covenant of law; that is the Mosaic. However, Jacob was drawn to Rachel by love and so she is presented as representing the covenant of grace; that is the Abrahamic. What we wish to consider is the character that Leah manifests in her life. Our focus will be on Leah, but we will comment on Rachel as well.

There is not much background information that we can find on them. They are the children of Laban, the brother of Rebekah. The record reveals that Leah was the firstborn in Laban's family. We don't find Laban's sons mentioned until much later in the account. Some believe that Leah's name reveals the disappointment that Laban and his wife felt in not having a son as their firstborn. Her name can signify 'weary'. So this daughter may have been

considered a weariness to her family; a name that was somewhat descriptive of the life she experienced. We note that it was Rachel, the second born, who tended the sheep. How appropriate, for her name signifies *a ewe lamb*. This also implies that Leah was not able to tend the sheep for some reason. This may have been related to a vision problem for her name also signifies '*dull vision*'.

As we look at the story of these two sisters we note what a significant spiritual impact Jacob had in their lives. Looking at the words spoken by these women, we find that their husband must have spent considerable time educating them in the things concerning the God of Abraham, for we find that Moses uses the Memorial name in much of what Leah says, thus indicating her understanding of the God of Abraham.

Historical Overview

Having fled from Esau's rage, Jacob traveled to the house of Laban and fell in love with Rachel, Laban's younger daughter. Laban promised her to Jacob in exchange for seven years of labor. So great was his love that Jacob readily agreed. To Jacob, the passage of time seemed like days not years.

At the end of the seven years, Jacob expected to marry Rachel. However, on the wedding night, Laban substituted his older daughter, Leah, since the custom of the day demanded that daughters be married in the order of their age. It would have been shameful for the family if Rachel was to marry before Leah.

The next morning, when Jacob discovered that he had a different wife, he protested vehemently to Laban whose answer was that for another seven years labor, Jacob could also have Rachel. In Galatians 6:7 we read, "***be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.***" Jacob now learned the bitter disappointment of deception, just as Isaac and Esau had from him. He had supplanted Esau, the elder son and is was now deceived by having been given Leah, the elder daughter, instead of his beloved Rachel. Perhaps we can see divine providence at work here. With that said, we must wonder if divine providence was such that it was to be Leah who would play an important part in Jacob's life; for it was from her child that the promised seed would come.

Laban conceded that Jacob would not have to wait until the seven years were completed, but that he must, however, complete the seven days of celebration for his marriage to Leah. When that time was completed, Jacob married Rachel and we read the following: "***he also married went in also unto Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah...***" (Gen 29:30).

On the first reading of this verse, it seems to introduce a measure of discord in our understanding of the events recorded here. Was there inequality? Certainly! But not as much as we might think. We believe that Jacob actually loved both sisters, but his passion was for Rachel. Jacob was part of Laban's household for 7 years. During that time he would have come

to know all of Laban's family including Leah. The sense of the words, 'he loved Rachel more', tells us that Jacob had a certain love for Leah, based on his acquaintance and his observations of her within the family. A love that would probably best be described at this time as a warm, respectful affection, but not passionate love. We get a similar sense in the words spoken by Jesus in Matthew 10:7 and verse where we read, **"he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me"**. Does this mean we cannot love father or mother, son or daughter? Absolutely not, we can have that love, but our love for Jesus must exceed all else.

"Hated"

The next verse (Gen 29:31) says that Yahweh saw that Leah was 'senuah' (hated). This word is usually translated in English Bibles as 'hated', but this is not accurate as we just read that Jacob loved her but in a different way than he loved Rachel. We again get the sense of what is said in Luke 14:26 where we read; **"if any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."**

This does not mean that we are to have no other interests or affections, but rather, that Christ, and the truth which is in him, overshadows all else. Therefore, our homes and loved ones, our work and leisure, all become part of a spiritual stewardship. One must be prepared to relegate every earthly tie and human relationship to second place, otherwise, says Jesus, we cannot be his disciples.

Then what does this mean - that Leah was *senuah* (Strong's 8130)? It conveys the understanding that Leah knew very well that Jacob's heart was elsewhere. She was 'loved', but not as a woman longs to be loved by her husband and she felt this lesser love as a rejection. In Genesis 29:31, the words 'Yahweh saw' implies that the Almighty Himself understood her sense of humiliation. Leah wept profusely for the husband whose passion was for someone else. Only in this context do we correctly understand the significance of the first mention of Leah: *"Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. The eyes of Leah were weak (rakot -Strong's 7390 - meaning Leah was tender eyed), but Rachel was lovely in form, and beautiful"*.

The word *rakot*, in Hebrew, can be used in three different ways. It can mean 1) beautiful 2) weak, or 3) sensitive. Is it possible that Leah could not go out with the flocks because the bright sunlight hurt her eyes? Were her eyes very light sensitive, as they are for many people? Or does it mean that her eyes were beautiful, but Rachel was beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance indicating that she had both personality and appearance? For me, this description of Rachel reminds me of Esther who was also beautiful in both appearance and character.

Could it be that the ambiguity in Leah's name is deliberate? It's rare that

the Hebrew writings give us a physical description of the characters recorded. Usually it is for a reason that will eventually be disclosed, such as in the case of Esther. The meaning of the phrase *'Leah's eyes were rakot'* could very well mean that Leah was easily moved to tears. She was emotionally vulnerable. She knew she was Jacob's lesser love and it caused her deep pain. We can see this description of her manifested in her character.

Leah blessed through childbirth

The subtlety with which all this is conveyed is remarkable. Moses had sketched Leah's portrait in a few careful strokes, each of which we will only realize if we are listening carefully. The scene had been set for the drama about to unfold. Unless we read very thoughtfully we will miss it. What follows next is a simple account of the birth of four children. Beneath the surface, however, these verses are as eloquent as any in the entire old testament: ***"Yahweh saw that Leah was (senuah) hated, and he opened her womb but Rachel remained barren"***. We must wonder here if Yahweh's granting Leah children was a rebuke to Jacob for making such a great difference between those to whom he was equally related. Maybe this was a check to Rachel, who was perhaps insulted over her sister in this account. We are inclined to think so when we comprehend the account of Reuben's mandrakes and the resulting manifestation of Rachel's haughty character.

Child bearing was a comfort to Leah so that she might not be overwhelmed with the apparent contempt put upon her. Here perhaps, we can begin to understand what Paul wrote of in 1 Corinthians 12 at verse 24: ***"for our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked."*** There is a definite lesson for us here. Those in the ecclesia who may be as Leah, take heart. God giveth abundant honor to that which lacked!

The account continues in Genesis 29:32, ***"Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben, saying: "Yahweh has seen (ra'ah) my troubles. Now my husband will love me."*** Leah's comment shows that she understood the principles of worship that Jacob had taught her. Reuben's name signified 'see a son'. Leah typified Israel under the law, brought up under the affliction in Egypt at which time Yahweh recognized the nation as His firstborn as we read in Exodus 4:22: ***"Israel is my son, even my firstborn"*** (Ex. 4:22). Yahweh, in seeing his people's affliction, called upon Pharaoh to 'see a son', a people whom Yahweh brought to political birth. Leah was described as tender eyed. Typically this would signify a lack of true vision. Israel under the law saw in its national birth the purpose of its calling, but they did not see that the son for which it should look was not the son of the flesh but the son of the Spirit. Only as those of Israel under the law came to see Christ would they find the love of their husband.

Leah became pregnant again and had a son and said, ***"Because Yahweh hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon"*** (Gen. 29:33). We believe that Leah

understood the significance of prayer. Understanding that she was not loved as Rachel was, she poured out her heart in prayer to Yahweh. She understood that she had contributed to the deception practiced by her father. She imagined that the birth of Reuben would have enabled her to replace Rachel in her husband's affection, but that did not happen. So, she gave herself to prayer and the result was the birth of Simeon. His name signifies 'hearing'. Typically, we must first see the son and then hear him.

She became pregnant once again and had another son and said; ***“now this time my husband will become attached (lavah) unto me, because I have given him three sons. Therefore, she named the child Levi”*** (Gen. 29:34). On the third day the earth rose up out of the water. On the third day our Lord rose from the grave. Three signifies divine completeness. It is also the number of the resurrection. Leah must have had some understanding of the significance of the number three based upon her comment on the birth of Levi, her third son. The lesson to us is clear - those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, clearly understand the next step is to be joined to that son.

Leah became pregnant yet again and had a fourth son. She said; ***“This time let me praise (odeh) Yahweh...”*** and she named the child Judah (Yehudah) which means praise. She then stopped having children. (Gen. 29:35).

Again, we find the covenant name used and Leah praised that Name for the blessing she received. Could she possibly have understood that He who will be manifest in a multitude would first be manifested in an individual; as the seed of Genesis 3:15; as the seed that Jacob would have told her about that had been promised through his grandfather; as the seed through which all nations of the earth would be blessed? We have to wonder.

Here Leah demonstrates to the generations of her children that it was not the praise given by an external, ritual obedience of the law that Yahweh sought, but rather that sincere praise that comes from the heart. Paul wrote, ***“But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and the circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise (Judah) is not of men, but of God”*** (Romans 2:29).

Read superficially, these verses are no more than a genealogy but as soon as our ear is attuned to Leah's plight we listen more carefully, and what we hear is heart-breaking. Leah was pleading for relief from her painful situation. Each of the names of her first three children was a cry to her husband – to see, to listen, to be attached, to love her as she longed to be loved. Significantly, it was Leah, not Jacob, who named these children. Sadly, the lack of relationship between Jacob and Leah at the birth of their first three children bore painful fruit as well in the years to come. Jacob's relationship with Reuben, Simeon and Levi broke down completely. On his death-bed he cursed them instead of blessing them.

Yet it was from Levi that Israel's spiritual leaders will come: Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and eventually the Cohanim (priests) and the Levites. From Judah

came its kings, David and his descendants, even Messiah the Prince. All of these were the children of Leah. **This is why many Hebrew scholars say that Rachel was the wife of Jacob, but Leah was the wife of Israel.**

Significance of the Names

The names of these first four sons are significant to us, for in them we find the order of redemption:

The Means of Redemption

1. Reuben – See a Son
2. Simeon – Hear Him
3. Levi – Join Him
4. Judah – Praise Him

Redemption can only be found as Yahweh has defined it and that is through His Son; ***“for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved”*** (Acts 4:12).

Deity had blessed Leah with these four sons out of compassion for her affliction, even though she had contributed to it. These names typed the purpose of Yahweh in the law. When Moses was commissioned, Yahweh said, ***“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry...”*** (Ex. 3:7). Deity became joined unto them at the covenant in Sinai, and called for their praise. The law constituted Israel as Yahweh’s son. But more than that, it was a schoolmaster to bring the nation to Christ. Throughout the ages the prophets and apostles proclaimed: see a son, hear him, join him, and praise him. Unfortunately, Israel failed to see the Son when he was manifested to them and the curse of the Law still rested upon them.

Rachel’s dilemma

After the birth of Judah we now look to Rachel. In Genesis 30:1, we read; ***“and when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, give me children, or else I die”***. How prophetic, for these words were a foreboding of the fate she would meet in giving birth to Benjamin. Unlike Leah, Rachel asked in the wrong direction. She should have sought help from Yahweh. In verse 2 we read, ***“and Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said, am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”*** Rachel’s outburst had wrongfully blamed him. She hadn’t, at this point, learned about faith and putting her trust in Yahweh. Jacob words should have directed his wife to the source of such blessings, ***“lo, children are an heritage of Yahweh: and the fruit of the womb is His reward”*** (Psalms 127:3).

The next several events seem to be a competition between Leah and Rachel. We find that Rachel gave her handmaid to Jacob which leads to the birth of two more sons. Leah then gave her handmaid to Jacob which resulted

in the birth of another two sons. We then come to the incident of Reuben's mandrakes.

Genesis 30:14-16; ***"and Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. And she said unto her, is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night."***

Mandrakes

These are what mandrakes look like. The word mandrake means love plant or love apples. It is thought to have some mystical ability to induce fertility. We can see here that Rachel drew on the superstitions of her people to try and have children.

What we find here in these verses is the great desperation for the love of their husband on the part of these two sisters; desperate enough to turn to the superstitions of the world. Perhaps Rachel thought that God would not answer her prayers and was indifferent to her. So she gives in to the temptation of using



other means to bring about a solution. Here is a direct example for us concerning God's will. When we pray that God's will be done, we should be prepared for His decision being something other than what we want. In such an instance all we can do is to say, "so be it". We see desperation and impatience on Rachel's part, desperation and impatience that could only lead to further problems. Again, we find another lesson in this incident that can help us. Paul wrote that ***"...tribulation worketh patience..."***. The word "worketh" here signifies to workout, achieve, effect by toil. Patience, then, is the end result of a conscious understanding of the purpose of tribulation. A person who can see Yahweh's hand in the matter, will allow that process to work in their life to affect the desired result.

We know that Rachel finally learned her lesson for in verse 22 of this 30th

chapter we read that; ***“God remembered Rachel and God harkened to her, and opened her womb”***. She finally understood and turned to God in prayer. Rachel, typical of spiritual Israel, brings us another lesson. The fruit that we must produce to the glory of God must come through the indwelling of the word and not a ritualistic obedience of the law.

We have to say that Leah also set a value to those mandrakes. Both sisters were moved by the same superstition. How many others who embrace the covenants of Yahweh succumb to similar temptations?

So Reuben’s mandrakes were given to Rachel and Jacob went to Leah. Going back to verse 17 of chapter 30 we read; ***“And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire (sakar), because I gave my handmaid to my husband: and she called his name Issachar”***. Leah, again, gave credit to God but this time used Elohim instead of Yahweh. She named her next son Issachar which signified *there is a reward* or *he will bring a reward*. Both Jew and Gentile will discover this reward in the age to come.

“And Leah conceived again, and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, Elohim hath endowed me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell (zabal) with me, because I have borne him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah” (Gen. 30:19-21). Again she bore a child and called him Zebulun which signified dwelling or cohabitation, dwelling with another. *“because I have born him six sons...”* Six is the number of flesh, which is reflective of natural Israel. Typically, natural Israel was to dwell with her husband Yahweh but because of transgression that was not to be. In the age to come natural Israel will dwell with her Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

The last child that Leah bore was a daughter, Dinah, which is the feminine form of Dan. Her name signified judgment. as well. With these last three children we have a total of seven names given to us. In them spiritual perfection is revealed through the complete gospel message:

The Gospel Message

Reuben – See a Son

Simeon – Hear Him

Levi – Join Him

Judah – Praise Him

Issachar – He will reward you

Zebulun – by dwelling with you

Dinah – After judgment

Leah & Rachel’s inheritance

The last item we want to consider occurs when Jacob was told by the angel to return to the land of promise. He called Rachel and Leah to him. We

note that Rachel was first in order here. He told them of his dream and the message contained therein. After he explained, Rachel and Leah gave their answer in Genesis 31: 14-16. ***“And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? For he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children's: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do. Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.”***

Rachel and Leah counted themselves as strangers and were ready to follow the direction of He who was now their God. This is what the word does to those who separate themselves to the will of God. Their father's treatment of them worked long on their minds. There remained no more love for that man. We also learn, that once we are brought under the influence of Yahweh, that the flesh profits nothing and we lose interest in those things that were once so important to us. Rachel and Leah recognized the providential care that the God of Jacob had provided and stated their willingness to follow as Sarah had with Abraham in going to the land of promise.

There was one hitch though, something that Rachel had struggled with. We read in verse 19; ***“and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's”***. The teraphim were a symbol of leadership in a family. In the case of a daughter it was an assurance that her husband had rights to the property of her father. Rachel had no right to them now seeing that Laban by this time had sons. They alone would have rights to their father's goods. The things that her father had done must have really aggravated Rachel. The point we want to make here is that it was not Leah. We typify Leah as representing natural Israel because of the connection with the deception and the meaning of her name “weary eyed”. The nation of Israel could not clearly see what God had purposed for them. At this point in her life it appears to us that Leah was looking for a better inheritance. She truly no longer had need for the things of her father. She could now be described as Abraham had been in Hebrews 11:8 and verse 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.”***

Let us return to the drawing of Rachel and Leah. Can you now pick out who is Rachel and who is Leah?

There would still be times of difficulty for Jacob, Rachel and Leah. These two sisters would falter to old habits which they earnestly tried to leave just as we struggle to leave those things of the world that would draw us away from our Lord. We learn that Rachel died in child birth. In Genesis chapter 30, Rachel pleaded for children on the grounds that if she did not have any she would be as good as dead. In giving birth to her second child, she died. There



was no mention made of mourning at her death, but undoubtedly Jacob did mourn. This would be a time of great sorrow for Jacob and we can only imagine that Leah was there comforting and caring for him.

Rachel was the woman that kindled the fire of passion in Jacob, but it was Leah who was the steadfast, faithful, self-sacrificing wife of the patriarch, the mother of half of the tribes of Israel and the one who in the end earned

a very special place in Jacob's heart, for on his deathbed he specifically asked to be buried next to Leah. Genesis 49: 29-31, ***“And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.”***

It would appear that Jacob, over the years, had learned to love her deeply, but it was a love which Leah obtained with much pain and many tears. Leah never abandoned Jacob, but endured the hardships and in time, we believe, truly found fulfillment. In that memorial grave, unbeknownst to Leah, she would sleep next to the man she loved so dearly. As we go through our life and the burdens we bare become heavy and difficult, let us remember the strength and persistence demonstrated in the life of Leah, who turned to God in her need and was blessed.

Yahweh saw, Yahweh heard. Leah learned in time, *“I will praise Him.”* She learned that ultimate fulfillment comes not from the love of another human being, but from the love of the Eternal Father. It is only when Yahweh is loved above all, that other loves can bring joy, peace and fulfillment. How many of us look for that fulfillment in earthly relationships, only to be disappointed time after time when every day - and in every way - there is one always calling to us, ***“I have loved you with an everlasting love and I have drawn you to myself”*** (Jer 31:3). These words were spoken to natural Israel but do apply to spiritual Israel as well. James tells us to draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to us. Let us run to Him with all that is in us.

On a personal note: From my perspective, I see in Leah qualities of that virtuous woman described in Proverbs 31:30-31. *“Favor is deceitful, and*

beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth Yahweh, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates".

Lou Locklear

FELLOWSHIP AND DIVISION

Robert Roberts

There is such a thing as "the Truth." There is such a thing as "coming out from among" and "having no fellowship with" the indifference and error and evil that prevail, however many may have become insensible to the obligation.

It is the recognition of these that leads to division, and not any insensibility to the advantages of union. The many are indifferent; a few are faithful. Hence the fermentation. It was Christ's understanding of men, and his foresight of the working of things among them that led him to say-- "From henceforth there shall be division" (Luke 12:51-52).

The result is inevitable in an evil world, so long as there's any faithfulness left. It is insinuated that withdrawal from errorists is an evil thing. This is a fashionable sentiment, but it is not in accord with the mind of Christ as expressed through the apostles. Love and union are beautiful. They are the most exquisite manifestations of intelligent life possible upon earth, and the earth will yet see their universal triumph when the purpose of God is finished.

But meanwhile, there are other duties. The loving John says concerning those who "bring not the doctrine of Christ" that the faithful are to "receive them not into their house" (2 John 10). And Jesus, in his message through the same John, commends one ecclesia for acting on this discrimination, and condemns one for not--

"Thou (Ephesus) CANST NOT BEAR them that are evil, but have tried them that say they are apostles, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2).

"Thou (Thyatira) sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants..." (Rev. 2:20).

Schism is the result of acting out these principles, and it is a good thing, if intelligently and faithfully done. It is a painful and apparently unfriendly process: but there is no choice with those who would be friendly to God first.

The Truth has been an obscure and weak thing from the beginning. From its nature it cannot become popular, because it runs counter to human feeling in so many practical ways not seen at first. Its true friends know this, and they are not working to obtain public success, or even public notice. They are simply carrying out orders. Christ calls for the exhibition of the Light, and they exhibit it.

-February 1891

THE SLAVE/SERVANT ATTITUDE



TODAY, people are standing on their soapbox of “human rights”, their “civil rights”. They claim that *“society owes us something, and therefore we are something to be reckoned with”*. There is a difference between our society and that of earlier times in history - men, who were not of a prestigious background or of means were considered as non-persons.

In battles during ancient times there were great numbers of captives taken. The mode of war in those days was this - you stayed in the lines fighting until you died, or at the benevolence of the victor you were allowed to live. Anything you had, became the booty and rights of the vanquisher. That individual was spared in battle at the graciousness of his captor. He owed his very life to the man who had defeated him in battle. And so, that individual developed what I would call a “slave concept”. He had to admit that had the normal trend gone forward he should have been killed. Therefore, he was grateful to his captor for sparing his life.

So, what did he do with the balance of his life? He was indebted to this man for his continuance. So he became his chattel, his slave, his bondman; and what happened to him in life was totally at the discretion of his master. Do you see any similarity between that kind of a person and those who would come under the auspices of the benefits of the sacrifice that Christ made?

For the one who was a slave, in the back of his mind for the balance of his life, he would realize that he should have died, according to their standards of the day. But he would live, as it were, everyday in jeopardy lest he offend, lest he upset, lest he dis-serve, lest he do anything that his master may have the occasion to call for that punishment of execution that hung over his head.

There are parallels we can see to the position of those who are in Christ. The value in our consideration is found in the attitude of the slave. Now Christ paid a great price that we might be purchased from death. We have been redeemed. We have been allowed to partake of the benefits of the family of

THE SLAVE/SERVANT ATTITUDE

Abraham and be heirs according to the Promises. What should our attitude be? Leave that question hanging.

Turn with me to the 4th chapter of Galatians. This is speaking about heirship. (vv 24-30). Because of the sacrifice that Jesus has made, the purchase of his blood, those who are adopted into the family of Abraham (be they Jew or Gentile) - the result of it is that this person who was a slave, who was a servant, who was a non-person has the opportunity of becoming an heir to all the benefits that accrue in the promise and the covenant that God made to Abraham. And all of this is possible through the sacrifice that Jesus made and the shedding of his blood. When one realizes this great opportunity, that one can become an heir to the benefits of the Covenant that God made with Abraham, what kind of an attitude should we have?

We said that today, the slave attitude is long gone. It is not that long ago that men were bonded to their masters for their lives. Many chafed under it, many others were allowed to live reasonably normal lives. But, as time went on and the consideration of the value of a human individual rose in the esteem of the society we live in, men were no longer considered as chattels of other people. In other words, if a man had been a slave he was freed from that. And to ensure that this practice did not come back into vogue, there have been world-wide societies called human rights groups who have dedicated their time and their energy to see that such practice does not return.

But one of the subtle problems that this has created is that in the mind of the individual, he thinks he is of great worth. The attitude of humility has virtually gone out the door with the introduction of one's "rights".

Now, we who have been fortunate enough to have been called out from the Gentile darkness into the glorious hope of the Gospel ought to realize, just as the slave did, that before God we as individuals have no rights. Because of the nature that we have inherited from our parents we should die, just as the slave. And, the idea of accepting that we, with all our talents, with all our abilities, with all our skills are really of little value is a very difficult pill to swallow. The slave had to accept it to live. The man who was spared from death had to realize that he was by the grace of another, allowed to live.

Today, those of us who are called out find it virtually impossible to adapt the slave concept of gratitude for an extension to our lives. And why do I say that? I say it because of that common problem that we have, that is the impulses of the flesh. And, it is a very, very difficult thing for any of us to be truly humble. It's like the man that said, "I'm proud I am humble".

I don't know why it is that the human mind is able to esteem himself so much better than another. This is completely contrary to what a slave concept should be. And I suspect as we carry on in our lives to the end of our days, or the coming of God's Kingdom, that this will probably be the greatest struggle that we will continue to have.

You notice I said "continue to have", because we will never overcome it. The estimation we have in our faulty thinking is that we are something to be

reckoned with. Some of us walk around almost as though God is in our debt. But when we consider that Christ must needs have suffered, shedding his blood as a purchase price, that we who should die may be spared, we find that with the working of the human flesh it's very difficult to accept it. We can mouth the words, and we do it all the time, but watch our community in action if you want to see whether or not we have really been able to develop the concept - the mental attitude - of a bond-slave, servant to his Master.

In looking up the various meanings of bond-slave, slave, servant, and bondage we find that there is a common denominator running through it all. And that is that the slave or the servant, as was taught by Jesus and by his own demonstration, was really only performing the job that he had to do. You remember when Jesus washed his disciples feet, he was illustrating to them that even he, who was to pay the price that they all might be redeemed, was willing to do that very humbling experience of washing their feet. He set out, by example, to show how we ought to follow him, and the kind of attitude that we should have.

I suppose I could ask the question, how long ago was it that you washed anyone else's feet in the typical sense (or me)? A servant is one that runs errands. He does lots of menial tasks. Ecclesias, Bible Schools and the like will not function if there are not those who will do the running around, the arranging, the menial tasks. Without them being done none of our functions will continue to prosper. There are thankfully, some that are willing to do that. But as a whole, our community in its dealings with one another hardly speaks of a group who really feel that they are nothing. And while I shouldn't labor this point, the idea behind it all was to the point where we might consider what our attitude ought to be when we consider the greatness of the work; the terrible cost that was demanded of the Man Christ Jesus, who purchased for us the opportunity of partaking of the Divine nature.

I would like to read a quotation from the book of Ephesians, bearing in mind the few things which we have been speaking of. *"I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:1-3). There is the appeal; there is the call by one who was a prisoner, one who was a slave. He could truly say; "be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ."

Jim Taggart, Excerpts from class #4 of "Christ Must Needs Have Suffered",
Kentucky Bible School, 1989



“BUT THERE WERE FALSE PROPHETS ALSO AMONG THE PEOPLE, EVEN AS THERE SHALL BE FALSE TEACHERS AMONG YOU...”

*A short study of the false prophet influence as detailed by the
Apostle Peter in his 2nd Epistle*



IN the first chapter of 2nd Peter, the Apostle Peter lays out the certainty and critical need of three basic aspects of sound belief in “*calling us to glory and virtue*” (manliness or moral excellence):

1. Sound doctrine in the understanding of (vs. 4) - “*exceeding great (i.e. the greatest) and precious promises that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature*”.
2. A course of action or walk that when successfully developed and executed will result in (vs. 11) “*an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour*”. Such a walk and spiritual development towards moral excellence is outlined in the 5th through 7th verses. First beginning and building on faith, it proceeds and builds towards “charity” or agape/love.
3. And then the “sure word of prophecy” - “*a light (or portable lamp) that shineth in a dark place (a squalid, drought ridden condition), until the day dawn, and the day star arrive in your hearts.*” The “day star” is Christ, symbolized by the last star to be seen before the sun fully rises. It is the harbinger of the new day, just as Christ’s appearance will be.

Such principles are according to, as prefaced in the 2nd verse, “*the knowledge of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*” The word “knowledge” does not indicate just to be aware or familiar with something. It is from the Greek word “epignosis” which indicates “*precise and correct knowledge* -

exact, full, discernment.” Such precision of understanding is made clear to us by the charge of *“rightly dividing (cut straight) the word of truth.”* As an example of the usage of epignosis, in Romans 10:2 we are told that - the Jews had a zeal for God, *but not according to knowledge* (or epignosis). Epignosis is the foundation for acceptable **worship** and **works** before Yahweh.

The humanistic philosophies of the Gentiles are merely designated as “gnosis” which denotes a general understanding. It does not carry the precision and exactness of knowledge necessary for belief and application of the Truth. It was such “gnosis” that the apostle Paul condemned as *“science”* (gnosis) *“falsely so called”* (2nd Tim. 6:21). It was the rise of the “Gnostics” or so called “Knowing Ones” within the Household that helped to corrupt the early ecclesia in the attempts to infuse the truth with philosophic doctrines that would gain an academic respectability in the eyes of the world. Regarding the fleshly preaching of the Gnostics, bro. Thomas wrote in the 1st volume of Eureka - *“Thus ‘the thinking of the flesh’ set to work to elaborate a theology that would popularize Christianity, make it a respectable and fashionable profession, and acceptable to the learned world. And in this diabolical enterprise they succeeded but too well. Being of the world, they derived their inspiration from the feelings and imaginings of the flesh, from whatever it approved, and therefore ‘the world hears them’ - it heard them then and it hears them to this day.”* (p. 199).

“BUT...”

With that introduction we now enter in to the 2nd chapter of 2nd Peter. After giving a beautiful and encouraging summary of the basic elements of our *“like precious faith”*, and making it very clear that *“we have not followed cunningly devised fables”*; he goes on to state, *“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”* **Then he proceeds with the conjunction “BUT”.....** Peter now leads into a very sobering and cutting warning in contrast with the wonderfully positive statements in the introduction of his epistle - *“BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies (i.e. heresies of destruction), even denying the Lord that bought them...”*

Peter now contrasts the critical use of exact/precise understanding (associated with a righteous walk) with the warning and certainty of the coming apostasy from within that would challenge the very “epignosis” that was required of true believers. The coming apostasy would reverse all things pertaining to “exact knowledge” leading to the loss of life saving Truth among those who later professed to be followers of Christ or “Christians” and the immersion into moral depravity. Israel’s history provides a perfect template as to how false teachers operated and the result of their falsehood. Peter draws upon this when he states, *“there were false prophets also among the people”*, i.e. the children of Israel. Recognizing that the past provides lessons

and warnings for the present and future - Peter warns of this impending movement that would bring in destructive heresies. Probably writing at a later time, Jude deals with it as a present reality at the time of his writing.

A study of the false prophet influences among the children of Israel is a lengthy study in and of itself. One outstanding characteristic of their teachings, we believe, is found in **Isaiah 30:10**. It was based upon what the people wanted to hear; *“say to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.”* The leaders of Israel and its people did not want to hear rebuke or condemnation upon their error. They did not want to be reminded of the right way, “the old paths”, as it contrasted the sentiments of the flesh; nor did they want to be told of impending judgments due to their unrighteousness. Reading from **Ezekiel 13:2-10, 16**, we wish to draw your attention to verse 10 specifically - *“they have seduced my people, saying ‘Peace;’ and there was no peace; one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed with untempered mortar (i.e. “whitewash”).”*

Are there not those who now cry peace or that all is well within the brotherhood itself, when there in fact is not true peace or wellbeing? Are there not those who cry for “smooth things” or “encouraging things” to the exclusion of necessary admonitions and warnings?

The impact of the false prophets upon both the righteous as well as the deceived is painfully revealed further on in the same chapter in vs. 22 - *“Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.”* We further read from the prophet Jeremiah, who was probably more negatively impacted by the false prophet elements than any other prophet of Israel, in 14:14: *“Then the LORD said unto me, ‘The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.’”* (We will not address it here, but please also give careful consideration to the 23rd chapter of Jeremiah in relation to the false prophet issue.)

As there were false prophets among the children of Israel, so too would there be false teachers among the Household of Christ. Their destructive heresies would lead to the *“denying of the Lord that bought them”* (vs. 1) - which was not an open denial of Christ’s existence, but a rejection of the principles of the Atonement and of God manifestation; thus making Christ “God the Son” and not of the Adamicallly condemned, sin flesh nature, and therefore resulting in the heresy of a substitutionary sacrifice. They would come to teach that Christ died instead of us rather than as our representative, therefore leading to the concept that we are merely saved by grace, requiring no sacrifice of the flesh on our part. Such was the spirit of “anti-Christ” - a denial that Christ came in the flesh and therefore a nullification of the principles of Divine justice and mercy by which we are atoned and justified.

Such was not the only characteristic of the philosophies of the false teachers, but would turn out to be one of its defining identifiers.

“Privily” - verse 1

We are told that such would bring in their doctrines “privily”. The word indicates: *“privately, cunningly without making much noise and as covertly as possible.”* The Expositor Series provides some interesting comments regarding the mode of operation of the false teaching element: *“Openly they would espouse the principles of Christ, but inwardly they would have mental reservations regarding certain doctrines that would develop into deadly errors as time went on. An enemy who openly opposes truth is no real danger to the cause, for he will unite an Ecclesia against him; but the enemy within, who secretly and silently works like leaven against the Truth, is one who will divide and break up an Ecclesia. Such an enemy, therefore, is to be feared as of the greatest danger to the healthy well-being of an Ecclesia.”*

Both Christ and the apostle Paul warned of the “wolves in sheep’s clothing”. The true threats to the Christ Ecclesia are often not the ones that are plastered with a neon sign. It requires spiritual discernment and attention to circumstances to perceive the dangers. Sometimes dangers come from not what is said, but from what is not said, or by subtle adjustments to phrases or teachings that were once understood in a different light. Often, the danger comes from inaction or the unwillingness to see danger. Though the enemies of the truth within the Household work covertly, we are not excused for failing to recognize their influence. Once it has become obvious, the damage to the household has already been done. This has been the constant history of the Truth throughout the ages. To suppose that all is well, or not that bad, or that various issues are none of our concern, or that we are only to be concerned with ourselves, is a failure if not outright rebellion against the warnings of Scripture to be ready for action at all times.

“Many shall follow” - verse 2

In verse 2 we are told that *“many shall follow”*. The question then becomes - ***“Were the efforts of Christ and the Apostles in vain or a failure?”*** We have the privilege of hindsight to see that the early success and growth of the Christ ecclesia soon became corrupt within a few short decades and had fully morphed into the Harlot system within 200 years. Even with the presence of the Holy Spirit among various ecclesial leaders and members during the 1st century, and the presence of apostles such as Paul and Peter who DID discern the dangers and who warned and took action accordingly, these powerfully righteous influences did not prevent the rise, influence and apostatizing sway of the false teachers. But to consider their work as a failure is to view it from a fleshly perspective. The apostles did not labor to establish a movement or a following - the building of some kind of institution or organization as is the ambition of men under the guise of “glory to God”. Their efforts were to call individuals to a future Kingdom, the fruits of which are yet

to be realized. 1 Thess. 2:19,20 - *"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy."*

As we watch the disintegration of the Body of Believers we must be reminded to not be influenced by the ungodly majority; nor can we compromise the Truth for the preservation of numbers or the holding together of a social community. **The pressures on early believers to "follow the herd" or "go with the flow" as it were, for the sake of "peace" would have been immense.** The pressures on us are very great as well, as many are following the ways of tolerance to keep the peace, preserve friendships, preserve respectability and to not be seen as "dividers". But it is the error (some subtle and some not so subtle) of false teachers and false influences that divide, not those who refuse to follow their lead.

"Pernicious ways"

This indicates that which is ruinous, and relates to that which is lascivious or UNCLEAN. Their false doctrines would lead to weakening of moral fortitude - they would pamper and indulge the lusts of the flesh. Conviction and conduct are inseparable concepts. Lack of conviction or erroneous conviction would have its impact on conduct. The rise of false Christian beliefs opened up the way for the truth itself to be blasphemed while the moral conduct of false Christians would reflect badly upon the true believers and the principles for which they contended. The way of truth, or *"the way of the tree of life"*, was being misrepresented and therefore blasphemed.

"Covetousness" - Verse 3

In the 3rd verse we are told that *"through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you."* To covet means to desire or yearn after something. It can be an unhealthy desire for material gain and/or for present power as well as prestige in the eyes of others. This has been a constant issue in the history of sin's flesh. This great evil that developed from among the remnant of believers of the 1st century ecclesia would manifest itself in Apostate Roman power and opulence. Men cannot convince other men to surrender their minds and/or their wallets through honesty. They must do so with political maneuvering - or DISHONESTY. ***"Feigned words"*** is from the Greek word, *"plastos"*, from which we get our English word "plastic". It is that which is moulded, and artificial and which figuratively represents that which is "fictitious." Proverbs 27:6 reads: *"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful"* and 2nd Cor. 4:2 states: *"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."*

They misrepresent, telling one group of individuals one thing and another group of individuals another, depending on the views or interests of those they are trying to influence at any given time. They are secretive, vague, or

outright dishonest in regard to their actions, motives and true beliefs and views. Today, within the Household, we have seen more of this behavior manifested. Beliefs and actions, ecclesial positions and views are being kept secret or are made difficult to ascertain by others who are interested or concerned, with the declaration of ecclesial privilege or autonomy. They will say “it is no one else's business”. An open and unvarnished declaration of what we believe and what we stand against, in other words, *speaking the Truth and letting the chips fall where they may*, once a defining characteristic of Christadelphian action has been overcome by “feigned words”.

Their desire is to use others to “*make merchandise*” for their own personal gain or the achievement of their agendas; whether it be for wealth, power, prestige or for unity and social preservation, or all of the above. Such are spiritual Canaanites; understanding that the meaning of Canaanite is a “merchant” or “trafficker”. When split into two words it represents “*the poor of the flock*”. So it is the poor or weak of the spiritual flock that these false teachers/prophets prey upon and use as slaves for the fulfillment of their own self-interests. Please read and consider the following passages in relation to this matter: Zechariah 14:21; Rev. 18:11-13.

Certainty of judgment

We wish to keep our focus on the tell tale signs and mode of operation of the false teacher/prophet class of individuals. In verses 3 through 9 the CERTAINTY OF JUDGMENT is declared upon this false teacher class and those who follow them. It is given both as a warning to the faithful, but also as encouragement, indicating that God does not ignore such wickedness and that the righteous will be rescued and vindicated. Three specific historical examples are given.

1. The first example is that of “the angels that sinned.” This refers to the rebellion of Korah (accompanied by Dathan and Abiram). These were men of authority or *elohim* (mighty ones) in Israel; with Korah being of the Levitical class and first cousin to Moses. They were moved by personal pride and desired higher authority but masked their ambition with the insincere concern that Moses took too much upon himself. Moses took no power unto himself, but reluctantly submitted to the position appointed to him by Yahweh. Their destruction was a very targeted and discriminatory act of Yahweh’s retribution (THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD) that pointed forward to verse 9: “*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.*” The evil ones were swallowed by the earth and **those who SEPARATED THEMSELVES** from the company of Korah were spared.
2. The example of Noah stands as a warning against the evils of unbelief. Apart from Noah and his family, even those designated as the Sons of God, who had intermingled with the daughters of men removing the barriers between light and darkness/good and evil, found themselves

on the receiving end of Yahweh's judgments. Such apostatized the Truth for social benefit and acceptance, falling into the preoccupation of the pleasures of the good life. But targeted deliverance was provided Noah; a family of EIGHT that pointed forward to the complete cutting off and repudiation of the flesh. As opposed to the false teacher class, he was "a preacher" or herald of righteousness.

3. The third example (vs. 6) is that of Sodom and Gomorra that represent a gross level of immorality and complete lack of restraint, but yet another example of God's power to annihilate the wicked while still delivering a small remnant. We are told in verse 7 that it "vexed" Lot to the *"filthy conversation of the wicked"* or as rendered in the Diaglott - *"the lewd conduct of the wicked."* To be "vexed" can indicate *"to be worn out with labor"* and to *"be tormented or tortured."* Although Lot had the spiritual discernment, the epignosis, to perceive the wickedness around him,; he put his family in a terrible position of worldly influence due to a false sense of ambition. Though we may ourselves have the strength to endure the evil and false influences around us, we have to understand such is probably not the case for our families or even our fellow brothers and sisters. It should be noted that Noah was able to save his family, Lot was not able to save his.

The detailed characteristics

Once we arrive to the 10th verse, the apostle pulls back the veneer of the false teachers even further.

- "them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness" - Such is a legal term associated with the ceremonial uncleanness under the Mosaic Law; **gratifying its lusts, and resulting in moral pollution.**
- "despise government" - This is to despise "lordship", or to reject all forms of restriction, whether it be the commandments of Christ or his apostles. This also alludes to verse 19 and the desire for fleshly liberty. We think of the more recent efforts through books such as "Legalism vs. Faith" and "The Judaizers" that condemn what they called "rules and rituals"; which are nothing more than an attempt to loosen themselves from historical Christadelphian positions and traditions. We see a rising tide towards freedom to believe as one wishes and to do as one wishes without concern of consequence. We are not at liberty to worship Yahweh as we please. The cries of *"ecclesial autonomy"* or independence (in fact an unscriptural concept) fits into this growing trend.
- "presumptuous" - *Bold, daring, without fear.* Are these not admirable attributes that faithful men of old have displayed in their characters? Yes they are, but as they relate to opposition against sin and falsehood in zeal for the Honor of God. Under this context, it is a daring and fearless attitude, - **a rebellious attitude**, - against the righteousness of Yahweh, His Truth and the responsibilities connected with it. Rather than boldness for Yahweh on the basis of personal humility and self-abasement, (such

as a Moses, Elijah or Jeremiah) their boldness comes from an inflated view of their own self. Nimrod was bold, Korah was bold, Jezebel was bold, Haman was bold, the Papacy and its many minions have been and are bold. And the false teachers who have risen from our own ranks have been very bold and fearless in their rebellions, exhibiting confidence based upon the thinking of the flesh and not confidence based upon Yahweh.

- “self willed” - *To be self pleasing*, governed by and following their own opinions.
- “speak evil of dignities” - To blaspheme that which should command respect and praise. Such would relate to speaking against the teaching and practice of the Truth.

Verse 11 goes on to state that the angels, with their great power, do not even engage in railing or slanderous speaking. The angels do oppose evil, but they deal in facts and not in the emotion driven and personally destructive barbs in which the false teachers engage; those who involve themselves in the politics of personal destruction because their own arguments do not stand up to the light of Truth. As verse 12 goes on to state, *“these are natural brute beasts (Irrational and without reason, they speak evil of the Truth and those who defend it) made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption...”*

Such individuals would have no shame, for we are told in verse 13 that they “count it pleasure to riot (actually - *live luxuriously*) in the day time, or in plain sight. Though their mode in bringing about change to the Christ ecclesia was at first stealthy and gradual, they had no qualms or embarrassment in their lifestyles as (seen in the opulence of the Roman Clergy). The Spirit, through the apostle Peter, goes on to use quite descriptive adjectives to describe the false teachers’ real value in referring to them as *“spots and blemishes”* (vs. 13). The objective of the Christ Ecclesia is to present itself without spot and blemish. Having been imputed with the righteousness of Christ as an atoning cover at baptism for our sin flesh nature (having “put on Christ” as stated in Gal. 3:27) as well as the wiping away of our personal sins, we are commanded to keep ourselves undefiled. Please consider **Ephesians 5:26,27**. By the undermining and destruction of the exact knowledge (epignosis) of the Truth, the false teachers and influences had corrupted themselves and were corrupting the ecclesia. (Also: **1st Pet. 1:19; 2nd Pet. 3:14; Jude 23; Rev. 3:4**)

“Eyes full of adultery” - Verse 14

“Having eyes full of adultery” or *“eyes full of an adulteress”*. Their lack of doctrinal concern also translated into sexual depravity. As Christ stated in his Sermon on the Mount: (Matt. 5:28)- *“whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Once the limiting, self control standards of *epignosis* are lifted, there are is no more

restrictions left. As is further stated, they *"cannot cease from sin"* or in other words, - they are unrestrained.

But of larger scope and under the context of what Peter was warning of, we see here the matter of spiritual adultery in doctrinal matters. As bro. Williams wrote in the World's Redemption - *"THE TRUTH is such a perfect system that it will not admit of the introduction of one error without making confusion"*. As exact knowledge is compromised, and humanistic philosophies are introduced, there then comes no limit to the decline or slippery slope of doctrinal adultery. Once the foundations are compromised, the whole building crumbles. The ecclesia becomes adulterated and unrestrained in a continued state of spiritual harlotry. The very reason that the Roman church is identified as an Harlot, resulting from the adulteration of the 1st century ecclesia is due to the unrestrained wickedness in belief and practice.

Though the descriptors are so blunt and ugly, would these false teachers actually appear so ugly? To the natural eye - no! However, the perspective that we are getting is from the eye of the Spirit. For those properly exercised in the Spirit Word there would be an ability to see Peter's warning against those who would pervert the true teachings of the Word. **Heb. 5:14** - *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."* But MANY others they would be "beguiled" or seduced by what Peter refers to as "unstable" or, as indicated by Thayer's, as "unsteadfast" souls, or those who do not exercise spiritual discernment. Those, who through a spirit of apathy, naivety or inexperience (especially with the young people) fail to "try the spirits". **1st John 4:1** states, *"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God..."* WHY? *"because many false prophets are gone out into the world"* (kosmos or ecclesial order).

"The Way of Balaam" - verse 15

We move on in the warning, to verse 15, where the Apostle Peter states in regard to the false teachers and those who follow them, that they *"have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness."* Quite simply, the name of Balaam means *"waster of the people"*. Bosor indicates *"to burn or consume"*. This is what the false teachers/prophets do. Their falsehood, their leaven, in all its burning and destructive lust, grows and eats away at the people like a cancer separating them from the life giving principles of salvation. It was riches and honor (covetousness) that moved Balaam to go against God's commandments. Although he blessed and prophesied of the Israelite nation as an instrument of Yahweh, he instructed Balak to cast a stumbling block before Israel to seduce them into wickedness in an attempt to separate them from Yahweh. Balaam therefore stands as a type of false teachers who would lead the ecclesias astray.

Bro. Thomas, Eureka, vol. 1, p. 308 - *"The manifestation of these false teachers created a crisis in the history of the faith. It had come to this, either*

they must be put down, or the doctrine of Christ would be suppressed. This alternative would certainly have resulted, if God had not reserved to Himself a remnant who refused to bow the knee to Baal. This remnant was Antipas, and therefore “against all” the Nicolaitines, Balaams, and Jezebels; false teachers, who had crept in unawares, corrupting and handling the Word of God deceitfully, that they might make it less offensive to the Jews and idolaters, and so make the profession of Christianity more popular, and consequently less dangerous to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in the world.”

The substance of their character and ability to influence summarized

- vs. 17 - **“wells without water”** - They promise refreshment, but give nothing but more thirst. They appeal to the flesh, but the flesh can never be satisfied. Consider **Isaiah 55:1** for the opposite example.
- **“clouds that are carried with the tempest”** - This is actually in reference to the mist or fog, that impairs clear vision and discernment. It does not provide refreshment as does the rain and will be blown from existence by the tempest of Christ’s Return. Such will be cast into the darkness of death - **Matt. 8:12**.
- vs. 18 - **“they speak great swelling words”** - Their rhetoric and arguments, usually appealing to the emotions and rooted in a certain degree of plausibility or truth, have impressed and overwhelmed the undiscerning throughout the ages up to our present time. They are skilled, very skilled in their powers of persuasion and rely on personality, self-promoted abilities in academic learning or intelligence and/or personal magnetism. They are impressive, BUT EMPTY. As it goes on to say; *“they allure through the lusts of the flesh”*
- These false teachers would prey on those who were **“clean (just) escaped from them who live in error”** or in other words, those new to the Truth. In our day, false teachers that have arisen within the Unamended Body (and continue to rise) recognized and were not shy in openly stating that it wouldn’t be through the older generation that they would change Christadelphia, but that it would be through the young people. For example, we know that Operation Onesimus was created for that very purpose – to get the young people together from various fellowships, and influence them to see that there were no differences between the Amended and Unamended. Well, their strategy worked - did it not? Liberalistic thinking that was so shocking in the early 70’s has had an impact reaching further into our Unamended community than any would have thought possible. Those who have ever had a direct relationship with “OO” or “WCF” know with certainty that it is at the root of much that is dividing us today, along with a general spirit of worldliness. The leaven was allowed to continue, it was not “put down” as bro. Thomas puts it, and it has divided and conquered us - making the *Antipas*

(against all) class of believers more hated, more of a minority and more isolated than ever.

- Vs. 19 - The golden carrot that the false teachers have to offer is this: ***“they promise them liberty.”*** Liberty from what? - The perceived shackles of restraint. Liberty from the “straight and narrow” aspects of salvation; liberty from “works” required of us during our probationary lives; liberty from “exclusive” fellowship practices; liberty to not be so concerned nor stringent on doctrinal matters; liberty from what is perceived as the outdated traditions of our Christadelphian heritage; liberty to enjoy the world and its distractions without fear of consequence or judgment (“judge not” as they like to wrest from the Scriptures). We are in fact called unto liberty, but it is a liberty from the law of sin and death and the cruel and death giving taskmaster of sin itself, to servitude in Christ. Turn to **Galatians 5:13** - *“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”*

The warning for us

So, what is the warning for us? It is very simple but also treacherous, and is the same for us as it was for those who received Peter’s Epistle. *“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you...”* It is an ongoing and present reality that has made a shipwreck of the Household. Some of it has been obvious, but much of it has not been. We will either be of that class that is or will be beguiled, or we will stand as the Antipas class of believers - against all that would threaten our relationship to the epignosis (exact or precise knowledge) of God’s word, both in belief and practice; Chapter 1:4 - *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature...”*

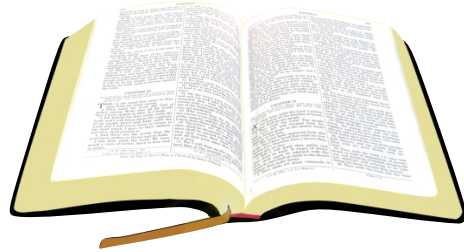
A Thomas



The self-sacrificing deeds of the holy men of old are not recorded merely for our admiration, but for our imitation: the New Testament PS, as it were, to each man’s good works, is “go thou and do likewise.”

F.R. Shuttleworth, The Christadelphian, May 1875

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES AND THE NATURE OF MAN



Fundamental Doctrines



PART ONE

Introduction

THE Bible is full of knowledge and wisdom. It is the holy word of God. The fundamental truths of God are simple, but following his word on a day to day basis is much more difficult. Even though the fundamentals are simple, the Bible still contains symbolism, prophecy, history, and walk. These things take a lifetime of study, and you can learn something new every day that you study. You can never stop learning. If you think that you have it all figured out, then you can assure yourself that you have a lack of wisdom. On the other hand, if you realize that you are not all knowing, but your mind is a weak vessel, and that you can learn something new every day from the Bible, then you have gained some wisdom. This applies whether you are 9 or 93 years of age. It takes a lifetime. You can always learn something new from God's word and how to apply what you have learned to your life. Over time and years of study, you can learn to tie things together that before you could not so easily see. The Bible is like a big puzzle that requires time and effort to make the pieces fit together. It was designed this way by God so that we could study to show ourselves approved and display our dedication. It's a continual process of knowledge gathering through study. This is not all. Once this knowledge is gathered, we must put it into action in our daily life. This is the hard part. The Bible confirms this by telling us in James 2:17 that "Faith without Works is Dead". The first thing you must study and learn when you set out on a journey to interpret the Bible is "Who is God?" How do I learn to know my God? What will knowing God do

for me? What are God's attributes? Daniel 11:32 tells us that the people who know their God will be strong or display strength and take action. This is what we want to do. We want to learn who God is, learn His word and His purpose, gain knowledge, and put it into action in our daily lives.

God's Purpose

Before we can understand who God is and learn of his characteristics, we must first understand that God has a divine plan and purpose.

1. **FILL THE EARTH WITH HIS GLORY.**

Numbers 14:21 - *"But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."*

We know that at one time the earth was filled with the glory of the Lord. This was when God created the earth in 6 days, declared it very good and rested on the seventh day. It was a glorious creation. We also know that once man sinned, thorns and thistles grew. Man was cursed and fell out of the very good state. Before man sinned, the lion and the lamb probably laid down beside one another. After man sinned, and over time the lion has eaten the lamb. We know that the Bible tells us that in the kingdom age the lion and lamb will lay beside one another again. This will be when the earth is once again filled with the glory of God. In order for the earth to be filled with the glory of God, the people that are to inhabit the earth must have knowledge of their God and have the true knowledge of his word.

Isaiah 11:9 - *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."*

Is the earth full of the knowledge, (that's the key word in this verse) of the LORD? We know that it is a small remnant who really understand the truth of God's words. There are many people that love God today. There are many people walking the earth that call themselves Christians and go to Sunday School every week. There are millions of these people. But out of all these people, how many of them can you truly say are full of the knowledge of the LORD? No man will ever come close to having the knowledge that God has. So what knowledge can man have? Man can have the knowledge of God's purpose and his eternal plan, his everlasting covenant, and his plan of salvation. This verse tells us that one day, in a future time, the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. This will be the Kingdom Age when everyone knows who the God of Israel is and the truth of his word. They will have to accept this or they will be cut off. Nations who will not accept this in the kingdom age will suffer from things such as famine. The earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord is in part due to the fact that God will fill the earth with His glory.

Isaiah 45:18 - *"For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else."*

This verse tells us that the Earth was created to be inhabited and that God created this earth not in vain. When God's purpose is fulfilled, the earth will be a success, not a failure. From these three verses we can conclude that the earth will be filled with the glory and knowledge of the LORD and that this earth was created not in vain, but to be inhabited with people who bring glory to God by serving God rather than man and that they are full of the knowledge of the Lord. This is half of God's purpose. What is the other half of God's purpose? What has to be established? We know that the present order of things or in other words, the political heavens must be put down. The current rulers and kings of the earth will not maintain their power. The presidents, popes, and prime ministers will cease to exist. All authority will be put down and a new order, age, and era will begin. The Kingdom of a new political heaven will be set up here on earth ruled by Jesus.

2. SET UP AN EVERLASTING KINGDOM.

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."*

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 kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."*

This is the Kingdom of God. These verses tell us that it shall stand forever and will be an everlasting kingdom. This is the same kingdom that Jesus spoke of and taught people about in the New Testament. Jesus was sent to:

1. teach the kingdom of God
 2. provide a way for believers to enter into this kingdom through knowledge, baptism and daily sacrifice or works
- **Matthew 4:23** - *"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."*
 - **Luke 4:43** - *"And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."*
 - **Acts 8:12** - *"But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."*

When this Kingdom is set up, the earth will then be filled with the glory and the knowledge of the Lord. This future kingdom is the same kingdom Jesus taught about before he ascended. This kingdom will never be destroyed. This kingdom will be set up first and then the earth will begin its process to be filled with the glory of God. After the thousand year reign of Christ, there will be no more sin and death. With this last enemy gone, the earth will truly be filled with the Glory of the Lord.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

There's an old saying that says you can't fight your enemy unless you understand your enemy and know who he is. What are his tactics? What is his agenda? If you don't know your enemy you can't defeat that enemy.

In a similar fashion, you can't enter the Kingdom of God unless you know God and understand about God and know His purpose. If you don't know God's purpose, then you can't know God and you can't inherit eternal life in God's kingdom and bring glory to Him. You have to know God's purpose first or you can't know God. So what is His purpose? Two things:

1. Fill the earth with his glory.
2. Set up an everlasting Kingdom to accomplish this.

Now that we know God's purpose, we can get to know God and learn of his attributes. There are 11 attributes of God that I would like to focus upon.

God's Attributes

1. **GOD IS ALL POWERFUL (OMNIPOTENT)**

Omnipotent means all powerful. This is the first attribute of God.

Isaiah 40:12-18 - *"Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?"*

These verses displays the omnipotence of God. God is all powerful and thus has unlimited authority and influence. He has the ability to do whatever His will dictates. Man may have some authority but not the ability to carry through. God's omnipotence is seen in his act of creating and sustaining everything. As a simple summary statement we may say that there are no limits to what God can do. There are four main things we need to know about God's power.

1. The first thing we need to know is that nothing is too hard for God.
 - Jeremiah 32:17 - *"Ah LORD GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."*
 - Luke 1:37 - *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."*
2. The second thing we need to know is that no one can stop God's plans of purpose.

- Job 42:2 - *"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee."*
- 3. The third thing we need to know about God's power is that He made all things and all things serve Him and His purpose.
 - Psalm 119:91 reveals this - *"They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants."*
- 4. The last thing we need to know about God's power is that God does whatever he pleases.
 - Psalm 115:3 reads - *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."*

Although God has all power, He will not do that which contradicts His holy character. He will not annihilate Himself because He is eternal, immutable, and all wise. He cannot lie because He is truth.

- **Titus 1:2** - *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began"*
- **Hebrews 6:18** - *"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us"*

We learn from these verses that one thing God will not do is tell a lie. Another thing that God will not do is go back on his word because he is faithful.

- **2 Timothy 2:13** - *"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself."*

God also cannot be tempted by evil.

- **James 1:13** - *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man"*

The omnipotence of God gives all of us a firm foundation to trust and confide in his ability to keep the precious promises that we are told of in Scripture.

2. GOD IS A JEALOUS GOD WHO DESPISES IDOLATRY - WHICH IS THE WORSHIP OF ANY FALSE GOD.

- **Exodus 20:5** - *"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me"*
- **Joshua 24:14-16** - *"Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. ¹⁵And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. And the*

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods"

God will not tolerate Idolatry. It makes him jealous as He is the creator and sustainer of all things. He created us to serve Him. We should follow after Him and not our own lusts. He is jealous because He desires our complete devotion and out of love wants to see us succeed. He wants us to bring glory to Him.

3. GOD IS FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING

- **Psalm 90:2** - *"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."*

This is an attribute of God that is well beyond our capability to understand. How can someone be here before time existed? The best explanation is that time dwells within God. He causes, affects, and controls it, and yet does so without time exerting any control or hold on Him. No hour glass can be turned over for the Creator of time, for He is not subject to time! A day is to God as a 1,000 years is to man.

4. GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE

A consuming fire is one that displays wrath and destroys. The purpose of the law was to destroy the lusts of the flesh that are contrary to God, and to purify the people for the Kingdom. The fire of divine scrutiny at the Judgment Seat will complete the process. (1 Cor. 3:13, 15). It will perfect faith. Gold, which is the symbol of tried faith (1 Peter 1:7), can never be destroyed; it can only be purified by fire. Therefore God still remains as a "consuming fire", and will manifest Himself as such against the world of the ungodly at the coming of the Lord (2 Thes. 1:8; 2 Pet. 3:12).

- **Hebrews 12:28-29** - *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire."*

If we have faith and seek God he will refine and purify us through daily trial and will not destroy us with his consuming fire.

5. GOD IS OMNIPRESENT (EVERYWHERE PRESENT)

A man can hide God from himself, but he cannot hide himself from God. God sees everything and is everywhere present. We are always in the presence of God. We can only be in one place at one time, but God is everywhere at the same time. This is far beyond man's simple mind to comprehend.

- **Psalm 139:7-12** - *"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not*

from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Most people are not comfortable with an omnipresent God. That's one of the reasons why they have idols. They want a god they can see and feel and touch. A god they can understand. A god they can control. A god made by their own hands. They reject the God of Israel but let us not reject our God. If we do, He will see us and just like the next attribute He will know because God is also Omniscient.

6. GOD IS OMNISCIENT (ALL KNOWING), HE KNOWS OUR THOUGHTS BEFORE WE SAY THEM.

God is all knowing. He knows and sees the past, the present, and the future with equal clarity and absolute certainty. To Him, all is the present. **Think about that. To God all is in the present, because he knows all from beginning to end. He is the Alpha and Omega.** God's omniscience means that nothing anyone does escapes His knowledge and that one day, those who are in His name will be called to give an account at the judgement and God will know everything we did, both good and bad. There's no use in trying to deny or justify anything at the judgement because God knows it all, especially our hearts.

- **Psalm 139:1-8** - *"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."*
- **Hebrews 4:13** also tells us - *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."*

God's omniscience gives us confidence in prayer, because it let's us know that God will not lose our prayers and that He always knows the best answer, even knowing our needs before we ask.

7. GOD WILL DO ALL HIS PLEASURE, HIS WORD WILL ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE.

- **Isaiah 46:9-11** - *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."*

- **Isaiah 55:8-11** - *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."*

There's a reason for everything that goes on in the world today. There's a reason for the governing authority at the current time, and the past time that has been set up. We might not always understand it and we should never oppose it. We have to realize that God's purpose is being fulfilled. We know that God's purpose is to establish a kingdom on this earth, so we can expect things to get worse as time goes on to bring about the return of Christ. We are told it will be a time such as never was in the earth and whether we try and interfere with the current order of things in politics or in the world or we don't, guess what? God's purpose will still be fulfilled. But we know we are not to get involved in such things as politics because we are told to be pilgrims and strangers.

8. GOD CREATED ALL THINGS FOR HIS OWN PLEASURE.

- **Revelation 4:11** - *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."*

All things were created for God's pleasure, not ours. Let's always remember that.

9. VENGEANCE BELONGS TO GOD, HE WILL POUR OUT HIS WRATH.

- **Romans 12:19** - *"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."*

This is a pretty clear message to us. We are told to avenge not ourselves but to give place unto wrath. The Lord will repay. It is all in his hands. Now I want to read about a time in the future when God will pour out his wrath.

- **Ezekiel 38:18-23** - *"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord GOD, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; So that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord GOD: every*

man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the LORD."

This is a future prophecy yet to occur that we know will take place. This is known as the great and terrible day of the Lord when his wrath will be leashed out upon the earth. We don't know exactly how much of this we will see before those of us in his name are gathered, but we are told that in that time we will be gathered. But as we've discussed, our time and God's time is different. But we can find hope in Daniel 12:1. This verse states - *"And at that time (there's that word time again) shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."*

10. GOD EXTENDS HIS MERCY AND KINDNESS.

God has demonstrated this attribute in abundance with respect to mankind. We from nearly the beginning of our existence have deserved nothing but wrath; from having sinned and fallen short into a state of condemnation.

- **Psalm 103:8** - *"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."*
- **Psalm 33:18-22** - *"Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine. Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield. For our heart shall rejoice in him, because we have trusted in his holy name. Let thy mercy, O LORD, be upon us, according as we hope in thee."*

God will look out for us and protect us with his kindness and mercy. He even provides us with a guardian angel.

- **Psalm 34:7** tells us - *"The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."*

Thankfully, God has been most generous to us through His mercy. Besides having the mercy to allow us to live out our miserable lives without destroying us instantly after the sin committed by Adam and Eve in the garden, God has extended his mercy to provide us a way out of the condemnation by which we have been cursed. He provided us a way to come out of Adam and into Christ through baptism. He provided his Son. Jesus made a perfect sacrifice through the shedding of his blood for both himself and for us, to provide a way of deliverance out of condemnation. Those of us in Christ enjoy and appreciate full well the fruits of God's mercy.

11. ALL CREATION BELONGS TO GOD.

- **Psalm 50:10-12** - *"For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."*

We are told that the fullness of the world is God's. We may think we own fancy things, a house, a dog or a race car; but we don't. It all belongs to God. We should take credit for nothing but give credit for everything to God.

Man's Characteristics

Once we understand these 11 attributes of God, then we can compare them to the attributes of man. By doing this we can see just how weak man is in comparison. In fact, there is no comparison. There are 10 attributes of man that I would like to consider. Man is beneath God and his power and is but a spot or blemish on the footstool of God. The earth is God's footstool. This is the first weakness or attribute of man that we want to examine. (Lord willing, to be continued.)

Sam Dew



Provided to us from a newspaper clipping. A bit of a tongue-and-cheek approach, but hopefully the spiritual pitfalls of Facebook will be perceived by our readers.

FACEBOOK

I am trying to make friends outside of Facebook while applying the same principles.

Therefore, every day I walk down the street and tell passers-by what I have eaten, how I feel at the moment, what I have done the night before, what I will do later and with whom.

I give them pictures of my family, my dog and of me gardening, taking things apart in the garage, watering the lawn, standing in front of landmarks, driving around town, having lunch and doing what anybody and everybody does every day.

I also listen to their conversations, give them the "thumbs up" and tell them I like them.

And it works just like Facebook! I already have four people following me: two police officers, a private investigator and a psychiatrist.

“THE KINGS OF THE EAST”



And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. (Rev 16:12)

A contemporary interpretation, which claims these “*kings of the east*” are Middle Eastern states to the North, South, and East of Israel which came into existence after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, invariably fails to take into account the full context of the scriptural teaching on the “*kings of the east*” and why the Euphratean power had to be “*dried up*.” It had to be “*dried up*” because it flooded.

The overflowing of the Euphrates River is recorded in Rev 9:13-19.

“And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For

their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.”

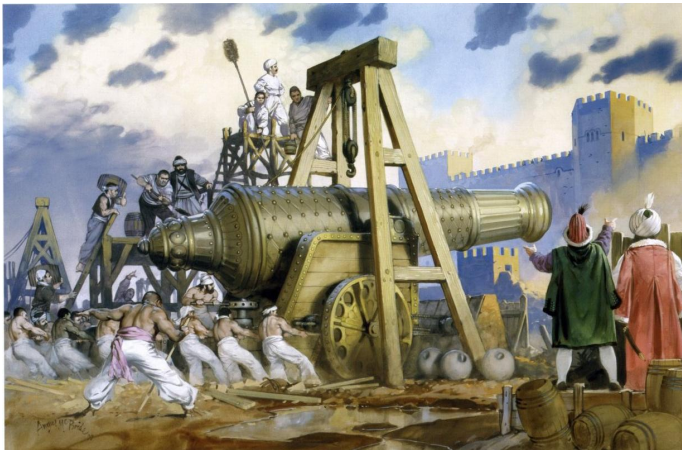
The expansion of a nation by military conquest, as depicted in the passage above, is likened to a river overflowing its banks.

*“Now therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory: and **he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks**: And he shall pass through Judah; he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.” (Isa 8:7-8)*

*“Who is this that **cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers**? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof.” (Jer 46:7-8)*

This is what happened during the period of the blowing of the Sixth Apocalyptic Trumpet. The Eastern power, the Muslim Turks, extended their reach beyond the Euphrates River westward. Prior to this time their power and influence was confined to the territories east of the Euphrates River. However, with the blowing of the Sixth Trumpet the time had arrived for judgment to be executed upon the Eastern third of the Roman Empire.

By political alliance and military conquest the Turks pushed their way west,



taking Constantinople, the capitol of the Eastern Empire, on May 29, 1453, following a 7 week siege. The reference in the passage to “fire,” “smoke,” and “brimstone” signifies the gunpowder and cannon artillery introduced to the battlefield by the Turks in this period.

In 1062, the Seljuk Turk, Togrul Beg, having liberated Baghdad from its

Bowide captors at the request of the Abbasid Caliph, married the Caliph’s daughter. From what we can gather, it appears this marriage took place April 27, 1062.

It was around this occasion that the Caliph bestowed upon Togrul Beg a new title: *“Ruler of Rulers, King of the East and the West, Restorer of Religion, Right Hand of the Caliph, and Commander of the Faithful.”* While he died in 1063, Togrul Beg’s work as the temporal civil and military leader of the Islamic people was continued by his successors over the following centuries.

In Rev. 9:15 we were told that the angels which were to overflow their Euphratean boundaries were in preparation *“for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.”* This period is most easily understood by working from the largest period to the smallest.

1 Year = 360 Days
1 Month = 30 Days
1 Day = 1 Day
1 Hour = 1/12th Day (*“Are there not twelve hours in the day?”* - John 11:9)

Upon the Day for a Year principle, we have symbolically before us 360 years + 30 years + 1 year + 30 days, or 391 years and 1 month. Each day represents a year, and 1/12th of a year represents 1 month, or 30 days.

We believe this period of time expired on May 29, 1453 with the fall of Constantinople to the Turks, who still possess the city today. This event stands as the most notable in the work of the Turkish power to *“slay the third part of men,”* or the Eastern Roman empire. Based upon this, we calculate backwards from May 29, 1453 and arrive at April 29, 1062 - two days after Togrul Beg’s marriage to the Caliph’s daughter. We would suggest therefore, that this is the beginning of the preparation period, and that it was on this date that Togrul Beg was designated *“King of the East and the West”* by the Caliph.

This history of the 6th Trumpet establishes what the Euphrates River symbol of Revelation 16 represents. By comparing the scripture with itself, we can see the broader picture. The Euphrates River is not first mentioned in Revelation 16, rather, it is introduced in the prophecy of Chapter 9. We must gather the context of the symbol in the prophecy to understand what the drying up of the Euphrates represents. You can read more of the history of the Preparation and Loosing of the 4 Angels in Eureka, Vol. 3, pp. 140 – 158. (Logos edition).

When we arrive in Revelation 16, we see the Spirit closing a part of the historical storyline left open in Chapter 9. The flooded Euphrates River found in Revelation 16 symbolizes the political and military advance of a Muslim Caliphate from Persia and Afghanistan westward to the fledgling Eastern Roman Empire. Without Chapter 9 we would not have this information.

When looking at the drying up of the Euphrates River we must also consider Cyrus the Great’s conquest of Babylon.

Cyrus’ work was typical of the events symbolized in the 16th Chapter of the Apocalypse. Cyrus’ name means *“like the heir.”* By this term our mind is





immediately drawn to Christ—“*To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*” (Gal 3:16). “*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” (Gal 3:29)

But the evidence of Cyrus typifying Christ does not end here. Look at the language Yahweh uses of Cyrus, and the shadow becomes clear: “[*Thus saith Yahweh*] *That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith Yahweh to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the*

bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, Yahweh, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.” (Isa 44:27-28; 45:1-4)

Here we see Yahweh calling Cyrus by name prior to his birth, as he did his own Son. He is also called Yahweh’s Shepherd and Anointed. Notice the reference to the drying of rivers in the immediate context of the introduction of Cyrus here as well. Isaiah refers to Cyrus in a few other places:

- “*I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith Yahweh of hosts.*” (Isa 45:13)
- “*Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*” (Isa 46:11)
- “*Who raised up righteousness from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet.*” (Isa 41:2-3)

Without delving into the details of Cyrus’ work, we can see from these few passages the parallels to the work of Christ, which will be on a much larger

scale. We can gather that Yahweh intended to use Cyrus to punish the Babylonians and deliver Israel from their captivity. For a description of how Cyrus captured Babylon we will pick up with an account from the historian Herodotus. After describing the massive impenetrable walls encompassing Babylon, and the fact that the city is divided by the River Euphrates running through the middle of it, he states:

*“The main body of his army he posted at the place where the [Euphrates] river runs into the city, and then again behind the city he set others, where the river issues forth from the city; and he proclaimed to his army that so soon as they should see that the stream had become passable, they should enter by this way into the city. Having thus set them in their places and in this manner exhorted them he marched away himself with that part of his army which was not fit for fighting: and when he came to the lake, Cyrus also did the same things which the queen of the Babylonians had done as regards the river and the lake; that is to say, **he conducted the river by a channel into the lake, which was at that time a swamp, and so made the former course of the river passable by the sinking of the stream.** When this had been done in such a manner, the Persians who had been posted for this very purpose entered by the bed of the river Euphrates into Babylon, the stream having sunk so far that it reached about to the middle of a man's thigh.”*

He continues:

*“As it was, the Persians came upon them unexpectedly; and owing to the size of the city (so it is said by those who dwell there) after those about the extremities of the city had suffered capture, **those Babylonians who dwelt in the middle did not know that they had been captured; but as they chanced to be holding a festival, they went on dancing and rejoicing during this time until they learnt the truth only too well.**”* (This is the external description of what is recorded in Daniel 5.)

Can you see here the prophecy of Revelation 16:12 being acted out before your eyes in history? Cyrus, Yahweh's “Anointed Shepherd,” is called to execute Yahweh's counsel by bringing judgment upon Babylon, returning the captivity of Israel, and rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple. As the King of Persia, he comes out of the East. He dries up the River Euphrates, thus preparing a way for the King of the East to “[pass]safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet,” or the way a person would not normally go by foot—through the river bed. This is how Yahweh did “open before him the two leaved gates,” and broke “in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron” by completely avoiding them!

We see, in the historic overflowing of the Euphrates River depicted in Rev. 9, the expansion of a militant Caliphate uniting the Middle Eastern populations and culminating in what is historically known as the Ottoman Empire. The drying of the river is the gradual decline of this empire commencing around



1820 and continuing steadily over the next 100 years. We believe that the last remnant of this empire, today called Turkey, will be entirely dried up by the future movement of Russia. As the latter day representative of the Eastern Roman Empire, they will seize Istanbul/Constantinople as the historic throne of the Dragon power.

Tying it together

We can learn the purpose of the Apocalyptic drying of the Euphrates from the historic type. The river is dried so that Yahweh's Anointed Shepherd, the Righteousness he raises up from the East, might redeem Israel, proclaim Jerusalem be built again, and overthrow Babylon the Great! This is the work of Christ and the glorified Saints, or "The Kings of the East."

The Greek word for "*East*" is literally translated "*rising of the Sun*." As the Sun rises in the east, the reason for the translation is obvious. But within the term "*rising of the Sun*" we have a little further insight into the identity of these Kings.

In addition to being "*Righteousness from the East*," Christ is the "*Sun of Righteousness*." (Mal. 4:2) Who then, we must ask, are this Sun's risings? Who is to be risen by this Sun? Those who have entered into the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant! Those sanctified by the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant!

From these "*risings of the sun*," or resurrected ones, shall the faithful be elevated to reign as kings and priests after the Melchizedek Order on the earth with Christ for 1,000 years. These are the "*Kings from the rising of the Sun*." They are the faithful of all ages who have been elevated as Kings from the resurrected multitude.

"And they [The Kings of the East] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings [of the East] and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev 5:9-10)

As Cyrus of old, Christ and his brethren will destroy Babylon, and they will deal the death blow to Babylon the Great. (Rev. 16:19) They will proclaim that Jerusalem and the temple be built again. All nations will be prostrate before them.

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a

rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.” (Rev 2:26-27)

Despite developments in the world over the past 100 years, nothing has altered the historic facts of Rev. 9 or the typical work of Cyrus the Great described by Isaiah. Without its scriptural and historic context, Revelation 16:12 is unintelligible.

To be a King of the East is a privilege to which all the Saints aspire. We must each examine and improve ourselves that we might be accounted faithful in the Day of Judgment.

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude [The Kings of the East], which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are [The Kings of the East] they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev 7:9-17)

Adam Kuipers



“Am I my brother’s keeper?” is the spirit of Cain; “when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly” - this is the spirit of Christ.

F.R. Shuttleworth, The Christadelphian, May 1875

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT



Oct. 12.

My Dear Mother:

I was speaking with Mr. Evans today, and he is very sorry for me. He says, however, that it is only what I can expect if I wish to enter the kingdom, for Paul says, "Through much tribulation we enter the kingdom." He advised me to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to strengthen my faith, and to remember the words of Jesus, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." Also, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." He says that tribulation is sure to come to every true believer sooner or later, but we must look upon it as coming from God and intended for our profit that we may become "partakers of his holiness." Mr. Evans himself has suffered deeply, though not in exactly the same way as I have, and he knows of many who have suffered the loss of all things which make life desirable for the sake of the truth. It is only a matter of having sufficient faith. Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," and this because he "had respect unto the recompense of reward."

Mr. Evans feels very sorry for my wife. He thinks she is honest and sincere, but deluded; and that the only hope for her is my own obedience to the Truth. "Obey the Truth yourself," said he, "and fill your home with the sweet and wholesome spirit of Christ, and her unreasonable opposition to the Truth will gradually melt away and she will soon open her ears willingly to the Gospel of the Kingdom." Perhaps he is right. I know that his counsel is good, and I shall certainly try to follow it before long, for I feel very uneasy over the situation. I realize that I am a mortal man and liable to pass away at any moment. What an awful thing to go into the everlasting oblivion of the grave without a single spark of hope. May God preserve me from such a fate.

Oct. 14.

My Dear Mother:

I have been considering Mr. Wilson's letter and I think it contains some very peculiar statements. How strange that he should be so uncertain and doubtful as to the condition of the dead when the Bible is so clear and positive on the subject. The Bible

says, “The dead know not anything;” “All their love and hatred and envy is now perished;” “They praise not the Lord:” “Their thoughts have perished;” and “There is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge in *sheol*.” I have heard Mr. Wilson preach some very eloquent sermons in which he vividly portrayed the blessedness of those who have died in the Lord. If theologians have to admit that they know very little about what happens after death why do they speak so positively and circumstantially on the subject in their sermons and funeral orations?

Mr. Wilson’s remarks about the Old Testament seem to imply that the New Testament teaching is contrary to the old instead of being confirmatory of it. This is putting the Bible against itself, which cannot be allowed, seeing that God is its author. His remarks on the promise to Abraham are equivalent to making God a liar, for he says, “The promise to Abraham was conditional, and in *some sense* *illusionary*.” As much as to say that God never really intended to give the land to Abraham even if he fulfilled the supposed conditions. I say *supposed* conditions for the promise was not conditional. Paul says that “these all (including Abraham) died in faith, not having received the promises,” and Mr. Wilson adds in effect, “And never will, for the promise was *illusionary*.” His illustration about offering his boy five dollars does not help him any unless we are to consider that promise to be “*illusionary*” also, in which case what will the boy think of his father when he finds that the five dollars are not forthcoming?

His idea that the “Good of this world hold most of the property on an average” is evidently intended to explain the promise of Jesus that “The meek inherit the earth;” but it is not in harmony with fact, neither is it Scriptural, for the Psalmist teaches that the time for the meek to inherit the earth is “when the wicked are cut off,” and that time has not yet arrived.

Altogether his letter is very unscriptural, although if I had received it a few months ago it would have seemed all right. I am now diligently reading the books loaned me by Mr. Wilson and will let you know soon what I think of them.

Oct. 30.

My Dear Mother:

I have been reading Mattison and Landis on Immortality, and I find them full of absurdities and contradictions. Several pages are devoted to “Heathen testimonies to the soul’s immortality,” though, to me, a whole volume of heathen testimonies would not be equal to one passage of Scripture on the subject. An amusing feature of Mattison’s book is where he tries to show how immortal souls are created. He presents the following four hypothesis:

1. Souls are pro-created by the angels.
2. Created by God, and pre-exist in another state.
3. Created by God at the time of their union with the body.
4. Propogated or transmitted from parent to child.

He then proceeds to demolish all but the fourth hypotheses, which he upholds, although he admits that it “tends to materialism.” He then gravely informs us that

“Eve’s soul was in some way propagated in connection with the rib.”

This is the sort of foolishness that young theological students have to study to fit them for “preaching the gospel.”

Here is an extract from Landis:

“It must be admitted as natural to suppose that the doctrine declared by Christ on this subject * * * would be that of the immortality of man; that death was not a complete victory over life; that notwithstanding the triumph of the grave, that which constituted his real, essential being survived the dissolution of the body, and subsisted forever in a state of happiness or misery in another world.”

It may be “reasonable” enough for a man saturated with Platonic philosophy to “suppose” that Jesus would teach the same doctrine, but it is not reasonable to Scripturally enlightened people who believe that He came to save us from “perishing.” It would have looked reasonable enough to me a few months ago, but it seems very unreasonable to me now. I cannot call it anything else but a lie; the same old lie of the serpent in the garden of Eden, “Ye shall not surely die * * * ye shall be as gods.” No, man is not immortal, but a weak, perishing, dust-formed creature, and his only chance of immortality is in believing and obeying the gospel of the blessed God. At times a realizing sense of my precarious position sweeps over my mind like a wave, and I feel as if I must not delay another minute in obeying the Truth, and then I think of my poor wife - and hesitate. I feel, however, that the strain is telling upon me and I cannot endure it much longer. Your letters are always comforting, and I am glad you are beginning to see the Truth. What joy if you and I and my dear wife meet at last in the kingdom. But it looks rather dark at present.

Nov. 4.

My Dear Mother:

I find that “doctors of divinity” do not agree in regard to the condition of the dead. Landis says on page 34, “The souls of the righteous, being made perfect in this life, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies; and the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day. Besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies the Scripture acknowledgeth none.”

Mattison says on page 97, “Why should souls go up beforehand to the heavenly mansions, to which they are admitted when made perfect and complete by the resurrection?” Again on page 105, “The doctrine of an intermediate state is the only doctrine that can be reconciled to the doctrine of a general judgment.”

Here is a clear contradiction between two of the foremost theologians of “orthodoxy.” Landis boldly avows that the righteous received their full reward as soon as they die, while Mattison, seeing the inconsistency of such teaching with the Bible doctrine of the resurrection, claims that both the righteous and the wicked go into an intermediate place or state to await the resurrection of their bodies. Both these theories are unscriptural and show the folly of trying to mix Paganism with the truth of God. It also

shows the danger of placing dependence upon the reputed wise of this world, for their wisdom is divinely declared to be “foolishness with God.”

I have ventured to ask my wife to read and compare the statements above quoted from the two books. Perhaps it may open her eyes to the unreliability of her spiritual guides. she has criticized me several times for presuming to think I knew more about the teachings of the Bible than men who are specially educated in such matters. The more I read of their books, however, the more I am convinced that God has “hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.”

Nov. 10 .

My Dear Mother:

I am still reading Mr. Wilson's theological books. I have finished Mattison and Landis, and am now reading “Lost Forever,” by L.T. Townsend. D.D. It seems almost like a waste of time to read such trash, but I shall keep my promise. I am making extracts from some of the most striking portions for future reference. They may be useful some time.

It is amusing to read the history of the devil as related by Mr. Townsend. Of course it is all imaginary, for he does not find any support for his theory in the Bible; in fact, he doesn't seem to consider it necessary to prove his statements.

He says that “somewhere in the universe God exercised his creative power and spoke into existence a spiritual creation, with inhabitants called angels. *** There was a leader among the angelic hosts, one who stood first, Lucifer, the Light-bringer, the glorious Son of the Morning. He was probably not only the *highest* but also the *best* of all created intelligences. The royal scepter was doubtless entrusted to him; he was, perhaps, for as yet, if we mistake not, God was invisible.”

Although Mr. Townsend shows great ingenuity, his frequent use of such expressions as “probably,” “doubtless,” “perhaps” and “if we mistake not,” betrays the weakness of his position.

He goes on to say that trouble began in heaven when all intelligences were commanded to submit to the authority of the pre-existent Christ. He says, “Notwithstanding this command, Lucifer stood erect and others with him. Worship this crowned Prince, Lucifer would not, *** therefore sin for the first time entered the universe, and this exalted Star and Son of the Morning became a sinner, and thereafter is known as Satan.”

Mr. Townsend then gives a detailed account of the inception and carrying out of the great rebellion in heaven. He says Satan “expected to conquer. He had no idea that his confederacy would cost such a struggle. He expected to hold all the blood shed in the palm of his hand. His first attempt was bold and daring. He called together his confederates, planned his campaigns, commenced his movements, and for the first time there was rebellion in that spiritual and primeval Paradise.”

In speaking of Satan's future, Mr. Townsend says, “Satan is the king in Gehenna; that place is his kingdom, given to him, deeded to him to have and to hold. To be sure he is a defeated rebel. Hell is his St. Helena. A terrible monarch Satan must be in his own

kingdom. He will be an absolute tyrant. He will be the punisher. God has committed the work to him, and faithfully will he execute it. He will have power enough delegated to maintain his position. If need be, God will harden his heart, were such a thing possible, so that he will be known as the fierce and Bloody Executioner.”

What Pagan foolishness is this! What awful blasphemy against the God of heaven! Truly “orthodox” theology is worse than I supposed. Why, this man actually teaches that God is more hard-hearted than the devil! What a slander upon that righteous and loving God of Israel, whom Jesus addressed as “Holy Father.” I will not trouble you with any more quotations from these blind guides. I will finish reading the books as soon as possible and return them to Mr. Wilson. If I had any lingering doubts as to the unscriptural character of so-called theology these books would be sufficient to remove them. I have pointed out some of these things to my wife and asked her to read them, but she says little and I do not know whether she looks at them or not.

Nov. 20

My Dear Mother:

I have finished reading Mr. Wilson’s books and returned them last evening. I told him that I was more than ever convinced that the Christadelphians had the Truth, and that my letter of withdrawal from the church must be considered as final as I could not fellowship such unscriptural doctrines. He said he was very sorry, but that it should be as I wished. He did not attempt any argument, probably because he thought it would do no good. I have now decided to obey the Truth in the appointed way at any cost. I have resolved firmly that I will enter upon the narrow way as soon as possible and walk therein, with God’s help, to the end, regardless of every consideration except to do His will. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” I shall speak to Mr. Evans about the matter tomorrow.

Nov. 21

My Dear Mother:

I told Mr. Evans today that I wished to be immersed into the Name that is above every name. He was very much pleased and grasped me warmly by the hand, saying he had prayed earnestly for me and that he now thanked God for granting me repentance unto life.

He says my application for baptism will be announced next Sunday at their “breaking of bread meeting,” after which I am to meet a committee from the Ecclesia and they will examine me as to my knowledge of the Truth so as to ascertain if the proper conditions exist. Although the Christadelphians have no minister, they have an organization and officers, whom they call serving brethren, and rules for the orderly carrying on of the business of the Ecclesia. I must now inform my wife of my determination, and I pray that she may receive it more calmly than before: but come what will, I shall not waver again.

W.H. Clough

The Christadelphian Advocate, July 1901

“THE CHRISTADELPHIANS”

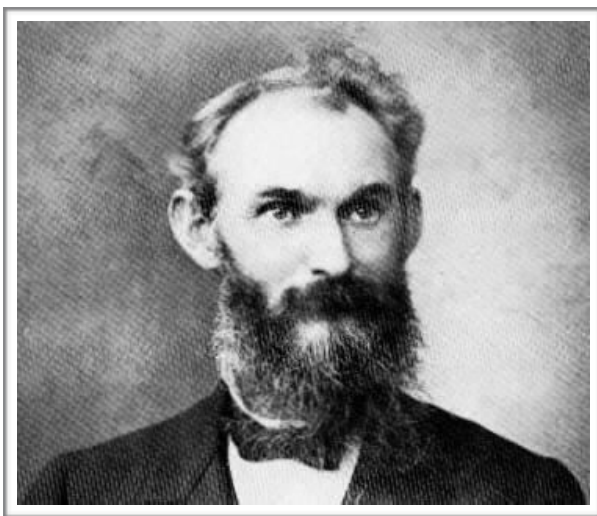
The following was a news article reporting a series of lectures delivered by Thomas Williams in January of 1895. The article was reproduced in the March, 1895 Christadelphian Advocate, with a short comment by bro. Williams at the very end. We have added the pictures - SK.

THE CHRISTADELPHIANS

What is Taught by the Masonic Hall Meetings on Sunday.

CHICAGO, ILL. Jan. 26. - To the Editor:

A course of lectures is being delivered on Sunday mornings at the Masonic Temple by one Thomas Williams, a representative of a body styling themselves Christadelphians. Like many other “isms” that have sprung up within the last fifty



years, they teach the personal return of Christ to the earth to establish his kingdom. Mr. Williams is unique in his teaching. Instead of Christ making His visible appearance in the sky while the world will be wrapped in a great conflagration, as claimed by other Adventists, Mr. Williams says that His coming will be thief-like, unknown to the world at large, while the dead who have believed the Christadelphian doctrines will be resurrected, and, with the living believers, will be called to meet the

Lord in some remote and lonely corner of the earth - presumably Mount Sinai - to be judged according to their deeds. The worthy will be made immortal and become cabinet officers under the new regime. the unworthy will be cast into outer darkness or among the nations, to finally perish.

After the judgment Mr. Williams has the route marked out that Christ and His “saints” will take from Sinai to Jerusalem - through Teman and Mount Paran, Edom and Bozrah. At the latter place a bloody battle will be fought by those who have gathered to oppose the onward march of this mysterious army.

The nations will begin to inquire: “Who is this that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah?”

The kings of the earth will take counsel together, and a confederation will be formed to overthrow this new power, led by a possible Mohammed of the desert.

Jerusalem being the objective point, the armies of the world will be gathered there to prevent its capture by the hero of Bozrah. Indeed, so successful will they be that, in spite of the opposition of the Jews, who will have gathered there from the four corners of the earth, the city will be taken by the confederates and half of its inhabitants will again go forth into captivity.

At this crisis the conqueror appears upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east. Quoting Zechariah as authority, Mr. Williams asserts that a great earthquake will cleave the mountain from the east to the west, half of it removing towards the north and half of it towards the south, while the valley to the south of Jerusalem will be lifted up and become a plain. A complete overthrow of the armies of the world follows, and Jerusalem, the conquered and reconquered city, is entered and becomes the capital city of the world; from whence the laws go forth to all nations, who will be compelled to submit to this autocrat of the East.

In that case democratic ideas will be at a discount. there would be this advantage under such a regime: No troublesome questions of taxation for the support of the government would follow, as the “royal house” would not be subject to the necessities of the present mortal state.



One of the many meeting rooms within the Masonic Hall



The student of comparative religions will find it interesting that the Christadelphians are peculiar in their belief concerning the second advent and its subsequent details.

It is also interesting to note that other adventual bodies predict the rise of an impostor, in much the same manner, who will deceive the Jews. Indeed, the latter has been the teaching of the mother church for a hundred years or more.

[This is as good as we may expect from a newspaper report. - T.W.]

EDITORIAL FLYLEAF

A NOTE FROM A SK SUBSCRIBER

“Read your article “Full Measure of Our Devotion” in the Winter 2016 SK. Your mention of “Prosperity Theology” brought to mind those like the talk show investment advisor Dave Ramsey. It also brings to mind the last paragraph of the article “Beware of Covetousness” by Dr. Thomas in the book THE FAITH IN THE LAST DAYS, page 240. It reads” - *“The profession of apostolic Christianity has made many a rich man poor; but we have never heard, or read, of the poor man who has been enriched by it as pertaining to the good things of the present life. We are not placed here to accumulate riches for those who may come after us; but to labor for the truth, in doing the truth ourselves, and in contributing to its establishment in our own day and generation. In occupying our time thus, we labor for the meat which endures to everlasting life. We do not believe that in the midst of so much ignorance, superstition, unbelief and woe as now prevails in the nominal household of faith, that a Christian can die rich, and possess the kingdom. It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's Eye.”*

“OLD PATHS CHRISTADELPHIAN STATEMENT OF FAITH”

In April we received a digital copy from bro. Al Bryan of a republication of the 1877 Statement of Faith. He stated in the accompanying letter - “A reprint of the Unamended Christadelphian Statement of Faith published under the above title which follows the original language of the 1877 statement is available for viewing at www.truthgleaner.org. Scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on the link provided.”

In his note he explains that it is not being published as an inter-ecclesial fellowship document, but is “solely for the convenience of any individual or ecclesia that may share a common interest in the preservation of the One Faith apart from false teachings that have been held up in the garb of “Truth,” whether believed or tolerated in fellowship.”

However, there is a notable difference with previous versions, as the “Doctrines to be Rejected” section contains an additional 15 entries dealing with current heresies that have arisen within the Body, not anticipated by earlier framers and versions of the Statement of Faith. Issues addressed: The present possession of “aionian life”; a present Kingdom; current Kingship of Christ after the Melchizedek order, that God communicates to believers through dreams; that salvation is complete upon baptism; that works are not an integral part of the believer’s service, Preterist and Futurist interpretations of the Apocalypse, that Bible prophecy as outlined in Articles 15 through 28 of the SOF have nothing to do with fellowship; justifications of Divorce and Remarriage; Issues surrounding Theistic Evolution/“Darwinism”; and ideas that the belief or tolerance of these issues has no bearing on fellowship.