



"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." -Prov. 23:23

A Christadelphian publication devoted to gleaning and heralding the Truth concerning the problem of life, here and hereafter, the restoration of the Jews to the holyland, the return of Christ as King of all the earth, and the signs of the approaching end of Gentile times.

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Son of God and Son of Man **The Two Sides of Christ at His First Advent**

COMMENT: The following, taken from the 1869 *Christadelphian*, was a letter from Bro. Thomas to Bro. Roberts regarding proposition XX of the "Declaration". The subject matter deals with the two aspects of Christ at his first advent, a subject which must be kept in balance. We commend Bro. Thomas's thoughts to our readers – *Editor*.

Brother Tait, of Edinburgh, having applied to the Editor for information as to the nature of the objection made to Proposition XX. of the *Declaration*, by the writer of "A FAREWELL TOUR IN AMERICA" (see letter last month), the Editor, in compliance with an alternative request in the same letter, sent it to Dr. Thomas (then lecturing at Nottingham), who, from having had the company of the said writer during the tour in question, might be presumed to know all about it. The Doctor has written the following reply:—

Alexandra Park, Nottingham, July 17th, 1869.

DEAR BRO. ROBERTS.—I do not know what correction brother Donaldson and Harper proposed to brother Bingley, not being present at their conversation. The objection to Proposition XX. turns upon the phrase "Jesus *Christ*," and the notion that "Christ," whose spirit was in the prophets, "had no existence before the birth of Jesus, except as a purpose," &c." This confounds all distinction between Deity and flesh. Deity is "very God." *Christ*, the Word, who "in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth," therefore pre-existed before the birth of "the body prepared" of the substance of Mary, and which lay dead in the tomb. That body named Jesus, had no existence until developed by the Christ-Power. *Federally*, indeed, it pre-existed in the loins of Abraham and in Adam, as Levi was in Abraham, and we in Adam, before birth; but not otherwise. The pre-existent Christ, or Deity, was not the less Deity because he veiled himself in flesh, in our "sinful flesh," or "sin's flesh," and styled himself JESUS, or *he who shall be Saviour*. The cause of all current confusion of ideas upon this "great mystery," is men working out their conclusions as the Jews did of old: their sole rule of interpretation is *the flesh*.—"Ye judge after the flesh," which the Christ-Spirit saith "profits nothing." They see nothing but *the flesh* in Jesus Christ, on the one hand; and nothing but an immaculate or spotless flesh, on the other. Both these belligerent parties are wrong. They are contending knights viewing opposite sides of the shield. If one side of the shield be black, and the other side white, what is the colour of the shield? Jesus Christ in the day of his weakness, had two sides—the one, DEITY; the other, MAN — *the Eternal Christ-Power veiled in, and manifested through the flesh created from the ground; which flesh had wantonly transgressed the Divine Law, the penalty of which sent it back into the dust from whence it came*. This is Jesus Christ the true Deity, whom to know is life eternal. This flesh which inhabited Paradise, like all the beasts, "very good" of its sort, is styled "sin" and "sin's flesh," because it sinned or transgressed the Eden law. Our flesh is the same as Adam's before he sinned, only *the worse for wear*: for Paul says that we sinned in him, and he was sinless before he sinned; and we were as much in his loins when he was sinless, as in the act of sinning. His flesh undefiled by sin is constitutionally the same as the flesh of his posterity defiled legally thereby. The Christ-Deity veiled himself in the Adamic nature defiled by sin, in order that he might condemn sin to death in the nature which, though created "very good," had legally defiled itself by transgression of the

Eden law. This purpose would have been defeated if he had veiled himself in a clean nature. To say that the Man, Jesus, was *corporeally* clean, or pure, holy, spotless, and undefiled, is in effect to say that he was not “made of a woman;” for Scripture teaches, that nothing born of woman can possibly be clean: but it is credibly testified that he was “born of a woman;” he must therefore necessarily have been born *corporeally unclean*. Hence, it is written of him in Psalm 51:5, “I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” He therefore prays, “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” This prayer has been answered, and he has been “Washed thoroughly from his (corporeal) iniquity, and cleansed from his sin;” so that *now* he has a *clean nature*, which is spirit and divine—“the Lord the Spirit”—once dead as to flesh, but now alive as Spirit for evermore.—(Rev. 1:18 .) “This is,” as Paul saith, “a great mystery,” which those who are “wise and prudent” as opposed to “babes and sucklings,” out of whose mouth the Deity hath ordained and perfected praise, are not able to understand.

I would propose that all your readers consent to stop *disputing* about “the nature and pre-existence of Christ” for the next twelve months, and apply themselves to the study of the

subject as revealed in Moses and the prophets, and by Jesus, John, Peter, and Paul, in the spirit of little children. There is too much *cacoethes scribendi et loquendi* by “the unlearned and the unstable” for the interests of the truth and themselves. They “wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction,” and develop by their logomachy only that which is altogether evil and embarrassing. If they would be more zealous for the enlightenment of their neighbours in the first principles of the gospel; and less captious and disputations among themselves, I am sure that they would lay up for themselves in store a better foundation against the time to come, and be more likely to layhold on eternal life.

The seats in the People’s Hall are nearly all occupied at our week-night meetings, and crowded on Sunday night. The attention is exemplary. The last two lectures I treated of the immortality revealed in the Bible, as opposed to the Egyptian invention of the immortality of the soul. Several “ministers” present; but they doubtless departed uncomfortable by what they heard.—Faithfully yours,

JOHN THOMAS.

Editorial

Psalms 119:45 “And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts”

People of the world speak often about the concept of “Liberty”, and yet its true value seems to escape them, blinded by worldly ambitions, the power of the principle being used to shore up every popular political creed: “Give me liberty or give me death!” are highly acclaimed words spoken on a hill in Richmond Virginia not so far from our home. “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” was later the battle cry of the French Revolution that sent myriads to their destruction. In these so-called “liberties” as the world esteems them, the man of God has no interest. What the world apparently defines as liberty is to be free to act in a manner as judged rightly by human reasoning, individual or collective, in opposition to the political or religious dictates of so-called “tyrants”. Its modern collective equivalent is often dubbed as “Democracy.” While the application of this principle within man’s political systems has afforded a measure of protection for the Saints, as well as the survival of the Truth, it is not, however, a system in which Saints are at liberty to involve themselves.

For a man to exercise his liberty to act in a worldly manner, or to involve himself in the world’s political machinery

is in opposition to Godly wisdom. The practice of such “liberty” is not new, of course, as we find in the book of Judges, that “*every man did [that which was] right in his own eyes*” (Judges 17:6). Verily, that is an apt description of the age we live in! So, while man (believer or non-believer) is at liberty to act in a manner that defies the word of God, seeking rather to establish behavior and judgment based upon his own concept of righteousness, being willingly ignorant of that which is true (Rom. 10:3), such is the way of sin and death. Of equal threat to our welfare is to emulate the world by placing in higher priority the pursuit of temporal interests at the expense of worshipping God, of serving the Ecclesia by being prepared (not slothful), of searching for truth, of lending our brethren a hand (as one reaching out), of providing for the spiritual nurture and admonition of our family. Yet sadly, believers are not immune to the many enticements the world has to offer. At this late hour of expectation we must remain vigilant in the Truth, and not become caught up in a world that is ever boasting about its “accomplishments,” encouraging us to follow after their “excess of riot.”

But there is a liberty to which we

would all do well to take heed, defined by James as “*the perfect law of liberty*,” which if a man continue therein, “*he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed*” (James 1:25). The simple distinction in these two libertys is that while the former is to exercise our free will to serve the flesh, that latter is to exercise our free will to serve Yahweh. We are at liberty to take what ever means are necessary to lay aside every weight, and to reach forth to take hold upon eternal life, so long as we are doing so in a manner that does not lay a stumbling stone in the way of another. Much to the rather, we should do so in an effort to help one another in the way of truth and life – “*for I seek thy precepts.*”

The exercise of this principle will weigh heavily upon the man of God, as some will choose the path of least resistance, preferring the usual spirit of apathy and indifference, approval of their peers, and disdain towards those that would think, speak, and act otherwise. The Apostle Paul has much to say upon this principle and we would refer the reader to Romans chapter 14 for a complete review. Suffice it to say that we should never set out to purposely offend

our brethren in the things that we do as a matter of exercising our spiritual liberty. As such, we may at times have to restrain our zeal, knowing when to speak, and when to withhold from speaking, setting forth Christ as our example, who made himself of no reputation. On the other hand, there is no place in the way that leads to life eternal for false humility either. Rather, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”*; nor is there a place for those who seek for something whereby they may be offended, and by so doing “quench the spirit.” The scripture teaches us to know and do better.

If we have legitimate questions of concern about an Ecclesia, or the ‘rumored’ activities of certain brethren, then let them be directed to the source, confirmed by more than one witness, rather than tossed about as the latest “hot item” off the rumor press! Unfortunately, such behavior falls right in line with our natural tendency to judge one another too quickly (with an eye of flesh, rather than with an eye of spirit) in order to justify oneself, coupled with our ability to build barriers along party lines, one after another, and then wonder why there is so much division in the brotherhood.

It has been our experience that there are several prime contributors to this unfortunate pattern of disintegration within the community. One is idle gossip, capable of bringing railing accusation and innuendo against both individuals, and even entire Ecclesias. Such information is seldom accurate or verified, and is more often blown out of proportion. In this offense we can become guilty of manifesting the most uncomely of all un-Christ-like behaviors – self righteousness. Another equally destructive behavior is the systematic dismantling of the

foundations of the Truth, received generously from our forbearers through Yahweh’s grace. This is most often displayed through unfounded criticism against those who were instrumental in the Truth’s re-discovery. We would note that this pattern is dangerously close to the manner in which the doctrine of the millennial reign of Christ was lost in the Papal abyss of the 4th century A.D. What was once considered as the hallmark of Christian belief was first railed upon with criticism in favor of a “broader perspective”; afterwards viewed as speculation with little toleration; then esteemed entirely as spurious nonsense. The following generations having built their spiritual house upon this foundation of rotteness, openly declared the doctrine of the millennium to be entirely heretical! Fortunately there is an antidote: Arm yourselves brethren with the sure foundation of the truth, faithfully expositing in the Pioneer writings. Study them yourself with prayerful consideration and Bible in hand as many have done and continue to do, and therein you will find great consolation in these days of weariness, yet so close to our redemption!

Would there be more care and compassion in this matter if we could grasp for a moment that such destructive behavior may overthrow the faith of someone we love, and if overthrown, may they ever be recovered? Have I contributed to this destruction? – A sobering question for any believer to ponder. Should we not then pause and consider what we are doing on an individual and collective basis, and ask for Yahweh’s hand in the matter? What if Yahweh stood aloof from us, according to our individual and collective failures to serve Him with perfection? What if He took the truth from us after the fashion of those whose desire is to destroy it? Where

would we be? Is the liberty we exercise, therefore, a course that is taken strictly in our own behalf, for the sanctity of “our name” among men, as to maintain their esteem, or are we thinking of others also, including our spouses, our children, and foremost, of Yahweh’s name, His purpose, and the gift of His son?

In view of these questions, our “liberty” should always be tempered with the full knowledge of the life of our Lord. It is recorded that even as he reached out to save those in need, he also became the object of misplaced judgment from those that sought to justify themselves, accusing him of associating with “publicans and sinners.” The Jews after the flesh were further incensed by Christ’s full knowledge and faith in the prophets of Israel, and for this he paid with his natural life, but in the process took hold of life eternal. Where is our faith? Again, because of their misconceptions about the Truth, the ruling Jews stood aloof from those they deemed “unworthy.” In this they greatly erred, thinking that they were keeping sinners and heretics out of the Lord’s house, they effectively shut the door on themselves! Let us not be of this sort! We cannot glorify our Father in heaven by unduly criticizing or passing judgment on others who can see for themselves that they need a physician, or by hiding ourselves away in isolation as an Elijah upon Mt. Horeb, thinking that we are the only one left! Our charge is to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, and to exercise the “still small voice” of the truth, wherever there may be found ears to hear, and wherever there are brethren whose creed is not their own, but, while imperfect, are seeking after Yahweh’s grace that they might be perfected. *“So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty”* (James 2:12). In this we shall not be ashamed.

Exposition Cities of Refuge

We find in the scriptures, three chapters where Deity outlines the laws concerning the Cities of Refuge. These specifications can be found in Numbers chapter 35, Deuteronomy chapter 4, and Joshua chapter 20. Our study will be focused mainly on Joshua chapter 20.

Special attention should be taken to the ordinances relating to the cities and those that would seek protection within. Yahweh has provided types and symbols relating to the manslayer that took refuge in these cities. Yahweh made special provision relating to the amount, purpose, location, and names of each of the cities. These cities provided security and spiritual lessons to the Children of Israel and to the present day believer. One of the most notable points of consideration with the study of the Cities of Refuge is how

the manslayer that murders without intent can be compared to the constituted sinful state into which each man has been born since the transgression in the garden of Eden.

Those that must be redeemed from their state of sin look for refuge in the cities and are likened to those who seek for redemption in Christ, the antitypical City of Refuge.

Man that disregarded the Law and purposely took the life of another man fell under the guidelines specified by Yahweh in Exodus 21:12-14: *"He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver [him] into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die."*

This word guile is from the Hebrew, *ormah*, which denotes 'trickery.' Suggesting to us that such a person has schemed in complete disregard of the will of God as revealed in the restrictions of the Law. We read in Numbers 15:30, that the man that sinned presumptuously, whether he be a native-born or a stranger, brought reproach upon Yahweh: *"But the soul that doeth [ought] presumptuously, [whether he be] born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people."* It is quite noticeable that upon the meditated slaying of an individual, the slayer is to be removed from the presence of God. A way of reconciliation was now removed from the individual and nothing but death awaited him.

The lesson to be derived for today is similar. We too can make choices and 'presumptuously' sin before our master. In doing so, we bring judgment upon ourselves, leaving little room for reconciliation with our Father in Heaven. Paul reminds us that those who walk in unrighteousness will reap the consequences of death (Rom. 1:18, 29-32). Even the writer of the Hebrews speaks boldly unto us as he compares the presumptuous sinner under the Law to those of us under the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus: *"For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:"* (Heb. 10:26 & 28).

From these verses we realize that once an individual becomes knowledgeable of the laws of Deity, he then becomes responsible for his actions. If he chooses to sin willfully or presumptuously it is only bringing upon him the condemnation of death – for a means of redemption has been removed from him. There is no longer a sacrifice for his sins, his soul shall be cut off from among his people, and he is worthy of death.

The sin of killing another man presumptuously was taken very seriously in the eyes of Deity. It should be remembered that each man has been fashioned in His image (Gen. 9:6), each man has the responsibility of bringing glory and honor unto him (Psalms 96:8, Rev. 19:1), and by willfully cutting off the life of any individual, one is in the act of removing a man that may stand in the image and glory of God. In Numbers 35:33-34 we

see how abhorrent to God the shed blood of an innocent man of the children of Israel was to God. If a man's shed blood (the redness thereof being likened to sin, the root meaning of Adam, or Edom) was to be found within the camp, it was evident that corruption had entered into the camp. Sin is a killer, and as Paul states, *"the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:27). "Those that murdered hastened the work of sin, prematurely placing the individual into the clutches of the dreaded enemy of death. By killing another man, the murderer allied himself with sin and acted as the agent of sin. In accordance with the law it was the duty of the avenger of blood to put this murderer to death after he had stood before the 'congregation in judgment' and found guilty. The murderer, like the man that worked on the Sabbath, was found to be guilty of despising the word of God, and had to be utterly 'cut off.'" (Law & Grace, pp. 159-160)

In this, the Israelites were to see the great lesson of eschewing evil and doing that which is good. We, like the children of Israel, are to flee from wrongdoing and separate ourselves from that, which brings about death, sin.

However, under the Law we see that provision was made for those that slew a man accidentally or without premeditation. We see that Deity appointed Cities of Refuge to provide Divine protection for the manslayer. The **appointment** of the Cities of Refuge by Deity was an act of grace and mercy, which foreshadowed the characteristics that are manifested by Christ. John the Apostle noted these qualities in Christ when he said: *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). Also, the scriptures bear forth the idea of grace and mercy extended to those that have been found worthy to enter into the gates of that glorious city, *"whose builder and maker is God"* (Heb. 11:10). *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward [is] with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Blessed [are] they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* (Rev. 22:12,14).

The *appointment* of the Cities is a study within itself. There are three Hebrew words translated appoint or appointed that are found in relationship with the cities of refuge. They are...

1. Hebrew 'Suwm' – *to ordain, establish, put aside.* *"And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver [him] into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee"* (Ex. 21:13).
2. Hebrew 'Nathan' – *to give up.* *"And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites [there shall be] six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities"* (Numbers 35:6, 11; Josh 20:2, 8).
3. Hebrew 'Qadash' – *consecrate.* *"And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjatharba, which [is] Hebron, in the mountain of Judah"* (Joshua 20:7).

These three Hebrew words have symbolic application to

our redeemer. We can see how he was **ordained** by God (Acts 17:31), **established** in mercy, judgement and righteousness (Isa. 16:5), he was **Holy** (put aside, consecrated) (Luke 1:35), and He **gave up** his life in sacrifice (Heb. 10:12). The Cities of Refuge were places set apart for the sanctification of those who sought their protection. As such they typified the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sanctifier of those who approach Yahweh through him (Heb. 2:11).

The basic analogy of the Cities of Refuge Josh 20:1-6

In Joshua 20:1 Joshua continued to provide guidance to the representatives of the Israelites regarding the allotment of the promise land. "He confirms the appointment of the Cities of Refuge as directed by the Law delivered unto Moses. And in so doing he typifies the Lord Jesus who 'confirmed the promises made unto the fathers' and enabled 'Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy (Rom. 15:8-9).'"¹ Jesus provided a means of redemption for the Gentiles as did the City of Refuge for the citizens of Israel as well as the stranger (i.e. Gentile) that dwelt amongst them. All that 'killeth any person unawares and unwittingly' (Josh. 20:3) was allowed to flee to the cities of refuge – that he may escape the 'avenger of blood.'

It is interesting that the Hebrew for "avenger" is 'goel', which denotes the **next of kin**¹ or a **redeemer**. This word 'goel' is found in the scriptures 104 times in 84 verses and is translated into the following words: redeem 50, redeemer 18, kinsman 13, revenger 7, avenger 6, ransom 2, at all 2, deliver 1, kinfolks 1, kinsman's part 1, purchase 1, stain 1, wise 1. In Strong's Concordance the word goel is translated: *to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman*.

Again a lesson or type is evident, bearing the fact that all mankind have come under the condemnation of death and must be redeemed by the part of a kinsman. This kinsman can be no other than the Son of God, Jesus. This lesson is revealed to us in Hebrews 2:14-15, "*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*" In the book of Ruth, we see this principle of redemption literally lived out by Boaz, as a type of the Christ, the near kinsman of Naomi and Ruth (by marriage), becoming the redeemer of them both.

We also find the use of this word in application to Christ in Job 19:25: "*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*". But we also know our Lord to reveal himself in the latter days as an avenger as can be seen in Rom 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.*" Jesus, then "redeems those who are worthy of being saved, but will avenge himself on those brethren who deliberately reject his way."²

In Joshua 20:4 we note the actions the manslayer had to perform in order to escape death. We see that the actions he

performs are much like the requirements we must perform in seeking freedom from death. The requirements of the manslayer were: "*when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.*"

Five steps are outlined in this verse. The number five is associated with an act of GRACE by Yahweh. The steps in correlation to the present day believer are:

1. **stand at the entering of the gate of the city** - Just as one approaches the ecclesia requesting baptism.
2. **declare his cause in the ears of the elders** - Similar to the act of interviewing the baptismal candidate being assured that all parties are knowledgeable of the circumstances.
3. **they shall take him into the city,** - the extension of help and comfort that an ecclesia can provide a believer, initiated by the extension of the right hand of fellowship.
4. **give him a place,** - Duties and responsibilities may be required of the individual while taking refuge within the ecclesia.
5. **that he may dwell among them** – Acceptance of the baptized member by the ecclesia to dwell amongst them till a time of judgement.¹

In Joshua 20:5 we can see that the city had the responsibility of providing safety to the manslayer from the avenger until a judgement had occurred. Is this not similar to our own probation where we have been assured a standing again that we shall "*all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things [done] in [his] body, according to that he hath done, whether [it be] good or bad*" (2 Cor. 5:10). We, just as the manslayer, are fully aware of the state and the threat to which we are subjected. Hebrews 2:15, bears this out, we that are in fear of death – remain subject to bondage unless released by deliverance.

Deity, again through his grace, has provided a means of refuge to those that recognize their position of being "(1) **without Christ**, being (2) **aliens from the commonwealth of Israel**, and (3) **strangers from the covenants of promise**, (4) **having no hope**, and (5) **without God in the world**" (Eph. 2:12). It is interesting to note that five descriptions of estrangement from God are mentioned in Ephesians – five we recognize as being the number of grace. By the Grace of God – His Son was provided, that now "*in Christ Jesus you who once were afar off have been made near by the blood of Christ.*"

We see that the manslayer is to sit in judgment before the representatives of the city (Josh. 20:6) to determine his guilt or innocence. "If found innocent he was then exonerated and provided a place in the City of the Priests waiting the time when full freedom would be granted."³

Does this not remind us of the words found in Romans 8:2: *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”* And Galatians 5:1: *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”* It is to be noted that the freedom of the individual was not granted at his exoneration by the congregation that judged him, but only until after the death of the High Priest. We note that that manslayer only received protection from the avenger of blood while he remained in the city of refuge. If he ventured outside the confines of the city, he could be liable to death if found by the avenger of blood. Much like ourselves, as long as we remain faithful to our calling, we may live without fear of death, but *“if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die”*, according to Romans 8:13. We are also told that *“if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”*

The law concerning the release of the manslayer from fear of the avenger of blood at the death of the high priest is, of course, symbolic, and points forward to the resurrection provided to those who are baptized into the death of Christ, the antitypical High Priest.

We understand that by our baptism into Jesus Christ, we have been *“baptized into his death”* (Rom. 6:3-4). And by such a position in Christ we are to *“walk in the newness of life.”* We have accomplished this with a knowledge that *“our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”* And by such an action we have been elevated to a position described by Paul as dwelling in the “heavenlies.” “A term that defines the sphere of a higher life in Christ. In Ephesians 1:3 and 2:5-6 Paul speaks of this status of dwelling in *“heavenly places in Christ.”* Also, in Colossians 3:1-3 Paul continues similar language *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”* “Paul describes those that have embraced the truth as *“risen with Christ.”* These have been elevated from the merely natural to a spiritual state in the Lord. They then occupy positions of privilege in him.”⁴ We also see how this state provides a means of protection similar to that which the City of Refuge offered the manslayer.

This idea of those ‘in Christ’ standing apart from those in the world in a different status in the eyes of Yahweh is also expressed to us by John in Revelation 13:6: *“And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”* In Eureka, Brother Thomas agrees with the use of the word as it applied by Paul in the letter to the Ephesians. He notes that “Christ and the Saints are not only the Name and Tabernacle of the Deity, but they are also, ‘those who dwell in the heaven.’ The phrase ‘in the heaven’ is Apocalyptically equivalent to ‘in the heavenlies in Christ’. Paul tells the saints in Ephesus that he with them were ‘blessed with all spiritual blessings’ in these heavenlies; in which they and Christ were regarded as sitting together (Eph. 1:20; 2:6).” This being together is a spiritual state – because Christ at the time of the letter to the Ephesians

was at the right hand of God and the members of the Ephesian ecclesia were walking in their probation upon the earth. *“A heavenly is a **constituted** heavenly (supernal or celestial) state. It may be Divinely constituted, or constituted by human authority.”*⁵

Therefore Paul and John are in agreement that those who are in the heavenlies, are ‘constituted’ such, by their participation in the gospel by their death through baptism into the name of Christ. So also are those who have been set free from the death of the High Priest after taking security in the City of Refuge. They have not taken upon themselves any change of character or physical transformation, but have constitutionally been provided freedom to return to their inherited allotment of the land of promise. This man, just as those that come forth from the waters of baptism, *“hath been made free from the law of sin and death”* just as we have been made free by *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”* (Rom. 8:2).

The placement and names of the Cities of Refuge

“Each of the Cities of Refuge was located in places where those desiring their shelter could easily reach them (Num. 35:6, Deut. 4:41-43, Josh. 20:7-8). And special roads were to be constructed leading to them to make them of easy access (Deut. 19:3). The Cities were to be found on both sides of the river Jordan (Num. 35:14).”

Therefore, these Cities of Refuge were in very **conspicuous** places throughout Israel. Anyone in **trouble** knew that the roads leading to the cities allowed them to get there quickly and easily. In like manner, **the Gospel is plainly** set before men, and **the road to it is made easy**,² so those that in times of urgency have no problems in locating a place of refuge. Yahweh continues to provide the present day believer with similar consolation. *“The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble”* (Psa. 9:9). And Psalms 46:1, *“God [is] our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.”*

“In Joshua 20:7 we read that ‘they appointed Kadesh’ as a city of refuge,’ but in the margin the word Kadesh is *sanctified*. Sanctified, of course, means set apart. This city was set apart from all others, as the Lord Jesus, our city of refuge is set apart from all men.”²

Also, there were a **total of six cities** – **Six** being the number **representative of flesh** – reminds us that **our redeemer** also, **was made of sin’s flesh**, and was himself in need of a city of refuge and redemption.

The meaning of the cities and there locations are as follows:

Joshua 20:7 – West of the Jordan

1. **Kadesh in Galilee** – to sanctify, set apart, consecrate, to make holy
2. **Shechem in Mount Ephraim** – Between the shoulders or Burden-Bearer, to sustain or support

3. **Kirjath-arba**, which is **Hebron**, in the mountain of **Judah** – City of the Four (Hebron – to join in fellowship)

Joshua 20:8 – East of the Jordan.

4. **Bezer** in the wilderness... out of the tribe of **Reuben** – A Fortified Place, to protect
 5. **Ramoth** in Gilead... of **Gad** – to be high, raised up, exalted.
 6. **Golan** in Bashan... of **Manesseh** – to Remove, Deliver, or Pass away, to cause to rejoice.

How well all these names depict the work and attributes of our City of Refuge, the Lord Jesus. “He **consecrates** us, **sustains** us, **unites** us in **fellowship**, **protects** us, **exalts** us, will **deliver** us, and cause us to **rejoice**. The lessons to be found in the Cities of Refuge, both of the law regarding the cities, and the meaning of their names, provides us with a dramatic picture of the Gospel.”⁶

In Joshua 20:9 we read: “*These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth any person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.*”

Unfortunately, comparatively few take heed of the offer of grace in Christ Jesus through the gospel, and so are destroyed by the Avenger of blood, sin in the flesh. Men fail to search out the conspicuous antitypical City of Refuge and choose rather to live all their life in fear of death. Thanks be to God that provision has been made for redemption, through The City of Refuge, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rob Bennett

¹ The Book of Joshua, Verse by Verse; Victory Through Faith, by. H.P. Mansfield, p.192

² The Story of the Bible, Vol. II, H.P. Mansfield, p.151

³ The Book of Joshua, Verse by Verse; Victory Through Faith, by. H.P. Mansfield, p.193

⁴ The Book of Joshua, Verse by Verse; Victory Through Faith, by. H.P. Mansfield, p.5

⁵ Eureka, Logos Edition Volume 4, p.317

⁶ The Story of the Bible, Vol. II, H.P. Mansfield, p.152

Exposition

The Apocalypse Rooted in the Prophets (Part 2) The Inspired Prophets of God Speak with One Voice

Perhaps no other book of the Bible is as misunderstood, distorted, ridiculed or ignored than its last book: The Revelation. It has been ridiculed by church leaders, banned by religious organizations, and greatly distorted by many who have been unable to find the key to its understanding. Now this is the reason why most people think that the book of Revelation is a deep, mysterious book that is too complicated to understand. So what is our opinion of the book? Do we think that this book is a book full of hidden and mysterious teachings with a new message all of its own or do we feel that this book can be understood, that it's message is consistent with the other inspired prophets of God and that the true Brethren of Christ have understood the message contained in this book. I would like to briefly look at the message contained in the Apocalypse and then demonstrate that the message contained in this last book of biblical prophecy is the same ultimate message that has been proclaimed by all of the inspired prophets of God!

Let's start by examining some important points contained in the 1st chapter of Revelation. In fact let's start with the title. The word Revelation is from the Gr. “Apokalupsis”. This Greek word has been transliterated into the English word “Apocalypse”, so that is why you hear some people refer to this book as the “Apocalypse”. The Greek word “Apokalupsis” means “disclosure, to uncover, to unveil, or to bring to light that which was hidden. Hence the word is translated to reveal or the Revelation. Now this certainly doesn't imply that we should expect the message to be new or different but rather a revealing of something already given, which was previously hidden. Also in Rev. 1:1 we read: “*The Revelation of Jesus Christ,*

which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John”. Now notice the word “show”. It is from the Greek word “deiknuo”; which means to show (lit. or fig.) and Vines' says that it means “to show by making known”.

So a student of God's word should realize that this book is not a book of mysterious teachings that can not be understood and if someone does feel this way then the question should be asked, “Why would God give us a book to disclose or reveal something that was previously hidden and not allow us to ever understand the meaning of the book?” So why does this book seem to be so widely misunderstood? Part of the verse just referred to may give us a key to understand why this book seems so mysterious and hard to understand for most people:

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John”

So to whom was the book written to? The answer is “**The Servants of Jesus Christ**”. Now that statement is an important clue as to why the Book of Revelation is so hard for the world to understand, the answer is simply that it was not sent or written for the people of the world. This accounts for one important reason for the difficult form in which it was communicated! It was intended for a class of people, who in their knowledge of the purpose of God, as revealed in the prophets, possessed the keys for the opening of the symbolic

book! It expresses spiritual things in spiritual words and as we read in Dan 12:10: *"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand"*.

Now we would like to read a quote from a brother of Christ who wrote upon the subject of Revelation in 1880 that makes a similar statement as to why this book is so misunderstood. He states that:

There are very good reasons why the Apocalypse is not understood. Those reasons are known to all who know the truth. In brief they may be said to lie in this, **that people come to the Apocalypse with ideas that cannot be harmonized with it.** The Apocalypse **deals with scenes and events belonging to the earth and to the nations upon it**--scenes and events that, in their general outlines, **are the subject of Old Testament prophecy** from the beginning, and **which constitute the subject matter of the gospel of the kingdom.** No marvel, therefore, if people whose **theology fixes their attention upon heaven and hell**, and an **imagined disembodied state of existence after death**, cannot get into the groove of a **correct understanding.**

We must not stay to discuss the problem how it comes to pass that professing Christendom should have come to **discard the first principles of primitive Christianity.** This has been discussed before. It is sufficient to note the fact as the explanation of the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon, that the last book of the New Testament should be deemed unintelligible, useless, and even dangerous by multitudes professing subjection to the book as a whole. If we are in a different position in the matter to those around us, we owe it to the kindness of God in having brought us into contact with the labours of a man who has been instrumental in our age in removing from the Scriptures the veil of misapprehension which hides them from the general understanding. Having received the benefit of these labours, it is our duty to do the best we can to extend it to others.

This was a quote from "Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse" by Brother Robert Roberts in 1880. Now notice he mentions "If we are in a different position in the matter to those around us, we owe it to the kindness of God in having brought us into contact with the labours of a man who has been instrumental in our age in removing from the Scriptures the veil of misapprehension which hides them from the general understanding." Now many of us would recognize from this quote that when he mentions being "brought into contact with the labours of a man" that he is referring here to Brother John Thomas. So I would also like to read a quote from Brother Thomas who makes a similar point about the reason the Book of Revelation is so widely misunderstood:

The Apocalypse is "the things concerning the kingdom of the Deity and the name of Jesus Anointed," with the times and the seasons, symbolically and dramatically exhibited: in other words, "the Mystery of the Deity as he hath declared the glad tidings to his servants the prophets"—ch. 10:7. **The gospel must, therefore, be understood as an indispensable prerequisite to the true and correct**

exposition of the book. The people's spiritual guides **do not understand** this gospel, and therefore the Apocalypse is **hid** from their eyes. **This is the grand secret of the failure of all their attempts at interpretation.** Their speculations wander and are lost in the labyrinths of the unknown; while the Apocalypse treats of the **kingdom and glory covenanted to Abraham, David, and their seed**, to which the saints are invited in the gospel; and of their present and future relations to the nations and governments upon earth. The speculations of the schools have nothing to do with the mystery of the Deity prophetically revealed; how is it possible, then, that men **indoctrinated with their traditions** can expound it? Their efforts, some of which have been exceedingly labored, have all hitherto, must, and will ever **terminate in failure.**

So this is why this book is so misunderstood. The Book of Revelation is "*the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,*" with the times and the seasons, symbolically and dramatically exhibited and the world at large does not understand this gospel and even worse the world's spiritual guides **come to the Apocalypse with ideas that cannot be harmonized with it.** So as Bro. Thomas pointed out the true gospel of Christ **must** be understood and is an **indispensable prerequisite** to the true and correct exposition of the book. So when you realize this, then it is clear that the message of the Apocalypse is not something unique and new, but rather a further revealing of the same Gospel taught by the other inspired Prophets of God.

So now to set the stage for our discussion, we will see that the message of the Apocalypse is not a new and unique message but is one that is found through out all the prophets in the Bible. Now we would like to briefly try to show what the overall message contained in the apocalypse is and how it is found in the writings of the other prophets of God.

An important key to understanding the prophecy contained in the book of Revelation can be learned from the prophet Daniel. The prophetic message in Daniel starts with the time of the writer and continues historically until the time of the return of Christ. Now if we apply this to the Book of Revelation, we would have a prophecy that begins around AD 96 during the time of the Roman 4th beast and would continue historically describing this diverse 4th beast until the time of Christ's return. This interpretation is what is referred to as the "Continual Historical" interpretation such as the one presented in Bro. Thomas's book "Eureka".

Brother Thomas interprets the Revelation as a forecast of history from the time of John to the full establishment of the kingdom of God under Christ. He gives the book a clear and understandable structure. As the centuries pass, the activities that make up history are seen to be groups of divine judgements in various parts of Europe and the Middle East. The Lamb undoes the seven seals on the scroll, revealing six Seal judgements, followed by the seventh Seal, within which are found seven Trumpet judgements. The seventh Trumpet is subdivided into seven final Vials of the wrath of God to be poured out.

The way in which the symbols shown to John describe what

subsequently becomes history is fascinating. Not only does the correspondence between the symbols and the on flowing history justify the exposition, but also it will be found that this interpretation has no gaps. This cannot be said of the other false interpretations that so many others believe and teach. Lastly the fit between the symbols and history provides assurance that this is the correct interpretation and that God truly does rule in the Kingdoms of Men!

So with this quick background established what we would like to try and demonstrate that the message of the Revelation is not something new but rather a further elaboration of the message that is spoken by the other inspired prophets of God, and that they indeed speak with One Voice!

We would like to simply focus on two major topics contained in Revelation. **The 1st** - the gathering of the nations together for the coming battle of the great day of God Almighty which is found in Rev. 16:12-17:

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.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet."

For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

"And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

The 2nd - The doctrine of Messiah's reign with the saints on earth which is mentioned in numerous chapters of the Revelation such as in Rev. 22:1-7:

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their

foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

So starting with the 1st point, we should ask the question, is the Prophecy of the gathering of the nations together for the coming battle of the great day of God Almighty which is commonly referred to as the battle of Armageddon found anywhere other than in The Revelation? Again let us remember the vision in Daniel 2:

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.

Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure.

So are there other Prophets with a similar message? Let's first look at this word Armageddon. The word Armageddon occurs only once in the Bible in Rev. 16:16 which we just read. Now the 1st key given to us is found in verse 14 of Rev. 16 when we are instructed that Armageddon involves a gathering of the nations, with the purpose described as, *"to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."* The 2nd key arising from this verse is that Armageddon is of Hebrew origin. Therefore in order to appreciate its significance we must look in the Old Testament scriptures, and whilst Armageddon may not be specifically mentioned by name, the inspired Hebrew prophets make frequent reference to this event because they speak with one voice. Let's first consider a number of general examples.

The prophet Zephaniah said that God's *"determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation"* (3:8) Once again we are introduced to this idea of gathering the nations. The prophet Micah comments, *"now also many nations are gathered against thee, that say Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion"* (4:11). This verse provides us with additional information; we learn that the gathering of the nations involves Israel, and in particular Jerusalem. The prophet continues, *"But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor"* (verse 12).

The last phrase is significant because it introduces us to the meaning of the word Armageddon. It is a phrase made up of three Hebrew words: **Arema**, meaning a heap of sheaves; **Gi**, signifying a valley; and **Don**, meaning judgment. So when we bring these three Hebrew words and the thoughts together, noting the way and the context in which they are used elsewhere in the Scripture, we have a word in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon that indicates, ***“A heap of sheaves in a valley of judgment.”*** The prophet Joel provides us with our next example, where God says, *“I will also gather the nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat”* (3:2). So Micah speaks about sheaves being gathered and Joel refers to a valley and the idea of judgment is found in the meaning of Jehoshaphat - Jehovah's or Yahweh's judgment. So the event of Armageddon is not just simply a big battle between the forces of God and a grand confederacy of nations, but is the occasion of God's final judgment upon the nations of men which have been gathered together for that purpose. Joel in Chapter 3:13-14 says:

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the vats overflow; for their wickedness is great.” (Joel 3:13)

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.” (Joel 3:14)

Daniel also, spoke of this event in chap. 2 and describes how the nations will become *“like the chaff of the summer threshing floor.”* And equally significantly, the Apostle John in his vision in Rev. 14 hears an angel speaking of the event of Armageddon - *“Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”*

It is remarkable the way that these quotations all describe the coming time when the nations will be gathered like sheaves to the threshing floor for judgment in that great valley of destruction. Refer to the following diagrams for emphasis:

Event	Revelation 16	Habakkuk 3	Joel 3	Zephaniah 3
The nations will be gathered for judgment.	And they go out to gather them for the battle of the great day of God Almighty (v. 14)	Thou didst thresh the nations in anger (v. 12)	I will also gather the nations (v. 2)	I have decided to assemble the nations, to gather the kingdoms (v. 8)
There will be a period of political and geographical upheaval.	Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake (v. 17)	He stood and shook the earth (v. 6 - R.V.)	The heavens and the earth shall shake (v. 16)	I have cut off nations their strongholds are demolished...their cities are destroyed (v. 6)
God will intervene in human affairs.	God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath (v. 19)	God came from Teman (v. 3) Thou didst ride upon...thy chariots (v. 8)	The Lord shall roar out of Zion (v. 16)	The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save (v. 17)

The 2nd point that needs emphasis is that after this battle of the great day of God Almighty, the Revelation instructs us of the doctrine of Messiah's reign with the Saints on earth for a long season. Bro. Thomas in Eureka comments “that the doctrine of Messiah's reign with the Saints on earth for a long season did not originate with the Apocalypse. It is the burden of all the prophets from Moses to Malachi.” Again, refer to the following diagram for emphasis:

Event	Revelation 22	Habakkuk 3	Joel 3	Zephaniah 3
God will bring salvation to Israel.	for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever (v. 5)	Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people (v. 13)	The Lord will be the hope of his people (v. 16)	at that time I will bring you home. I will give you honor and praise among all the peoples of the earth (v. 20)

We are quite blessed to not only have this Revelation, but to also have a knowledge of the “Truth” which will enable us to truly understand the message contained in this book and it is very important for us to understand the vision contained in this book, for we read in Heb. 11:1 that faith is defined as *“things hoped for”* and *“things not seen”*. Also in verse 6 of that chapter we learn that the faith which pleases God not only recognizes His existence, but it also trusts in the reward that is promised to those who seek Him with diligence.

The Bible is our source of faith, and it is the function of prophecy (which comprises at least one third of all scripture) to provide us with a vision of the future. It also reveals to us the hand of God in the history of the Jewish people and of other nations as well. It thus strengthens our awareness of God's continuing involvement in the rise and fall of nations and in human affairs generally. Without this aspect of God's word faith would be incomplete and our spiritual growth stunted.

It is important that we understand this. It is the prophetic word that helps to make us conscious of God's hand at work day-by-day, bringing about His purpose in the earth. Newspaper headlines, which to other people are just passing events, are constant trumpet blasts in the ears of those who are informed of the truth by God's inspired prophets and apostles. It is a constant counterbalance to the godless environment that can be so damaging to our faith.

When we consider God's precious word, and it is indeed a precious gift that he has given us, let us realize that the Apostle John, Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Joel, Zephaniah, Zechariah, along with all of the inspired prophets of God, have spoken with one voice in prophesying about the time of the end. The apostle Paul declared that God "*has appointed a day, in the which he will judge this world in righteousness*" (Acts 17:31); and it will be no ordinary day, it is

described as "*the great day of God Almighty*" (Revelation 16:14) and all the prophets have painted the same dramatic picture.

God made a promise through the prophet Amos that He will do nothing, but that he would reveal "*his secret unto his servants the prophets*" (Amos 3:7) and because of this the apostle Peter described this one voice of the prophets as "*a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed...*" (2 Peter 1:19)

We are living in unprecedented times; wherever we look we see the nations being gathered together, with the Middle East as the focal point of interest. Whatever reasons provoke the United States, Britain, the United Nations, or the Palestinians to do what they are doing, "*they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel: for He (The Almighty God) shall gather them as sheaves into the floor*" (Micah 4:12). And yes, Armageddon will come and the one voice of the prophets will be fulfilled and God will finally say, "*Behold it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord; this is the day whereof I have spoken*" (Ezekiel 39:8).

David Pinkston

An Open Letter Are the "Traditional" Views Outdated?

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There recently has been criticism within our community that current events are showing that long held views regarding the role of Europe in latter day prophecy are "outdated" in that it is assumed that current events are not supporting such a view. If one is keeping track of the growing strength of the European Community; It's involvement in the Middle East; It's opposition to Israel; Russia's growing ties and political maneuvering with Western Europe; Putin's growing totalitarian tendencies (as clearly demonstrated in recent arrests, his control of the media, and the sham of recent elections); Putin's strengthening relationship with both Eastern Orthodox and Catholicism and his efforts for reunification between the two; The growing political and spiritual might and influence of the Vatican; England's strengthening ties with the US, Blair's dream of Britain playing a central role in the future of "greater Europe" in shambles; The **possibility** (we only provide this as an interesting possibility) that Britain will be next led

by a Jew (Michael Howard) if the Conservative party regains power; etc, etc.; then one can easily see with great excitement the **general** outline of long held prophetic expectations falling into place.

One of the criticisms provided against a European role is that instead of there being 10 literal nations in the EU there are soon to be over 20 nations in its membership. Since the number **10** is closely associated with the *Ten Toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image* (Dan. 2), *the ten horns of the 4th beast of Dan.7*, *the ten horns and crowns of Rev. 13*, *the ten horns of the beast of Rev. 17* (keep in mind that all of the prophecies are in fact closely related), then it is assumed that there is no way Europe or a **25** or so Member EU can be related to these prophecies. What is provided instead as a **suggested** interpretation is the **ten Arab nations** listed in Psalm 83. But if one examines the names listed in Psalm 83 and identifies their modern day location one will see that there are not even 10 Arab nations now in existence that correspond with the territories that

are listed in Psalm 83 (a few of the territories fall into modern day Israel with most being identified with Jordan) - so the latter interpretation still does not solve the issue and if compared with the related prophecies and carried to its logical conclusion such a theory falls to shambles.

The problem that some may create for themselves is by trying to apply the number 10 too literally. Yes, Bro. Thomas himself identified (and rightly so) **10** European nations that rose out of the Roman Empire - *Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Bavaria, Hungary, Lombardy, Naples, and Sardinia*, territories that modern day Europe grew out of and now stands upon. What this did, along with many other scriptural clues **too numerous** to mention in this letter, points us in the direction of Europe (eventually including Russia) as the fulfillment of the standing again of Nebuchadnezzar's Image, a revival of the Holy Roman Empire - the "beast of the earth" (Rev. 13), and the "Beast" that the Great Harlot (Rome) rides upon in the last days. But the number itself, like many other symbols of

prophecy, is just that - **a symbol**, and we need to be careful not to apply it too literally. And it is a symbol among **many other scriptural symbols** that point to the role that Europe will play in latter day events - a role being clearly played out even as we speak. We should not place all of our understanding of this issue on the **single matter** of the number 10.

More time still has to play out, maybe the EU will eventually have only 10 nations in it, we don't know yet. Attempts to put together an EU constitution fell apart shortly before Christmas in that several nations were resisting the political control and power that France and Germany were greedily trying to secure for themselves. We do not even know if the *European Union as an organization* will exist at Christ's Return. There is another organization within Europe known as the *Council of Europe* founded in 1949 and headquartered in Strasbourg that lies on the French-German border. This organization already includes Russia, and if the EU parliament proves to be too stubborn or cumbersome for the aims of the French-German-Russian alliance this organization may prove to be more useful for the binding together of Europe than the EU itself. One thing that the EU has accomplished is in bringing much of Europe together to this point under a socialistic ('frog like') and unified umbrella, which would have seemed impossible a generation ago. Nonetheless, whether it be the EU or some other organization we need to study our Bibles and pay attention to the many clues that cry out at us to not ignore Europe (whatever the name of the organization it uses for its aims may be, or the number of members in it) as Yahweh prepares these nations for that "great and terrible day of the LORD".

Just so the writer is not misunderstood he personally believes that the Arab/Middle Eastern Nations are to play a role in latter day events (as they are doing even as we speak) but they should not be applied to prophecies that clearly point to a European/Russian application. We recognize that the observations that we make in this message are extremely general in nature and are not intended to be a full exposition of the matter. We are just saddened by the confusion that some try

to create regarding the exciting observation of latter day events by providing ideas or theories that just do not seem to be well thought out and that clearly do not follow the scriptures and blatantly go against the lessons of world history and the tide of current events. In viewing traditional prophetic views as "outdated", and those that hold to them as "dogmatic" or "extreme" a few in our midst themselves make an unfortunate and enormous mistake by going to a dogmatic extreme of their own, "throwing the baby out with the bath water". If it is necessary to make adjustments in some of the details of our prophetic expectations then so be it, but not at the expense of the general and fundamental prophetic framework that is tried and true and that continues to be confirmed even as we speak. Let us hold fast to the general outline as has been intelligently embraced by Christadelphia since its beginnings which allows us to view the world we live in with an eye of understanding and not of confusion. An understanding which allows the prophetic word to speak to us as "a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19).

The following is part of an interesting article that the writer came across this morning regarding the EU's involvement in the Palestinian issue, and one that sparked the thoughts that we provided above.

In the Hope of our Master's Soon Return,

A. Thomas

Europe Wants to Rival US as Military Superpower, Says EU Parliamentarian
By Julie Stahl

CNSNews.com Jerusalem Bureau Chief
January 02, 2004

Jerusalem (CNSNews.com) - European Union support for the Palestinian Authority against Israel is part of Europe's "hidden war" against the United States to become a world superpower, a European parliamentarian said in Jerusalem this week.

Washington has often backed Israel's position against the Palestinians, particularly in its war on terrorism over

the last three years. The United State is also perceived by the Arab world to be pro-Israel.

President Bush has consistently refused to meet with PA Chairman Yasser Arafat, while Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been a guest at the White House many times.

The EU has argued that it is a neutral observer. But Israel has rejected direct EU participation in the peace process fearing that what it considers the EU's pro-Palestinian bias would tip the scales in favor of the Palestinians.

The EU has backed the Palestinian Authority since the beginning of the Oslo process in 1992, becoming one of its main financial supporters and giving the PA hundreds of millions of euros (dollars) since then.

EU parliamentarian Ilka Schroeder charged that EU backing for the PA goes beyond support for the Palestinian cause and is actually part of a secret agenda to gain power in the world.

"For me it is obvious that the Middle East has become one of the most important fields of European military superpower ambitions," Schroeder said.

"The primary goal of the EU is the internationalization of the [Israeli-Palestinian] conflict in order to underline the need for its own mediating role. ... The longer the conflict continues and the deeper it gets, the more evident is the incapability of the U.S. to moderate the peace process," Schroeder told diplomats and journalists at the Institute for Contemporary Affairs in Jerusalem this week.

"The need for a solution only exists as long as war continues. This is why the EU does not want the conflict to end before it gains [a] major role. And this is why the EU does not wish the PA to give up too early and why the EU is strengthening the PA.

"The EU is ... stirring up conflict that it supposedly wants to see resolved by financing one side. This is inherently inhuman purpose of EU humanitarian aid in the region. The Palestinians are

A Note of Thanks and Admonition

Unfortunately, due to various life circumstances, this is the last issue of the *Truth Gleaner* magazine we are able to publish. We wish to offer a special thanks to all those who have supported both the website and the magazine over the course of the past four years. The Editor would especially like to thank those brethren who have served on the Truth Gleaner Committee and have dedicated their time and resources, and especially their counsel and prayers, over the course of this magazine effort. A higher respect and love amongst brethren cannot be found. Our purpose has been to try and provide a pioneer oriented publication for the Unamended community. We hope that our readers have found the material beneficial and above all else we pray that this effort will be met with our Lord's approval at his coming. "Truth Gleaner Publications" will continue to exist for the purposes of publishing booklets and other materials from time to time. A listing of our current offerings are on the back page of this issue.

As we survey the state of the Christadelphian body, so close to our Lord's return, we see a body in turmoil, both without and within. From without, one does not have to look far to see worldly influences and distractions constantly competing for our minds and the minds of our children. From within, the body suffers from a disease that is eating it from the inside out. Some will instantly, and loudly, speak up that the disease needing eradication is the brethren among us seeking "unity" among Christadelphians. Others, just as loudly, will speak up and proclaim that it is those who will not "unite." Neither is the case. These, and the numerous other controversies with which the body is beset, are only symptoms of the real disease. The real disease is that none of us are applying ourselves to a diligent and comprehensive study of God's word. Put simply, we are not as well grounded in the things of God as we should be! We are not as well grounded as past generations of Christadelphians. Any who actually do read the works of our pioneer brethren can discern this in an instant. The real disease was described by the last prophet sent to the Kingdom of Israel prior to the Assyrian captivity: "*there is **no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land** and my people are destroyed for **lack of knowledge***" (Hosea 4: 1, 6). The conditions in Israel were precisely the same at the first advent of Christ (whom the prophet Hosea merely typed) and the nation suffered the consequences in the years around 70 A.D.

We now stand at the brink of the greatest events ever to take place in the history of the world: the return of Christ and the Judgment Seat. With all the strife and controversy we see in Christadelphia we feel the need to sound a warning that it is very easy for us to lose site of that which is all important. Each of us as **individuals** must "*work out **our own** salvation with fear and trembling*" (Phil. 2:12). We alone will answer for ourselves in the day of account for what we believe and how that belief is manifested in our walk.

With this in mind we would like to offer a final "Gleaning" written a number of years ago by an elder and esteemed brother in our community. This selection addresses the **critical need** for each brother and sister to **diligently** study the word of God **for themselves**, with, we would strongly suggest, the writings of our pioneer brethren close at hand. Salvation is an individual matter and it is the individual's comprehensive study and daily intake of the word of God that provides him or her with the solution to all the turmoil in Christadelphia today:

us "The better we have become grounded in God's Word, the lower is the probability that someone else will be able to confuse and to convince us that he has found a new or fundamental doctrine with which to enlighten us. The converse is, of course, true, namely that the weaker our grounding in Scripture, the more easily can we be led astray and be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine..." (Eph. 4:14). Such was the state of his people during the days of the ministry of Jesus. The people had been led astray by their leaders who were interested more in guarding their power and control over the people than in teaching God's way in truth. If the inspired apostle Paul was able to state categorically to the brethren at Ephesus, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel of God*" (Acts 20:27), then we may have confidence in understanding that there has arisen no *new doctrine* in our time that is Scriptural. Because of the appetite of the human mind for self-expression, there may be times when someone may come to us wishing to "straighten us out" doctrinally. Upon such occasions our minds should be sufficiently open to permit us to be both discerning and courteous, but sufficiently guarded to cause us to apply the **test of Scripture** to what is being propounded." (John S. Peake, *What is Truth?*)

It is our hope and prayer that those who have been regular readers of the *Truth Gleaner* have applied the test of Scripture to what they have read and that we have passed the test, helping a few to remain grounded and settled until the coming of the Lord.

Michael T. Jasionowski

Truth Gleaner Publications

The following materials will continue to be available for any desiring them from Truth Gleaner Publications:

Contact: Bro. Al Bryan 10101 Venango Ln. Richmond, VA. 23236 Email: pellucidar@juno.com

The Line of Construction by Bro. Al Bryan - \$2.00 plus postage (35 pages)

The Feasts of the Lord by Bro. Bud Roth - \$1.00 plus postage (34 pages)

Observations on the Sure Word of Prophecy by Bro. Al Bryan - \$3.25 plus postage (68 pages)

The Chronology of the Crucifixion Week by Bro. Alex Briley - \$1.00 plus postage

Children's Workshop

- **Bible Marking** for Ages 10 and Up - \$3.25 plus postage (96 pages)
- **Circle-a-Word Puzzles** for Ages 6 and Up - \$1.00 plus postage (28 pages)
- **Character Studies on Kings of Judah and Israel** for Ages 10 and Up - \$3.25 plus postage (76 pages)

Free Bible Inserts

- The Hebrew Alphabet
- 12 Foundation Stones
- The Order of Things to Come
- The Beatitudes Contrasted with Woes
- Comparison Chart of the Kings
- Jeremiah as a Type of Christ

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