



“Elpis Israel” — The Foundation for “Eureka”

“Restitution and renovation, and not destruction of the earth, is the Almighty fiat, as I have already shown at sufficient length. ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly,’ is the heart-breathing of the true believer, who, with the hearing ear rejoices in the Bridegroom’s voice, which says, ‘Behold, I come as a thief, and quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 22:12; 16:15). — Elpis Israel, p. 240.

IN setting out his exposition in *Elpis Israel*, Brother Thomas divided the work into three parts. *Part First* he called “*The Rudiments of the World.*” *Part Second* he defined as “*The Things of the Kingdom of God.*” *Part Third* he headed “*The Kingdoms of the World in Their Relation to the Kingdom of God.*” There is a logical progression of thought as he develops this threefold division of Scriptural exposition. *Part First* may be considered as THE FOUNDATION; *Part Second* as THE ELABORATION; *Part Third* as THE ANTICIPATION.

Bearing in mind the wording on the title page: “*Elpis Israel: An Exposition of the Kingdom of God with Reference to the Time of the End and the Age to Come,*” it follows that the author should be led at least to a partial consideration of the Apocalypse.

In 1847 Brother Thomas published his *Confession and Abjuration*, indicating his conviction that he had discovered the basic elements of the truth of God’s Word. It is evident that, when undertaking the mammoth work of set-

ting forth his beliefs in *Elpis Israel*, two years later, Brother Thomas had delved sufficiently into the Apocalypse as to give him a valuable working knowledge of that final and vital book of Scripture.

A Dedicated Bible Student

In *Elpis Israel* there are at least 167 direct references to the Apocalypse, with 65 appearing in *Part Third*.

Some might wonder as to how Brother Thomas was able to basically comprehend the message of the Apocalypse at this stage of his development in the Truth. For many years prior to the writing of *Elpis Israel* he had been a dedicated Bible student. However, this alone is not the answer to the question. Simply, as he states in *Eureka*, he gained a correct comprehension of the Apocalypse *because he had acquired a sound fundamental understanding of Moses and the prophets.*

Students of the Book of Revelation should never forget this. In recent times a number of Christadelphians have written expositions of the Apoca-

lyse which, from their very foundation, oppose Brother Thomas' findings in *Eureka*. If the foundation is wrong, the exposition will be wrong. Most of the modern attempts which have been seen, have utterly failed in this respect. Some conclusions which have been advanced have been so totally in conflict with certain accepted Christadelphian doctrinal and prophetic beliefs as to be unrecognizable.

As *Eureka* has clearly stood the test of time, one cannot help but be disturbed to learn that there are brethren who believe they have a deeper understanding of Scripture than that possessed by Brother Thomas, and that they are capable of presenting an exposition of this remarkable and important book of Scripture superior to that in *Eureka*.

The Book of Revelation is largely structured upon the vast number of references taken, both directly and obliquely, from Moses and the prophets.

Brother Thomas understood this. It is distressing to discover that those who have tried to replace his exposition with new theories have not followed this method of scriptural reasoning. For example, how would it be scripturally reasonable to define "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots" as being an apocalyptic term for "the city of Jerusalem"? Moses and the prophets teach that Jerusalem is "the place" where Yahweh desires to put His Name; that at the epoch of Christ's return, "they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Yahweh, and all nations shall be gathered unto it"; that the city will become "an house of prayer for all people"; that God's servants are urged to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem"; that those who "love" her "shall prosper" (Deu. 12:5; Jer. 3:17; Isa. 56:7; Psa. 122:6).

Brother Thomas knew and under-

stood these divine truths, and expounded them accordingly. Why aren't others in the Household content to do likewise?

Moses and the Prophets

The book of Genesis is unquestionably the crucible of all divine revelation. The reader of *Elpis Israel* should not, then, be surprised to discover that there are almost one hundred direct references to Genesis in its pages. There will also be found more than sixty-five quotations from Exodus to Deuteronomy. When it comes to the prophets, such widespread appeal to the Scriptures becomes even more pronounced. There are more than one hundred direct references to the book of Isaiah, and the prophecy of Daniel (the Apocalypse of the Old Testament), although a mere twelve chapters are directly referred to more than one hundred times.

Thus it is understandable that, in setting forth his convictions, Brother Thomas should state: "*The writings of the prophets, which are the root and foundation of the New Testament, and without the understanding of which the latter is unintelligible aright*" (p. 170).

The vast and wide-ranging appeal to Scripture which is found in *Elpis Israel* shows that Brother Thomas had gained sufficient knowledge of the Word by the time he wrote this work; that he was sufficiently illuminated and mature in his understanding to later complete his crowning work in the publication of *Eureka*.

In *Elpis Israel* Part Third, ch. 3 (p. 363), Brother Thomas shows a remarkable degree of understanding concerning the seven trumpets of the Apoca-

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lypse and their sub-division into seven vial periods, and how these Apocalyptic symbols lead the student to discover the truth concerning Armageddon and the subsequent establishment of God's kingdom on earth. His exposition concerning the frog-like spirits is thoroughly researched, and is presented with remarkable clarity. Earlier, he has dealt at some length with the subject of the "saints and two witnesses" (pp. 337-350) in which he provides an extensive exposition of fundamental aspects of Rev. 11. It is evident that a correct understanding of this 11th chapter is one of the major keys in properly interpreting the Apocalypse.

A reader of *Elpis Israel* will realize that Brother Thomas had a good grasp of the overall theme of the Apocalypse: The true Israel of God in their struggle against the Babylonian Church/State system, with the final victory going to the true saints of Yahweh and the glorification of His Name in all the earth, with all nations being brought into subjection to His will.

In regard to this matter, he has written: *"The special pleaders of the Papacy have the hardihood and effrontery to declare that the Head of their church has put none to death; that their church is the pure, sinless spouse of Christ! But the spirit denounces it as 'drunk with the blood of the saints,' because, in stirring up the secular powers to murder and massacre the opponents of Romanism and the advo-*

cates of human rights, it has 'caused the saints to be killed'; and become so dyed in wickedness, and steeped in crime, that its iniquity hath at last reached unto heaven, and the burning flame of war is consuming and destroying it unto the end" (p. 340).

From One to the Other

An appreciation of the things expounded in *Elpis Israel* will give readers such a comprehensive grasp of the fundamental message contained in all the inspired Scriptures that they will have ready minds to grasp a deeper understanding of the last book of the Bible, as set forth and scripturally expounded within the pages of *Eureka*.

Brother Thomas sets down in *Elpis Israel* a basic thesis to which he constantly alludes in the pages of *Eureka*:

"The gospel of the kingdom will be no longer a matter of hope, but a reality; and those who have believed it, and submitted cheerfully and lovingly to the law of faith in the obedience it requires, and have perfected their faith by works meet for repentance, will be shining 'as the brightness of the firmament and as the stars for ever and ever.' This is the Hope of Israel which is set before men in the gospel, and for which Paul was bound with a chain. It is a very different one to that exhibited in pulpit-theology, yet it is that which must be embraced as the soul's anchorage, if a man would be saved, and inherit the kingdom of God" (page 454).
— John Ullman.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FAITHFUL

I am at peace and in fellowship only with those who believe the Gospel of the Kingdom and Name; obey afterwards in immersion into Christ, as established in the formula. "The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" — or the Father manifested in the Son by the Holy Spirit, which is "the Christ"; and therefore "patiently continuing in well-doing, thereby seeking for glory, honor, incorruptibility and life". These are Christadelphians, or Christ's brethren; all others are illegitimate or counterfeit. This is my position in Britain and America, though I may have to stand alone; and from it, at this late day, I am not likely to swerve. — J. Thomas, 1865.