

The Berean Christadelphian

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the exposition and defence of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints, with the object of helping to make ready a People prepared for the coming of the Lord. Opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.

Edited and Published by:
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“They received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many believed.”—Acts 17: 11.

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CHRIST IS COMING AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

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G. A. Gibson, 294 Glebeholme Blvd., Toronto 6, Ontario, Canada

Vol. 42, No. 12

December, 1954

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EDITORIAL

From Truth to Fables

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine (teaching); but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables"—2 Tim. 4:3-4.

Although few people seem to realize it, the natural tendency of mankind is to turn away from the truth. It has ever been thus since the day our first parents were placed in the garden of Eden. At that time, they were given their freedom to eat the fruit of every tree of the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and they were warned that if they disobeyed, they would die. The serpent then came upon the scene and assured them that they would not die, but would become as gods, knowing good and evil. This was a half-truth—the most dangerous form of a lie, and it resulted in death as God had said.

The statement of Paul's, appearing at the top of this page, demands investigation. It does not stand alone—there are several apostolic prophecies of a similar nature. Peter speaks of scoffers who would appear in the last days, and John states that many deceivers are entered into the world. If we believe the New Testament writings, and are assured that these predictions have been fulfilled, we should have no difficulty in locating some of the fables that Christians have adopted.

There are two sources of authentic information to which we may go—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Gibbon, and *Ecclesiastical History*, by Mosheim. (Authentic, that is, as to provable, historic facts.) Both of these writers use similar descriptions. With regard to the first century, Mosheim says—

"Christian churches had scarcely been gathered and organized, when here and there men rose up, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the apostles taught, attempted innovations and fashioned religion according to their own liking . . . So long as the greater part of the apostles were alive, to watch over the churches, these innovators were not very successful."—Century 1, Pt. 2, Ch. 5.

The detailed information given by these two writers shows that after all of the apostles passed off the scene, error advanced and multiplied rapidly. Dealing with the 2nd century, Mosheim says:

"The **philosophers and learned men** who came over to the Christians in this century, were no inconsiderable protection and ornament to this holy religion (but) the noble simplicity and majestic dignity of the Christian religion were lost . . . when these philosophers (brought) faith and piety under the dominion of human reason."—Century 2, Pt. 1, Ch. 1.

Among the many fables adopted by the church during the second and third centuries, the principal one is the doctrine of the *Immortality of the Soul*—a doctrine forming the basis upon which the churches of Christendom have built their entire system of religion. Without this pagan doctrine—for it is a pagan doctrine—their whole system would collapse like a house built upon the sand. All of the theories of going to heaven at death, and the God-dishonoring doctrine of hell-torments have no foundation in the Bible. The few phrases in the Scriptures that seem to countenance these things, have to be twisted and distorted in order to make them appear so.

This whole philosophical hypothesis is nothing more than a development of the serpent's lie, and is universally found in the records of the nations of antiquity. There is one exception, however, and this should be noted carefully—it *does not appear in the Hebrew Scriptures*. Another notable fact to be observed is that the Israelites are the only people through whom God has revealed Himself. That is a fact of special import.

How, then, did this development of Platonic philosophy gain entry into the early church? Mosheim says it was through the philosophers and learned men who came into the Christian church. Among them was Justin Martyr, who, towards the end of his Second Apology declares that "the doctrines of Plato were not heterogeneous to those of Christ." And Ammonius Saccas, a famous Alexandrian teacher, and a member of the Eclectic, reduced the opinions of this sect to a system. He was educated a Christian, but fancied that all religions, Grecian and barbarous, Jewish and Gentile, meant the same thing at the bottom.

And so the Platonic doctrines developed and grew, not by weight of Scripture, for there was none, but by the *decrees of councils* such as the Council of Lateran in a declaration of a canon which reads as follows—

"Some have dared to assert, concerning the nature of the reasonable soul, that it is mortal; we, with the approbation of the sacred Council, do condemn and reprobate all such, seeing according to the canon of Pope Clement the fifth, the soul is immortal; and we strictly inhibit all from dogmatizing otherwise; and we decree that all who adhere to the like erroneous assertions shall be shunned and punished as heretics."—Caranza, page 412, 1681.

It should be carefully noted here that it was according to the canon of Pope Clement the fifth, the soul was declared immortal, and NOT the Scriptures of Truth. As one reads the history of the early church, it is not difficult to observe the fulfilment of Paul's prediction that—

"They shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

The Christianity of Jesus and the apostles was corrupted and overwhelmed by a flood of Platonic philosophy. The learned men of those ages, who devoted their time to the study or science of the principles underlying all knowledge, *adjusted the Scriptures to fit in with what happened to be the current fancy of "science."* They failed to understand (as bro. Thomas points out) that "it is 'the poor of this world rich in faith,' and not 'gentlemen' and 'philosophers,' that God has chosen to be heirs of His Kingdom."

Is there anything we can learn from this record of the past? Yes, much every way. The most striking fact is that those who have "turned unto fables" were the highly educated in things concerning

the wisdom of this world, and many of them became deeply involved with aliens in various "cultural" and "learned" societies, whereby their minds were "corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Let us therefore listen to Paul again as he warns the brethren in Colosse—

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ"—Col. 2:8. —Editor.

"Son of Man"

By **BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

Son of Man is a title bestowed upon "the Perfect Man" to indicate his origin. *Son* expresses the idea of emanation; hence, that seen in the midst of the lightstands—as their stem or shaft, as it were—was an emanation from the race of Adam—*Son of Man*.

"Israel is My Son, My First-born."

In this declaration to Pharaoh, a nation of some three millions of people, is styled the *First-born Son of Yahweh*; hence, the reader will find no difficulty in comprehending that the Son of Man in the midst of the lightstands was the form of a man representing a *multitude of individuals* taken by some certain process from the human race. This is indicated by the symbol itself; for John speaking of its voice loud as a trumpet says—

"His voice was as a sound of many waters" (Rev. 1:15).

—and the apocalyptic waters are defined as importing—

". . . peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues" (Rev. 17:15).

His voice was the voice of an election from these, saying—

"Thou hast purchased us for the Deity with thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and nation; and made us for our Deity kings and priests, and we shall reign over the earth."

This idea of a multitudinous Son of Man is clearly exhibited in Dan. 7:13, in the words—

"I was seeing in the vision of the night, and behold there was coming **with clouds of heavens like a Son of Man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before Him.

"And to him was given dominion, and glory, and a Kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and tongues, should serve him.

"His dominion is a dominion of Olahm which shall not pass away; and his Kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Here the "clouds of heavens" constitute the Son of Man, who is brought before the Ancient of Days, when "they" who compose him, themselves come into His presence. The Ancient of Days is "the Lord the Spirit," the "Quickening Spirit," the Logos in David's Flesh, who is the Head of this Son of Man.

In v. 14 the Kingdom is said to be given to the Son of Man; and in vs. 18, 22 and 27, it is said to be given to the *Saints of the Elyonin*—Most High Ones:

"The Saints of the Most High Ones shall receive the Kingdom, and shall possess the Kingdom for the Olahm, even during an Olahm of Olahms . . ."

—or during the Millennium. And as in v. 22, the Horn prevailed against the Saints—

"Until that the Ancient of Days came; and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High Ones, and the time came, and the saints possessed the Kingdom."

And in the twenty-seventh verse—

"And the Kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under all the heavens shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High Ones, whose Kingdom is the Kingdom of Olahm (the Millennium) and all the dominions shall serve and obey him."

If a kingdom be given to A, and the same kingdom at the same time be given to Z; then A and Z are one and the same, though called by different letters of the alphabet. This is the argument of the texts before us—the Millennial Kingdom is given to the Son of Man; it is also given at the same time to the Saints; therefore "*the Son of Man*" and "*The Saints*" are but different phrases for one and the same thing.

Daniel and John both introduce a Son of Man as a *similitude*. They tell us that what they saw was a thing *like to a Son of Man*. It had the exterior form of a man; but from the description of parts, anything but the exact counterpart of a man. The only place when the same similitude is again introduced is in Rev. 14:4, where John says, he saw "*a white cloud*"; and then, in order to show what the cloud represented, he tells us he beheld—

"Upon the cloud sitting **like to a Son of Man**, having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle."

This is the similitude of the cloud of saints ready to reap the harvest of the earth, and to tread the winepress without the city; they are styled "*a white cloud*" because *white* is the raiment with which they are everywhere invested as the apocalyptic emblem of conquest and righteousness. The head of the similitude is *crowned* to indicate the Son of Man similitude is a Body Politic of Kings.

The similitude exhibited to Daniel in 7:9-10 has reference to the same subject as John's. Daniel was attracted principally to the Head, the rest of the body being concealed by "a garment white as snow." The head of the similitude represents "the Ancient of Days"—"the hair of the head being like the pure wool." Daniel and John's symbols agree in this. White as snow, and pure wool, are emblems of purity: scarlet and crimson redness are representative of sin. Thus it is written—

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

The wool of the symbol connects it with the Lamb of Rev. 5:6 "as it had been slain" in which are the Seven Eyes of Deity. The other particulars of John's Son of Man are merged in the following scenery of Daniel's vision:

"His throne the fiery flame, his wheels burning fire. A stream of fire flowing and issuing from before Him; a thousand thousands served Him, and a myriad myriads stood before Him; the judgment was set, and books were opened."

The white garment indicates the priestly and righteous character of the body clothed thereby; all of which are justified, and *priests* as well as conquering *kings* for God.

When it was revealed to Daniel in 8:14, that the holy should be avenged "after 2300 years" had passed away, he fell into the death state and revived, *to signify that the vengeance would be after the resurrection*. At that time also he says—

"Behold, there stood before me as the Appearance of Man, and I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called and said, Understand, O Son of Man, for at the time of the end the vision is."

Here Daniel is made to personate the Son of Man. He was lying on his face in a deep sleep at the time, but when touched, he stood up as the Son of Man raised from the dead, ready to hear about the breaking of the Little Horn at the epoch of vengeance by the Prince of Princes.

Again, the apocalyptic Son of Man appears to Daniel by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel, as narrated in 10:5. In the English Version, he is said to have beheld "a certain man." This phrase is the original of *ish-ekhad*, MAN OF ONE. It was not a real man he beheld; but, as he styles it, "the Appearance of a Man" (v. 18); and "like the Similitude of the Sons of Adam" (16).

It was a symbolical, or shadowy, representation of *the Man of the One Eternal Spirit*. It was, therefore, truly "a certain man," not an uncertain, or indefinite, one.

John the Baptizer "saw the Spirit descending from heaven *like a Dove*"; and Daniel, and John the apostle, beheld the same Spirit "like the similitude of the Sons of Adam," or "like to a Son of Man." Now, the description Daniel gives of this symbol, or SPIRIT-FORM, is that—

"He was clothed in linen, and his **loins** girded with fine gold of Uphaz. His **body** also was like the beryl, and his **face** as the appearance of lightning, and **his** eyes as lamps of fire, and his **arms** and his **feet** like in color to polished brass, and the **voice of his words** like the voice of a multitude."

He saw this in Eden, by "the third" of its rivers, "the Hiddekel" where "the Cherubim and the devouring fire" were originally located—Gen. 2:14; 3:24. The reason why the locality of the vision is specified, is to acquaint the reader with the region of the earth where the glory of the Spirit Man is to be revealed.

Fourth Letter to the Elect of God

BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS

For the last time at present I greet you in the Name of the Lord, wishing you all the comfort and fortitude and joy which Christ intended his disciples to receive from his loving and sympathizing words at the Table before he left them; and which they would always impart to us, if our minds were capable of continuous and lively remembrance.

Known and loved of God, and dearly beloved by Christ:—It is one of the many evils of our present situation that the endearments of the Truth seem *empty phrases*. As it is with the name of God's family—*the elect*—so it is with the love that belongs to them. It is talked of only to seem a mockery, or a thing that strong men are ashamed of. *But it is none the less a precious reality*. It may seem as absent and dead as the flowers of summer in the depth of winter, but it exists as actually as the roots and seeds under the snow, and will come forth in beauty and fragrance in due season.

Paul speaks of "the comfort of love." Love *is* comforting. We all feel the comfort of it, whether we are the subject or the object of it. *It is the most beneficent mental activity in the universe*. It blesses giver and receiver alike. It is the highest phase of the Eternal Power, from which all things have sprung. God is love. He is truly many things besides: but *love inspires and directs them all*.

You do not experience much of love upon earth at present. You are, in fact, languishing for want of it. A mother's love sweetened the early years of your life: the love of companions and friends continued the sweetness for a time: but as life rolled on and experience of human weakness increased

in yourselves and others, the sweetness has gradually disappeared with the inrush of the bitter waters of a more accurate knowledge of all human things.

And now, you find yourselves in a desert where—in the midst of many people—you are alone, and where love is mainly a thing of memory or of painful desire. And you groan within yourselves and pine for love, both to receive and bestow.

Now, there is an antidote to the unutterable sadness of this position, if we can but open the mind to its application. It lies in the fact that the elect, in the midst of all their afflictions, are "*known and loved of God and dearly beloved by Christ.*" You have only to believe the fact to feel the comfort of it. You cannot feel it by looking into your own heart. The fact does not lie in your feelings, but quite outside of them, just as any friend's love is a fact outside of your own feelings.

To feel the comfort of your friend's love, you look at its indications—his acts, his words, his looks. These inspire you with the confidence of his love, and the confidence brings comfort. If you trusted to your own sensations apart from the tokens of love, you could not feel either the confidence or the comfort. It is much more so with the love of God. If you trust to your feelings, you will never know it, for there is no point of contact between human feeling and Divine thoughts. God's thoughts are outside of us, and as much higher than our thoughts as heaven is higher than the earth, as God says (Isa. 45:12). What you must do is to *look at its tokens*. These are of a somewhat different order from the tokens of human love, yet it will be found upon reflection that they are not less tangible or convincing.

There are *words* and *acts*, and (historically reflected), there are *looks*. The difference is that they are not personal to ourselves. Doubtless, this is a great difference as regards our ability to appropriate the comfort. Still, it does not affect the essence of the thing; the tokens have only to be looked at steadily to bring the conviction that will produce the comfort.

What are the tokens—tokens, that is, of a feeling existing in God's mind, irrespective of our ability to be conscious of it? I might speak of Creation as it is—its beauty, its wisdom, its manifest beneficence; but you might feel that this did not come close enough. Creation you might feel to be too vast and indiscriminating to give an assurance upon which you could individually rest.

This would be a natural feeling—to some extent, a *reasonable* feeling. Still, it may be carried too far: you must allow it is *something* to see Divine Wisdom and Love manifest in Creation, as we see it with our eyes. It is something to see the Father's impress in the physical universe, marred and obscured though it may be by the particular disturbance prevailing at present in the affairs of men.

Doubtless, it is more to the purpose to note the fact of His having *spoken and acted*. This fact comes to us with Israel's history, and the history of Europe as affected by the apostolic work. Moses and the prophets come before us in the one: Christ (a risen Christ) and the apostles come before us in the other.

The Bible is the irremovable and inexpungeable monument of both. In the reading of it, we are in the *warm presence of living reality*. We hear God's voice; we see His wonderful acts: we almost note His looks in Christ: and out of all comes the conviction of the Father's love—not as a fantasy, not as a sentiment, but as a deduction, as scientifically accurate in its process and result as any modern demonstration. What more explicit assurance could we have than we have received? First Moses tells us:

"The Lord thy God is a merciful God . . . long suffering and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression."

Then from David we have the teeming declarations with which the Psalms abound—

"The Lord is gracious and full of compassion: slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him: in those that hope in His mercy."

Then the prophets, one and all, as occasion serves, unite in telling us what Isaiah declares:

"God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and song: He also is become my salvation" . . . "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

In the apostolic writings (including in them the apostolic record of Christ's sayings) God's love may be said to glow with a warming brightness that we cannot escape. First Jesus tells us in general that God has "*loved the world,*" and sent him for the reason that a way might be opened for His love to operate conformably with His righteousness. Then particularly, he used such comforting words to the disciples as these:

"The Father Himself loveth you" . . . "He careth for you" . . . "How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him."

The apostolic letters, which are the breathings of the Spirit of God, are full of the same comfort—

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress, or persecution or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . . . Nay, in all these things we are **more than conquerors, through him that loved us.**

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

"God Who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:4-7).

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins . . . We have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:9-14).

"If God be for us, WHO CAN BE AGAINST US?"

Here, then, are the tokens and the pledges of the love that exists in the Father, for His children. Not only in the Father, but in Christ especially, if there is any difference; for the love of Christ for his brethren is compared to the highest love known to man, the love of a bridegroom for his bride.

"Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having a spot or wrinkle, or any such thing . . .

"No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. 5:25-30).

What should hinder our joy in this love? It has not been intimated to us personally, but it has been assured to "whomsoever" and to "all" who come into a *certain way of things*. You have come into this way, and you walk in it. You believe the great and precious promises; you are daily striving to obey the beautiful commandments. Wherein you fail, you may have mercy and forgiveness, through the mediation of the "Great High Priest over the house of God," who ever liveth to make intercession for us:

"If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ; and if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity."

Remember, also, for your comfort, that this love that is in God, the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, is *supreme in the heart of every member of the House to which you belong*. You may not see much of it now. You may know more of being "in heaviness, through manifold temptations." You are far scattered and lonely, just now. But nothing can change the purpose of God to "gather together in one" the family of His love, that they may rejoice in His love, and in the love that will pass in unchecked and flowing stream from heart to heart in their glorified assembly.

Is there not, in these things, power to sustain the heart in the midst of all the "sufferings of this present time"? What could be more consoling than the confidence that the love of Christ is engaged solicitously on our behalf, though we cannot see or know it by mere sensation? And that, after a brief conflict with the toils, weaknesses and disappointments of our mortal years, we shall enter into a realm of being and an order of society in which *love will be our atmosphere, joy our light, praise our life, and peace and glory our everlasting habitation?*

There is no situation in life in which these convictions are unable to impart courage, and nobleness and purity. Are you a servant? Care not for it. It is but for a time; you are Christ's free man or woman, to be manifest in no merely sentimental manner at his coming.

Have you to work for unlovely employers, on whom your service seems thrown away, and for whom all natural heart-motive would fail? Redeem your part by acting it, as Paul recommends—

"In singleness of your heart as unto Christ, not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart: with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not unto men."

Are you engaged in uncongenial employment? As a conscientious servant of Christ, with heart a-lit with hope, you can attend to it in the spirit of the Divine command, which says—

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, **do it with thy might.**"

—and in the confidence expressed in the Psalm, which says—

"The needy shall not always be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."

Are you dissatisfied with the smallness of your sphere and the limited nature of the service you can render? Be comforted by the thought that small things are often very important; that larger ways might not be so useful in your particular case; and that it is possible for you in a small sphere to do what is, after all, the utmost a man can do in any sphere, and that is, to *faithfully make the very best use of the opportunity God gives*, knowing that the small will be accepted equally with the great at the hands of Him with Whom—

"It is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

It will be helpful, too, to remember that it is the faithful filling of a small place that is always exhibited to us in the Lord's teaching as the ground of exaltation to great things at his coming.

Have you to mix with ungodly company and to endure the oppositions of the scornful? The memory of the Lord's own experience of this line of things, and the recollection that it is in temptation and difficulty that righteousness is brought forth for honor and comfort in the day of the Lord, will reconcile you to your lot, and enable you to turn that which is evil into good.

Have you no comfort, no love, no consolation? *Build your heart in God.* God loves and guides now, and has unspeakable goodness in store. Remember that it was not as a beautiful form of words that Christ said—

"Blessed be ye poor . . . blessed are ye that hunger now . . . blessed are ye that weep now . . . blessed are ye when men shall hate you."

He said these things because they are *true*, and that they might be realized by those to whom they refer while yet in their tribulation. Such shall laugh; shall be filled; shall be comforted; shall inherit the Kingdom—in faith of which they can endure in the face of all the storms that may howl through the wintry land of their probation.

Are none of these things your experience? Are you, on the contrary, well off? Master of your own actions? Blessed with leisure, means, honor and friends? There is no need to be distressed, as I have known some distressed, with a fear that in such circumstances, it is impossible for our lives to be in harmony with God. God has use for a variety of servants in His house. You have but to estimate your case scripturally, measure it, and *HANDLE IT ACCORDING TO WHAT IS WRITTEN*, and all will be well. Do not get away from Scriptures, either by neglect, or by unscriptural doctrines of things. Accept God's guidance—

"To whom much is given, of them much shall be required."

"Charge them that are rich . . . that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate."

"Mind not high things; condescend to men of low estate."

While the brother of low degree is to rejoice that he is exalted by the truth, "the rich" is to rejoice "in that he is made *low*" (Jas. 1:10), that is, he is not to be ashamed of the humbling associations of the Truth, or to stand apart as if he were of higher consequence in the body of Christ, but rather to take joyfully the only opportunity he has of partaking of the sufferings of Christ and the afflictions of the Gospel.

But it is mostly the poor and the afflicted that are called to the Kingdom; such is God's appointment and no man can change it. It is mostly among their ranks that the elect will be found. It is mostly these that need the consolation afforded by the Truth in a time of trouble; and to these chiefly I have made bold to address these wandering remarks.

Hoping and praying to be permitted, with you, to occupy even the least place in the Kingdom of God, when the sufferings of this present time shall have *wrought in us their appointed work*, let me write myself once more, Your fellow-sojourner and servant, In the joy of faith and the patience of hope through our Lord Jesus Christ, —*Robert Roberts*.

One Hundred Years Ago With Bro. Thomas

On Saturday I met the people at Temperance, Virginia. The congregation was so good that I never wish to meet a better. The house was full, and the audience apparently intelligent. We want men and women who can think, and do think; and who are not afraid of truth which does violence to the thinking of the flesh.

Next morning we left Temperance for Webster, where a houseful were assembled to hear about the "New Doctrine." The subject discoursed on was 1 Cor. 15:1-4. I showed that those who took the words of vs. 3-4 as Paul's declaration of the Gospel took a very shallow and limited view of the subject.

What "glad tidings" is there in the simple statement that "Christ died for sins, according to the writings of the prophets"? What were they to **gain** by his dying for their sins? And **how were they to have access** to the things procured by his dying for sins? There is not a word of this in vs. 3-4, and yet some say these declare the Gospel Paul preached!

They were only the "first things" submitted to the Corinthian synagogue. Paul recalls their attention to these "first things," one of which was the resurrection of the Christ from among the dead (and which they had admitted) as premises for an argument against a heresy that had been introduced among them. They concluded that resurrection was useless if human souls were immortal and went to heaven at their separation from their bodies at death.

But Paul teaches that **where there is no resurrection there is no future life**. Having settled the question of resurrection, he went on to declare the Gospel, in what remains of the chapter. In this we find his points, such as: the **coming of Christ**, at the epoch of the resurrection of the saints; **his reign**, till he has put down all enemies; the deliverance to God of the **Kingdom**, at the destruction of the last enemy, death; baptism, for the resurrection from among the dead, the **kind of body** with which the dead rise—glorious, incorruptible, powerful, spiritual; the **transformation** of those saints who are alive at the coming of Christ; the **victory of the saints** through Jesus, and so forth.

These are the points of the apostle's declaration in this 15th chapter. **This** was something like "glad tidings"!—"good news" to all who laid hold of them, and **acquired a right to them** in recognizing Jesus as the Anointed Son of God and Heir of all these things, and in being united to his Name for repentance, remission of sins, and resurrection to the Kingdom of Jehovah, destined to subvert all other kingdoms, and to stand for evermore.

Having thus discoursed for some two hours, the meeting was closed. Our friends expressed themselves as well satisfied. The stronghold of human tradition was in ruins. They saw that Paul does not declare the Gospel in two brief verses!—**Herald of the Kingdom, December, 1854.**

"I Do Rejoice, Yea, and Will Rejoice!"

"Rejoice in the Lord ALWAYS: and AGAIN I say, Rejoice!"—Phil. 4:4.

This is the most intimate and personal of Paul's ecclesial epistles. The ecclesia at Philippi was the first established by Paul in Europe—in response to the vision of the Man of Macedonia. It was there that Paul went on the sabbath day to the place of prayer by the riverside, and found Lydia, whose heart the Lord touched. This was the beginning of the Philippian ecclesia, which held such a prominent place in the apostle's affections.

The spirit of the epistle to the Philippians is joy, contentment, fraternal affection, and holiness. Its background is loneliness, imprisonment, and the hovering shadow of condemnation and a cruel death, but its keynote is peace and rejoicing. "*I do rejoice, and WILL rejoice!*" the apostle triumphantly exclaims (1:18); and to them he writes—

"Rejoice in the Lord **always**: and **again** I say, REJOICE!" (4:4).

Our minds turn again to that unforgettable scene at midnight in this same city of Philippi years before (Acts 16:23-25)—

"And when they had laid **many stripes** upon them, they **cast** them into prison . . . **thrust** them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks . . . And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and SANG PRAISES UNTO GOD."

What glorious secret was it that these men had? Surely no circumstance could be more physically and mentally miserable and depressing—cast roughly into an inner dungeon to be reserved for more abuse on the morrow—distressingly fastened by the feet in stocks, and racked with the pain of the "many stripes" they had unjustly received.

But they "sang praises unto God." *WHAT for?* This epistle gives the answer—

"Be careful for nothing"—let nothing depress you—"but in everything by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, **SHALL** keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (4:6-7).

Nothing could dim or obscure for Paul the ever-present and overwhelming ecstasy of the love of Christ. He gloried in tribulation (Rom. 5:3), for the bitterest of tribulation only impressed him more intensely with the all-sufficiency of the consolation of Christ—

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? **Nay!** In all these things we are **more than conquerors** through him that loved us!" (Rom. 8:35-37).

All these things were everyday experiences with Paul, and he gloried when they flooded down upon him, for each visitation but thrillingly revealed anew their utter powerlessness to pierce the all-protecting armor of the love of Christ in his heart.

"*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,*" he tells them as he begins his letter (1:3). That must be *our* feeling concerning all our brethren and sisters who are striving toward the mark of the perfection of Christ. Our minds, like Paul's, must be constantly filled with loving thoughts and thankful prayers concerning them.

V. 4—"Always making request **with joy**."

This is an unusual and striking expression—"making request *with joy*"—but it well illustrates the spirit of the epistle. Paul was in prison, writing to dear friends far away whom he longed achingly to see, but still there is not even a hint of any restraint upon his buoyant rejoicing. These are the circumstances in which the wisdom of the Spirit has placed him; these then are the circumstances in which God sees that he can do the most good, or receive the most benefit.

Therefore, though he earnestly desires the freedom and opportunity to enjoy their company and fellowship, he does not let the enforced separation lessen his present joy. He and they rejoice in mutual, understanding love, knowing that "*ALL THINGS work together for good to those that love God,*" content to wait out the sorrows of the brief present in the cheerful confidence of the eternal, cloudless future.

He was confident, he said (v. 6), that God, Who had begun a good work in them, would perform it until the day of Christ. If we are watching for them, we shall find many thrilling references to this glorious Divine mystery which is expressed so boldly later in the epistle—

"It is **God which worketh in you**, both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure."

It is God which worketh in us—if we will let Him—if we will yield and submit, putting aside our own desires, our own plans and hopes and ambitions, and seeking to follow the guiding light of Scripture and Providence from day to day.

"The things which have happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel" (v. 12).

Paul's life was wrapped up in the furtherance of the Gospel of his beloved Master. What did bonds and imprisonment mean to him if they contributed to that end? He turned it all into a powerful and glorious advertisement for Christ (v. 13)—

"My bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places."

And the result went further still (v. 14)—

"**Many** of the brethren, waxing confident in my bonds, are much more"—note the emphasis—"much more bold to speak the Word without fear."

Thus he turned a crippling handicap into a stirring inspiration. Such is the power of a fearless example—not only of courage, but more—of *inextinguishable rejoicing*. He not only endured with patience, but in his very enduring he radiated a confidence and peace that inspired others to fearlessness and joy.

"And I therein do rejoice, yea, and WILL rejoice!" (v. 18).

Why?—

"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ" (v. 19).

See how he binds up *his* salvation with the power of *their* prayers and Christ's indwelling Spirit. There was no self-sufficiency about Paul. "No man liveth unto himself." Again and again we are impressed with the mutual interdependence of the body of Christ, for so it is ordained in the love and wisdom of God. "*The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee.*"

Paul was humbly conscious that, in the strange and marvellous working of the Divine purpose, the prayer of the least of God's saints could have a bearing upon the issues of his salvation. What a wonderful bond of unity a perception of this truth creates!

V. 21—"To me, to live is Christ."

Here again Paul briefly and beautifully expresses our walk in the world—"To me, to live is Christ." All his life was bound up in Christ—all his activities centered in him.

Outside of Christ *there is no life*—he is the Way of Life—all else is death. How dimly we seem to perceive what was so living and vivid to Paul! "*To me, to live is Christ.*"

V. 27—"Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

This epistle contains no criticism or rebuke. But if there was one thing in which Paul thought it advisable to exhort them, this would be it. The thought appears again at the beginning of ch. 2, and again beginning ch. 3. "*With one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.*"

The brotherhood today is going through a crucial period of purging and tribulation. It *must* drive those that are left closer together—there could be no greater tragedy than to suffer the tribulation without reaping the joys and benefits that the tribulation is Divinely designed to effect. To the apostle, this was the deciding index of success or failure—of sorrow or joy. He pleads (and who could ignore such pleading)—

"If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship in the Spirit—if you have any affection and sympathy—fulfil ye my joy by being of one mind, united in mutual love" (2:1-2).

What relationship is more tender and beautiful than the fellowship of the Truth? Jesus said, "*Behold, my mother and my brethren!*" But it requires much patience and gentle understanding—

"Let each esteem other better than themselves" (v. 3).

Paul advances this as the basis of mutual love and communion and forbearance. The worth of any individual in the sight of God depends upon his *degree of overcoming*. "Where much is given, much is expected." We cannot judge. Our own record may prove to be the poorest when abilities and opportunities are in the last Great Day weighed against accomplishments. How can we evaluate the efforts and struggles of others? Only God can gauge the bitterness and stress of each heart's secret conflicts.

Paul, in his pleading, but expresses the mind of Christ. "*Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*" is still the most touching and powerful of entreaties. The future of the Berean fellowship may well hinge upon the degree to which we are moved by this entreaty to *enlarge our hearts one to another in the bonds of a love that suffers long and is kind*—hoping all things, bearing all things, and enduring all things.

Paul emphasizes his entreaty by the example of Christ—

"Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus—he humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation" (vs. 5-8).

Christ, the Great Example, was big enough to yield lovingly and cheerfully in everything that concerned his own desires and honor and self-gratification—always seeking peace and putting the pleasure and welfare of others before his own—realizing the utter unimportance of the present, and the immensity of the eternal issues—*the great work of God in him*.

This leads the apostle to that glorious paradox (vs. 12-13)—

"Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is **God which worketh in you**, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

"*Work . . . for God worketh in you.*" The mighty, rushing wind of the Spirit is upon you—set your sails to catch every ounce of it, for this is your day of opportunity.

V. 14—"Do all things without murmurings and disputings . . . that ye may be the children of God."

"Without murmurings and disputings." "*Forbearing one another in love*" is the thought—recognizing in others a fellowship of effort, a unity of objective—and overlooking in love the weaknesses and shortcomings which they are perhaps more conscious of, and secretly grieved by, that we are.

BUT—*there must be a sincere unity of objective*, and it can only be the objective the Scriptures hold forth—*the perfection of Christ*. Without this basic agreement there can be no hope of the fellowship of the Spirit. *That* is the real issue today.

V. 15—"Among whom ye shine as lights in the world."

Here indeed our walk in the world is brought into sharp focus. Jesus said likewise, "*Ye are the light of the world.*" The picture we are given by these words is one of a spectacular radiance in the midst of a boundless darkness. Our walk in the world must be such that men will be impressed that we are motivated by a strange, unearthly power. Jesus said (John 13:35)—

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples—**if ye have love one to another.**"

To what extent do we conform to this *essential requirement of discipleship*? Love does not plead the excuse of unloveliness in others—rather in such it finds an opportunity to demonstrate its own unselfishness and power. Paul desired this heavenly fruit in his converts that (v. 16) he might rejoice in the day of Christ that he had not run in vain, for truly unless their spiritual growth in Christ reaches the full ripeness of unselfish, uncomplaining love, his efforts on them had been completely wasted, as on a barren tree.

* * *

He planned (v. 19) to send Timothy to them soon, as his messenger of consolation, he said. And then comes a revealing note which, though infinitely tragic, has an aspect of comfort for us in this dark day (vs. 20-21)—

"I have no one else to send—for all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

All were wrapped up in their own quite legitimate, but quite temporal, interests. How meaningless it will all seem in retrospect when the day of golden opportunity is passed, and the only reality left is the judgment seat of Christ! Can we measure our own lives and activities by this unsparing yardstick, and be content?

The comfort of the picture lies in the fact that even the apostolic times were "a day of small things." It was a very restricted and family affair. "My son Timothy . . . *I have no one else to send . . .*"

But still the apostle is not discouraged or cast down—

"Finally, my brethren (3:1), rejoice in the Lord."

Again he returns to his basic theme of rejoicing, which nothing can quench. The aged and forsaken prisoner is encouraging those who are younger, at liberty, and have the advantage of ecclesial companionship. But it was fitting, for he possessed in much fuller measure than they the one real, never-failing source of joy—the vivid awareness of the power of the love of Christ.

The word translated "*Finally*" literally means "*remainder*," and the sense is, "This, then, remains . . ." He uses the same word again in ch. 4, "*Finally*, whatsoever things are true, etc." This word is translated "Henceforth" in the expression, "*Henceforth* there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." *This remains*, in spite of all passing sorrow—"Rejoice in the Lord."

V. 3—"We worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

"*Worship God, and rejoice in Christ.*" The closer we come to that as our fixed and habitual frame of mind, the closer we are to the mind of the Spirit, which is life and peace.

"*Have no confidence in the flesh.*" This is infinitely far-reaching. Jesus said: "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Paul had done just that, as he goes on to say, and he had done it gladly—even eagerly.

All that had made up his former life of satisfaction and pride, he had cast aside. He saw the emptiness and falseness and unsoundness of it all. The mind of the flesh seeks self-expression and self-gratification in a 1000 different, subtle ways—many of them apparently righteous, noble and good, but *pride* is at the bottom of them all. We *must* see through it. We must abhor every ugly impulse of self-assertion and self-esteem. We must empty ourselves of self, and be overwhelmed with our utter insignificance.

"What is man, that Thou, O God, art mindful of him?"—pitiful specks of briefly animated dust in the immeasurable vastness of eternity. Who are we to even think we have a thought worth thinking? "Worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh."

"I count all things but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him; that I may **know** him, and the **power** of his resurrection, and the **fellowship** of his sufferings—if by **any means** I might attain!"

Surely we can but sadly smile when some speak disparagingly of "extremists" in the race for life. How pale the most extreme would appear before the intensity of the apostle's fervent strivings and desire!

"In stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft . . . beaten with rods, stoned, scourged with whips . . . weariness, painfulness, watchings, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness . . ."

And yet he says (vs. 13-17)—

"I count not myself to have attained . . . I strive that if by any means I **might** attain . . . I **press** toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus . . . Brethren, **be followers of me.**"

And then he goes on in sadness (vs. 18-19) to speak of those who walked as the enemies of the cross of Christ . . . whose end is destruction . . . whose glory is their shame. . . *who mind earthly things.*

Is it so terrible to "mind earthly things"? Does it call for such extreme condemnation? Houses, lawns, furniture, automobiles, business, what shall we eat? what shall we wear?—all must be attended to in their time and season—but *where is our heart?* What fills our interests? Where does our mind naturally love to turn?—patterns, recipes, needlework, hobbies, workshops, gardens, photographs, recreation, sport? . . . or the *eternal things of God?*

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth."

"I count all things but loss . . . I press—I strive—I strain toward the mark . . . if by any means I might attain to the transcendent, eternal glory of oneness with Christ.

* * *

"Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed-for, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (4:1).

Does this overflowing manifestation of affection seem to us extreme and overdone? Are we, like the Corinthians, afraid to open our hearts to one another? Are we cold, and reserved, and self-contained? Peter exhorts (1:4:8)—

"ABOVE ALL THINGS, have fervent love among yourselves."

That will solve most problems.

There is nothing ordinary or commonplace about the glorious Gospel of Christ. It means a complete and revolutionary transformation of the heart. It is *all or nothing.*

Then once more (v. 4) comes that exultant refrain—

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and **again** I say, **Rejoice!**"

How eager and anxious he was that they should enjoy the full glory and power of their holy calling—that they should share with him the transporting joy and peace of life in Christ!

V. 5—"Let your moderation"—the word really means 'gentleness' and is so translated in other places—"Let your **gentleness** be known unto all men."

Christ's true brethren will be universally known for their unfailing gentleness in all relationships and circumstances. Gentleness is the manifestation of a calm and spiritual mind—"Be careful for nothing" (v. 6)—let nothing make you anxious or upset—take every problem to God in thanksgiving and prayer.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding (v. 7), SHALL keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

He speaks in terms of unshakable assurance. He has no doubts of the unfailing efficacy of his Divine prescription.

"Finally, my brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report—**think on these things.**"

The practical wisdom of this counsel, even from a natural point of view, is surely obvious. The folly of the opposite course is surely manifest. To keep the mind occupied with thoughts of things that are lovely and pure is not only beneficial and spiritually upbuilding—it is also self-evidently the course of peace and happiness. But, above all, the crowning promise of this way is (v. 9):

"The God of peace shall be with you."

He finds occasion, in conclusion, to rejoice in them again (v. 10)—that their care of him in his affliction had flourished. In the intimacy of his special affection for them, he reminds them (v. 15) that when he was establishing the ecclesias, they alone of all the churches had been concerned to contribute to his daily needs. Philippi was in Macedonia. To the rich Corinthians he said—

"The deep poverty of the ecclesias of Macedonia abounded unto the riches of their liberality . . . beyond their power they were willing . . . praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift."

And later, in ch. 11, he tells the Corinthians that he had accepted nothing from *them*, relying rather on the hard-earned assistance of the Macedonian brethren. He refused the help of the rich, and accepted that of the struggling poor. He refused the help of the Corinthians, he said (2 Cor. 11:12), that he might cut off occasion from them that desired occasion—that he might not give them cause to glory that they had supported him.

How much this tells us of the confidence of his intimacy with the brethren and sisters of Philippi—that he did not hesitate to share the meager resources of their poverty with them! There were no puffing-up, pride-gratifying riches here—no danger that the well-to-do would glory over him that of their abundance they had patronizingly supported this indigent wanderer, among their various charitable hobbies. *Rich Philippians*—powerful in their poverty! *Poor Corinthians*—impotent in their opulence!

Arising out of this consideration, he beautifully reveals to them the secret of his divine peace of mind (vs. 11-13)—

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need."

"*I have learned . . . I am instructed.*" It was a state of mind that had to come by a process of learning. Jesus said: "*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*" And of the Son of God himself it is recorded, "He *learned* obedience by the things that he suffered."

This word "instructed" in v. 12 means *to be initiated into divine mysteries*. It is the only place it occurs in the Scriptures.

"I can do **all things** through Christ who strengtheneth me" (v. 13).

That was the glorious secret into which he had been initiated, and it must be ours. "When I am weak, then am I strong." When I most fully realize and am impressed with my utter helplessness, then am I most strong through the transforming power of Christ.

V. 20—"Unto God be glory for ever and ever."

This dare not be just a form of words, or an occasional remembrance. "*Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created*" (Rev. 4:11). Let us keep that before us as a continual perspective of the purpose of our life and walk in the world. Our part in the glorious, unbounded future depends upon whether our lives and characters contribute to the glory and pleasure of God.

* * *

V. 21—"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus."

Not just "*all saints*," but "*every saint*"—each one separately and individually. A beautiful concluding thought—"Salute *every saint* in Christ." Consider them all, over and over, one by one, in loving and prayerful remembrance, after the wonderful example of the aged apostle, that the whole body, fitly joined together according to the effectual working of every part, may grow up in Christ unto the edifying of itself in love.

"*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*"

—G.V.G.

"But So Did Not I!"

"*Think upon me, my God, for good*"—Neh. 5:19.

We are met to spend a little profitable time in the company of a man whose character presents a remarkable combination of devoutness, determination, and sagacity. These are qualities whose union in the same individual is sufficient to make him an interesting and profitable study.

"*The fear of the Lord*" is not only "*the beginning of wisdom*," but the basis of all *other* characteristics which make a man's society agreeable to the friends of the Truth. His energy and discernment and general capacity derive great interest from the fact that he is what Paul would style "*spiritually minded*."

There are many clever men in whose audience we should not care to sit because of the absence of this feature from their mental composition. It is a thing peculiar to the Truth that it makes writers and orators whom once we considered paragons of excellence, lose all their attraction for us.

Our copies of Carlyle and Dickens find their way to the secondhand book shop; while Talmadge and Spurgeon we would not cross the street to hear.

It was Nehemiah's "*fear of God*" that was the secret of the prominence which he acquired in the affairs of Israel. Men who are merely adroit and smart are not suited to any important part in the Divine program. And on the other hand it is necessary that a man's organization should display other qualities besides that of veneration, if he would accomplish extensive work for God.

He must be bold and enterprising—he must be able to see a point and make others see it too—he must have prudence and caution—he must know when to use his tongue and when to hold it—his emotions must be well reined up by his reasoning faculties—and yet *he must be an enthusiast in what he takes in hand*.

All the holy men of old were conspicuous examples of strong mentality combined with a child-like reverence for the ways and things of God. The men His purpose requires are those in whom His Word is fruitful in a variety of ways that betoken intelligence and reason, as well as devoutness and enthusiasm.

In Nehemiah there was a happy blend of the characteristics that go to make up what James calls "a perfect man." Some have considered that he displayed a certain tendency to parade his own doings which is not the mark of a properly balanced mind.

"Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people"
(Neh. 5:19).

But there is nothing in this request that is inconsistent with true humility of mind. It is simply a petition based upon an acknowledged fact, which fact is urged as a reason why the prayer should be granted. And when we remember that "God will render to every man *according to his work*," it does not appear a breach of modesty on Nehemiah's part to make this allusion to the work he had done in Jehovah's Name, which allusions some have interpreted to his disparagement.

There are two considerations which make Nehemiah specially suited to our companionship. In the first place he was not a Prophet, nor a Priest, nor did he claim to possess any Divine commission. He did what any man might have done by the help of the same circumstances and the same religious fervor and natural capacity and resolution.

Therefore we cannot put him aside as a standard beyond our reach. *Indeed there are no such standards anywhere presented in the Scriptures*. Even the gifts of the Spirit did not disqualify the Prophets and Apostles from being *ensamples to others*. And what's the good of an example that nobody can follow? The man who endeavors to excuse disobedience in any form by saying—"I am not inspired"—"I haven't seen Christ"—"I am not as favorably situated for doing the will of God as Paul, and Peter were"—that man has woefully mistaken the nature of "the high calling in Christ Jesus"—as he will eventually discover to his cost.

Therefore when I say that Nehemiah is specially adapted to the purposes of the present address, I do not mean to infer for one moment that he would have been at all less suitable if he *had* possessed those supernatural endowments which fell to the lot of the Apostles in the first century.

The remark is simply intended to call attention to the fact that his example does not admit of that unreasonable treatment which some have accorded to the example of a man like Paul, who have said that an inspired man is no fair pattern for one who is not.

Nehemiah was a very firm and determined man. Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the Ammonite, who were the ringleaders of rival colonies of Samaria, and their Arabian allies, found in Nehemiah a man who was made of very strong fibre. He was just the man to build the wall "in

troublesome times" (Dan. 9:25), and to seize the reins at an epoch when God's affairs were in general down-treading and neglect. He met with a great deal of trouble among his own people, which arose from the general distress that was much aggravated by the unscrupulous exactions of his predecessors in office, who of course represented a foreign dominion, and had been in habit—like the Turkish Pashas of recent times—of maintaining themselves and their courts, at the expense of a population already overburdened with imposts of various sorts.

Nehemiah set his face against this piece of tyranny and injustice, for the reason we are about to consider. And he did a great many other things for the same reason. He aroused a very general interest in Divine things by arranging for the *public reading and exposition of the Law*.

He was the means of getting up an unequalled celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, and he caused the people to enter into a solemn covenant to walk in God's Law, and to observe the Sabbath, and to avoid intermarriages with the heathen. The value of his presence at Jerusalem was illustrated by the fact that when he returned to the palace of Artaxerxes at the end of 12 years, abuses of one kind and another crept in, and greatly marred his work; so that when he came back to Jerusalem he had to use extra sternness, and enforce the separation of all the mixed multitude.

Tobiah the Ammonite had to be cleared out of the chamber which the High Priest Eliashib had prepared for him *in the Temple*, with all his household stuff. Nehemiah was distinguished for *what he did*, and for *the way he did it*, and no doubt his prayer will be remembered, and this man who had the fear of God so continually before his eyes will again find a place in Jerusalem, at a time when there will be no wall to build, and no Sanballats and Tobiahs to embarrass his proceedings, and no Canaanite in the House of the Lord of hosts.

But Nehemiah was not only remarkable for what he did, he was also conspicuous for *what he did not do*. Sometimes it is just as difficult to take a negative attitude in the interest of righteousness and truth—to pursue a policy of refusal and abstention—as to engage in any positive act of service toward God.

It is by no means every man who is able to say "No," and give the reason: especially when "No" means present and obvious disadvantage. To make a stand against any practice that has custom and respectability and gain on its side, requires a Nehemiah, and such men are scarce.

"The former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people; but so did not I, because of the fear of God."

The custom might be a source of gain, and quite a respectable thing, and what most in my position would not think worth while to meddle with, but—

"So did not I, because of the fear of God!"

Now the object of our studies of the Scriptures is to assist us in all important directions, especially to imbue our minds with that "fear of God" which will enable us to pronounce the word "No" properly. Christadelphians have more use for that negative than has any other community of people under the sun. Our entire attitude is a huge "NO," and we have been led to assume it *"because of the fear of God."*

Nehemiah had learned to take an independent stand. He used his own conscience, and did not suffer himself to be led off the right track by what was a *common practice*, and innocent in the estimation of other men. We live in a day when all who possess an enlightened fear of God are compelled to be singular.

There is a perfect Babel of religious sentiment around us, and in the midst of the confusion, we have to decide "*What is Truth.*" The multitude are no guide to us in the matter, except as furnishing an infallible intimation that the Truth lies not with them. They have never intelligently brought "the fear of God" to bear upon their religious position.

But you may ask—How is a young man judiciously to exercise independency of thought in relation to the theological pretensions that clamor for his acceptance in the present day? "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way" from the defilement of mere paganism and ecclesiastical tradition? Is he to trust his *own ability* to correctly canvas these rival claims, and may he rely upon the soundness of his *own mental vision* when objects purporting to be Divine are presented before it?

Would it not be the wiser course for him to distrust what *he* may discover to be, or what *he* may think to be, the Truth, and rely upon the verdict that has been pronounced before his day by his pious ancestors, and his church-going predecessors?

This is the counsel that any orthodox parson would give our young brethren and friends if he were addressing them. He would emphasize the danger that attends the investigation of ideas that are not in harmony with established religion. He would say—

"Your fathers and grandfathers, your pastors and teachers, have decided that these things are true, and there is no particular need for you to go to all the trouble and incur all the hazards that are involved in a thorough overhauling of such matters—just take your seat comfortably in the pew and let not your mind be unsettled by these winds of doctrine—be assured that 'what is new is not true, and what is true is not new.'"

Every Christadelphian can say, whether he be young or old—

"So did not I, because of the fear of God!"

We *cannot*, if we would bring young people into harmony with the mind of God, suggest that *"So and so has said this and that, and you need not see for yourselves whether it's right or not, but just accept his word and save yourself all further anxiety."*

"The fear of God" is not a thing that can be generated after such a fashion. It arises from an intelligent and steady discernment of facts that have been revealed and which every man must see for himself before he can fear God as Nehemiah did.

As regards the bulk of mankind, we all know how completely they have allowed their senses to be imposed upon, by the glare and tinsel which bedeck the ecclesiastical rottenness of the day.

You, as brethren of Christ, have this advantage—you can take the multitude man by man, and woman by woman, and in your imagination ask them a few of those simple questions which, with you, have passed beyond the realm of fraternal discussion into the region of undebatable fact—and you can by this means get a precise idea of the Scriptural value of their position.

In the mass they seem to one another to present an unanswerable argument in favor of their aggregate pretensions, but how much do they *individually* know of "The Hope of Israel," "The Covenants of Promise" and the glorious purpose of God to fill the earth with His Praise?

And the same "fear of God" which enables you to say "No" in this direction, qualifies you as nothing else can, to meet a variety of other suggestions with as firm and decided a negative. You have companions in that daily occupation which so seriously limits your opportunities of mental improvement: and you doubtless know the bitterness which accompanies the friendship of the Truth in the continual presence of the average work-fellow.

I won't suggest that you have any difficulty in saying "No" to an invitation to go to the theatre, or to go and have a drink; or to join your fellow-workmen at some place of secret dissipation. If I were addressing members of one of the churches around us, it would be necessary to spend some time in words of warning against temptations of this sort; but here it would be almost like a waste of breath. A *Christadelphian*—or one who is thinking of becoming such—at a *theatre*, or *pot house*, or *race course*! Why the idea is too ridiculous to be suggested!

These Gentile customs, I should hope, present no element of danger for you, and you are not—under *this* head at least—to be accredited with any surprising virtue, because they supply you with nothing that can be fairly called a temptation.

But you cannot perpetually mix with contemporaries of this stamp, and not be liable to be drawn aside from the fear of God in other ways. "*My son,*" says Wisdom, "*If sinners entice thee, consent thou not.*" Open not thine ear to the suggestion that there can be "no harm" in a day's jollification in their company.

The end of such things is death. Though you are obliged in the Providence of God to associate with those who do not fear Him, from morning till night, you are *not* obliged to drink at the muddy stream at which they are vainly endeavoring to slake their thirst. They are dropping into the grave, one by one, like sheep— "Be ye not like unto them."

You need to be suspicious of the very atmosphere which surrounds the mirth of your ungodly associates in daily toil. *The child of God can take no part in the laughter of fools.* It is here where a young brother of strong social proclivities needs particularly to be on his guard. We are allowed to be glad and rejoice, but we are not to borrow the materials for our exultation from the devil's ground, and the devil's companies.

"Exhort young men to be sober-minded" (Titus 2:6).

Christ does not want a parcel of buffoons as his companions in the day of his glory. There has arisen a class of literature in our day which has an enormous sale, and which leavens Gentile society with an almost universal disposition to use a style of speech that is the opposite of "grave."

The American humorists have largely helped to create a condition of mental soil in which it is simply impossible for anything Divine to germinate, and I suppose that their books are in the hands of most of the "educated" young men of the present day. When asked if you read these publications, it will be well for you if you can say—

"*So did not I, because of the fear of God!*"

You cannot afford to introduce into your mental being so powerful an antagonist to the New Man which is in process of formation within you, as literature of this class would produce. Men *might* crack jokes if there was no resurrection of the dead; but as long as sin reigns unto death—as long as the world is in a state of exile from God—as long as man rules and the earth mourns, and Divine things are trodden under the feet of fools, what can we do but "pass the time of our sojourning in fear," remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said—

"Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh."

We shall wish we had been of a serious type of mind when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ, if we have not been so characterized before. Our appearance there will not reveal us in any character save *that which we have made habitual to ourselves*, during this time of probation. Neglecters of the Word will not then suddenly find themselves transformed into patient, systematic, daily readers of it. Those who have shown neither zeal nor fidelity in relation to the things of Christ, will not then have the satisfaction of discovering that they are good and faithful servants.

If a man has never put his hand to any good work, he will not then all at once develop into one of those to whom Christ will say, "*Well done!*" He who has not loved Christ will not then be made into one who *has* loved him—in the twinkling of an eye. And so he who has never put off that frivolous, snickering old man of the flesh, will *not* appear then as one who has given heed to the apostolic counsel, and abstained from foolish talking and jesting—one in whom the word of Christ has dwelt richly in all wisdom, and who has (instead of Gentile jokes) indulged in the mirth which can find its best conveyance in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

It is possible for there to exist customs *in connection with even the brotherhood*, to which it is necessary to oppose a sturdy and invincible non-compliance such as that expressed by Nehemiah—

"*So did not I, because of the fear of God!*"

We have to recollect that the companies called into existence by the Truth here and there simply furnish Christ with a heterogeneous mass of characters out of whom he will make a selection according to his purpose. It is impossible to believe all who are called brethren are fully alive to this admonitory fact. Many seem to be in the habit of *assuming* their acceptance and immortalization, as a matter touching which there is not the slightest ground for anxiety or doubt.

The idea of a brother "working out his salvation with *fear and trembling*" never appears to have presented itself to their minds. Their belief in the judgment is of the sort that James speaks of:

"As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Theoretically they would admit that the judgment of Christ's professed Household, is to be: but "*in works they deny*" this most salutary and undeniable truth. Hence they can do things which call for expostulation on the part of those who really have the fear of God before their eyes. The net is cast into the sea, and all sorts, good and bad, find their way into it. That is Christ's own illustration of the work that is now going on. Therefore we must not be surprised if some who are called brethren should do things which make us quote Nehemiah's words:

"*So did not I, because of the fear of God!*"

Questionable conduct of any sort cannot find justification in the example of any brother. If a thing is not "lovely and of good report," it cannot be made savory and acceptable in the sight of God, though a thousand unite in the doing of it. Nehemiah was one who was prepared to *stand alone if need be*, in an attitude of immovable resistance to everything that was out of harmony with his conceptions of what was compatible with the fear of God.

It is not safe for any of us to fall into doubtful ways because we may happen to know, or to have heard of, some one who is *nominally* a brother, who does the thing about which we have been exercised with doubt.

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

—and there is always peace and safety resulting from abstinence from whatever course of behavior is open to a scriptural demur.

Brethren do take impressions from one another in a variety of *commendable* ways, but there is an ever-present possibility of the *opposite* happening. Let *your* spiritual complexion be your own. Refuse to be made what you will be when Christ comes, by the artificial injection into your moral nature of *false ideas* about our high calling, whether gathered from this quarter or from that. Take your stand with Nehemiah, on the basis of *Jehovah's fear*— a comprehensive term.

And after a while you will discover that "every plant which the Father hath not planted" will not be able to live in the atmosphere which is congenial to you. Great peace have they who love God's Law. Of course it is a little awkward and disagreeable to be so very singular. I rather think those 3 Hebrews found it so, when in the plains of Dura, to the sound of harp, sackbut, and dulcimer, the whole multitude bent the knee, and these alone had the courage to say,

"Be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

You are not likely to have your fidelity put to so severe a test as was theirs. Their "No" involved a dreadful alternative—

". . . they fell down in the midst of the burning fiery furnace."

"So did not I" does not mean as much as that, in these days. *But what if it did?* Is it not written—

"He that saveth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."

It is pleasant thus to renew our familiarity with these ancient saints of God. What a contrast they present to all who now occupy the high places of the earth, where nothing is done "because of the fear of God"—but where the honor and praise of man, and a miserable cringing to the mastership of a state of society from which God is entirely absent, are the order of the day!

We know there is to be an end to this condition of affairs, and that the earth has not been created in vain. Its future rulers are those, in this and past generations, who like Nehemiah, have been able to say—"So did not I"—for a reason which has earned for them the reproach and persecution of their contemporaries. And so the whole family of God meet together at last, having been tried and exercised by the conflict of the same just and righteous principles with the manifold iniquity of their respective generations: and so made to feel one in a sense which never would have been possible under any other arrangement.

We make the aspiration reasonable, by doing in *our* appointed circumstances, what *they* would have done had it been their turn instead of ours. The toils and tribulations incident to these days of our fidelity to the Truth are a very necessary introduction to that which God has provided for them that love Him.

Yet a little while, and all men of Nehemiah's mold will form one glorious company with which the Lord Jesus will surround himself as with a cloud, and in the midst of which he will sing a song of praise. It is well worth while being singular in the estimation of a generation like ours, if it results in, or at all contributes to, our being present on that unspeakably blessed occasion.

And that is but preliminary to the great work which he will proceed to accomplish in the earth—when he will rid it of its countless abominations, and root the wicked out of it, and make it the enduring habitation of knowledge and purity, and peace and righteousness, and universal "fear of God."
—*Christadelphian*, 1881.

The Fourth Volume of the Herald closes with the current number. In reminding the reader of this fact, I have the satisfaction of being able to add that its position is not worse than it was a year ago.

I do not think that its increase has exceeded twenty subscribers; which, however, is better than none and discontinuances to boot, which has been its fortune in former times.

—**Bro. Thomas, Herald of the Kingdom, December, 1854.**

"The Likeness of a Man"

EZEKIEL, CHAPTER ONE (continued)

Ezekiel further describes the faces of the four living creatures—

"They four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle" (v. 10).

To understand this, it is necessary that we refer to the military grouping of the Israelitish camp in the wilderness, as recorded in Num. 2. That camp consisted of the Tabernacle and the families of the house of Levi in the centre, and a *fourfold division of the remainder*, ranged in due order, according to the respective ensigns of the tribes of Judah, Reuben, Ephraim, and Dan.

Now, we gather from Josephus that Judah's heraldic symbol was that of a lion, Reuben's that of a man, Ephraim's that of an ox, and Dan's, that of an eagle. This was the marching and military arrangement of the Israelitish host. It is a point of great significance then, that the *four forms of animal life*, which were incorporated in the symbol seen by Ezekiel, should be characteristic of the nation of Israel in its aggressive relations.

All who become the constituents of this corporation are Israelites. In fact, the Scriptures are not permanently concerned with any other nation. *A full end is to be made of every other nationality, and the nation and kingdom that will not serve Israel, shall perish.* God's salvation is of the Jews. His purpose is connected with the seed of Abraham, and His kingdom is the kingdom of Israel restored. Christ is to occupy the throne of his father, David, and to rule over the house of Jacob for ever. At his coming, there is to be rebuilt David's Tabernacle that has fallen (Amos 9:11).

Now, how are those who are not naturally of the stock of Abraham to become engrafted thereon, and so be capable of representation in the symbolic cherubim, which Ezekiel saw? Well, God has provided a way in which this can be done. No stranger could become a fellow-citizen with the house of Israel who did not submit to the rite of circumcision. And if we, as Gentiles in the flesh, desire to partake the privileges and blessings which God has promised to Israel, we must undergo what Paul speaks of as "*the circumcision made without hands*" (Col. 2:11-12).

This is the all-important matter for both Jews and Gentiles, under the present dispensation. Fleshly descent from Abraham profits nothing, as regards the glorious facts symbolised here.

"He is not a Jew who is one outwardly."

"They are not all Israel who are of Israel."

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God."

"We are of the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

It is a fact that the Israelitish character of the divine scheme is almost universally ignored in our day. Men have substituted for it all manner of pagan ideas about heaven and hell-going, and consequently never dream of connecting themselves with the house of Israel in the manner described in the apostolic Scriptures. Still less are they prepared to contemplate that house in the aggressive and military aspects in which it is presented in Ezekiel's vision.

We learn from Zech. 9:13, that it is God's intention to use Judah as His *bow* and Ephraim as His *arrow*, and to make Zion's sons as the *sword* of a mighty man. And in Jeremiah 51:20 we have Israel spoken of as Jehovah's *battle-axe and weapons of war*, by means of which He will destroy

kingdoms and break in pieces the nations. In the subjugation of the world to Messiah's rule there will necessarily be war. The reigning powers are not likely to vacate their thrones without a struggle. Their attitude towards Christ has received prophetic description in the second Psalm, where the kings of the earth are represented as setting themselves, and taking counsel together, against the Lord and His Anointed.

But all their opposition will prove futile and vain, for the Power of the Eternal will be incorporated in the mighty host which then shall claim jurisdiction over all the nations, and the grand result will be that the kingdoms of this world will become "the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

I know this is not the view which is commonly entertained in religious circles. The impression prevails that mankind is gradually to become Christianized, by the preaching of the Gospel (or what is *supposed* to be the Gospel). It is held that the world is but as yet in its moral infancy, and that in the course of untold ages yet to come, it will undergo such progress and development in spiritual directions as will result in the universal triumph and ascendancy of righteousness and truth. But surely if anything akin to the Christendom of the present hour is to be the final issue, the consummation is not calculated to excite much enthusiasm of desire.

God has a shorter, a more effective and satisfactory plan, in His revealed purpose to establish His Kingdom by His Own irresistible might embodied in His immortal son, and in the glorious hosts of His friends, whom He will admit to a share in the authority which will find its all-powerful and beneficent center in him on account of whom the ages were ordained.

We pass on to notice the description of the feet on these four living creatures contained in v. 7—

"Their feet were straight feet and the sole of their foot was like the sole of a calf's foot."

This part of the symbol depicts the retributive aspect of the work which the glorified saints will perform, in executing the vengeance of God upon the rebellious populations. We draw this conclusion from a prophecy to be found in Mal. 4:2-3—

"Ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked: for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord."

These straight feet are so formed in view of what is to be accomplished by their means. The righteous are to tread down the wicked, just as calves of the stall tread down the refuse in their joy and eagerness to be released. This is an inspired representation of the destiny of evil men. They are not to be restored to the divine favor. They are not to have a second chance. *Neither are they to be kept alive in agony.* They are simply to be *destroyed*, and the righteous are to be employed as the instruments of their destruction.

Their feet, moreover, "*sparkled like the color of burnished brass.*" This reminds us of what is said in Rev. 1:13-15 of the similitude that appeared to John in Patmos—

"One like unto the Son of Man, whose feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

It is remarkable, too, that in Micah 4:13 we have brass used in a like symbolical manner—

"Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion; for I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoofs brass, and thou shalt beat in pieces many people."

Burnished brass, moreover, is suggestive of a *purifying* process, and the meaning doubtless is that it is not Israel after the flesh that are to be exalted to this glorious destiny, but Israel *purged of all*

their dross. Dr. Thomas has pointed out that there were many things connected with the Temple furniture which were made of burnished brass—such as the altar of burnt-offering, the laver with his foot, the two pillars of the porch, and other things besides. *All the brass so used was holy.*

"Gold, silver, brass, iron, tin, and lead everything (said Moses) that may abide the fire, ye shall make **go through the fire, and it shall be clean**" (Num. 31:22).

There is some impressive instruction for us here. The feet that are to tread down the wicked do not belong to the common run of men. The character which finds its symbol here has been subjected to *God's refining methods.* This indeed is but another form of stating the apostolic truth that—

"Through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God."

Its great honors will not be indiscriminately bestowed. As human beings come into this world they are not eligible for any divine uses. They require to get rid of the characteristics that appertain more or less to all natural creatures.

The Truth finds everybody in this state—a state of *unfitness for the Kingdom of God.* Our minds, all our intellectual and moral affinities require readjustment and purification before we can be qualified to take part with Christ in the glorious work he is coming to do. The only means by which this can be accomplished consists of a *diligent application to the study and practice of the Scriptures* on our part. The neglect of this cannot be supplemented in any other way.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH, IF THE LORD WILL)

"After This Manner Pray Ye"

Paul, interceding on behalf of the Philippian ecclesia, prays—

for their fellowship in the Gospel;
that their love might abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment;
that they might approve things that are excellent;
that they might be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
and that they might be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

—Phil. 1:5-11.

Paul, interceding for the Ephesian ecclesia, prays—

that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him;
that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened;
they might know what was the hope of their calling, and what the riches of the glory of the Deity's inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power to reward all who believe;
that they might be strengthened with might by His Spirit;
that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith;
that being rooted and grounded in Him, they might comprehend, with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ;
that they might be filled with the fulness of God;
and that the Ephesians, on their part, should make common supplication for Paul that utterance might be given to him and that he might be enabled to open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

—Eph. 1:17-10; 3:16-19; 6:18, 19.

Paul, interceding for the ecclesia at Colosse, prays—

that they might be filled with a knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;
that they might walk worthy of the Lord;
that they might be fruitful in every good work;
that they might increase in the knowledge of God;
that they might be strengthened with all might unto all patience and long-suffering, and joyfulness;
and that the Colossians, on their part, should pray for Paul, that a door of utterance might be opened to him to speak forth the mystery of Christ.

—Col. 1:9-11; 4:3.

Paul, interceding for the Thessalonian brethren, prays—

that the God of Peace might sanctify them wholly;
that their whole spirit, and soul, and body, might be preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ;
that God would count them worthy of the calling;
that He would fulfil in them all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power;
that the name of Jesus Christ might be glorified in them, and they in him;
that he would comfort their hearts, and establish them in every good word and work;
and that, on their part, the Thessalonians should pray for Paul and his fellow-laborers that the word of the Lord might have free course and be glorified, and that they might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men.

—1 Thess. 5:2, 3; 2 Thess. 1:11, 12; 2:17; 3:1, 2.

Paul, to Timothy, exhorts—

that intercessory prayer and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings, and for all who are in authority that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty;
and he also prays himself for Timothy, that the Lord Jesus Christ would be with his spirit, and that grace also might be with them.

—1 Tim. 2:1, 2; 4:22.

Peter also prays—

that grace and peace might be multiplied to the brethren scattered abroad;
and that God would perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle them.

1 Pet. 1:2; 5:10.

Paul invoked grace and peace upon the Corinthians, and prayed—

that the God of love and peace might be with them;
and that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit might be with them all.

—2 Cor. 1:2; 13:11, 14.

Christ also prayed for his disciples, and taught them to intercede—

for the coming of the Kingdom and that the will of God might be done on earth as it is in heaven;
for those who despitefully used them;

and that they might not enter into temptation.

—Matt. 6:10; 5:44; 24:40.

David also exhorts to—

pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and himself prays that Jehovah would arise and judge the heathen;

that he would do good to Zion, and build the walls of Jerusalem;

that God's way might be known upon earth and His saving health among all nations;

that the nations might be made to be glad and sing for joy, by the establishment of His kingdom on earth;

that God would cause His face to shine upon Israel;

that all the people might praise Him;

that all the earth might be filled with His glory;

that Jehovah would arise into His rest with the Ark of His strength;

that God's priests might be clothed with righteousness, and His saints shout for joy;

that God would remember and revenge the desolations of Jerusalem;

that He would hear the sighing of the prisoner and preserve the people appointed to die.

—Psa. 9:19; 51:18; 67:1-5; 132:8, 9; 79; 122:6

"YE ARE OF YOUR FATHER THE DEVIL" (John 8:44)

Jesus was given to personification and parable, and in this case he employed his own way of defining their spiritual pedigree. He refers to» a "beginning," and to the birth or introduction of sin into the world, when the devil of his discourse performed the part of father to the lie that prevailed, and became established in the state of sin and death. Thus the serpent became the father of liars in the sense of which Jubal (Gen. 4:21) is "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ."

Christ's words amount to an allegation that the Jews who were opposing him belonged to the sinful stock of the world—mere flesh which passeth away—instead of having any real kinship to Abraham.

Ecclesial News

BOSTON, Mass.—581 Boylston St.—Bible Study 10:30 a.m.; Memorial 11:45 a.m.

Almost a year has elapsed since nearly 2/3 of our ecclesia decided to leave the Berean fellowship and join another group. This action has proved to be a mistaken effort to solve a problem where error has existed for the past 25 to 30 years. As it stands, there are many sad features about it:—

1st, that one brother (because of his honesty) has been the target of all the error in an ecclesia that has been steeped in it for so many years.

2nd, that many of the former Berean ecclesias that joined Central have been led to believe that only one brother has been discovered as holding error, and that the matter will be taken care of.

3rd, it has caused much sorrow and many heartaches in ecclesias that have labored peacefully together for many years. Not only have ecclesias been broken up, but also many families have been divided. By this we are reminded of what Christ says in Matt. 10:34-37.

Nevertheless we must never let the feelings of the flesh hinder our walk in the Truth, to sacrifice it. We must "Press forward toward the mark for the prize of our high calling."

We have been greatly encouraged and strengthened by visits from bre. & sisters from other ecclesias; also by our joint Fraternal Gathering in October.

We had the pleasure of having bro. & sis. Elliott meet with us around the Table of the Lord on Nov. 28. Bro. Elliott encouraged us by the word of exhortation.

We have also been encouraged by the response of so many strangers who have corresponded with us. It shows to us the Lord is still working, even in this time of evil.

All in all, this year—though bringing sadness—has drawn closer together the remaining few who have set their course to remain steadfast. It has strengthened every one of us in this "time of trouble such as never was."

Brethren and sisters, let us keep in the paths of righteousness, especially now as we see the shadows lengthening and the days of our probation swiftly drawing to a close.

—bro. Edgar A. Sargent.

* * *

CANTON, Ohio—1322 Fourth St. N.E.—Memorial 10 a.m.

We are greatly encouraged that a group of brethren and sisters in Canton have reached the conclusion that the "reunion" movement is not on a sound and scriptural basis, and have retaken their stand with us, not being able to conscientiously continue with the meeting there in the course they have taken of leaving the Berean fellowship to join another group.

We pray they may be strengthened and comforted and enabled to hold fast, for the way is not easy in these closing days of general laxity.

They desire to make it clear that their action is not primarily based on what some call the "divorce question," as some have incorrectly concluded. Their decision is on the much broader basis of the whole "reunion" picture, and the developments of the past year; although they wish it to be known that they are shocked and disappointed by the wholesale abandonment (for the sake of union with a looser and more worldly group) of the once firmly-established principle among us that suing at law for any reason (including divorce) is, as bro. Roberts expressed it, "highly unscriptural" and "a sin."

We are happy to welcome them, and we are confident that—if we do our part faithfully, and earnestly strive to maintain the old standards of conduct and fellowship and separation from the world—there will be others who will add their strength to us, as the picture becomes clearer.

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GLENDALE, Avoca, Penn.—Memorial 9:30 a.m.; Bible Class Wed. 7:30 p.m.

The following sisters have left our fellowship:—sis. Mary Orr, sis. James Matthews Sr. and sis. James Matthews Jr. This leaves only my sister wife and myself in the Berean fellowship in Glendale. We have been meeting with the Hawley ecclesia, and on Nov. 7 applied for membership there.

The plight of the brotherhood stirs our feeling of compassion. We want to assist all we can, but believe that since we can do nothing of ourselves, we ought not to set aside principles for the sake of results, but patiently wait for God to bring forth fruit from our labors. Conditions, today, are in conformity with prophecy. It is our hope and prayer that God will deliver all those who are honestly and sincerely trying to perform His service even though they may not have as yet taken, or retaken, their stand with those whose zeal for God moves them not only to cry out against unscriptural views and practices, but also to require that they be abjured as a prerequisite to fellowship.

—bro. David Sommerville

TORONTO, Ont.—294 Glebeholme Blvd.—Memorial 11 a.m.; Bible Study 7 p.m.; Bible Class Wednesday 8:15 p.m.

The months of October and November were periods wherein we were strengthened and encouraged by visiting brethren and sisters. We had with us bro. & sis. Roy Sutherland, bro. & sis. Arthur Martin and sis. Louise Martin of London; bro. G. V. Growcott and sis. Anne Growcott of Detroit. Bro. Growcott administered the word of exhortation, by which our minds were deeply stirred when he directed our attention to the things of the Spirit as revealed in the Scriptures of Truth. What a beautiful thought it is that the Word of God spoken by Jesus, is described as "the fountain of the water of Life." Therefore, said Jesus, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Therefore, when we assemble together on Sunday mornings, it is with joy that we draw water out of the wells of salvation. That is why the memorial service is so refreshing and invigorating. May it continue to be so to all who are doing their best to walk worthy of God.

We deeply appreciate the many inquiries regarding our welfare with respect to the destructive hurricane that swept over this city a month ago. It was a terrifying experience to pass through, but we are thankful to our Father in heaven for His protection in bringing us all through it safely.

—bro. G. A. Gibson

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There is nothing that carnal pietism revolts from so instinctively as **obedience**. It will believe and do everything and anything not required of it, but the thing commanded it will not submit to.

—**Bro. Thomas.**

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