

# 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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**We are anxious to send the Berean FREE to any desiring it that way. Please do not hesitate to request it. If you know of any who might like it, please send us their names.**

**CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH**

## Ecclesial News

### BOSTON, Mass.

IN response to an application from the Huntington Avenue ecclesia in Boston for return to the Berean fellowship, our examining and arranging brethren met with their arranging brethren to determine if sufficient oneness of mind existed for reunion.

This being satisfactory, arrangements were made for interviewing the ecclesia as a whole. The Berean restatement was used as a guide, and all points, positive and negative, were considered for individual acceptance or rejection.

The result being satisfactory, our final approval was submitted to them by letter of December 22, extending a hearty welcome around the table of the Lord.

On January 31 they responded to this invitation and met with us around the Lord's table. It was a joyful occasion after being separated for 11 years.

Due to the fact that the application for return to the Berean fellowship was made as an ecclesia, problems have arisen that have caused delay in the final consummation.

Arrangements have now been completed and as of March 7, the two ecclesias are meeting as one at 320 Huntington Ave., Boston. (Bro. Kenneth MacKellar, recording brother). The meeting times are—

Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

Breaking Bread 11:45 a.m.

Lecture 2 p.m. (2nd & 4th Sundays)

We pray that our united efforts may be strengthened to withstand the perilous times that lie ahead, for certainly we cannot expect conditions in the world, or facing the ecclesias, to improve. When our Master comes, "Will he find Faith?"

Bro. Nick Mammone and bro. Will Davey have co-operated with us, and have assisted us in bringing about this result. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all whose encouragement and prayers have made it possible for us to endure in these days of our probation. May we ever continue to hold fast the profession of our faith firm unto the end. Whatever may have been done in the past, or be done in the future, may it be to the honor and glory of our Heavenly Father's great and holy Name.

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IT is with sorrow that we have to report that sister Adelaide Richardson has fallen asleep in Christ, and was laid to rest on February 17. She had been in poor health for several years and was in a nursing home when she was stricken. Our sympathy goes to the family. —bro. Edgar A. Sargent

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**HOUSTON, Tex.—8008 Junius St.—Sun. Sch. 10 a.m.; Breaking of Bread 11 a.m.; Lecture every 3rd Sun. 7:30 p.m.; Eureka Class 6 p.m.; Wed. Class 7 p.m.**

OUR lecture for Houston in January was given by bro. Joe Burkett. His subject was "The Commandments of Christ." There was one stranger present.

Visitors around the table of the Lord so far in '65 have been: bro. & sis. Richard Wolfe (Lampasas ecclesia), Jan. 10, and on Feb. 14, bro. & sis. Pat Cassidy and bro. & sis. Wayne Wolfe, also of the Lampasas ecclesia.

We are always deeply grateful to our Heavenly Father for the fellowship and association of those of like precious faith. May our mutual interest and activity in the things of the Spirit help prepare us for that day, which by all indications of the times, is so soon to be fulfilled. —bro. Charles Banta

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## **HYE, Texas—Quarterly Meeting**

THE Texas ecclesias were well represented at the Quarterly meeting at Hye, Feb. 7. There was a total of 39 brethren and sisters, 4 visitors, and 13 Sunday School scholars. There were two present from Dale, Texas, three from San Angelo ecclesia, eight from the Mason ecclesia, nine from the Houston ecclesia, and seventeen from the Lampasas ecclesia.

The topic under discussion by the Sunday School class was the last chapter of Colossians. Bro. Roy Johnson of the Houston ecclesia gave us stirring words of exhortation, urging us to a closer adherence to the Word of God while awaiting with patience the soon return of our Master. Since this meeting we have learned that sister Ellie Eastman has suffered a broken hip and arm in a fall at her home. At present she is in Brady Hospital, Brady, Texas. But her home address is Fredonia, Texas if some might like to send cards or correspondence. —bro. Charles Banta

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**PORTLAND, Ore.—Memorial 11 a.m. at 2212 N.E. Prescott St.; Lecture 7 p.m. at Centra! YWCA; Wed. Bible Class 8 p.m. in homes.**

AT last writing, we invited all brethren and sisters to our Fraternal Gathering for the week-end of the New Year. Realizing that it is a bad time of the year for travel, etc., we were not discouraged when some who thought they might be with us could not make it. We had a very early cold snap for the Pacific coast during the holidays with considerable snow.

Brother John Randell of the Southern California Ecclesia braved the elements and was present to assist us in our endeavours. He took one of the subjects on New Year's day, and lectured for us Sunday evening. Even though he was the only visitor, we spent many hours talking on things of the Truth, and we felt our week-end was a thorough success.

Believing that winter is a bad time to expect visitors, we intend, if the Lord will, to have an ecclesial Gathering on Saturday and Sunday, May 22-23. This date should not conflict with other ecclesial plans, and has the advantage of being an official holiday in Canada on the 24th, and that would give Canadian visitors an extra day for travelling.

The theme will be "The Messages to the Seven Ecclesias." This will be divided into three subjects—

1. The Messages to Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos.
2. The Messages to Thyatira, Sardis and Philadelphia.
3. Judgment pronounced on Laodicea. Does it apply today?

The first two will be given on Saturday, and the third will be used for a lecture on Sunday evening. There will be other spiritual repasts during the week-end.

Any brother able to be with us on this occasion and take part, please write as soon as possible, so that we can make up our program. All brethren and sisters who may come will find a hearty welcome waiting them upon arrival.

Our small meeting was enlarged on Dec. 6 when we welcomed to the table of the Lord bro. & sis. Pickford of Lethbridge, and bro. & sis. Frank Truelove of Richard. Bro. Truelove gave the word of exhortation, and bro. Pickford lectured in the evening. It was a pleasure to have these brethren speak to us. We were also grateful to have the opportunity of talking about many things spiritual.

Our lectures show some promise. Three or four strangers have attended each lecture. One of our brethren and his sister wife have been working with them. It is our hope that in time God's Word will enter their hearts, and bring them into the race for eternal life. —bro. A. R. Tilling.

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## EDITORIAL

### The Coming of the Lord

*"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming"—1 John 2:28*

JUST a little over nineteen hundred years ago, while the faithful apostles were rejoicing in the company of the risen Lord, they were amazed to see him suddenly rise from the ground, and disappear in a cloud. As they gazed fixedly towards the heavens, they were startled by the presence of two men who stood by them in white raiment, and spoke to them, saying,—

"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"—Acts 1:11.

In every age since those momentous times, there have been signs indicating that the time of his return was gradually drawing nearer. And during all this time, he has had many friends watching and waiting for him. While it is impossible for any man to reveal the exact day of his return, yet by observing events in the world we may, with the enlightenment of the Scriptures, discern the times we are living in, and BE PREPARED for that great and glorious event—the second coming of our Lord.

The apostolic writings show us that the believers in the first century "looked for his appearing." They "watched" for him in the midst of the suffering that their unswerving faith brought upon them. But, one by one, they dropped from the scene with his parting words ringing in their ears—

*"I will come again."*

And he will come again. His return is absolutely essential in order that he may complete the work that has been designed by his Father, and appointed for him to do. And so they continued—

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" —Tit. 2:13.

The first century passed into history, and the second century came. Here we find the same conditions. Earnest and faithful disciples came upon the scene. But they lived in a very difficult period, because it was the time of the great persecutions. Every year they watched for him; they prayed for his return, and cried for him in the midst of their suffering. But he did not appear.

They, too, died in faith, some under natural circumstances, while others were executed in fires at the stake. Many died by being torn to pieces by wild beasts in the public sports of Rome, while others starved in vile dungeons amidst filth and disease. These too, fell one by one, with his parting words ringing in their ears—

*"I will come again."*

\* \* \*

BUT time passed, and gradually the iron hand of persecution weakened until now its power is gone. Year after year, and century after century passed by until we come to the present, but still he has not returned. We also look for him; we pray and hope for his return, knowing that what God has promised, He will infallibly fulfil. Though **we** may weaken, and though **our** faith may slacken, yet He is faithful that promised, and our waiting and sadness will come to an end when the cry goes forth:—

"Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us:

"This is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation"

—Isa. 25:9.

Be not discouraged, brethren. If you think that your lot is hard in these days; if you think that your burden is greater than you can bear; then turn to the records of the first century, and listen to Paul as he speaks of his trials—

“Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep.

"In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren.

"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness" —2 Cor. 11:24-27.

We are not called upon to suffer thus, but whatever our trials may be, let us remember the promises given to those who overcome, and hold fast to the end. He will not fail—

"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" — Heb. 10:37.

While it is true that, in every age since Christ ascended into heaven, there have been signs indicating that the time of his return was drawing nearer, yet never, in all this period of waiting, has there been such outstanding signs as those that have appeared during the past half-century.

There have been times when brethren expected that he would come in some certain year. But the time came, and he did not appear. Such disappointments caused pain in the hearts of many, and some fell by the wayside. But it cannot shake the faith of those who are grounded and settled, rooted and built up in him, because their faith rests on foundations that are absolutely independent of all questions of time.

*The all-important question is not, When will he come, but—*

*When he does come will he find us ready and waiting for him with that measure of character that will constitute us worthy of being chosen as one to become a partaker of the divine nature?*

\* \* \*

IN many places in the Scriptures we find references concerning a period known as "the latter days." As we study the various objects of thought, and compare them with present world conditions, **we become fully persuaded that we have the inestimable privilege of living in that period.**

It is a day that would have brought joy unspeakable to such men as John Thomas and Robert Roberts, and many other faithful brethren who now sleep in the dust of the earth. We have seen the temporal power taken from the ecclesiastical element of the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast, and have seen the desolator driven from the land of promise. We now see Israel returning to the home of their fathers where they are causing the desolate places to be inhabited, and are bringing prosperity to the land of unwallled villages.

Therefore, it is with confidence that refuses to be shaken that we look for the accomplishment of God's purpose, when Daniel shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. For, like Job—

"We KNOW that our Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth"—Job 19:25.

The dark clouds of despair will then be rolled away; the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his beams and, for the first time since man was driven from the garden of Eden, there will be—

"Peace on earth, goodwill among men, and glory to God in the highest."

As we see this day approaching, and realize that the FAITHFUL in Christ Jesus only will be the recipients of the blessings that God will shower upon His people, we would cry aloud and rouse the Household of Faith to great vigilance and prayerfulness.

Yea, we would shake it with the voice of thunder so that the ears of the people would be attentive unto our supplications, and they would awake to the duty that rests upon them because of their belief and obedience of the Gospel—

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.

"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light"—Rom. 13:11-12.

But some one may say—

*These words of Paul cannot possibly be made to apply to any in our ecclesias. Surely none of us is in a state of sleep, nor guilty of works of darkness. We are among those who wait for the Lord.*

Let us see. Are we better than the believers in Rome? Have you noticed how Paul addressed them? Listen carefully as he writes—

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints"—Rom. 1:7.

Here is an ecclesia, composed of men and women "beloved of God and called to be saints." Yet there were some who required to be "wakened from sleep," and some who were called upon to "cast off the works of darkness." If then, such things were possible in an ecclesia in the first century, where they were subject to the guidance of the apostles, how much more is it possible, in our day, where we have the guidance of the written Word only?

To you, then, who look for the Lord from heaven and pray for his return, having all confidence that you are on good terms with God, and that a place awaits you in His kingdom, we direct the striking words of the prophet Amos—

"Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you?" —Amos 5:18.

These surprising words were addressed to some who had great confidence in themselves but, as the prophet shows, had **neglected the conditions on which divine favor can alone be obtained.** Like those in the days of Jesus, they had omitted the weightier matters of the Law—judgment, mercy and faith; to whom Jesus said—

"But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless"—Matt. 12:7.

Now is the time to examine ourselves to find out if we are truly walking in the Truth. We may boast about our knowledge of God's Word but, unless it is being used as a basis of walking in newness of life, and ESTABLISHED ON LOVE (which is sacrifice and service), we will fail completely. So declared Paul, when he said—

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge;

"And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing"—1 Cor. 13:1-2.

If, therefore, we know the Truth, let us prove it by our walk, having compassion one of another, being knit together in love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. As Paul says in another place—

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you RICHLY."

*If it does, just think what manner of people we will be, for our conduct in the ecclesias will bring no sorrow upon our brethren and sisters, but only joy, gladness and comfort.*

*THEN we will truly be able to call Jesus our Master, and be ready to meet him when he comes.* —Editor.

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## **They That Know Thy Name**

*"I will make him a pillar in the Temple of my Deity . . . I will write upon him the NAME of my Deity, and the Name of the city of my Deity, the New Jerusalem which descendeth out of heaven . . . even my New Name."*

**BY BROTHER JOHN THOMAS**

THUS the Deity speaks of "the Victor."

In this, the Temple, Name, and City are all affirmed of "My Deity." The reason of this is because of the principle laid down in the words—

"There is One Deity, the Father, out of Whom are all things, and we for Him" (1 Cor. 8:6).

Does, then, the Deity desire a Temple, a Name, or a City upon the earth? Doth He desire all these things? Then "out of" Himself they must all proceed; for He is "the Father," or fountain and origin of all existences.

When, therefore, he speaks of a Temple, Name, and City elaborated out of His Spirit, He styles them emanations "of My Deity"; as if He were to say—

*"The Temple, Name and City are emanations from, and manifestations of, My divine power and glory.*

*"I, the Father, desire to dwell among men. But I will not dwell in a temple or house built by men. I will dwell in a habitation every stone and pillar of which shall be Deity in immortal flesh."*

Such is Paul's teaching in 2 Cor. 6:16, saying—

"Ye are a Temple of a living Deity, as the Deity hath said,  
"I will dwell in them and will walk, and will be of them Deity."

And this Temple of Deity in all its parts shall be "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4)—a Temple of everliving stones.

\* \* \*

BUT the manifestation of the Deity is not merely for habitation purposes, but for glory and dominion. This is indicated by "the Name," and "the Name of the City," or "New Name." Thus it is written in Psa. 79:9—

"Help us, O Elohim of our salvation in the matter of the Glory of Thy Name, and deliver us: and cover over our sins for the purpose of Thy Name."

Moses styles it (Deut. 28:58)—

"The glorious and fearful Name, Yahweh Elohekhah."

—concerning which David says (Psa. 72:18-19)—

"Blessed be Yahweh Elohim, the Elohim of Israel.

"And blessed be the Name of His Glory for Olahm; yea, all the earth shall be filled with His Glory."

The Glory of the Deity is intellectual, moral, and physical, all of which is covered by His Name, which expresses what He really is. Thus "His Name is Jealous"; that is, "He is jealous." "His

Name is holy"; that is, "He is holy." "His name is Yahweh Tzavaoth"; that is, He who spoke to Jeremiah is He who shall be of armies, which is the meaning of the Name.

*Thus, "The Name of the Deity" in Scripture signifies everything that He is as revealed therein.*

When Moses said (Ex. 33:18)—

"I beseech Thee, show me Thy Glory."

—it was replied—

"I will make all My GOODNESS pass before thee, and I will proclaim YAHWEH before thee by Name."

When we read the proclamation, we therefore read the Name, or character, of the Deity (Exo. 34:6). He knows all things, and there is nothing too hard for Him to do. This is what He is, abstractly and essentially. As He is, so He has always been from everlasting, and will be without end.

\* \* \*

BUT will He be thus abstract forever? This is the question, and one which can only be answered from the Scriptures. This answer is in the negative, and finds a very pointed illustration in Jer. 13:11. In the parable of the girdle buried by Euphrates, the Spirit says—

"For as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto Me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith Yahweh, that they might be unto Me for a people, and for a NAME, and for a praise, and for a glory. But they would not hear."

Now the argument contained in this testimony is, that if Israel and Judah had hearkened to Yahweh, they would have been to Him "for a Name." But they would not hear; so they became like the girdle when dug up—a name good for nothing.

In consequence of this national worthlessness, Isaiah predicted that—

"Adonai Yahweh should slay them, and for His servants proclaim another Name; that he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in Elohim of Truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by Elohim of Truth;

"Because **the former troubles are forgotten**, and because they are hid from Mine eyes"

(Isa. 65:15).

Here we have the idea presented of the whole Hebrew nation being a Name of the Deity. But through the iniquity and falsehood of the tribes the idea was not perfected. The development of the idea was placed in abeyance. He had brought them out of Egypt under Moses—

"To make for Himself a Name of Olahm."

He led them as a horse in the wilderness—

"To make Himself a Name of Honour."

And to no other people was the Name proclaimed. But although they were called gods, and all of them sons of the Most High (Ps. 82:6), yet they were not "Elohim of **Truth**"; therefore the Spirit in David said:

"Surely as Adam ye shall die; and as one of the princes ye shall fall (v.7).

But to His faithful and truth-loving servants, He saith—

"Arise, O Elohim, judge the earth; for thou shalt inherit among all the nations"

(Psa. 82:8; Isa. 63:12-19).

\* \* \*

BUT though Israel and Judah under the Law judged themselves unworthy of having the Name of the Deity written upon them, Yahweh did not abandon His purpose—

"Behold, saith He, I will bring Jerusalem health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth.

"And I will cause the captivity of Judah, and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first" (Jer. 33:6).

In performing this work He also says (Jer. 31:33-34)—

"I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be to them for Elohim and they shall be to Me for a people . . .

"And they shall all know Me from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Yahweh; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"

When this is accomplished, they will be a truthful and righteous nation, and filled with the Spirit as the apostles were of old. Thus anointed, they will be intelligent and wise, and the mightiest of the nations of the earth.

The Hebrew nation has never attained to so high a position as this yet; nevertheless, it is the destiny that awaits their repentance, and acknowledgment of Jesus Anointed, as their Lord and King.

*But "another Name" (Isa. 65:15) was to be proclaimed to Israel and Judah than any they were acquainted with in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah.*

These both prophesied concerning it. Isaiah says of the child born and son given (9:6-7)—

"He shall call his Name Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty Power, Father of Futurity, Prince of Peace . . . upon the throne of David."

And Jeremiah says of him—

"The Great, the Mighty Power, Yahweh of armies, his Name" (Jer. 32:18).

And in 23:5, he says furthermore concerning it—

"Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will cause to rise up unto David a righteous branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and he shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

"In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this his Name which he shall call him, Yahweh-Tzidkainu—He shall be our righteousness."

This is certainly a Name of glory, honor, power, dominion, wisdom, and holiness. It is the Name for the Olahm emanating from Deity.

*Who shall bear it? Shall it be borne wholly and solely by Jesus, or shall a multitude share it with him?*

We, who have confessed that he is Lord to the glory of the Divine Father, rejoice that he hath already received it in part, which is an earnest of the whole. The Name of the Deity hath been written upon him, for he hath received a Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow. The Name of the New Jerusalem, which is his new Name, has also been inscribed upon him; for he is the Glory, the Light, the Wall, and the Temple thereof.

The Gospel of the Kingdom was preached to Israel and the nations, that by faith in it a people might be separated from them for this Name. All who accept it are baptized into this Name and for it. All such are in this Name, and anxiously looking forward to the time when the "New Name of the

Deity" will be written upon them by the resurrection-power of the Father. What Jesus now is they will become; for they are joint-heirs with him of all he inherits.

He is Deity manifested in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), and so when those who are now in the Name shall rise among the dead, and put on incorruption, they also will be the Deity manifested in immortal flesh. The "New Name" of glory, honor, incorruptibility, life and power, will be written or engraved into their new nature—incarnate focalizations of Spirit-emanation from the substance of the Eternal Father.

"I, Yahweh, will be to Israel and Judah for Elohim."

*The resurrected saints are these Elohim, who "arise to judge the earth" (Ps. 82:8), and to rule Israel when they become a righteous and truth-loving people.*

*The saints are the "Elohim of Truth"—elohai-amen (Isa. 65:16)—in whom Israelites will bless themselves in the earth.*

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## **My Days and My Ways**

**BY BROTHER ROBERT ROBERTS**

*"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts"—Psa. 119:63*

### PART FOUR

THE regular receipt of the Herald every month was a great educator to me, in conjunction with the daily reading of the Scriptures. My mind opened on a great variety of subjects, and I felt much drawn to the editor of the magazine. Letters from indebted readers used to appear in its pages, and I at last ventured to address him myself. In the autumn of 1856 I wrote the following letter (which appeared in the Herald for 1857, p. 43.

It now strikes me as being an inflated and raw production of the sort that usually comes from impetuous youth when permitted to air itself—interesting only as the premonition of a laborious and painful day. There was no one to control or check me, otherwise the letter would not have been written, or, being written, would never have crossed the Atlantic:

My Dear Brother,

Although personally unknown to you, I have, nevertheless, in virtue of a unity and identity of "hope," presumed thus far upon your forbearance. It has long been my intention to write you, but hitherto I have been deterred by various considerations. At last, I have got the pen in my hand, which I am resolutely determined not to relinquish till I shall have transferred my ideas (such as they are) to paper.

My object in writing is more to encourage you in the struggle in which you are engaged than to perplex you with pointless questions and imaginary difficulties. Allow me to remark then, that, to my mind, you seem to be carrying forward the "good fight" to a successful termination, for I conceive that the capture of the "good and honest-hearted" (of which I painfully testify there are but a few) by the Truth, is the very highest point of success to which we could aspire. This, then, you are certainly accomplishing.

True, in relation to the mass, the progress of the Truth is slow and uncertain. While the state superstitions and the most extravagant absurdities of the multifarious "sects and denominations" meet with respect and command attention, the "Truth," even with the most "learned" and "intellectual" among them, meets with the bitterest opposition, and its adherents they treat with the most profound contempt.

In fact, their "divines," "philosophers," "fathers," etc., do not deem it worthy of investigation. They summarily discard it as altogether unworthy even of notice, while they will gravely discuss such monstrous absurdities as Romanism, Campbellism, Mormonism, etc!!!

But with the other class it is the reverse. When the "word of the kingdom" (Matt.) is sown in "good ground," it springs up and bears fruit, some an hundredfold, etc., a synonymous expression with the belief of the Truth.

Therefore, my dear brother, although it may appear anomalous that a young, inexperienced youth such as I should be encouraging a hardy veteran, still I cannot but speak from the fulness of my heart, and encourage you to persevere.

What if, by your faithful advocacy of the Truth, you entail upon yourself the contempt and abuse of all Christendom! That's nothing but what Paul experienced from the "philosophers" too! And it is nothing but what all must and do experience who "contend earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the saints." But, after all, these considerations would afford little consolation were it not for the "gracious promises"—

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

You will bear with me if I should appear too minute in detailing a case illustrative of the illuminating influence of the Truth, as set forth in *Elpis Israel*. The case is my own and I can, therefore, speak with certainty.

Previous to coming in contact with the above-mentioned work, I was zealously affected for what I considered the truth, namely, the ideas promulgated from the pulpit. I believed them, and so far as I am aware, walked consistently. I was sincere, quite in earnest, and my language mentally was, "Sirs, what shall I do to be saved?" On all hands, I invariably received the response, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, etc." Being in perfect ignorance, except of what I had received from maternal indoctrination, I accepted the generally received understanding of "Believe, etc.," as truth.

I was just on the eve of being immersed on Baptist principles when I fell in with a *Herald*. There was something so rational, so comprehensible, something which partook so much of common sense, that my attention was at once arrested. My curiosity was so much excited that nothing short of an understanding of the whole matter, in some way or other, would satisfy me.

I therefore procured a copy of *Elpis Israel* and read it with intense interest. I then compared it with what the Scriptures actually said, and I was perfectly struck with the identity of the language. Without further hesitation I renounced forever the absolute blasphemies to which I had before adhered, namely, "immortality of the soul," "heaven," "hell," and atmospheric recompense at death, etc., etc., etc., and having become aware of the existence of a meeting of believers here, although then only in my fifteenth year, I identified myself with them by putting on Christ by immersion.

In following this course of action, it is almost needless to add that I experienced the most abusive misrepresentation and utter contempt that vindictiveness could possibly devise. Former friends turned their backs and became sworn enemies; relatives became cold; and all agreed to pity my infatuation.

And yet, if you "reason with them from the Scriptures," the very strength of the arguments, the very overpowering nature of the evidence, seems to confirm them in their unbelief. They therefore hesitate, stammer, sputter, and turn round and brand you as an "infidel," "materialist," etc., etc., reminding one forcibly of the words of Paul—

"To the one it is a savour of death unto death, etc. . . ."

They will not reason, but resort to vociferous vituperations. Surely these are not sincere, surely they are not interested in the absorbing question, "What is truth? who will not reason. Their faith is certainly, as you express it, "An unreasoning assent to certain dogmas."

Bro. Thomas, my gratitude is unbounded. I cannot possibly give utterance to my feelings. What a great salvation has been revealed! What a book is the Bible!! What a God is Jehovah!!! My heart swells with grateful emotion when I contemplate these things. My thanksgiving knows no bounds, when I revert to the former contemptible, effeminate appearance which these things made, when reviewed through the medium of sectarian theology.

My efforts for the diffusion of the Truth, I regret to say, can extend no further than contention, of which I have plenty. Being only 17 years of age, I am, of course, poor in this world's goods, or else, I can assure you, dear brother, the *Herald* should never go down for want of funds.

As it is, however, my exertions in behalf of the Truth must be confined to speaking; and, when the time comes, they will also be extended to co-operation in the way of funds. And then, when Jesus returns, he will reward every man according to his work.

I am afraid I have trespassed on your forbearance, but then you know how to excuse one that is in earnest. With an earnest desire that you may be spared until our Lord returns to Zion, I remain, your affectionate brother in the hope of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,

Robert Roberts, Aberdeen, Scotland, October 8, 1856.

ABOUT the time of the appearance of my letter to Dr. Thomas, an incident occurred which had a material bearing on my future course. A printer who had an office over the druggist's shop where I was employed, and who used to be a frequent visitor at the shop, started a daily paper, on a very humble scale, a mere sheet, of which not more than a hundred circulated.

On the occasion of one of his visits, he asked me if I knew a young man who could do the editing and reporting for the paper. I thought of a young acquaintance of mine who had become an expert shorthand writer. I mentioned the matter to him, and the idea pleased him, and ultimately an arrangement was made between him and the printer, by which he became the reporter of the Aberdeen Daily Telegraph.

He continued in this position several months, and then received an offer of the editorship of a small paper about 40 miles further north. I think it was the Peterhead Sentinel. He accepted the position. This made a vacancy in the Aberdeen Daily Telegraph, and the printer applied to me again. I could not tell him of a suitable young man this time. He then asked if I thought I could take the position myself.

This was a new idea. It set me thinking. The position I was in was ill-adapted to my tastes and aims in life. The Truth had opened the world to my view in its real meaning. The knowledge of the purpose of God, as revealed to the prophets, had thrown a new light on all sublunary things, and imparted a new interest to history, and a new prospect to life, in every way.

My heart rose to the expansion, and I felt out of place behind a counter vending pills and hair oil. The idea of entering upon press work seemed to strike a new chord, and open up new prospects. It did not take me long to come to a decision.

I was a bound apprentice to my employer for five years, and only four years of the term had run. My master consented to cancel my indenture, and accept another apprentice in my place. Thus set at liberty, I entered upon a new field, which gradually opened out my sphere indefinitely.

It was not many months, however, before I was obliged to call a halt. My new employer, the printer, was in somewhat needy circumstances, and could not afford to pay the telegraph company for the daily telegrams. Consequently he used to require me to go to the news room and copy the telegrams as they arrived there. I did not at first know that this was an illegitimate proceeding. When I realized it, I gave the printer to understand I could not continue it, and so I had to leave.

For a few months after this I was idle, but during the interval I received several reporting "jobs" through the acquaintance with the reporters of the other papers which my brief connection with the Telegraph had given me.

I was called on to assist in the reporting of the speeches delivered at an investigation into the merits of the Suez Canal scheme, conducted by the Town Council on the occasion of a visit by M. de Lesseps, with whom and his canal, I always felt specially acquainted after this.

Another appointment was of a more onerous character. A project was being promoted for the construction of a railway through Aberdeenshire which as yet was only traversed by stage coaches.

There were two rival railway projects. A committee of the promoters was about to pay a visit to the principal points in the county, to enlist the support of the farmers and others on behalf of the Buchan and Formartine line, and it was needful that a reporter should accompany them to make notes of the meetings and furnish a report to the weekly paper, the Aberdeen Herald.

The paper could not spare a man from the ordinary work of the paper, and I was applied to, and duly commissioned to do this work. I was away some week or more, jolting over the country in a road conveyance with these railway people, putting up at hotels, and attending meetings in all kinds of out-of-the-way places.

It was my first real peep out into the world. I got my first real look at an aristocrat during the journey (I think at Fraserburgh) in the person of the chairman at one of the meetings, Mr. Grant Duff, M.P. I was agreeably impressed with the superiority which I saw human nature was capable of attaining, for I had been accustomed to the utmost commonplaces, both in respect to people and circumstances.

I delivered my first lecture during this journey. I came across a Mr. Bruce—a kind of Plymouth Brother—who knew me through my mother, though I was unaware of the fact. He asked me to his house and convened some religious friends, to whom he introduced me.

He then asked me to address them. I said I was not a speaker. They said they knew I could say something to them about the Bible, and pressed me. I complied at last and, getting on my feet, spoke for half-an-hour or so on Daniel's vision of the four empires and the coming of the Kingdom of God. They expressed themselves as greatly delighted, and hoped we should meet again—which, as far as I am aware, we never did.

When my work was done, it filled five or six columns of the weekly paper, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that my temporary employers were pleased with my work, which they also paid me for, on a scale which, in my inexperience, overwhelmed me with its munificence. In reality I was paid only half the professional charge. This I did not know at the time and to me it seemed almost criminal to accept such liberal payment.

The sub-editor of the paper laughed heartily at my scruples, and said the day would come when the acceptance of earned money would not distress me. Out of the money paid me my mother got me my first watch.

\* \* \*

ABOUT this time there was an annual meeting at Edinburgh of brethren from various parts of Scotland. Brother John Barker was appointed to go on behalf of Aberdeen, and he asked me to accompany him. This was a great matter for me. Edinburgh was interesting beyond anything I had seen in the north, and the meeting of brethren, though not very large (perhaps from 70 to 100) was interesting to a degree I could not express.

But the chairman struck me as being rather obtuse. There was a proposal to publish some things from Dr. Thomas' Herald in tract form. He offered strong objections to this, principally on the ground that such a course would "infringe Dr. Thomas' copyright."

When everybody had spoken, and the last appeal for further remark had been made, I rose and said I scarcely dared to speak, but it seemed to me the objection to the publication of good tracts from Dr. Thomas' works was one that should be left to him, and that I did not believe he would raise it, as we could not suppose but that he would only rejoice at anything that would extend the knowledge of the Truth.

My future wife was present. I did not know it, for I had no acquaintance with her, but she has often since remarked that my words on that occasion commended themselves to her as a little young common sense in the midst of much senior fog. I had occasion afterward to know the nature of the fog of whose existence at that time I had, and could have, no suspicion.

\* \* \*

RETURNING to Aberdeen, my future wore a very uncertain aspect. I had no regular occupation, and no likelihood of obtaining any settled reporting appointment in the limited world of Aberdeen life. Several months of indefiniteness and wearisomeness wore away, and then a letter from the south changed the current once more.

Alex Mowatt, who had gone to Peterhead, was now a reporter on the staff of the Caledonian Mercury, a daily paper published at Edinburgh. From this city, I received a letter from him, apprising me of a vacancy that had just occurred on his paper, and of the fact that he had recommended me for the post. This was glad news, and after a few days' preparation I left Aberdeen for Edinburgh, never to return to my native place except as a rare visitor.

My duties as a reporter of a paper like the Caledonian Mercury (published at the historic and intellectual center of Scottish life) introduced me to many matters and things that greatly extended my acquaintance with life, of which, however, I was not able to take the full advantage.

The Scottish law court, the ecclesiastical synods, the monthly presbyteries, the art exhibitions, the scientific lectures, and annual prize convocations of various educational institutions, and numerous miscellaneous occasions gave me many opportunities of a widened view in all directions.

But my heart did not go out to the things with which I had to deal. I was content to get my duties done. My sympathies were centered in the Scriptures and the things that stood related to them. Professional matters were repugnant to me, as the embodiment of the world to which Jesus did not belong, and in which I felt it was my part to be equally a stranger with him.

The meetings of the brethren were the point of attraction with me. Fresh from the crudeness of the north, there was much in these that for a considerable time was charming. There was more culture and mellowness than I had been accustomed to, and there was the pleasantness of good singing. The love of the Truth I took for granted, and was therefore entirely in my element.

If the charm was broken by and by, it was because the Truth stood in a different position among my new friends from what I had assumed. Dr. Thomas was not esteemed as I esteemed him. His works were not appreciated as I supposed they necessarily must be by everyone understanding the Truth. The Bible and the Truth had not that earnest place which seemed to me essential in a company professing subjection to apostolic principles. It was some time before I discovered this.

Meanwhile, I was solaced by the sympathy and love of one sister in their midst, whose society created an atmosphere that I mistook for a time for that of the whole circle. To this sister I have twice already referred. She had seen me twice before, but I had not seen her at all until I came to Edinburgh, and when I was introduced to her I was drawn to her with a power that soon ended in the closest intimacy.

She was my senior by eight years, but this, so far from being an obstacle, was the reverse. It imparted to her a weight and sobriety of character that fitted her for the companionship that I desired. Her tastes were all in the line of intellectual and scriptural things. There was an inexhaustible fund of interest in this direction which supplied the material for conversation that never flagged. I met no one like her in this respect, and it was inevitable that our acquaintance should ripen fast, as it did, into the tenderest relation.

I was only nineteen when we mutually agreed that we were suited for life companionship. Some of our friends were scandalized at such a result, but we felt sure our decision was a wise one, and therefore, without making a secret of it in any way, we shut our eyes and ears, and went on our way. Time justified our policy.

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**CONTINUED NEXT MONTH IF THE LORD WILL**

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## **Fraternal Gatherings**

(If the Lord Will)

### **PORTLAND, Oregon: May 22 and 23**

Bro. A. Tilling, 2212 N.E. Prescott, Portland, Ore. Ph. 503-287-3064

### **RICHARD, Saskatchewan: July 3, 4 and 5**

Bro. F. G. Jones, Rte. 1, Richard, Sask., Can., Phone Richard 615

### **HYE, Texas: July 26 to August 1**

Bro. C. Banta, 815 Boston, Deer Park, Tex. 77536, Ph. 713-479-2568

*Please notify bro. Banta, preferably before May 1, of desired motel accommodation.*

### **WORCESTER, Massachusetts: October 9 and 10**

Write: Bro. Will Davey, Strawberry Hill St., Dover, Mass. 02030

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## **Peace, Be Still!**

*"There came a storm of wind on the lake, and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy"*  
—Luke 8:23

WE see the counterpart of this in the lives of the brothers and sisters. All may seem well, peace is the order of the day among us, and unity and love—then suddenly storm and stress break out among us in the many trials and afflictions that arise, and we find the need for drawing nigh to him who rebuked the winds and stilled the waters.

"Where is your faith?"—Jesus asked them. And so may we ask ourselves the same question when we falter in the way and fail to put our trust in God.

Jesus was asleep from exhaustion, but not as one of the sons of night; for the words that he spoke and the life that he lived were of light and life. As storms come upon us, and we seem ready to perish, let us remember the words of the Lord Jesus —

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

God is not unmindful of His children. It is not their part to presume upon His goodness, but to walk in His ways and remember that with every trial He will make a way of escape for us if we cast our cares upon Him.

Let us have full confidence in the great Jehovah Who can say to the angry sea of nations as to the literal sea—

"Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (38:11).

Let us manifest the unflinching confidence of David in the midst of all his trials—

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

"Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

"Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof" (Ps. 46:1-3).

As Jesus on this occasion rebuked the winds on the lake, and they ceased and there was a great calm, so will it be when he comes again. The wicked sea of nations and people that cast up mire and dirt will be rebuked, and the time will come when he will speak peace to them and bring about a great calm among them. As it is written in Ps. 72:7—

"In his day shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

In our day we see the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear of those things that are coming on the earth (Luke 21:25). Let us not be afraid; for out of the present unrest there will come peace, a glorious peace like the world never had before. As the apostle John saw the symbol of this peace, in the days to come, it is likened to a smooth, tranquil sea of glass (Rev. 15:2).

Jesus when he comes will still the storm of wickedness and sin, and establish in its place a glorious era of righteousness and peace—

*Change is our portion now:  
Yet midst our changing lot,  
Midst withering flowers and tempest drear,  
There is that changeth not:  
Unchangeable Jehovah's Word,  
I will be with thee, saith the Lord.*

We see today and throughout the world this truth revealed as never before, as Jesus foretold concerning the last days (Luke 21:25-26)—

*Like floods the angry nations rise  
And aim their rage against the skies:  
Vain floods that aim their rage so high;  
At His rebuke the billows die.*

*Forever shall His throne endure,  
His promise stand forever sure;  
And everlasting holiness  
Becomes the dwelling of His grace.*

Brothers and sisters, in the trials that afflict us; in the uncertainty of things that are round about us, let us ever be mindful of the great hope before us. And let us endeavour to make all our ways to be in subjection to the glorious will of God, that we may be blessed in that glorious day, when in truth it shall be said again by Jesus, in glorious eternal finality— "*Peace, be still!*" —W. J. P.

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## **Teach Us to Number Our Days**

*"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them"—Eccl. 12*

AS we watch the years pass, and the seasons come and go, we realize that each day we die a little. Each day we come closer to that final moment when our breath goes forth from our weak mortal bodies. Tomorrow we will be a little nearer to the time when we shall be lowered into the grave to await the coming of Christ. Tomorrow, indeed, may be the end itself.

As we reflect over the past 10, 20, or 30 years, we remember many brothers and sisters who once walked with us. Now they are gone. They are asleep in Christ.

Life is a vapour. Like a shadow it passes swiftly, then it is gone. Gone but not forgotten. Perhaps the dead are forgotten by the living as the generations pass, but those who are asleep in Christ are not forgotten by their Creator.

The Almighty God has the books of life. Each one is a record of someone's life; each year is a new chapter. Everything we did for the Truth has been entered into that book; everything we have done in violation of its instructions is recorded there too. Nothing is erased. Nothing is altered. What

has happened in our lives during this past year is on record. It can only be recalled if we truly repent. At death the book of our life is closed: closed until the judgment day.

*Through the death of others we are warned and awakened to the fact that we must teach ourselves to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Perhaps it is a warning to us when we view the case of the late President of the United States. To the world, he was a man of fame and honor. He was in the height of his career, when suddenly, without warning, his life ceased to exist. His breath of life went forth, his keen intellect was darkened forever in an instant. All of his forty-five years are only a memory —

"For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him, though while he lived he blessed his soul. And men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.

"He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. Man that is in honor and understandeth not, is like the beast that perish" (Psa. 49:17-20).

This incident may be employed as a stern signal of caution to us who profess the Truth. Death gives no warning, and God is no respecter of persons. No matter what our age, or position, we must be found living the Truth. We must realize our complete dependency upon God, and use the opportunity set in front of us now, before it is too late —

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

"When they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way . . . and desire shall fail.

"Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about in the streets" (Ecc. 12:1-5).

We can remember our Creator, and our Saviour, most effectively in the days of our youth. Let us not wait until we are too old to do anything else. Let us build our lives—our family—our ecclesia—while we still have sight to see, ears keen enough to hear, and minds alert enough to understand. Let us not wait until our senses are dim and dulled with age.

Some will wait. Some will wait until it is too late. Death will find them unprepared, and in their dying moments they will recall the many warnings of Scripture. But alas, their "dust shall return to the earth as it was and the spirit shall return unto God; Who gave it."

How many of us are prepared for this? How many of us are ready to die? If this day were our last, if we had seen our last sunrise, what sort of record would we leave behind?

Let us consider our record for the past year. How were our days, weeks, and months spent? What is under our name for 1964?

*A true servant would have MUCH to show for his work in the Truth in a year's time.*

He would have instructed and encouraged his family in the way appointed. There would be many instances where he helped his brothers and sisters. He would have given much of his time strengthening and building up the ecclesia, instead of judging and condemning. He would have manifested love and encouraged unity, instead of fostering discord and division.

The true servant of God would not have his record marred by wasting the precious time God has given to him on television, theatre, or radio. He would be very conscious that God was his employer; that he was always working on God's time.

Our lives are not our own. We are servants of God, bought with the precious blood of Christ. The true servant will be ever aware of this, and will spend his time studying the Bible and instructing his children. He would be anxious to be at ALL the ecclesial activities.

It has been truly said that we can always find time to do what we really want to do, and that we can always find excuses for not doing what we do not want to do. We can make all sorts of excuses for not doing the things we know we should do, but if we are wise, we will recognize this course for what it is and turn from it. God will see to it that unerring justice is meted out.

In the book of Proverbs, we read —

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Let us not rely upon the way that may seem right to us. Left to ourselves, we are not capable of judging what is to our best interest in the Truth. Let us look unto God's ways, and use every moment in pursuit of a clearer understanding—

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

\* \* \*

UNDER the Law of Moses the sacrifices were offered daily. The lamps were filled morning and night. The laws were read. Everything was constant and consistent. The people served God continually, not just now and then.

God does not accept the person who offers his services one day and withholds them the next. We cannot take up the Truth as a way of life, and lay it aside when not convenient.

It is not something optional, something that can be taken up or left alone at our own convenience. It is all or nothing; a way of life that demands consistency.

A man climbing up a steep mountain does not suddenly relax his hold and rest. If he does, he falls all the way back to the bottom; if he survives the fall he will have to start all over.

This principle applies to the Truth. Either we are making progress, or we are slipping backwards. Which have we done this year? Are we any further along the path to eternal life? Let us stick to the bright, clear path of scriptural truth. There are no short cuts or easy methods of learning.

*God wants only those servants who are willing to give their entire being to bring every thought into subjection to Christ—only those who are willing to bear the tribulation, out of which they shall come forth as refined gold.*

\* \* \*

IN conclusion, let us think on these things. We cannot alter or change the past year which has come and gone swiftly. 1964 has taken its place in history. The year to come can be ours in a certain sense. It can be marked with success and not with failure. Now is the time to resolve to "redeem the time because the days are evil."

If we truly, whole-heartedly, and sincerely dedicate ourselves to overcoming the works of the flesh, and giving our selves, our talent, time and energies and possessions to the Truth; if we are not slack or inconsistent, nor given to puny excuses for not fulfilling the laws of God; if we are firm, immovable, sound in walk and doctrine—then we may finally say with Paul—

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."  
—M.P.

## True Doctrine Vital to Salvation

*"For this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who believe not the Truth"—2 Thess. 2:11-12*

### TRUE FACTS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS IN EVERY WALK OF LIFE

IN any walk of life except religion, it is fully realized that accuracy and a correct perception of the real facts are vital to any accomplishment.

We know what would happen to a chemist who believed that any mixture or any ingredient would suit his purpose as long as his intentions were right; or an engineer who thought that the correctness of his mathematical calculations was quite unimportant as long as he was trying to do good to everyone; or an electrician who attached little value to the matter of which wires he connected together feeling that somehow everything would be all right; or the farmer who was convinced that as long as he meant well he would get just the crop he wanted regardless of what kind of seed he planted.

*In all human endeavours, men have learned that to be successful they must first take the trouble to determine the facts, and then work in harmony with them.*

The sincerest belief—the best of intentions—the most arduous of labours—will never help a man who goes blindly right in the face of actual fact and reality.

The very continuance of man's life depends upon his proper acceptance of and adjustment to the facts and realities around him. The law of gravity would destroy him in a moment if he ignored or flaunted it. He must keep eating to live, but still he cannot eat everything that looks edible—many attractive-looking things are poison. This knowledge does not come naturally or instinctively, it must be learned. Children will attempt to eat practically anything.

### THIS PRINCIPLE COMPLETELY IGNORED IN RELIGIOUS MATTERS

ALL of the foregoing seems almost too simple and obvious to mention. But the moment we turn to religious affairs—affairs that concern eternity—the only affairs of any real importance—we find all these natural lessons ignored completely.

There is no more any need to study and learn, no more any need to carefully distinguish between hard, cold fact and pleasant fiction, no more any need to lay out and adhere to a course that is strictly adjusted to proven realities. The common philosophy is expressed in the oft-quoted words:

*"For creed and faiths let senseless bigots fight:  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right:"*

This is a supreme example of illogical and meaningless sentimentalism. It completely misses the question at issue. Of course a man can't be **wrong** if he is **right**. But—WHAT IS RIGHT? Who is to say? Is it a matter of feeling or fact? Is right something that can be established like the fact that two and two make four? Can we be mathematically sure that we are right in our actions, just as we can be sure we are right in adding two figures? Is there any fixed, dependable standard of "right," to which we can turn—with which we can compare ourselves, or does each man make his own standard?

### A VAST DIVERGENCE OF VIEWPOINT AS TO WHAT IS "RIGHT"

People speak of right, and good, and justice, and fairness, and other qualities related to proper conduct. Superficially these appear to be universal standards, but immediately we go into details we discover that there is a vast divergence of viewpoint regarding what is right, and what is good, and

what is just, and what is fair. Conscience will make two sincere men do diametrically opposite things. Which is right? Clearly there is no natural instinct or "light within" to infallibly guide man. Men's opinions differ according to many factors.

And when we get the facts in religious matters—that is Doctrine—revealed Truth and Fact concerning man, and life, and death, and eternity. The Bible is a book of facts; the facts that it is necessary to know in order to succeed in the greatest of all occupations—life itself.

### **TRUE RELIGION A MATTER OF FACT, RIGHT FROM THE START**

RIGHT from the beginning, religion is a matter of **facts**. Either there IS a God—a supreme, all-powerful Authority—at there is NOT. If we wish to live intelligently, we must face that issue. We may say it is immaterial—that a man should and could "do good" regardless of whether he believed in God or not—but this is the shallowest of meaningless thinking in a—circle. Our whole conception and standard of what good is hinges entirely upon our belief on this point.

If there is a God this is the biggest single fact in the universe and in our lives. If there is not, each man must make his own god—every man must have a basic principle by which his life is guided, something to determine his conduct. The natural, unthinking animalistic mind of the flesh will assume this position if nothing else does.

The world's sordid history, the various degrees of decency and proper conduct that different nations have attained to, the unbelievable depths to which some have sunk—all stem from the characteristics of the gods that each have created for themselves—the supposed "basic facts" which each have believed in and lived by. In each instance, conduct is the inevitable reflex of doctrine. Men act according to what they believe.

*We are not going deep enough if we think the question is whether or not doctrine is necessary. That is settled for us. The question is—*

*WHICH doctrine shall we live by?*

For we must of necessity live by **some** "doctrine"—same basic principle. Is it important that we find the truth—the real facts—or can we live successfully and purposefully by beliefs that are false?

### **IS THERE A GOD? — THE GREATEST SINGLE FACT TO DETERMINE**

If there is a God; if there is even just a possibility that there is a God, then no one can claim to be intelligent who does not make a determined effort to find out the facts. So much depends upon it. Life is a continuous series of decisions and choices, conscious or unconscious. Success depends upon knowing the facts—above all, the real, deep, eternal facts.

What is the real meaning of life? What are time and history working toward? What is gradually shaping itself in the purpose of God? What is man and what is his relation to these things? These are the facts of which doctrine is made; the necessary facts for intelligent life-planning.

What is our goal in life? What possible goals are there? Here again we need knowledge and facts. Is there life beyond the grave? Do we care if there is? If we are concerned merely with present satisfaction, any pleasing and inspiring illusion will do as long as we can maintain our faith in it, but if we look beyond the present to an ultimate accomplishment, then we must have the facts to make our plans.

### **EVERYTHING IN LIFE HINGES ON THIS ONE FACT**

FIRST then, is there a God? Is there a supreme, all-wise, all-powerful central Authority in the universe? To determine that if possible, is the first logical step, because the road forks widely at this point. If there is, then obviously "right" is that which He approves and which fits in with His purposes.

If there is not, then "right" is merely a matter of individual judgment according to probable consequences.

Once we profess a belief in God, it is impossible to logically escape the force of the fact that the first and most important step of both wisdom and duty is to find out as much as we can about Him, and plan our life in harmony with the facts we discover. Wisdom lies in recognizing and adjusting ourselves to facts. Folly is simply an inability or refusal to make this recognition and adjustment, whatever field of activity we are considering.

Men have from time to time claimed to have a message from God. But there is one object that stands out in this connection without any comparable rival—the book known as the Bible. This should naturally be considered first in any search for a message from God. If it is authentic it fulfils all the requirements of the case and also supplies a touchstone by which all other similar claims can be tested.

*We accept God and His revealed Word as the two basic and primary facts of life. We are convinced that they can be proven as facts beyond any reasonable shadow of doubt.*

### **WE COME TO THE BIBLE FOR FACTS AND TRUTH**

WE, come then to the Bible for knowledge and guidance— truth and instruction—doctrine and conduct—facts and what to do in relation to them. The main purpose of our remarks up to this point has been an attempt to demonstrate the inseparability of these two things, because the great modern fallacy on this point is that doctrine and conduct are two separate and independent things—that we can do what is right without knowing what is true.

When a fallacy becomes so deep-rooted as to be accepted without thought as axiomatic, it takes a strong and very self-reliant mind to shake off its shackles. Such a fallacy fastens itself onto the very words we use, and twists those words into its own deceptive tools. "Do good," it says, "and forget doctrine." And to be able to answer this we must first take this word "good" and scrape off the accretions of this falsehood from it.

If God is the supreme Authority and Source of knowledge, then "good" is that which He approves. And that which is known as "doctrine,"(which is in such disrepute today) is that body of basic fact which He has revealed as the foundation of His instruction as to what is good, and why. He tells us first the facts and second how we should conduct ourselves because of those facts and to relation to those facts—that is, if we desire to please Him and take part in any future arrangements He may have.

### **WE SHOULD FIND TRUTH GIVEN PRE-EMINENT IMPORTANCE**

If all that we have said be correct, we should find the Bible placing supreme importance upon TRUTH. We should find it repeatedly emphasized that a correct knowledge of the facts God has revealed is essential to fellowship with Him and acceptance by Him. We should find careful instructions given for preservation of correct beliefs in, and exclusion of error from, the assemblies of worship. And we should further find instances and illustrations of the application of these principles. We should find error and falsehood and imagination and supposition condemned in words as clear and strong and uncompromising as the warning label on a bottle of poison.

*All these things we DO find—in vivid clarity and overwhelming abundance.*

Jesus said (John 4:24)—

“They that worship God **must** worship Him in spirit and in TRUTH.”

"Thou desirest Truth in the inward parts" (Psa. 51:6).

"Teach me Thy Way; I will walk in Thy TRUTH" (Ps. 86:11).

"His Truth endureth to all generations" (Psa. 100:5).

"The Lord is nigh to all that call on Him in Truth" (Ps. 145).

"He that speaketh Truth showeth forth righteousness" (Prov. 12:17).

“Buy the TRUTH, and sell it not!” (Prov. 23:23).

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the Truth may enter in" (Isa. 26:2).

"Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

"I am the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life" (John 14:6).

"When the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all Truth" (John 16:13).

“Sanctify them through Thy Truth. Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17).

*Has all this passed away? Do Truth and Fact no longer matter, but merely human feeling and sentiment? Is it uncharitable and narrow to insist that TRUTH be still given the pre-eminence that we find it given in the Scriptures?*

Is it just and fair to represent Truth as something that unnecessarily constricts and hampers the operations of Love? Does not Love itself need the ever-present guidance of Truth if it is to be anything more dependable than shapeless, groundless feeling?—

"They that worship God must worship Him in TRUTH."

"The wisdom that is from above is **first** pure, **then** peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated" (James 3:17).

The apostle Paul shows the same supreme regard for Truth, and abhorrence for ignorance and error, no matter how well-meaning. To the Ephesians he speaks of the "Word of Truth, the Gospel of salvation" (1:13) and of **ignorance** as "alienating from the life of God" (4:18). To Timothy he says—

"God will have (that is, desires to have) all men to be saved, and to **come to a knowledge of the Truth**" (1 Tim. 2:4).

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of Truth**" (2 Tim. 2:15).

James shows that a perception of the Truth is the vital connection between us and God when he says (James 1:18)—

"Of His own will begat He us **with the Word of Truth**, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures."

And of the bearing of a faithful adherence to this Truth upon salvation he says (5:19)—

"Brethren, if any of you do **err from the Truth**, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall **save a soul from death**."

John, too, bears the same testimony (1 John 2:21)—

"I have not written unto you because ye know not the Truth, but because ye know it, and that **no lie is of the Truth**."

*"No lie is of the Truth." This is a basic scriptural principle. Truth and error will not mix. There can be no fellowship between them. There is no hazy middle ground of charitable tolerance of well-meaning error.*

*"NO LIE IS OF THE TRUTH."*

It must be quite evident that the concept of truth and accuracy holds a high position throughout the Scriptures—

TRUTH is one of the fundamental characteristics of God. He is spoken of as the "God of Truth" (Psa. 31:5).

He must be worshipped "in Truth" (John 4:24).

The Gospel of Salvation is the "Word of Truth" (Eph. 1:13).

Truth sanctifies (John 17:17), and saves (2 Thess. 2:13).

Ignorance alienates from God and from life (Eph. 4:18).  
God desires Truth in the inward parts (Psa. 51:6).  
No lie is of the Truth (1 John 2:21).

### **ERROR IS AS STRONGLY CONDEMNED AS TRUTH IS EXALTED**

THE testimony **against** error is as strong as the testimony **for** Truth. Consider Paul's striking denunciation (2 Thess. 2:10-13)—

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, **because they received not the love of the Truth**, that they might be saved.

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they **all might be condemned who believed not the Truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **CHOSEN YOU TO SALVATION THROUGH sanctification of the Spirit and BELIEF OF THE TRUTH.**"

A love of Truth—a desire to find the real facts and live in harmony with them—is here given as the key to God's blessing. The absence of this love for Truth brings condemnation and death. Is Truth immaterial? Does it matter much whether we take the trouble to get the facts? Is it sufficient to blunderingly and blindly "mean well," too busy with other things to put a prolonged and consistent study of God's Word first in our lives? It is so easy and so human to speculate: it is so hard and so against nature to really study and learn.

In his second epistle to Timothy Paul writes (2 Tim. 4:2-5)—

"Preach the Word. Be instant in season, out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

"For the time will come when they—'believers' in general—will not endure sound doctrine; 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. But watch thou in all things."

*What is the infallible index of declension and decay? It is a gradual—almost imperceptible at first—weakening of the realization of the paramount importance of TRUTH, and the destructiveness of error.*

Paul says further to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16)—

"Take heed unto thyself, and **unto the doctrine.**

"Continue in them, for in **doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.**"

And yet again (6:20)—

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so-called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith."

1 Tim. 1:3—"Teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables."

The world is so full today of "profane and vain babblings, oppositions of "science," falsely so-called. To the Hebrews, he commanded (13:9)—

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines."

To the Ephesians (4:14)—

"Be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

*The only defence against error and disaster is a solid grasp of the true facts; a complete, clear picture of revealed Truth.*

This danger of the believers losing the realization of the vital importance of truth was always before Paul's mind and he did all he could to prevent it, although he knew that to a large degree it was inevitable that it should come and carry many away from salvation and life.

It takes so much work, day after day, to keep rebuilding and refreshing the mind, resisting the relentless pressure of nature to relax, that few continue to the end.

Let us glance through Paul's letter to Titus—

1:1—"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness."

1:9—"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

1:13—"Rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith."

1:14—"Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men that turn from the truth."

2:1—"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

2:2—"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith."

2:7—"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness."

2:8—"Sound speech that cannot be condemned."

3:10—"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject."

#### **THE SCRIPTURES' SHARP LINE BETWEEN TRUTH AND ERROR**

The Scriptures cut the issue sharply between truth and falsehood—

*"No lie is of the Truth."*

*"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14).*

What is an "unbeliever?" Can a man reject an elementary part of God's Word and be truly considered a believer? Is a partial belief mixed with error or ignorance a safe or saving faith?

Consider Paul's sorrowful words regarding his fellow Israelites, who believed fervently in God but **not according to truth** (Rom. 10:1-3)—

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that **THEY HAVE A ZEAL OF GOD**, but not according to knowledge.

"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

This misplaced zeal and ignorance of the facts led them to reject and crucify Christ, and persecute his followers. Can we separate doctrine from conduct? Can we conduct ourselves acceptably before God if we are ignorant of what He has revealed and commanded?

Is ignorance and natural human sentiment a safe guide in anything? Paul gives the scriptural answer to this when he says to the Ephesians (2:3)—

"Among whom we also had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath."

Similarly in 1 Cor. 2:14—

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither CAN he know them.”

### DOCTRINE AND CONDUCT ARE INSEPARABLE

IT is the weakening of the bonds between doctrine and conduct that has created the common view that doctrine is unnecessary.

To see a great profession of doctrine with little noticeable effect on conduct naturally gives the impression that doctrine has no practical value.

But those that judge thus judge shallowly. We must not get at the doctrine a man **professes** but the one he **lives by**. Then we shall immediately see a vital connection between his doctrine and his conduct. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

*Where a man's heart and interest are most of the time, THERE is his life's doctrine, regardless of the one he professes, or wears on Sunday. And whatever it is, true or false, it will shape his life and determine his destiny.*

There is only one doctrine that will lead anywhere but the grave. That is the true outline of eternal fact that God has revealed in the Scriptures.

Doctrine is never given in the Bible as an abstract thing apart from conduct. It is always presented as the **basis for conduct**. Broadly, it is put this way: God loves Truth and hates falsehood, therefore to gain His fellowship and His salvation hold to Truth and shun falsehood.

We may not with limited human perception be able to see the full force of the vast, irreconcilable difference between Truth and error when it is written on a piece of paper, but very few are unable to perceive the importance of the difference between purity and infection in a wound in their own body.

*Modern civilization suffers from an over-consciousness of physical germs, but the far deadlier spiritual germs of error and ignorance of divine fact trouble it not at all. Could there be any more striking example of straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel?*

### THE PRACTICAL BEARING OF DOCTRINE UPON CONDUCT

THERE are a few verses in Paul's second letter to Timothy which help us to perceive the importance of truth in doctrine in its practical bearing. (2 Tim. 2:16-19)—

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness."

THERE is the first point:—**Error, once introduced, is bound** to increase. He continues—

"And their word will eat as doth a canker."

The margin gives "gangrene." The Truth of God has a purpose—to purify and sanctify men and women, to transform their minds, to build them up into an acceptable Temple for the dwelling of God.

*This transformation is absolutely essential if God is to accept them, and it is the Truth continually meditated upon that accomplishes this.*

Error has no such power. It can only break down. Mix a little error with the Truth and its power for good is destroyed. What was the error in this case?—

"Of whom is Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the Truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is passed already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure."

What direct bearing on conduct and salvation did the belief in the resurrection have? Cannot we do good and love God and still believe that the resurrection is "passed already?" Why do we have to know and believe the truth concerning the resurrection?

*First, because God says we must.*

That alone is sufficient. God wants people who believe Him. If we reject what He says, and ask **why** we must believe Him, and say we cannot see what difference it makes, we immediately stamp ourselves as an suitable material for His purpose. We have been asked to choose between God's Word and the natural promptings of our mind, and we have chosen the latter.

Consider what was said to Saul. He did what he thought was right and good but Samuel was sent to say to him—

"Thou hast rejected the Word of the Lord, therefore the Lord hath rejected thee"

(1 Sam. 15:26).

This false teaching about the resurrection "overthrew the faith of some"—destroyed their hope of salvation.

### **ERROR, LIKE GANGRENE, NEVER STANDS STILL**

Paul compares error to gangrene. Gangrene does not stand still. It is out to destroy. Either the body is quick and strong enough to fight and overcome the gangrene, or the gangrene will certainly and inevitably destroy the body.

Surely the force of Paul's illustration cannot be missed or evaded! There can be no tolerance of error. **Error is never harmless.**

Most religious error is intensely sincere and well-meaning. But if men—in the words of Paul—"Err concerning the truth," then their teaching is as dangerous as gangrene. An infection may be very small, but it is never unimportant, for potentially it is death. Therefore the urgency of Paul's entreaty to Timothy (1 Tim. 6:20-21)—

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called: which some professing have erred concerning the Faith."

Likewise (2 Tim. 3:14-17)—

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

That is what God has given us the Bible for—instruction in righteousness. Righteousness does not come naturally or instinctively. We must not only **desire** to do good. We must carefully **LEARN HOW** by studying God's "instructions in righteousness."

To do good is to live in conformity with God's will and purpose. Therefore we must know what that purpose is. We must have a true view of what we are, what God plans and desires, **who are the enemies of the Truth and who are its friends; what to seek and what to guard against.**

False doctrine leads us astray and deceives us in these things. It tells us untrue things about God and our natures and sin and death, and the future. It sends us laboring in an entirely wrong direction, going about—as the Jews were—to establish something that we called "good" and "righteousness," instead of getting into harmony with the real facts and the way of true righteousness that God lays out.

*"No lie is of the Truth."*

It may be well-meaning and it may appear harmless, but still that does not change its true character. It still robs its believers of the salvation that only the Truth brings. Of the final commonwealth of the sanctified and redeemed it is said (Rev. 21:27)—

“And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a LIE.”

And Rev. 22:15—

"Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

See what company lies are placed in! All who are content to believe error instead of diligently searching out the Truth are "loving a lie." Our only defence is to learn the Truth by patient, prayerful study of the Word of God.

### **WE MUST KNOW THE TRUTH TO PROCLAIM IT TO OTHERS**

There is another aspect that makes it essential for us to know the true doctrine of God. We are to do our part in teaching it to others. Jude says (v. 3):

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

Peter says (1 Pet. 3:15)—

"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

Be ready to give a reason for your hope—be able to give scriptural authority for what you believe.

"Speak the things that become sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1)

"If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11).

All this calls for FACTS and KNOWLEDGE. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria (John 4:22-24)—

"Ye worship ye know not what: We know what, we worship . . .

"They that worship God must worship Him in truth."

### **WE MUST KEEP SEPARATE FROM ERROR**

And besides proclaiming the Truth, we have a further duty that requires a thorough knowledge of the doctrine of God. We are told (Rom. 16:17) to—

"Mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine** which ye have learned; and avoid them."

We have already noted similar instructions in the epistle to Titus (3:10)—

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonitions reject."

John also said (2 John 10)—

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

And Paul says (Gal. 1:9)—

"If any man preach any other gospel, let him be accursed."

*It is quite clear from these testimonies that the maintenance of pure doctrine is a major duty in the conduct of faithful believers, and that to this end they must separate themselves from all who do not hold the Truth.*

Paul, commanding separation from error, pointedly asks (2 Cor. 6:14-17)—

"What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

"Wherefore come out from among them and **be ye separate**, saith the Lord."

And he commands—

"If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing but dotting about questions and strifes of words—destitute of the Truth—**from such withdraw thyself**"

(1 Tim. 6:3-5).

These instructions directly link doctrine with conduct, and make acceptable conduct impossible without first a foundation of true doctrine.

*How can we obey these commands to separate from error if we do not clearly know the Truth?*

### **ONLY THE TRUTH CAN UNIFY, UPBUILD, PURIFY AND TRANSFORM**

THERE is yet another aspect with which we can fittingly close. God is at present calling out a people from the world for His eternal purpose. These people are commanded to assemble themselves together and hold forth the light of the Truth.

*An acceptance of that Truth is to be the basis of their association.*

The Truth, intelligently understood and sincerely believed, is to be the influence which **unifies them into one whole** and binds them together in the body of Christ. Otherwise they are merely a human, social, meaningless assembly, like myriads of others. Paul said to the Ephesians (4:3-6)—

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

"There is one Body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling: One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

Then he continues (v. 11)—

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ:

"Till we all come in the **unity of the Faith**, and of the KNOWLEDGE of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

*"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

*"But speaking the TRUTH in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ."*

See what a vitally important part the Truth plays in the development and unification and PRESERVATION of the divine Household! Where would the Household be without it? What would bind them together; give them a common interest; fill their minds; occupy their conversation; supply the basis for all their hopes and mutual activities? And how long would they be able to hold on without a solid foundation of truth and fact?

Perhaps doctrine is unimportant in the lives of many people. Perhaps it is generally regarded as dry and purposeless and only a source of wrangling and contention, with no living power to transform weak human clay into the divine image. Unfortunately this is all too true in the world, but not so in the Household of God. Paul continues (v.20)—

"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the TRUTH is in Jesus.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

*How CAN they do this, without an accurate knowledge of God's Word and God's will?*

True believers, true children of God are—again using Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:6):

"Nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine."

—G.V.G

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WE would like to have a much greater range of representation in the articles in the Berean. We therefore request all Berean speaking brethren to send in articles. They can be of any nature—exhortations, lectures or addresses on particular subjects. Those who are not speaking brethren could help by forwarding copies of addresses by others in their ecclesias which particularly strike them as desirable for publication. Double-spaced typing is preferred, but not essential.

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## Melchizedek

*"Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils."*

Who was Melchizedek?

I have no doubt he was Shem.

Why? Because Shem was the only personage, so far as we have any account, who could fill the position of "King of Righteousness" and "King of Peace" in Abraham's day.

He was the oldest man living. He overlived Abraham 35 years. He would be over 500 years old when Abraham—

"Returned from the slaughter of the kings."

This venerable age, at a time when human life did not go beyond the second century, would invest him with an authority and a sanctity not pertaining to other men, while Noah's blessing and his character for righteousness would naturally secure for him the headship and primacy in spiritual things which Melchizedek possessed.

But why should he be called Melchizedek, and not Shem? The answer is that Shem was his family name as the son of Noah, while Melchizedek was a title of office and character (literally, King of Righteousness), which he would naturally acquire among the population of the East that had grown up around him.

In such a situation he would naturally be referred to by his official title, rather than his personal name.

His very name, Shem, is itself expressive of a name of renown amongst men. It is the word rendered "name" and "renown" in such phrases as "men of renown" (Gen. 6:4; Num. 16:2); **and in other passages particularly, with which Christ and Israel's future are bound up**, as in the following illustrations—

"I will raise up for them a plant of renown (**shem**)."  
 "It shall be to them a renown."  
 "It will give them an everlasting name."  
 "A name, and a praise, and a glory."  
 "I will make you a name and a praise."  
 "The man whose name is the Branch."  
 "Thou shalt be called by a new name."  
 "It shall be to Yahweh for a name."  
 "So shall your seed and your name remain."  
 "It shall be to me a name of joy."  
 "His name shall be called Wonderful."

Shem's name, therefore (on the supposition that he was Melchizedek), was evidently prophetic of the renown that awaited him as "King of Righteousness." "King of Salem," "King of peace," and "Priest of the Most High God;" and still more prophetic of the greater renown of the names of Christ and Israel in the day when it shall be said again—

"Blessed be the Lord God of Shem."

As adding to his renown, Shem was an antediluvian centenarian, and by the time he quitted the scene, a five-century post-diluvian—altogether a man of 600 years, at a time when the current length of life was not more than from 147 to 205 years; and when, for centuries before that, it had not reached to more than from 230 to 239 years; and when, even from the very year of the deluge (Noah excepted), it had not risen higher than from 433 to 464 years.

The apostle to the Hebrews, referring to Melchizedek, says—

"Now consider how great this man was."

The apostle's words seem to imply that Melchizedek was translated like Enoch and Elijah, without dying: for he says—

"Here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them of whom it is witnessed, that he liveth" (Heb. 7:8).  
 —bro. Roberts, 1889

## Correspondence

### An Appeal to the "Central" Group

*"The House of God is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth"—1 Tim. 3:15*

SUCH is the inspired designation and description of the apostolic churches in the days of Paul and his fellow workers. The basic principles and practices and its institutions of ecclesial life were founded upon the teachings of Christ. Jesus and Paul laid down the foundation for membership in these churches, that is, that such membership depended entirely upon belief of the "first principles of the oracles of God" and walking worthy of their calling.

So long as these early churches followed these God-given instructions, both in doctrine and practice, they were "the Church of the Living God," but when they departed therefrom they died, and the Truth of God was extinguished with them. However delightful such churches may have been to their worshippers, they were in the eyes of God "miserable, poor, blind and naked." God was not interested in their kind of Christianity; He repudiated them.

The Church of the Living God in our day is the guardian of the purity of doctrine and the basis of fellowship of these early apostolic churches. If it has failed to adhere to them, it has not fulfilled the

destiny which God had in mind when He chose to reorganize His Church in these days; it is not now the "pillar and ground of the Truth," and therefore not the Church of God, for the strict apostolic command was that their inspired teachings were to be handed down to succeeding generations without mutilation or corruption.

There can be no doubt that all well-informed brethren in the main body of Christadelphians, the Central fellowship, know full well that the apostolic procedure is being ignored and that various departures from the truths believed by us to be fundamental are being promulgated and accepted by many, outstanding among them being our basic foundation, the Inspired Bible.

Yet when told of this we are often advised that "There are none in **our** ecclesia holding wrong doctrine," or that "All **our** members accept the BASF," or that "We are not involved in what other ecclesias believe," and with such assurance from the "elders" the ecclesia settles down into peace and tranquillity.

Everyone acquainted with the history of the Christadelphian movement for the past 100 or more years knows that this doctrine of the non-involvement of one ecclesia, near or far, as regards error in another, is a new teaching among us, one which until recent years has been rejected as unscriptural.

We believe that the Bible contains an abundance of evidence that there is an individual as well as an ecclesial responsibility, and an involvement beyond a mere regret that such conditions exist, or that they have performed their duty by preventing any error to gain a foothold in their own ecclesia.

We believe that the scriptural concept of the true Church of God is that world-wide action must be taken to remove the evil from the Body. We further believe that the present inaction in these matters is due to a partial and very incomplete understanding of why God has selected us as contestants for the wonderful prize of Immortality.

\* \* \*

LET us look, each one, at our present position in the plan and purpose of God as it relates to our individual part in His plan of the ages:

We have been "chosen out of the world by God" (John 15:19)—

"Ye have not chosen me, I have chosen you" (v. 16).

"He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

And however wonderful and incomprehensible this may seem to you, God has by his foreknowledge "predestinated you **according to His purpose**" (v. 11). What is His present purpose with you? What does He expect from you? You have been called by God—

"Ye are also the called of Christ Jesus" (Rom. 1:6).

This is spoken of as "an high calling" (Phil. 3:14), a "holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9), "called to be the sons of God" (1 John 3:1). And again it is said to be because God had a reason for calling you—

"To them who are called **according to His Purpose**" (Rom.8:28).

Stated in yet another way, you are (1 Pet. 1:2)—

"The elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

Why has God elected you? You were not chosen, called or elected by God to be a member of any certain ecclesia in any particular city. God is now, as in ages past, building a House; a Spiritual House—

"The House of God is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth."

"Ye also are built up a Spiritual House" (1 Pet. 2:5).

Jesus is "the chief corner stone" of that house, "in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God" (Eph. 2:20-22).

God is the Architect of this building. He has laid down certain specifications for the materials to be built into that house. "Ye are labourers together with God" in the building of His house (1 Cor. 3:9), "but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (v. 10). The "Church of the Living God" is not a mixture of truth and error. God is not building that kind of a house. His specifications do not allow a combining of sound and unsound material in His house, and He **commands you to reject it also**—

*"If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your House, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds"*

(2 John 10-11).

This Spiritual House is a world-wide structure; if you are a member of it, you are involved, responsible for it, even if you pull down the blinds so you cannot see it and shut the windows so you cannot hear the cries of the watchmen on the walls, warning you of the pending destruction by the enemy at the gate.

\* \* \*

THE "Church of the Living God" is also spoken of as "the Body of Christ"—

"Ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular" (1 Cor. 12:27).

"Christ is the head of all things to the church, which is His body" (Eph. 1-22).

"We being many are one Body in Christ" (Rom. 12:5).

As in the natural, so it is in the spiritual. Christ is part of the Body; he is the Head, and from the Head alone comes the directions which guide the other members of the Body. Apart from instructions from the Head the other members could do nothing, and by refusing to follow the guidance of the Head they would die—

"Apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5).

So close is the union between Christ and his Body that Paul says (Eph. 5:30)—

"We are members of his body, his flesh and his bones."

Perhaps nothing more clearly illustrates the absurdity of ecclesial non-responsibility for error elsewhere in the Body than to imagine Christ (who said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them") being present and joining in a memorial service where some of the members reject his teachings or that of his inspired apostles.

*Remember that the "Church of the living God" is worldwide. An ecclesia, large or small, is only a part of it. Salvation does not depend on membership in an ecclesia. It does depend on being "in Christ" and OBEYING HIS INSTRUCTIONS.*

Sick members of a body must either be cured or the diseased parts of the body removed or severed from it, otherwise the whole body will die, for a healthy body cannot and should not long tolerate in its midst a malignancy which eventually will kill the whole body. Christ said—

"If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; if thy foot offend thee, cut it off."

And there cannot be anything more offensive to Christ than apostasy.

Writing about present ecclesial conditions bro. Peter Watkins in the Christadelphian, June 1962, pages 249-250 said—

*"The Bible demands that we accept it in all its parts . . . doubts (on this) are evidence of grievous spiritual sickness . . . The sickness that has already struck some and threatens all, is the more dangerous because it is extremely infectious . . . once doubts are permitted, there can be no controlling them . . . The doctrine of the authority of the Word is the doctrine upon which all other doctrines depend. We dare not yield on it."*

The issue at stake is not the use or misuse of the name "Christadelphian" although there are some facts which should be plainly stated.

**That name belongs to and has always been associated with a group separated from the churches of Christendom but joined together by belief of certain doctrines which they believe to be fundamental scriptural teaching, which doctrines are set out in their Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith.**

Membership in the Christadelphian brotherhood is predicated on the applicant endorsing all of these doctrines; rejectors of any of them cease to be members of that body.

Those who continue to use the name "Christadelphian" while holding beliefs contrary to that Statement are not only unethical but dishonest. They have every right to disagree, but they have no right to take any part as a member in any of the activities of the Christadelphian brotherhood, and especially no right to join in the Memorial service as a member of the One Body of Christ.

Further; the issue at stake is not, of itself, the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith. True Christadelphians believe that Statement to be a true exposition of the first principles of the Oracles of God as taught by Christ and his apostles, and that therefore when any tenet is rejected, that person is rejecting one of the foundation truths of Scripture. By so doing he places himself outside the Body, he has no rightful place in their assemblies, he is dishonouring himself and falsifying his position before God and men. If this is not true, then our Statement of Faith is a mockery, a sham.

\* \* \*

FINALLY, the living Oracles of God have been handed down to us (Acts 7:38). You have been chosen by God from millions of people to be His representative on the earth in your day and generation. He has revealed to you His plan and purpose with the earth and man.

God has "magnified His Word above all His Name" (Ps. 138:2). Those who have that Word "go forth bearing precious seed" (Ps. 126:6). Yet God has entrusted His precious Word, His promises, His laws and His commandments to your care; yours to preach, and what is at least equally vital, **yours to preserve and protect from corruption.**

Like Paul, we have been "put in trust with the Gospel" (1 Thess. 2:4). A trustee is one in whom the trustor can have confidence, can rely on to carry out his wishes. You are "ministers of Christ, stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1).

*"It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful" (v. 2).*

You have been commanded to "Keep that which is committed to thy trust" (1 Tim. 6:20). These commands you (of Central) have not kept; you have allowed "men of your own selves speaking perverse things" to enter in (Acts 20:30), and remain in your assemblies as members of the House of God, which is supposed to be the "pillar and ground of the Truth." By inspiration of God Paul describes them as "grievous wolves." Harsh as this may seem, it is God's disclosure of His feeling toward those who reject His Word. Read 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan the priest and the Levite who crossed the road to avoid helping a wounded man, were involved, although they never struck him; their calling was to help the sick and the afflicted but "they passed by on the other side," **indifferent to a situation which they knew needed their help.**

In the parable of the Good Shepherd the hireling—the hired shepherd—was involved in the death of many sheep, although he never personally killed any of them. He was hired to protect the lives of the sheep, it was his duty to drive off the wolves, even at the risk of bodily harm, instead of which he ran away so as not to hear the cries of the sheep or see their destruction. But he was nevertheless responsible for their death. You can, if you will, apply the lesson to yourself.

The majority of the members of the Church of the Living God are suffering from a fading sense of individual responsibility. Called to be trustees of God's Word, they have not been watchful of that "which has been committed to their trust." They have not in recent years been "contending earnestly for the Faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

A large proportion of the appointed stewards of God's House have not properly administered their Master's business. They have allowed "vessels of dishonour" to sit (and work) side by side with the "vessels of honour" in their Master's house and have not "purged themselves from these" (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

*Verse 21 is worthy of very serious thought, since we are told that it is only those who have so "purged themselves from these" who are fit for the Master's use.*

Almost all of those who have been chosen to "guard the deposit," "the pearl of great price," have demonstrated that they "have this treasure in earthen vessels" and "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches and the lust of other things entering in have choked the word" (Mark 4:19). They seem unmindful of their duty as "watchmen" guarding that very valuable deposit of which they are caretakers.

The Body of Christ is (to use bro. Watkins' figure) today sick, very sick and from various ailments, and from recent reports that illness has reached almost epidemic proportions.

*"Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?"*

—bro. W. M. Biggar, 5458 Village Green, Los Angeles 16, Calif.

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Will all recording brethren, and all in isolation, please send us the following information:

1. Ecclesial address and phone.
  2. Meeting times.
  3. Recording brother's name, address and phone:
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