

The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Upholding the Truth since 1923.

Vol. XCI No. 8

AUGUST, 2003

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God Willing, The Berean Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

BOSTON, Mass. – S.S. 9:30 am; Memorial, 10:45 am; Mid-week Study Class, Wed. 7:30 pm. Meetings held at 310 Washington St., Dedham, MA 02026. Bro. Paul Garvey, 11 Maureen Way, Plymouth, MA 02340 508-224-6840

My dearly beloved Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

It has been sometime since our last report from this corner of the Master's vineyard. We have had much reason for joy as well as sadness. We have been blessed with the company of many brethren and sisters from different ecclesias, Brother David and Sister Lois Van Pelt, and Sister Becky Van Pelt from New Jersey, Brother Harry Phillips, Brother Michael Phillips, Brother Johnny Phillips and Sister Mary Phillips from Ohio, Sister Carolyn Dylla from Houston, Sister Shiloh Brown, and Brother Rusty Stephen from Lampasas, and Sister Kay Stinchcomb from the Detroit ecclesia. We thank all these brethren and sisters for their much needed company and fellowship which we truly enjoy, and to those brethren who supplied the words of exhortation we are truly thankful.

We regretfully report at this time, that on 12/22/02 the Boston ecclesia had to withdraw their fellowship from Brother Anthony and Sister Ann Marsico, for walk contrary to the commands of Christ. We sincerely hope that our Brother and Sister will reassess their position and come back into fellowship and continue that walk Zionward in this most dreary time of evil.

We are also with saddened hearts, at the departure of our Brother Mike and Sister Leslie Morrell, who left this wonderful area of the country where it never rains, for the land of sun in New Mexico. Brother Mike's employment situation was the reason for the move. We wish them God speed in their new endeavors, especially setting up an ecclesia in that area of the country that will shine forth brightly in this sin polluted world. But if they tire of all that warm weather in the Southwest we will welcome them back with open arms and a loving heart.

On a much happier note Sister Terri Davey was accepted into the Berean fellowship after meeting with the examining brethren on 6/12/03, and also Brother Mike Daniels was accepted into fellowship on 5/25/03 after meeting with the examining brethren. On 2/21/03 we were fortunate enough to witness the obedience of another of Adams race who put on the saving name of Christ, Joshua Garvey was baptized after a good confession of his faith, it is most reassuring to those within the household of faith that our Heavenly Father is still calling out a people for His name, that will one day stand before the Master to prayerfully hear those words of well done thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Brethren and sisters may this be the lot that will fall to each and every one of us in that day that we prayerfully plead will come tomorrow.

With much love in the one hope,
Bro. Paul Garvey

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

DETROIT FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 18 - 19, 2003
Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, 586-790-2156
(Please Note: This is one week later than last time).

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Mar 19 - 22, 2004
Bro. Phillip Hughes 25 Hoel-Y-Gelli Fforchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid-Glamorgan, South Wales, U.K., CF44 6LN, phone 011-441-685-870254

FAITH—HOPE—CHARITY

First Paul tells us in this chapter—now abideth these three, Faith—Hope and Charity (which we know to be love [Agape love]).

So here we have faith, hope and love. But then it starts getting confusing—by this I mean, if we take that first one—Faith—we find this same Apostle in Hebrews telling us “without faith it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God”

And then we have the apostle James telling us that “Faith without works is DEAD, being alone.

Now let’s see what we have so for---there is no way we can please God unless we have FAITH!! But faith by itself, if not accompanied by works is not going to do us much good — (and that is probably because works is the standard by which we will be judged.)

And James goes on to show that our WORKS is a demonstration of all of our faith. But let’s get back to the first of the three listed in this chapter—which is FAITH. The Bible has a lot to say about faith. — some of the things we are told are:

1. The just shall live to by FAITH.
2. We walk by FAITH and not by site.
3. By Grace we are saved through FAITH.
4. We should continue in the FAITH, grounded and settled.
5. We are to hold fast the profession of our FAITH.
6. Paul said he had finished his course---he had kept the FAITH.
7. Finally we’re told---there is one Lord, one FAITH and one baptism.

So now I can see that FAITH and WORKS are important elements to salvation.—I can see that---I think I am beginning to understand this!!!

And then I read what Peter has to say --- ADD to you’re FAITH!!! --- do you mean there is more? --- am I to understand that FAITH and WORKS are not enough? --- I need to add more stuff? Yes and you do says Peter --- you have to add VIRTUE --- KNOWLEDGE --- TEMPERANCE --- PATIENCE --- GODLINESS --- BROTHERLY KINDNESS and CHARITY.

I can tell you one thing right now, —if you are going to be a true servant --- you have a lot of things to keep up with and remember!!!

Now the second virtue listed in this 13th chapter of first Corinthians is HOPE.

Now we all have had hopes --- dreams --- desires and aspirations, --- but this is not that kind of HOPE.

This kind of hope is not tangible nor can get to be ascertained in this life. But it is rather a “favorable and confident expectation that what is hoped for will assuredly come to pass.

So what do we know about this HOPE?

1. That we are saved by HOPE.
2. That we are called in the one HOPE of our calling.
3. That we are to lay hold upon the HOPE that is set before us.
4. There we are to give a reason for the HOPE that is in us.

But yet we are told that “hope that is seen is not hope.---for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?” --- That is why we live by FAITH and not by sight.

Okay,---now let me see---I have got to have FAITH—VIRTUE---KNOWLEDGE---TEMPERANCE---PATIENCE---GODLINESS---BROTHERLY KINDNESS---CHARITY---and WORKS --- Oh yeah, there is also HOPE.

And now we come to the last one on the list, which is CHARITY or LOVE.

And what are we to understand about this LOVE?

True love, (and we are talking about Agape love,) whether exercised toward the Brethren or toward men in general is not an impulse from the feelings. It does not run with the natural inclinations, nor does it concern itself only upon those for whom it has affection, --- because true love seeks

the welfare of all, and works no ill to any. It seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith. --
- But, first and foremost, agape love and God as it's primary object. And it expresses itself to God by implicit obedience to His commands.

As Brother Rene Growcott stated in "Search me O God"

"Love of God. That is the ultimate. That is life. That is peace. That is power. That is everything. That he is the Pearl of Great Price for which a man gives away all he has---and is thereby infinitely enriched. The "of" is significantly ambiguous. It is not just love FOR God or love FROM God. It is the inseparable unity of both, --- necessarily puny from the human side, a transforming flood from the divine side: but necessarily total for both. The mutual totality is the essence. Love is a total giving without reserve. "Love" has many meanings, but its supreme meaning is a perfect two-way union of heart and mind. How do we achieve the exquisite, absolute peace of its perfection? Principally---almost entirely---it is simply a yielding and a self-emptying. All good and perfect gifts come from God and must come from God; and love is the ultimate, crowning good. Man cannot create it. Men cannot create anything. He must seek it from above, as a flower seeks life from the sun. Man's contribution is the yearning and the desire: the rigorous self-emptying of everything else; of every other love. That is, every other love that could mar, or obscure, or dilutes the perfection of this love. The "love" that pours forth to all creation is the result and flower and fruit of this love: the second commandment, whose fulfillment follows inevitably upon the achievement of the first commandment. The love of God, and it alone, has the power to change fleshliness to spirituality---filth to cleanliness---ugliness to beauty---if we will only have the wisdom to choose beauty---and faith and courage to yield ourselves wholly to it without reserve."

The Bible clearly reflects Brother Rene's thoughts when it tells us:

1. That God is love (we had in our hymn.)
2. That perfect love casteth out fear.
3. You're my disciples, if you have love one toward another.
4. A new commandment I write unto you---that ye Love one another.
5. God so loved of the world that he gave his only begotten son.
6. Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Okay, I can see the importance of love --FAITH--hope--works and all the rest. But it really gets confusing when he says that love is greater than all these other things (which are also an essential part of salvation). He

says, if I don't have love I become as a sounding brass and a tinkling symbol. And that if I have all the knowledge I can ever want---and understand all mysteries---and I could figure out all the Prophecies---and even though I had all FAITH to remove mountains---but in spite of all of this, if I do not possess love -- I amount to nothing.

No matter what I do in this life---if I do not do it with love---it profits me nothing.

Now just why would Paul put so much weight and emphasis on LOVE? -- Because he said the greatest of these three was LOVE!!!

And Paul's reasoning on this matter is confirmed by our Master himself. Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment?---To which he promptly replied:

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment --- and the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, on these two commands lay ALL the law and the prophets".

We are told in another place that love is the FULFILLING of the law of God.

And Peter tells us "and ABOVE ALL THINGS have fervent love among yourselves: for love shall cover a multitude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8)

And then it finally occurred to me why love was utmost in the mind of the Apostles!

All the things we've talked about this morning--- FAITH --- HOPE --- WORKS --- VIRTUE --- KNOWLEDGE --- TEMPERANCE --- PATIENCE --- GODLINESS ---- BROTHERLY KINDNESS are all encompassed and included in perfect AGAPE LOVE. --- So if you have IT -- then you have all these attributes in one word.

LOVE is not just hope---LOVE is not just FAITH---LOVE can not be defined by only one of these things,--- but all of these things are a part of and comprise the true meaning of LOVE.

I would like to read a poem that demonstrates this very point. --It is entitled "And God said "No" -- The author is anonymous.

I asked God to take away my pride. And God said "No". He said it was not for Him to take away, but for me to give it up.

I asked God to make my handicapped child whole. And God said "No". He said her spirit was whole, her body was only temporary.

I asked God to grant me patience. And God said “No”. He said patience is a by-product of tribulations. It isn’t granted, it is earned.

I asked God to give me happiness. And God said “No”. He said He gives me blessings, --- happiness is up to me.

I asked God to spare me pain. And God said “No”. He said suffering draws you apart from worldly cares and brings you closer to me.

I ask God to make my spirit grow. And God said “No”. He said I must grow on my own. But he will prune me to make me fruitful.

I ask for all things that I might enjoy life. And God said “No”. He said I will give you life, that you may enjoy all things.

I asked God to help me love others, as much as he loves me. And God said,....Ahh, finally you have the idea.

We meet here this morning to memorialize the death and resurrection of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. And we’re told that “Greater love hath no man than this – that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

He willingly and lovingly laid down his life for us (his friends) – But are we his friends? ---For he said “you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.” --- So to continue to be friends with Christ, we MUST OBEY his commands. And we are told that his commandments are not grievous.

On another occasion he said “IF you LOVE me, keep my commandments.” --- Here is that all powerful and all encompassing word again --- LOVE.

But have you never thought about the reverse of this quote? I mean if we don’t keep Christ’s commandments, --- does that demonstrate a lack of LOVE for him on our part?

We will have presented to us, this afternoon, our relationship with God and Christ based on these very commandments given by our Master. We would do well as brothers and sisters in Christ, to heed the walk and warnings contained therein. For what we do, think, act, and how we walk now in this lifetime will determine our fate before the judge of the whole earth.

In closing I would like for you to think about the words contained in Philippians 4:8.

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Bro. Jerry Connolly

By Grace Are Ye Saved Through Faith

What is this faith, concerning which it is said, “By grace are ye saved, through faith?” There are many descriptions of faith; but almost all the definitions outside of the Scripture confuse the issue. It is the flesh taking hold of a beautiful idea and distorting it to hide the beauty of what God has set down for us. The world teaches, “faith is the simplest of all things, and perhaps because of its simplicity it is more difficult to explain.” If it was not trying to hide the simplicity that is in Christ, it would not be hard to explain or understand.

What is faith? The apostle Paul when writing to the Hebrews wrote, Hebrews 11:1 KJV, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Bro. Thomas, in his treatise on the Revelations, Eureka: an Exposition of the Apocalypse, gave a slightly different translation of this verse. He wrote, “The word ‘elpizomenon’ rendered ‘of things hoped for,’ is the present participle passive, the sign of which is ‘being;’ the word should therefore be translated, ‘of things being hoped for.’ Thus rendering the words of Paul to give us a deeper appreciation of what he was saying, “Now faith is the substance of things being hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

This shows us that faith is made up of three parts; knowledge, belief, and trust. To have faith one must know what is being hoped for. What God has promised to those who love Him. Believe in those things which make us wise in the way of righteousness. And trust that God will fulfill His promise to all who love His name.

Knowledge is what comes first. (Romans 10:14 KJV) “And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” We must be informed of a fact before we can possibly believe it. It is not something we have heard or learned and passed it out of mind, forgotten as the breakfasts we had last year. It is something we know in our very hearts. It has all the substance as the book we are holding, the house we live in, and the Bible we read.

It is true that it is only by study that this essential knowledge comes. Paul tells the Romans in 10:17 (KJV) “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We must hear, in order that we may know what is to be believed. A measure of knowledge is essential to faith, hence the importance of getting knowledge. Only a man in whom the word of Truth dwells richly by reason of constant reading and study of the Scriptures is full of the “things being hoped for.” Whatever strengthens faith helps the victory. We have nothing in our day to strengthen faith

except the written Word and the communion with God in prayer, which that Word produces.

We do not learn of God by means of watching TV, sports, or as time passing by. It is only while constantly, diligently searching the Scriptures that we learn what God teaches concerning Christ and the Kingdom. "Before the things of Christ can become a power in our minds, which is able to compete with the things of the natural man, they must be diligently and constantly renewed by special wisdom, in reading the Word of God, and prayer, and meetings, and the various other ways in which the memory may be refreshed and the knowledge strengthened and increased. This is truer, because the things of Christ, in many points, are distasteful to the natural man." This is the foe which the power of faith will enable us to vanquish. It will enable us to say to the desires of the flesh, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

We may think to ourselves that we love God fiercely. Let us literally think on the significance of this. Our lives are divided into three parts, sleep, work, and opportunity. We may be able to think on the things of God while we work and we may not. But clearly we have a choice when we are not working. Do we study to gain the mastery over our own natural desires, to readily and willingly give our minds over to Scriptural learning, to give due consideration to Him who alone is worthy of it? It is written, (Matthew 6:21 KJV), "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." It does us all well to remember our baptism was just the beginning of knowledge not the end of learning.

At our time of baptism we have an understanding of the "milk" of the Word. As faith begins with knowledge, so then the mind goes on to believe that these things are true. Baptism is the first act of faith and belief. We meet together each and every Sunday because of our belief in the promises which bind us to a common hope. We recognize the fact, with full appreciation, that only those baptized brethren who "by patient continuance in well doing," will be saved in the kingdom of the Deity. In other words, all the baptized "who walk after the flesh" shall die the Second Death. They will die and cease to exist, not even as a memory. We believe these truths as much as we believe any other facts.

The difference between common faith and saving faith lies mainly in the subjects upon which it is practiced. If we believe what God has promised we will study what he has left on record for our learning. We have the testimony of it in our hands. The Bible alone is proof of it, if we had no other evidence in the world. In there are written "great and precious promises." Those who have little faith in God, little belief in what must shortly come to pass, and little reverence for Him, can have but very small

interest in it. We know what has been promised to us or we could not have been baptized. We believe the promises or we would not have been baptized. We have read of Noah, who it is written of in Hebrews, (11:7 KJV) "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." He had faith that what God said would come to pass. He believed what he was told. It was his conviction that galvanized him into action. He did those things which he was commanded.

There are over 100 commands for us in the New Testament. How motivated are we to obey what was written? Does the "old man of the flesh" convince us the ways of righteousness are difficult and time consuming? Are friends, neighbors, and co-workers able to draw us away from valuable time spent investigating the ways of righteousness? What do we actually believe? The easy, fun, self-righteous ways of the flesh or the sober workings of the mind centered on the ways of God? One gives pleasure for a season the other for eternity. If we be certain of the "great and precious promises" given to us in the testimony of the Scriptures then we have but one choice. Our salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to the divine ideas, principles, and disposition, exhibited in the Scriptures.

In Elpis Israel, our namesake, was mentioned with the following sentiment, "Let the example of the noble minded Bereans be ours. They searched the Scriptures daily to see if the things taught by the apostle were worthy of belief; "therefore they believed" (Acts 17:12). If then not even the preaching of an apostle was credited unaccompanied by Scriptural investigation, is it not infinitely more incumbent on us that we should bring to a like test the opinions and precepts of the uninspired and fallible professional theologians of our day?" Take the lesson of daily Scriptural study to heart. The knowledge and belief of these things was the powerful and transforming motive which caused Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus to obey and serve the One True God. Believe the witness of God just as you believe the testimony of your own father or friend, (1 John 5:9 KJV). "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."

Faith is primarily an idea of trust. If a thing is true, it is therefore worthy of trust. Trust is the lifeblood of faith, there is no saving faith without it. Brother Roberts wrote, "Consider: What is faith, but trust in His Word? What is tried faith, but faith put to the test by Him? What is healing but His act who says, "I wound and I heal"? And whose are the stripes, but His, Whom it pleased to bruise the saving Son, with whose stripes we

might be healed? Who so royal as the King of glory, whether in Father or Son, to whom every knee shall bow? What is sin-nature, but nature cursed by God because of disobedience? What is righteousness, but the doing of His perfect will?¹”

(Mark 10:15 KJV) “Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” If we look at young children we find perfect trust. Kids see their parents as omniscient beings that know everything and can do anything. They are the source of care, knowledge, and comfort. A child trusts his parent to take care of him, to love him, and protect him. This is the trust we must have in our Heavenly Father. The trust required by faith.

Faith is not a speculative thing; for faith believes facts of which it is sure. It is not an impractical, dreamy thing; for faith trusts, and stakes its destiny upon the truth of revelation. This is one way of describing what faith is. But there is another way so let me try again. Faith is believing that Christ is what He is said to be, and that He will do what He has promised to do. That God will not be slack in His promises. The Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ as being the Son of God, made of Adam’s sinful human flesh, being perfect in His character and being made an offering for sin. The sacred records further tell us that He rose from the dead, that He makes intercession for us, and that He will shortly come again “to judge the world in righteousness, and his people with equity.” We are most firmly to believe that it is even so; for this is the testimony of God the Father when He said, “This is my beloved Son; hear ye him.” This also is testified by the Holy Spirit; for the Spirit has borne witness to Christ, both in the inspired Word and by divers miracles. We are to believe this testimony to be true.

Faith believes that since Jesus said, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” It must be true; and if we get this living Water from Christ, it will abide in us, and will well up within us in streams of life. Whatever Christ has promised to do, He will do, and we must believe this, so as to look for pardon, preservation, and eternal glory from His hands, according as He has promised them to believers in Him. (Psalm 119:41-42 KJV), “Let thy mercies come also unto me, O LORD, even thy salvation, according to thy word. So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me: for I trust in thy word.” Commit yourself to the merciful God. Place your hope on the gracious gospel. Commit your life to the one Saving Name.

Bro. Beryl Snyder

Hymn 174

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING; take no care for the things of this world.
THE LORD IS AT HAND; for he will soon appear.
REMEMBER THE GLORY, that His glory may be ours,
REMEMBER THE LAND, as the earth will be filled with His glory.
BE FERVENT IN SPIRIT; be earnest and sincere in your attitude,
BE INSTANT IN PRAYER; pray constantly, about everything.
WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION; w-o-r-k—do everything you can do
to get into the Kingdom. Want it. Desire it. Yearn for it. Reach for it. Work
for it. Do it NOW.
WITH TREMBLING AND FEAR, remembering that we are still
unworthy servants.

BE PURE IN THE DOCTRINE; if any man preaches any other gospel
unto you, let him be accursed.
BE STRONG IN THE WORD; study to show thyself approved unto God.
PRESERVE IN ITS BRIGHTNESS
THE TWO-EDGED SWORD, for the sword of the Spirit is the Word of
God.
THE THINGS OF THE KINGDOM, the good news,
THE THINGS OF THE NAME, and glad tidings,
CONFESSED IN JEHOVAH—a good confession of your faith in the
gospel,
ABSOLVE US FROM SHAME, through forgiveness of our sins.

FULFIL YE THE JOY OF
THE FATHER AND SON. It is said there is joy in heaven over each
sinner that repents.
BY SEEKING THE PEACE WHICH
THEIR COUNSEL HATH WON. Let the peace of God rule in your
hearts—the peace which passeth all understanding.
OUR PRAY’RS AND OUR PRAISES belong to God, desired of God,
sweet incense rising to Him.
GOD’S GRACE WILL COMMAND: Grace—the favorable attention,
love, care, comfort, and guidance from God toward us.
REMEMBER THE GLORY, our only Hope.
REMEMBER THE LAND, our only Desire.

DANIEL – STUDY AND PRAYER

“Then we look at Daniel himself. What do we find him doing? Studying the book of Jeremiah the prophet, from which he understood that seventy years would be the limit of Israel’s desolation in Babylon. We may here note that we are in good company in the habit we have acquired of giving heed to and being interested in the writings of the prophets. If we cannot in this manner comfort ourselves with the countenance and approbation of the wise of this generation, we have the satisfaction of knowing that the prophet Daniel would be with us, if he were in the land of the living, in the place we give to the prophets in our studies and affections. One such is worth an army of professors.....The effect (of his attention to what had been revealed to Jeremiah) was a very profound interest and a very earnest solicitude concerning the affairs of Israel – a feeling so deep and strong as to lead him to make those affairs the subject of “prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes” (Further Seasons of Comfort page 174).

We have seen on more than one occasion how Daniel sought for the meaning of the various visions that were revealed to him. He had an intense desire to understand the things that were related to the plan and purpose of God. Daniel chapter 9 opens with this faithful servant of the Deity engaged in the study of the Scriptures, the hallmark of God’s truly faithful children in every generation. They have always been absorbed with the things of the Spirit, always desiring to learn more of the Divine mind, always desiring to be filled with God’s moral atmosphere, and always ensuring that they combine prayer with their life of holiness.

We have in this ninth chapter a powerful exhortation to study and an example of earnest prayer. Do we study the Scriptures enough, and “pray to God always”? And do we apply the things that we read? When we were baptised, we no doubt had a determination to learn more about the Bible. We were going to study the Word of God, and develop our prayers to the Holy One of Israel. We may remember the questions being asked at our baptismal interview on this subject. The ‘Baptismal Interview’ questions that we probably have a copy of ask:

No.59 – “Would it be possible to get eternal life without continual recourse to prayer?”

No.60 – “Would it be possible to get eternal life without regular study and meditation upon God’s word?”

We know the answers to these questions, but as we look back over a year, or a few years, or many years, perhaps we feel a little uncomfortable now. Perhaps we have not put into practice these things as we intended to do. Continual recourse to prayer and the regular study (not just a quick read at the end of the day) may not have been the fabric of our lives in the Truth. Added to which, life’s distractions and responsibilities may have increased, and some things may have become more appealing than they should have.

We really should be evaluating how much we have grown in spiritual things. We need to take stock of ourselves and make those necessary course corrections “while it is called today”, while we have time! The example of Daniel should provide us with an impetus in this direction.

Let us then peer into the private life of Daniel via the Word. Let us try to imagine this faithful servant in his own room somewhere in the busy city of Babylon, sitting perhaps by his open window (Daniel 6:10). We are able to see him in a world very similar to our own. The pleasures, entertainments and amusements would have abounded on every side outside of his dwelling. There would have been an immense amount of things to do that could have distracted Daniel. But we find him in his house, quietly studying the Word of God, shutting out the world’s transient attractions, and applying his mind to eternal things. This was no doubt typical of his daily life as we considered in our study of chapter 6 (cp verse 5). While the activities of his daily work in the palace would have engaged his attention in the day, his own time was devoted to study.

Are these inspired writings just pieces of information for us? Are they just part of the background? Or are we being taught once again the vital importance of diligently studying the Word (2 Timothy 2:15)?

So what part of the Scriptures was Daniel looking up, and why? The first verse tells us that it was “in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus”. This was the year in which Darius was made “king over the realm of the Chaldeans”. In chapter 5 we read:

“In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.” (verses 30-31)

So Babylon had been overthrown! This was not a surprise of course, for those acquainted with the prophecies concerning the demise of Babylon, or who had heard the denunciations made against Babylon by Seraiah. For example, we read in Jeremiah 51 the following words:

“And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; Then shalt thou say, O Yahweh,

thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever.

And it shall be, when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of Euphrates:

And thou shalt say, Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary.” (Verses 61-64)

Isaiah had also prophesied of the destruction of Babylon (see chapter 13 and 14), and had also made reference to the victory of Cyrus in chapter 45 and verse 1, even naming him approximately 200 years before he was born (see verse 4).

So Daniel would have been keenly awaiting these events. He would have been studying the signs of the times, just as we do today. Bro. Thomas makes the following remarks in *Elpis Israel* with regards to the purpose of prophecy:

“In ages past, God has had among the nations a people of His own. These are wise in the wisdom of God, and venerate His word above all things. Though not His counselors, He has graciously condescended to inform them what He intends to do before it comes to pass. Hence, it is testified by the prophet, that “the Lord God will surely do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” This revelation is made that His people’s faith may be confirmed and enlarged, and that in every generation they may know the signs and seasons to which they stand related. Knowing the signs, they are enabled to discern the times; and while consternation and dismay cause men’s hearts to fail, they are courageous, and rejoice in perceiving the approach of the kingdom of God” (page 323).

But it wasn’t just the fall of Babylon that Daniel was looking for, just as the fall of Mystical Babylon and the world powers is not the only thing we are looking for. Just as we wait for the Return of Christ and the setting up of the kingdom of God consequent upon the fall of the Kingdom of Men, so Daniel was waiting for the restoration of Israel that would follow the destruction of ancient Babylon.

He was in fact studying a particular part of the prophecy of Jeremiah. The words in Daniel 9 and verse 2 are:

“In the first year of his (Darius’) reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.”

Jeremiah had recorded this some years earlier:

"And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith Yahweh, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.” (Jeremiah 25: 12)

“For thus saith Yahweh, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.” (Jeremiah 29: 10)

If Babylon’s first invasion was B.C.606, then seventy years would bring us to B.C.536 and the fall of the Chaldean phase of the kingdom of men. The time had arrived for the desolations of Jerusalem to cease. Daniel was greatly looking forward to that, and the prayer which follows in Daniel chapter nine reflects the great sympathy which he had with the city that Yahweh had chosen to place His name, and the people who He had called out of Egypt. So moved was he by the events that his mind goes back to the past and the reason for the captivity. In this frame of mind, he sets his face to seek “Yahweh Elohim” in sackcloth and ashes, and even fasts (Verse 3). He was clearly in a state of mourning when the recent history of his people was contemplated, and it became the basis of his prayer.

The subject of Prayer in the Scriptures is a study on its own. There are many recorded instances of prayer throughout the Word, and as prayer is the most intimate form of communication with The Father, it deserves our careful attention. It has been suggested that a prayer contains three basic elements. The first is a beginning - a form of approach that recognises that we are addressing the Almighty Creator of the Universe. As such, we dare not take prayer lightly.

Secondly, a prayer will have content, or the reason for our prayer (e.g. thanksgiving, confession, and petition).

Lastly, prayer has a conclusion that continues to recognise that we have been communing with the High and Holy One of Israel. We can’t just burst in and out of the holy presence of Yahweh in a thoughtless manner. We enter the presence of a Great King. We leave with due respect and reverence, giving honour to Him, to whom it rightly belongs.

It is not our intention to follow every verse of this wonderful prayer that Daniel offers to the Most High, but if we follow the pattern suggested above, we are able to absorb the main points.

Firstly there is no question as to his reverential form of address, and the recognition of who he is speaking to. The Covenant Name is foremost in his words. He tells us that he prayed to Yahweh his Elohim – He who would be manifested in Mighty Ones. The Name which reminds us among

other things of the purpose of the Deity to fill the earth with His glory, via a people who have reflected the characteristics of that Name in the days of their probation. His opening words actually remind us of Exodus 34 (Verses 6 and 7) where the Name is proclaimed to Moses. The prayer begins thus:

“O Yahweh, the great and dreadful El, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.” Verse 4

From verse 5 to verse 18 we have the substance of Daniel’s prayer. Here we have a frank recognition of the sins of the people. There is no question of justifying their actions. They had departed from Yahweh’s precepts and judgements and done wickedly. They had not listened to the warning words of the prophets. They had not obeyed Yahweh or walked in His laws. The people had made no attempt to pray to God and turn from their iniquities.

To Daniel, it was obvious why the great calamities had befallen his people. It was written in the Law of Moses that this would happen (Verses 11 and 13)! And Yahweh was righteous (Verses 7 and 14). There was no question of injustice with Yahweh - though there was mercy and forgiveness with Him (Verse 9). As such, Daniel pleads for the divine anger to be turned away from Jerusalem (His holy city) and His holy mountain (Verse 16), and in words reminding us of Numbers 6: 25 Daniel expresses his petition as follows:

“Now therefore, O our Elohim, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for Yahweh’s sake.” (Verse 17)

We also note in Daniel’s prayer that he includes himself in the confession of sin. “We have sinned, and have committed iniquity....neither have we hearkened unto thy servants....etc” (see verses 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 etc). Daniel was not personally involved in the sins of the people. The terrible list of transgressions that Daniel refers to and which are documented in the prophetic writings, were not attributable to Daniel, who was a righteous man. Why then does he include himself?

There are many interesting thoughts arising from this form of confession. It certainly shows that Daniel was not “self righteous.” He was not distancing himself from the people like the Scribes and Pharisees did in the days of the Master. “I thank thee that I am not like other men are.....” (Luke 18:11). He was humble and interested in the exaltation of Yahweh, not the petty contrasting of oneself against another. He was of the people of God, and accepted his position with them, and like Moses, did not want to distance himself from them. This was the same as Ezra

(compare Ezra 9:6, and see Isaiah 64: 7). In fact, the prayers of these men reflect the prescribed mode of confession in captivity as outlined in the prayer of Solomon (see 2 Chronicles 6: 39). It was a prayer on behalf of the nation, and in no way indicated that the prophet was personally involved in the transgression.

Finally Daniel concludes his prayer in verse 19 (although the previous few verses indicate that his prayer was coming to a conclusion). We will also conclude this article with this verse, as the words can echo our own sentiments as we wait for the consummation of God’s purpose in the land, with the consciousness of our own failings.

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Signs and Events

“But alas for this wicked and adulterous generation; they have no taste or relish for the Word of God! They have more confidence in the “I promise to pay” of a bank bill, than faith in the “thus it is written” of the Sacred Writings. The Truth has lost its influence, it cannot move the people. Few, very few, obey the Gospel, because they love and are moved by the Truth. Unless they are excited by some touching songs, they sit like stocks and stones under the most Scriptural, powerful and rational appeals. What is the cause of this? It is referable to their having been preached into a state of moral imbecility by the fictions of their blind and infatuated guides, who have caused the way of Truth to be evil spoken of by their traditions; and, although a few, comparatively, will obey the call, and come out of Babylon, nothing but the plagues – the judicial visitations of an indignant and insulted Deity – will dispel the apathy, rouse the attention, and conquer the rebellion of the race of man.” (a reply to a letter from Baltimore, Maryland, by the late Bro. John Thomas).

In recent weeks, the Hengoe ecclesia has held four public lectures on the papacy. The lectures: The Origin of the Papacy; Should the Cruel Persecutions of the Past be Forgotten? The Doctrines of the Papacy at Variance with the Scriptures; and, The Downfall of Rome the Eternal City, were all advertised by way of posting leaflets in the local neighbourhood. During the course of our distribution, one young teenager asked what we were distributing and he was informed that it was an invitation to attend a Bible Lecture. The teenager asked “what is the Bible?” At first, we were shocked that someone the boy’s age genuinely didn’t know that the Bible is, but upon further reflection, we realize that the boy

is not in an isolated position; that in fact, there are probably now tens of thousands in the U.K., who once prided herself on being a Christian country, who wouldn't know what the Bible is and what it preached. This very fact is a sign of the times in which we live! Let us consider the words of Jeremiah the prophet: -

“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Yahweh is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but Yahweh shall arise upon thee, and His Glory shall be seen upon thee.”

Indeed, gross darkness, covers the earth. We've mentioned previously about the increase of homosexuality and we remain astounded at recent laws, passed in both Canada and the U.K., which passes on more rights to homosexuals than they've had since the time of Sodom!

In Canada, the definition of marriage is being deliberately altered to allow same-sex marriages. In Britain, just two weeks ago, a plethora of legislation came in to protect them and to give them equal rights as those enjoyed by a married couple in a normal relationship. For example, they now have the same pension rights, and right to property and other capital assets upon the death of their partner.

Further, a new Archbishop has recently been appointed in Reading (South East England) who is a practicing homosexual. This caused uproar amongst the Anglican Church who do not approve of practicing homosexual ministers, and the appointment has since been revoked to bring a calm to the storm. Interestingly, the official appointment of an archbishop has to be approved by both the Prime Minister and the Queen. When asked to intervene in the row between the Church of England and the Anglican Church, the Prime Minister pointed out that it is not right for politicians to become involved in religious matters (what Mr. Blair really means is that he doesn't want to lose votes in the next election!) and the Queen refrained from getting involved because “it was a matter for the Church to resolve!”

In the last week, we've had published in U.K. tabloids, the warning of the Archbishop of Canterbury, that we must “learn to become more tolerant” and “more understanding” of people whom God loves. Gross darkness doesn't only cover the people of the earth, but the corrupt and unholy religious systems too!

The Scriptures must be our guide and God's judgement is “those who commit such things are worthy of death”.

“And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet ... haters of God ... who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” (Romans 1 v 26-32).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6 v 9-11).

“IN THE AGE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, PEOPLE WILL BE EDUCATED ACCORDING TO WHAT GOD KNOWS IS GOOD FOR THEM AND NOT ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN FANCIES, SCIENTIFICALLY BASED OR OTHERWISE”.

In a recent magazine article, on the subject of the chaos in Iraq, a brother points out that western democracy is “no better” than the evil autocratic rule of Saddam Hussein: -

“Recently we have witnessed the overthrow of the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. During the years that the media has been reporting the excesses and atrocities of his regime, people have become accustomed to the worst features of a bad dictatorship. As it was stated, with the end of the government of Saddam Hussein “the whole world is now a safer place in which to live” and that is probably true. Now that a new government must be built to stabilise the country, we are about to witness the influence of democracy on the people of Iraq. Although it will likely lead to a correction of the evil intent that was in the mind of the dictator, one wonders how much better the people of Iraq will be under the influence of the spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity. Is this the best form of government the world has to offer the Iraqi people?”

The Bible states that “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34). Strictly, it isn't the form of government itself that exalts a nation, but whether or not,

that form of government leads to justice, peace and righteousness. Using the Bible's standard of righteousness, the evils of democracy are just as apparent as the evils of a bad dictatorship. It has often been said that in a democracy it is possible for anyone to be elected leader of a country, but reality shows that it is the rich, the popular, and the one with the greatest promise for the party to win in national elections that gets chosen. Presently, righteousness is not a criteria for choosing the leaders of national parties and it is most likely that if a candidate was righteous according to Bible standards, that he or she would not be chosen. The freedoms of democracy allow righteousness to exist, but the same freedoms accelerate its corruption.

At one of the lowest times in history of the people of Israel, when the Kingdom was weak and the government approximated rule by democracy, God's assessment of them was stated as follows: "An appalling and horrible thing has happened in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule at their direction; and my people love to have it so, but what will you do when the end comes? (Jeremiah 5:30-31 RSV). It is quite obvious from God's assessment of that society that He is not impressed with the principle of "majority rule". For those who know God's assessment of human nature the problem with democracy is related to liberties and freedoms practiced (Mark 7:20-23). Human nature is much more inclined to follow the broad way leading to destruction than the narrow restricted track leading to life (Matthew 7:13). For instance, why is it that with the abundance of evidence showing cigarette smoke kills 40,000 people a year in Canada and with an enormous cost to the health care system, that the government doesn't step in and ban smoking everywhere? We cannot simply blame a government for this problem but there can be no doubt that democracy and the freedoms associated with it are a root cause.

The Bible is abundantly clear that the government of the Age of Righteousness will not be a democracy, but a Kingdom. "Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice" (Isaiah 32:1 RSV). The fact that there never has been such a government on earth is testimony to the fact that this event has yet to occur. Jesus has not yet returned to the city of Jerusalem to assume the role as king upon the throne of David (Luke 1:32-33). However, the Lord Jesus Christ is busily preparing for that event as he continues to seek for people characterised by righteousness to rule with him (Revelation 3:21). The word of God assures the reader that the King involved in this Kingdom to come will be

righteous and that the characteristic by which his government will be known will be one of righteousness (Isaiah 11:1-5).

One of the areas where everyday life in the Kingdom of God will dramatically depart from that of democracy is in the area of human rights. The universal Declaration of Human Rights as lauded by the United Nations states the following: "Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings enjoy freedom of speech and belief, and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people" (The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Switzerland). There is no doubt about the barbarous acts committed by people in the past who did not acknowledge that their victims had any rights at all. It may also be true that the highest aspiration of the common people will seem to be the said freedoms. However, God is not limited to human thinking and that is a very good thing, for He says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9). What God has in mind in the age of righteousness surpasses the highest aspirations of the common people.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice and observance (Article 18). Presently, this freedom is practiced in Western society and has allowed for the multitude of different religions that exist and prosper there; however, all is not well with the exercise of this 'right'. Some religions are based on fact, and some are based on fiction. Some religions promote the virtues of God, and some promote the virtues of men. This same freedom that allows men and women to find the Truth, also shelters those who promote evil and falsehood. In the Age of Righteousness, people will be educated according to what God knows is good for them and not according to their own fancies, scientifically based or otherwise. The freedoms proclaimed in article 18 will be rendered obsolete and superseded by a code of ethics of far greater value to society {end of quote}.

"YAHWEH HATH A CONTROVERSY WITH THE NATIONS, HE WILL PLEAD WITH ALL FLESH; HE WILL GIVE THEM THAT ARE WICKED TO THE SWORD" (Jeremiah 25v31).

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS – the crisis grows in the Middle East. Six days after the Akbar peace agreement brokered by Mr. Bush between Ariel Sharon and his Palestinian counterpart, a Hamas suicide bomber killed 24 and injured 60 in Jerusalem. The terrorist disguised as a Jewish Orthodox, blew up a bus in Jaffa Street. People were literally roasted alive in their seats. Packed with nails the bomb produced horrific injuries. A deathly silence after the bomb went off, was followed by terrible screaming of people in agony. Israel replied within hours by a missile attack on Hamas leaders in Gaza. A second missile attack followed soon after killing Hamas agents and five bystanders. This all left Mr. Bush's peace deal in tatters with talk of international forces between the two parties.

In Iraq, chaos increases. Forty U.S. soldiers have been killed by ambushes and sniping since the war ended. A Daily Telegraph article, quoted British sources that U.S. administration had lost control, had no strategy and was failing to deliver essential services to the people. Unrest is increasing. The U.S. has mounted a major offensive North West of Baghdad, Operation Desert Scorpion. But today thousands of former Iraqi soldiers protested angrily in Baghdad, two were shot dead by U.S. forces.

EUROPE – The rise of a vast Totalitarian monster on the world stage looms ever closer, but people seem blind to it. The new constitution will virtually strip away sovereignty from independent states, merging them into an all powerful Brussels based unelected authority, like a new Roman Empire, professing democracy but in fact a dictatorship or oligarchy forcing its own will on all by laws, myriads of laws. Hitler imposed his will by the jack boot only 60 years ago. But the principle of domination and absolutism versus freedom is the same. This is Europe, subjection to law emanating from the all powerful centre. Pagan Rome had vast law making powers emanating from its powerful senate in the Roman Capital. The Justinian code, brought together by the Emperor Justinian, still underpins much of European Law. The Catholic Church had its cannon law, thousands of laws preserving the power and control of the Catholic Church all over Europe and England. As Samuel Smiles points out in his book on the Huguenots, the church saw the invention of printing as its greatest enemy and tried to stamp it out, shutting down the printing press of Gutenberg and Dr. Faustus saying he was in league with the devil. But printing and the printing of Bibles could not be stopped. Clandestine printing houses sprang up all over Europe. Cardinal Wolsey wrote to the Pope warning him

that if he didn't root out printing, printing would root him out. He realised that if people could read the Bible for themselves, they would see that they did not need to go through a priest, but could go to God directly themselves through the Lord Jesus. This would undermine the Mass and hence the entire church was imperiled. Tyndale was garroted in Amsterdam trying to smuggle Bibles into England. Many were smuggled in within wine casks.

The constitution of the U.K. was set up to defend democracy, or civil and religious liberty, against the arbitrary exercise of power by any one individual or group of individuals, following James II attempts to return to Britain to Catholic control. William of Orange came over from Holland and enshrined the Bill of Rights, which from then on preserved and has safeguarded Westminster Parliament against the exercise of arbitrary or despotic power. Mr. Blair seems to have breached this by his constitutional changes, in which he has personally, without recourse to parliamentary debate or discussion of the issues, exercised arbitrary or despotic power, itself unconstitutional, and an impeachable offence. The changes to the Law-making-authority he is implementing, could have unforeseen consequences for British civil and religious freedoms that we take so easily for granted. The changes he is proposing are almost certainly designed to facilitate integration with Europe with which he is besotted. Everything is being harmonised. Soon it will be religion. This is how it was under Constantine. The Catholic religion was made the official religion of the Empire. The implication of this was that unless a person was a Catholic he was not entitled to own land, property, to trade or form assemblies, denied basic freedoms including loss of liberty and life. So that ever since, the two witnesses (civil and religious liberty) have fled into and taken refuge in the wilderness to escape from this despotic mind and crushing tendency and enjoy their freedom to worship God according to the Bible and their own conscience (Revelation 12:6 and 11:2-3).

Brethren and Sisters, the Kingdoms of Men and their evil religious systems are about to be overthrown. God is currently preparing His Kingdom by taking a few out of the Gentiles a people for His glorious name. Those few of us who have been called are being moulded by trials and tribulations to shape us for much better times to come, when the democratic rule of today will forever be replaced by a righteous autocrat who shall "rule with a rod of iron", with justice and with equity. Are we ready?

Bro Stephen Male

Natural Extremes

We need all the helps we can get in our struggle with this tendency that draws to death. No fear of going to an extreme. The danger of extreme is all the other way. Extreme in a spiritual direction (such as there is any possibility of running into), is self-corrective, because the commands of the Spirit, daily pondered, will remind the liable extremist that there are other duties besides reading the Bible, and studying the truth, and prayer; that there are duties in many things pertaining to this life which require attention, and which yet may be so performed as to be as much a doing of the will of God as any act in which we can engage.

But the other extreme is not self-corrective: it binds its slaves in stronger and stronger fetters. The man, who goes to an extreme in saving money, becomes more and more saving. The man, who goes to an extreme in developing business, becomes more and more devoted to that object, and increasingly indifferent to everything else. The man, who goes to an extreme in careful provision for family exigencies, becomes more and more careful and anxious, until the words of Christ, which tell us to be without carefulness, cease to have the least meaning for him.

All these classes of extremists - and they are legion - sink at last into a state of spiritual torpor, in which all sensibility is gone. The present world, which they have loved, has slain them, while they continue to think they are alive. They imagine their spiritual interests will take care of themselves; at all events, they can spare neither the time nor the money necessary for the promotion of them, and so precious life is wasted and thrown away, and the case of the fool with the barns is enacted over again. The result is inevitable: the man comes to die, and awakes to the fact that he has lived a carnal and useless life; that he has laid up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. Or Christ comes, and the same terrible disclosure opens to his eyes with still more staggering effect; for where will all the careful provisions and snug arrangements of this life be when the Redeemer stands at last in this latter day upon the earth?

Everyone instinctively feels that in that day our personal affairs will have vanished into nothing; and that the only valuable possession will be the answer of a good conscience in being able to think that we have used life, in things few or many, as servants of the Lord Jesus Christ - as good stewards of the grace of God - and have not unfaithfully appropriated it to ourselves. In that day, even such an extreme as half a fortune given to the poor (Luke 19:8), will be a prudent and pleasant investment, when a

careful hoard for self and family will seem as a fire in the bones - a millstone burden that may sink the possessor to the depths of the sea.

Prudence is reckoned all one way just now, because God is not in the reckoning. Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself. But when the true reckoning day arrives, men will return and discern between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not. It will then be discovered that the faithful use of unrighteous mammon does not consist of its careful consecration to personal and family interests (in which all the faithless world shine conspicuous); but in using it as trustees for Christ in this day of his shame in the many ways he has indicated. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Every man is his own judge at present, but the earnest competitor for Christ's approval will fear to be implicated in the unfaithfulness of any who teach or practise in opposition to his commandments, even and more particularly if such profess subjection to his name.

The false maxims of a professor are more dangerous than those of the world, because those of the world have little weight, while disciples are apt to be influenced to their hurt by believers who have not learnt the practical principles of the house of God. We must be on our guard, and take our cue from the word only. "If any man speak not according to this," we know how to estimate his sayings. Such care will only be offensive to the children of the flesh; the children of God delight to be measured by the word, and to be brought to its standard. They may appear inconvenient and even odious at present, but the end will justify their attitude.

Bro. Robert Roberts – Seasons of Comfort

The Deep Things Of God: Labors More Abundant

The following exhortation from the pen of brother Roberts reminds us of how important it is that we remain focused upon that labor which is truly worthwhile. Unlike our temporal labors which are here today and gone tomorrow, the meaningful labors in the Master's Vineyard hold great promise for the life that now is, and that which is to come, if we faint not.

"Let us be zealous towards God, 'working with all diligence to make our calling and election sure.' Oh, that each of us would remember that in degree according to our deeds will be our reward. The Son of God declares: 'I will give to every one of you according to your works.' It is not

the enrollment of names on the lists, but the successful running which ensures the victor's chaplet. Then, brothers and sisters, through another year, let us strive earnestly and with a high aim, yea. 'Let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus.' Shall we not try to earn high distinction by our works of labour, patience, and love our enmity of evil; our perseverance; our service; our faith'? 'The promises to those who overcome are many and great, even all the blessings pertaining to immortality and incorruptibility.

"Let us then labour to obtain them, by a fervent, earnest courteous demeanour in life and testimony.' Let us put on the whole armour of God,' and gird up our loins to the conflict. Let us fight the good fight of faith, and in one united band advance to victory! Oh, let us never flag! The bright dawn of eternal day approaches.

Brethren and sisters, one and all, we can say with the Apostle that 'now it is high time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand; let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.' Now, when all the earth is waking to the struggle, it is not time to sit selfishly at ease.

If we have any thought of 'the recompense of reward,' we must 'be not conformed to this world.' It is, alas! too true a charge brought before believers of God's electing message, that their deportment and conversation differ almost nothing from the world's votaries. There is too little observance of the command, 'let your conversation be as cometh the gospel of Christ.'

"Oh, brethren, be it ours to 'let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works,' and thus we shall glorify our Father. 'The time is short' in which we can labour. It is the 'eleventh hour.' 'The Lord is at hand,' and 'redemption draweth nigh.' The glad morning of salvation is about to dawn on this sin-stricken world. The grave shall but little longer retain the lettered sons of God; soon one long bright morning of freedom shall burst upon the world in the advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us then be patient in our present tribulation. and continue 'seeking for glory, honour, and immortality,' by 'labours more abundant.' "

Bro. Bob Widding

What Does That Mean?

“Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” Ephesians 6:2-3

Why is this fifth commandment "the first commandment with promise," when the preceding commandments deal with idolatry and monotheism--topics that seem more important? Also, why was continued occupation of the land dependent upon a person honoring his or her parents?

This commandment was vital to the salvation of Israel. God doesn't provide a "quick fix" for any issue (as we humans tend to do), as he is concerned with a successful outcome. If a person obeyed the first four commandments but his children failed to follow in his footsteps, faith in the God of Israel would last only one generation. This is, in fact, what happened in Israel: "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua - And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth."(Judges 2:7, 10-13)

Additionally, Israel's continued presence in the land was contingent upon two things: 1. Israel had to obey God's laws and teach them to their children, and 2. their children, in return, had to honor them and follow in their footsteps, as indicated in Deuteronomy 32: 45-47: "And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel: And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

David understood this " blessing cycle": "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." (Psalms 78:5-7)

We should now see why divine emphasis was placed on this fifth commandment, rather than on the previous four. Effectively applied, this commandment develops the attributes of obedience, faith and reverence in a child. The combination of godly parents and obedient children was designed to bring a blessing upon Israel. Brethren and sisters, if this combination exists in our families, it will also bring God's blessing upon us.

Bro. Jim Sommerville