

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. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness, and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed.
Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian 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

HOUSTON, Texas – Sunday School 10am (verse by verse study of Genesis); Memorial 11am; Study Class 1pm (Phanerosis); 4th Sunday 1pm (Open discussion 1st Principal Class); Wednesday 7:30pm (The Minor Prophets). Meeting Hall address: 8008 Junius Street, Houston, TX 77012.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

We have two reports of loss this month which we sadly note. First, our beloved Sis. Sharon Johnatty has relocated due to work requirements. She has been a member of Houston for more than 20 years, and will be missed immensely. Her piano playing is tremendous, as many of you have had occasion to enjoy on the set of CD's of hymns she recently compiled, with the help of Bro. Bob Bent recording. If you would like a set of the CD's you may request them from her directly. Her new address is: 10000 SW 52nd Ave., Apt. R-102, Gainville, FL 32608. Phone: 352-377-2827

With sadness we also report that our brother Johnny Packer, of the Houston Ecclesia, fell asleep in Christ on Saturday, Feb. 21st, around 12:30 pm. He was 81 years old and had been a laborer in our Master's vineyard for many years - baptized on August 22, 1947. His presence and constant love of, and service for, others was a strong example and leaves a lasting impression on those around him. His absence will be a void. But, as we have been reminded by cards and letters, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope...wherefore comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:13). Brother Johnny now awaits the Lord's return, the blessed resurrection, and those great and precious promises in which we all rest our hope. The funeral was held on Tuesday, Feb. 24th at 2pm, in Pasadena, Texas. Bro. Bob Lorquet gave the remarks.

Cards may be sent to: Sis. Myrtle Packer, 210 East 3rd St., Deer Park, Texas 77536. The flowers, cards, and letters of comfort have been greatly appreciated by all here.

With love in the bonds of the truth, from the Houston ecclesia,
Bro. Shaulywn Smith

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING..... June 10 - 13, 2004
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 19 - 25, 2004
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1 Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, 915-985-3868
Study Class Topics: Galatians – Daily Bible Readings - Discussion

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 9 - 10, 2004
Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 330-494-7717

Cast Thy Burden on the Lord

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful. Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" 1Corinthians 10

THESE GOOD words of Paul show us that our individual problems, when we take a good look at them, are a part of the experience of all human kind. Any temptation that may come to any of us has come to others before us. It is a part of human nature, and we must face it as it is, and learn to use the experience of those who have gone before us.

Sometimes it may humble the pride of those who discover that what they thought was an experience entirely different, is commonplace among men. It is an easy matter to think that no one ought to have to bear such troubles, and this is the very reason why one can easily fall into the temptations.

When we turn to the days of Abraham and Lot, what do we find? We find that there existed then all the profligate excesses that the world indulges in today. Down through the days of Joseph, Judah and David we see the sins as they are today.

In the days of Solomon and Rehoboam the sins of the individuals were added to the problems of taxation, just as today. The human temptation to sin goes back to the Garden of Eden, where man fell from the state wherein he was created, and was condemned to die and return to the dust. So we find Paul saying to the people of his day, "Trust in God Who is faithful" - your problems were faced by others before you, and they were helped, and they held fast and overcame, because they leaned on God.

Yes, God is faithful: if we do not ask amiss, He is our help. He knows our limit of endurance, but we must do our share. We have read how various materials are tested by stress and strain to find out their limit of endurance. And so it is with man in the spiritual. We all do have a limit of endurance; we may not know where the breaking point is, but God does, and He gives us strength to meet the strain.

"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

Troubles may sometimes seem beyond our strength to endure, but we have the living God on our side, if we have the faith, and can feel as did the Psalmist when he said,

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

We cannot expect to be free from problems, but are we to give up in despair and helplessness? Are we to allow nervous breakdowns to be the only way of escape? Have we no faith? Have our minds become so hardened that we cannot forget?-our hearts as flints that we cannot forgive?

From the first to the last page of Scripture we have the assurance that man was not meant to bear the load alone. The great beauty and value of tribulation is that it forces us to seek comfort and refuge in the arms of God.

"Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

In Judges 6, we find a man in great difficulty. He is discouraged almost beyond measure. Israel had sinned against God, and their enemies had overcome them, and were taking everything away from them. This man was in hiding, threshing wheat, when suddenly an angel appeared. He came and sat down under an oak tree in Ophrah. He said to the man

"The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." The man answered
"If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?"

Israel in their folly had forgotten God, but God had not forgotten them. Yea, said Gideon,

"Where be all the miracles which our fathers told us of?"

There was bitterness in the words of Gideon. We do not need to guess who was to blame. The fault was their own, but they refused to see it.

There have been many since that day who have used the words of Gideon, "If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?" A mother sees the remains of her only son lowered into the earth. The widow mourns for a lost husband; troubles have separated brother from brother, and sister from sister; and not understanding, they say, "If the Lord be with us, why then has all this happened?"

We could ask the same question as we consider the tragedies of today. The love of God may seem to many to be but an empty phrase. Many people reason that if God cares, then why must people be in such distress and perplexity? For most people, the lamp of faith gives but a feeble light, and they get irritated when told that suffering can be for their good, as it was for Israel. The Psalmist said, (119:67)

"Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept Thy Word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted: that I might learn Thy statutes." (v. 71)

Paul speaks in the same strain,

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

The Lord looked upon Gideon and said "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel. Have not I sent thee?"

Turning to Luke 4, we have a different picture. This shows that lack of understanding can bring tragic results. When Jesus came to Nazareth where he was brought up, he went into the synagogue as his custom was. All eyes were fastened upon him when he stood up to read.

"The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to, the poor . . . to heal the broken hearted . . . and to set at liberty them that are bruised . . . This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The people were filled with wrath at his words, and rose up and thrust him out of the city, and brought him to a place to cast him down. They did not understand that the Son of God was now in their midst, so, "Jesus of Nazareth passed by." Because of their unbelief, Jesus could do no mighty works there, so he passed them by, to return no more. Jesus came to them in love, and they turned him away in hate. What a difference there is between these two words, "love" and "hate"! Love is defined as a feeling of strong personal attachment, induced by sympathetic understanding.

We can better understand it when we consider the answer of Jesus to a certain lawyer, who said "Master, what is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said,

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.." (Matthew 22:36-37)

The opposite of that principle is the word "hate"; it is defined as "to dislike exceedingly, to abhor." There are things in the Truth that we should and must love, and other things that we should hate. In Ecclesiastes 3:8, Solomon says "There is a time to love, and a time to hate: a time of war, and a time of peace."

These words like other passages of Scripture need to be carefully considered in all our interpretations of divine things. Paul understood that when he wrote to Timothy,

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

In Proverbs 8:13 we read, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

If we were to spend all our time hating that with which we do not agree, we would become unbalanced in our ideas. But being in the Truth, and having knowledge, something better is expected of us. Again we read from Solomon,

"By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

Therefore believers will express their hate of evil things by departing from them; because they understand that the fruit of the Spirit is love.

While it is very true that God hates many things, as we read in Deuteronomy 12. He is never spoken of as a God of hate, always as a God of love. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God. for GOD IS LOVE."

Bro. C. Harry Thompson

God's Promises to Soldiers

David Ha'melech, or as we might say in English, David the King, was a warrior, and a man who could solve problems with force. Look at how we meet David. He explains his faith as that of a ready warrior, whose strength lies not in mere skill, but in a solidly developed faith in God. Look at the first entry in David's resume if you will. Interviewed by the King Saul, David said,

"Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: And I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God. David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." 1Samuel 17:34-36

Such was the start of this young man's career in Israel. He had a chore, watching over his father's sheep. To him, there were threats in his life he had to deal with. Also there were insults made against God, and he would deal with them as they came. Possibly, this brought about the later Proverb in Proverbs 28:15, "As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people." The giant Goliath, was a roaring insult against the God of Israel, and with faith in God, David silenced that threat with extreme force, cutting off the enemy's head. David went on to have a career often filled with bloodshed and violence, starting in his own house, and extending throughout the land and beyond. Did David feel, as is said in Psalms 120:5-7

“My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.”

Look at the trouble in David’s life because of violence. Within his family, there were murders, rapes, deceits, trickery. His closest men were warriors, and when the life of David is recounted in the Bible, they are listed by their feats of warfare and battle.

Abram was a man we might not often think of as a warrior, but, when the time arose, he rose to the challenge and assembled an army of soldiers. Lot had been captured in wars against Sodom. Lot was taken prisoner as were the women, and goods. It was a grim time. Abram, did not fail his brother. Abram knew that a family, especially one like his, established by God, must be loyal to one another. He rose to action. Genesis 14:14,

“And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.”

In this case, he assembled an army of his trained. Trained in this case is from a word meaning experienced, tried. Together with this army, Abram, as he was then known, they defeated their enemies, got back their goods, and their women and his brother Lot.

Abram didn’t take a spoil, he didn’t even really take a reward! God was his reward. As a result of his rising to the occasion, but not benefiting himself, God made promises, more promises than before. He appeared to Abram in a vision, promising and foretelling the glorious future that awaited the seed of Abram. God made him the promises of defeating all of his enemies, he made a covenant with Abram, the same covenant that we are part of today, if we obey God, and get baptized into Christ.

Jesus on the other hand, did not come as a soldier or a warrior, not yet. In fact, Jesus told us that we are now in training, and as such, are not allowed to fight with arms. When one of the disciples chose to bear and use arms, Jesus rebuked him saying, Matthew 26:52

“Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”

We indeed are at war, but our weapons are currently much more advanced and powerful than something made of dirt, of iron, of steel and metal. We are at war, even during our training time.

The Holy Spirit moved the apostle Paul to write 1Timothy 1:18-19,

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having

put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.”

Faithfulness, is an attribute of soldiers that are now being trained by Christ, with the teachings he left us in God’s Word. Faithfulness, is also an attribute that soldiers often must have. Their faith is the complete belief that the orders they obey, and the techniques they are trained with, will allow them to complete the missions they are given. They are convinced that they will vanquish their enemies. People who follow Christ must also be utterly convinced that the things we believe in will gain us our objectives. We must completely accept that the codes we base our actions on are right, and true. We must also, as Abram did, retain intense loyalty to each other, willing to stand alongside one another and go to any Scripture length to help each other as needs arise.

What kind of weapons can we use during this time? What are the intensely powerful weapons we ARE allowed to use?

One aspect of our training is that the battlefield is often, but not always, in our minds. Sometimes, but not always, the enemy resides inside of our own head. When I say not always, believe me, there is always an enemy present within us, called our flesh, or our natural man, in Romans 7 and 8. As is written, “evil is present with me”. Some of the weapons of warfare that we use, are told to Timothy. They are supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. This communication with God, concerning the things going on around us, are critical, and they are powerful and real. For example, we can be praying that our message to those around us is presented in as clear and effective a manner as is possible for us, given the circumstances we are in. That is an acceptable and good prayer. Think of that in terms of dealing with an enemy. The greatest victory over an enemy is to alter things so that they turn around and buy into the same things as you. They in essence are changed into friends, admitting they were wrong to be enemies.

We can do this through the immense power of the Word of God. God’s Word, is a powerful weapon. Hebrews 4:12,

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

What that means is that it strikes at the very root of what makes people enemies in the first place, their minds and their heart. The Bible, has the power to change people, completely. I know it changed me, and continues to do so each day. It helps me fight the enemy within, and enemies without. But with any weapon, we need to be trained in its use, or else we

can only hurt ourselves and the weapon.

When the old-fashioned soldiers of today are trained, they go through what I imagine we have all heard of, something called basic training. Basic training is as much mental as it is physical and involves learning how to obey orders instantly, without questioning why. It involves teaching about a chain of command, it involves learning how to lead a disciplined life. The women and men we see who have become highly trained soldiers are often put through this extremely rigorous training, because battles will depend on that training. Then they are also trained in the use of primitive weapons so popular today, like guns, knives, cannons and the like. I say primitive, because they are insignificant in contrast to the weapons available to us. What will become of those outdated, obsolete weapons when Christ comes? Will they be used anymore? No, in fact, they will be smelted down and refashioned into things that steel and iron should be used for, plows and shears for feeding everybody, not items to destroy.

Christadelphians, brethren and sisters in Christ are forbidden by Christ at this time to bear arms, to raise their hand against another, or even to defend themselves or others physically. Christ's followers are forbidden to swear oaths of allegiance, or take things by force, or enforce their will upon others. We, as servants of God are forbidden to attack or participate in government and armies. We stay very separate and aloof from soldiering and armies, because they are foreign, they are not ours. Our kingdom is not of this world. Yet, the Bible makes reference to how some of the things about armies and soldiering are similar to our position in this life. We can still learn a lesson from the rigorous training these people have gone through. When they come out, if they are good soldiers, they should have a distinct respect for the chain of command theory, which assumes: The orders that come down from the top, will be such that they will meet the objectives of the big picture. Do we not have to maintain the same exact way of thinking?

Sometimes orders we get in the Bible, are hard to understand. We don't know how they will eventually bring about the manifestation of God in flesh. We might not understand how learning when to hold our little tiny peace in the midst of an argument, might eventually bring about the objective of the return of Christ to set up the Kingdom of God. We might not, at a given moment, understand how our adherence to a strict code of non-retaliation will bring about the defeat of sin and death. We might not, at a given moment, understand how a disciplined and controlled observance of the command to never, ever get drunk, is going to have an effect on the big picture. We might not understand some of these things at the moments we want to give into our fleshly impulses, and toss aside the notion of orders coming down from the top, of the notion of someone up

there, in the chain of command, has their reasons, and if we follow them, the objectives will be met. But that is precisely the time that a soldier will call on their training and stick to the plan.

If a soldier is told to set up gun to fire up 20 degrees and 30 degrees west or something of that nature, even when they have no idea at all of what they might be shooting at, they do it, immediately, without question. That is because they accept that is their job. That is the discipline of a soldier. They don't waste a lot of time always asking why, but instead, work within the framework of how a battle goes.

That doesn't mean soldiers are mindless robots either. No. They are men and women who can lead as well as follow. They are men and women who can save lives as well as take them. Each must know his or her job. Each must know what they are in charge of in their own little responsibilities. Each must do their very utmost for their commanders and stay in line with the rules they are taught.

Are we not the same? Fathers have a set of commands to follow, husbands have a set of commands; wives have a set; mothers have commands and methods to master and obey. Sisters, brothers, children, masters and servants all have specific duties and commands to follow that they must master, and practice, as the Bible teaches. Many of these commands overlap, and are shared by all. Prime directives and core values are given throughout the Bible that we, in training for the Kingdom, must accept, learn, and follow without fail. Our discipline is tough, but is involved in making up the most highly trained and glorious army the world will ever see.

Joshua, having faith in God kept an intensely positive attitude after his mission as a spy in the Promised Land. He earned the grace of God being shed on him to lead the bride of God - Israel into the Promised Land. He got to assemble, train and lead the army of God into the land of Canaan. This led ultimately to the defeat of many enemies, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God at that time. Joshua, as we are taught, was Moses' right hand man, his helper, his trainee if you will. Even when Moses faith faltered, and kept Moses out of the land, teaching that another must lead the people into the promised land, Joshua was the pre-representative of Christ, who will lead the army and people of God into the land in the near future.

Joshua organized the nation and armies, and encouraged them successfully to follow the law given to them through Moses. He certainly rallied the people. They responded whole-heartedly. This was because the orders came from the very top, The LORD himself spoke to Joshua saying,

“Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.”

We are under the same directive. Those who will succeed at obtaining eternal life, are those who are driven in their desire to know and follow God’s Word. Just think of what we can accomplish if our devotion, our loyalty, our FAITH is that strong. The people responded fantastically,

“And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go. According as we hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses. Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandest him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of a good courage.”

We are told to use the same type of weapons, the same tools if you will, in our current warfare. The Ephesians are told “finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God.” This is using army, soldiering metaphor. We are not just fighting mano-a-mano, hand to hand combat, we are working to bring about the object of the complete collapse of the TRUE image of Babylon, not just some rubber look-alike of a criminal despot. We are warring in a way that will bring about the fall of the image of Nebuchadnezzar, the great golden image, and when it falls, that is the end of the rule of the nations who oppose the Truth. A little tiny stone, which becomes a powerful mountain is formed and brings about the collapse of the governments, and all the nations become Christ’s and ruled over by the re-established nation, the same nation before set up by Joshua, the same nation ruled over by David, but soon to be re-established and ruled over by one greater than David, David’s seed, Abram’s seed - the Christ.

The Christ, or as we also call him, Jesus of Nazareth, knew and taught that our battle is against far more than some external, easily identifiable foe. He taught that the way people were viewing the law was stopping short of the real enemy, the enemies within. So Jesus stretched it even further. He said, don’t just not hate your friends, don’t hate your enemies either. He said, don’t just not commit adultery with your friends wife, don’t even be looking at her in that way, he said don’t just give up what your forced to give, but willing give way more than you are expected to give. Jesus said not to strive for all this world has to offer, it is insignificant when compared to inheritance of the planet.

Anybody could teach you to say hi to your friends, but Jesus said to say

hi to everybody. Jesus said that anybody can tell the truth if forced to swear to it, but we should go way beyond that, and be so honest that we never even have to swear to it, yes means yes and no means no. Jesus said that washing hands doesn’t make us clean, we need to wash out our mouths, our hearts our minds. It’s what comes out that defiles us, not a smudge or having touched something dirty.

The organizing of the army of Christ will take place after a judgment. Only the acceptable will become a part of that immortal army of warriors. The others will be sent away, and lose out on immortality. The training, once complete will be evaluated by Christ. Must like in the law, the army will be assembled in a way that Christ will follow. Those who have loved wives more than Christ won’t be acceptable. Deuteronomy 24:5 says,

“When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war.”

War is all about death, about defeat, and about victory. But some battles have a winner and loser, other battles have all losers. Isaiah 9:5,

“For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire.”

For the Christ, victory will be complete; there will not be losses on the side of army sometimes called “the rainbowed angel”. This immortal army of Christ will march up and take over Jerusalem, saving the Jews and establishing the Kingdom in the Promised Land. In continuing in Isaiah 9, the victorious new captain and king of all will set up a glorious, far-reaching kingdom. We are told that it will usher in a time of peace, re-establish the throne of David, and set up a government with justice and judgment and order. Order and organization will be the answer in that day. With Christ as the head, his chosen, immortalized saints as the teachers, kings, priests and rulers will convert the peoples of the world into obedient, peace enjoying, productive people. Jesus Christ, and his gospel message, is not merely about a Jesus dead on a Cross, as some people would have you believe. That was the beginning of the final blow to sin, but Jesus Christ is about government and power in the future and about changing people’s minds and hearts now.

In the Kingdom, we are told that knowledge of God will be taught to all the world. This true and peaceful Kingdom, which will ultimately rule over all the nations of Earth, will come about in the midst of much bloodshed, but, that is not what will bring about the changed and peaceful earth, no. Once rule is established there will be the immense task of converting human thinking into obedient and peaceful productive society. It says in Habakkuk 2:14,

“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the

LORD as the waters cover the sea.” In contrast to that, look at what ignorance, and hatred of this knowledge is like. The next verse says it,

“Woe to him that gives his neighbor drink, that puts the bottle to them and gets them drunk, so they can look upon their nakedness.”

It goes on to talk about all the parts what the world is filled with now, vomiting, drunkenness, violence, bloodshed, teaching lies, worshipping idols. The prophecy tells the whole world to shut up and listen to God. We are told in verse 20,

“But Yahweh is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.”

The earth will be humbled and made to shut up, it’s deeds will be stopped by the mighty army of God when Christ returns. The nations now always are saying “blah blah blah, let’s do this and that, make peace, make war, make money, take money.” But the day is coming, when God will laugh at them all, and say, “Stop.” “Turn to my Son, kiss him, forget everything else, or else, you will be in big trouble”.

The tellers and makers of lies who currently control the armies, the churches, the governments, the crime, the schools, the industries, the families, the secret societies, the advertisers, the sciences, the arts. All of these liars, drunken and confused, will be put to silence. A last offer will be made to earth, obey, or die. Those who choose to follow, will enjoy a thousand years of peace under the reign of Christ and the saints. At that time, after the saints training are done, after the immortal army has conquered the world, they will fulfill their ultimate mission - to teach the nations righteousness with a new message of hope, called the everlasting gospel. Rev 14:6-7,

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Although science is so very helpful in this day, and although governments often have good plans, although even the religious people are sometimes helpful and useful, they fail. Although many men and women mean well when they start to love those around them, they fail, and it turns to sin. When they rejoice with drunkenness, they fail. When they attempt peace through violence against the wicked, they fail. When they attempt to talk, and discuss, and come to conflict resolution they fail. When their armies are called the best in the world -- they still fail. Why do all of

men’s efforts fail? Because they don’t give the glory to God. They don’t read His word, their fixes and drinks, and potions and rules and laws and treaties all fail, because Jesus Christ is not at the center. They have completely missed God’s prime directive, they have ignored the chain of command, they have tossed aside discipline for disgrace, they have chosen frivolity instead of faith, they have chosen death instead of life.

Yahweh is where? “He is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him.”

You know, when the army of God conquers Jerusalem, and the temple of God is rebuilt and the order and organization of God’s kingdom is established, Christ’s mighty men, saints, men and women who trained for ages and are chosen and immortalized, will sit with him ruling over the nations. That temple will become the focal point of all worship, and all allegiance. It will be the place to go, to overcome the age old problems mankind has with sin.

Armies train to conquer, protect and organize on massive scales. They train to defeat any enemy, at home and abroad. The whole idea of enemies started with Sin. A liar told a bold complete lie. A contradictor lied to our common mother, we all have the same mother you know, Eve. She was tricked by wickedness, by slander and by false accusation. The first lie was Eve; “You won’t REALLY die, even if you disobey.” What slander, what cheek to call God a liar. Our mother Eve knew what God had said. She knew that if she and her husband ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, that it would bring about a death sentence. She knew, but she was tricked. Lies are like that, if we couldn’t be tricked or deceived, nobody could ever really lie to us, because we would instantly know what they said was untrue.

If we are convinced, utterly convinced, that our captain, our general, our Lord, our commander, Jesus Christ is correct, and there is nobody else we can turn to, then we will utterly ignore anyone and anything that would sway us from the Truth he has taught us. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the apostle Paul said to our brethren, Galatians 1:7-9,

“Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

It doesn’t matter how tricky, how powerful, how mighty, how beautiful, how seemingly knowledgeable and delightful the teller of the

lies may be. We must be so committed to the Truth, that we don't change. They are the cursed ones. They would pervert Christ. They would tell you that beliefs, codes, devotion and loyalty don't matter. They would tell you that you have to feeeeeeell right about what you do, they would tell you that harsh words are wrong. They would tell you that you should only discuss smooth topics, and ignore the rest. The liars will tell you can't be forgiven for sin, the liars will tell you that you must hate, the liars will tell you that Christ won't really return. Friends and brethren and sisters, ignore the liars. May they all be put to silence and turn their attention to God.

We are now in basic training, probation, schooling. We were schooled in an elementary way to be brought to Christ. Once we have entered the war, we must learn discipline and how to use the weapons God gives us.

Jesus had armor. We are told in Isaiah 59, that he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and salvation as a helmet, Christ will dress himself with vengeance for clothing and zeal for a cloke. He'll repay our enemies, and the saints will do it with him, that is the honor they will enjoy. In that day fear and respect will come over all the nations in the world, from the west to the east. The enemy will try to defend it's kingdoms of liars, but the redeemer will come to Zion and lift up the standard, with the army of God against them. The darkness that overshadows the earth will be lifted. Light will shine and all the nations will come to that light to obey and worship and learn.

We must use our armor now. We must learn about it, put it on, and use it in our training. Our loins are covered and protected with truth, a powerful, powerful weapon. We too, have a breastplate of righteousness, we have on strong, powerful boots, the preparation of the gospel of peace, and we have a mighty shield that can deflect supernatural missiles, the shield of faith. Our head is protected with the helmet of salvation. Our secret weapon is prayer and supplication in the spirit. Read about it in Ephesians 6:14-18. We are currently training, although there is battle, its currently a battle against our minds and loyalty. It wants to take us captive, but that enemy can't conquer us if we use our armor, follow our discipline and stay alert and awake like good, strong soldiers. We can become the greatest army the world has ever seen.

No soldiers who are deep, deep in training appear to be glorious, or mighty or as a crack regiment. No. They are humbled, humiliated, dirty, weak, and are often defeated in practice. They hunger and thirst, they are in pain and suffer greatly. This is much like the place of Christian brothers and sisters in Christ as they train to be part of the Army of God. It's hard, hard work. Christ warned, that although it is so obvious we are in it together, although it should be obvious we can succeed if we have unity,

all for one and one for all, that what would really happen is that we turn on each other, we bite and devour each other, we mistreat one another, we don't try our best to help one another.

That is what so often happens in this world's armies. They grow weak, selfish, they start in on each other, they get dragged down with drunkenness and partying, they get too intermingled with worldly interests. Those kinds of soldiers are not fit for any army. That's why they fail.

We must stay alert and separate; never letting down our watch, never dropping our guard, never letting the weapons of our warfare become unfamiliar. Keep training, keep pushing, and keep living by the code, the creed, the one Truth that Christ delivered to us through the apostles. Then we can stay focused on our mission, to be immortal, to participate in the strongest army the world has ever seen, the army of Jesus Christ in the day of his return.

Bro. Michael Morrell

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES

This parable of Christ has been misunderstood by many to justify the "wheat and tares" growing together and letting the Lord sort them out at the judgment. Bro. Roberts is clear that this is not the case and that the key to its understanding is the Kingdom of God.

THE Parables of Christ differ from all other parables--(whether Aesop's fables or the flowers of modern oratory)—in that they are the authoritative enunciation of eternal truth. The form is a veiled form, but the essence is divine. Hence, their paramount pre-eminence.

The meaning of them is lost to most readers for want of the key—the Kingdom of God—which is absent from modern theology. With this key restored—in the understanding of Moses and the prophets—it is possible to get at their full meaning and see their full beauty. An endeavour to display these is made in the following pages, with a degree of success or failure which must be left to the judgment of the reader. - R.R. Preface

The kingdom of heaven has been in preparation from the beginning of God's work upon earth. The parable of the tares represents that phase of it embraced in the personal work of Christ. This appears from Christ's explanation. We will look at that explanation item by item:—"A man sowed good seed in the field."

EXPLANATION:

The sower, Christ: the field, the (Jewish) world : the good seed, the

truth, as embodied in its true believers. — "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat."

EXPLANATION:

The enemy, the devil, consisting of the authorities of the nation, who everywhere stealthily neutralised the teaching of Christ, disseminating evil doctrines, and scattering wide their sympathisers and disciples, who drew away the people, and multiplied their own number greatly by the energy of their operations and the popularity of their influence. "When the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared forth tares also."

EXPLANATION:

When Christ's teaching began to take effect in the development of earnest disciples, the result was not so general as might have been expected, for the Scribes and Pharisees had meanwhile been very busy on the quiet, and out of the sight of Christ, and the people sided with them in larger numbers than would have been the case if they had been let alone to consider the works and words of Christ for themselves.—" So the servants of the householder came and said unto them : Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field ? From whence then hath it tares ? He said unto him, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up ?"

EXPLANATION:

The surprise of the Apostles that the people did not submit to the word of Christ, and their proposal (as on one occasion) that they should command that fire should come down from heaven and destroy them.—" But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." **EXPLANATION :** The destruction of the wicked would have interfered with the development of the righteous, which requires that the wicked prosper for a while in their disobedience.—" Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn."

EXPLANATION:

Both the wheat-class and the tare-class in Israel to be left unmolested till the arrival of their respective times, to be dealt with " according to their deeds." The tare-class to be harvested "FIRST" the wheat-class afterwards—the one a long time after the other, as the event has proved. The harvesting to be performed by the angels in both cases, under Christ's command, but the harvesting of the tares to be done in the way of Providence, in which the angels work by influencing natural circumstances, while the harvest of the wheat would be done by them in an

open and visible manner. The parable has been nearly all fulfilled, except the glorious part which is still future.

"First," as the parable required, at the end of the Jewish world, the tare-class were gathered into Jerusalem, as into a furnace of fire, where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth, where they were destroyed with every circumstance of suffering and horror, as a study of the details of Josephus' account of the devastation of Judea, and the destruction of Jerusalem, nearly forty years after Christ's ascent to "all power in heaven and earth," will abundantly show to the reader. Thus were retributively "gathered out of his kingdom all things that offended " during his personal ministry, and " them who did iniquity." The kingdom of the Holy Land is his kingdom which enables us to understand the interpretation.

If we supposed with modern theologians that "his kingdom" was "heaven" or the "church," it would be difficult to apply the statement that he is to gather the workers of iniquity out of his kingdom. But with an understanding of the kingdom, there is no such difficulty. The destruction of the whole generation of Jews that were honoured by his presence and wonderful works, and proved themselves so utterly unworthy by rejecting and crucifying him, enables us to recognise the historic application of a parable which was at the same time a prophecy. The gathering of the wheat is next in order—tares "first,"—wheat afterwards. The wheat-class will be gathered openly by the angels at Christ's return,

"He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven even to the other." (Matthew 24:31)

The "gathering of the wheat into the barn" will have its fulfilment in the entrance of the righteous into the Kingdom of God.—

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

It reads as if the shining forth of the righteous in the Kingdom would be immediately after the gathering out of the Kingdom of all that do iniquity, but the scope of the parable compels us to attach the larger meaning of "then" to its use in this case. When we say, "first this, then that," we do not define time, but order. "First the tares, then the wheat" gives no indication of the length of the interval. As a matter of history, it has already run into more than 1800 years. The righteous will shine forth in the kingdom when the angels come forth to gather them for an entrance therein. It is a long time since the tares were burnt up on the same spot with fire unquenchable. Some argue from this that there is no judgment and rejection of the unfaithful at the second coming of Christ. This does

not follow. There is a place for every part of the Truth: and one part of the Truth is that the tares of Christ's own day were cast into a furnace of fire for consumption within forty years or so of the utterance of the parable.

Bro. Robert Roberts - 1897

DANIEL – THE KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH (continued from last month)

“The eleventh chapter, from the fifth to the thirty-first verse, treats of two (of the four horns), the northern and southern horns in their struggles with one another for ascendancy in the Holy Land, and consequent lordship over Judah; and thus the treatise fills up the interval between the foundation of the horn kingdoms and the incipient intervention of “the breakers of Daniel's people” who should exalt themselves to establish the vision”. (Exposition of Daniel page 24)

Our last article finished in verse 4 of Daniel chapter 11. Verse 2 was the first suggested division of the chapter, (following the overview outlined last time from Elpis Israel). Verses 4 and 5 formed the second division. We will now move on to consider the third, and longest part of the eleventh chapter from verse 5 to verse 35. This contains historical information that most of us are unfamiliar with. It is however, an important section in the prophecy as we will be able to trace the historical development of the king of the north and the king of the south that will figure so prominently in the time of the end, when Russia makes her grand move for world domination. We are all fairly familiar with the last seven verses of the chapter. The previous verses provide a sound background to the details contained in verses 39 to the end.

Some quotations from a book entitled “Ancient History” by an M Rollin are to hand. These are quoted below as they may assist in supporting our understanding of the exposition.

Verses 5 to 35

It will probably be useful, and help our general understanding of this section, if we provide a further breakdown of verses 5 to 35. This will be the plan we will follow below.

(a) Verses 5 to 9 – The development of the Kings of the North and South; their rivalries, diplomacies, and internecine warfare.

Alexander's empire began to disintegrate immediately. Years of internal strife followed, as six generals struggled for supremacy. Four of them obtained control as related previously, but only two of them are

referred to in the prophecy; Seleucus, who controlled Syria, Armenia and east to the river Indus (the king of the north), and Ptolemy Soter, who obtained Egypt and Libya (the king of the south).

Verse 5 immediately introduces us to the King of the South, who is described as being “strong” and having “great dominion.” At this time, it had reference to Ptolemy Soter, the first Macedonian King of Egypt, who wrested in battle Palestine, Caelo-Syria and Phoenicia from a fellow general. In addition, he had dominion over areas such as Libya, the maritime provinces of Asia Minor, Cyprus, several other islands of the Aegean Sea, and even some cities of Greece. Thus it was a “great dominion.” (The time period of these battles is approximately BC313-301)

The following is an extract from the book referred to above:

“Towards the close of this year died Ptolemy Soter, king of Egypt, in the eighty fourth year of his age, and two years after resignation of his empire to his son. He was the most able, and worthy man of all his race, and left behind him such examples of prudence, justice, and clemency, as very few of his successors were industrious to imitate. During the space of near forty years, in which he governed Egypt after the death of Alexander, he raised it to such a height of grandeur and power, as rendered it superior to the other kingdoms.”

Verse 6 indicates that there would be an “agreement” between the kings of the north and the kings of the south. This would take place after a long period of war between Ptolemy Philadelphus (successor to Ptolemy Soter) and Antiochus Theos, who had succeeded his father, Seleucus, as “King of the North”. The two monarchs came to a treaty of marriage with Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy. The following is another extract from Rollins' “Ancient History”:

“The troubles and revolts in the East made Antiochus at last desirous to disengage himself from the war with Ptolemy. A treaty of peace was accordingly concluded between them; and the conditions of it were, that Antiochus should divorce Laodice, and espouse Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy; that he should also disinherit his issue by the first marriage, and secure the crown to his children by the second.”

When however, Ptolemy Philadelphus died (BC246), Antiochus put his daughter away and re-called his previous wife, who poisoned Antiochus and killed Ptolemy's daughter and all her Egyptian attendants.

Thus this part of the prophecy was fulfilled, that she (Berenice) should not “retain the power of the arm” (that is of her father Ptolemy Philadelphus), but be “given up”(that is, to suffer death). “Neither shall he stand”(that is, Antiochus, who was poisoned).

Again, the following is from “Ancient History”:

“As soon as Antiochus Theos had received intelligence of the death of Ptolemy Philadelphus, his father-in-law, he divorced Berenice, and recalled Laodice and her children. Laodice, who knew the variable disposition and inconstancy of Antiochus, and was apprehensive that the same levity of mind would induce him to return to Berenice again, resolved to improve the present opportunity to secure the crown for her son...Laodice, therefore, caused Antiochus to be poisoned, and when she saw that he was dead, she placed in his bed a person named Aremon, who very much resembled him both in his features and in the tone of his voice, to act the part she had occasion for...In his name were issued orders, by which his eldest son Seleucus Callinicus was appointed his successor. His death was then declared, upon which Seleucus peaceably ascended the throne, and enjoyed it for the space of twenty years.....Laodice, not believing herself safe as long as Berenice and her son lived, concerted measures with Seleucus to destroy them also: but Berenice being informed of their design, escaped with her son to Daphne, where she shut herself up in the asylum built by Seleucus Nicator. But, being at last betrayed by the perfidy of those who besieged her there by the order of Laodice, first her son and then herself, with all the Egyptians who had accompanied her to that retreat, were murdered in the blackest and most inhuman manner.” (Rollin)

Verses 7 to 9 details the revenge executed by Ptolemy Euregetes (the brother of Berenice) as her father was dead. He is described in verse 7 as “a branch of her (parents) roots.” He successfully invaded Antiochus’ dominions and took an enormous booty in Syria and Cilicia, including a larger number of statues and images, besides a vast store of precious metals. This was in BC245-244. He also carried away Antiochus’s principal courtiers, and had a lengthened reign. Verse 8 states “And (Euregetes) shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall continue (to reign nine) more years than the king of the north (who died a prisoner in Parthia five years before the king of Egypt).

Ptolemy made a triumphant return to Egypt with the spoils referred to as verse 9 records, “So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land.”

The following is another extract from Rollin’s account:

“Her brother, Ptolemy Euregetes was also as expeditious as possible to advance thither with a formidable army; but the unhappy Berenice and her children were dead before any of these auxiliary troops could arrive. When they therefore saw that all their endeavours to save the queen and

her children were rendered ineffectual, they immediately determined to revenge her death in a remarkable manner. The troops of Asia joined those of Egypt, and Ptolemy, who commanded them, was as successful as he could desire in the satisfaction of his just resentment.....This prince carried off 40,000 talents of silver with a prodigious quantity of gold and silver vessels and 2,500 statues, part of which were those Egyptian idols that Cambyses, after his conquest of that kingdom, had sent into Persia.”

As can be seen so far, a careful consideration of these verses in chapter eleven, coupled with the historical references quoted above, indicate the minute fulfillment of the prophecy. This continues throughout the chapter as we will continue to observe, God Willing. No wonder the unbeliever states that these prophetic writings were compiled after the events!

(To be continued next month)

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Commitments

It is the most elementary principle of righteousness that covenants must be kept. Even if one “swear to his own hurt” he must “change not.” In younger days, such a flagrant breach of decorum would have caused wrath and world-rousing efforts at rectification. But after a life-time of weary fight with things that cannot be mended, I could but acquiesce with pity, and make the best of a bad job.

Bro. Robert Roberts – Voyage to Australia

As Ye See The Day Approaching

“...To the angel of the ecclesia of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the Witness faithful and true, the Beginning of the creation of the Deity. I have known thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. Would that thou wert cold or hot! Thus because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and have abounded in wealth, and have need of nothing, and has not known that thou art the wretched, and pitiable, and poor, and blind, and naked one. I counsel thee to buy from me gold which has been refined by fire that thou mayest be rich; and white garments that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be apparent; and anoint thine eyes with salve that thou mayest see. Whomsoever I love I discipline and admonish; be zealous therefore, and change. Behold I have stood at the door, and I knock; If any one may hear my voice, and open the door, I will enter in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. The victor, I will give to him to sit with me in my throne as

I also vanquished, and sat with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear let him hearken to what the Spirit saith to the ecclesias.” (Rev. 3:14-22 – John Thomas’ translation)

“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:12-13)

Jesus Christ and the apostles continually warned of the danger and inevitability of apostasy from the Truth. There would be many who would not hold to sound doctrine and would, by their actions and works, deny their Lord. We must ever keep in remembrance that the Truth has only been faithfully kept by a very few out of any one generation. Many are called, but few compared to the many called, will finally be chosen. Most, through not realizing the Truth’s priceless value, merely “sit” on it. They profess to have it and then never really do anything with it. They neglect it—the precious gift of God! They don’t, in the day of opportunity given, seek to put down strong and well developed root systems into the abundant water supply of Yahweh’s Holy Word of Truth. Because they don’t abide in the Father and in the son, they wither and become as dead branches. We know what will eventually become of those dead branches, those who have a name to live and are really dead. They will be rejected in the judgment and cast into outer darkness. That we might be refreshed by way of remembrance and because we are such leaky vessels, we do well to take heed to Luke 12:39-48.

“And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much

required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

Sin is so exceedingly sinful. We can be so easily deceived and led astray with the error of the wicked. Many suppose that gain is Godliness. Nothing could be further from the truth. We are directly commanded: “...from such withdraw thyself.” (1Timothy 6:5) We are not to labor to be rich. We are not to covet wealth or opulence, ease or comfort, where our Lord is not. Rather, we are to “...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (2Timothy 2:3-4) Many are they who have been thrust through with many sorrows, laboring to be rich and to have this world’s goods. Many have equated acceptance with God by the measure of their prosperity. We know, also, that it is not wisdom to compare ourselves by or among ourselves. One is our master, even Christ. He is the one we should follow, as he is the good shepherd. He is the way, the Truth and the life. He set the supreme example of how we should live and act. No man can come unto the Father, but by him. How often we get our priorities mixed up. Also, there is the true proverb found in Proverbs 23:5: “Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” In Deuteronomy, chapter 17, it was commanded that the kings of Israel not multiply horses, wives, nor greatly multiply silver or gold unto themselves. It is recorded in 1Samuel 2:32 that Eli and his house would see an enemy in Yahweh’s habitation, in all the wealth which Yahweh would give Israel.

This world’s wealth so often can encumber and ensnare us. It is like briars, thorns and brambles, choking the Word and making us unfruitful. Also, if we seek this world’s wealth to the neglect of the things of the kingdom and name, we will verily be guilty of hiding the light under the bushel. In trying to acquire it, we miss the goal set before us. We must remember that we cannot serve God and mammon. Remember the law of physics that states that we cannot be going in two directions at once. We either are making progress on the road to the kingdom or we are losing ground to the enemy, the flesh. We cannot serve two masters. Usually—almost always—when wealth increases, they are increased who would devour it. Much time and energy is spent in trying to secure and protect it. We must remember that time and distance are very important factors in the race to life. The athlete tries to concentrate on the goal to be achieved and will get rid of all unnecessary encumbrances. We must “lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1)

If it is laziness, sloth, apathy, or boredom that causes us to slack off or quit altogether our continuance in the confined way to life, we must remember that a day of reckoning and account is rapidly approaching. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." (Proverbs 6:6-11)

Let the slothful take the advice of Proverbs 30:28: "The spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces." If we would just follow this simple, straightforward advice, we would each enter into the kingdom of God.

We have been called to service. We are servants of the only true Deity who is uncreated and having neither beginning of days nor end of years. He is from everlasting to everlasting! He is the eternal first cause! What a high and holy calling! It is the highest privilege a mortal man or woman can possibly receive! We are invited to eternal and unbroken fellowship with the omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent deity whose alone are the heavens and the earth and all things therein. He created them and sustains all immensity! We are not our own. We have been bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ our Lord and savior; His only begotten and well beloved son. We must learn that greatness—true greatness—comes through faithful, loving obedient service to our God and His anointed. We must learn to serve each other in love, also. How can we say we love our heavenly Father and not love our brethren? We know that love is the fulfilling of the law. (Romans 10:13) We know that He (Yahweh) first loved us, giving His only begotten son to be a propitiation for our sins! It is only reasonable that we should respond to the wonderful invitation given and draw nigh to Yahweh and love Him with all the heart, soul, strength and mind and our neighbor as ourselves. We are to have the mind of the Spirit. We are to speak the same things, holding to that one sure foundation that has been laid in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If this spirit is in us, imbibed from the living and Holy Word of Deity, we will not have time for all of the passing interferences and distractions and hobbies and foolishness that so easily draws away from the real beauties and joys and happiness for evermore. Let us have this fiery zeal that comes from knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. It is freely available to us through that living word He has magnified above all His Holy name.

Let us be among the white robed sons of deity who will have their name inscribed (and not at all blotted out) on the scroll of the life of the

lamb slain. May we be constituents of the man that is the angel, the rainbowed angel.
Bro. David VanPelt

The TRUTH Shall Make You Free

"Because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be saved, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie"
2 Thessalonians 2:10-11

Belief is the motive power behind all human activity. Without a strong belief in the desirability of one's objective, failure is almost certain. The inventor toils, often in poverty, and endures the jeers of the skeptical, because he believes that eventually he will be rewarded for creating some device which will be of great benefit to mankind, and bring to the inventor fame and fortune. The explorer sails into uncharted seas, or plunges into the trackless wilderness because he believes that he can reach that goal for which he is seeking and the fulfillment of all his dreams.

Whatever one's character may be, good or bad, depends chiefly on the principles believed. A strong belief in right principles tends to building of good character, belief in evil principles leads to immorality, crime and wickedness.

And so we could go on to include the whole range of human activity, showing that each action, good or bad, was the result of belief in something. To this all informed people will agree. It is inescapable; it is a matter of common and universal knowledge.

Yet, strange to say, when it comes to the most vital matter of all—that action which makes all others pale into utter insignificance—popular thought does a complete about face and says true belief is not essential at all. That is, when it comes to one's eternal salvation, we are told it makes no difference what we believe, if anything at all, concerning the great issues involved. This notion is not only commonly accepted by the rank and file of humanity, by the overwhelming majority of church members, but by professed preachers.

We affirm, on the basis of infallible scripture testimony, that it not only makes a difference what we believe, it makes all the difference in the world - the difference between eternal salvation and eternal death.

Is it reasonable to assume that the God of heaven would condescend to reveal His eternal plan of redemption, for the specific purpose of making known His will and purpose to man that he might be saved, and then permit these weak, fallible creatures to do as they please about believing it?

Is it logical that God should so lightly esteem His own Word, delivered through His inspired prophets and apostles, many of whom suffered death

in doing so, and then permit man to treat it lightly-believe or disbelieve it as he chooses?

Can we believe that God will crown with "glory, honor and immortality" those who reject or disbelieve His Word delivered through His only begotten Son? Will He save anyone merely because he is "sincere" in his unbelief or misbelief of divinely revealed truths?

God has given to no one the right to tell his fellowman what he must believe, or how he shall worship God. Neither has God given to anyone the right or privilege of choosing his own creed, or worshipping God in any way except **THAT WAY WHICH GOD PROVIDES**.

Cain and Abel (Genesis 4) offer the first example of what God requires of man in this respect. Abel followed God's way and was accepted. Cain chose his own way and was condemned. Let us be sure we follow the example of Abel and not of Cain.

In the absence of divine revelation, man's religion must depend solely upon his own thinking and reasoning. It is because so many have assumed the right to formulate their own creeds, and use the great blessing of religious freedom as license to ignore God's Word and believe as they please, that we see so many creeds and conflicting religious beliefs in the world today.

Sinful man is altogether incapable of framing his own way of salvation. His natural tendency is to go contrary to God's will and purpose. Therefore, when he attempts to choose his own religion and think as he pleases, he is certain to go wrong. There is nothing more evident in Bible history than the fact that the vast majority of mankind have always been wrong. Only a small minority have ever been in full accord with God and His Word. Only a few in any age have been willing to heed the divine injunction.

"Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.... For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your way,... and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:7-9).

The very first consideration in the delivering of God's message of salvation to man was that it might be believed, and it was through this belief that salvation was to be obtained. In John 20:31 we read,

"But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his Name."

The Gospel preached by Christ and his apostles was a message requiring belief. Christ's commission to the apostles was (Mark 16:15-16),

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Scriptural belief involves more than a vague belief in some kind of a Supreme Being, or the mere acceptance of Christ as a Saviour. It refers to a certain form of doctrine, or teaching, as noted in the following testimonies

"Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 1:13)

"Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Romans 6:17).

"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." (Jude 3).

The purpose of the Gospel to the Gentiles was,

"To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ)." (Acts 26:18).

No one can "call upon the Name of the Lord" in the scriptural sense, or come into fellowship and relationship with the Father and the Son except through a knowledge and belief of the Truth of the Gospel, as we read,

"For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?...So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:13,17).

Eternal blessing is obtained only through a belief in God's Word (Revelation 1:3)

"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and KEEP THOSE THINGS which are written therein."

On the other hand, in the last chapter of the Bible, God warns that if anyone shall add to His Words, that God shall add unto him all the plagues written therein; and if anyone takes anything from that Word, God will take away his part in the book of life.-Revelation 22:17-18.

In writing to the church at Galatia, Paul warns them against permitting false teachers to pervert or adulterate the saving Gospel, saying,

"As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:9)

A lack of knowledge and belief of the Gospel definitely bars one from salvation. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4,

"If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost."

Paul reminds the Ephesians that when they were ignorant of the divine plan of redemption as revealed in the covenants of promise,

"That at that time ye were without Christ ... having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

It is an indisputable fact that all of whom it is testified in the Bible that they were accepted of God, have been accepted on the basis of belief in His Word. Cornelius, the first Gentile to be offered salvation in Christ, was accepted only after he had sent for Peter, at God's direction,

"Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:14)

It is said of Abraham, the great example of faith and righteousness (James 2:23; Romans 4:3),

"Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God."

Only a casual reading of the 4th chapter of Romans and the 2nd chapter of James should teach anyone something which the "liberal-minded" entirely overlook. It is that God forgives sins and bestows rewards only on the basis of belief in His Word and obedience of His commands.

The notion that God will save anyone solely on the basis of sincerity and morality is completely foreign to the Scriptures. Abraham became the friend of God because he believed the Word of God and did what God told him to do. What faith and righteous works did for Abraham it will do for us, because Paul tells us that it was not written for Abraham's sake alone, but to all who (Romans 4:12-24),

"Walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham."

Now it amounts to a certainty that the way of salvation has not changed since the days of the Apostles. There has been no further revelation. The only change that has taken place is that Christendom has departed from The Faith once delivered to the saints. The doctrines of men have undergone many changes, but,

"The Word of God abideth forever."

The Gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation." "The Gospel," or "good news" of salvation, which the Apostles preached is defined as,

"The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ." (Act 8:12).

It is God's message of a coming kingdom on earth, which will bless all nations and in which the saints will receive their reward of the inheritance. The things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ are composed of the things relating to Christ, his nature, his mission, his sacrificial offering for sin, his resurrection, and everything pertaining to salvation in him. This Gospel has the power to save, for (Romans 1:16-17)

"Therein is the righteousness of God revealed."

In it God has revealed Himself, His purpose, His will. It is that which makes us free (John 8:32); it is the word of life (Philippians 2:16); it is "able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32); "By which also ye are saved.." (1 Corinthians 15:2)

To briefly summarize, Jesus and his apostles taught:

1. That God has offered to man a plan by which he can be freed and inherit eternal life (Romans 6:23);
2. That salvation depends on a belief in God's plan of salvation centered in Christ (John 3:16);
3. That there is but one faith (Ephesians 4:5);
4. That none can please God without this faith (Hebrews 11:6);
5. That this faith comes by hearing and believing the Word of God (Romans 10:17);
6. That all who were blind or had no knowledge of the Gospel were lost (2 Corinthians 4:3);
7. That to reject God's Word brings certain condemnation (John 12:48);
8. That to neglect "that great salvation" is fatal (Hebrews 2:1).

One of, if not THE greatest, sin of the present age is the neglect of God's Word. The baneful effects of this general unbelief and skepticism are already apparent in the awful wave of crime and immorality which is sweeping over the world, and in the obvious weakness of popular "liberal" religions which stand helpless as they face an unbelieving world which they have taught "it makes no difference what you believe."

Such "broad-mindedness" has been very pleasing to the world. They have taken the preachers of smooth things at their word and have rejected everything which might interfere with the pursuit of their worldly ways. God's saving Word is ignored and in its place we have everything that is pleasing to the flesh, things that

"Seem right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Let us follow the advice of the inspired apostle, and

"Receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is able to save Your souls ... and be doers of the Word and not hearers only." (James 1:21)

Uninspired man may offer us much in things that pertain to this life but he stands mute and helpless at the graveside. God's Word alone can guide us into eternity.

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

The Deep Things of God: Christian Disciples

This term "disciple" is derived from the latin noun *discipulus*, which signifies a learner or scholar. He then who styles himself a disciple announces to mankind that he is a student whose object is to learn. If he adopt the term as a sectarian distinction, it then imports that he is a student of the system of theology approved by his denomination, that he may learn all its mysteries. There are innumerable disciples of this class, subdivided also into a multitude of orders. In this sense they are as followers and adherents to the doctrine of another, who is therefore always more or less in advance of themselves; and therefore their leader. But there is a non-sectarian sense in which men are styled disciples, namely, when they are students of the Word, "proving all things," (1Thessalonians 5:21) that they may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with The fullness of God; and so understanding what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 3:18,19). Hence an ecclesia of disciples is an assembly of learners; and an ecclesia of Christian disciples is an assembly of persons who believe the things of the Kingdom of God, and of the Name of the Lord Jesus, and, thus believing, have been immersed into Christ and patiently continue in the faith and well doing of their vocation, reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting all things revealed in the Scriptures of Truth.

Such were the disciples first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26). These Christian disciples shone as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life. They counted not their lives dear unto them: but hazarded everything, reputation, liberty, wealth and friends, for the Word's sake.

Their treasure was in heaven (Matt. 6:19-20); therefore their anchor was within the veil (Heb. 6:19). The icy coldness of their old nature was thawed into the genial sympathies of the new man (Eph. 2:15; 4:24; Col. 3:10; see 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15) by the benevolence of God. Heart clung to heart, and hand joined in hand, the expressive symbol of unity and love. We want to behold an Ecclesia of Christian Disciples such as these; we fear that such an one is yet a stranger in our world. When such a community of ecclesias is restored, we shall glory in it as a Reformation in verity and deed.

Bro. John Thomas

What Does That Mean?

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." (Revelation 3:4-5)

From these two verses in Revelations it appears that baptized believers are accounted as already clothed in white garments, yet if they keep these garments white the hope is held out for them that they will be clothed in white raiment in the future. What is the difference?

The word for "garment" and "raiment" is the same (*himation*) which is the plural form of the word "*heima*" meaning, "to put on." The Bible appears to make the distinction between the plural and the singular form of the word. The plural refers to clothing in general, while the singular relates to the outer cloke or mantel. We do not have this outer mantel (*heima*) at this time but we have been given garments (*himation*) to keep unspotted from the world. It brings our minds back to the garments of the High Priest who was first washed and then clothed with each garment until he was fully clothed and the miter placed upon his head as a crown of glory.

This indicates a process that is gradual and takes time from the original washing until finally fully clothed and crowned. Baptism is a preparation for clothing. Bro. Thomas commenting on this subject says, "Having 'put on Christ' by faith in the kingdom and name, and by immersion, he is for them a robe of righteousness; and by walking in him according to the truth received and obeyed, and so yielding the fruit of the Spirit, they 'keep themselves unspotted from the world,' which is as a garment of 'fine linen, clean and white,' which symbolizes the righteous actions of the saints."

When the single form of the word is used "*heima*" it is used expressly for an outer cloke or mantle. This is the final "white robe" that we hope to put on. Once again, I will quote bro. Thomas, who in Eureka explains, "When they are clothed with this Spirit Nature, they are 'clothed upon with their habitation which is from heaven'... This is the consummation of their investiture, which begins with their immersion into Christ, and is perfected in their post-resurrectional immortalization... clothed in the linen garment of righteousness, honor, majesty, and salvation."

Let us now put on Christ as a robe today and keep our garments white so we will be able to obtain that final white robe of salvation and victory at the return of Christ to the earth.

Bro. Jim Sommerville