

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. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.

Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 790-8519 e-mail: fredhigham@ameritech.net

Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

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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

CHESAPEAKE, Virginia — S.S. 10:00 AM; Memorial 11:00 AM; Eureka class alternating Sunday evenings. Meetings held at 321 Woodbridge Dr., Chesapeake, VA 23322, USA. Bro. Dale Lee, 757-547-5816.

Dear brethren and sisters in the Hope of Israel,
Loving greetings in the name of Yahoshua Messiah!

The Chesapeake ecclesia has welcomed the following visitors around the table of the Lord since our formation: Bro. and Sis. Steve Osborne, Bro. Jeremy Osborne, Bro. and Sis. James Sommerville, Sis. Agnes Stephen, Bro. and Sis. Leonard Naglieri of the Boston, Massachusetts ecclesia; Bro. Michael Murphy of the Newton, North Carolina ecclesia. We are particularly thankful for the word of exhortation given by Bre. Steve Osborne, James Sommerville and Len Naglieri.

The Chesapeake ecclesia, along with the Newton ecclesia, sponsored a study that was held the last weekend in May in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. The subject of study for the weekend was “God Manifestation.” Although planning and notification for the weekend commenced rather late, nevertheless, we were gratified by the interest in the program and by the spirit of those who attended. The number of those in attendance was just short of 30, with some even having traveled from Wales. We appreciate the efforts of all the brothers who consented to speak. We especially want to acknowledge the assistance of Bro. Jim Sommerville, Sis. Kathy Sommerville and Sis. Sharon Osborne, all of whom contributed significantly to the success of our weekend.

It is the consensus of some of the brethren who attended, as well as some who wished they could have attended, that we do another study weekend. Accordingly, and God Willing, we are planning a study for the last weekend in May 2005. This is Memorial Day weekend in the United States, which allows Monday as a day of travel for American sojourners. We are tentatively planning to hold the study at the same location as this May, at a Holiday Inn in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. We intend to notify the brotherhood through the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News Magazine as well as internet, as plans develop.

With love on behalf of the Chesapeake Ecclesia,
Bro. Dale Lee

HÖLÖ, Sweden — Sis. Lori Gustavsson, Eneboda, 15393 Hölö, Sweden.
Phone: 011-468-656-4180

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,
Loving greetings from Sweden,

This past weekend I was blessed with the encouragement, comfort, instruction and company of Bro. Steve and Sis. Liz Male of the Hengod Ecclesia, Sis. Annetta Jones of the Richard Ecclesia, and Bro. Alexey Matveev of Estonia. We all enjoyed a day of sight-seeing in Stockholm on Friday and they were able to visit our home on Saturday. The weather was perfect, for a change. Bro. Steve gave a wonderful lecture on the subject of Creation vs. Evolution with much informal discussions afterwards.

Bro. Alexey reminded us during Sunday morning exhortation to "Be ye doers of the Word". Sis. Annetta was very thoughtful in giving myself and Bro. Alexey some books by the pioneer brethren that we did not have and she also held a Sunday school class for my children, Casey and Jesse. I'm very thankful that they could visit me here and, God willing, look forward to any future visits from anyone who would like to come.

With love in the bonds of the Truth,
Sis. Lori Gustavsson

HOUSTON, Texas – Sunday School 10am; Memorial 11am; Study Class 1pm (Temple of Ezekiel's Prophecy); 4th Sunday 1pm (Open discussion, roundtable Bible class); Wednesday 7:30pm (The Minor Prophets).
Meeting Hall address: 8008 Junius Street, Houston, TX 77012.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

We've taken longer than usual to contribute ecclesial news and as such, we have a number of items to report. We apologize for the delay.

First, most are aware, but in February we sadly lost the company of our dear brother Johnny Packer when he fell asleep in Christ on Saturday, Feb 21st. He was 81 and had been a laborer in our Master's vineyard for many years – baptized on August 22, 1947. He now awaits the Lord's return and the blessed resurrection.

In February we also lost the company of sister Sharon Johnatty when she moved to Florida due to job requirements. However, we continue to "meet" with her at both memorial meetings as well as our study classes by using a conferencing telecommunications set up. Sister Sharon either telephones the meeting hall, or we call her, and we have a two-way speaker phone that allows her to either just listen in (during memorials), or actually participate when we have open discussion study classes. It is a wonderful tool that perhaps others in isolation might find it useful to inquire into. Sister Sharon's contact info in Florida is as follows:

730 98th Drive, Gainesville, Florida, 352-332-9763

We also have some wonderful news to announce (again most already have heard). It is with great pleasure that we inform the brotherhood of

the baptism of Laura Longoria into the saving name of Jesus. Laura was baptized after a good confession on April 17th, 2004 and given the right hand of fellowship into our family the following day. May Yahweh bless her in her endeavor to walk in the light as He is in the light, and may we help her as best we can to make her journey in the Truth successful.

It is also with great pleasure we announce the marriage of brother Joel Pando and sister Laura Longoria on May 29th, 2004. It was a happy occasion. May Yahweh bless their union and may they both help each other on the road that leads to the kingdom of God. Their new home address is: 11911 Tierra Palms, Houston, TX 77034, 713-943-8326 (this is the same phone # Joel has had)

We've had a number of visitors this year: bro Rusty and sis Susie Stephen, and bro. Bob Bent of Lampasas (Dallas); bro. Paul Garvey of Boston; bro David Hughes of Wales; bro Rachel Johnatty-Theaker of England; sis Sharon Johnatty of Florida; and sis Tanya Darter of Lampasas. Brother Paul Garvey graciously offered the words of exhortation the Sunday he was here. Hopefully we have not missed anyone.

We send our love to all those of the faith, hoping and praying that we stand fast in the ways of righteousness, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

With love in the bonds of the truth, on behalf of the Houston ecclesia,
Brother Shauywn Smith

Ecclesial Correspondence

KILIFI-MTONDIA, Kenya — Bro. Fred W. J. Omoto, PO Box 1177, Kilifi, Kenya.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Greetings in the Hope of Everlasting Life from the brethrens and sisters of the Kilifi-Mtondia Ecclesia.

On behalf of the brethren and sisters of Mtondia Ecclesia, I feel privileged to announce that we wish to hold a fraternal gathering God willing on the following dates: 10th, 11th, and 12th of December 2004. Whose theme will be: "The Truth Will Make You Free". It will be held at Mtondia meeting Hall. P.O. Box 1177, Kilifi – KENYA.

Yours in the bonds of the Truth,
Brother Fred and Sister Irene Omoto

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERINGOct 9-10, 2004
Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, N. Canton, OH 44721, USA. 1-330-494-7717

KILIFI-MTONDIA FRATERNAL GATHERINGDec 10-12, 2004
Bro. Fred Omoto, Mtondia Ecclesial Hall, PO Box 1177, Kilifi, Kenya.

NORTH CAROLINA – VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND May 28 - 29, 2005
Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERINGJune 11-12, 2005
Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628, USA. 1-512-869-2008

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERINGJuly 8-11, 2005
Bro. Sid Jones, RR #1, Richard, Sask, S0M-2P0, Canada 306-246-4468

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING July 25-31, 2005
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868
Study Class Topic: **Ephesians**; Daily Bible Readings; Discussion

3 Capabilities to Consider: Thought, Word and Deed

When I was first given the title to this exhortation, the first thing that popped into my head was the Christadelphian Instructor. Now I know you are probably thinking that the Instructor is pretty elementary stuff, but haven't you ever heard the saying, "Everything I wanted to know about life I learned in kindergarten"? Well, the same is basically true about the Instructor. You see, most of us who were privileged enough to be raised in the Truth (of which I am one) had to learn the questions in the Instructor as a child. Now as I got 'older and wiser', some of the more simplistic elements of the Truth gave way to deeper and more thought provoking things like doctrine, fellowship, atonement and prophecy.

Now I am not saying these things are not important, but I should not let them overshadow, or relegate to the back burner, the very things that got me to this point in the first place. For instance, Question #10 of the Instructor (section for younger children) asks, "Can the Father see us, although He is in heaven?" Answer – "Yes, He can both see us and hear us. His Spirit is everywhere; and all things are in it, so that He knows everything that happens. Nothing can be hid from His eyes." Question #11 - "Does He know even our thoughts?" Answer – "Yes, He knows the very thoughts of our heart, even if we say nothing about them." And Question #12 – the biggest of them all – "What does this teach us?" Answer – "To be very careful of what we do or say or think."

You see, the number 3 represents spiritual completeness. For instance, the fruits of the spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 are given to us in 3 sets of 3 according to Bro. Growcott and they show us the total spiritual man, if we

were able to attain to them all. They are: Love–Joy–Peace, Longsuffering–Gentleness–Goodness, and Faith–Meekness–Temperance.

And now we will investigate these 3: THOUGHT – WORD – DEED.

The word 'thought' according to Strong's Concordance means "a process of the mind that involves perception, purpose, mind, intellect, knowledge, disposition and attitude."

The Scriptures have a great deal to tell us about our thinking, our mind and our disposition. Psalm 139 basically tells us that God knows our thoughts and everything that we do and we cannot be hid from Him. He also admonishes Solomon in 1Chronicles 28:9, to "serve God with a perfect heart and willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." And in Hebrews 4:12 we are told that God is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." So the question to you and me is — Do you ever think about what you think? Well, the scriptures tell us that we are to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. (2Corinthians 10:5)

How do we "bring into captivity all our thoughts to the obedience of Christ"? Well, I will tell you how — through knowledge — by reading what God and Christ expect of us. Bro. Roberts tells us, "God demands the highest place in all our affairs, which is His reasonable place. Let us render the service He requires. His word is in our houses. Don't let us insult Him by giving our feeblest efforts to the reading of it. Don't let us wait till all our energies are worn out and our faculties impaired in attending upon the affairs of the natural man. Don't let us sit down to the Bible when nature is exhausted and sleep hovers over the eyelids. Let us give the best time of the day." And then bro. Growcott advises that, "If we do not love God enough to want to study and learn all we can about His word and work, then we are of no use to Him. So be sure your reading is purposeful and beneficial study."

So it is the Knowledge of God's word that brings our thought process into submission to Christ! Without a Knowledge of God's WORD, we are void of hope and faith, which comes by hearing; and hearing, by the Word of God. The Scriptures tell us that, "wise men lay up knowledge" (Proverbs 10:14); "through knowledge shall the just be delivered" (Proverbs 11:9); that, "the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel" (Proverbs 20:15); and "a man of knowledge increaseth strength." (Proverbs 24:5). We are also encouraged "to be filled with the knowledge of His will." (Colossians 1:9), and we are expected to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour." (2Peter 3:18)

There can be no understanding of divine things, nor can any spiritual wisdom be acquired without knowledge. You see, it is entirely possible to have knowledge, but at the same time, not be very wise. But it is impossible to be wise without knowledge. And it is the knowledge that we gain about anything, that influences our thoughts — and our thoughts are what dictate our actions. Therefore, knowledge is the foundation from which wisdom and understanding may be discerned and applied as is revealed in the Bible.

But it is not without carefulness that we acquire this knowledge! For we are urged to put on a Christ-like character as we grow in grace and knowledge, and not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly and righteously. We should not feel smug, selfish, superior or self-righteous, but rather show grace and mercy through lowliness, meekness, humbleness and brotherly kindness. We have a need to always remember this warning, “wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1Corinthians 10:12). Along this line of thought, Bro. Roberts tells us that we could fall into the same mode as did Israel, who “with their lips they draw near unto God; but their heart was far from Him.” You will recall that we said that part of our thought process is our disposition and attitude, which we may not always think about concerning our walk in the Truth. However, bro. Roberts has an enlightening comment about this in the book, *A Word in Season*, where he tells us, “Is it not plain as the noonday that like Israel, we may deceive ourselves as to our standing towards God? If we content ourselves with a mere technical compliance with the instructions of the house of God, then is there no possibility that we presume TOO much upon our KNOWLEDGE of the Truth, and our baptism, and our breaking of bread from week to week?” He goes on to say (Quote): These are divine, and in their right place indispensable, but what if at the same time it is man — more than God — that is before our eyes in the doing of these things? What if we sing and pray merely as the right sort of thing to do without opening the heart to God in all sincerity and fervency and fear? What if the glory of God be but a phrase on our lips and not a sentiment in reality foreign to our hearts? What if we shut up our bowels of compassion towards those who suffer? What if with plenty in our hands, we think only of our own need and our own comfort, and our schemes are shaped and burdened only and continually with our own cares and interests? What if we never help the heavy burdens under which so many around us are staggering to the grave? What if we practice a habit of absolute indifference which is crushing to the earth our neighbors on every hand? — we may be zealous of the divine ordinances in the same way Israel was. We may be attending and enjoying meetings; and in a manner be as strongly in love with the Christadelphian position as the Jews were their

Temple, and yet be lacking in the spiritual element that makes these things acceptable to God as part and parcel of a faithful service...But if we worship unaccompanied by the sentiment toward God which sincerely offers ALL to Him, and that Disposition toward man which prompts to do deeds of blessing and mercy, it may be all in vain. (End quote)

Brothers and sisters, it is so easy for us to get caught up thinking of ourselves — “more highly than we ought to think.” To the flesh, it is much easier to belittle and criticize others, rather than giving a kind, tenderhearted, compassionate, loving and gentle response. This brings us to the second part of our topic, which is ‘WORD’.

Strong’s Concordance tells us that ‘Word’ is an expression of thought as embodying a conception or idea; or a layman’s way of putting it is that words are an outward expression of our thoughts. But what about God’s Word? What thoughts does He convey to us concerning His Word? He lets us know right away, that you and I do not think like Him nor do we act like Him. In Isaiah 55:8-9 God tells us, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” The next thing He wants us to understand is that He values His WORD even above His great name as we are told in Psalms 138:2, “for thou hast magnified thy word above thy name.” So it follows that we, too, should hold His Word in highest esteem above everything else. And if we do, we are promised that the entrance of His word “giveth light” (Psalm 119:130) — which is understanding. And then His Word will be — a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path (Psalm 119:105). His son, Jesus Christ, said that we, then, are to “live...by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4)

Therefore, if we let “the word of God dwell in [us] richly” (Colossians 3:16) and “receive with meekness the engrafted word” (James 1:21) and earnestly “desire the sincere milk of the word that [we] may grow thereby” (1Peter 2:2), so that we may preach the word and be “instant in season and out”. Then maybe, like Timothy (1Timothy 4:2), we would be “an example of the believers in word, in conversation, [which is our way of life] in charity, [which is love] in spirit, in faith, and in purity.” Because, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver”, and that is why we should ask, as did David, (Psalm 19:14) to, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer.”

Brothers and sisters, if we do not continue to “receive with meekness the engrafted word” and let it fill us with kindness, compassion, mercy, love, gentleness and patience — then we have missed the message that the

Word of God was intended to convey. We know from James, how our tongue can get us into a world of trouble if we do not control the thoughts that our minds conceive and the words our tongues produce. So it behooves us to remember Paul's advice that if anyone (1Timothy 6:3-4) "consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness"; then, "he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, strife, railings and evil surmisings." Because he tells us, they strive about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. (2Timothy 2:14)

You see, God places a great responsibility upon you and me about what we say, and how we say it! So important are our words, that we will be required to give an accounting of them at the day of judgment. Our Master tells us in Matthew (12:36-37) "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (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." So, what we say, and how we say it is more important than we may think during our daily lives. Solomon even tells us in Ecclesiastes (5:2) to "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." He also tells us (Proverbs 15:1) that, "A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." That is why our speech should "be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that [we] may know how [we] ought to answer every man." (Colossians 4:6) So, "whatsoever we do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God."

So to wrap up this segment about WORD, we have this admonition to us from Bro. Roberts — (Quote) Many will discover that they have been wasting their time and hurting their brethren by bootless and embittering controversy instead of redeeming the evil days by the consolations of the Truth. They will see too late that instead of imbibing the sincere milk of the Word, they have been feeding on ashes; that instead of dispensing a portion of meat to the household in due season, they have been giving them gall and vinegar; that instead of strengthening the hands of fellow laborers, they have been casting stumbling blocks in the paths of the weak, and discouraging the hearts of the strong; that instead of rejoicing in the Lord, they have been fretting their souls with barren contentions; that instead of filling up a good account with works of humility and mercy and faith, they have been sowing a harvest of envy and strife and every evil

fruit; that instead of helping purify a peculiar people, zealous of good works, their influence has only been mischievous, and that continually...obstructing the work of the Lord, pulling down work already done and throwing clouds and darkness over the beacon intended to guide the feet of the stranger to eternal life. [Bro. Roberts goes on to tell us] Let us aim to be out of the ranks of this number...that the Lord, at his coming may approve our faithfulness in small things, and give us higher work to do (End quote). That is why, brothers and sisters, it is so important that we pray as did King David that, "the words of [our] mouth, and the meditation of [our] heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength and my redeemer."

Now we come to the final segment of our topic, which is DEED!! According to Strong's Concordance, the word DEED means effort, toil, labor, or an action of some kind. Maybe a simpler way to put it is — it is our WORKS! And we all know that this is the standard by which we will be judged either worthy or unworthy of eternal life when our Master returns. Proverbs 24 tells us that He will "render to every man according to his works." Christ himself tells us in Matthew 16 "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." Therefore, it seems to me that if we are going to be judged according to the things we have done in this life, whether it be good or evil — then our DEEDS, which are our WORKS, are an extremely important part of our probation.

So important are our WORKS that James says that our faith is dead if it is not coupled with works. He even goes so far as to tell us that faith will be of no profit to us and will be unable to save us if our faith is unaccompanied with WORKS. Now, why is that? Because our WORKS are a DEMONSTRATION of our faith, and that is the very reason James 2:18, tells us "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works."

You see, when we were baptized, we were expected to crucify the old man and his DEEDS — to do away with our old ways and walk in newness of life, and put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge. So, basically we said "all that thou hast said, we will do." And that is the instruction that John gives us (1 John 3:18) when he says for us to "Love not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Then, "whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." (Colossians 3:17) Now, that's precisely why James tells us (1:25), if we are a doer of the work, and not just a hearer, that man will be blessed in his deed. Brothers and sisters, Christ tells us (Matthew 5:16) that we are to "let [our] light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify [our] Father which is in heaven." But, the Apostle Paul also

knew our nature and that we sometimes let things slip if we are not careful. So, he warns us in Titus 3:8, “These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” Therefore brothers and sisters, we need to give ourselves a kind of spiritual checkup to see if we are MAINTAINING GOOD WORKS. But, really as far as we need to go to get proper maintenance is the Scriptures themselves, because Timothy said in 2 Tim 3:16-17, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Bro. Roberts has a rather unique perspective concerning this verse on the topic of ‘Striking a Spiritual Balance’ when he says (Quote): Notice we are not partially furnished, but thoroughly furnished, wealthily furnished, heartily furnished, efficiently furnished, zealously furnished...and furnished unto ALL GOOD WORKS...not one or two; not like those who perform one set of duties and neglect others; who attend lectures, but absent themselves from breaking bread; who like to argue about first principles, but disrelish holiness and prayer; who get up public meetings, but forget the ministration of the saints; who like discussion, but have no taste for worship; who are interested in the sign of the times, but dull on the law of Christ; who take an interest in a stranger, but forget love to the brethren; who zealously invoke the law and the testimony, but neglect the daily reading of the scriptures; who teach doctrine, but pass over mercy and the love of God; who are diligent in business, but do not serve the Lord; who cherish theory, but fail in practice; who are alive to correctness of belief, but dead to holiness of life; who contend for the faith, but neglect the WORKS without which faith is dead; who promise liberty to others, while they themselves are the servants of corruption. (End quote)

On the other hand, Bro. Roberts says, (Quote): The man of God, furnished unto ALL GOOD WORKS, will not be found in opposite extremes. He will not exalt ‘charity’ over the gospel; he will not advocate peace where there is no purity; he will not hold up almsgiving as the way to salvation; he will not inculcate union and fellowship with the world on the plea of loving our neighbors as ourselves. For everything there is a time and a place; and the study of the word will teach us the where and when. There is a right handling of the word of truth...and a handling of the word of God deceitfully. The man of God thoroughly furnished unto ALL GOOD WORKS, will discern instinctively the one and the other, and be enabled to give its right place to every part of the word of the testimony (End quote). From this it is evident that our work in the Truth must be balanced — for what Christ told the Pharisees also holds true to us today,

“These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42)

But our GOOD WORKS are not confined solely to the brothers and sisters. It is easy and pleasant to serve the brotherhood, but the hardest command for us to adhere to is for us, “To love [our] enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.” This command is from our Master (Matthew 5:4)!!! And yet we have a hard time doing kind things to the “unthankful and the evil.” Bro. Growcott tells us this (Quote): If our ‘religion’ does not move us powerfully to put away all selfishness, and create in us a great desire to “DO GOOD TO ALL MEN,” then it is not “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father.” The underlying motive force for all we do MUST be a zealous love for ALL, and a desire to help ALL, rooted in the love of God, who points this out to us as the ONLY possible way of life. (End quote)

Bro. Roberts informs us that if we are going to demonstrate complete allegiance to Christ and His commandments, then we are to show our obedience by doing those things which he requires of us — even though it might personally be distasteful to us from a natural standpoint. He says, (and I quote): Someone is ill, who in health was savorless, useless and perhaps hurtful; and our GOODNESS is denied on this ground, these things ought not to be so. We are in such matter to act from allegiance to Christ, and not from our own tastes. There are not many who bestow their kindness upon the repulsive; there are not many who call to their feasts the poor, and the halt, and the maimed, and the blind. Who can give no recompense; — and yet none others are Christ’s true servants. Jesus says, “why call ye me Lord and do not the things I say?” Let us remember this — it is not sufficient to hear the Truth and like it. For there are many who sit and listen with pleasure to the beautiful sentiments of the Gospel, to whom the words spoken to Ezekiel apply — “Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; For they hear thy words and do them not.” Let’s not forget, [says bro. Roberts] that Jesus likens this class of people to men building their houses on the sand, which, when the rain descended and the floods came and winds blew, the fall was great. If, therefore, we are to be associated with Jesus and the glorious band that constitute the kingdom of God, we must distinguish ourselves by the present and ACTUAL PERFORMANCE of his commandments. (End quote)

And then, bro. Growcott adds to this point another perspective we may not think of in Search Me O God speaking on the subject of ‘Loving your enemies and doing good’ he says, “Lay your foundation in love and sincere and kindness. We are never going to help anyone to make a hard decision against the pull of their own natural desires, if we have already

embittered them against us by criticism and unconcern; — rather in such case we just re-enforce their resistance. We may have gratified our ego by condemning them, and achieved cheap self-satisfaction, but we have done no service to God.”

Along the same line, Bro. Thomas tells us, “I have no controversy with persons — it is with doctrine and principles, in my view, destructive to the Truth, and not with men that I am at war”

So as I said in the beginning and as these quotes from our pioneer brothers indicate, we are going to be judged by our own DEEDS, WORKS, ACTIONS, and the manner in which we respond to the commandments we have been given, — which is exactly the lesson taught in Question 12 of the Instructor which asks, “What does this teach us?” — Answer: “To be very careful of what we DO or SAY or THINK.”

Therefore, to sum up our title of THOUGHT – WORD – DEED, I leave you with one of my favorite verses in the Scriptures that I use quite often in my exhortations, but it happens to perfectly fit our subject today. In the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, Solomon gives us these words of wisdom — “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole [duty of] man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Bro. Jerry Connolly

ARE YOU PLANNING YOUR FUTURE IN THE ECCLESIAL BODY OF CHRIST?

Certainly all of our youths are aware that we all are living in the days most prophets and apostles prophesied upon as “the last day.” Our Lord Jesus Christ equated these days to those of Noah. All these insist that true brothers and sisters in Christ have to be totally selective in their present and future activities while still living in this present system of things. Any unconscious move in this age will prove disobedience to God's will.

It is within this context that youths should as well view their lives. Youth is a time when you have the most opportunity to make choices and plans. It's also a time when a person has energy and enthusiasm to use or misuse, to spend or squander. Use this Godly gift of youth for the betterment of your future.

The key to better usage of your youth is provided by the giver of youth Himself, even the Lord God. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when

thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). He also promises to help you build for your better future: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

During this stage of sole opportunity to launch a sound basis for the future, you are bound to make several decisions. It is a must that you make wise decisions only. Youths are able to make wise decisions. Yes, you are able and you can. Consider the four teenage Hebrews; Shadrach, Meshech, Abednego and Daniel; when in Babylon, their decision against idolatry was wise. What about Joseph who was sold in Egypt? His decision not to commit the sin of fornication was wise. Yes, even teenagers can make wise decisions! But what was the secret of their success?

Well, in ancient Israel, God had given the responsibility to parents that they had to diligently (yes, diligently) instruct their children in Godly ways (see Deuteronomy 6:7). The children were also to obey their parents following what they were instructed for their better future (see Deuteronomy 5:16). Obedience to parental instruction was the real secret of their success. What about in the days we live in — last days? Notice the following inspired prediction of the last days.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good; traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

Have you ever checked the dictionary definition of some of the above individual words? How many from the list have troubled your life previously? Which of them are affecting you presently? Have you noticed that to practice even only one of them will introduce you to the rest of the list? Say, for instance, you are “disobedient to parents”; can you see then you're “proud, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, heady, lover of pleasure more than lover of God, etc”? Did you notice that the last days will be “perilous times” and men “shall be” as enumerated?

Cannot this prediction sound enough alarm for youths to quickly run for safety within the Ecclesial body and plan their future within, avoiding the dangerous situation without? Listen to the Biblical counsel: “To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instructions of wisdom, justice, and judgement, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.”

(Proverbs 1:2-4). Where else can we get all of the above instruction if not in the Ecclesia? The Lord Jesus Christ warns us to remain in the body for our future progress. See what He commands: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me...If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:4, 7) Notice that in addition to remaining in the Ecclesial body of Christ, the 'words' of the Ecclesial body of Christ should abide in us.

As we plan our future within the Ecclesia we will have to avoid lip-service friends (Proverbs 13:20) who would only be dangerous to our plans, and choose true friends who are wise and faithfully active in the Lord's service (see 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Proverbs 13:20). We shall always consult God's word on the issue we happen to be considering and recognizing our spiritual infancy (a barrier to detecting subtly hidden intricacies) frankly seek assistance from wise, faithful, older brothers and sisters of long standing in the faith, before making decisions of long term consequences, for instance, marriage (see Proverbs 15:22 and Hebrews 5:13-14).

After receiving mature counsels, at times they will not be favourable to your taste. You have to take your time, and with much thought and prayer, decide to adapt the mature counsels (consider Proverbs 21:5 and Hebrews 12:11). Why should you at long last try to adapt mature counsels? Well, most personal decisions will always also affect others, like your parents, the Ecclesial body, and our Heavenly Father. Consider Proverbs 10:1 and 1 John 1:3. Study the following in particular, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." (1 Corinthians 12:26,27).

Did you notice that we all are members of each other "being knit together?" (Colossians 2:2) Did you also notice that one member's decision can affect the whole fellowship, either for its suffering or for its rejoicing? How would you like to see the consequences of your decision on the entire fellowship? Is it not that you would like to see your brothers and sisters, the Lord Jesus and Yahweh rejoicing because of your wise decision?

Come on, our dear young brothers and sisters in Christ, the entire brotherhood, the Lord Jesus Christ, and our loving Heavenly Father, Yahweh, are earnestly beseeching you to build your future wisely in the Ecclesial body that the end results may be joy for you and all of them.

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us 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)

Bro. Shawn Tyler

DANIEL – THE KING OF THE NORTH

"The eleventh chapter of Daniel is therefore fulfilled as far as the first colon of the fortieth verse. The things which remain to be accomplished in the time of the end are briefly outlined in the remaining part of the chapter. The king of Egypt having pushed at the Little Horn, as we have seen, the next event of the prophecy is an attack upon him by the king of the north, as it is written, "And the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships;" that is, the Russo-Assyrian autocrat shall attack Constantinople by sea and land, and with such whirlwind impetuosity that the Sultan's dominion shall be swept away. The whirlwind-nature of the attack implies, I think, not only its overwhelming character, but that when it is made, the allies of the Sultan will be off their guard; that is by the Autocrat's assurances of peace and moderation for which they will give him credit, Constantinople will be left unprotected, and it will fall into his hands, before they can come to the rescue." (Elpis Israel page 418)

The above extract from Elpis Israel serves as a suitable introduction to the last part of Daniel chapter 11. It also provides some interesting thoughts as we contemplate the world shattering events that will take place "when Russia makes its grand move for the building up of its Image-empire" (Elpis Israel – Author's Preface xviii).

Who, for example, on the world stage today, would be more likely to be "given credit" on issues such as "assurances of peace and moderation?" Russia, Great Britain, or the United States of America?

It is true that events change so quickly, but at the present time, it is the United States of America and Great Britain that would be viewed as aggressors. It could well be, therefore, that Russia will be prominent in issuing assurances of peace and moderation in world affairs, thus lulling the western powers (or southern powers as they will appear in the denouement of the time of the end) into a sense of false security. Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) will then be left unprotected, and the whirlwind will engulf Turkey before "Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof" can come to the rescue. All they will be able to say is, "Art thou come to take a spoil? hast

thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?" (Ezekiel 38:13)

Ezekiel chapter 38 is a fitting chapter to consider and study in conjunction with the last few verses of Daniel chapter 11. The similarities between Ezekiel's Gog and Daniel's King of the North are striking, and Bro. Thomas itemises these on page 80 of *The Exposition of Daniel*. They are as follows:

1. Their geographical position is the same (Dan. 11:40, Ezek. 38:15). Gog is therefore King of the North, his place or country being there.
2. They are both the adversaries of Israel (Dan.11:41, Ezek. 38:16).
3. The time they invade the land is the same. The king of the north invades it in the time of the end. (Dan. 11:40, Ezek. 38:8)
4. The same peoples are named as components of their armies (Dan.11:43, Ezek. 38:5)
5. Hostile tidings come from the east and north, which excite the King of the North to fury; while tidings also come to Gog from the same quarter to deter him from invading the Holy Land. (Dan. 11:44, Ezek. 38:13)
6. The King of the North encounters the Little Horn; and Gog is antagonised by "Sheba and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish and the young lions thereof" — the Anglo-Indian power — the ancient ally of the Little Horn. (Dan. 11:40, Ezek. 38:13)
7. They both meet with the same fate, at the same time, in the same place, and by the same power. The "king of fierce countenance" stands up against the Prince of Princes; the King of the North encounters Michael the Great Prince; and Gog is smitten by Adonai Yahweh. They, all three, come to their end with none to help them; they all fall upon the mountains of Israel, and consequent upon their overthrow Israel is delivered. (Dan.11:45, Ezek.38:18)

These are the exciting events then that are the subject of the concluding verses of Daniel's 11th chapter. They take place in the time of the end (verse 40). In the long history that we have been considering in this 11th chapter, we have now arrived at our own days!

The 40th verse of Daniel chapter 11 begins "And at the time of the end." These events form part of the final revelation given to Daniel in chapters 11 and 12. In a previous article we drew attention to the seven subdivisions in these two concluding chapters as highlighted in *Elpis Israel* on page 397. We have dealt with the first four divisions, and will now look at the fifth and sixth sections.

Verse 40

As Bro. Thomas states on page 397, this section refers to the time of the end, or "latter days," when "the King of the South," and "the King of the North," should reappear on the stage of action, and the power of the Little Horn, and that of the King of the North, should coalesce, and form one power, as when the Roman and Assyro-Macedonian were blended together, BC 67.

This was also referred to at the conclusion of the last article when an extract from *Elpis Israel* was quoted. On pages 405 and 406, Bro. Thomas gave the illustration of the fretsaw cutting out a piece of the Goat's Horn and attaching it to a spring that would enable the piece cut out to extend, and also be pressed down again. The extended piece represented the Little Horn of the Goat, and when pressed down, represented the merging of the Little Horn power of Constantinople into the Assyro-Macedonian, or Russian, Horn of the Goat, in the time of the end.

Verse 40 states that, "at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him." Who is the King of the South at the time of the end? We recall that when we were examining the prophecy of Daniel, the King of the South was Egypt. In the days when bro. Thomas was alive, Egypt "pushed at him" in the person of Mehemet Ali, "who made successful war upon the Sultan of Constantinople, and would have overthrown him, if the powers had not interfered and ordered the Egyptian king back" (Bro. Roberts). The "him" referred to, is the Turkish power (the Little Horn of the Goat). The details are given on page 417 of *Elpis Israel*.

We have also seen a further development of the King of the South pushing at "him" when in 1917, General Allenby directed British forces against the Turkish forces that occupied Palestine (as it was called before the State of Israel was born in 1948), liberating Jerusalem from the hand of the Turk.

There is then a time period between the events just considered, and the next part of the verse that reads, "and the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over."

The "him" in this part of the verse is also Turkey. Russia is therefore destined to invade Turkey with a massive army and with whirlwind velocity, taking the nations by surprise and completely off guard. The world's intelligence services (including Mossad!) will be oblivious to the plans of Russia. The characteristic Russian chess players will have had this plan carefully concealed, although in accordance with Ezekiel chapter 38,

it is Yahweh who puts hooks into their jaws and brings them forth (verse 4). Some event or series of events will compel Russia to make this move, but no doubt the contingency plan is there.

(The saints will probably be in Sinai when this occurs. Let us make diligence now to make our calling and election sure, that we may comprise part of the far greater force that will destroy Gog's armies on the mountains of Israel.)

Verses 41 to 45

These verses outline the invasion of the land of Israel by the Little Horn's northern king, who over-runs Egypt, and finally encamps before the holy mountain (Elpis Israel page 397).

As Bro. Thomas remarks in The Exposition of Daniel, "the result of this tornado will be a successful one." Russia will enter into the countries including Egypt, who will not escape as recorded in verse 42. In fact, Russia will "have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt (verse 43). Egypt was once firmly in the Soviet camp. Russia built the (disastrous) Aswan dam for Egypt, but in the seventies, the Russian advisers were expelled from Egypt. Egyptian president, Anwar Sadat, also made steps towards peace with Israel (an action that cost him his life!). These events will have remained in the Russian memory, and a time of retribution for Egypt will arrive when her armies sweep through the Middle East.

The "glorious land" (that is, Israel) will also be invaded (Daniel 11:41). This is the "burdensome stone for all people." Russia will seek to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, but it will be the catalyst that will introduce the Great Day of Yahweh EL Shaddai. (How privileged we are to understand these future events — Amos 3:7).

The Libyans and the Ethiopians "shall be at his steps" (verse 43). This is in accordance with Ezekiel 38:5 as indicated above.

The prophecy indicates that "Edom, Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon" escape this deluge (verse 41). Who are these? The area occupied by these powers are the south-eastern districts of Israel. Bro. Roberts indicates that they escape because of the presence there of Britain — the merchants of Tarshish and all the young lions thereof. In The Exposition of Daniel, Bro. Thomas identifies "Britain as the Moabitish antagonist to Russia in the Latter Days" (see pages 92 to 95).

"Tidings out of the east and out of the north" troubles Russia, leading her to manifest great fury and destruction. Bro. Thomas says this is the British power that will be powerless to halt her progress. As Ezekiel 38 indicates, the Tarshish power is only able to say, "Art thou come to take a

spoil? Hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? To carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?"

From a natural point of view, all will seem lost for Israel. "Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Eze.37:11). Her proud army will have been devastated; her freedom, confidence and long fought for state, gone! Russia is triumphant, Europe is in chains, and the rest of the world looks on, powerless to do anything as they witness the massive military might of the King of the North who has successfully duped the arrogant, affluent and corrupt western nations. The latter-day Assyrian of Isaiah chapter 10 declares:

"By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabitants like a valiant man: And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." (Ezekiel 38:13-14)

However, despite planting "the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." The purpose of Yahweh is to smash this Image power on the mountains of Israel by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. Ezekiel declares in chapters 38 and 39:

"And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith Adonai Yahweh, that my fury shall come up in my face...Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: And I will turn thee back, and leave but a sixth part of thee...Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee."

The "name of Yahweh" that comes from far, burning with Yahweh's anger, accomplishes Gog's overthrow. That glorious and fearful Name, Yahweh Elohim, will incorporate the faithful who have waited for the time of the end, and the consummation of His purpose. We are living in the very days when these things will begin to transpire; when "Michael shall stand up" (Daniel 12:1). Let us hold fast in these desperately wicked days, so that we can be among the "wise (who will) shine as the brightness of the firmament." (Daniel 12:3)

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Signs and Events

"Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13).

Once again Russia has been in the forefront of the UK news media. Most recently the world has been horrified by the hostage situation in a school, which ended in a deadly siege.

(Quote from the BBC) Agony as school death toll rises. Relatives of victims of the school hostage siege in southern Russia are enduring an agonising wait for news as the death toll continues to rise.

More than 320 bodies have been pulled from the rubble of the school so far, officials say, but many of the victims have still to be identified. Local people scoured hospital wards and searched for bodies at the town morgue. Meanwhile, President Putin has called on the Russian people to stand together and confront the threat of terrorism. In a televised address to the nation, he said the country had to stand up to terror, as the alternative meant submitting to blackmail or giving in to panic. Terror, he said, was a challenge not just to the president but to the whole nation. Mr Putin said international terrorists had declared "full-scale war" on Russia and, because of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the nation had been unable to respond effectively. He proposed a new approach to law enforcement and vowed to increase border security. "We stopped giving enough attention to questions of defence and security, and allowed corruption to infect our judicial and law enforcement sphere," he said.

Bodies recovered

Work to clear the school, in the North Ossetian town of Beslan, has been slowed by the presence of mines in the building, where militants demanding Chechen independence held children and adults for three days. A Russian Deputy Prosecutor General Sergei Fridinsky said bodies were still being identified - 322 had been recovered so far, of which 155 were children. The BBC's Jonathan Charles in Beslan says there have been angry scenes, with many relatives accusing the government of denying them information about their loved ones. One woman, who was looking for her nephew, told the BBC what she saw. "I've been to the morgue to look for him," she said. "There were so many bodies - so many small children. I saw one woman sitting there stroking the heads of two children, she didn't even have the strength left to cry."

Children at the school had been celebrating the start of the new school year with parents and staff when they were seized by militants on Wednesday morning. A sombre Mr. Putin, who himself visited some of the injured in Beslan on Saturday morning, said the whole of Russia was grieving with the families. "In recent days every one of us has been deeply suffering and feeling in our hearts what has been happening in the town of Beslan," he said. He paid tribute to the courage of its people. "In Beslan, literally saturated with sorrow and pain, people have been concerned with, and have supported each other," he said. And they have not been afraid to put themselves at risk for the lives and calm of others. Even in the most inhuman conditions, they remained people." He said the ordeals had brought the Russian people closer together. "Today we must be together," he said. "This is the only way for us to defeat the enemy." (End quote)

Such horrific events sometimes serve to pull a nation or many nations closer together. That is obviously President Putin's objective, and one that fits in perfectly with Bible prophecy. One thing is certain, all is in God's hands, and nothing will ever be solved by man's solutions of terrorism or war. One University student was quoted as saying, "Fathers will bury their children, and after 40 days [the Orthodox Christian mourning period]... they will take up weapons and seek revenge."

This will not be the end of violence and blood shed. It gives us a small insight into the chaos and terror that will cover the whole earth in the time of the end. It is a time that the saints long for, when, Yahweh "will roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but [Yahweh] will be the hope of His people, and the strength of the children of Israel" (Joel 3:16).

One of the comments recently made by a British politician is that it seems as though the Muslims are currently at the heart of worldwide terrorism activity. This is interesting as Bible Prophecy foretells of the time when Catholicism will be at the heart of bitter persecution upon the inhabitants of the world who will not submit to its doctrines and precepts! This, we know, will be at the time of the end when the Pope will work alongside the "Cruel Lord", the one in a bid to rule the world from a political perspective, the other in a bid to rule the ecclesiastical world. So, it would seem that by the time of the end, the up-rise of Muslim activity may be somewhat suppressed by the Gogian force. Will the events we have seen this past week in the school

siege, serve to strengthen Russia's resolve to quell the Muslim power in the world? Time will certainly tell!

On a different note, we have seen Russia strengthening alliances with the Mother of Harlots, the Roman Catholic Church.

This report also comes from the BBC: (Quote) Pope returns icon to Russia

The icon of the virgin of Kazan was symbolically handed over by the Pope to a senior cardinal during a rare Vatican performance of the liturgy in Russian. Cardinal Walter Kasper will carry the icon to Moscow where he will present it to Patriarch Alexy II on Saturday. The icon is a copy of one of the most venerated religious images in Russia. The original was stolen 100 years ago from a church in the city of Kazan, 600 km (372 miles) east of Moscow, and may have been destroyed. The BBC's David Willey in Rome says that this particular copy, encrusted with silver and precious stones, has been in the Pope's possession for the past 11 years. It was bought for \$1m (£556,000) from a dealer in the United States and presented to the Pope by a group of American Catholics. Until today, the Pope had kept the painting hanging above his desk in his private apartments. The Pope showed it to Russian President, Vladimir Putin, when the Russian leader visited the Vatican last year.

Tense relations

On Thursday, the icon will be displayed for the first — and last — time inside Saint Peter's Basilica for veneration by the faithful. During the ceremony, the Pope said he hoped the "ancient image of the Mother of the Lord" would speak to Patriarch Alexy II and the Orthodox Church of the Pope's affection for them. "May it speak to him of the desire and the firm will of the Pope of Rome to progress together with them on the path of mutual understanding and reconciliation, to speed the day of full unity of the faithful, for which the Lord Jesus ardently prayed," he said. Our correspondent says "relations" between the Catholic and Orthodox churches, which separated 1,000 years ago, have been tense in recent years. The Russian Church leader has consistently opposed a Papal visit to Russia on the grounds that the Catholic Church has pursued an expansionist policy inside Russian territories trying to poach converts — a claim the Vatican denies. (End quote)

Behind the scenes, the Catholic Church is working hard to unite Europe and Russia. She is apocalyptically described as "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the

kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." (Revelation 17: 1,2,14)

May we be of this faithful class that will rule with our Master in the day when "The kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord and His Christ" (Revelation 11:15).

The question as always is, "Are you ready?"

Bro. Stephen Male

Thoughts:

Diversity of Opinion

Diversity of opinion and conflict of advice are no new things. They are so inevitable in a world like ours, that any one having anything important in hand must train himself to form his own judgment, and act it out independently, with as much courtesy and consideration for other people's feelings as he can command, but still with a firmness not to be moved from its purpose by the contrary winds blowing on all sides. We have often been made to feel the need of this in the conduct of the Christadelphian.

The most contrarious opinions have been expressed, and the most contradictory advice given. Where one has said the Christadelphian is too large, others have said "we could do with it twice the size." Some express their satisfaction at the improved character of the magazine, while others give it as their opinion that it has deteriorated. Some, again, have complained of the absence of elementary matter, and the unsuitability of the Christadelphian, on that account, for putting into the hands of those who stand in need of "first principles," while others, in a directly contrary strain, have said that too much prominence is given to first principles, and not enough attention given to nutcracking, or the elucidation of obscure and difficult passages.

"Keep us plentifully supplied with Eastern news and tidings of what is going on in the Roman habitable," say others; but their voice is, so to speak, drowned by the counter demands of those who say "Too much newspaper matter; do it up short. We can see the newspapers any day; we don't want old Joe." Then another complaint is, "There is too much of the Dr.'s writing in; give us greater variety; we would like to hear the other brethren;" to which a counter refrain arises, "Other brethren's articles are

all very well, but we want the real grit. Give us more of the Dr. and the Editor. In fact, we would not object if there was nothing else.”

Yet, again, a cry is heard, “It is a mistake to publish the Dr.’s early writings; they are superseded by his later productions;” and while we are considering this, another voice, a little gruff, growls, “The Dr. lived too long. His early writings are the best. We can understand him in the Advocate, Elpis Israel, and the Herald. Give us plenty of this.” Then others complain that too much is said about the man-side of Christ, and not enough about God manifest in the flesh; that, in fact, the Editor does not go far enough in this subject; while another party sets up just a contrary lament, that in the prominence given to God in Christ, there has been “retrogression;” that his manhood is lost sight of, that there is too much mystification; and so on, and so on, and so on.

Now, what can we say to all these things? In the first place, we say as little as possible; but just get along with our work, meeting the wishes of the critics where it is possible, but not swerving from the even line of the purpose we are pursuing—a purpose which will be justified in the judgment, if it is not seen at all times now...”

Bro. Robert Roberts - The Christadelphian, 1873

Lay Aside Every Weight

The chief business is to “save ourselves from this untoward generation;” a business which involves the avoidance of many things which a man merely bent on entertainment might think proper to engage in, and doing of many things which such a man would think unnecessary. Paul defines this important business and its co-relevants in the well-known words:

“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us. . . We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip.”

Jesus expresses the same idea parabolically, when he says:

“If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed than having two hands to be cast into the fire of Gehenna.”

Bro. Robert Roberts – The Christadelphian 1878

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

“...the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

The word ‘church,’ occurring many times in the New Testament Scriptures, is translated from the Greek word ekklesia, and means ‘that which is called out’. It refers to that body of people which God has called out as His saints, a people for His name.

This assembly of called out ones is referred to in 1 Timothy 3:15, as “the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground [foundation] of the truth.” The church, the true church of God, is that divine institution through which God is working out His purpose of calling out sinful men and women who are to form that host of redeemed ones to serve and glorify Him in the age to come.

God's Temple and Household

It is God's temple on earth, as we read in 1 Peter 2:5, where he says, speaking of the saints: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

And, of which Paul also speaks in Ephesians 2:19-20, where he tells converted Gentiles that they are no longer “strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”

The church of God is a divine, holy institution, built by the Word of God, as revealed through the prophets, Jesus Christ and His Apostles. It is, and has always been, the lightstand by which the Word of God, His Truth, has shown forth to a darkened world. That is why the church of God is called the pillar and ground of the Truth. It is the medium through which He has chosen to proclaim, to exhibit and to keep His Truth, pure and unadulterated from error. Any organization, regardless of its claims to being the church of God or the Church of Christ; if it fails to teach and practice those principles of divine Truth laid down in the Word of God, it is not, and cannot be the church of God.

God's church is His temple, in which His truth is deposited, and in which He dwells, as we learn from 2 Corinthians 6:16: “ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

Continuing in the same connection Paul clearly shows that the church or house of God is a distinct and separate institution from all worldly organizations, with which it is to have no connections whatsoever. He says, “Wherefore [because they are the temple of God] come out from

among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

Here, the family relationship of the church to the Father is brought out clearly — no one can be a member of the family of God, of the household of God, a child of God, and at the same time be identified with the unbelieving elements of the world, which is the great enemy of God.

Church of God and Christ

The church of God and the church of Christ is one and the same institution. It is called God's church because it was He who purposed it; He who designed it; and through which His purpose in Christ Jesus is to be realized. It became the church of Christ by purchase, as we are told in Acts 20:28, where Paul, in addressing the Ephesian elders, says, “feed the church of God, which he [Jesus Christ] hath purchased with his own blood.” And as Peter tells us in 1Peter 1:18-19: “forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold...but with the precious blood of Christ.”

When He made an offering for sins, and opened the way for the forgiveness of sins in His name, God gave the church to Him as Paul says in Ephesians 1:22-23: “and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church. Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

The church then became the mystical bride of Christ, as we learn from Ephesians. 5:21-33. In a figure, the church became "members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." Jesus Christ, the head of the church, became the great Example of what God requires of all members of that body, as we learn from Romans 8:29: “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

Exactly what the true church was to be like; what its members were to be like, was foreordained, or planned beforehand by the Father. It was to be according to the pattern of His Son. He was (Hebrews 7:26) "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.” And we read in 1Peter 2:21: “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.”

The immediate followers of Christ; those to whom He committed the work of laying the foundation of true Christianity, were godly men like their Master, who were set forth as examples of what true church members should be like, as Paul says:

“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1Cor. 11:1)
Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

Hymn 111

A ROSE SHALL BLOOM IN A LONELY PLACE,
A WILD SHALL ECHO WITH SOUNDS OF JOY,
FOR HEAV'N'S OWN GLADNESS ITS BOUNDS SHALL GRACE,
AND FORMS ANGELIC THEIR SONGS EMPLOY.

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing:”

AND LEBANON'S CEDARS SHALL RUSTLE THEIR BOUGHS,
AND FAN THEIR LEAVES IN THE SCENTED AIR:
AND CARMEL AND SHARON SHALL PAY THEIR VOWS,
AND SHOUT, FOR THE GLORY OF GOD IS THERE.

“...the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.”

O, SAY TO THE FEARFUL, BE STRONG OF HEART;
HE COMES IN VENGEANCE, BUT NOT FOR THEE;
FOR THEE HE COMES, HIS MIGHT TO IMPART,
TO THE TREMBLING HEART AND THE FEEBLE KNEE.

“Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you.”

THE BLIND SHALL SEE, AND THE DEAF SHALL HEAR,
THE DUMB SHALL RAISE THEIR NOTES FOR HIM:
THE LAME SHALL LEAP LIKE THE UNHARMED DEER,
AND THE THIRSTY SHALL DRINK OF THE LIVING STREAM.

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.”

THE RANSOMED OF GOD SHALL RETURN TO HIM,
WITH A CHORUS OF JOY TO A GLADSOME LAY;

NO EYE WITH A TEAR OF GRIEF SHALL BE DIM,
FOR SORROW AND SIGHING SHALL FLEE AWAY.

“And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there: And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35)

The Valley Of Achor...A Door Of Hope

Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: THEY HAVE FORSAKEN THE LORD.

“From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” Isaiah 1:4,6

Before Judah was carried away captive by the Babylonians, the word of God had come to them through the prophet Isaiah containing the foregoing message. Was there nothing that could heal them? The mollifying ointment was there, for God had spoken, but they would not hear.

"...they have cast away the law of the LORD of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." (Isa 5:24)

So Judah was to be desolate, her cities burned with fire, her land devoured by strangers. Her last agonizing moments were approaching and God's kingdom was to be overturned: its king taken, its people captive. But there were a few faithful ones: “Except the Lord of Hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom: and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.” (Isa 1:9)

There were a few like Jeremiah and Isaiah who lamented and grieved as they saw the end approaching, helpless to avert the disaster. Judah was to be broken off because of unbelief. Apart from the faithful remnant, Israel had become as Sodom, her inhabitants as Gomorrah.

Brothers and sisters, we call ourselves the Ecclesia of the living God. What does God see when He looks down upon us? Have we "cast away the law of the Lord" or by our actions "despised the word of the Holy One" Or are we healthy, active members: alive to our great responsibilities and cognizant of the great blessing of being a chosen people? Are we really dedicated to God's purpose in the earth, abounding in the work of the Truth? Let us not spare ourselves this

introspection. We may be part of the wounds and bruises and putrefying sores that have to be constantly doctored, carried in a sling, sick members that drain the strength of the ecclesia.

God has purposely made us an interdependent body. We ARE greatly affected by what other members do. In this connection let us remember Achan's sin, and how it affected all of Israel.

When Israel crossed the Jordan to take the city of Jericho the people were solemnly commanded by Joshua to keep themselves from the accursed (devoted) thing. They were warned: “Keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, are consecrated unto the Lord.” (Josh 6:18-19)

But Achan saw among the spoils, a goodly Babylonian garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold, and he took them, thus setting at nought the word of God and despising the law of the Holy One. So, God withdrew himself from Israel when they went out to fight against Ai. Hence, because of Achan's sin, they were smitten. We remember how Joshua had to track down the iniquity that stood between the people and God; and how finally, when Achan's sin was uncovered, he, his sons, his daughters, and all that he had, were brought down into the valley of Achor and stoned with stones and burned with fire, that the fierceness of the Lord's anger might be turned away.

Do we not see, brothers and sisters, that Achan's sin involved many who were innocent of his transgression? So it is with the Ecclesia. We are our brother's keeper — we are interdependent in every way. We may bring God's displeasure on the whole Ecclesia by our transgression. And what did Achan gain for his wilful disobedience? How long was he able to enjoy the fruit of his stolen goods?

Brothers and sisters, all these things were written for our learning. Was the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold worth the price? What a lot of unhappiness and sorrow might have been avoided if God's commandment had been feared. Let us fear mightily lest we be tempted to partake of the things that belong to the false city, and thus bring the Holy Name we bear into open shame.

God's presence is with us to overcome the deeds of the flesh when iniquity is recognized and forsaken. Natural Israel was broken off because of unbelief. Let us not be highminded but fear — “For if God spared not the natural branches, let us take heed lest he also spare not [us].” (Rom 11:21)

We CAN be a healthy Ecclesia. God is the source of health and strength. He is ever faithful to supply our needs. Does not His Spirit entreat us — Incline your ear and come unto me. HEAR AND YOUR SOUL SHALL LIVE; and I

will make an, everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David (Isa 53:3)

What a glorious future is promised those who believe!

Bro. John F. Packer

The Deep Things of God: The Wise and Foolish Builders

This was not a parable in the sense of a complete story. It was more in the nature of a simile interwoven with plain discourse. Still, it is instructive, as the conveyance of important truths by illustration. A man built a house on the solid rock: another built his on the loose sand — a supposition borrowed from the practice of the East, and not so obvious in the West where the nature of the foundations, though of some importance, is not so important. While the weather is fine, the difference between the two houses, as regards the foundation, is immaterial. But a time of storm and inundation comes. The difference is then both great and apparent. The one falls to ruins; the other is unhurt by the violence of the storm, and remains a useful habitation when the storm has passed away.

The application is of great importance. Jesus supplies it. The building of the house is the acceptance of the teaching of Christ, in both cases. (Note by the way: apart from this acceptance, a man has no house — no abiding place in futurity: must die without hope. Ergo, the growing and popular view that ‘morality’ will save, especially the thought that all will be saved, is a delusion). But a man may accept the teaching of Christ and not conform to it. His house — his hope, is, in that case, on the sand. For only that acceptance of the truth which is accompanied by affectionate submission to its requirements will be acceptable with God. “Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom...but he that doeth the will of my Father” (Matt. 7:21). Faith will not save a man whose “works” are not in accordance with faith. Without faith, he cannot please God: but he cannot please God by an inoperative faith. “Faith without works is dead” (James 2: 20).

A disobedient man's belief of the gospel will go for nothing in the day of the issues of things — the day when the judgment will “try every man's work of what sort it is” (1Cor. 3: 13). The house of hope which he has built will fall to ruins in the day of storm — lacking a stable foundation — even that foundation to which Paul refers, when he exhorts rich men to lay up for themselves “a good foundation against the time to come” (1Tim. 6: 19). “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them [is like a man who] built his house on the rock” (Matt 7:24). The judgment of God is coming like a storm to “sweep away all the refuge of lies” (Isa. 28:17).

In that terrible day, the man will stand unmoved who has acted the part of a friend of God in the midst of “the crooked and perverse generation” now upon earth in apparent safety. He will pass unharmed through the destructive revolutions in which thrones will perish and society itself be dissolved.

He will be “under the shadow of the Almighty” during “the time of trouble such as never was” and when the storm has passed, and the sun shines out, he will stand forth in safety and glory as one of those “kings and priests” whose work it will be to re-build the shattered fabric of human life, and lead mankind in ways of peace, blessedness and well-being. But in vain will you look round at that moment for those believers who merely have a name to live during these times of probation, but who are dead, as shewn by their non-submission to all the requirements of the Word of the living God. The difference between the two classes is scarcely discernible now; it will be known and read of all men then.

Bro. Robert Roberts

What Does That Mean?

“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” (Prov.17:13)

I do not understand the comparison of beginning strife and “letting out water.” Can you explain this?

I thought of this verse this spring when I went for a walk in the woods. My office moved from Boston to the nearby suburbs so one afternoon I decided to explore the woods behind the office. I climbed a steep hill and came to a dirt road. As I walked along, I came to a spot where the road was under water. The water was at least a foot deep and covered the road for 75 to 100 feet. I proceeded to walk along the shoulder between the water and the steep hill that I had climbed. Soon the area I was walking on narrowed to a point where there was only about three inches of bank between the water and the side hill. I reached down, removed about two handfuls of dirt, and allowed some water to start flowing down the hillside. As the water began flowing it began washing the surrounding bank away. Soon the water had cut a gully several feet wide and several inches deep where water was swiftly flowing and crashing down the hillside.

At that point, I was unable to stop the flow of water, which I had set into motion. Replacing the few handfuls of dirt that I had removed did nothing to even slow the flow down; the current simply carried the dirt away. Therefore, Solomon tells us, “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water.” It may only be a few words spoken in anger; or it may be an unnecessary observation that we should have remained silent about. Many times these thoughtless words are “the beginning of strife”.

The danger of “the beginning of strife” is that one angry word begets another and soon, like the flow of water, it widens itself and makes itself deeper so there is no stopping it.

Solomon’s conclusion is: “Therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” Another translation says “before one mixes himself with it.” Just leave it alone. If you get involved, it may be difficult or impossible to get out. Do not even start, because it may get out of control. You may start something which you never intended or ever dreamed could happen. All it took was one handful of dirt; all it may take is one sentence or even one word and family members, ecclesia members or close friends are swept away in the current.

When I was a child, my mother would quote proverbs 10:19 “He that refraineth his lips is wise.” She would say, “Don’t say one word, not one word” and the strife would instantly end.

Brothers and sisters let us learn to apply some of Solomon’s wisdom in our lives.

Bro. Jim Sommerville