

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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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

LAS CRUCES, New Mexico, Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia,
— Memorial 10 AM; Key Lesson Bible Seminar 1 PM; Tuesday 7 PM Mid-Week Bible Class; Tuesday and Thursday 7:30 PM Walk and Conduct Class & Social Time Meeting Hall address: 800A Spruce Street, Las Cruces, NM 88011; Bro. Michael Morrell, 301 North Roadrunner Parkway #309, Las Cruces, NM 88011; morrell@morrellcom.com Web Page <http://lascruces.bereans.org/main>

All is well in Las Cruces. We send thanks out to all of you who have phoned and written. Thanks also to all who support the internet preaching work. Anyone interested in learning how to do web pages, I am starting up a little web school for Berean Christadelphians. It's at <http://learn.bereans.org>. If you are interested in being involved, let me know and I'll set you up a web site to learn on. Anyone who wants a web site for their ecclesia let me know. We have recently made one called <http://houston.bereans.org> and <http://gainesville.bereans.org>. We also of course have lascruces.bereans.org and others.

The Key Bible Lessons we do are still generating a lot of activity. We have had 149 people sign up in October, 171 people in September, 189 people in August, and 139 people in July, and of course many more before that. Activity remains high. We get lots of interesting questions from people who are studying the lessons.

What we really need help with is people making web links in their home towns, advertising <http://www.bereans.org> as well as the key lessons and the free key lesson sign up page at <http://www.bereans.org/email>.

Also, if you are interested in teaching any of these people, we can arrange that.

Love to all of you,
Bro. Michael Morrell

RICHARD, Sask. Sunday School @ 10:00 AM; Memorial Meeting @ 11:20 AM; Week night Bible Class Wed. @ 8:00 PM. Bro. Sid Jones, R.R.#1, Richard, Sask., Canada, S0M 2P0, Ph. 306-246-4468. Email: sc.jones@sasktel.net.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Our love and greetings in the one hope we have in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Several months have elapsed since our last submission, and during that time we have enjoyed the company and fellowship of the following brethren and sisters visiting from other parts of the ecclesial world: Bro. Joey Marple, Sis. Grace Punter, Bro James Fuhr, Sis. Rachel Luard, Bro.

Lynn Osborne, and Bro. Ben, and Sis. Jennifer Luard. We enjoy the fellowship we have with our visitors, and appreciate the effort they have made to come and be a part of our meetings. Brethren, Lynn and Ben, have also brought us words of exhortation on a Sunday morning, which we wish to express our appreciation for.

We have also been happy to have Bro. Joey Marple become a member here at the ecclesia at Richard. May we enjoy many years of fellowship together.

It is with a great deal of interest that we watch the world today, since there are very few developments that we can see must take place before the return of our master, maybe none. It is almost ironic that the times where we see that day so close, are the times when we must be most diligent to watch that the flesh doesn't get the upper hand. We are at war against the flesh, and the world has dressed the thinking of the flesh in ever more subtly attractive garb. Let us admonish one another, and be admonished, in a true spirit of brotherhood, that we may thus strengthen the things that remain. The world is full of change, and proud of those changes, but the word of God never changes, and neither does His attitude towards the thinking and doing of the flesh. We may be comforted to know that what is also constant is His plan, His purpose, and His love for those who make His business theirs, His will theirs, and His family theirs.

It is truly with thankfulness that we read the news sent in from various points all over the globe. It is a source of strength, and encouragement to have contact with those of like precious faith.

Since there has still been a misunderstanding as to the Berean Position, by those who have left us, we of the Richard Ecclesia wish to re-affirm the following:

RICHARD STATEMENT OF POSITION

The Richard Berean Ecclesia remains firm and loyal to the Berean Basis of Fellowship. We believe that the statement of position contained therein is sound, concise and covers all the requirements of belief necessary for baptism and fellowship without additional statements or letters to inform brethren and sisters as to how certain parts of it should be understood and/or interpreted.

The Richard ecclesia takes exception to any attempt to impose on others, as a fellowship issue, any particular interpretation of a clause that, in effect, adds a meaning or application that did not previously exist as a fellowship matter. Recently this has happened in relation to both clauses 5 & 6. It has had the effect of altering the existing foundation which has formed the basis on which both sides of this recent and divisive issue have

tolerated and fellowshipped the views and opinions of each other for more than three decades. It has had the effect of creating a situation unprecedented in Berean history. We also believe that there is a deceptive element in all this whereby the interpretation has been presented as if it were the only way clauses 5 & 6 have ever been understood among Bereans. This is simply not the case.

We believe that where there is a desire to reword or explain or interpret any part of the Berean Basis affecting fellowship, it should be done in an open forum and by unanimous consent. The entire brotherhood should be involved in the process, and if there is not unanimous consent, the matter should be dropped. Such was the method that was employed in issuing the Restatement in 1960, which at one point was all but aborted on account of a lack of unanimity in relation to the same clauses that are the focus of the recent division. These matters have always been a contentious issue in the brotherhood; and it is our belief that the only thing that has really changed between then and now is the level of tolerance in the brotherhood for the interpretations of others as to matters of detail.

We are in unanimous agreement with the Brisbane Ecclesia circulars of April 20, 1998 and February 1, 1999, and recommend them to any that desire further information and / or clarification on the issues that have divided us.

For the record, the Richard Ecclesia believes that "the Scriptures forbid going to law AGAINST another for any cause whatsoever". The Richard Ecclesia believes that divorce and remarriage after divorce is contrary to the commands of Christ and is in deep violation of the deep principles of the mind of Christ. We at Richard have always held this position and continue to do so along with all other Bereans.

Our united love to all the Ecclesia of Christ everywhere, in Jesus saving name.

On behalf of the ecclesia at Richard,
Bro. Sid Jones

NARVA, Estonia — Sunday Memorial Meeting, 12 Noon. Bible Class, Weds. 7:00 p.m. Bro. Alexey Matveev, Kreenholmi 31-1, Narva, 20203, Estonia. +37235 61650

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We were very blessed by the visit of the British Brethren and Sisters, namely, Bro. Arthur, Sis. Barbara, Bro. Matthew and Sis. Elizabeth Hughes, who came to see us here in Estonia on 29th-31st of October, 2004. That was an encouraging time for all of us here in Narva.

We spent some time touring around medieval down-town of Tallinn on Saturday.

Then in the evening of that day we enjoyed having Bible readings together.

On Sunday, we broke bread. Bro. Arthur Hughes gave us an exhortation on the subject of the incidents.

We would like to thank the mentioned above brethren and sisters for their effort. We are always happy to see those of like precious faith.

Love in the hope of Life Eternal,
Bro. Alexey Matveev

BOSTON, Massachusetts — S.S. 9:30 AM; Memorial 10:45 AM Mid-week Study classes Thursday (South) and Friday (West). Recording Bro. James Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Road Northboro, MA 01532.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Greetings in our One Hope,

Once again it is past time for us to convey our love and greetings to the rest of the brotherhood and keep all informed of recent activities in our ecclesia.

Bro. Michael Daniels has decided to stay in Texas after attending the Hye Gathering this past summer. He is missed by our ecclesia but we are happy to be able to commend him to the Lampasas Ecclesia. Also we are pleased to announce the birth of a healthy baby daughter, born to Bro. and Sis. David and Kelly Sommerville on September 6th. Rachel Sommerville; a sister for James and Katie.

The hall we have been renting in Dedham, MA. is no longer available to us. The owners have decided that they can no longer maintain it so have stopped renting it out. Therefore, any correspondence to our ecclesia should be addressed to the recording brother at the above address. We have been able to rent temporary office space in a town north of Boston, however, this building is for sale so we are looking for a more permanent location.

We are pleased to report that we have had many visitors around the table of our Lord since we last wrote. Bro. Lynn Osborne and Sis. Cheryl Sargent of Denver, Colorado; Sis. Terri Rankin of Holladay, Tennessee, Bro. and Sis. Michael and Leslie Morrell of Las Cruces, New Mexico; Sis. Jessie Prentice of Worcester, Massachusetts; Bro. John and Sis. Mary Phillips of Canton, Ohio; Bro. Gary Stephen of Glen, New Hampshire, Sis. Susan Stephen of Lampasas, Texas; and Sis. June Jones of Edmonton,

Alberta Canada. It is indeed a happy occasion when we can share fellowship with those of like precious faith.

Bro. Jim Sommerville
Recording Brother, Boston Berean Ecclesia

BRISBANE, Australia — Sunday Memorial Meeting, 10.15 AM; Bible Class Wednesday, 7.30 PM; Meetings are held at 69 Passage Street, Cleveland. Bro. Ted Mingham 8/2 Denison Court, Capalaba, Queensland, 4157, Australia Telephone/Fax 617-32451971, E-mail tmingham@hotmail.net.au

Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Loving Greetings in our Master's Name and Service,

It is some time since news was sent from this very isolated part of the Master's Vineyard. Though few in number and having one member in a Nursing Home suffering from Dementia, the rest of us, 5, endeavour to live according to our Master's commands. No opportunities to hold Gatherings or such like are available to us as it is difficult to attend to those duties we now undertake. Nevertheless, we enjoy our weekly Memorial Meetings and our Bible Class at which presently we are studying the Apocalypse. Our Gospel extension work is presently done on a personal basis with a few interested friends.

Our dear Sister Eileen Wright is physically and mentally unable to attend our meetings, and we try to visit her to give her what comfort is possible in these trying times.

We were very pleased to have brief visits from Sis. Kaye Yuen in October 2003, and Sis. Brenda McChesney during October 2004, for which we were most appreciative. It was like wells of water in the desert to have them visit us. It certainly would be very uplifting to have brothers and sisters visit us in this distant land. But having travelled ourselves we realise the great disadvantage there is for travelling so far. Even so, anyone daring to make the journey would be warmly welcomed.

Correspondence helps us to keep in touch with the Berean Community. We have resisted the attractions of joining with others claiming the name Christadelphian, knowing that we have to stand firm to the Truth in its purity.

Praying for the soon return of our Master, we send our warmest love and best wishes to all our Brethren and Sisters worldwide.

On behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Brisbane Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia,

Bro. Ted Mingham

AUSTIN, Texas — Memorial Meeting 11:00 AM, in homes; Exposition of Daniel Class, Thursdays at 8 PM; Bro. Jim Phillips, 14723 Single Trace, Austin, TX. 78728; phone (512) 218-0920.

Lord willing, beginning this Sunday, we will start rotating Memorial between Buda and Austin.

This Sunday we plan to have Memorial meeting at the home of Bro. Mark & Sis. Naomi. The approximate time schedule will remain the same: Sunday School 10:00 AM - Nazareth Revisited, Daily Bible Readings - 11:15 AM, followed by Memorial Meeting exhortation, and breaking bread and partaking of wine in remembrance of Christ our elder brother.

Love in the Truth,
Bro. Jim Phillips

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

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. 1-306-246-4468

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.

TENNESSEE FRATERNAL GATHERINGOct 8–9, 2005

Bro. Jim Rankin, 115 Sherwood Dr., Camden, TN 38320 USA. 1-731-584-6039

A Good Conversation

This morning we will try and provoke some thought within ourselves; that is the biggest job that we have to do. And, I have a question — What is an MVP?

It might mean a lot of things. To people who pay attention to sports, it might mean ‘Most Valuable Player’. But for our purposes here, this

morning, it is going to be given to you in the form of a question. What is your Most Valued Possession — your most precious possession?

I am going to skip way ahead here, and I’m going to make an assumption that I hope is correct — that that most valued possession is not something temporal, or belonging to the things of this world. I think amongst us here that should be generally true. So, where would we start? Ah, yes, maybe it’s your Bible. Maybe, your Most Valuable Possession is your Bible — the Word of God. Yes, it’s precious, but only if you don’t have to dust it off when you pick it up. And, only, if you know what’s in it and, only, if you apply what’s in it. That makes it valuable; but I have something else in mind.

What about your knowledge of that Bible? Well, that’s precious, but not very, if it doesn’t bear any fruit, if it doesn’t give our life any direction, if it doesn’t cause us to be able to exercise the power of the mind over the power of the emotions — the power of the Word of God over our natural inclinations. Paul says, “Knowledge puffeth up” (1Cor 8:1). So its got its short comings. It definitely is valuable, but it is not your MVP.

What about your moral strength — your ability to apply that knowledge of this valuable Bible that you brought with you? It’s precious, but it’s not very, unless it is coupled with the grace of God, because we all know that our moral strength cannot be turned directly into salvation. “The gift of God is eternal life” (Rom 6:23).

No, you know what I believe should be considered your most valuable and precious and jealously guarded possession? Brethren and Sisters, it should be your relationship with God. And that encompasses the existence and the use of all of these other things, doesn’t it?

You know, I heard a radio show the other day, and they had asked people to call in and speak about their relationship with God. And if it hadn’t been so sad to hear, it would have been funny. People’s relationship with God is a very awkward area that most people don’t even come close to expressing themselves on, but those who expressed themselves that day, over the telephone, made it quite clear to me that their relationship with God was a most awkward area in their life.

The only analogy that I can draw — the only comparison that I can make — might go something like this: A relationship with God is something like feeding a lion in the dark. You know you are dealing with something powerful and potentially dangerous. You don’t know where it is, because it is dark out there, and you don’t know very much about it. So you know what you do? You open the door and you fire a piece of horsemeat in the right direction, hope it goes over the fence, assume that

the lion is happy with what ever you just threw, close the door, and get on with the rest of your life.

Is that the kind of relationship that God is seeking to have with you and I; that He gave His son for? I don't think so. It is like, to them, God is some distant being, who wants something, but we don't really kind of know what it is, so we just sort of go along through life and hope that He will be happy with a few bones that we throw Him. And, there was talk about mind games and bargaining with God, like the young boy who was praying to God and he wanted a bicycle. But, he knew that he shouldn't waste God's precious time. He is very busy (— a business man; you know, this is the kind of thing you get). He is very busy, and he shouldn't trouble Him with something as trivial as a bicycle. So he sat down and figured this all out; he decided he was going to ask God to help him to be real good. And, you see, the end result of this, was that when he was real good, he would please his father, and his father would, somehow, catch on that he wanted a bicycle, and, because he was so good he would get the bicycle. He was playing mind games with God!

A lot of this results from, what I would call, a balance sheet mentality — a balance sheet mentality. You know, it is just like they envision — God is up there with a ledger: debits / credits. You have all heard the expression “a little white lie.” Well, you see the assumption is that God assigns a value to good deeds and evil deeds. So, we add up so many points on good deeds and so many points on evil deeds. You know, a white lie is only worth about half as much as a black lie. When you get down to the end of your life, He adds up the totals. And hey! If you have done more good deeds than evil deeds, He owes you!

Well, what happens if you don't? And you and I, and everybody else knows that you are never going to put God in your debt. Even the Lord Jesus Christ, when he had lived his life of obedience to the very, very end, still had to satisfy the principles that brought into effect the grace of God.

What are we talking about here? Now when we get down to the end, can we do like some, and add in a situation where if it doesn't quite add up, your poor bereaved that are left behind can take some of the estate and donate to the church and buy some 'air miles' to get you in there? I don't think so.

What's it all about? Well, first of all, a lot of this stuff is ensconced in the principle of the sacrifice of Christ. You often hear on the electric church, if you happen to listen to a preacher on the radio, you often hear the story told about the hangman and how you have the criminal — he's been convicted, he's guilty, there's no question and they're going to hang him this morning at sunrise. Just as they're about to trip the floor out from

under him and he has the noose around his neck, somebody else runs up and says, “Oh, oh, oh, wait, just wait a minute. I really like this guy. What I'm going to do is, I'm going to stand up there, and you hang me and let him go.” And they say that's what Jesus Christ did for you and I. We know, we all know here, that that's not an accurate picture.

So what we have to do is realize that the sacrifice of Christ operates on principle, not on a mechanical basis. It is His Grace extended to us, inasmuch as we declare with Christ His righteousness, and as much as we declare our allegiance to serving Him and repudiating sin in the flesh. But, I think, it is very important for us to make ourselves familiar with the Being that we are trying to establish a relationship with. We all know that when young people are dating, they are supposed to be doing it with the idea in mind of getting to know that person so that they know whether this is the type of person they want to establish a relationship with. And that's the only way of effectively establishing a good, strong relationship, and it's no different with God.

We need to search the Scriptures and try to get to understand what kind of character this is, who has extended already, His hand in relationship to us and asks us, or gives us, the opportunity to reciprocate that. What is it that He wants? Now, He might be like a car salesman. You go to a car salesman lots of times and you ask him what he wants for the car, he'll say, “What is it worth to you?” And God could say, “What is it that you have to give to me?” He has already asked for it! He says, He wants our heart, our soul, and our mind, and all our might! But still, we need more definition. That's all fine and dandy, but how do you get from point A to point B?

Let's go to Deuteronomy 14, just for an example — for an example of the principle that He wishes to operate on. “Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it:... Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee. At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within

thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied.”

Now I always assumed, when I thought about the tithes, that the ten percent tax was always given to the Levite. But, suddenly, when you read this chapter you realize that only one year out of three was that ten percent given to the Levites. And the rest of the time, what was it used for? It was used in a feast of worship! And that is a very important principle, Brethren and Sisters, that God does not want some kind of a payment. He wants worship — worth ship.

So how do we do that? How does this work in with the sacrifice of Christ? Let’s go to Romans 8:3: “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (or on account of sin), condemned sin in the flesh.”

Now go to Romans 3, starting at verse 20: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...” And that was what the deeds of the law became to the Jewish nation and the deeds of (supposedly) the commandments of Christ has become to those who have that balance sheet mentality. “...for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (And now we have the introduction of the concept of grace.) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood (and here is the crunch), to declare his righteousness for (or in order to have) the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; (and he repeats it for emphasis) To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness.”

What I am trying to establish here, is that God deals in principles. He is not satisfied by payment. He cannot be satisfied by blind, faithless obedience. We had the conversation here about the combination of faith and works in the James class yesterday.

It is the basis — this declaration of His righteousness. Like we are born subject to King Sin, and, sometime during our life, we become conscious of this relationship that is necessary to be established with God, and we repudiate King Sin, and we commit our ways to God through Christ that we might declare His righteousness. Christ’s death made this statement about God — about His righteousness and about the repudiation of sin in the flesh in a clear manner, which neither you, nor I, nor any other

human being, nor animal sacrifice, could ever do. So, when we join with him in making that statement, as we go through the waters of baptism, as we utter our prayers through the Lord Jesus Christ, as we partake of the emblems on a Sunday morning, we are associating ourselves with that statement. And then, the rest of the week, we need to live in consistency with that statement.

Now, this all involves a little something. It all involves a little voice in our heads. See the little worried guy here? (Drawing on the blackboard) Because you know that under Moses, they had a national law — the capital law was written on the tables of stone as the Ten Commandments. And everything else was spelled out, as Paul described it — touch not, taste not, handle not — everything was spelled out. They had a law that was just as complicated as the laws of this country.

Brethren and Sisters, you and I don’t have the complete law — do this, do that, don’t do this, don’t do that — written out for us in black and white. We have this little worried voice in our heads called conscience. And it’s a very, very important aspect of our relationship with God.

I’m going to take you to 1Corinthians 10:23-25: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify (or strengthen) not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth. Whatsoever is sold in the meat market (shambles), that eat, asking no question for conscience sake” — for conscience sake. There he identifies the conscience as something that has to be maintained and guarded. It is one of the most important things in our MVP — in our relationship with God.

Paul speaks about it again in Romans 14:22-23: “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” What he is telling us here is that a violation of our conscience is sin — it is wrong to violate our conscience. And it is furthermore wrong to violate our brother’s or sister’s conscience.

Look at verses 15-21: “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify (up build, strengthen) another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat

flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” And the Diaglott puts that as: “anything whereby they brother stumbles or is ensnared or is weakened.” And so, we have a responsibility to guard and protect and build an effective conscience in our own selves and to assist one another in doing so with one another.

But why? Why is conscience so important? What is it about our conscience that is so important to our relationship with God — our most valuable possession?

You know, most Christadelphians don't have so much of a balance sheet mentality, because we know that it's not really correct. In the varying stages of our spiritual development, we may or may not know why, but we know it's not correct. We know that Christ did not die as a substitute, and we know that Grace is effective in getting us salvation.

But, we have another mentality that is almost as dangerous. And it still comes from the thinking of human flesh. And I'm going to call it the Ten Commandments mentality. The Ten Commandments mentality — what would that be? That is the feeling that everything should have a “thus saith the Lord...” If my life is going astray and I'm entering into a danger zone with my walk and conduct, and my brother or my sister comes to me and says, “Oh, just a minute. I think there is something that you need to think about.” They are trying to awaken that little worried looking fellow there. They are trying to make me hearken to my conscience. My reaction in that situation, left totally to nature — would be what? Just like the discussion that we had here on the chapter in James. I might turn around and say, “Where does it say in the pages of scripture that I cannot do this? Where are you coming from? Why is it that you think that your interpretation of my doings is any of your business?” That is the natural inclination of the flesh!

Well, let's get back to this question of why is it wrong to violate our conscience? There are two answers to that question. The first one we can find in 1Timothy 4:1-2: “ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits (that can be none other than the thinking of the flesh), and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

That is the first thing that is wrong with violating our conscience. It renders it ineffective. It's like this little messenger comes along and says, “I'm worried about what you are doing.” And you go, “Well, just don't worry so much. I know what I'm doing here.” Be that messenger the little voice inside your head, called a conscience, or your brother or sister. You

don't like the message; if the thinking of the flesh doesn't like the message, you've got to get rid of the messenger, so he doesn't come back again. This is, by the way, the worse thing that you can do for your relationship with God. Because, as we know, we are much better advantaged by having a network of support within the ecclesia for us to carry on and to maintain our relationship with God, than we are to go and turn people off. Do you think that when you smudge someone like that when they come to awaken your conscience that they will be back again in 10 minutes, or half an hour, or tomorrow, or next week, or maybe ever? You have lost an instrument that is useful for you to maintain that MVP!

But I think there is a much more powerful reason why we should not violate our conscience — much more important. Yes, our conscience is our spiritual immune system, and if we smudge it often enough, it will not be back to remind us, when we are failing to live up to the standard that we have committed ourselves to. It was supposed to have been a conscious decision that we made.

But let's get back to our relationship with God. Without our relationship with God, what else do we have? Without our relationship with God, we have no hope. That might seem like an over-simplistic statement, but the truth of it is so powerful that we have to keep it in front of our eyes all of the time.

What happens to a human relationship, when one of the parties in that relationship, be it a marriage relationship, a friendship, or whatever, insists on continuing to do something that is offensive or annoying to the other person? That relationship has the potential to be destroyed, doesn't it? Now when we think in a ten commandments mentality, we think, “Yes, if I do what he says thus saith the Lord thou shalt not do, or if I don't do what he says thus saith the Lord thou shalt do, then I am being offensive to God, and I am endangering my relationship to God.” But you see, we are in relationship with a much more powerful and intelligent being than another human being. And this being knows what our conscience has been telling us!

And now I am finally getting down to the point where you can understand why I titled my talk “A Good Conversation.” When we, as human beings, insist on doing something that annoys another human being, what does it SAY to that other person to cause our relationship to deteriorate? It says that something else — something, someone, whether it be myself, my sense of freedom, my sense of pride, whatever it is — is more important to me than you are. That's what it says.

So what do we do to our relationship with God when we violate our conscience? Now God is up in heaven, and He knows that our conscience

told us that this was something that was potentially offensive to our Father. And I'm talking about things where there is no thus saith the Lord in Scripture — something that we have established knowing the principles that God operates on, and we extend those principles and we say if this would be displeasing to God, so would that. I'm sure it would be, and I feel uncomfortable about doing it, because of that. But, suddenly, the impulses of the flesh cause us to squash that little worried voice and go ahead and do it anyway! What does that say to God about the importance of our relationship to Him? It says that we have, at this point in time, at least, found something that is of greater importance to us than He is.

Do you ever think of it in those terms? That is why it is utterly important to develop a good and balanced and effective conscience — a sense of what is right and wrong and to do our utmost to never violate that.

The word 'conversation' is found in that quotation that I have been looking at up here in the front since I got here. In the King James Version, 1Tim 4:12, it reads, "Let no man despise thy youth, but be thou an example of the believers in word (here it says speech), in conversation (and here it says conduct), in charity, in faith, and in purity." Now, the translation of the original word for conduct, or conversation, is conduct.

So what you are seeing me here do this morning is using a play on words — our conversation, our conduct, is part of a conversation, a communication, with God about our relationship to Him. Now, suddenly, our responsibilities under the law of Christ have expanded, because now we have three jobs.

There are three jobs that we have to do in our relationship with God. And we are talking here about the principle of self examination. This work is necessarily an individual matter. And, herein, lies the difficulty. A man is his own accuser, his own defender, and his own judge, with the most complete facilities for knowing the full measure of his guilt. He unites a most unjudicial bias in favor of the defendant. He perhaps possesses all the knowledge necessary to draw up an unanswerable indictment or accusation, but his talent is mainly employed to find extenuating circumstances. He has all the skill of a defending counsel to raise a false issue, but lacks the impartiality of a judge to expose the pretense.

We know the term today very well when you think about the things that are happening on the stock market, it is called conflict of interest. And that is what we have to catch ourselves in. And that is what we need the most help with from our brothers and sisters — to see the conflict of interest that is closer than the end of our nose, and we are not able to see it.

So what is our reaction, when someone tells us that they are concerned about where we are going in our lives? It can be a lot of things, about which there can be no thus saith the Lord. It can be about a career choice. It can be about the choice of the clothes we wear. It can be about the way we drive and conduct ourselves behind the wheel of an automobile. It may be about a dangerous relationship with another human being that threatens to eclipse that relationship with God. This is an important point that I feel is worthy of serious thought. There are many ways we can rationalize the forming of a relationship with a person who is outside the covenant relationship we have with God and Christ, but we all know there are inherent risks to doing that. There is the risk that we may find ourselves becoming unequally yoked together with the unbeliever, or there is the risk that we may be drawn away from our first commitment, our commitment to God. What does this say to God, when He sees this willingness on our part to place that MVP, that relationship with Him at risk? All of these things, if we do not develop and maintain a clean conscience on them and refuse to violate it, can undermine our relationship with God.

And so, we cannot afford to destroy that network — that support system of brethren and sisters. And this is where our thoughts this morning tie up very well with the class of James this morning, because that responsibility rests with both yourself and others — both the listener and the talker. That relationship can be destroyed by a poor approach on the part of someone who is trying to lend support, or it can be destroyed by a poor response on our part. If we destroy the messenger, he may not come back. But, if we, as a messenger, approach the person, we must remember to put on the worried face, because we will be unrecognizable as a friend when our approach lends the other appearance, the angry face (here on the blackboard).

We are not to be many masters, as it says in James. We are to exercise ourselves in beginning with the end, or purpose, in mind.

Let's go to Hebrews 10:22-23: "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." Let us live according to the profession that we made — that we repudiate King Sin; we do not serve King Sin, and that God is the one whom we serve with all our heart, soul, and mind. Verses 23-24: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:" To provoke — to do what has to be done to bring that about in an effective way.

So let's go and look at our James chapter 3 (verse 13): "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." Until we realize that our maintaining our relationship with God is of such importance and that what we do, say, and think, tells God things about our value of that relationship. We might just think that that quotation makes reference to our appearance to other people "out of a good conversation we show our works with meekness of wisdom." But now when we read that verse, I am hoping that you will understand that we are also carrying on a much more principled and intimate conversation with God in whatever we do.

So what I have done is made a play on words. Our lives are a conversation with God. And what have we been telling Him to date about the importance of His relationship to us? Does it match what we told Him when we joined Christ in the waters of baptism? Does it matter? Does it match up with what we tell Him when we use the name of Christ when we pray? Does it match up with what we tell Him when we receive the emblems associating ourselves with the sacrifice of Christ? Does what we do everyday match up with what we've been telling Him out of our mouth?

Let's hope that our conversation becomes a matter of consciousness — that we become conscious of the value of that relationship with God, because all of the blind and wooden and mechanical obedience to laws and thus saith the Lord isn't enough. We have to have the grace of God and that operates contingent on our relationship with Him!

Bro. Sid Jones

Daniel, The Man Greatly Beloved

"The words of the scroll rehearsed to Daniel, were "closed up and sealed;" and the scroll rehearsed before John was "sealed up with seven seals." To seal up a scroll was to "close" it; but with how many seals it was closed up, Daniel was not informed. This secret concealed from the "greatly beloved" Daniel, was revealed to the "beloved disciple," the exile of Patmos."

Eureka, Vol. 2, Chap. 5, Sec. 2.

Daniel 1:3-7

Our thoughts this morning are with Daniel, the man greatly beloved. What a wonderful title and tribute to be heard from the mouth of an angel of God! The Book of Daniel opens at the time Nebuchadnezzar first came against Jerusalem in the days of King Jehoiakim. Nebuchadnezzar (verse 3) selected certain youths from the princes of Judah to attend him at his court, and four are especially mentioned (verse 6) — Daniel, Hananiah,

Mishael, and Azariah. The latter three are better known by their Babylonian names (verse 7) of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Daniel 1:8

Nebuchadnezzar was supreme ruler of the most powerful nation on earth. Daniel and his companions were captives. They were in the position to escape the common lot of captives and to achieve great benefit and advantage, if they gained the king's favor. "But (verse 8) Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat." Daniel could easily have convinced himself that the position he was in made a rigid adherence to the Law of Moses impossible, and that, therefore, it would have been foolishness to jeopardize his life and that of the other Jewish captives by making an issue of meat.

Daniel 1:9

Have we not often heard such arguments? But Daniel saw through all these weak deceptions of the flesh's reasonings. He knew that God had given a law, and regardless of danger or difficulty, he determined to obey it, as fully as he could under his captive circumstances. We notice (verse 9) he was in favor and tender love with his Babylonian overseer. How much this tells us of the character of Daniel, even at this very early age. Though of such strong determination, he must have been of exceptional gentleness and courtesy and pleasingness to have won the tender love of this man.

Daniel 1:15

This is a striking picture, and there is a great lesson in it. Strength and firmness do not necessitate harshness and coldness. True godly strength of purpose is always accompanied by gentleness and kindness. The result of this faithful uncompromising stand was (verse 15) that God blessed the Hebrew children with physical health and robustness above all others, and in addition, with preeminence in wisdom and understanding. All things are in the hands of God. The main thing — the only thing of any importance — is to sincerely seek to please Him. He can, as He sees fit, give health or wisdom or any other blessings in limitless abundance, or He can withhold it.

Daniel 2

Chapter 2, which follows soon in time after chapter 1, records the famous dream of the great metallic image, which represented the course of history of the kingdoms of men from Nebuchadnezzar's day until ours. And how wonderfully and significantly all the details fit, when laid against the pattern of events as they have transpired! Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and divided Europe. And now we are in the last days of the vision.

Think of how much this one revelation in Daniel 2 has meant to us in understanding and confidence and assurance. It is not for us to tremble in darkness, fearful of the future, which seems so ominous to the natural eye, as evil and ruthless men threaten the world with atomic destruction. We watch current events with keen interest, seeing the overall picture wonderfully developing, as world tensions and rivalry center more and more upon the Middle East.

In the past twenty years we have seen the British and western power decline with unexpected speed in the Mid-East, and Russia suddenly loom as a major factor in the critical Palestine and Egyptian areas. Now events have taken a new turn. Russia is out of Egypt, and the United States is growing in strength and influence there, as it should be at the end. It is an exciting drama of the potsherds of the earth striving together for power and possession, unaware that the LORD God rules in the kingdoms of men and gives it to whomsoever He will — whoever suits His purpose.

Daniel 2:48

Daniel, alone, is able to reveal and explain this vision to the king, and (verse 48) “the king made Daniel a great man, and...ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief of the governors over all the wise men of Babylon...and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego over the affairs of the province of Babylon.” So ends chapter 2. But the favor of man is precarious.

Daniel 3

Chapter 3 records the incident of the golden image and the fiery furnace. It illustrates the form of trials of which God’s servants in all ages are subjected — pressure to conform and to give reverence to man-made objects of worship. Even today, in times of national danger, brethren have been faced with the same issues and the same hazards. Patriotism and side-worship can become a frenzied cult in time of war, and we must be prepared, if necessary, to face this danger and test with meekness and restraint, but still inflexible determination to keep a clear and faithful allegiance to God alone, with our windows wide open to worship Him.

This test will also face us in many subtle and disguised ways. The world is full of things and principles, and men will try to pressure us to conform and, in a sense, to worship them.

Daniel 3:17

Let us remember the inspiring example of Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael. Our God is able (verse 17) to deliver us, even though it be not His will at this time to work a miracle on our behalf, still (verse 18) “Be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not worship the golden image that thou hast set up.”

What a calm and noble example of courage in the face of imminent peril! Again, the power of God was manifested to the confusion of the heathen and to the salvation of God’s people. That power will always be manifested eventually for His people, if they are faithful, though God’s purpose may require their present suffering and martyrdom. The final results will always be the same as here — salvation and deliverance.

Daniel 4:17

Chapter 4 gives the dream of the cut-down tree and the seven-year madness of Nebuchadnezzar that was represented by it. Nebuchadnezzar reigned 43 years — from 605 to 562 BC, as closely as we can determine. Babylon was the head of the image that represented the kingdom of men, so there was a special significance in what was divinely caused to happen to her and her rulers. The lesson in this chapter is expressed in verse 17, “To the intent that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” A fact just as true today as then.

Daniel 4:14

In a dream the king saw a mighty tree in the midst of the earth, lifting up to heaven, visible to the ends of the earth, harboring all the birds of the sky in its branches, and sheltering all the beasts of the field under its shadow. At the height of its prosperity, a watcher — a holy one — descends from heaven and issues a decree (verses 14-16), “Hew down the tree...nevertheless leave its stump, (and bind it) with a band of iron and brass...and let seven times pass over (it).”

The vision appears to have a three-fold significance. First to Nebuchadnezzar himself, seven years; second to Babylon, seventy years; and third, to the kingdom of men as a whole, 7 times 360 years, or 2520 years. Its immediate and typical fulfillment was in Nebuchadnezzar. Just a year later, at the peak of his pride, he was divinely struck with madness, and for seven years roamed the fields like an animal eating grass.

The full scope of the vision is obviously greater than this, as further indicated by the binding of the stump of the tree with the band of iron and brass. The constitution of the kingdoms of men, since the fall of the Babylonian Empire, is just as pictured here — the Babylonian stump bound with a band of Roman iron and Grecian brass. All, in any way familiar with history, are aware that our present-day civilization is principally bound by the customs, principles, and heritages of Greece and Rome in language, government, philosophy, art, architecture, law, science, literature, etc.

But there are fewer who recognize the basic Babylonian fleshly and religious stump. Students of God’s Word know that the modern religious

world is fundamentally Babylonian, and that BABYLON THE GREAT, MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH is the title that the scriptures give to this modern system. Such documentary books as Hislop's Two Babylons expose the pagan Babylonian origin of the world's principle religious observations and traditions and festivals as Christmas, Easter, Halloween, etc. God's people can have absolutely nothing to do with any such Babylonian corruptions.

Daniel 4:16

Verse 16, "And let seven times pass over him." Seven times is the scriptural symbol of months, on the larger scale, is 7 times 360 years, or 2520 years. Our day, which we know from world conditions to be the time of the end, lies just this length of time from the period of the Babylonian Empire. Seven times, measured from the beginning of the Babylonian head of gold, comes to approximately 1914. Seven times, from the end of Babylon, comes to approximately 1984. That is the 70 years of Babylon carried forward seven times, or 2520 years, covers the period 1914–1984.

Daniel 4:35

At the end of his madness, Nebuchadnezzar, typifying the kingdom of men, cured from his present delusions and brought to the true knowledge and worship of God, declares (verse 35), "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say to him, What doest thou?"

This is the great value of Daniel for us today — the great truth we must keep in our minds, as we watch the futile maneuverings of the great sin-powers of the earth, as the final crisis approaches. Even a proud and terrible God himself, God says, (Eze 38:4) "I will turn thee back...and I will bring thee forth." Russia, of whom the world is increasingly afraid, is merely fulfilling God's will and preparing the things for the manifestation of God's glory. We have nothing to fear.

Daniel 5

Chapter 5 describes the last night of the great Babylonian Empire. Daniel is now an old man over 80, and the king is Belshazzar, who is apparently the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. This chapter was long used by critics in an attempt to discredit the Bible, for it did not fit in with the fanciful legends of heathen historians. The critics said there was, and could be, no such king — no such circumstances, but archeology has completely justified the Bible account.

Daniel 5:1-3

This destruction of literal Babylon by Cyrus is typical of the destruction of symbolic Babylon by Christ. Even as the enemy surrounds the city, King Belshazzar, confident of his power and defenses, (verse 1) makes a great feast unto his lords, and in their drunken revelry (verse 3) he makes sport of the holy vessels of the temple, drinking to their own heathen gods out of them. So the Babylonian Harlot is drunken with the blood of the saints, and all nations are drunken with the wine of her fornication and follow all her customs and festivals. He says, (Rev 18:7) "I sit a queen, and am no widow," at the very time that her destruction strikes.

Daniel 5:5-7

Suddenly, (verse 5) Belshazzar's merriment is silent, and the revelers are struck with terror by the appearance of the fingers of a man's hand, writing on the wall. The king (verse 7) calls for all his wise men and offers great honor to any who can interpret the supernatural message.

Daniel 5:11-30

Daniel is not at this time in public prominence, but his fame is well known. The queen reminds Belshazzar of him, and Daniel is called (verse 11). And he spells out the meaning of the divine message (verse 25) — "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" "Numbered, numbered, weighed, and divided." The handwriting is clearly on the wall today. But the blind nations cannot read it. In that night (verse 30) was Belshazzar slain, and Darius, the Mede, took the kingdom.

Daniel 6

Chapter 6: The lion's den — is a lesson and an inspiration in many ways. It is not always God's purpose to miraculously intervene and close the lion's mouth. Many faithful men have sealed their testimony with their blood, but the lesson and the comfort of this chapter is not diminished. In the end, all who are His will stand eternally before Him, delivered from the lions — all the lions.

Daniel 6:5-7

The events of this chapter occur in the reign of Darius, the Mede. The prominence of Daniel and his godly separateness leads, of course, to jealousy. His enemies realize (verse 5) that they would not be able to find any thing against him, unless they could create a situation where he must choose between service to the king and service to God. So (verse 7), they flatter the vain king into making a foolish decree that none may ask a petition of any but him for 30 days.

The course that Daniel follows is a striking illustration of the principle that a lit candle is not prepared to be put under a bushel — not even temporarily for convenience sake, and it is a standing rebuke to all who on

a plea of prudence hide their divine light that is meant to illuminate the world. When open confession of the principles of Christ is dangerous or inconvenient, how often do we hear it quoted that we should not toss our pearls before swine? Daniel's conduct puts such a misapplication of scripture to shame. "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light shine."

Daniel makes no attempt at concealment, though he knows that he is walking into a planned trap and is exposing himself to a cruel death. How easy it would have been to shut his windows, and, thus, make sure that his prayers were unobserved! What harm would it have done to use a little caution in this way? But Daniel, the man greatly beloved (and we can see why), could see the issue so much more clearly than that. He saw that such a course would have been weakness, cowardice, failure, and defeat. And so all generations since that time have been strengthened by the power of his fearless example —

Dare to be a Daniel!

Dare to stand alone!

Dare to have a purpose firm,

And dare to make it known.

Daniel 6:10

Verse 10, "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

Daniel 7

Chapter 7 begins the great prophetic visions of Daniel himself, which now continue right through to the end of the book. They were all at the end of his life in the short reigns of Belshazzar and Darius and the first three years of Cyrus. Chapter 7 is about the vision of the four beasts that parallels the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. But the symbolism here is much fuller and more striking. That was for a heathen monarch; this is for the servants of God. There the kingdom of men was as a great man-like image; here it is shown as savage destroying beasts. Here we have the deeper details — of the little horn that prevailed against the saints, of the Ancient of Days, the Son of Man similitude of God-manifestation, coming with the clouds of heaven, the opening of the books of judgment, the ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him, and the saints taking the kingdom under the whole heaven. These were vast and mighty things for a mortal man to see and to carry alone in his heart.

Daniel 7:28

Daniel says (verse 28), "My thoughts much troubled me, and my countenance changed in me: but I kept the matter in my heart." The more

terrible things were yet to be revealed to the man greatly beloved. He was to see the long centuries of the desolation of his people, the restoration, and then the destroying again of the city and the sanctuary, the cutting off of the long-awaited Messiah — visions and revelations that overwhelmed his spirit and caused him to lie sick many days.

Daniel 8:7-14

Chapter 8 contains the vision of the Persian ram destroyed by the Grecian goat. After the goat had destroyed the ram (verse 7), its great horn (Alexander) was broken (verse 8) and four horns took its place — the four-fold division of the Greek Empire under Alexander's generals. From one of these horns (verse 9) came a little horn — the Roman power that was to wax great against God's land and sanctuary and to take away the daily sacrifice. And the vision (verse 14) was to be for 2300 days, "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." The vision throughout concerns the he-goat and what develops from it, and the appearance of the goat, coming like a whirlwind from the west under Alexander, is the first specific action in the vision. Therefore, counting 2300 years from the brief 9-year period of Alexander the Great — 332–323 BC — we come to the period 1969–1978. Of the end of the period, we are told (verse 14), "then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

Daniel 9:2

Chapter 9 occurs in the first year of Darius, right after the Babylonian oppressor had been destroyed. Daniel understood (verse 2) by the prophecies of Jeremiah that the captivity of his people was to be for seventy years. This first year of Darius, as closely as we can determine, was 69 years from the beginning of the captivity.

Daniel 9:3

And Daniel sets himself (verse 3) to seek by prayer and fasting and supplications for the gathering and blessing of his people. Even though the end of the time had come, and the destroyer had been destroyed, Daniel does not take the re-gathering for granted, or merely wait for God to move.

Prayer, supplications, fasting, sackcloth, and ashes (verse 3) indicate the fervent urgency of his appeal for his people. With such intense desire, God is well pleased. He desires those, and only those, who burn with intense longing for the fulfillment of His promises.

And then we note how Daniel identifies himself with his people and their sinful condition. There is no superior self-righteousness, but a loving sympathetic desire to stand for them and plead for them. Repeatedly, he says — We have sinned. We have rebelled. We have not obeyed. We have not made our prayers.

Daniel 9:21-23

As he prayed (verse 21), a gracious answer came to him. The angel Gabriel, who had appeared and explained the vision of the he-goat, stood beside him again. This was the angel who appeared to Zacharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist and to Mary to announce the birth of Christ. He appears to no one else in scripture — just to Daniel, Zacharias, and Mary. It is here at the end of his life that Daniel is first addressed in (verse 23), as the man greatly beloved. The beloved Daniel is the Old Testament counterpart of the beloved John. Both in their old age received marvelous apocalyptic revelations. Love is the key to the deep knowledge of God.

Daniel 9:24

Gabriel's message at this time is brief, but it is one of the most striking prophecies in the Bible, perhaps it could be called the central prophecy of all. (Verse 24), "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." What depth of meaning is contained in these words! How beautifully and wonderfully all was fulfilled in Christ! Here is the hope and salvation of mankind — to make an end of sin. Here is all the law and the prophets.

Daniel 9:26

But Gabriel continues in verse 26, (The) Messiah (shall) be cut off...and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." Daniel is left with the enigma of the end of sin, reconciliation made, everlasting righteousness brought in, the covenant confirmed, and then the Messiah cut off, the holy city and the temple destroyed. We can see now, in the wonderful working out of the eternal purpose, how all this fits together and was fulfilled in Christ. But what would Daniel's thoughts and feelings be? Here is glorious accomplishment associated with utter defeat and desolation. These were the things the angels desired to look into.

Daniel 10:2-14

The next vision, chapter 10, occurs in the third year of Cyrus, apparently about three years after the foregoing. It is clear that Daniel's great concern in the meantime has been to learn more of the things in store for his people and regarding Messiah the Prince. As this chapter 10 opens, Daniel has set himself (verse 2) to mourn and fast and seek unto God for an answer to his searching. He had been fasting and mourning three weeks, when (verse 5) he sees a vision of a man that corresponds in striking detail to the Son of Man similitude that appeared to John on Patmos — the

multitudinous Christ. Like John, he fell at this man's feet, as dead (verse 9). And like John, he is caused to arise and is given courage and strength, and is told (verse 14), "I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days." Chapters 11 and 12 contain this final revelation.

Daniel 11

Chapter 11 is a detailed history of the conflicts between the king of the south and the king of the north — the two parts of Alexander's Empire, Egypt and Syria, between which lay Palestine, the Holy Land — their common battleground, just as today. As time passes on, nations come and go. And Rome enters the picture, as the king of the north, by the conquest of that territory. The Roman power develops into the Papal power, into whose hands the people of God are given for 1260 years. Much history is telescoped into a few verses.

Daniel 11:40

In verse 40, our attention is turned to the time of the end. There is still a king of the north and a king of the south. The ancient enmity still exists, and God's land is still the crossroads and the battleground, just as we see today.

Daniel 11:40-45

As the final crisis arises (verse 40), the king of the south pushes against the king of the north. Then the latter, the king of the north, comes forth like a whirlwind and carries all before him. At the zenith of his power, he meets his end, (verse 45) between the seas in the glorious holy mountain.

Daniel 12:1-3

Chapter 12 is the final picture. This time of the great power and the final destruction of the king of the north is described (verse 1) as a time of trouble on the earth such as never has been. But it is also a time of great deliverance, "Thy people shall be delivered." It is the time (verse 2) of the awakening of the dead and the rewarding of God's faithful servants of all ages. Verse 3: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."

We know that this great day is even now upon us. Are we among the wise? Are our lives filled and dominated by the consciousness of these great things? Do we put all present things in the background — meaningless? Do we feel the intensity of Daniel's yearning and supplication?

Daniel 12:4

"But thou, O Daniel (verse 4), shut up the words, and seal the book, even till the time of the end." Here, as one asked another (verse 6), "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?"

They speak of the 1260-, the 1290-, and the 1335-year periods. Here again a final 75-year period is indicated related to the rebirth of Israel, and we are in the midst of it, obviously. At the moment these periods appear to run out successively, in 1917, 1947, and 1992. But it is not for us to know, only to be wide awake to the possibility and to recognize that it is certainly the time of the end.

Daniel 12:8

Daniel heard the mystic reply — he heard but he understood not (verse 8), for the vision was not for Daniel. The aged prophet had now come to the end of his long exile. His weary years of prayer and concern for his people were now over. Verse 8-9: "Then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Verse 13: Go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." May it be our lot to stand with him, the man greatly beloved.

Bro. G. V. Growcott

Thoughts:

Love One Another

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" John 13:35.

As the time drew very near for the things concerning Jesus at his first appearing to have an end, and cause him to depart into a "far country" to receive for himself a kingdom and return, he began to prepare his disciples for the work that must be done in the earth during his absence. The work they were to do was specifically set forth to them

"Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

In carrying out this great commission, the Lord's servants would come into direct contact with the evil forces of a world that was the enemy of God, and always had been; for Jesus himself, as he prepared them for the work, was troubled and sorrowful at the knowledge that the powers of darkness were about to close in on him.

But, as he awaited the appointed hour when Satan would temporarily triumph over the promised Seed of the Woman, he occupied his time, not in lamenting his own imminent suffering and death, but in speaking words of comforting inspiration that would prepare his servants to carry on the work after he had been taken away from them.

It is profitable and enlightening to study carefully the method Jesus used in the closing days and hours of his mortal life, so that his brethren would be duly prepared to testify of his resurrection and bring men and women to repentance through his Name.

One thing is particularly noticeable as we study his words and actions as he prepared to leave his work in the hands of those who would "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." He did not give them a long list of rules that would cover all phases of their lives from morning till night, as you would a child before leaving him alone.

Jesus knew how to speak a word in season. He knew that no servant would be faithful to his master in his absence unless he loved and honored him. The apostle John writes more fully of Jesus' words during the days immediately preceding his crucifixion than any of the others; and as we read his account of these discourses from the 13th chapter to the end of the book, we can but feel uplifted and inspired by the gracious and tender words that Jesus uttered to his apostles.

"Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1).

The words that Jesus spake were designed to draw the apostles near to himself and the Father in love and unity of mind and purpose, so that all their future course of life would be inspired and motivated by unselfish devotion to the furtherance of God's work —

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34-35).

These words of Jesus were fresh from the fountain of life. They had power, because they were divine. They were able to create in man a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him. Jesus was emphasizing the one great lesson that is worth more, both now and for eternity, than all the rules and regulations; this was love and reverence for God and His work.

His appeal was to the depths of the heart and soul, with a view to awakening a likeness to the divine. Jesus well knew that if these men went out in the exercise of their commission wholly given to it out of love for God and the advancement of the cause of His work for the salvation of mankind, their efforts would have no bounds. It could not fail.

"Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).

Truly guidance and instruction are necessary, but the power of obedience is rooted in love. Was it a command or a loving appeal that Jesus uttered from the cross, when he said,

"Woman, behold thy son" (John 19:26)?

Or when he said to John,

"Behold thy mother" (John 19:27)?

Yet, we read that from that hour that disciple took her into his home.

"Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me" (John 21:17)?

A lifetime of unselfish, devoted action in the Master's service found their springs in these words. In these intimate conversations and close communion with his brethren in the last hours of his association with them, Jesus was able to light the fires of divine love and truth in their hearts so that they could go on with energy to fulfill their commission.

Bro. Emmett W. Banta

THE WEAVER

Not till the loom is silent
And the shuttles cease to fly
Will God unroll the canvas,
And explain the reason why
The dark threads were as needful
In the Weaver's skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
For the pattern He has planned.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Romans 8: 28.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." 2 Corinthians 4: 17-18.

Opening The Door

The brethren are keepers of this door, to some extent, in every place where they exist. It is their business to throw it open as wide as possible, and they are responsible if they neglect their duty...What are well-to-do brethren afraid of? Expense? They spend money on their persons, their houses, and their tables; and, is the truth less worthy? Ought not the cause of the truth to stand the highest? Or are they afraid of compromising their respectability too publicly? Let them know that shame will recoil with disgrace in the day when Christ comes to acknowledge where he is acknowledged.

Is it that they are lukewarm and insensible to their duty, paralysed by the deception practised on the senses by the world, which appears to be real, while all the while it is the merest shadow, flitting with every hour? Or is it that they are afraid of giving too much scope to the stripling? Afraid that he will feel too much honoured? Afraid that he will get above them? Let them rouse and fling away this nonsense. The stripling has only one earnest business in hand, and has no other interest to serve or object to promote. The paltry jealousy fostered by the tongue of the slanderer is a hindrance. Let the sons of God ... throw it to the winds. The stripling has been too well castigated from the beginning to spoil now. He sets but one thing before his mind — and this he pursues by inflexible courses which are sometimes evil interpreted by those who are trampled on the toes thereby — and that is, the promotion of the truth, and the protection and encouragement of its results among those who receive it. To accomplish this, he has laboured and spent money for years, fagging body and mind continually, and impoverishing his pocket on every hand. Are brethren afraid to encourage him in this? What is his offence? He is young and plain. If he were a lordly visitor, from parts unknown, with fine clothes, and bumptious "we-are-the-people" airs, wouldn't they exert themselves and make a fuss, and say great things? But being a young man whom they knew as a boy, who makes no brag, and puts on no airs, but does the work, they are afraid to open the door to him. They will repent this perhaps in time. Don't let them delude themselves with the idea that "deep things" are their exclusive property. "Deep things," as they talk, may be but the illusions of morbid ingenuity. "Deep things" are sometimes deep mire in which a man may lose himself. There are deep things, but there is a medium in all things. About the glorious gospel of the blessed God, there is no mistake.

There are those who slanderously impute evil aims, and say many things that are as utterly false as a lie can be; and there are many to open their greedy mouths and smack their lips over the delicious morsels. This is why the editor submits to the humiliation of putting in a word for himself, that the barriers of an unreasonable and mischief-working jealousy may perchance be removed from the path of the truth's progress,

at least among those who ought to be, ... the untiring, the enterprising, the unselfish, and the by all and by any means, effective soldiers of Christ.

If those who profess it [the Truth] would but unite with earnest and unselfish enterprise to make it known. The first thing is for them to be alive, themselves We use the word 'alive' in the highest sense. A man may be in life incapable, and from debility, of discharging the duties, of realising the objects of life. Such a man is worse than dead; he is a burden to the living. Spiritual life is governed by the same general law.

A man professing to be a brother, but only just knowing the theory of the truth, and that, imperfectly, not evincing a great degree of interest in the things that are Christ's or any degree of subjection in his life and behaviour to the law of Christ, while on the other hand he shows a very lively interest in things pertaining to the world, and a quick response to the world's maxims and principles of conduct — is worse than an alien. His nominal standing in the truth obtains for him currency and recognition in the truth's territory, and gives him a power for mischief which he unconsciously exerts, and which others are unconsciously smitten with. People look at him as a specimen of what a brother ought to be. They look at the fact that he is a brother, and unconsciously assume, as a matter of course, that it is all right with him, and almost without knowing it, they are dragged down to the level of his spirit, or prevented effectually and for ever from ascending to a higher platform.

Now, when a number of such people come together, the gravitation earthwards is something beyond exaggeration. They all keep each other down, without intending it, and without knowing it. There is a talent of lead round every neck. They establish among themselves an invisible but omnipotent standard by which they stereotype the existing mediocrity and sluggishness, and bar the way against any ascent, on the part of any of their number, to a higher life. The slavery is terrible... the truth ought to be supreme among those who believe it; it ought to amount to a passion; not an irrational impulse, but a calm, deep, deliberate, logical, unquenchable preference for the cause of the truth in all its aspects, as against everything else that is followed as a hobby in the world. Let the heart be to it, what a man is to business, and a woman to her house. These are not mad; they are cool, rational and consistent, but there is a terrible constancy in their devotion, the one to the counter or the counting house, and the other to the household gods. It is the constancy of logic, but mistaken logic. This life's interests appear to them the chief good; hence their labour and their love. But they are under a mistake. The chief good of existence is connected with higher aims, higher sentiments, and a higher state. These they do not see, because they are blind, as the natural mind is inevitably blind in the absence of revelation.

But those whom the truth enlightens have another vision before their eyes, and, for that reason, another line of action in their lives. The truth is committed to their hands in a concrete form. It is a cause which imposes

active duties and requires practical measures of service and promotion. It is not a theory to be idly contemplated as the opium-eating Moslem contemplates his reveries. It is not an ideal to be luxuriously stowed away in the inner recesses of the brain. It is a hard practical system or cause which God has entrusted to the care of those who become the recipients of it. It demands the first affections. It imposes continual study of the holy oracles delivered. It exacts incessant service in divers forms, involving the expenditure of labour and money. There are needy to succour, wayfarers to be entertained, the ignorant to be enlightened, sinners to be saved.

Some can do much; some are only able to do little, but all are under the imperative obligation to do what they can, and under all circumstances, to live and rejoice in the truth themselves; for even the very poor man, who appreciates the pearl of great price, and shews his joy by consecrating as much as he can offer, in body, enthusiasm, and substance, (if only two mites,) is a useful and faithful servant, refreshing the hearts of all in the truth, and honouring God in his day and generation. All this can be done without demonstrativeness. Life in the truth is unmistakable, if ever so quiet. In fact, quiet ardour is beautiful, and more to be admired than the dash of shallow water.

Bro. Robert Roberts – The Ambassador 1867

Hymn 3

BE MERCIFUL TO ME, O GOD; for without Yahweh's mercy we have no place to be found in that future Kingdom we look and hope for.
THY MERCY UNTO ME DO THOU EXTEND; O Father, we pray for Thy forgiveness and acknowledge our great need and dependence upon Thee.

BECAUSE MY SOUL DOTHT PUT HER TRUST IN THEE: for, all things are possible with Thee.

YEA, IN THE SHADOW OF THY WINGS MY REFUGE I WILL PLACE, "How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." (Psalm 36:7)

UNTIL THESE SAD CALAMITIES DO WHOLLY OVERPASS, until our days of probation and trial and sadness are ended.

MY CRY I WILL CAUSE TO ASCEND UNTO THE LORD MOST HIGH; our prayers, as the smoking incense, fly upward to the Lord.

TO GOD, WHO DOTHT ALL THINGS FOR ME PERFORM MOST PERFECTLY. "All things are of God."

O LORD, EXALTED: to be highly esteemed,

BE THY NAME — Yahweh

ABOVE THE HEAV'NS TO STAND; DO THOU THY GLORY FAR ADVANCE ABOVE BOTH SEA AND LAND. "Thy glory shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

The Deep Things of God: The Two Sons

"A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise: and he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not" (Matt. 21:28-30). The question which Jesus put to the chief priests and elders of the people immediately after he had uttered this parable, shows the meaning of it "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" They answered, the first. He immediately made this application of it. "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." On what principle? On the principle supplied in the answer they had given — that the man who did what was required of him was the right doer, even if in the first instance he made great show in the contrary direction. The publicans and the harlots by their profession were such as refused to perform the commands of righteousness: but as a matter of fact, they repented at the preaching of John the Baptist, whom the Scribes and Pharisees rejected. These Scribes and Pharisees made a great show of willingness to submit to the divine requirements, but as a matter of fact, while promising obedience, they did not yield it, and their long prayers and religious performances did not make up for their disobedience. They were in the position of the son, who said, "I go, sir," but went not.

The parable has a valuable modern application. There is much talk of the lips: much piety. Where is the doing of what God has commanded? There is very little of it. No wonder. The state of things is so corrupt that the very theology of the people almost kills incentive to righteous action. They are taught that they can do nothing to please God; that all that is needful is to believe that Christ died for them. "Only believe," that is enough, say they. As for doing, they are to "cast their deadly doing down — down at Jesus' feet". Jesus "did it all, long, long ago." As for them, they are "miserable sinners," who constantly do the things they ought not to do, and leave undone the things they ought to do. In clear and dignified contradiction to this demoralising travesty of the apostolic doctrine of justification by faith, stands the words of Jesus: (Matt 12:50) "Whosoever that do the will of my Father... the same is my mother and sister and brother" — a doctrine he could not have placed in a clearer light than by this parable of the son who was approved even after rebelliousness of speech, because he did the things that were required of him. How reasonable and beautiful is the doctrine. Action is the very essence of character. If a man's actions are always evil, of what acceptance with God or man can the finest speeches find? They are as a fine cloak over a grinning skeleton. The man who talks finely and acts badly is not inaccurately known in all the world as a hypocrite, and a knave whose basenesses are rendered all the more hideous for being tricked out in the garb of a fine wordy profession.

Bro. Robert Roberts

What Does That Mean?

"Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle" (Jeremiah 25:10).

Why is the sound of the millstones listed among those things that show mirth and gladness?

It does seem a bit odd that Jeremiah would include this in his list. Grinding at the mill was often imposed upon captives taken in war. It was very fatiguing work which was never done by men. It was woman's work, slaves or the lowest servants performed this duty. In this way Samson was horribly abused by the Philistines, this big, strong Israeli leader, made to grind in their mill as a slave or a woman.

It is obvious this concept does not fit with the sounds of rejoicing; however there was another class that used the millstones. They were the every day house wives in Israel. The mill was the most interesting and also important piece of furniture in the home. Indeed, the grinding of the millstone was the sweetest music to their ears. Every morning the woman of the house would take enough grain for the household for that day and grind meal for their daily use. It would, without a doubt be an evil time when the "sound of the grinding is low" (Eccl.12:4). The sound of the millstone means there is food in the home, and not famine.

Jeremiah, in the quoted verse is prophesying of the coming destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon. He is letting them know that all forms of enjoyment will be removed. The sense is that there would be no corn to grind, and so no use of the mill.

The light of the candle was also to be removed; signifying that houses should be without inhabitants, no light in them, nor work being done. The whole picture shows that they should be deprived of everything, both for necessity and pleasure. Where then, the noise of the mill is not heard in the morning, nor the light of the candle seen in the evening, there must be an utter desolation.

For seventy years Jerusalem remained desolate because Judah looked to their own ways and did not allow the things of God to guide their thoughts and actions. There is another prophecy in the Bible that sounds very much like the one in Jeremiah, but it has nothing to do with people in past generations. It speaks directly to us! It is talking about the events at Christ's return. "...and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee... and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived." (Rev. 18:22-23) The warning of the chapter is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (verse 4).

What happened in Jeremiah's day will happen again. Everyday life as we know it will not continue forever so let us be wise and redeem the time profitably.

Bro. Jim Sommerville