

# 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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ECCLESIAL NEWS .....	Edmonton
FRATERNAL GATHERINGS .....	North Carolina-Virginia, Lampasas Richard, Hye, Tennessee
EXHORTATION.....	Mordecai Versus Haman.....35
EXHORTATION.....	By Faith .....40
STUDY.....	The Relation of Jesus to The Law of Sin and Death.....46
AS YE SEE THE DAY APPROACHING.....	52
THOUGHTS: Hymn 55.....	55
Recent Tragedies – How Do We Explain?.....	56
Corruption Separates Believers From God.....	58
Responsibility: A First Principle From The Beginning.....	61
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN.....	64
B.E.N.'S PAGE .....	(Insert)

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

EDMONTON, Alberta — S.S. & Study class 10 A.M.; Memorial 11:15 A.M.; Bible Class 8 P.M. in homes. Bro. Steve Armstrong, Box 16, Site 440, R.R. # 4, Stony Plain, Alberta, T7Z 1X4. Phone (780) 963-7115. Email: [stevearm@icrossroads.com](mailto:stevearm@icrossroads.com)

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Loving greetings in the hope of Israel,

We have enjoyed the company of several visiting Brethren and Sisters. From the Richard Ecclesia: Sis. Meredith Cumming, Bro. James Fuhr, Bro. Dan & Sis. Sandra Jackson, Bro. Jon & Sis. Liz Jackson, Sis. Kim Jackson, Bro. Sid & Sis. Christine Jones, Sis. Annetta Jones, Bro. Gordon & Sis. Linda Jones, Sis. Beatrice Jones, Bro. Herbert & Sis. Eileen Humphreys, Bro. David Humphreys, Sis. Jeanne Humphreys, Bro. Joey Marple, Bro. Terry & Sis. Lisa Readman, Sis. Sarah Sadler, Bro. Ed & Sis. Delma Truelove, Bro. Darren Truelove. From the Lampasas Ecclesia: Sis. Tanya Darter, Bro. Lee & Sis. Trudy Freeburg.

We thank the Brethren who through their efforts brought to us words of Exhortation, Study Weekend material and those who encouraged our Sunday School students.

We were very pleased during this past summer to witness the joining together in marriage in the LORD on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, Bro. Ben Darter and Sis. Jennifer Luard. We pray that they will have a very happy life together in the Truth..

Starting in October we offered a 6-week seminar entitled “Learn to Read the Bible Effectively”. This seminar was originally put out by the Central Christadelphian group and we thank Bro. Jim Sommerville for acquiring a copy on our behalf. We advertised this seminar in many of the local newspapers and received over a dozen registrants. Several of them completed the course, and some of them requested further study. We now have a first principle class for these individuals on Sunday mornings. It just goes to show that Yahweh is still taking out of the nations a people for his Name and although it seems that those of the world are not interested in coming to our lectures, great results can be had by presenting the Truth in a different format. We would encourage all ecclesias to look at this different option for preaching the Truth. Any needing further information please contact the writer.

In November we enjoyed the efforts of Bro. Dan Jackson who presented to us a Study Weekend on the subject of Faith, Hope and Love. It was a very encouraging weekend for all of us that were able to attend. Our Sunday school students also enjoyed their lesson on spiritual body building by Bro. Terry Readman.

God willing, we will soon be moving from our present location where we hold our Sunday Morning Sunday School and Memorial meetings. Any planning on visiting should first contact a member of the Edmonton Ecclesia for the location of our new hall.

On behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Edmonton Ecclesia,  
Your Brother in Christ,  
Bro. Steve Armstrong

## Ecclesial Listing Changes

AUSTIN, TX, Bro. Jim Phillips, 12707 Dove Drive, Buda 78610  
GAINESVILLE, FL, Sis. Sharon Johnatty, 2730 SW 98th Drive, 32608

### FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

**NORTH CAROLINA-VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND**.....May 28-29, 2005

Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com.

**LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING** .....June 11-12, 2005

Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628, USA.

1-512-869-2008

**RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING**.....July 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 GATHERING**...(Note corrected date)..Oct 1-2, 2005

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

### Mordecai Versus Haman

Good morning, my dear brethren and sisters. This past week we have had the opportunity to read through the book of Esther in our daily Bible reading. Each time we read the story of Esther, I can't help but be impressed with her wisdom and courage as she follows the instructions of Mordecai. She certainly shows her faith in God when she puts her life in jeopardy for her people. It is abundantly clear that the hand of God was indeed working in her life to bring about the salvation of her people. Although there are many lessons to be learned from the attitude and character of Esther, for this morning I have chosen rather to draw exhortation from a couple of the other characters in the story of Esther. The two characters that I would like to explore this morning are very much exact opposites of one another. Each in their own way actually symbolizes something far greater than they themselves may have ever known. The men, Mordecai and Haman, are the two people we would like to investigate a little further.

To begin though, let's try to put this story of Esther into some historical perspective. Esther chapter 1 begins, "Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus". This first line gives us a starting point. With a little checking, we find that Ahasuerus was also known as King Xerxes the First and that as a king of Persia, Ahasuerus (or Xerxes) ruled from approximately 486-465 BC. With this date, we then know that the first and second return of the Jews from Babylon had already taken place, the temple in Jerusalem had

been rebuilt, however neither Ezra nor Nehemiah had yet returned to the land. The prophets that would have prophesied closest to the time of Esther would have been Zechariah who had just completed his prophecy, and Malachi coming only a few years later than Esther. One other note in passing is that this story of Esther took place in Shushan, or Susa as it is sometimes called. This was the same place that Daniel would have prophesied to Nebuchadnezzar only a little more than 50 years earlier and this same city was later to be conquered by Alexander the Great. With that little bit of time-line history, let's go back to our characters and see what we can uncover.

We are introduced to Mordecai after Queen Vashti has fallen from favor and the king was searching for another to be queen. Esther chapter 2:5, "Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew whose name was Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite" I hadn't noticed that before. "The son of Kish, a Benjamite," that sounds familiar, doesn't it? The son of Kish, the Benjamite. Let's look at 1Samuel 9:1-2, "Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. And he had a son whose name was Saul." Here we also have Kish, and his son was none other than Saul, the first king of Israel. Let's just keep that one in mind. We will refer to this detail later. What else does it tell us about Mordecai? Well, it says he was brought as a captive from Judah and that he had raised his niece as his own child. Now that the king was searching for a replacement for Vashti, Mordecai had brought Esther forward with strict instructions to keep her heritage a secret. Esther 2:21-23, "In those days while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door were wroth and sought to lay hand on the king, Ahasuerus, and the thing was known to Mordecai who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter it was found out, therefore they were both hanged on a tree and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king." In this we see Mordecai as a faithful servant to the king, his master — much the same as our duty to Christ.

Now, what of Haman? Chapter 3:1 introduces us to Haman. It says, "After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite and advanced him and set his seat above the princes that were with him." So after Bigthan and Teresh were hanged because of their plot, Haman was promoted, and, notice, he was promoted to the top. It says, above all other princes. Along with this point, we notice he is introduced as the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite. When researching Hammedatha, the Bible describes Hammedatha as "the

Agagite” in every place it uses his name, except one. The Bible record follows with Haman described as — the Agagite — in several places as well. Why would this be so important to continue to mention them as Agagites? Again, if we look up the definition of Agagite, the answer is they are the descendents of Agag. That seems fairly obvious. So what’s the deal with Agag? Why is he so important? A little more checking reveals in 1Samuel 15, that Agag was the king of the Amalekites. A quick look at the definition of Amalekites is a Bedouin people, descended from Esau. Well, of course, we know Esau to be the son of Isaac and Rebekah and brother to Jacob. It is interesting to note what God told Rebekah in Genesis 25:23 concerning her two sons, “And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels and the one people shall be stronger than the other; and the elder shall serve the younger.” Notice, it says, “two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels.” So, what two manner of people are we talking about here? Well, verse 24 tells us that she had twins and the first came out red and was called Esau, and, in verse 30, was also called Edom. We know, of course, what red represents. The next is Jacob, hanging onto his brother’s heel. He, of course, had his name later changed to Israel. Here we have two manner of people — the red, Esau or Edom, a symbol of sin, versus Israel, the people of God. And, interestingly enough, my Bible margin has a reference for the word “manner” in verse 23 that takes us ahead one chapter to Genesis 24:60. Here, Rebekah is leaving her family and they bless her with these words, “Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.” And, of course, for “seed” in the last line, “let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them” is referring to the seed of Abraham. To Abraham and his seed were the promises made. So we can clearly see the connection all the way through the scripture from the faithful Mordecai who devoted himself to his master, not receiving his reward for his good deeds, but in the end, through the judgments and mercy of God, had his enemy destroyed and ended up possessing the gates of his enemies as a symbol of the righteousness of God.

But, what of the wicked Haman, the Agagite? A descendent of Agag of the people of Amalek who were descendents of Esau or Edom. This is the other manner of people who sprung from Rebekah’s womb. Haman put himself first. This man of sin was a mortal enemy of the righteous, Mordecai, threatening to eliminate their very existence. As the story of Esther shows there is no doubt that Haman, the symbol of wickedness, will be destroyed. The Bible tells us more about this symbol in Numbers 20:14-15, “And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us: How our fathers went down into Egypt and we have dwelt in Egypt a long

time; And the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers.” And so they asked in verse 17: “Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country”; and verse 18 Edom replied, “Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.” Verse 21: “Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border. Wherefore Israel turned away from him.” And so in Numbers 24:18 God says, “And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.” Verse 19: “Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city. Verse 20, “And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek was the first of the nations but his latter end shall be that he shall perish forever.” So we can see that Edom, as a symbol of those who struggle against the righteous of God, shall receive His judgments. Notice that Amalek or Esau was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he perishes forever. And remember the words spoken to Rebekah, “and the elder shall serve the younger”. Obadiah verse 18, “And the house of Jacob shall be a fire, and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them, and devour them; and there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau; for the Lord hath spoken it.”

So, it is without the shadow of a doubt what the path and the fate of Edom has been in the past, and will be in the symbolic sense in the future. As Haman, they will be destroyed.

Now, if you will recall, back when the Bible introduced us to Mordecai, as the descendent of Kish and, that Saul the first king of Israel was also a son of Kish — is this just coincidence? If we look back in the life of Saul, in 1Samuel 15:1-2, “Samuel also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD. Thus says the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did unto Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.”

Now, remember Amalek was the nation that wouldn’t let Israel pass through their land on their way to the Promised Land. So verse 3 continues, “Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not: but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.” And in verse 9, we see what Saul did. “But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.” Here then is the real story, isn’t it? Saul was sent to destroy the Amalekites. Saul, the son of Kish, had his opportunity. God had said to destroy completely. But, what happened? Saul does exactly what we do from time to time. He set out with the best of

intentions; he set out destroying every sinful thing of Amalek. Then, after a bit, he started looking around and noticed the best of the sheep and the lambs and all that was good. He began looking through the eyes of the flesh. All that was good was standing before him. He should have destroyed them, but he simply ignored the word of God. God was very clear; there was nothing uncertain at all. He said, completely destroy everything. But, naturally speaking, there was nothing wrong with these sheep. Naturally speaking, there is so much about the world, about sin, about the flesh, that just doesn't seem that bad. When we ignore the work of God and see through the eyes of the flesh, we put ourselves in the same danger as Saul.

1Samuel 15:17-23 says, "And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the LORD anointed thee king over Israel? And the LORD sent thee on a journey, and said, Go and utterly destroy the sinners the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed. Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the LORD? And Saul said unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way, which the LORD sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal. And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king."

Saul lost the kingdom because of it! When we look back at Saul's mistake and put it into perspective, we realize that he lost the kingdom for a few good animals and a king. How much more would God have been pleased to give Saul had he been faithful. But, that is how sin is. It is so tempting at the time. If only Saul had been able to put those few good animals in perspective. Brethren and sisters, we have come here this morning to examine ourselves. Hopefully we will each be able to recognize those few so-called good sheep in our lives — whatever spoil we are trying to save! Prayerfully we will be able to put them into perspective and recognize what their value really is and what we are jeopardizing by keeping them in our lives. Hopefully we will not react like Saul and rationalize our mistakes; because, guaranteed, we will, like Saul, fall short. Fortunately, we have an avenue of forgiveness made possible

through the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Mercy is there for us.

Lastly, let's look to Moses for one of the best examples we can find on the subject. Exodus 17: 8-13, "Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy: and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side: and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Therefore, if we keep our arms outstretched to God as Moses did, we will have victory over the flesh, as Moses did over the Amalekites.

In closing then, there are many lessons that we can take from Mordecai and Haman. They were actually living out an age-old struggle between the righteous and the flesh, as spoken to Rebekah concerning the two manner of people in her womb. Mordecai, the son of Kish, had an opportunity to prevail against sin and he succeeded, where his ancestor, Saul, the son of Kish, failed so many years earlier. The type like Haman, the Agagite, have been with us right from the Garden of Eden, as the serpent, and we can be sure that we, and every other person who is trying to follow God, will have the same struggle.

Bro. Terry Readman

## By Faith — Hebrews 11

We are currently reading Paul's epistle, or letter, to the Hebrews, a beautiful text on faith and its attributes, as well as its importance.

To many in the world, faith as well as God and His Word — both in its written and incarnate forms — have become beautiful ideas or concepts and treated casually as if they were mere trinkets, baubles or even knick knacks. They use the Bible as a decoration. To them it is just another book on their coffee table; something to impress people with. They treat it as a religious relic showing off their faith, while living their carnal, worldly lives, as though having a Bible around were doing them any good and that it's valuable, life giving power might be seeping into their brains by osmosis.

Others may actually read the Bible, picking out a verse or chapter here and there, as though they were at a buffet and were free to pick only the

parts that are pleasing or appetizing to them. These go looking to its pages for comfort in times of distress and trouble.

Others read the Bible as history or even literature, as though it were an epic novel or admiring its beauty as though it were a classic painting or sculpture.

Some may even try to apply it to themselves, but through their actions are denying that it may have any transforming power over them. These are like the man who looks into the mirror and does not like what he sees, but as soon as he leaves his reflection forgets what kind of person he is and goes about his life as though there were nothing wrong with him.

The Scriptures do have some of the qualities just mentioned, but we know that it is so much more than mere beauty, literature, history, consolation or guide. We cannot be content to treat the Word with the same flippant attitude or contempt as those in the world. When we come right down to it, we are really discussing a matter of life and death. We can treat the Bible in some of the ways mentioned, but that cannot be the full extent of our relationship to God's Word, if we are to have any hope of eternal life. The Bible must be to us as a balanced diet, for we know that man does not live by bread or meat or candy alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The faith that is engendered by the Word must be treated in the same way. We know the relevant verses, "Without faith, it is impossible to please [God]" (Heb. 11:6) and "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20), but we cannot be content to treat faith as many in the world do. Faith is not something that is to be dragged out and dusted off on Sunday or when it is convenient or advantageous to us. From the beginning, those of true and sound faith have suffered and even died for their faith as Abel did at the hands of his brother, Cain. We live in an age where faith is tolerated and that may be of greater harm and danger to us than if we were living in an age where faith was persecuted. We are apt to be lulled to sleep, having our minds dulled, being stupefied by the wonders that our modern age offers. We are all too easily enticed and captivated by the siren's song; the lie that happiness can be had by purchasing this or that.

Would we recognize true faith if we were to see it? What does faith look like? Can we even see faith or is it like the wind; an invisible and intangible concept that can only be grasped at? We may not be able to see the wind, but faith like the wind affects the things it touches and we can see how it works and what it does. As a matter of fact, Hebrews chapter 11 is a 'word painting' of true faith and its effects on the lives of those who possess it. Going back, just a little further, we read in Hebrews 10:38 "the just shall live by faith" in which Paul is quoting Habakkuk 2:4. Just like we need food, water and clothing to care for our bodies and to continue to live with some level of health, we need faith in order to attain eternal health,

eternal life and eternal joy. It is this faith, and how it transforms people, and what it leads those who possess it to do, that we read about in Hebrews chapter 11.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11:1). In modern language and understanding, faith gives us a connection to God's promises. It is the essence or foundation of what we are expecting and hoping for, the proof of what is shortly to be established. However, faith cannot be just a noun, which is a thing; it has also to be a verb, it must be put into action. That is, it has to transform us and lead us to actions that are pleasing to God.

"For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Heb. 11:2).

Those who have this faith have had their lives touched and transformed by the power of God. They have a personal story to share with others. They not only have their lamp lit, but it is on the lamp stand in plain sight for all to see and not hid under a bushel basket. Not only do they have something to share, but, before the Judgment Seat, they will have obtained a report or witness concerning the way they lived their lives — that they were good stewards and servants in their Master's absence.

"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Heb. 11:4).

We know that we are called to offer our lives as a living sacrifice. Like Abel, we must do the things that God has prescribed and live a life of Faith. We cannot be like Cain and offer the work of our own hands just because it seems good to us and to expect that God will respect it and bless us for it!

In Hebrews 11 verses 5 and 6 we read that Enoch was translated because he pleased God. What was pleasing to God about him was his faith; and without it, it is impossible to please God. Our faith must contain certain aspects — obviously, we must believe in God, but we must also believe what He has promised, and that He can and will keep His promises to those who seek Him and love Him.

By faith, Noah was moved by fear to prepare an ark in order to save his family and became the heir of righteousness. Yes, Noah believed God when he was warned about an impending disaster that seemed impossible. For a hundred and twenty years, he and his family built the ark, on dry land miles away from any body of water. They suffered the cruel joking and teasing of their neighbors with no proof of the coming flood other than the fact that God had said it would happen.

By faith, Abraham, when he was called to leave his home and to go to some place far away, did not hesitate. He had no idea where he was going and when he would get there or what he would find when they arrived. Yet he packed his things and left, just because God said to. Abraham and his

family lived in tents for years not having any land of their own, with only the promise of God that he would afterward inherit the land. They were not looking for the conveniences and benefits of a city that they would have then and there, unlike Lot and his family. They knew that their ultimate reward was going to be in the Kingdom, truly a city, whose builder and maker is God.

Through faith, also, Sarah was made fertile and given the strength to have a baby when she was old and gray because she judged him faithful who had promised and because of her faith her descendants are and will be as many as the stars of the sky and the sand of the sea.

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13).

We must, as they did, seek for a heavenly country, the Kingdom of Israel. We cannot, as Lot’s wife did, turn back to the world, for if we do, we may not turn into pillars of salt, but we will be just as dead when the Kingdom is established in the whole earth, which will be covered with God’s glory as the waters cover the sea.

Through faith, like Abraham, we must overcome trials and tribulations. We must believe that God will keep His promises even when all seems lost and impossible. Abraham offered up Isaac, his promised son and seed. He knew that God was able to raise him from the dead and did not hesitate to obey God.

Like Isaac and Jacob, our faith must lead us to live our lives in such a way that we are a blessing to those around us. We cannot keep God’s blessing to ourselves, God blesses us so we can be ambassadors and distributors of His blessings and His Word.

Joseph, because he believed that God would return His people to their promised land, asked that his bones not be left in Egypt when the people returned to their promised home.

Moses’ parents, because of their faith, did not fear the king’s command to kill all the Hebrew children and hid Moses for three months. By faith, Moses, when he was an adult, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures that his royal life had to offer. He looked forward to the fulfillment of God’s promises and valued the reproach of Christ to greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. Moses’ faith led him to leave Egypt, not fearing the anger and wrath of the king. His faith kept him going, he did not give up and he persevered because he kept God and His promises before his eyes at all times. His faith led him to keep the first Passover in order to save all of the firstborn Hebrews and later had him lead all of

them through the Red Sea as though it were dry land which when the Egyptians tried to cross, they were all drowned.

Joshua, encouraged and strengthened by his faith, destroyed Jericho by having the people walk around the city for seven days. By faith, the harlot Rahab saved the spies and died not with them that did not believe.

Continuing, Hebrews 11:32-40:

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

God has given us a great many people in the Bible who are examples and role models for us. They show us the true meaning of the word ‘faith.’ We, standing on their shoulders, can see a great and wonderful future in the Kingdom that God has promised to us. A place where there will be no more suffering or sadness. This should help us to fight against the flesh and the world and not to give into them.

As Paul puts it (Heb. 12:1-3):

“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, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.”

Like the people that we read about in chapter 11, we know that our walk with God is not always going to be easy or pleasant. Many in the world believe that because their lives are happy and carefree that they are blessed of God, but we know that He makes the rain to fall on both the

good and the evil. We must be prepared for our future roles in the Kingdom and we are not fit for service the way we are now.

Paul tells us that this preparation is not pleasant (Heb. 12:6-11).

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

We are also exhorted that, as a family, we must rely on one another for strengthening and comfort as well as on our faith. Paul tells us (Heb. 12: 12-14):

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

This is not only for the matter of strengthening one another, but also that we can exercise love, one toward another, which is one of the ways we show love toward God. We can think of love as a muscle in this way, if you do not use it you lose it and the Bible asks us if we love not our brother who we can see how can we love God, Who we cannot see.

This will also help keep us from becoming bitter one toward another or trading in our heavenly promises for worldly gain as Paul again tells us (Heb 12:15-17):

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

Each week when we gather together we hear God’s Word just as they heard God’s law around the mountain. Then they asked not to hear God anymore for they feared that they would die. Now as then, God’s Word has power to transform and we must therefore make a choice. We need to choose if we want to die to the flesh and have eternal life. If we do not choose eternal life, either by returning to the world or living a fleshly life we are turning our backs on God and inviting our own destruction. Let us,

like those we read about, choose God and His ways so we may be rewarded according to God’s promises (Heb 12:28-29):

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”

Paul closes the letter with warnings and recommendations that are very clear and important and speak for themselves (Heb 13:1-2, 1-9, 12-18):

“Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares...So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein...Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.”

Let us also follow in their faithful footsteps, offering our lives as a living sacrifice, doing all things out of a loving heart. Each step we take is a step closer to the Kingdom or the grave, God can give us the Mercy, Strength and Grace to make it, but we must make the decision which way to go!

Bro. Antonio LaBarbera

## THE RELATION OF JESUS TO THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

No teaching of the New Testament is more unequivocal than that Jesus was a man, and the same kind of a man as those whom he was manifested to redeem. He was “found in fashion as a man” (Phil. 2:8). He was made in all things like unto his brethren (Heb. 2:17). He was of the seed of David “according to the flesh” (Acts 2:30; Rom. 1:3). He is “the man Christ Jesus” (1Tim. 2:5). And he is a man, not merely in the sense of being of the same general type as ourselves, but in the sense of partaking

of our identical stock and nature — ‘bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh.’ He was not organised from the earth as Adam was: he was not produced as a new man would be produced; he was developed from a pre-existing nature with a purpose having reference to that nature which necessitated that he should be clothed in that nature as we shall see.

He was born of Mary: he was elaborated from her substance as any ordinary child is from its mother’s substance, for the ordinary period elapsed from conception to birth. He, therefore, inherited the flesh and blood of Mary. He was made of her flesh and blood. He was built up from materials supplied by her nature in the ordinary process of foetal development. He was, therefore, Mary’s nature embodied in a son. This fact is not interfered with by the fact that his conception was caused by the power of the Holy Spirit; the materials made use of by the Spirit were human flesh and blood, and the result was the production of a Son of God in the nature of the condemned man whose representative and descendant Mary was. The purpose fulfilled by the Spirit’s intervention we shall presently consider. We shall find that it had to do, not with the quality of his physical nature, but with the mental quality which was the essential qualification for a successful sacrifice.

We call attention to the fact that John lays emphasis on this doctrine, that Christ had come in the flesh. He makes it a test: he says, if any man confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the same is not of God (1John 4:1-3), and he forbids the faithful to receive any who bring not this doctrine with them. We shall see a good reason for this stringency. We shall find that the fact of Christ having come in the flesh, involves a principle that lies at the bottom of the scheme of truth, of which the manifestation of Christ is but the expression; and that to surrender it or be a party to its surrender, is to be guilty of opening a leak which tends to the admission of the polluted flood which has for centuries submerged the world in death.

If Jesus came in the flesh, he was under condemnation, for the nature he inherited was a condemned one. The sentence of death ran in the blood that he inherited from Adam through Mary. He was, therefore, “in the days of his flesh,” as much under its power as those he came to save. This conclusion follows from the testimony that he was a man; it would stand secure upon that foundation alone, but it is also expressly affirmed in divers’ parts of the word. It is testified that he was ‘made sin for us’ (2Cor. 5:21). As he was not of sinful character, this could only apply to his physical nature, which, drawn from the veins of Mary, was ‘made sin.’ Again, in Rom. 8:3, we are informed that “what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God [hath done in] sending forth his son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for [or on account of] sin,

condemned sin in the flesh”. The word “likeness,” in this statement is taken hold of by some, to suggest that Christ was not the real nature of Adam, but a different nature, bearing a mere resemblance to it. The answer to this is that in testimony quoted further on we are informed it was “THE SAME,” a fact irresistibly apparent on the face of his origin; secondly, the word “likeness” will bear the sense of generic identity (Gen. 5:3). Paul’s statement necessitates this view in the present case, for it must be evident that sin could not be ‘condemned in the flesh’ if the flesh under the dominion of sin was not the subject of operation. Paul further says, “Both he [Jesus] that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb. 2:11). That this has reference to nature is evident from the words immediately following (verse 14; emphasis added): “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of THE SAME.” “He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren” (Heb. 2:16-17).

The next thing to be considered is the principle or law necessitating that Christ should be a man, and under the curse. This principle is to be found in the fact that Jehovah is a great king, whose word stands fast and changes not. He is immutable in His plan of operation. All His ways are founded in wisdom, and they are never diverted from their course. In the development of these ways, the human race has come under condemnation of death, and the operation of these ways would hold them in condemnation, and destroy them for ever, no new circumstance intervening. Not only is the sentence of death hereditary, but every individual of the human race is a transgressor, and has been from the beginning; and, therefore, the law that “the wages of sin is death” has fatal hold of every soul. From a human point of view, salvation under such circumstances is an apparent impossibility. Because, if the law cannot be relaxed, and the law has its hold on us, how can we escape? The answer is to be found in the facts before us. In his kindness, God intends release for the captives, but not at the expense of His law; this must have its full course. How to allow the law its full course, and yet save those under it, is the problem solved in Christ. By the Spirit, God took hold of the condemned nature in begetting for himself a son in the flesh of Mary. The son so begotten was, “in all points,” like those he was manifested to save. He was of the same flesh and blood; was under the same condemnation, and exposed to the same temptations, but — thanks be to God! — through the power derived from his high origin, he was without sin, that is, he was not a transgressor. He was obedient in all things, even unto death, and when he died the death due to our common nature, he was not given over to its perpetual dominion, but was granted a glorious liberation from its

bonds and exaltation to a position of glory beyond the angels. The supremacy of God having thus been vindicated in the condemnation of sin in its own flesh, the Father transferred to the Son (John 17:2), “power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life” to all who should make acknowledgment of their utterly lost position, by believing the truth concerning Christ, and taking his name upon them: the only means given under heaven whereby men can be saved (Acts 4:14). The result of the scheme is that no flesh can glory in the sight of God.

But, take away the doctrine which John inculcated as a first principle, (that Jesus, in the days of his weakness, had come in the flesh, clothed with the condemned nature of our sinful race), and a foundation stone is loosed; the key-note is altered; the whole system assumes a different complexion. We are landed in the doctrine of vicarious suffering — that is, one being suffering for another, which is not a fact or a possibility in the divine dealings. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, and the suffering of angels could not avail. Man must suffer his own penalty, and this he did in Christ, who was a man — “made of a woman, made under the law” (Gal. 4:4) and, therefore, under the curse of the law, which said (Gal. 3:13), “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” The contrary doctrine lowers the majesty of God, in representing Him in the light of a compromiser. God will accept no recompense. ‘Substitution’ is a myth of the apostasy. Death having passed on the race of Adam, he will not accept the death of angels or a new race in the place of what he has decreed. His law must be carried out, and the salvation there is to be, is on the strict basis of compliance with the requirements of his law in the first place. This has been secured by the manifestation of Christ in the flesh of sin.

The objections to these teachings of the word are not founded in true reason. They have an appearance of force which disappears on a strict analysis. The fact, for instance, that Jesus is styled (1Cor. 15:45) “the last Adam,” does not justify the conclusion that Christ was ‘as much a new beginning as the first Adam’; for this conclusion goes in direct opposition to the fact that Jesus was not created from the dust, but begotten of Mary. He is the last (or second) Adam in the sense of being the beginning and father of the new order of men shortly to appear on earth, and in the sense that he bears to them the same federal relation in the matter of life that the other does in death: but we must not ignore the process by which this glorious work is brought into accomplishment.

The idea that ‘he was of the same nature as Adam before his fall,’ is equally untenable in the sense in which it is put forward. His nature was developed from Mary, and partook of the qualities of that nature. If, therefore, Christ ‘was of the same nature as Adam before his fall,’ in the

sense contended for by the friend whose objections have given rise to these remarks, so must Mary’s have been. The Roman Catholics themselves have seen the force of this, and have propounded the doctrine of ‘the immaculate conception,’ and given us the absurd and blasphemous title ‘Holy Mary, mother of God!’ They are logical enough, but their premises are wrong: they make Christ ‘immaculate,’ and, therefore, his mother; whereas, the fact is that both were of the flesh of sin. The friend in question is bound to follow the Roman Catholics to the extent to which he affirms the immaculation of Christ.

But, there is a misapprehension lurking under the proposition which we are combating. Our friend imagines there was a change in the nature of Adam when he became disobedient. There is no evidence of this whatever, and the presumption and evidence are entirely the contrary way. There was a change in Adam’s relation to his maker, but not in the nature of his organization. What are the facts? He was formed from the dust a “living soul,” or ‘natural body’. His mental constitution gave him moral relation to God. He was given a law to observe: the law he disobeyed, and sentence was passed that he (the disobedient living soul) should return to mother earth. What was the difference between his position before disobedience and his position after? Simply this; that in the one case he was a living soul or natural body in probation for immortality; and in the other, he was a living soul or natural body under sentence of death. He was a living soul or natural body in both cases.

The phrase “sin in the flesh” is metonymical. It is not expressive of a literal element or principle pervading the physical organization. Literally, sin is disobedience, or the act of rebellion. The impulses that lead to this, reside in the flesh, and, therefore, come to be called by the name of the act to which they give birth. In determining first principles, we must be accurate in our conceptions. The impulses that lead to sin existed in Adam before disobedience, as much as they did afterwards; else disobedience would not have occurred. These impulses are in their own place legitimate enough. We can judge of this matter by experience, because the human nature under discussion is the human nature we have upon ourselves and see in operation around us. There is no such thing as essential evil or sin. Evil and sin are relative terms. The difficulty is to keep the impulses in the legitimate channel. This difficulty is insuperable so far as perfect righteousness is concerned. A child comes into the world with impulses, but no knowledge or experience to guide the action of them. The result is that “foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,” which the judicious administration of the rod will help to take out of him (Prov. 22:15). For the same reason, there liveth not a man that (at some time of his life or other) sinneth not. The reason is to some extent applicable to Adam. He was in a

state of innocence, or non-experience. Obedience seemed the natural thing till there was temptation. When good results were presented to the mind as the effect of disobedience, his want of experience left his mind a prey to the impulses excited by the prospect. Had he known experimentally that the path of disobedience was a path of thorns and death, he might have resisted the temptation.

When we come to the case of Jesus, we find a different state of facts, and at once perceive the part performed by the Spirit in his conception. Having God for his father, he was “holy” He is so styled by the angel Gabriel in his message to Mary (Luke 1:35): “Therefore also shall that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, be called the Son of God.” There are two senses in which he was so, (but neither excludes the fact, already established, that he was born a mortal descendant of Adam by Mary). He was separated, set apart, from his mother’s womb as an instrument of God, who, through him, was to compass the world’s redemption. In this sense, he was a “holy thing,” but he was holy in another sense. Having God for his father, he inherited a mental type in harmony with divine things, and a vital sympathy with the divine mind.

Now, Jesus was born of our species and one of our species, and subject to the laws which (in the divine arrangement) govern our species. When therefore, we realise the fact that divine power, (directly wielded by the Holy Spirit) was the energy which incepted his being, we are enabled to see that the type and texture of his being, though developed from the flesh of Mary, were something far above what fall to the lot of the mere children of men; and we shall find that this is one of the secrets of his sinlessness. It was the preparation of the suitable soil for the divine ideas to be implanted, which should germinate to such glorious results for this mighty globe which we inhabit.

The soil prepared, the next stage was the sowing of the seed. The child “grew in wisdom and in stature.” He was in the hands of devout and God-fearing parents who walked in the ordinances of the Lord blameless. By them, in addition to the daily instruction commanded by the law, he was taken every year to Jerusalem to keep the feasts, by all of which means, he would acquire a knowledge of the past dealings of God with man, from the days of Adam onward, and being of so spiritual a constitution of mind, and ‘the grace of God being upon him’ from his infancy, he would quickly apprehend the bearings of the whole matter, and become possessed, by knowledge, of that experience of the evil of sin, which Adam lacked, and, which, joined to his native tendency to divine things, would complete his qualification for succeeding where Adam failed. When at the age of thirty, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, and as it were, took possession of his being, the Father dwelt in him, and his qualification was complete. Yet he was tempted, because he possessed the impulses

common to our nature. He possessed, however, that counter-balancing endowment of knowledge and superior power which enabled him to do what no man ever has done, and that is to pass through this state of existence without sin. The common run of mankind inherit natures in which — through the prevalence of ignorance and the activity of disobedience in a long line of ancestry — the propensities are out of all proportion to the regulating faculties; and under the special disadvantage of being brought up in a state of society where ignorance of divine things, and consequent lawlessness, is the order of the day. No wonder that sin reigns, and that no man can offer to God a ransom for his brother. But thanks be to God for the glorious provision in Christ, by which we may escape the corruption which is in the world through lust, and enter, in due season, upon life eternal.

Bro. Robert Roberts — The Christadelphian , 1869

## As Ye See the Day Approaching

We begin this article with a quote from the apostle, Peter, which stirs us up to remembrance of the high and holy calling with which we are called. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.” (1Pet. 1:3-9)

When we think of just how wonderful that lively hope is, we should be highly motivated to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14). That lively hope is the hope of Israel! All others are vain. Where is the proud King Nebuchadnezzar? Where is his golden-headed empire, and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees’ excellency? Has it not become as Sodom and Gomorrah? Where are the other mighty empires of antiquity, such as the Medo-Persian, Greco-Macedonian and the Roman? One by one, they too, have come and gone, ending in violent overthrow. Where is the Napoleonic Empire? Where are Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich, which was intended to last a thousand years? It lasted a mere twelve years and

ended in terrible fiery destruction. The former Soviet Union fell apart after years of oppression, corruption and financial collapse. Saddam Hussein's tyrannical rule of Iraq has come to a sanguinary end in the war that still rages in that part of the world.

We should be so very thankful that we understand what Yahweh has revealed in the Holy Scriptures of His plan and purpose with this earth and man upon it. He has clearly shown to Israel in the past that He rules in the Kingdom of Men and gives it to whomsoever He will. He sets in power the basest of men. "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1). His plan and purpose is right on schedule; though most have no idea that there is any deliberate plan or purpose with the earth. They walk in complete ignorance of the glorious future that shall be to this beautiful orb that revolves upon its polar axis in the star lit heavens. Others, who have some light, imagine that the heavens and earth that now are will be destroyed and new heavens and a new earth created in their place. This is not at all the correct view, as we know. Those believing this also have a whole raft of false ideas and doctrines which originate from either pagan sources or from the pseudo-Christian institution enthroned in Rome. The whole gamut of professing Christendom is destitute of a correct knowledge of the Truth and therefore, is beyond the pale of salvation. Those who are without are a-Theos — atheists and without God in the world.

Yahweh intends to fill this planet with His knowledge and glory. "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD." (Num. 14:21) "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. 2:14)

It is written in Jeremiah 30:10-11, "Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid. For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." There is another almost verbatim quotation of this same prophecy in Jeremiah 46:27-28.

The fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah is a beautiful prophecy of the restoration of Israel. It speaks of the long Diaspora Israel has gone through and of Yahweh's mind and intentions to bless and comfort the preserved and restored tribes. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on

the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called....For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the LORD; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake....No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."

As brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus, we must keep these things of our hope clearly in our minds. We see Trouble brewing on the horizon. Surely, we are nearing that time of trouble such as has never been since there was a nation upon Earth. (Dan. 12:1) Economic troubles are increasing daily. The U.S. is trillions in debt. It is my understanding that the Saudi Arabians have so much invested in the U.S. economy that they virtually or potentially could control something like seven percent of the economy! Other nations such as China, Japan, England and others have lent and invested tremendous sums in the U.S. All of this means that others are getting a bigger percentage of the pie. Americans are spending vast sums and doing much of it on credit. The debt that individuals are accumulating is staggering! The dollar is slipping against the Euro. The war in Iraq is proving to be astronomical in dollar costs. Many formerly high paying jobs are being outsourced to other nations and business and trade is shifting. Should the U.S. economy stagnate or even worse, collapse, it would throw the world economy into a tailspin. Florida

sustained four hurricanes this year. The tremendous cost of rebuilding and repair has got to be a factor in the economy. The cost of rebuilding in Iraq and Afghanistan has got to be a huge factor, also. The situation in the Sudan is horrid.

The Russians are about to deploy a new nuclear missile system which they claim is unlike anything any of the other nations have in their arsenals! North Korea is now a nuclear power. Authorities feel that it now has between four and seven nuclear weapons. Iran now has a missile that can hit any point in Israel. The new range (1200 miles) makes it possible to hit targets even in Europe! If they should develop nuclear capability, this could prove a potential disaster in the making. Keep in mind that the U.S. is working on a Star Wars type nuclear technology and shielding system capability. They (and doubtless the Russians, also) are developing small nuclear weapons and hand held nuclear weapons. High tech weapons are being developed by the wealthier nations of the world. These are highly sophisticated and more and more accurate and deadly. NASA just tested an aircraft that can fly ten times the speed of sound!

Yasser Arafat's death on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November has drawn all eyes to the Middle East. Time will tell whether the "peace and safety cry will be the result in the outworking of things. With the PLO leader gone, it will be interesting to see what new developments occur in that war weary region. We know that it won't really get much better. For when they say peace and safety, then comes sudden destruction upon them. The world is arming to the teeth. We must be ready for our master's return. Our only offensive weapon is the word of God. It is the sharp, two-edged longsword of the Spirit's providing. May we not be discouraged in whatever might come in the way of trials. If God be for us, who can stand against us? Hold fast! The day is almost upon us! Let us lift up our heads and rejoice. The day of redemption is near!

Bro. David VanPelt

## HYMN 55

THY WAY NOT MINE, O LORD, HOWEVER DARK IT BE!

Even as our Lord in His prayer on Olivet, when the most horrible of death awaited Him said, "Thy will be done."

LEAD ME BY THINE OWN HAND, CHOOSE OUT THE PATH FOR ME.

Following the lead of our Master and all the faithful, we must commit ourselves to His word, and if it be His will, we shall do thus and so.

THE KINGDOM THAT I SEEK IS THINE;

It is His and we must accept His Divine Authority. "Shall not the God of all the earth do right?"

SO LET THE WAY THAT LEADS TO IT BE THINE;

Psalm 25: 5 "Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation: on Thee do I wait all the day." So prayed David, and it is our prayer too.

ELSE I MUST SURELY STRAY.

Without the guidance we get by reading God's Word, we will.

TAKE THOU MY CUP, AND IT WITH JOY OR SORROW FILL,  
AS BEST TO THEE MAY SEEM;

The Almighty knows what is best for us although we may not see it at the time.

CHOOSE THOU MY GOOD AND ILL.

NOT MINE, NOT MINE THE CHOICE, IN THINGS OR GREAT  
OR SMALL;

If we are placed in God's Hand by covenant relationship, He will help us  
IF we place our trust in Him.

BE THOU MY GUIDE, MY STRENGTH, MY WISDOM, AND MY  
ALL!

It is most difficult for human nature to be humble and submit to the  
commandments of our Lord.

## Looking for Flaws

Don't look for flaws as you go through life  
And even when you find them,  
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,  
And look for the virtue behind them;

For the cloudiest sky has a tint of light  
Somewhere in the shadows hiding:  
It is better by far to look for a star,  
Than for spots on the sun abiding.

The current of life runs ever away  
To the bosom of God's great ocean.  
Don't set your face 'gainst rivers' course,  
And think to alter its motion;

Don't waste a curse on the universe,  
Don't shrink at the trials before you;  
Don't butt at the storm with your puny form,  
But bend and let it go over you.

The world will never adjust itself

To suit your whims to the letter;  
Some things must go wrong your whole life long,  
And the sooner you know it the better.

It is folly to fight with the infinite  
And go under at last in the wrestle;  
The wisest man shapes into God's plan  
As the water shapes into a vessel.

## Recent Tragedies — How Do We Explain?

How do we explain to our interested friends and even one another, the reasons and consequences of the recent tragic Earthquake and Tsunami, which caused so much destruction and loss of life, particularly in southern Asia? The churches are at a loss to explain — are we?

First of all, God has a purpose, in which the earth will be filled with his glory as the waters cover the sea. This is not the case at present — men and women go about in their lives heedless of their Creator and His requirements. If they do not turn from their evil and godless ways then they will sooner or later perish everlastingly. There is a promise of the future establishment of the Kingdom of God upon this earth. This will radiate from the land of Israel with Jerusalem as its capital and extend throughout the earth and it is what we call the Hope of Israel. This will fulfil the covenanted promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. This promise is conditional to those who put their trust in our Creator and follow the example of His son the Lord Jesus Christ, i.e. a life of obedience and commitment to the commandments recorded in God's Word.

Even the obedient class are not to expect that they may not be overcome by some tragic event that may arise in their lives. The difference between the righteous class and the heedless and disobedient wicked is that the righteous are subject to Divine guidance and overruling of events to develop the characters of the saints, whereas the wicked class are largely subject to the ordinary circumstances of time and chance. Undoubtedly, even in this age in which God appears heedless of mankind, He may at times choose to cause punishment upon some elements of society, especially where it relates to His people, Israel. However, we are denied the ability to know just where this may apply.

If you consider the words of Jesus recorded for us in Luke 13: 1-5, we have here an answer, which we can give when we meet with the tragedies that have recently occurred:

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

I tell you Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

The lesson for the world here is that they may escape the tragic events such as the earthquake and tsunami, but if they continue to ignore God and do not repent, they will all likewise perish everlastingly.

Although the following words had particular reference to God's dealing with Israel, they show that God, though a God of love, requires responses that honour Him and recognise His supremacy.

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” Romans 11: 22.

This principle applies to us too as it did to Israel, so we see the two sides to our Creator, which need to be emphasised to our interested friends. It may seem harsh and cruel but we remember the apparent indiscriminating consequences of the Noahic flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the requirement for Israel's destruction of the Canaanites which was caused by man's wickedness reaching the enormity which has been recorded for our admonition and learning. These classes of people are evident in the earth today and are a warning of far more catastrophic events yet to happen as forecast in the Word. Let this recent tragedy be a wake-up call for all and prepare us for the soon intervention of our Lord from heaven. Let us not be as the world unprepared. Now is the day of opportunity, tomorrow may be too late!

Bro. Ted Mingham

## Corruption Separates Believers From God

“Gather not my soul with sinners...In whose hands is mischief, and their right hand is full of bribes.” Psalm 26:9-10

How and why? Because your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God and your sins have hid His face from you. So He does not hear you. Your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers with iniquity your lips have spoken lies, your tongue mutters wickedness.

Isaiah 59:2-3. When you spread forth your hands I will hide my eyes from you. Now what is the hope of the Godless when God cuts him off, when God takes away his life? Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Not all this is the portion of a wicked man or woman with God and the heritage which oppressors receive from the Almighty. The reason is your princesses are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not defend the fatherless, and the widows cause does not come to them. Therefore, be aware with the wicked on every side, the wicked prowl as vileness is exalted among the sons of men. Psalm 12:8 (Conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desire Rom. 13:13-14.

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers.” Psalm 1:1.

Cast Away Strife. The beginning of strife is like letting out water to quit before the quarrel breaks out. Let not our bad thoughts make you wicked. As well as you know, a wicked man accepts a bribe from the bosom to pervert the ways of justice. A man of crooked mind does not prosper and one with a perverse tongue falls into calamity Prov.17:14, 23. A perverse man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. A man of violence entices his neighbour and leads him in a way that is not good. He who winks his eyes plans perverse things, he who compresses his lips brings evil to pass. He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city. Prov.16:28-30 and verse 32. When the wicked die, his people perish, and the expectation of the godless comes to nought. With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbour but, by knowledge the righteous are delivered. Prov.11 verse 7 and 9. The wicked will see it and be grieved, he will gnash his teeth and melt away. The desire of the wicked shall perish. Jesus will say, I tell you I do not know you, where are you from? Depart from me all workers of iniquity. Psalm 112:10, Luke 13:27, Brethren note those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine learned and avoid them. Peter said brethren be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble 2 Peter 1:10.

Brethren and Sisters who give Judgement for a Bribe?

The answer is, its heads give judgement for a bribe. Its priest teaches for hire, its prophets divine for money. Your princes are rebels and companions of the thieves, from the least to the greatest of them, everyone

is greedy for an unjust gain, and from prophet to priest everyone deals falsely. Micah 3:11 and Jer.6:13

Corrupt minds separated Israel into two parts. After the death of Solomon his son reigned in his stead. (1 Kings 11:42-43), then King Rehoboam took counsel with the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, How do you advise me to answer these people? And they spoke to me saying, if you will be a servant to this people today and serve them and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants for ever.

King Rehoboam rejected the advice which the elders had given him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him who stood before him and said to them, what advice do you give? How should we answer these people who have spoken to me, saying, lighten the yoke which your father put on us? Then the young men spoke to him. Thus he should speak to his people who have spoken to you saying your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us thus you shall say to them. My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist. Now where as my father put a heavy yoke on you, you will add to your yoke, my father chastised you with whips but I will chastise you with scourges. (1 Kings 12:7-11) Israel departed to their tents.

But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelled in the cities of Judah (1 Kings 12:16-17.) The way Ahijah separates Israel into two parts. Then Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him and tore it into 12 pieces and he said to Jeroboam. Take for yourself 10 pieces, for thus says the lord the God of Israel, behold I'm about to tare the kingdom from the hands of Solomon and give you 10 tribes, but he says he shall have 1 tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel - 1kings:11:30-32.Two Kingdoms - Judah - two tribes and a few good kings. Rehoboam 975 BC to Zedekiah 589 BC, two tribes taken captive into Babylon 588 BC, Israel 10 tribes bad kings Jeroboam 975 BC to Hosea, 10 tribes taken captive into Assyria 721 BC. 1 kings 12.

The events of corruption, the Bible says, for the company of the godless is barren and fire consumes the tents of bribery, (Job 15:34) because men in whose hands are evil devices and whose right hands are full of bribes, (Psa. 26:10) who make a man an offender by a word and lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate and turn aside the just by empty words. Isa. 29:21. I do ask all believers in our loving Christ's name to come out as well as he or her who walks righteously and speaks uprightly, he or her who despises the gain of oppressions who gestures his hands

refusing bribes, who stops his ears from hearing of blood shed and shuts his eyes from seeing evil. (Isa 33:15.)

Let us not be as Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses; so do these men also resist the Truth: men of corrupt minds and counterfeit faith 2 Tim. 3:8. Paul said to Timothy, preach the Word be urgent in season and out of season convince, rebuke, and exhort. Be unailing in patience and in teaching for the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will turn and accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings and will turn away from listening to the Truth and wonder in to myths.

2 Tim 4:2-4 Some preachers holding the form of the religion, but denying the power of it, avoid such people 2 Tim. 3:5. They promised them freedom but themselves are slaves of corruption 2 Peter 2:19, 1 Tim 6:10.

Let us, brethren and sisters, avoid all sorts of corruption which can separate us from God.

Bro. Philip Wekati

## Responsibility — A First Principle from the Beginning

In 1845, Bro. John Thomas wrote an article entitled “The Things of the Spirit: What We Must Do to Obtain Eternal Life.” In that summary list we read,

“6. ...And here I would make one remark for the reflection of our Universalist friends, namely, had there been no other sentence promulgated than that in Eden, and had the word of Christ been simply and solely ‘all shall be saved,’ then the dogma, that to the extent in which all men die in Adam to the same extent shall all men be made alive in Christ, would have been true; but, on the assumption, that ‘he that believeth,’ means ‘all,’ there is still a sentence of condemnation pronounced against unbelieving mortals, which restricts the ‘all’ to a portion of mankind, and condemns the rest. ‘He that believeth not (the Gospel) shall be condemned’ ...

7. Here then, are two sentences of condemnation, to which, if a man become obnoxious, he may be said to be doubly damned. He is condemned to the first death because he is ‘born of the flesh’ and he is condemned to the Second Death if he believe not the Gospel; but, let the reader bear in mind that no mortal son of Adam is obnoxious to the Second Death because he is born of the flesh; but, being born of the flesh involuntarily, he becomes liable to it by rejecting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And this is

the ground of the Second Condemnation, ‘that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.’ John 3:19.” (“The Things of the Spirit: What We Must Do to Obtain Eternal Life,” 6-7)

In 1855, Bro. Thomas wrote, “Summary of Christianity Revealed in the Bible”. Over the article he placed the words, “‘He that believes and is baptized, shall he saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned’ — Jesus.”

During 1866, the Christadelphian Association of Detroit issued a treatise by Bro. John Thomas. It was entitled, “How to Search the Scriptures for Eternal Life”. This effort also featured an addendum by Bro. David Brown which enumerated first principles of doctrine. Although the work was not published by Dr. Thomas, he neither demurred from it nor disapproved of its distribution on both sides of the Atlantic — ample evidence that its teachings were considered acceptable to him as well as the brotherhood at large.

The addendum to the book first examines the importance of comprehending first principles. Under the heading, “The Principles of Doctrine,” the writer states: “...the following definitions of the faith that has come, as the First Principles of the doctrine of the Christ...the exact knowledge of them, according to the Scriptures, with the heart and the understanding also, is a prerequisite for the obedience of a saving faith — ‘the washing of water by the word’ to obtain the one baptism, without which no one can stand in God’s salvation, or become a partaker with all them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promise.”

In the list of first principles which follows, the fifth deals with responsibility. It reads: “That the Resurrection has effect only in regard to those individuals of the human race who have been brought into such connection with revealed truth, that they incur the responsibility of its rejection or its unworthy profession, and that the judgment upon them has been committed to the Son, as the Father’s representative in the work of Adamic regeneration, and the residue of the dead remain in the dust to rise up no more.”

Here the basis of resurrectional responsibility is plainly stated. Those who lay themselves open to the responsibility of rejecting the Truth can only be of the enlightened non-covenanted group. And those who run the chance of an unworthy profession are without a doubt of the enlightened covenanted group.

The sixth first principle reveals the destiny of the resurrected. It declares: “That the resurrected spring to light, flesh and blood, or mortal men and women, to report their former selves to the Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, at his appearing and kingdom; and such of them as shall be counted the righteous Seed, will be raised to a spiritual nature by a spirit — birth in the fullness of the Christhead, that they may inherit the kingdom; and the others, unworthy of eternal life, will be thrust out of the kingdom to suffer their many or few stripes, and then to utterly perish in their own corruption.”

With regard to this work of Bre. Thomas and Brown, Bro. Roberts published the following in *The Ambassador* of August 1866, “The cooperation of the brethren is earnestly requested in the circulation of this excellent pamphlet, which is well got up in every respect” (see *Bible Journal*, January, 2003).

In 1869, Bro. Thomas issued through Bro. Roberts, *The Revealed Mystery*, a booklet wherein the following appeared under the heading, “A Summary of Christianity Revealed in the Bible”:

THE WICKED shall be turned into SHEOL; all the Gentiles that “forget God.” The wicked are those “who know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.” Of these there are three classes: first, sinners that never heard of the one true God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the gospel; and others who are physically incapable of faith and obedience; second, those who have come to an understanding of the gospel, but have rejected it; and third, those who have obeyed it, but do not hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast to the end, nor walk according to its precepts, but after the flesh. The first class dies and perishes as the beasts; the second also dies, but comes forth from the grave again to encounter the burning indignation of Christ, the Judge of the living and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom; and the third also comes forth to be judged, and to undergo, in condemnation, “a sorer punishment” in the fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. PROOF: Psa. 9:17; 11:6; 2 Thess. 1:8-9; Psa. 49:12, 20; Isa. 26:14; Eccl. 3:17-20; Acts 14:16; 17:30; John 5:29; Matt. 25:41,46; Luke 13:28; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 2:2, 8; 10:27-29; Rom. 8: 13; Gal. 6:7-8.

In 1870, Bro. Thomas wrote, “Sir, — In No. 181 of your bi-weekly, you inform your readers that a correspondent is anxious to have information on this new sect (the Christadelphians) and their place of worship in London. Having, then, had perfect understanding of all things from the very first most surely believed and taught by their recognized scribes and

their literature, I will, with your permission, proceed as briefly as possible to relieve your correspondent of his anxiety...

10. The things subjective of the ‘one faith’ and the ‘one hope’ they regard as ‘the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ,’ believed by the Samaritans when Philip ‘preached Christ’ to them (Acts 8:12), in harmony with the ‘law of faith,’ which saith ‘He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned...’ 14. They teach that it is knowledge that makes responsible; so that ‘man that is in honour and understandeth not, is as the beasts that perish’” (Psalms 49:12,20).

“Concerning This New Sect the Christadelphians” (a 24-point statement of the Christadelphian faith by Bro. John Thomas; Intro, 10, 14) *The Christadelphian*, 1870

Excerpts from *Bible Journal*

## What Does That Mean

“And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” Daniel 11:35

The prophets, under divine inspiration, predicted the development in a future remote from their day, of a period that should continue “for a season and a time.” They did not know when it should begin, nor what length of time was meant by the formula; and, consequently, could not tell when it should come to an end: but that such a period should exist, and be of a very peculiar character, even most glorious to all the righteous who should be contemporary with it, they were agreed, as is plainly to be seen in all their writings.

“I heard,” says Daniel (12:8-9), “but I understood not... for all the words were closed up and sealed till the time of the end.” For this reason, the period was called Olahm, or THE HIDDEN; beyond which, the prophets, and those instructed by them, did not often look. They saw it was terminable: and therefore if they spoke of anything not restricted to it, they would say, ad-olahm we-ad, “during the hidden period and beyond.

The promises made to Abraham and to David had especial reference to this Olahm; and the Apocalypse shows symbolically how the Olahm is to be introduced, and how the promises to those patriarchs are to be performed. Thus, the Spirit said to Abraham in regard to Canaan (Gen 13:15), “All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed [(ad-olahm) during a hidden period].”

And again, reminding Israel of the same promise, He says by Jeremiah (7:5), “If ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings... I will cause you to dwell... in the land that I gave to your fathers [ (l'min-olahm; we-ad olahm) for from (the beginning of) the hidden period]” which in the Common Version is rendered “for ever and ever,” as though the Israelites were destined to be flesh and blood occupants of Canaan for eternity!

The covenant made with David is styled by him in his last words, “a covenant of olahm.” In the Common Version this is rendered, “an everlasting covenant;” but it ought to be termed “a covenant of the hidden period.” It was so styled, because it was to be established then; and as the subject-matter of this covenant is the throne symbolized in Apoc.4, and the kingdom taken possession of by the Saints in chapter 11:15; Dan 7:18, it is styled “a kingdom of Olahm,” or the kingdom pertaining to the hidden period.