

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

LAMPASAS, Texas — S.S. & Study Class 9:50 am; Memorial 11:00 am; Eureka Class 1:15 pm; Lecture 4th Sunday 1:30 pm; Bible Class Wednesdays 7:30 pm; Fraternal Gathering 2nd weekend in June; Bro. Charles Banta Jr., 949 CR335, Burnet, TX 78611; Tel: 512-756-6298

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

We are happy to report that Beryl Snyder Jr. gave a good confession of his faith and was baptized on Sunday Jan 9, 2005. We pray that Bro. Beryl will hold fast until our Master returns, that he may have right to the tree of life.

We were also pleased to have Sis. Carol Dylla of the Houston Ecclesia, visit us on Jan.16, 2005. We always enjoy having visiting Brothers and Sisters.

Please direct all communications to the new recording brother, Charles Banta, Jr.

Your Brother in Christ,
Charles Banta, Jr.

KAMUKUYWA, Kenya — Memorial Meeting Sunday 10 am; Sunday School 9 am; Friday Bible readings followed by a Bible talk from house to house 3 pm; Bro. William Kilui, Box 27 via Kimilili, Kenya 50216

Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters,
Greetings in the Saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ our redeemer.

It's our first ecclesial report news which we would like to present. First and foremost, we extend our thanks to Bro. Ed Truelove and his son, Bro. Darren Truelove, Sis. Kaye Yuen and Sis. Jeanne Humphreys and not forgetting Bro. and Sis. Epaphras Wekati and their children in November the 13th, 2004. We really enjoyed their visit to our ecclesia. We recall it as a wonderful occasion in that we were officially welcomed into the Berean Ecclesial fellowship.

Now our doors are open to brothers and sisters to visit us at any time in order to encourage one another – “not neglecting to meet together as it is the habit of some....” (Hebrews 10:26)

We hope to uphold the apostles doctrine and practice all the time while the Lord delays to come.

We are thankful for the new Holy Bibles presented to us. Thank you and may the Lord God be with you all.

Yours in the service of the Lord,

Bro. William Kilui, Recording Brother

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>

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with great thankfulness and praise that we joyfully announce the very good confession of faith and subsequent baptism of Jonathan Noah Morrell here in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Bro. Jonathan is the son of Bro. Michael and Sis. Leslie Morrell. We thank God that He continues to call out Adam's descendants to join in the family of Christ. We pray God will bless Bro. Jonathan on his journey to the Kingdom of God.

Love in Christ,
Bro. Michael Morrell
Las Cruces Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia

The following notes have been received concerning the Brethren and Sisters in Busia and Kimikungi Ecclesias,

ODIADO, Busia Ecclesia S.S. 9am Memorial, 10am; Wed. Bible Study, Home Visiting 10am-1pm; Fri. New Friends Class Lecture 2:30pm; Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu, Box 142, Bumala, Kenya.

We met Sister Jenifer Anyango in November. She was very ill and was confined to her bed. We were very happy to see her and needed a translator seeing as she only spoke Swahili. She now rest awaiting resurrection. Cards could be sent to the ecclesia at Odiado care of Humphreys Odaba at: P.O. Box 142, Bumala, Busia, Kenya

BUNGOMA, Kimikungi Ecclesia, Bro. Arphaxad Wekati, P.O. Box 552, Bungoma, Kenya

We have received news from two people (one brother and one sister) from the Kimikungi ecclesia in Kenya that Sis. Tunai Namukuru has broken her leg and is on bed rest. She is an elderly sister, at age 110 years old. We visited her in her home and found her able to see, move and speak for herself, in Kswahili. Although she does not speak English I'm sure that if we sent cards to Box 552, Bungoma, Kenya 50200, that her family would translate communications to Kswahili for her seeing as some are bilingual.

Ecclesial Listing Changes

ALASKA

SAND POINT, Bro. Craig Kiley, P.O. Box 324, Sand Point, AK 99661

MEXICO

BUCERISS, Sis. Bea Arredondo, c/o Jose Arredondo Sanchez, APBO Post 120, Buceriss, Nay Mexico 63732

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held God Willing)

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

'The Parable of the Priesthood'; Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERINGJun 11-12, 2005

Bro. Charles Banta, 949 County Road 335, Burnet, TX 78611, USA.

1-512-756-6298

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERINGJul 8-11, 2005

Bro. Sid Jones, RR #1, Richard, Sask, S0M-2P0, Canada. 1-306-246-4468

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING Jul 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

One Opportunity

About three and a half thousand years ago there was what we might call a tribunal — a court case; a court hearing, to use the modern terminology. A hearing was made before the highest court of the land, and, in fact, the highest court that can be found in the universe. The particulars of the crime were laid before the Supreme Judge. And the verdict was returned — the verdict was guilty. The sentence was passed and executed — death by stoning. The crime? The crime was gathering sticks on the wrong day.

Four or five hundred years later there was what we might call another court hearing — another court case, although it went on without the knowledge of the individual. It was only at the time of the verdict and sentence that the individual was aware that this was going on, though perhaps the individual was not entirely unaware of what might have been going on in the 'Supreme Court.' On this occasion the verdict was also guilty — undoubtedly guilty. The sentence on this particular occasion was forgiveness. The crime? The crime was adultery, murder, and blasphemy.

We don't know the name of the individual in the first account, but we are all familiar with the name of the individual in the second. It was one of Israel's greatest kings — King David.

You and I, brethren and sisters, also have to appear before a tribunal. We regard it as the judgment seat — the judgment seat of the Lord Jesus Christ. We will have a verdict and a sentence, as we know full well. And at that time it will be made quite apparent to us that we have had one opportunity, and that opportunity, of course, is our lives — what we often refer to as our 'probationary life' in the Truth. What will be very certain at that time is that we will not be given a second chance.

When we stand before our Lord and Master, we will have had our one opportunity to serve him — no second chance. One opportunity to have developed a character like his own — a character that he will see a reflection of himself in. One opportunity to be like him in our ways, in our speech, and in our thoughts. One opportunity to have manifested the Divine Name, the attributes of that name — the Father's Name — written in our foreheads. One opportunity to transform our lives from the flesh to the spirit. How does that make us feel?

Often times, if we do an examination and we fail, we perhaps have got a second chance and we can resist; but at that tribunal — no second opportunity.

So how does that make us feel, brethren and sisters? Sometimes we can be quite worried about that fact. Sometimes we can be troubled, when we are perhaps in the quietness in our homes and the realization suddenly dawns upon us that at some point in time in our lives we will have a tap on our shoulder or someone says to us, "The master has come and calleth for thee." And the stone cold realization dawns upon us that we are going to have to give account of our stewardship.

It's at these moments that we feel troubled, because we are so conscious, aren't we, of our own failings, our own weaknesses, of our imperfections, which trouble us. In the warfare of faith, sometimes we feel, is just not going that well and we feel that we lose more battles than we win.

In the two accounts that I referred to — of the stick gatherer and of David — I feel that we have, when we consider this subject by way of exhortation — One Opportunity — I feel that we have warning — yes. We are to behold in the two accounts, the goodness and the severity of God. But I do feel also, brethren and sisters, that we are able to have

comfort — comfort when we consider the real character of our heavenly Father.

Could we just think for a few moments of this unnamed individual who was in the wilderness having been brought out of Egypt? He stood related to the promise of entering into that land, as did the rest of the children of Israel. Why then did Yahweh execute such a harsh punishment upon him? He didn't hurt anybody. He did nothing wrong to his neighbor, as it were. Why? What are the reasons behind it? Can we learn anything from it? I think we can.

The incident is recorded in the 15th chapter of the book of Numbers. But those who have written accounts upon that incident suggest that it actually took place after the institution of the Sabbath law and before the giving of the law itself — the institution of the Sabbath as opposed to it being incorporated into the Ten Commandments.

There is no doubt about it that the law was quite clear — it was to be a holy Sabbath of rest. Interestingly enough, in the 15th chapter of Numbers, where the account is recorded of this individual who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day, we actually have the discussion of the presumptuous sin just prior to the verses giving the details of the incident —

"But the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth [Yahweh]; and that soul shall be cut off from among the people. Because he hath despised the word of [Yahweh], and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him" (Num 15:30-31).

"Because he hath despised the Word of [Yahweh]" — there is the key in this individual's life — the despising of the Word of Yahweh.

They found this man, we are told, gathering sticks. So it suggests to us that he was not actually doing it in the site of the camp of Israel. The possibility is that he was doing it on the outskirts of the camp. He did not want to make a fuss in any way. He did not want to draw attention to himself. But he was found gathering sticks in direct contradiction to what God had told them, and I think herein is the reason why such a severe judgment was made upon this man.

The gathering of sticks, as such in the scheme of things, is relatively unimportant, as Paul in our considerations of Galatians (5:6) says, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything. It was what it was leading to. And this particular individual flagrantly disobeyed the voice of Yahweh. He couldn't care less what God had said. It wasn't the God of

Israel executing some severe punishment on some poor individual who just happened to want to make a fire on a day, which God had said not to. This individual had despised the Word of Yahweh

It is significant that the law considering the presumptuous sin precedes that verse. His attitude towards God's Law and his general motivation were not in harmony with God.

In direct contrast, we have David. He is described for us as "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22). We know that the world delights in criticizing the Bible because of incidences such as these. Why would God destroy a poor individual gathering sticks and yet forgive a man who had hurt his neighbor? Adultery, murder, and blasphemy were unforgivable sins under the law. There was no atonement, no sacrifice for them.

Why then did God act differently here? There is no doubt, of course, that David committed these sins, and the sins were enormous. There is no way that you or I would want to underestimate what David did. There is no way that we would wish to do that.

Sin got the better of David. Sin was like a traveler, as the parable of Nathan given to him in the chapter that followed the incident where David had committed that sin. Sin was like a traveler in his life — it came and it departed. But it was not the normal fabric of his life. It didn't really find an ingrained part in his life. It was an exception, and such an exception to this great man.

Of course, the forgiveness of sins and the consequences of sins are two different things. David did suffer for the rest of his life because of this. But God had forgiven him.

This sin that David had committed was not the normal fabric of his life, as one might have put it. And I think that is the key — it was not the normal fabric of his life.

You and I, we fall short; we have many points of failure, and we are only too aware of it ourselves as individuals. But the great and glorious and precious promises must be the normal fabric of our life. What was the normal fabric of David's life?

Reading an exhortation by bro. Growcott — he drew attention to three particular verses of Scripture. He referred to David in the exhortation, and he referred to these particular verses, which we will look at in Psalms 42, 63, and 84.

Psalm 42:1-2 – "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"

Thirsting — We have all experienced times of thirsting, and even in the United Kingdom we do get hot weather sometimes, and we can become quite thirsty. But particularly in lands such as these, if you don't have the necessary intake of fluids then very soon you begin to dehydrate. And you begin to have that thirst, and your mind is actually focused on one thing then, when you are thirsty, and that is to get a drink. Nothing else seems to matter. OK, you might be dealing with something, and at the back of your mind, you have just got to get a drink to satiate that thirst, and the longer it goes the worse the situation becomes.

It is a thirst that needs to be quenched; and David had that thirst for God, and for the things of the Truth. That was the key to his life, and it must be the key to ours.

Each one of us needs to ask the question, God will count the answers. Are we thirsting after God?

What is the motivation of coming here? Is it social? Or is it because we want the Truth? Well, I think it is both. I certainly like coming here because of the social aspect of things. It's certainly comforting and gratifying to speak to Brethren and Sisters, yes, about the mundane things of life.

We had the blessing of a brother and sister stay with us just before we came to this particular gathering, and we enjoyed talking about geography, our children, the weather and all sorts of different things. And it was nice, no doubt about it, it was nice to talk about these things. And of course as the evening drew on, we sat down and we did the readings. And what a comfort it was. And the sister said to us, "You don't know what this means to us." We said to that sister, "You don't know what that means to us."

Yes, it is good to talk about the things of everyday life, but our thirsts should really be with the things of the Truth. And when we come here and we listen to the words of exhortation, and when we chat about the things we have heard, then that must be the motivation of our lives. It must be the thirst quenchers for each one of us.

The hart — the deer — pants, yearns after that water brook. Especially as one writer says, if it's being hunted, it's out of breath, it's exhausted, and it's yearning. In many ways, brethren and sisters, we know in our trials and our tribulations and our battles with the world we come here

sometimes exhausted, and we are able to drink deep drafts from the Word of our Almighty God.

Psalm 63:1 “Oh God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.”

Do we have this longing, brethren and sisters? This longing for the things of God, this longing for a better time to come when we will be free from the limitations of mortality, when we will be forever able to quench our thirsts?

“My soul longs for thee in a dry and thirsty land.” The world, brethren and sisters, is a dry and thirsty land. There is no sustenance for us there. There is nothing in the world that can quench our thirsts. The psalmist was a monument of difference — his thirst could only be quenched in one place. There was no satisfaction anywhere else.

Psalm 84:1-2 — “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O [Yahweh of armies]! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of [Yahweh]: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.” There is almost a feeling of desperation there. He is crying out for the living God.

I think it is what we need to be like. We need to cry out. The days are very short. Our yearning and our longing must be for the things of the Truth and for the realization of the promises and the near return of our Master.

It was recently drawn to our attention in the words of Jeremiah 20:9, the Word of God “was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones...” — like a fire. Jeremiah, because of his ordeals, because of his problems — the people of his own city were even ready to kill him and he was ready to quit and he wanted to say, no more. He didn’t want to speak any more in the name of Yahweh, and he said he couldn’t; he physically could not do it, because the Word was in his bones as a fire that couldn’t be quenched.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them...,” he said (Jer 15:16); probably a reference to the finding of the book of Deuteronomy in the days of Josiah. And he said, “...thy word [Yahweh’s Word] was unto me the joy and the rejoicing of mine heart.”

His words were within me the joy and the rejoicing of my heart. Do we find that the Word of God is the joy and our rejoicing of our hearts? Or, after a long day at work, a hard day with the children, the washing and

the scrubbing, and we settle down to do the readings, is it the joy and rejoicing of our hearts? Or is it the light bread? We’ve got to do the readings again; we’ve got to go through the readings again. Let’s get our three portions done and dusted. Or, do we find it a joy? I sometimes find it a joy after a long day. But I think the challenge to all of us, brethren and sisters, is to look at it as our lifeline, to hold fast to it. And to make it, above everything else, our joy and our delight.

These three portions that bro. Growcott drew attention to, indicate the intense desire of the psalmist in his yearning for God. Bro. Growcott commented that we must train ourselves to this. We must raise ourselves to it from our natural ignorant animal level. This is not natural. It is not our natural condition. That is why we sometimes find it so hard. It’s not our natural mode. But we must rise to it. It alone, bro. Growcott said, is the way of life, and we may add the way to life.

So how do we train ourselves to be like that? There is nothing new in what I have to say here — the study of the Scriptures, the meditation of the Scriptures, and the generation of prayer, which comes from the study and meditation of the Scriptures.

The tabernacle, of course, had the ideal example of this where the lamps were trimmed at the time of the incense — faithful prayer generated by the Word of God through the morning and evening sacrifice of the Lamb — Christ Jesus.

The Scriptures are given, brethren and sisters, as we know, to fill our minds with God.

Again, we’d like to quote from bro. Growcott who said, “God does not mock men by requiring impossibilities.” It wasn’t impossible for that man to survive who gathered sticks. It wasn’t difficult to let his fire go on the Sabbath day. God doesn’t mock us by requiring something that is impossible for us to do, but neither does he permit men to mock Him by presumption and complacency.

Paul said to Timothy in his 2nd epistle 2:15 — “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

Again, it was bro. Growcott who made the point that if we spend half an hour everyday reading the Word of God that it represented 2 % of our lives. Half an hour everyday represents just 2% of our lives! And how many of us miss the daily readings? For whatever reason? He said, “What tremendous dividends we expect to receive from such a paltry

investment! What tremendous dividends we expect to receive from such a paltry investment — 2% of our lives, and we hope to gain eternity!”

Meditation — I must admit I find that extremely difficult — meditation. I think it’s difficult because we lead such busy lives. I think, I personally find it pretty straightforward to read; but that’s difficult for some people. But to meditate upon God’s Word requires a great deal of mental effort, a great deal of discipline. It is so easy to pick up our readings and read them through. Pick up Eureka, Elpis Israel, read a portion and then forget about what we read; instead of ruminating upon it. Chewing it all or thinking about it, trying to call back what we read — those course corrections that someone referred to from this platform — those course corrections that we need to make every hour, to pull ourselves back — meditation. Joshua was told that the book of the Law was not to depart out of his mouth, and he was to meditate therein day and night.

There was an article in The Berean Christadelphian magazine, 1937 or 1938, which pointed out that to read only without accompanying thought and meditation will give no more spiritual benefit than was received by the Israelite who gathered the manna mechanically without a thought of its heavenly origin.

We need to insure that we are people of the Word. The Word of God must be an intrinsic part of our lives. We must meditate upon it. We must never be satisfied with ourselves. The Word of God has not been given so that we can pack our minds with knowledge. It’s not given for that purpose. Yes, it’s a help, but it’s not given so that we can stand up and speak or comment. It’s given to transform us from ugliness to beauty, from the natural to the spiritual. And we can only do that if we read it and think about it and let it transform our lives.

And of course, prayer — it’s impossible for us to do anything without recourse to our Heavenly Father. Our hearts must be inclining to our Heavenly Father on a daily basis — Jesus says that men ought always to pray and not to faint.

The key to all this (back to the points that we made in the Psalms) is our desire — that burning, yearning, unquenchable desire, which we must have and must develop. We must have a determination to be holy — to study God’s Word, to absorb it and to allow it to find it working in our lives. Do we want to be a part of the divine purpose or not? Do we want to overcome? To quote another brother, “In our desire to overcome we must constantly say to ourselves, ‘I want to be in the Kingdom of God more

than anything else.’” And that’s really in harmony with what we are trying to say in this exhortation.

The stick gatherer couldn’t care less. Yes, he was part of the people of God. But he wasn’t interested really in the Divine Law. But David, like you and me, he had his weaknesses and the problems that resulted from them. But his overriding desire was to be in the Kingdom, was to be like Yahweh. He desired to honor Him, and it must have been shattering to him, when Nathan said, “Thou art the man” (2 Sam 12:3) For about nine months he had agonized without vocalizing his sin — for nine months he had tried to come to grips with his conscience, but without effect. But his desire was to serve Yahweh.

You know that God in His almighty power can raise the dead, as we know He will at the soon return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He can and has created a vast universe the extent of which we cannot comprehend. We can only marvel at its design and its beauty from the star of the first magnitude to the tiniest insect of the air. But God will not be able to change our characters, when we stand before Christ. He will not be able to do that.

Jeremiah 6:10 — “...the word of [Yahweh] is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it.”

1 Corinthians 9 expresses this idea of determination. I know that some of the brethren, and some of the sisters, and some of the young people had a great deal of determination this morning, when I was still in the land of nod, because they were doing their run, and you have to have a fair amount of determination to do that. The apostle Paul was well aware of the athletes and the determination that they put into winning a race —

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain” (verse 24). We know that Paul was not saying that only one would enter into the Kingdom.

When an individual runs and trains, he is going to do it with a determination and desire that he is the one that’s going to win. This one opportunity that we have got must be characterized with the kind of determination of an athlete running a race.

To paraphrase an extract from a British newspaper, called the Daily Telegraph, regarding some athletic games: To train for years, to sacrifice personal pleasures, then to make the team and be smashed to oblivion — that’s determination. One apparently had competed in the last three games but had not won. For years he had trained for six hours a day, for 23 of his 29 years, he had devoted his efforts to this — to sniff at glory, yet in vain,

he hadn't made it — 6 hours a day, 23 of 29 years — that's determination. That's the kind of determination, brethren and sisters, that we need to have.

Jesus said that the children of this world are sometimes wiser than the children of light. We need to have that same determination — the determination which Paul also spoke of in Philippians 3:14 —

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” — I press towards that mark.

The most encouraging thing in this particular chapter, is not necessarily the pressing forward, but in the previous verse —

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”

Never mind what is behind us. We must look to the way forward. If we concentrate on those things which are behind — those things that we have failed in perhaps — we are going to hinder our progress forward. It is difficult sometimes to forget what is behind us, but in a sense we are limiting our Heavenly Father. God has not called us to wrath. He has called us to give us the Kingdom. It is His great pleasure to do so, and we are lacking faith in His ability to bring us to the Promised Land, if we don't think He is going to do it. He wants to do it. He delights in doing it. We have to have faith that He will do it. So with our failings behind us, let us press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul wrote in Hebrews 9:28 —

“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

To those who look for him — and that word ‘look’ — in the Greek, means to ‘eagerly expect’. To eagerly expect. Do we have an eagerness about the return of Christ? Do we have that longing for his coming? Perhaps sometimes we don't, but we need to. Let us forget those things which are behind, and let's press forward.

I'd like to close with the words from the Book of the Apocalypse 22:17

—
“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

When we stand before that great tribunal, brethren and sisters, with our one opportunity reflected before us, it's not going to be a matter of a calculation — a mathematical calculation of plus and minus values — how many things we have done good, and how many things we have done bad. It's going to be about the general well-stream of our lives. Are we among those who thirst for the things of God's truth or not?

Verse 20 — “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Bro. Phillip Hughes

Reading Of The Scriptures

There is an unexplored depth of reality in the saying. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.” All consent to the saying as a true one, but only a few go far enough in the process of ‘learning’ from what has been written. Even these will never get to the end of the process while in the flesh. They will always be discovering some new force in exhortations they have been familiar with from infancy. Our progress in this respect, however, will depend entirely on our compliance with the divine exhortation to seek wisdom as for hid treasure. In many respects, the wisdom of God that is communicated in His word is hidden. It is accessible only to those who dig; and for this digging to be serviceable it must be a continuous process. It must not be done in fits and starts. It must be constant, patient and reverential, a daily feeding on the manna from heaven.

The systematic and painful efforts of mere scholarship — the spasmodic attempts of what is generally understood by the term ‘study’ — may be to the real work of upbuilding in the word; what the chemist's analysis of flour is to the process of nutrition — clever but useless. Such a mode of treating the word of God will leave a man unacquainted with nearly all the riches it contains. A daily, habitual, thankful, reverential, prayerful and orderly converse with the holy oracles will uncover to the mind irresistible, almost inexpressible, evidences of their truth, and a fund of significance that will remain utterly unknown to the careless, irregular, spasmodic, or merely scholarly reader.

But, to accomplish and continue in this mode of intercourse, requires a species of motive to which the mere scholar is a stranger. A man must fear God and realise his own insignificance and dependence. He must feel hungry before he will desire to feed on the word in this unremitting manner. He must be non-content with himself and things as they are. His

affections must be operative on heavenly, and not on earthly things. He must in fact, have made considerable attainments in the kind of spiritual education which is implied in saintship. The gospel, as seed to the soil, must have germinated and sprung before it can bring forth this excellent fruit of the Spirit — this continual delight in the statutes, commandments and word of the living God. — The yearning thirst for communion expressed by David, when he said, “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God” (Psa 84:2).

What does this mean but that a man must not only know that there is a God, but must love Him and be filled with admiration of His infallible and eternal excellencies; that he must not only know that he himself is a mortal, but must have such a living sense of the fact as to be in a constant temper of modesty and extreme reverence towards God, trembling at His word; that he must not only be aware that there has been a Christ in the world, but realise that there is a Christ now, and that we, having yielded ourselves to his purchase, are no longer our own, but his who lived and died for us? Only this rich indwelling of the word of Christ will enable a man to perseveringly discern the excellence of the word of God, and the absolute insignificance of all present things, though they be very importunate of our attention and striking in their impressions upon the senses. Only such will be found, day and night, giving the word of God that place in the economy of life which it ought to have.

The reading of the Bible and the appreciation of it will react productively one upon the other. Read the word and you will appreciate it; appreciate it and you will desire it, and seek the comfort that is to be found in reading it. And thus, as in every vital process, there will be a dual action which will preserve life.

But there is a view of the matter outside of the word and outside of man, because there is a God outside the word and outside of man. The word is the only form in which the name and honour of God have a visible place among men at the present time. His temple is in the dust, His nation scattered, His kingdom destroyed. His word remains, and He hath magnified it above all His name. It is in the hands of the nations. It is the principal and most numerously multiplied book in the world. It is everywhere His representative. The Bible in the house is God in the house. The Bible in a man’s life is God in a man’s life. Where people place the Bible, they place God. The place it demands is the heart — the throne. With nothing less will God be satisfied. Do you neglect it? Do you neglect God? Do you allow the affairs of house, or business, or friends to ride over

it, to displace it from the first position, to put it in the corner, to keep it hidden, neglected, disregarded? Then is God cast behind your back, and great is your danger. A voice of thunder would not be too loud to rouse you from your folly. You say you have no time to read. The plea is absolutely inadmissible. You take time to eat and drink, and this is the most important kind of eating and drinking. You will have to take time to be ill some of these days. Death will rap at the door, and He won’t ask you if you have time to attend to Him. Christ will stand in the earth one of these days, and what about your family, your house, your business then? You will want to turn to wisdom in a hurry, but wisdom will fly far from you. You will want to seek God with your whole heart, but He will not be found of you.

So has God arranged things, that He will cause every one to find the fruit of his ways? “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets . . . How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you” (Prov 1:20,22,23). “Blessed are they that keep my ways. Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD. But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death” (Prov 8:32-36).

But if ye heed not her gentle entreaties — if ye persist in putting her off, that ye may attend to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, hoping dimly and indefinitely that some day all will be well — hear ye your own doom declared beforehand by the same gentle voice: “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity. I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me and I will not answer. They shall seek me early but shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices” (Prov 1:24-31)

God has declared, “I am a great King” (Mal. 1:14). He demands on this ground to be honoured, and to have the first place in the heart, and the best of all we have to offer. All the ceremonial appointments of the law were

intended to teach this lesson. No one was allowed to approach the sanctuary except those appointed, and those only in the appointed way, on pain of death. No offering was accepted with a blemish, or hurt, or imperfection. All uncleanness required purgation by sacrifice. Holiness and majesty were continually impressed on Israel as appertaining to Him in the highest degree. The lesson in its individual application is unmistakable. Jesus brings it home in the words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart...and all thy strength and all thy mind” (Luke 10:27). His own demand is, “My son, give me thine heart” (Prov 23:26). He demands the highest place in all our affairs, which is His reasonable place.

Let us render the service He requires. His word is in our houses. Don't let us insult Him by giving our feeblest moments to the reading of it. Don't let us wait till all our energies are worn out, and our faculties impaired in attending upon the affairs of the natural man. Don't let us sit down to the Bible when nature is exhausted, and sleep hovers on the eyelids. Let us give the best time of the day. It is a matter of contrivance. There are difficulties, but difficulties can be overcome. Where there is a will, there is a way. Besides, who knows but our difficulties are God's tests. He may want to prove us — to see and let us see whether we will honour Him or not. It is no new thing for God to leave a man that he may see all that is in his heart. Therefore, our increasing business — our growing affairs — may be a part of the machinery by which our probation is accomplished. If we resist the clamours of the flesh — if, notwithstanding the pressure of worldly affairs, we turn aside daily in reading, prayer and meditation, we overcome; but if on the contrary, we are carried before the stream, and leave God behind, we are overcome, and will awake sooner or later to a sense of our great folly.

If we do our duty in this matter, we shall be assisted. This is matter of promise. If we are attentive to God, He will be attentive to us. “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (James 4:8). The converse is true. Neglect God and He will allow you to fall. There have been many illustrations of this in history. One of them is mentioned in the chapter read this morning. — (Rom 1:28.) “Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” All nations were related, in the first instance, to the fountain of divine knowledge through Noah, but they slighted God, honouring themselves, each other, and their own affairs, like the multitudes of our own day, and God departed from them, and gave them over to the reprobateness of mind, which is manifest in all the sculptures of antiquity and the state of man

universally. The Jews were favoured as no nation ever was. Jehovah says, “as the girdle cleaveth to the loins of a man, so have I caused to cleave unto me the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah, saith the LORD, that they might be unto me for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear” (Jer. 13:11). What was the consequence? “Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings that sit upon David's throne, and the priests and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with drunkenness [that is mental confusion; the result of the wine of His wrath]. And I will dash one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, saith the LORD; I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but destroy them.” (Jeremiah 13:13.)

Bro. Robert Roberts — 1878

CURRENT EVENTS — FULFILLING PROPHECY

THE WORLD'S IMMORALITY

Hardly a day passes without news of some, once-held moral standards being undermined, sometimes surreptitiously, other times quite brazenly. The latter often occurs after a long period of slow erosion, when the world has been drawn into acceptance of such standards by the example of individuals, whom they have idolised in their different vocations, sporting prowess etc., as in the world's eyes, otherwise respectable people. For instance film stars, have been reputed for their infidelity and “as long as it feels good” mentality, which is soon imitated by their followers, so we have this standard being absorbed by the populace at large. Marriage has now begun to lose its value either by easy divorce, or living together without the commitment of marriage, or sexual cohabiting with those of the same sex, and seeking the status of marriage by legal enactment. Take the following instances of this and other circumstances of immorality.

1. An unmarried Rumanian woman aged 66, (apparently the oldest known woman to have a baby) has become pregnant, after fertility treatment and supported by donated eggs and sperm from unrevealed donors. A baby girl is the result. There is no shame, but it is glamorized by news reports of support from doctors and the new mother who looks forward to the child turning 21 while she is still alive. This unnatural arrangement is not an isolated one, but highlights the depths of the imagination of human hearts who try to evade the responsibility of true parenthood, as also in the case of the increasingly

common practice of homosexual and lesbian couples assuming this unnatural and godless practice.

2. Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, openly admits his eldest and last surviving son died recently from AIDS, which as a plague, has affected millions of that country's citizens. Hitherto, the South African government has not been prepared to admit this disease is such a problem, or even admit there is such a disease, shameful as it is. This was highlighted by the son of the deceased having admitted his mother had also died from the same disease, but at the time to protect his father and the Mandela name, she was then said to have died of some other complaint. Africa seems to have been the area most afflicted by this disease, evidently because of the higher incidence of immoral sexual activity (particularly homosexuality) and a lack of recognition of there being a problem until too late.

The apostle Paul, foreseeing these trends nearly two thousand years ago, spoke of this very immorality, which has had such a hold in the last fifty years or less. It was once a shame to speak of this, but increasingly it is openly and brazenly paraded in 'gay' parades, and such like. Listen to what Paul said, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet." — Romans 1: 26-27.

3. There has been much media publicity concerning the United States and its Allies commitment of atrocities against their prisoners, both in Iraq and Guantánamo Bay, with a view to extracting information to curb, if not eliminate, terrorist activities. Photos and subsequent court martials have confirmed the Iraq reports to be true. How tragic that those nations, hitherto, believed to be largely beyond reproach in these matters, have apparently compromised their standards in the cause of best national interests.

Another aspect that arises from the foregoing, is the attitude that the end justifies the means. This is clearly the motivation that the terrorists in Iraq, Palestine (Hamas group and their like), and elsewhere use in their dastardly deeds; "let us do evil that good may come." (Rom 3:8) United States and their allies seem to be infected with the same sentiment. Perhaps we need to emphasise among ourselves that this sentiment has no

place in the Household. There are no short-cuts to the Kingdom; the easy way around a problem is often the wrong one. The Scriptural course is not the world's way. For us it is: — (emphasis added)

"In your patience possess ye your souls." — Luke 21: 19.

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." — Romans 12: 12.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." — Hebrews 10: 36.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain." — James 5: 7.

MIDDLE EAST PEACE

There is no peace for the wicked, is the Scriptural response to all the agitation for peace that we hear and see in Iraq and also more especially in Israel. No doubt such peace is an ideal worth seeking to alleviate some of the misery and hatred that occupies the world and these last two named countries in particular. We now see that there has been an election in Iraq; reasonably well supported, by early accounts. This is believed to augur well for democracy to take the place of a brutal dictatorship, which is what all the people of Iraq have known for many years. However, time only will tell how good this will be, as the Sunni minority, largely under the pressure of terrorists and their Imams, refused to vote. The majority, Shiites, are believed to have secured a large vote, and consequently will have a large and perhaps dominating majority of parliamentarians. There are some fears of a Civil War if the Sunnis are shut out of the process. In any case, the terrorist elements are by no means silenced, and will be ready to foment as much discontent as will achieve their object of destabilizing any democratic process, which equals in their eyes America's, and their allies', domination in the region.

Israel and the Palestinians are cautiously treading a path of moderation following the election of Mahmoud Abbas as the Palestinians' new President. The latter has secured a temporary agreement with Hamas and other terrorist groups of a ceasefire in exchange for Israel's ceasing its responses. There are a lot of hidden items that Hamas and the others have demanded as their ultimate objectives before peace talks make much progress, or, ultimately, the Palestinians achieve their objective of nationhood. Among these, which it seems impossible that Israel will make any compromise, is the return of thousands, perhaps millions of

Palestinians to their original land in Israel, or for East Jerusalem to be made the capital of a new State. So at this point in time there appears to be no likelihood of any form of a Peace Agreement and Palestinian Nationhood being accomplished. There may be some form of agreement but it will probably prove to be an illusion, because it is not in God's purpose that Israel should surrender any of its present land, and much of the land presently held by the Palestinians is to be ultimately surrendered to Israel, to fulfil the promises made to the Fathers of Israel, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Time only will tell, how this will work out in the short term; but we know, and prophecy confirms, that although there will be a cry for peace, it will only lead to upheavals, and conflicts. This, perhaps, with a brief interlude of a peace that will make Israel dwell confidently, will ultimately bring down Gog from the North quarters. In turn, Divine intervention in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ will occur. He will have already made his presence known to the Saints, having judged the responsible living and dead, and determined their destinies. So of necessity, for us, the time is short and we need to be examining our own personal lives to ensure that we are ready, patiently working and watching and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world. (Emphasis added)

“Be patient therefore, brethren unto the coming of the Lord.” — James 5: 7.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” — 1 Corinthians 15: 58.

“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.” — Matthew 24: 42. (See also 43-44)

“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world” — James 1: 27.

Bro. Ted Mingham

Walking

Walking is good for body and mind. There are many pains and clouds which would never be endured if the sufferer were sternly in the habit of doing two things DAILY: walking over God's beautiful earth and reading

methodically God's beautiful word. Water also in the morning on the outer man, all over, will help the good work of invigoration for the good fight.

In the house all the time is not good: neglect of invigorating contact with the divine ideas, which God has treasured for us, is worse; and a knee that never bends, and a tongue that never makes confession of the glory of God in prayer, is perhaps worst. All three, and every other good word and work, develop saintliness which will end in glory.

Bro. Robert Roberts — 1873

‘Selah’ — What is the Meaning of It?

Bro. Donaldson transmits the following remarks of Dr. Thomas, which he has had in his possession for a long time. Presumably they were written in answer to a question as to the meaning of the word ‘Selah, so frequently occurring throughout the Psalms.

Selah

The translators of the Bible have left the Hebrew word , selah, which occurs so often in the Psalms, as they found it, and of course the English reader often asks his minister or learned friend what it means. And the minister or learned friend has most often been obliged to confess ignorance, because it is a matter in regard to which the most learned have by no means been of one mind. The Targums, and most of the Jewish commentators, give to the word the meaning of ‘eternally, for ever’. Rabbi Kimchi regards it as a sign to elevate the voice. The authors of the Septuagint translation appear to have regarded it as a musical or rhythmical note. Hentler regarded it as indicating a change of note, and Matthewson, as a musical note, equivalent to the word ‘repeat’. According to Luther and others, it means ‘silence’! Gesenius explains it to mean, ‘let the instruments play and the singers stop.’ Woche regards it as equivalent to ‘sursum corda’ — ‘up, my soul’! Sommer, after examining all the seventy-four passages in which the word occurs, recognises, in every case, as ‘an actual appeal or summons to Jehovah.’ They are calls for aid and prayers to be heard, expressed either with entire directness, or, if not, in the imperative, ‘Hear, Jehovah,’ or ‘Awake, Jehovah!’ and the like, still earnest addresses to God that he would remember and hear, &c. The word itself he regards as indicating a blast of the trumpets by the priests. Selah itself, he thinks, is an abridged expression, used for ‘Higgaion Selah’ —

‘Higgaion’ indicating the sound of the stringed instruments, and ‘Selah’ a vigorous blast of trumpets. — (Bib. Sac.)

is properly the imperative from the root ‘sahlah’, which signifies to ‘lift up, to raise’; hence, to ‘suspend’ a balance, to ‘weigh’; and, therefore, metaphorically, to ‘consider’. — JOHN THOMAS, M.D.

The Christadelphian, 1874

ZEAL

“The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (Psalm 69:9).

It is noteworthy that all the great divinely chosen leaders of Israel were characterized by fervent zeal. The consuming zeal manifested by our Saviour caused him to drive the money changers and temple defilers out of God's house (John 2:14-16).

The prophet Elijah was an outstanding example of zeal for God.

In 1 Kings 19:10 we read of him —

“I have been very jealous [zealous] for the LORD God of hosts.”

This intense and fiery zeal caused Elijah to destroy the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:40).

The apostle Paul depicts all the redeemed as characterized by a zeal for good works (Titus 2:14). He speaks of his own zeal, even before his conversion

“I...was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day” (Acts 22:3).

There is a zeal then that is begotten of ignorance, as described in Romans 10:3 —

“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

There are many today who possess this type of zeal, as is evidenced by the missionaries sent abroad to convert the heathen by those who know not the true gospel of the kingdom Christ is to establish on the earth.

Does not the very manner of Israel's apparent acceptance of God's law as given by Moses, and their refusal to accept Christ's teaching, afford a warning of what would occur in the latter days? No wonder the apostle exhorts us to examine ourselves whether we be in the faith.” Our zeal and enthusiasm should greatly increase as we read of those worthy men of old.

It is God's zeal which will bring about the establishment of His kingdom on the earth (Isaiah 9:7).

Bro. H. A. Sommerville

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt 5:16).

It is not enough to speak the Truth, constantly and earnestly, important as that is. Our actions, as well as our words, are taken into account by all of our associates and those to whom we speak the Truth. And, if the Truth is reflected in the kind of life we live, our friends and associates will take note and judge the effectiveness of a belief in the Truth by the effect it has upon us.

“Let us go on unto perfection” (Heb 6:1).

There is no one fitted for salvation by nature. Even the Lord Jesus Christ had to pass through a period of trial, labor and suffering that he might be fitted for the glorious purpose for which the Father was preparing him. For, everyone selected as an entrant in the race for eternal life needs to be drilled, disciplined and developed into something higher and nobler than he is by nature; a new man in the image of God, conformable to that new and perfect order of things to be established on earth.

There is a great store of knowledge to be found in the books contained in the libraries and in the book stores. Some of its knowledge is useful, much of it is worthless trash, and the greater portion of it is corrupt and injurious, leading the mind into a way of thinking contrary to divine principles.

Let us always keep in mind that the scriptures alone give us the exceeding great and precious promises of God concerning eternal life and an inheritance in the kingdom of God. Reading worldly literature is far more liable to detract from, rather than add to, our store of knowledge and our interest in these glorious and precious promises.

As one who lives in a tropical swamp is constantly exposed to poisonous reptiles and deadly diseases, so we who must live in a world dominated by the ungodly, are constantly exposed to things dangerous to the spiritual man.

One of the greatest dangers with which we must come in contact more or less, is the constant flood of propaganda and teaching on every imaginable topic, which can now be disseminated so easily by so many different methods. It behooves all who seek to keep their way of thinking in line with divine principles

to be wary of the ideas advanced by the wise of this world; for their thinking is as man thinks, not according to divine thoughts, and the things which they approve of are the things that appeal to the lusts of the flesh and purely human aspirations, not on the basis of what God approves. "To the law and to the testimony" is the only safe guide in evaluating any form of teaching.

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19).

The study of Bible prophecy is not only interesting, even enthralling to the earnest student thereof; it is the greatest evidence available today as proof of the divinity, and inspiration of the scriptures except, of course, the Bible itself.

Fulfilled and fulfilling Bible prophecy is the readiest and most effective weapon against prevailing skepticism and doubt. God, in His word, has pledged His divinity on His ability to foretell the end from the beginning —

"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" (Isa. 46:9-10).

Likewise, God has issued a challenge in His word, to all believers in other gods to prove their divine power, by the same rule:

"They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near, yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God beside me" (Isa. 45:20-21).

Two outstanding facts are established by these bold challenges from the word of God:

First, that there is a Supreme, Almighty Being, and that the God of Israel, the God of the Bible, is that Being.

Second, that belief in any other god is a vain belief, and that all other so-called religious books and all other claims of inspiration are fraudulent.

Accurate prophecy, found in the Bible, and in the Bible alone, is unassailable evidence that the Bible is the only book of divine inspiration ever given to man.

A living and ever-present witness to the divine inspiration of the scriptures is to be found in the history of Israel, and God has set forth Israel as an outstanding witness that He, the God of Israel, is the one true God as we read in Isa. 43:12 —

"I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no

strange god among you; therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God".

The fact that every prophecy in the Bible concerning the Jews (and there are many), even to the very present time, has been minutely fulfilled, is unquestionable evidence of the inspiration of the scriptures and the divinity of the God of Israel.

It is remarkable that in all the attempts that have been made to discredit the scriptures and refute their claims of inspiration, none has ever attempted to discredit prophecy; yet this would be one of the simplest methods of discrediting the Bible, if it could be done.

Every student of the scriptures, everyone who seeks to teach the Truth and equip himself as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, could not do better than devote himself to an earnest study of prophecy and its connection with past and present events.

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

HYMN 79

LORD, WE WAIT THE TIME OF BLESSING,
RESTING ON THY PROMISE NOW.

The promise given to Abraham is the basis of the one given as our Lord ascended in Acts 1:11 by the angels to those assembled.

HEAR OUR PRAYER, THE THRONE ADDRESSING,
LORD, HOW LONG? WHY TARRIEST THOU?

This has been the cry of the believers for generations. For the ones who lack faith it has been their downfall. We are told to be patient as in James 1:3, "the trying of your faith worketh patience."

COME UPON THE WINGS OF SPIRIT,
COME, REDEEM THY MOURNING BRIDE
GIVE THE KINGDOM TO INHERIT,
GIVE HER GLORY AT THY SIDE.

Four lines that contain a whole world of instruction. The Savior will come with the power of the spirit, of which we can only glimpse in part with our mortal minds. Why is the bride mourning? Her Prince is away and she is sad as there is much need for a healer and a leader in this

wicked world which she cannot change by might, only by proclaiming the gospel and holding to its teaching. Only at His coming will she realize the joy and the reward of the promise.

MANY DAYS OF TOIL AND SADNESS,
MANY WRESTLINGS FOR THE PRIZE,
HAVE PREPARED HER FOR THE GLADNESS
OF THAT DAY OF SWEET SURPRISE.

Many that sleep in the dust and of those who struggle on have tasted even unto death to wrestle with the enemy, not only our own desires but also the opposition of those who pervert the word with zeal, even with sword and imprisonment. In these latter times we can be drawn away by lack of interest and time away for earning a living (at whatever level that means to us).

LONG HATH SIN AND DEATH ENSLAV'D US,
LONG IN DUST HATH FAITH REMAINED;
COME, O LORD, WITH MIGHT UPLIFT US,
GIVE THY SAINTS THE VICTORY GAINED.

To us it is long but to the Lord a thousand years is but a day. His plan is continuing all the time. It will be a sweet reward to have power to right the wrongs now perpetrated.

LORD, OUR HOPE AND CONSOLATION,
BRING THINE ISRAEL QUICK RELEASE;
O, REFRESH US WITH SALVATION,
BE OUR STRENGTH, OUR JOY, OUR PEACE.

Compare the times of refreshing to the world in its present state. Man is clever but he is not wise in many ways. It is only with the guidance of the Divine Hand that this change can take place for the world, be it physical or spiritual. Even so come Lord Jesus.

The Hymn Book And Ecclesial Singing

My motive for writing is to be found inside the cover of this month's Christadelphian. Not that I have anything especially good to contribute, but having had a little practice at this kind of work, I thought that what experience had taught me might not be totally valueless to some others, who, like myself, take delight, when merry, in singing Psalms and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts unto the Lord. It will be found, I think, by experience, that the majority of Christadelphians are people who enjoy singing, but have very little natural adaptedness for becoming

sufficiently familiar with the technicalities of music as to sing therefrom with ease and without losing the import of the words. This being so, those who are able to sing from the music should always endeavour to lead the singing, and keep it to the pitch and to the time (that is supposing there be no instrument), while if those who are not so able, will get the tune by ear and sing heartily, giving the expression which they think the words require, the result will be found to be far more satisfactory than stumbling along either with the old or new notation, with just sufficient knowledge to distract attention from the words but not enough to sing easily. I think it is a mistake to follow the expression, as marked, too closely, for this reason: if a thing be sung loudly because it is marked 'forte.' it is often a mere shout, but if one is singing appropriate words to an appropriate tune, the 'fortes' and 'pianos' come naturally and the result is truer and more natural than in the former case. One thing to be remembered is that the object of music is not to be heard for its own sake, but to give the clearest, and best enunciation of the words by a number of voices in unison. This supplies the reason why words relating to death, the grave, &c., should be wedded to sad and solemn strains, and vice versa. I do not wish to discourage the practice of music, which has, I believe, a very refining influence; but, at the same time, it is a thing that is very liable to exert an undue fascination on its admirers, and to lead to its being practiced for its own sake and not made subservient to its due purpose. The best singing, for ecclesial purposes, is only to be obtained by a thorough and hearty appreciation of the words, and if the music be suitable, the words will find their expression therein. Hoping to stand with you among those who shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Bro. George F. Lake — 1877

Think Twice

Before you push a brother down,
Think twice,
Before at another's sins you frown,
Think twice.
For who are you in judgment hall
Your brother to the bar to call?
Tomorrow you may slip and fall —
Think twice.

Beware the stinging gibe and quip —
 Think twice,
 Withhold the gossip's idle sneer,
 Think twice.
The Thrust that draws the bitter trap,
For Fortune's favouring gale may veer —
 Think twice.

Is Charity a quickened art?
 Think twice,
And does it thrill both hand and heart?
 Think twice.
The mercy you to others show,
That mercy you some day shall know:
With other's faults be kind, be slow —
 Think twice.

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Judge Not

“Judge not, that ye be not judged, For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged” (Matt. 7:1-2).

“He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13).

These words of our Lord and of the apostle James, come with peculiar force to our minds at the present time, when we are living in expectation of the near approach of that great and terrible day, in which God shall reveal the secrets of men, and bring to light the hidden counsels of the heart. How often the necessity for such words is felt in the experience of nearly every Christian, as bearing upon some occurrences within his own knowledge and under his own observation.

One of the great mental infirmities to which human nature is subject, is that of giving a verdict or judgment upon things which they do not understand. In the language of scripture, they “speak evil of things which they understand not” (2 Pet. 2:12) and there is not wanting in every society a class of persons, censoriously inclined, who have an inveterate propensity to magnify the motes in their neighbours' eyes, into very uncomely, sight-destroying beams. To form some kind of a judgment,

however, upon things which we see and hear, is a natural instinct, and a very useful and important one — for without it, we should be deprived of that tact and sagacity essential for carrying on our affairs, for self-protection and preservation, and for proper discernment between right and wrong; this is the lawful, legitimate use of the faculty; but like all other faculties which we inherit by natural descent from the first Adam, it has been sadly misused and perverted, as the natural consequence of the blindness and perversion of judgment manifested by the father and mother of our race.

Many persons, labouring under this very unhappy inheritance, allow their judgment to revel in the mazes of conjecture, supposition and imagination, concerning “other men's matters,” and finally decide to condemn the apparently real ways and conduct of others, the inmost recesses of whose private affairs, it is impossible for them to fathom — pronouncing judgment upon things which they understand not. Judgment used in this way, is misused and perverted, and is a fruitful source of mischief in any society, but especially among the faithful in Christ who desire to live in peace, love and harmony with each other. There is a natural judgment, and there is a spiritual judgment — or in other words, there is a judgment according to the flesh, and there is a judgment according to the spirit. When we become members of the spiritual family, we must not assert the right to judge our fellows according to fleshly rules, but according to the divine standard, by which all are to be judged. Let no one judge or condemn his brother on account of some infirmity or weakness of character, which causes no special violation of gospel principles or divine commands; the one who does this, is himself the subject of a great infirmity — and, as often happens, is far more culpable, than the object of his censure or condemnation.

It is well understood that all men and all women are compassed with infirmities — otherwise what need have we of a saviour? Our Lord said, “I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32) — that is, he came not to call the righteous in their own estimation, who, in reality were sinners, but those who knew that they were sinners — with honest and good hearts, notwithstanding all the sins which they had committed — sinners, possessing a love for truth, and consequently with unsophisticated understandings — that is, understandings untrammelled by the intricate meshes and webs of the serpent's deceitfulness. Such sinners as these were considered fit receptacles for the truth of God, by which they might be cleansed from all unrighteousness. We see that there is a classification of sins in the scriptures.

The heart that is full of serpentine subtlety and deceitfulness, is not a heart in which the truth can take root and bear fruit unto eternal life — but only the honest and good heart, although it may have been guilty of evil thoughts resulting in evil actions. When repentance comes to such, turning them from dead works to serve the living God, they are prepared to accept any conditions, to make any sacrifice, to give up their whole heart with unselfish devotion to the service of God and His truth; completely divested of selfish objects and feelings — having only one object before their minds, viz. the glory of God; that is, the promotion of his truth, the service of his church; the internal culture of their own hearts — showing the triumphant power of the truth over the flesh, the devil. The apostle John says, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin”, he cannot sin because His seed remaineth in him (1 John 3:9); nevertheless, he says, in another place, “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8); “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17); but there are sins unto death, and there are sins not unto death, for which we may obtain mercy and pardon, if we confess them before the mercy seat. “If any man see his brother sin a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death” (1 John 5:16). Those who have, in truth, been born again and are in reality the children of the kingdom, will not be guilty of heinous offences, or outbreaking sins; but still they may be, and frequently are, guilty of trespassing against the commandments of God in a greater or less degree, according to the differences in their natural organizations and temperaments; but is it permissible for them to continue in this state of trespassing during the whole of their Christian course? Assuredly not; shall we sin because grace abounds? asks Paul — God forbid. The son or daughter, who desires to stand high in the love and favour of their Father, cannot do this. We must not rest satisfied with the idea that we shall escape condemnation along with the wicked; it is not only necessary to abstain from committing sins; there are virtues to cultivate, and graces whereby to adorn the gospel of Christ.

This we learn from the parable of the nobleman who gave to his servants so many talents, to each one so many, which they were expected to increase to at least as much again, during the time of his sojourn in the far country. We are not expected to rest contented with having received the talents or talent; we must work away continually to increase and expand into the fullness of stature, according to the standard of measure. Having ceased to do evil, let us learn to do well; having ceased to manifest the works of the flesh, let us bring forth the fruits of the spirit, which are “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, patience, meekness...” &c (Gal. 5:22). “Put on

therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind...forbearing one another” (Col. 3:12-13) “tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). Oh, may we never rest satisfied, until we have so cultivated our hearts as to possess bowels of mercies. A heart filled with tender mercy and loving kindness is not likely to be severe in judgment upon fellow heirs of the saints’ inheritance. The more our hearts are filled with love toward our brethren for the truth’s sake, the less inclined we shall be to judge them at all; but if at any time it become necessary to exercise the faculty of judgment in any particular case, we shall be careful to judge righteously, according to the written Word, and not according to fleshly standards.

In the Law of Moses it is written, “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment...but in righteousness thou shalt judge thy neighbour” (Lev. 19:15). This is also according to the gospel, for Jesus said “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). It was because of their failure to render righteous judgment that the eyes and ears of the Jewish people became dim and heavy, and powerless to act for the general good; the Lord accused them of heavy transgressions in this respect, when enumerating their iniquities, which brought down His wrath upon them. If, therefore, He spared not the natural branches because of these things, it behooves us to take heed that we come not under the same condemnation; for the gospel rule is, “with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged” (Matt. 7:2). The judicial courts of the kingdom of heaven, being based upon a higher code of laws, will pronounce judgments upon higher principles, than can be attained under the present order of things; for it is written of the supreme judge himself, that “He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But in righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth” (Isa. 11:3-4). Under present arrangements, the sight of the eyes, and hearing of the ears, generally forms the only basis for judgment, owing to the limitation of human wisdom, and being disqualified to discern the hidden springs of action; the thoughts, motives and intents of the heart. May we, therefore, who profess to follow Christ, cease to judge after the flesh, but endeavour to form our judgment upon a more enlightened basis. Indeed, it is very essential that we, who are to be the future judges and rulers of mankind, should seek to build upon the true basis in this respect as well as in all others. Above all things, let us not judge or condemn our brethren upon light, frivolous grounds; but if, as before stated, it become necessary to exercise our judgment in some particular case, we have the rule; “judge not according to the appearance”

(John 7:24), and in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be established.

Let not the brother or sister who is gifted with ten talents, condemn the possessor of only one; and let not the possessor of one talent envy and misjudge the possessor of the ten. The Lord has distributed to all according to His good pleasure, for the furtherance of the gospel; only let all take care that these talents are applied for the given purpose, and not used for selfish objects, that we may receive the blessing in due time, and reap abundantly, if we faint not.

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What Does That Mean?

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
(Psalms 119: 105)

I read an article this week written by a woman traveling at night on donkey back in Palestine. She described seeing a path up ahead of them, which lead into the road, they were on. As she looked down the path, she saw small flickering lights near the ground. She stopped and watched as several men walked up the path. Here is what she said: “We waited until they joined us and found they had small foot lamps. Some had straps tied around the ankle with a small clay lamp attached; others were larger clay lamps carried in the hand. They would swing the lamp a few feet before them to throw a light on the stony, unsafe path.”

I thought of the above verse, as I am sure this is what David had in mind when he said: “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Although she described the path as “narrow, stony and filled with holes, these men kept the light swinging a few feet off the ground just one step ahead of them. Most of us, living in this age of electricity would not be satisfied with a “lamp for our feet.” We want a nice bright flashlight or lantern even when walking on a smooth sidewalk. The further we can see ahead the safer we feel. Yet, brothers and sisters, God does not promise light for miles ahead. None of us know what tomorrow brings. “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” (Proverbs 27:1)

The light God has given us, when used properly, will prevent our feet from stumbling. As we travel down the straight and narrow path during this time of darkness we must focus on just one step at a time, ensuring that we are avoiding all the stumbling blocks we encounter. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” is just as applicable to our walk as it was to David. If we properly use that light to avoid the obstacles that we encounter, then we will safely reach our desired destination. David

a little later in that same Psalm says “I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. (Psa. 119:101) In another Psalm he said: “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies.” (Psalm 18:36)

For those of us who walk in the light, we have this assurance: “He will keep the feet of his saints...” (1Samuel 2:9)

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