

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare. 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	San Angelo, Kitui
FRATERNAL GATHERINGS	Lampasas, Richard, Hye, Tennessee, Hengoe
EXHORTATION.....	Not A Bone Of Him Shall Be Broken..... 163
EXHORTATION.....	The Spirit Of Christ..... 173
As Ye See The Day Approaching.....	179
THOUGHTS: Affairs In The United States - 1881.....	186
The Ten Toes.....	188
Hymn 103.....	190
As A Little Child.....	191
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN.....	192
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

SAN ANGELO, Texas – Sunday Memorial Meeting, 11 am; Bro. Gary Smith, P.O. Box 447, Blackwell, TX, 79506 915-282-3829; email BsmithG@aol.com

Dear brothers and sisters in the One Hope,

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of our bro. Nick Mammone. He has been a contender for the Truth for many years. He will be greatly missed in our small ecclesia.

We have been visited recently by bro. and sis Jimmy Philips, sis. Brenda Britton, bro. Lee Smith and bro and sis. Jimmy Summerville. We enjoyed and spiritually profited from their visits.

In March, we conducted a public Bible Forum. It was held at a San Angelo hotel. Bro. Carwyn Smith, bro. Lee Smith, bro. Todd Smith, and bro. Gary Smith presented the 2 hour session. There were 11 visitors in attendance. The subject was "What did Paul mean when he said, 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'" We had a very enjoyable time.

May we all continue our work and pray that each of us will hear those words, "Come ye blessed of my Father and inherit the Kingdom,..."

Love in the Truth,
Bro. Gary Smith

KITUI, Kenya; Kitui Ecclesia, Bro. David Nzoka; P.O. Box 1 Kitui, Kenya; Memorial Service Sunday 10 AM0.00; Wednesday Evening Bible Study.

Greetings in Christ our Saviour,

It is a long time since we sent news from this part of the world. This doesn't mean that we have been doing nothing as we know that who has nothing to do has the hardest job.

In November 2004, we rejoiced to have company of Bro. Ed Truelove, Bro. Darren Truelove, Sis. Kaye Yuen, Sis. Jeanne Humphreys and Bro. Epa Wekati of Kimukungi Ecclesia. Their visit to us was a spring water in a desert.

On 11th – 16th March – 2005, I, the writer was able to travel to southern Kitui (Ikutha) to preach to interested friends from another fellowship group. I met a congregation of 16 people who were eager to listen to the

Word of God. It is my hope that all those friends will be soon interviewed and be accepted into Berean fellowship.

Any brother or sister who might want to make a visit there can contact Kitui Ecclesia. Your trip to Ikutha would be highly appreciated. Any brother or sister with literature can send to us so that we may forward to them.

Love in Christ,
Bro. David Nzoka,
Kitui Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERINGMar 17–20, 2006
Bro. Stephen Male, 63 Ty Llwyd Parc, Quakers Yard, Treharris, South Wales, United Kingdom, CF46 5LB; Phone: 011 441 44381 3828

Not a Bone Shall Be Broken

**“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart;
and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.”Psalm 34**

THIS Psalm, like all Psalms, is beautiful, comforting, and instructive. It is filled with interesting and thought-provoking statements by the wisdom of the Spirit. If we could fully absorb in ourselves the spirit of this Psalm, fully learn all its wise instructions, and fully conform to all its loving commands—we would be assured of eternal life.

Eternal life, like every other practical activity, is simply a matter of cause and effect, of following certain clear, specific instructions, and getting certain guaranteed results. Truly the mercy and grace of God are very essential ingredients—but these are guaranteed by God's unchangeable promise to those who do the right things.

The key is OBEDIENCE. Do what God says. Take the trouble to find out His will, and do it. It's just that simple. No one will make it who doesn't do this. All the wishing and hoping and praying and good intention in the world is no substitute for simple obedience. And all will make it who do do this. God has promised.

Verse1: "I will bless the Lord at all times:

His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

We have most of the secret right there. If we “continually”—at all times—fill our hearts and minds and lips with praise of God, it will at one stroke eliminate all complaining, all foolish talking, all unhappiness, all self-pity—all the things that make most people unlovable and unloved. These things of the flesh just can't exist together with a heart that is full of praise and blessing of God.

It will also, if it is true praise, make us continually study and meditate on God's Word to find out how to better please Him. Praise that is not associated with careful obedience is no praise or pleasure at all to Him, for it is of the flesh and unsanctified.

Praise—continual, at-all-times, heart-outpouring praise—is the only sensible and practical and mature frame of mind. If we do not find ourselves irresistibly overwhelmed by this frame of mind, we have not yet made true contact with divine things. This lack is not a tragedy—unless we are satisfied with it. It is just a sign that we have not yet thought life through, and studied and prayed and meditated enough. We are too much in the world. We haven't had the great awakening to God that makes all the present seem a meaningless dream.

The one great Reality of life—the one great, bright, glorious, ever-shining FACT—is that God is Love, and that—

"ALL THINGS work together for good to them that love God," and “Great peace have they that love Thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.”

Get this in sharp and clear focus—and everything else fades away. Get this sharp and clear, and continual praise is irresistible.

Verse 2: "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord."

"Boast" here means "grateful exultation, thankful rejoicing, worshipful assurance." My "soul"—my life, my whole being.

Verse 2: “The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad."

No one lives to himself. We affect all with whom we come in contact, either for good or ill. And at that great last day, we shall have to give

account for what our influence has done to others, or has failed to do. If we manifest a consistent life of praise and thanksgiving and rejoicing in God, especially in times of sorrow or trial, "the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad." They will be upbuilt and comforted and encouraged to do likewise. They will see the power of faith. Joy breeds joy, and faith breeds faith—

"I rejoiced greatly that I found thy children walking in Truth" (2 John 4).

The humble are the only intelligent people—those who see themselves, and all mankind, as nothing; and God as everything: those who see all passing things as passing things, even natural life itself. They have no pride, or touchiness, or self-esteem that needs to be built up and catered to. They have no natural ambition or desire. They clearly perceive the emptiness of all lust and worldly pleasure. They are always happy and contented in God. They have no juvenile need for being entertained, or mollified, or pacified.

Verse 3: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together."

"With me" and "together" are the thoughts here. Again, no man liveth unto himself. It is easy, and it is selfishly pleasing, to be wrapped up in ourselves and our own little petty day-to-day concerns. But it is not sensible. It is not godly. It is not healthy. It is not spiritual. It is not even happy, compared to what real happiness can be.

"The hand cannot say to the eye, I have no need of thee."

The children of God are all members of one another. If they are not—if they don't perceive and practice this—then they are not the children of God. It is a glorious communism, a true communism, of which the natural man has no conception: one for all, and all for one. It is God's way. It is God's command. The way of selfish and self-seeking individuality leads only to rejection and death.

The true children of God are as inseparable as Siamese twins—with common organs of life and activity; and if we hope for life, we must enthusiastically adapt ourselves to this basic reality, for God in His wisdom has ordained it that way—

"We ought not to please ourselves. Let every one please his neighbor for his good to edification: for even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom.15).

Verse 4: "I sought the Lord."

We must seek. We must make a real effort. We must be prepared to put time and labor and joyful enthusiasm into the search. We cannot just sit back and take God for granted. He has to be diligently sought for: "Seek,

and ye shall find." There's no excuse: it's guaranteed. It's entirely up to us.

Where do we seek? There is only one place: His Word. There is only one way: with constant, fervent prayer. God says (Jer. 29:13)—

"Ye shall find Me when ye shall search for Me with ALL your heart."

Let us stop, and think, and face this frankly: it has got to be all, or we are just wasting our time. We shall never find God until we seek with all our heart, putting everything else away.

Verse 4: "He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."

Not: "He delivered me from all the things I feared." He doesn't do that, for these things are necessary for our character and development. (Of course that deliverance will come in the end, when the purpose of these things has been accomplished). But here it's—

"He delivered me from all my fears."

—from the fears themselves. This is a far deeper, far greater blessing. This must come from God. We cannot do it ourselves. How often, from one end of Scripture to the other, do we find the command and the assurance, "Fear not"—

"Fear not, Abraham" "Fear not, children of Israel" "Fear not, Daniel" "Fear not, Jacob" "Fear not, Joshua" "Fear not, Mary" "Fear not, Moses" "Fear not, Gideon" "Fear not, Paul"

—and so we find, over and over and over throughout the Scripture, right down to the Revelation—

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be faithful unto death."

Fear is the great enemy of peace. We must conquer fear: and there is a way, and only one—

"There is no fear in love: He that feareth is not made perfect in love: Perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Verse 5: "They looked unto Him, and were lightened."

Here, in almost the same words, is what Paul says to the brethren at Corinth (2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6)—

"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory . . .

“God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

God is light. There is no other light. All else is darkness. Apart from God, apart from His Light, we are merely groping through life in gross darkness: seeing nothing, understanding nothing: mere bats and moles, mere animals in a black tunnel of oblivion—never comprehending, never enjoying, the splendors and beauties that the divine Light reveals.

There is much food for nourishment and meditation in every verse, but we must pass on to consider the more central and outstanding ones—

Verse 7: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

We do not think enough about this aspect of God's providence. It is related to the casting out of fear. The angels are real—much more real and substantial than we are ourselves, for they are immortal and indestructible, while we are but a passing breath that could be snuffed out in a moment. And they are right here on the earth, among us. If we are among the children of God, and we hope and pray that we are, then there is an angel watching over each of us continually, and present at all our assemblies.

We remember that Paul instructed according to the Spirit's wisdom—a beautiful type to the mind of the Spirit, but so annoying to the rebellious mind of the flesh—that sisters should wear a special covering in the assemblies of the saints “because of the angels.” Herein sisters are especially privileged to typify the glorious Bride of Christ in his presence. Their humility is their glory.

Angels have rarely appeared visibly to men, but throughout the record of Scripture there are enough instances of such appearances to give us much comfort and understanding and strength, if we will meditate upon them.

"He shall give His angels charge concerning thee.”

Some, we are reminded, have entertained angels unawares, and we are told to bear this in mind in all our contacts with others. We never know when God is testing us in this respect. Any common incident may be an angelic visitation. It would be tragedy indeed to find at last that we had destroyed our salvation by being unkind and ungracious and ungodly toward an angel of God.

Verse 8: "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"

This is surely the key verse of this Psalm, and one of the key verses of all Scripture. An actual, practical demonstration is infinitely more

convincing and conclusive than the strongest and most logical of arguments. We can prove by reason and Scripture and evidence that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him: but how much more simple and satisfying to “taste and see!”

In spiritual things, the "taste and see" approach has an even greater advantage and importance than in natural things, for the results are divinely controlled, and we are specifically told that only those who do obey will be permitted to understand. Only those who "taste" will be allowed to "see." Jesus said (John 7:17)—

“If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.”

God does not permit mere speculators and intellectualizers to be convinced and converted. He deliberately blinds them, as we are repeatedly told.

The sad part is that very few—either "in the Truth" or out of it—are willing to give the glorious divine promise of “taste and see” a full and fair trial. They have various degrees of interest and desire, but they will not accept the whole program. In natural things it is considered an indication of folly to invest in a major item on which all one's welfare depends, and then not follow—or even bother to learn—the instructions concerning its successful operation.

But in spiritual things, we tend to substitute wishes and hopes and good intentions for careful study and learning of facts. The Bible is a large book. It is a detailed message from God of how to obtain eternal life. It is all necessary, or it would not be there.

It can make us “wise unto salvation.” Studied constantly, it can change us from the natural, ignorant animals we all are to start with, into something useful for God's eternal purpose—something He can joyfully save, and not have to cast sadly away as useless at the last great day of judgment. The rest of this verse says—

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him.”

If we were asked, "Do you trust in God?" we would say, "Yes, of course." But if the questioner said, "Give some evidence, some proof," what have we to offer? James says (2:17-18)—

“Faith without works is dead ... I will show you my faith by my works.”

Paul tells us how men of faith of old time gave proof of their faith. Noah built an ark on dry land, and preached 120 years, to the derision of the wise of the world. Abraham left his comfortable home (and Ur was comfortable in those days), wandered 100 years as a stranger, and offered

up his son. Moses abandoned the wealth and luxury and power of Egypt, and chose affliction with the people of God. Others were mocked, scourged, beaten, imprisoned, stoned, sawn asunder, "not accepting deliverance," all to manifest that they trusted God.

We are not tested to these extremes. But we are tested. We are faced with a choice. The fact that we may ignore it, and fail it, does not mean that the test has not come. We are called upon to demonstrate faith and trust by following the course of spiritual wisdom, which is folly to the natural man. In its simplest terms, we are just called upon to obey. This doesn't just mean being baptized, and breaking bread, and going to the meetings. It is far more than that—far more searching. The commands of God are many, and have a direct bearing on every act and decision of our lives. It must be that way, for their whole purpose is to transform our mind and nature and character: they must therefore affect our every act.

At every step, we must make the conscious decision between the mind of God as revealed in the Scriptures, and the mind of the flesh as we naturally find it in our own thoughts and desires. This is the only way godly character can be built up.

Whatever action is taken, whatever decision is made, that is not consciously motivated by a scripturally-enlightened desire to please God, is sin, for it is of the natural flesh. "Taste and see" means try God's way. Try God's way in everything as a complete pattern of life. Put away all the world's selfish, fleshly, God-ignoring "common sense" rules and maxims, and try the Spirit's way—learned by constant, loving, prayerful study of the Word.

We then just may make the marvelous, unearthly discovery that we had never really lived at all before.

Verse 11: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me:

I will teach you the fear of the Lord."

It is something that has to be learned, and it is a lifetime's work to learn it—with ever-increasing depth and understanding. The first instruction is—

Verse 13: "Keep thy tongue from evil."

Keep thy tongue. The Spirit saith (Proverbs 10:19)—

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."

Even to the dim eye of common sense, this is obvious. Being what we are—weak creatures of flesh—it is inevitable that if we talk a lot, much is bound to be natural and of the flesh, and therefore sin. The Scriptures

emphasize nothing more strongly than the absolute necessity of rigidly guarding the tongue, if we hope for life—

"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

If we find ourselves talking about others, judging and criticizing and condemning others, complaining, finding fault, gossiping about what others do and don't do, should do and shouldn't do, then let us be moved with a terrible fear at our fleshly folly in not bridling our tongue, and seek by the power and help of God to change our ways before it is too late.

"Love believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, thinketh no evil, suffereth long, and is kind."

Truly error must be faced, wrong-doing must be confronted, sound fellowship must be maintained. Serious matters cannot faithfully be ignored. But in this present, sad, stumbling, dark vale of tears, love must of necessity, in our day to day relationships, cover a vast multitude of sins.

Verse 18: "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart: and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

A broken heart and a contrite spirit. These are essential qualifications for salvation, so it is urgent that we know what is involved, and how it is accomplished. A "broken heart" is something that must be prepared and offered to God in sacrifice—

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psa. 51:17).

A broken heart is not primarily the result of outward affliction and sorrow, though such things can greatly contribute to its development, and therefore Paul says (Acts 14:22)—

"We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God."

Even of Jesus it is said (Heb. 5:8)—

"He learned obedience by the things which he suffered."

Jeremiah declares (17:9)—

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

This is all of us, in our natural, animal state—

"In me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth no good thing."

The deceitfulness of the heart is principally self-deceit, leading us to think we are other than we really are—that salvation is an easy thing we

can drift into, instead of agonizing for—that we can serve both God and Mammon—

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

"When ye have done all, say, We are unprofitable servants" (Luke 17:10).

What hope then have we if we haven't done all—if we haven't made the utmost effort to serve and obey?—

"If the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18).

If we are more concerned with criticizing others than criticizing ourselves, we are being deceived by our wicked heart. The more enlightened and concerned we are about examining and criticizing ourselves, the more we face and recognize our own shortcomings, then the more kind and charitable we shall be toward others, knowing that—

"With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matt. 7:2).

A broken and a contrite spirit are developed by searching self-examination by the light of God's Word. Without the light of the Word, the search is meaningless, however strenuous and sincere and well-meaning, for then it is just darkness examining darkness. This is the case with all the world's self-examining and self-analyses, leading to nothing but further confusion. There is only one Light.

The broken heart and contrite spirit that God requires is the repudiation of the foolish will and desires of the flesh, and complete submission to the beauty and wisdom of the will of God—

"Thy will, not mine, be done."

Verse 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

We are assured (Lam. 3:32-33)—

"The Lord doth not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men: Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies."

That is, He has no pleasure in, nor desire for, the affliction of men. It is simply a necessary means to a glorious end, in the development of a broken and purified heart. If we have afflictions, we can be sure they are of a loving necessity, and they are probably because our character needs the lesson. Our wisdom is to submit in thanksgiving, and to try to learn the lesson they teach—

"He subjected Creation to vanity, not willingly, but in hope" (Rm. 8:20).

Verse 20: "He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken."

The significance of no broken bones is that affliction is so controlled that there is no permanent injury or deformation. We remember that under the Law, whenever in chastisement there was any permanent injury to a bond-servant, the owner had to let him go free, even for just a broken tooth—for he had transgressed the limits of permitted chastisement.

Again under the Law, not a bone of the Passover lamb must be broken (Exodus 12:46), and these two passages in Exodus and Psalms find their spiritual fulfillment in John 19:33-36—

"When they came to Jesus, they brake not his legs . . . That the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken."

This Psalm, therefore, has led us—as all Psalms do, as all the Scriptures do—to the sinless Son of God; the spotless Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the perfect—the only perfect—embodiment of the broken heart and contrite spirit that is so precious in the sight of God—

"Not a bone of him shall be broken . . ."

"Not a grain of corn (of the true wheat—the true bread) shall be lost."

"This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

"We are members of his Body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

And again the thought comes around—

"The Body is One, and hath many members, and all the members, being many, are One Body. The foot cannot say, I am not of the Body:"

—what good, to itself or anyone, is an amputated foot?

"The ear cannot say, I am not of the Body." —what good is an amputated ear?

"The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee."

In God's wisdom, every member needs every other: and the Body needs every member.

"The members should have the same care one for another. Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. Ye are the Body of Christ."

"NOT A BONE OF HIM SHALL BE BROKEN."

Bro. G.V. Growcott

The Spirit of Christ

“He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.” (John 19:17-18 ESV)

The apostle John’s detail that the place of the crucifixion was called in Aramaic Golgotha implies that there is a Hebrew context, a Hebrew idea, which he wishes to convey that is associated with the events described. The Hebrew *Gulgoleth* is from *Galal* – to roll, as round from which the idea of a cranium or skull is derived. This place of the skull tradition says was the depository of Goliath’s (Hebrew Exile) head, the champion of “sin in the flesh.” It was to this place that Yahweh’s beloved came bearing sins’ reproach as an exile outside Jerusalem to bruise the serpent’s head a fatal bruising. *Gulgoleth* also in signifying a skull relates to “a head,” in enumeration of persons – a poll i.e. “every man.”

This latter signification in the context of the Hebrew scriptures has two examples, which bear upon John’s description of events connected with Golgotha (Hebrew *Gulgoleth*). Both incidents have to do with a collection. “This is the thing which Yahweh commanded. Gather of it (the manna) every man according to his eating, an omer for every man (Hebrew By the poll or head – *Gulgoleth*)...And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete (measure) it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” (Exodus 16:16-18) So the original context of “*gulgoleth*” had to do with the manna, men went out to gather it “for every man”. Christ said “I am the bread of life he that eateth me shall live by me.” John in relating to us the Hebrew name of the place where Christ was crucified, immediately states that with Him two others were crucified (in all probability one Jew and one Gentile) Jesus between them. “He was numbered with the transgressors.” “Yahweh laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” by His wearing of our condemned defiled nature; by the condemnation of sin in the flesh, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all, abrogated the law of condemnation for Himself and all that shall believe and obey Him.

Jesus was related to those two men by nature. He shared their condemnation though only one correctly discerned that He had “done nothing amiss,” to deserve such a death. Both men could have been related to Him in spirit. Only one however, through the shame and agony was able to stop thinking about his own circumstances with its associated cursing and swearing directed at their executioners, to focus on his extraordinary companion who said, “Father, forgive them; for they know

not what they do;” to see that Jesus “by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” (Hebrews 2:9)

The other collection that has bearing upon the context of Golgotha (Hebrew *Gulgoleth*) is in Exodus 38:26. This was the compulsory levy of the half shekel (silver) of the sanctuary. “A *bekah* for every man (Hebrew Poll or head i.e. Golgotha) half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for everyone that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward. This silver compulsory collection as “a ransom” for each and every soul of the men over the age of twenty was “unto the Lord.” It was to be “a memorial unto the children of Israel, to make an atonement,” for their souls. (Exodus 30:11-16) This silver was a ransom for their souls because it was to bring to Israel’s remembrance the accomplishment of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It was “an atonement for their souls,” because the memory of Yahweh’s grace should have developed in them a purifying, purging influence, creating in them a right spirit (Psalm 51) by which Yahweh would impute unto them righteousness. This internal covering was to enable Israel to see how they might be numbered among Yahweh *Elohim*. Erected typically in there midst in the tabernacle of God manifestation. The silver used to make the sockets for the tabernacle’s boards, its capitals, hooks and struts, which helped to lift up and exalt the linen screen of Yahweh’s righteousness in conjunction with the Christ gates. Yahweh’s redemption – the means of deliverance from certain death, should have created in Israel a spirit, so motivated by God’s grace that it becomes the way by which the principles of Yahweh’s righteousness can be lifted up or in the language of Paul, “crucified with Christ.”

The half shekel of silver spoke of every man’s need of redemption – deliverance from death. This need encompassed by Yahweh’s plan the Lord Jesus, who at Golgotha, “was numbered with the transgressors” bore our sins in His own body of sin’s flesh. He suffered the required sacrificial cleansing from the defilement of sin’s flesh, that the cleansing and purifying gained thereby might cover all that become part of Him. One of the thieves “crucified with Christ,” understood Yahweh’s deliverance did not embrace Christ using His power to “come down from the cross,” by that means saving Himself and helping those who hung beside Him. The thief’s faith believed the principles of Yahweh’s righteousness, his own personal condemnation, need of deliverance and conviction that in the dying man beside him was Yahweh’s salvation. This conviction created in him a remarkable spirit, which moved him through great suffering to identify with God’s work in Christ.

The knowledge of Yahweh’s grace ought to move us, to create in us the spirit of Christ, to motivate us in giving ourselves to the Lord. This

morning after we have partaken the emblems of God's love, we shall very appropriately take up our free will offering. This morning it is a special collection, for our ecclesia has determined that twice yearly we should take up an offering unto Yahweh to relieve the poor saints of Kenya. What should be the spirit, which motivates us in contributing to this collection? Ten times in II Corinthians 8 and 9 Paul refers to the grace of God in the context of motivating the brethren and sisters of the ecclesias of Achaia to give generously to a fund that would relieve the poor saints of Jerusalem. Ten times, that is two times five—the grace of God to both Jew and Gentile, available “for every man,” who would respond—the principle of Golgotha. In the days of the apostle Paul two different motive-spirits for life in the Truth were present among the believers. One was law keeping and the other “the law of grace.” Paul's earnest hope was that the exhibition of the Gentile brethren and sisters' generosity would silence those, whose motivation was the keeping of the Mosaic Law as necessary for salvation. Paul hoped the Jewish brethren of the Jerusalem ecclesia would be so taken by the spirit of giving of the Gentiles that they would see beyond the law to the secret of God's righteousness. A motivating spirit, which constituted those who possessed it “the house of God,” the Yahweh Elohim.

In motivating the ecclesias of Achaia Paul recounts the extraordinary response of the Macedonians. He attributed that response to the grace of God in the Macedonian ecclesias. That grace was manifested in their generosity of spirit, which moved them at a time of great personal suffering to identify in a practical way with God's work in Christ. Paul by his own eyewitness account (II Corinthians 7:5) tells, “How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.” (II Corinthians 8:2)

We are informed in Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians that the great trial of affliction the Macedonian ecclesias were experiencing were persecution from the Jews and Gentiles. (I Thessalonians 2:14-15 & 3:4; II Thessalonians 1:4) Not only this trial but Paul tells the ecclesias of Achaia that the Macedonian brethren and sisters were also suffering “deep poverty.” Historians tell us that Macedonia had suffered the deprivations of a severe drought just a few years before Paul's writing of his second Epistle to the Corinthians. Further more, the Macedonian metal mines, one of the chief sources of revenue for the region had been confiscated by the Romans. Beyond this the Romans had also at the same time imposed a grievous taxation on the area of Macedonia. Therefore, at the time when the Macedonians gave for the poor Jewish saints at Jerusalem they themselves were experiencing the deepest of poverty. They could have been so taken by their own personal suffering and circumstances to lose

sight of God's work in Christ and though they did not have anything to give because of their “deep poverty,” yet they manifested “abundant joy!”

The English Standard Version (ESV) translates verse two as “for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.”

Paul continues to show that the spiritual efficacy of this collection lay in the nature of its giving. “For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means of their own free will.” (Verse 3 ESV) They gave voluntarily, without the compulsion of command and gave spontaneously of themselves. Not just to relieve poor saints, but to manifest the spirit of grace as the motive, transforming power in the life of disciples who appreciate what Christ has done for them.

“Simon (hearing) I have somewhat to say to you.” And he answered, “Say it, Teacher.”

“A certain money-lender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarie, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?”

Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt...Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many are forgiven – for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.” (Luke 7:40-47)

The difference between these two debtors was to illustrate their common need. One owed ten times what the other owed, i.e. two times five – the desperate need of God's grace to Jew and Gentile “for every man” – the principle of Golgotha. Neither could pay, therefore there was an equal need. All of the men over twenty had to pay the half shekel to the sanctuary, even men like Simon. Simon had little to be forgiven because that was his estimation of self. The woman had a large debt “frankly (Greek Grace) forgiven.” She understood her position as the thief on the cross but believed with all her heart in God's work of redemption in Christ. Her faith saved her. (Luke 7:50) The nature of her love is the response of such a faith, which manifested itself in her practical ministration to Christ in washing His feet with tears of thankfulness then wiping those feet with her hair, typical of the multitudinous Christ.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” (Matthew 25:35-36)

With this class “the blessed of the Father,” it was not a question of awareness of their need for forgiveness, but rather the spontaneous

response of their giving of themselves voluntarily to Christ made them unaware of doing God's will, it was their "delight," as it had been Christ's. (Psalm 40:8)

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brothers, you did it to Me." (Matthew 25: 40)

"Begging us earnestly," says Paul of the Macedonian brethren and sisters, "for the favour of taking part in the relief of the saints." (II Corinthians 8:4 ESV)

The Macedonian saints did not want to be asked but begged and begged the apostle to have the favour of participation in those things that might bring relief to the saints.

"And this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us." (Verse 5 ESV)

What was the secret of the Macedonian joy in generously giving while suffering trial of persecution and poverty? To view participation in the relief of the saints as God's grace towards them? They "first" gave themselves to the Lord. To do this under trial is a great act of faith and speaks of their personal dedication to Christ. Their "much love" exhibited in the spontaneity of their giving illustrates the nature of the personal relationship they had diligently formed with Christ. It was this same gracious spirit, which Paul wished to see formed in the Corinthians. (Verses 6-7) A spirit, which needed not to be commanded, but a love shown to be genuine by what one does for Christ's sake. The earnestness of the Macedonians was indeed an example by which the ecclesias of Achaia could prove their love, but the spirit, which was to permeate all, was that of Christ.

"For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich." (II Corinthians 8:9)

"For our sakes He became poor." "He made Himself nothing, taking the form of a bondservant...He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

The cross was approximately twice the height of an ordinary man. Strong nails were driven through the hands and the feet of the naked victims. They usually lived about twelve hours, but sometimes much longer. Fever soon set in and induced in the victims a burning thirst. The increasing inflammation of the wounds in the back, hands and feet, the congestion of blood in the head, lungs and heart, the stiffness in the limbs caused by the unnatural position of the body, all united to make the punishment complete.

"So that you by His poverty might become rich."

"While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

"Who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted."

"Who gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us from the present evil age."

"Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness."

The Christ spirit of selfless giving for others took hold of Paul's mind. It became the motivating force of his life, the secret of how he was able to give himself unto the Lord. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me."

In II Corinthians 8:9 Paul is not giving an exposition on the atonement, but rather he is referring to the spirit, which enabled reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, purification and cleansing to be achieved. Of the means by which Christ was able to participate in the cleansing benefits of His sacrificial death so as to incorporate His brethren and sisters into His own personal victory and salvation. The spirit of selfless giving for others, because "He loved them to the end.." (John 13:1)

This morning we are called to take up this spirit first in our determination to give our lives anew to the Lord and then in our giving for the need of others. In learning how to give for the need of others we take up the spirit of Christ. What is the nature of that spirit personally appreciated, as Paul so movingly expresses in regard to his own life? (Galatians 2:20) The two debtors of Christ's parable were both forgiven what neither could pay. What Christ has done for you and I cannot be repaid. In the emblems of God's love before us is the giving that cannot be recompensed. This is the spirit of giving for others. "Let this mind (or spirit) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 2:5)

This is how Paul saw this spirit of giving. The collection of money he relates to the offering of Christ. He elevates the liberality, the grace of others, their thoughtfulness and their collection of money for the poor saints to the spirit of Christ giving Himself for others. It is for this reason that he commands that the collections for the poor saints were to be taken up on the first day of the week, in association with their coming together to break bread in remembrance of Christ. (I Corinthians 16:1-2; Acts 20:7) In regard to the collection Brother Roberts writes, "Let it follow close on the breaking of bread. Thus the giving of our free-will offerings will be sanctified as part of our service." If the writer may be so bold to act as

“the presiding brother” and “invite” the brethren and sisters of the Berean ecclesias, “in a dignified and loving way, to unite their free-will offerings for the service of the truth.” “For this,” says Brother Roberts, “imparts grace and profit to an important act of service.” (The Ecclesial Guide nos. 11-14 Mode of Conducting the Meetings)

We have great comfort this morning to think that after our free-will offering is taken up it is placed beside the emblems of God’s love. Just as the thief was placed beside Christ and was so transformed by his witness of the spirit of His giving. Our offering this morning should be motivated by that same spirit wherewith, He Who was rich for our sakes became poor. Placed beside the emblems of God’s love in Christ, it is sanctified by that same spirit of giving for the needs of others. “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!”

Hymn 103

**Hail to the Lord’s Anointed!
Great David’s greater son;**

Luke 1:11 – “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

**Hail! in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun.**

When the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, then will be the time He comes to reign on earth.

**He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free;**

Justice will be meted out to break those who oppress their fellow man and free the captive who is worthy to be freed.

**To take away transgression,
To rule in equity.**

Psalms 51:13 – “Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”

Prov.1:3 – “To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity.”

**He comes with succour speedy,
To those who suffer wrong;**

**To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong;**

1 Chron 16:21,25 – “He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea he reproveth kings for their sake... For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.”

**To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turn to light,
Who languishing and dying,
Are perishing from sight.**

1 Chron 16:9 – “Sing unto Him, sing psalms unto Him, talk ye of all His wondrous works.”

**Through changing generations,
With justice, mercy, truth,
While stars maintain their stations,
And moons renew their youth,**

Life continues as it was ordained in nature, but generations have come and gone who look and wait, either sleeping in the dust or living, waiting for His coming.

**He shall come down like showers,
Upon the Fruitful earth,**

Oh! The refreshing showers on the dry and thirsty ground, giving life and displaying the rainbow as the fulfilling of His promise to the faithful followers of His word.

**And love, Joy, Hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth.
Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring:**

**All nations shall adore him,
His praise, all nations sing,**

Rev. 21:26 “And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.”

Not only will it be a house of prayer for all nations but the homage and offerings will be presented to the King and Priest.

**O’er every foe victorious,
He on His throne shall rest,
From age to age more glorious,
All-blessing and all-blest.**

Psalm 132:18 “His enemies will I clothe with shame: but upon Himself shall His crown flourish.”

As Ye See the Day Approaching



“And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten governments, which have not yet received kingdom; but they receive authority as kings one hour with the beast. These have one purpose, and they shall deliver their power and authority to the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall conquer them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings and those with him, called, chosen and faithful. And he said to me, The waters which thou sawest, where the harlot is sitting, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the harlot, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and shall burn her with fire. For the Deity hath given into their hearts to execute his will, and to perform one purpose, and to deliver their kingdom to the beast, until the predictions of the Deity have been fulfilled. And the woman

which thou sawest, is that Great City having dominion over the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:12-18 – Translation by John Thomas)

Pope John Paul II died April 2, 2005 at age 84. He was born in Wadowice, Poland in 1920 and was named Karol Jozef Wojtyla. He was elected Pope in 1978 and had the third longest papacy in the history of the Roman Catholic Church – a reign of 26 years. He was the first non-Italian Pope since Adrian VI (1522-1523). He traveled more than any other Pope in history and visited 129 countries and spoke eight different languages. He was a very strict traditionalist in matters of Church doctrine, disappointing the more liberal thinkers in the church, such as in North America. He claims to have “canonized” (What blasphemy and absurdity!) 482 “saints”! He also claims to have “beatified” (whatever that is supposed to mean) 1,338 people – more than all of his predecessors combined! How thankful we should be as brethren and sisters of Christ to have the Truth as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. They, alone, are able to make us wise unto salvation. We know that “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17) We know that a saint is one sanctified by the Word of God, heartily believed and obeyed. And we have each been called to be saints in Christ Jesus, needing no acknowledgement from any Pope! How can one be audacious and presumptuous enough to take upon them the right to supposedly “canonize” a person, even if such a thing were possible?

We write on this subject of the Papacy this month, because it was so openly and prominently staged before the whole world. There are 1.1 billion Roman Catholics on the earth, fully one sixth of the planet’s population! As I watched images of the spectacle on CNN of St. Peter’s Square, I saw the sea of multitudes all enthralled and concerned and praying with rosaries in hand. People were there from many, many different nations. Heads of state were there at the funeral and all concerned and acknowledging the death of the prior Pope and also the installment of the new one, after his election. Thoughts passed through my mind, as I am quite sure they did in the minds of many other brethren and sisters, viewing these same images, that the masses are truly drunk on the intoxicating wine of the Roman harlot! If that 1.1 billion are intoxicated, how terribly dark the planet is, in a spiritual sense, when we think of the names and denominations and other abominations of the rest of professing Christendom. If those who profess Christ, but in actuality do not either know him or his Father are in darkness: how gross must be the darkness out among the raw, idolatrous paganism and atheism everywhere extant in the earth? Truly, that darkness is so intense, that it can be felt by all

having eyes to see and ears to hear, in a spiritual sense. How visibly and palpably is this fact driven home to us, living under the Sixth Vial! How long this Sixth Vial has been outpouring! How much more can it possibly pour out before the return of our master from heaven? Surely, not much longer, as we see the Euphratian power all but dried up to prepare the way for the kings of a son's risings!

Of course, the Papacy is the height of blasphemy. Remember what is written in Daniel Chapter seven of the little horn with eyes and a mouth that would speak very great things? That horn is associated with the Fourth Beast of Daniel. We quote that passage of scripture here, because it tells so much of that terrible one (holding the office of the Papacy). Note the three horns which fall before the one whose look is more stout than his fellows. Remember that those three horns which fell were the three Papal States? Remember that they were lost to the Papacy when Garibaldi in 1870 wrested them from Papal authority in his campaign on the Italian peninsula?

“Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; And of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” (Dan 7:19-27)

The point of this article is to show just how far from the light of scripture the Catholic Church has wandered. The very occupant of the office is automatically The Man of Sin, The Lawless One, The Antichrist

and The Son of Perdition. The Pope claims to be “Vicar of the Son of God”. In Latin that is written: “Vicarius Filii Dei” It is very interesting that the numerical equivalent of that title in Latin is 666. When he signs a document, he signs it “Dux Cleri” Which is interpreted “High or Chief Priest”. This, also, has a numerical equivalent of 666. It is also of importance that from the second century A.D. onwards, the interpretation “Lateinos” has been given for the Latin power because the numerical equivalent adds to 666. This identification was given by Irenaeus, the disciple of Polycarp (born A.D. 70) who was contemporary with the apostle John. The Hebrew for this same power is “Romiith” and has the numerical equivalent of 666. These facts are a fulfillment of Rev. 13:18:

“Here is wisdom. Let him that hath the understanding, count the number of the Beast, for it is a man's number, and his number is Six Hundred and Sixty-six.” (The translation of Rev. 13:18 is from John Thomas.)

The doctrine of the Immortality of the soul is the lie, bringing “strong delusion, blindness and confusion upon the masses who know not God. The apostle John in his first epistle in chapter four gives us an absolute and unvarying formula so that we will not be deceived by the spirit of Antichrist which is in the world.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” (1 John 4:1-6)

The doctrine of the Trinity is another of the early evidences of the “spirit of Antichrist” which was well developed among the deceived in the outer darkness. Men truly love darkness, rather than light. They will not come to the Scriptures that they might have the true light, because their deeds are evil. Let us take heed to ourselves that we lose not that true light which has shined into our hearts, giving us Gladness, joy and hope of the life which Jesus shall bring to those who will prove to have been called, chosen and faithful.

Below is a listing of very clearly documented corruptions and departures from Yahweh's Holy Word of Truth found in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

Forty-Eight Steps Down

1. AD 300 - Prayers for the dead
2. AD 300 - Making the sign of the cross
3. AD 320 - Wax candles
4. AD 375 - Veneration of angels and dead saints
5. AD 375 - The use of images
6. AD 394 - The Mass as a daily celebration
7. AD 431 - Beginning of exaltation of Mary: the term "Mother of God" first applied to her by council of Ephesus
8. AD 500 - Priests begin to dress differently than laymen
9. AD 526 - Extreme unction
10. AD 593 - Doctrine of Purgatory is established by Gregory I
11. AD 600 - Latin language used in prayer and worship is commanded by Gregory I
12. AD 600 - Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints and angels
13. AD 607 - Title of Pope (bishop of the universe) given to Boniface III by emperor
14. AD 709 - Kissing of Pope's foot. Begins with Pope Constantine
15. AD 750 - Temporal power of the Popes is conferred by Pepin, King of the Franks
16. AD 786 - Worship of the cross, images and relics is now officially authorized
17. AD 850 - Holy water (mixed with a pinch of salt and blessed by a priest) comes into use
18. AD 890 - Worship of St. Joseph
19. AD 927 - The College of Cardinals is established
20. AD 965 - Baptism of bells is instituted by Pope John XIII
21. AD 995 - The canonization of dead saints is first done by Pope John the XV
22. AD 998 - Fasting on Fridays and on "Lent" begins
23. AD 1050 - The Mass has gradually developed into a "sacrifice" and attendance is made obligatory
24. AD 1079 - The celibacy of the priesthood is required by Pope Gregory II (Hildebrand)
25. AD 1090 - The rosary, a mechanical praying with beads, is invented by Peter the Hermit
26. AD 1184 - The Inquisition, in operation for centuries, is now made official by the Council of Verona
27. AD 1190 - The sale of indulgences begins
28. AD 1215 - The error of Transubstantiation is proclaimed by Pope Innocent III as power to bring down God out of heaven into a cup and wafer
29. AD 1215 - Auricular confession of sins to a priest, instead of to God, is instituted by Pope Innocent
30. AD 1220 - The adoration of the wafer (Host) is decreed by Pope Honorius III
31. AD 1229 - Laymen are officially forbidden to have or read the Bible – it is placed On the "Index of Forbidden Books" by the Council of Valencia
32. AD 1251 - Protection by a piece of cloth, the scapular is invented by Simon Stock, a British monk
33. AD 1414 - Laymen are forbidden to drink the cup at Communion, by order of the Council of Constance
34. AD 1439 - Purgatory is proclaimed as a dogma by the Council of Florence
35. AD 1439 - The doctrine of Seven Sacraments is affirmed on pain of mortal sin
36. AD 1508 - The first part of the "Ave Maria" saying is made official
37. AD 1534 - The Jesuit order is founded by Ignatius Loyola
38. AD 1545 - Tradition (the sayings of the popes and councils) is declared to be equal in Authority with the Bible, by the Council of Trent
39. AD 1546 - The Apocryphal books are added to the Bible by the Council of Trent
40. AD 1560 - The Creed of Pope Pius IV is imposed as the official creed of the Church
41. AD 1593 - The last part of the "Ave Maria" has been prepared and is required of the Faithful by Pope Sixtus V
42. AD 1854 - The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary is proclaimed by Pope Pius IX
43. AD 1864 - The "Syllabus of Errors" is proclaimed by Pope Pius X and ratified by the First Vatican Council as the truth of God. (It condemns freedom of Religion, speech, press and all scientific discoveries that have not been approved by the Church.)
44. AD 1864 - The temporal authority of the Pope over all rulers is officially reaffirmed
45. AD 1870 - The absolute infallibility of the Pope in all matters of faith and morals is Proclaimed by Vatican I
46. AD 1930 - Public schools are condemned by Pope Pius XI

47. AD 1950 - The assumption of the Virgin Mary (bodily ascension into heaven shortly after her death) is proclaimed by Pope Pius XII

48. AD 1965 - Mary is proclaimed the Mother of God, by Pope Paul VI

Do we not, in considering what is listed above, see how Yahweh's Holy Word, the Bible, is surely being fulfilled? Consider these passages of Scripture that clearly set before us what would happen during the absence of Christ from the earth.

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2 Thess. 2:1-12)

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” (2 Tim. 3:13)

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30)

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power

thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.” (2Tim 3:1-8)

Let us awake to righteousness and sin not, knowing that the day is at hand when our master shall appear to perform the mighty work before him. Brethren and Sisters, may we have part with him in executing the judgments written.

“Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.” (Psalm 149:1-9)

Bro. David VanPelt

Affairs in the United States - 1881

Brother H. W. Hudson, of Plymouth, Mich., writes: “We are certainly on the eve of mighty events. The political aerial is in much perplexity (Luke 21:25), and men are looking after the things that are coming on this habitable (verse 26) for the powers of the (Political) heavens are greatly agitated.

On this side the Atlantic we see no good, but evil coming upon the devoted head of the high ruling authorities of this great republic: the death of its President is, at this time, hourly expected, which portends grave complications in the future of this Government (for there is no peace to the wicked saith ELOAH—Isaiah 57:21). The people have been congratulating themselves, and even boasting, in their escape from assassination turmoils; such as exists in the old world; but alas! how soon is its expectations blasted. This country has been in great prosperity up to the assassination of its chief magistrate, (President Lincoln) now all is gloom and great dependency.

There is no doubt cause for its present troubles; infidelity here is rampant. Ingersoll continues to walk through the land making ridicule of

the Bible and divine things to its people: making sport of Jesus Christ, and the God of the Bible. How far the high-ruling authorities at Washington have endorsed Ingersoll, I am not able to say; but that they have largely partook of his dainties, is no doubt quite true. Now, dear brother, if God broke up “his nation” for practically doing the same thing, is it to be supposed for one moment that he would let go unchastised this great nation? By no means. Judgments are doubtless to fall with great severity both now and “pre-eminently” in the hour of judgment upon this nation.

It is an exceedingly hard lesson for peoples and nations to learn, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and gives it to whomsoever he will (Dan. 4:25); but it must be learned at all hazards, for it is written, “Be still and know that I am ELOHIM: I will be exalted over the nations, I will be exalted over the earth” (Psalm 46:10), Now, in conclusion, dear brother, I would say ‘Let us be diligent in every good work, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.’ (II Tim. 2:3).”

Writing again later, brother Hudson says:—“Since I last wrote you, things have gone rapidly from bad to worse; this President still lives, but with little hope of recovery. The whole American people are greatly bowed down; there is a terrible condition of things throughout the whole country. The hot weather is unprecedented, the sun has been blazing at the earth for three months, and, after destroying the crops of a continent, is now apparently determined to burn up what is left of it. Along the coast of New England they are burning gas at mid-day.

Half of Michigan is being swept by forest fires, which spare neither villages, crops, nor human lives; 500 lives said to be lost in one county, and thousands of people made homeless refugees. Canada is in a blaze through all her primeval forests; the lakes are covered by a veil of smoke that makes navigation dangerous and disastrous. The east too, is parched everywhere, and burning somewhere, and the flames of burning trees and crops sweep down to the ocean on the New Jersey coast. There is no rest for man under the broiling sun, and insanity and suicide has become epidemic, as if the gods wishing to destroy the race, were first making mad. Add to this the general disquiet in other countries, such as wars and rumours of wars in Eastern Europe. Surely it is true there is no peace to the wicked saith the ETERNAL ELOAH (Isaiah 57:21.)

Surely we are living contemporary with the predictions made by Christ in Luke 21:25, 26. These are the great signs of the times immediately preceding the announcing that Christ has arrived. There is no doubt but the Spirit foresaw what would attain at the end of Gentile times, and has, therefore, caused to be spoken by Christ, in the memorable prophecy of mount Olivet in the 21st of Luke, from the 25th verse to the end of the

chapter. What would be the exact condition of things? Now, what do we see before us to-day in the sun, moon, and stars of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the world, but precisely what we do see, viz., upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and waves (of human society) in an uproarious state, or condition; look, for instance, into the heaven of the great American Republic, and behold the great perplexity in the sun, moon, and stars of its high ruling authorities; is it not significant of what is foretold? Surely it is. I have no doubt but the hand of Omnipotence is largely connected with this whole thing. I learn today that the great fire in this State has left 16,000 persons houseless and homeless, and the greatest amount of suffering prevails, hundreds and thousands of families are in groups around where their homes once existed, with no shelter but the skies over them. The people are hurrying to their relief as fast as possible, but the greatest suffering prevails.

Now, Christ says ‘upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.’ The above is a fair illustration of the general disquiet existing in this section of the Habitable. Verse 27 is yet in the future, but verse 28 is applicable now. ‘Indeed, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all be fulfilled; heaven and earth (of the body politic of the world) shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.’ The generation also contemporary with verse 5 to 23 did not pass away till all was fulfilled. Now comes the 34th verse, which is strictly applicable to us. Christ continues, ‘Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts (or affections) be overtaxed with the cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares, for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch, ye, therefore, and pray always, in order that ye may stand before the Son of Man.’”

The Ten Toes

J.J.H. asks: “Is it necessary to find five toes on each of the legs of the political image, eastern and western; and can they now be identified in the constitution of Europe”?

ANSWER—There do not exist the grounds of absolute certainty on this point. The fact that the fourth beast, in its latter-day papal phase, possesses ten horns at the crisis of its destruction, has naturally been interpreted to coincide with the image symbol which undoubtedly covers the same crisis. The ten horns and ten toes being identical, it has been concluded that the ten horns would be found so distributed east and west as to harmonise with the fitness of the image symbol, and give five toes to each foot.

It is a beautiful idea, but if we push it too far, it will only be to our confusion. It is pushing an idea too far to push it beyond its general intended significance. The general significance of the image symbol is a

succession of empires represented by the various metals. These metals all incorporate in one human figure is appropriate in view of the fact that they are but changes in the same system of human power: but when we come to the details of the human figure, we may err if we put a meaning upon them not expressly intimated. For example, there are the ten fingers of the Medo-Persian “breast and arms,” of silver. It would be sheer speculation to suggest a meaning to them. The same remark would hold good about the eyes, nose and mouth of the Babylonian head of gold, and with other things. The clay and iron feet and toes are doubtless of special interest as representing the latter-day phase of the kingdom of men: still it is unsafe to do more in a positive way than to take them generally as exhibiting the weakened and divided state of the political system of the world in the latter days.

It is the coincidence of the ten horns (that make war with the Lamb) with these ten toes in point of number that has led to the suggestion that the minor powers of Europe would be found at last grouped in two sections of five each, east and west, corresponding with the Greek and Latin sections into which the iron or Roman empire was divided. It is a beautiful suggestion, and probable, but it fails of absolute certainty: that is, the grounds on which it is advanced do not yield a demonstration.

We have no doubt this line of remark will to some appear to savour of absolute incompetence. We shall endure the unfavourable thought, preferring always to feel our feet on the rock before we try to stand. The stones for the feet in this case are a little shaky on various other points which we need not particularly mention. There is no doubt about the general meaning of the image; there is no doubt about the legs and feet standing for the Roman (ancient and modern) phase of political Europe; there is no doubt about the existence of the feet and toes, or of the arrival of the era for the descent of the destroying stone: but that an exact geographical distribution of power is shadowed in the feet and toes of the image, though a beautiful thought, is not certain enough to justify a wise man in making it a matter of positive expectancy.

Bro. Robert Roberts

What Does That Mean?

“Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:” (Phil. 3:15)

This statement appears to contradict the argument that Paul has been making. In the verses just before this, he said that he was not perfect, but then goes on in this verse to address his audience as if they were already perfect. How can we reconcile this statement?

In the verses preceding this Paul says, “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may

apprehend (laid hold of it) that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 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, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:” (Philippians 3:12-15)

Indeed Paul is clearly teaching that he has not been “saved” as many churches teach today. After stating that he has not been perfected he clarifies it by stating that he has not apprehended or laid hold/ taken possession of his goal. Nevertheless, he is constantly striving toward, and struggling to reach that desired end.

Paul uses a form of the Greek word “teleios” in v.12 and in v.15, which does sound contradictory. In v.15 he uses a form of the word which connotes “of full age” or “mature” and is translated this way in Heb 5:14: “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (teleios), even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

In v.12, Paul uses the verb in a different sense using the perfect tense (“am...perfected”) to denote absolute spiritual maturity, or sinless perfection. He shows that he is not in possession of this, but it is his struggle to try to obtain it through the grace and mercy of Christ.

Paul uses this word (teleios) to sum up the exhortation just given. He uses himself as an example and he: (a) Counts what was gain to him, loss for Christ: (v.7) (b) Reckons all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; and is willing to suffer the loss of all things to win him. (v.8) Desires to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not his own: (v.9). To know more of him in his person, righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead: (v.10) To attain and be able to stand in the resurrection: (v.11) And yet to disclaim all perfection, and acknowledge imperfection: (v.12) To forget those things behind, and reach forward: (v.13) And press towards the mark, Christ, for the prize of eternal glory (v.14). Is it any wonder that he concludes with the thought “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, (not children, but of riper age and mature in divine things) be thus minded.” (v.15)

The question is: are we “mature” in the faith and are we like Paul “thus minded”; or do we continue to place our affections on this life? Paul is exhorting brethren and sisters, not in a state of sinless perfection, but those who have developed that single-minded maturity in Christ.

Bro. Jim Sommerville