

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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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

Hengoed, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class - held in the homes of the bre. and sis. Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Aberdare Country Park at 6.30pm

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

The Fellowship has recently experienced great joy as a number of Adam's race have put on the Saving Name of the Messiah in the waters of baptism. The Hengoed Ecclesia is delighted to be able to record that Esther Hughes (daughter of Bro Phillip and Sis Cheryl Hughes) is among that number. On 16th July (2005) Esther, remembering her Creator in the days of her youth, was baptised at a local swimming pool after giving a good confession of her faith. She was exhorted by Bro Steve Male after her baptism, who reminded her of the difficulties that would lie ahead and of the fact that she would have the companionship and help of the brethren and sisters. Bro Robert Bennett also provided a sound word of exhortation to continue in the One Hope of our Calling before she was received into fellowship. We hope and pray that our young sister will hold fast to the pearl of great price and continue to follow the Daily Readings that has been a practice with her since infancy. She has also been encouraged to get to grips with the writings of the pioneer brethren, as the duty to develop the spiritual mind is incumbent upon sisters as well as brethren!

The Ecclesia has recently enjoyed another Study Weekend in September. Sadly, we did not have any visiting brethren and sisters this time, but the time away from the world and the mundane routine of life was a great time of refreshing. The Theme of the weekend was "Battles in the Bible" and it commenced on the Friday evening with the Battle of the Kings as recorded in Genesis chapter 14. Our minds were transported in type to the Battle that the Abrahamic household will execute against the King of the North, followed by the glorious fellowship with the Melchizadech Priest of the Most High El. With our minds set for the weekend, we listened on the following morning to the thrilling details that led to the Battle of Jericho, again a great type of the judgements to be executed on the world of the ungodly. The Battle on Mount Gilboa provided a sober consideration of the plight of the rejected when Saul not only lost the battle, but his life, because of his rejection of the Word of Yahweh, and for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit. The day was concluded by an address entitled the War in Heaven (Apoc.12). The historical review of the seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent provided the basis for our consideration of this chapter, and we enjoyed a faithful exposition based on the exposition of Bro. Thomas. The following Sunday morning exhortation drew a sharp focus on the battle that each one of us is engaged in, under the heading The Battle against Sin. As spiritual warriors we were exhorted to be determined in this fight and not give up. The final address for the weekend was The Battle of Armageddon. This was a public Lecture, but sadly, minus the public! Our minds were refreshed

however, and we were thankful to our Heavenly Father for allowing us to partake of a feast of good things.

We send our love to the brotherhood in the hope of the speedy return of the Master.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of Hengoed, Bro. Phillip Hughes

DETROIT, Michigan – Memorial, 10am; S.S., 11:30am; Wed. Night Class, 8pm; Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035, 586-790-2156

Dear Brothers and Sisters of like precious faith,
Greetings in Our Master's Name,

We have enjoyed the company and fellowship of Bro. Beryl and Sis. Becky Snyder, Bro. Johnny and Sis. Mary Phillips from the Canton Ecclesia; Bro. Arthur, Sis. Barbara, Bro. Phillip, Sis. Cheryl and Sis. Esther Hughes from the Hengoed Ecclesia; Bro. Terry, Sis. Lisa Readman and Sis. Linda Jones from the Richard Ecclesia. We thank our Bro. Johnny and Bro. Terry for their words of exhortation. These visits from those of like precious faith are a source of great encouragement for us in this isolated corner of the vineyard. We welcome any who can visit us here in Detroit.

We look forward to Jesus returning soon and bringing peace and righteousness to the earth. We are living in a time, like Noah, when the earth was full of violence. God will soon say it is enough! Hold fast to your faith and watch.

Love in the Bonds of the Truth,
Bro. Freddie Higham

Ecclesial Correspondence

The following Ecclesial correspondence was received in part:

Dear Bro. Carwyn, Greetings in the One Hope,

The Lampasas Ecclesia has considered the five year ongoing issue of the seven point statement, and have concluded after much prayer and thought that this statement places demands on the Fellowship that are not consistent with the BASF. While containing points we can agree with, it contains points that cannot be accepted. It is a complete statement and therefore needs to be withdrawn as a whole. This is adding to the basis of fellowship, and therefore we cannot accept your position.....

.....We [also] cannot accept your offering fellowship to someone that is out of fellowship with the Bereans. Therefore, we are withdrawing fellowship from you effective Sept. 5, 2005.

We regret having to take this action and pray that you reconsider your position. If at a later date you desire to reapply for fellowship, you would need to withdraw the seven point statement as a whole, and we would need your

assurance that you would not teach or promote this view. We would also need your withdrawal of your accusations of fundamental error against the Hengoed, Boston and Lampasas ecclesias. And you would need to understand that for Bro. David Hopper to join the Berean fellowship, he would need to apply for fellowship through the Hengoed Ecclesia.

On behalf of the Lampasas Berean Ecclesia,
Bro. Charles W. Banta, Jr., Recorder

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

MTONDIA FRATERNAL GATHERINGDec 9-11, 2005
Bro. Fred Omoto, P .O. Box 1177, Kilifi, Kenya

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

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING Jun 9-11, 2006
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING Jul 24-30, 2006
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868
Study Class Topic: 1Thessalonians; Daily Bible Readings; Discussion on Zech. 1-7

Books For Kenya Ecclesia's

We have a special request from the Kamukungi Ecclesia for works on the Truth—books, pamphlets and Sunday School material that you can send would be very helpful in this effort, please contact Bro. Philip Wekati, P.O. Box 552, Bungoma, Kenya. Other ecclesias in Kenya also have an ongoing need for the same material and may be addressed to the ecclesial addresses in the Ecclesial Directory.

The Fullness of Time

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” We use this verse to prove the nature of Christ, but let's read it with a different emphasis. “But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.” What made that time, above all other in history the “fullness of time?” Romans 5:6 says: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” And again in 1Tim. 2:6 “Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” It is as if God had a plan all worked out and he said after 4,000 years, “OK this is the right time.” And we know this is the case. The 70 weeks that Gabriel told Daniel would elapse, had indeed run out. But why was this more than any other the right time? If we can understand this, then we know what to look for when looking for the due time or fullness of time for his second advent.

As Christadelphians, we spend a lot of time learning Israel's history. **292—The Berean 2005** There is one block that is generally skipped over, the 400 silent years between the Testaments. What was going on in Palestine at this time that made it the “fullness of time?” And what exhortation can we gather for ourselves as preparation for the fullness of time when Christ will return to re-establish the kingdom to Israel?

“Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7) We are given pictures throughout Israel's history of how God responds. He called Abraham out of Ur, made promises to him and told him that his seed would be strangers in a land that was not theirs and they would be evilly entreated 400 years. Yes, they did need this time to develop into a nation, to see that they could not redeem themselves, and to learn to depend on God. However, the reason the Scriptures gives for the delay is because, “the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Gen 15:16). When the fullness of time came—when God could tolerate it no longer—then he brought forth His people and destroyed the Amorite out of the land. Not that the time was needed to make Israel more righteous so they could be redeemed and given the land; but because the wickedness of the land was so great, that God spewed them out and allowed Israel to come in.

We find the same thing when God saved Noah and his family. The earth was so corrupt for “all flesh had corrupted His way...and the earth was filled with violence” (Gen 6:11-12). When God could put up with it no longer, He destroyed the earth and Noah with his family were saved. It wasn't that the earth was filled with such righteous people that God redeemed them—no just the opposite—the earth was corrupt and the imagination of their hearts only evil continually, God could take no more of it and He destroyed them and thus brought deliverance to Noah.

The angel that delivered Lot—was it because Lot and his family were righteous that God decided the time was right to deliver them? No, we read: “And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me.”

So they entered Sodom and found it so. “And the men said unto Lot,..whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place...For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it” (Gen 19:12-13)

If we believe like the Christian churches are teaching; that the Gospel will be spread into people's hearts awaiting the return of Christ. If we are looking for the Christadelphian movement to spread and for the world to

be ready and waiting for Christ's coming, then the fullness of time will come and we will not be prepared! **The Berean 2005—293**

“In due time Christ died for the ungodly”, and if ever there was a time that could be characterized by that term “the ungodly” it was at the first advent of Christ. But look at today and realize God has a “set time to favor Zion” because “He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

We are familiar with Israel's history from Sinai, the time of the judges, the kings, the 70 years in Babylonian captivity, and their return under Ezra and Nehemiah. We then immediately find ourselves in the New Testament, dealing with people like Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians. How did we get there, and what happened to Israel during these 400 silent years?

They are not completely silent. Daniel was shown by Gabriel how the Elohim would rearrange the world scene to provide for the final solution. He goes into a fair amount of detail in Daniel chapter 11, which is corroborated by fairly reliable Jewish history. It was necessary that two mighty powers be established; the “King of the North” and the “King of the South”. These would influence affairs to bring about the fullness of times for Christ's birth, and they will influence affairs to bring about the fullness of times for Christ's second coming.

Israel was in Babylon for the 70 years captivity, and with the fall of Babylon in B.C. 538 the “Head of Gold” gave way to the “Breast and Arms of Silver.” The Jews fared well under Persian rule; Cyrus made the decree to return to the land. We read of their return under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, and for a century and a half, the Jews enjoyed a large measure of independence under this Medo-Persian “Bear”; and for a time even under the “Four-Headed Leopard” of Greece.

Balaam had prophesied, (Num.23:8-9), “How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the LORD hath not defied? lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations.” However, he taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before Israel by breaking down this barrier. The doctrine of Balaam has been their snare ever since, as it is with the brotherhood today.

Nehemiah's efforts were largely successful; but although they became separated FROM other nations, that did not guarantee that they would be separated TO God. Israel of old, and believers today are to be set apart, but only as we “go forth unto Him without the camp” will our separation be of any real value to make us a “vessel unto honor, sanctified [set apart] and meet for the Master's use.” (2 Tim. 2:21)

The Persians entrusted the High Priest, who previously was a religious leader, to govern the Jewish people. Slowly this corrupted the priesthood, making it a political office with all the same problems that we see in politicians today. This is where Gabriel begins his revelation to Daniel. **294—The Berean 2005** (Daniel 11:1-2) “Also I in the first year of Darius the Mede, even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him. And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia.” Xerxes was noted for his fabulous wealth, which enabled him to accomplish his expedition into Greece; thus fulfilling Gabriel’s statement. Meanwhile, Philip of Macedon successfully united the independent Greek city-states under his leadership; but he was murdered before he could launch an attack against Persia.

His son, Alexander, barely 19 years old, was thrust into leadership. Alexander was not simply a power-mad despot; he was a pupil of the philosopher, Aristotle, and was thoroughly convinced that Greek culture was the force that could unite the world. He, therefore, attempted to Hellenize (establish the Greek culture) in each place he conquered. He would erect Greek-style public buildings, gymnasiums for games, and open-air theatres to encourage the arts. Individuals were encouraged to take Greek names, adopt the Greek language and Greek dress—in short become Hellenized.

The freedom, prosperity and encouragement to Hellenism proved disastrous to the faith. Many Jews took Greek names and dress. They accepted a school of Greek philosophy, and tried to combine the wisdom of Greece with the faith of their fathers. Teaching that Jewish Scriptures taught the same things as the Greek philosophers and that Moses was the wisest philosopher of them all.

Alexander’s military and cultural success was unmatched; history claims that he wept because he had no more nations left for him to conquer. Gabriel says (Dan. 11:3) “And a mighty king shall stand up, that shall rule with great dominion, and do according to his will.” He was an absolute sovereign over all known lands. (v.4) “And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity, nor according to his dominion which he ruled: for his kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those.” “Stand up” says Brother Thomas in Elpis Israel: “Having suffered no defeat” Alexander was only 33 years old when he died in B.C. 323 after a drunken orgy and leaving no heir. Antigonus, one of Alexander’s most powerful generals, seized Syria and the adjacent region, and sought to control Palestine of which Ptolemy Lagus, another general, was governor. Control went back and forth, and the unhappy land with God’s people was

about ruined. Many, in their despair, imagined that the only possible and logical way out of their distress was to become assimilated with one side or the other of these warring factions.

However, even in these dark days, there have always been an elect few that held tightly to the Scriptures. **The Berean 2005—295** Malachi had written: (3:17): “And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.” Ptolemy, together with three other generals, united against Antigonus, defeated him and divided the kingdom between the four of them, thus forming the Four-Headed Leopard of Dan. 7 and divided toward the four winds of heaven as Gabriel said in Dan. 11:4: “And when he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity.” We now have four divisions; of which the Scriptures focus on only two: the King of the North and the King of the South. Ptolemy was in control of the area to the south v.5 says: “And the king of the south shall be strong,” and under the reign of the first three Ptolemy’s, Israel enjoyed comparative peace and the Greek culture flourished.

Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the son and successor to Ptolemy I, requested that the Hebrew Scriptures be translated into Greek and added to his Imperial Library at Alexandria. In 277 B.C. the first five books were translated, and book after book followed. This became known as the Septuagint (meaning seventy), from a tradition that it was the joint production of seventy translators. This production rapidly grew in favor even among the Jews, as very few could read their own Hebrew, which was fast becoming a dead language. This Septuagint was the Bible used in the days of Christ and the apostles. Although this preserved the Scriptures, many of the Jews bitterly rejected it as a “golden calf.” It was used as an aid to the Hellenizing Jews in their efforts to introduce the new learning and to overthrow the old school teachings, much as modern translations attempt to do today.

In 251 B.C. Onias II became High Priest and brought grave trouble to the nation. He neglected the annual tribute of 20 talents of silver for many years, until the amount became so high that Ptolemy threatened the destruction of the Jewish state. Joseph, (a nephew of High Priest Onias) heads to Egypt to plead clemency for the Jews. On the way, he traveled in a caravan of merchants from Syria and Phoenicia. Overhearing their business he determined to outwit them. The plan of these merchants was to guarantee tax revenue to Ptolemy by paying him 8,000 talents for the right to farm the taxes throughout the Middle East. Joseph saw great opportunity for himself, so offered double the amount to secure the position. He knew he could more than make that amount up out of the people. He was given 2,000 men to assist him and became the first Jewish Publican—the

beginning of that detestable class of people of which Christ said; “but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

We can well understand the abhorrence that this system set up by Joseph, would cause to any true Jewish patriot. As the servant of a foreign potentate, and under his protection, he enriched himself at the expense of his own people. He and this class were pitiless of the poor, and extorted from them all they possibly could by taxes on their lands and goods. Anything that was over and above the yearly fee paid to the king of Egypt was theirs kept for the privilege of that position. No wonder the name “publican” came to be a synonym for all that was disgraceful and unworthy to the Jew.

However, problems did not take long to develop for Joseph, his family and his nation. The ill-gotten gains of the publican-priest brought joy to neither himself nor his family. It resulted in a family feud of fiercest intensity. What developed was the priesthood for sale to the highest bidder, with oppression of the common family. This also caused a lot of internal political strife among the Jews.

Meanwhile, the strife between the King of the South (the Ptolemaic Dynasty) in Egypt; and the King of the North (the Seleucid Dynasty) in Syria, began to have negative impact on the common Jew. The land of Israel was a buffer zone between the conflicting armies; the consequence of the constant wars was desolation and ravaging of the land through which they trod. (V15-16) “So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities: and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him: and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed.”

So now we have a somewhat Hellenized Jewish society with a corrupt priesthood, but the fullness of time had not yet arrived. Another Seleucid King of the North arrives on the scene 175 to 163 B.C. His name is Antiochus Epiphanes. He saw himself as another Alexander the Great. He wanted to control the world and to have Hellenism practiced as the only culture. His problem, another obstacle was developing—Rome was becoming a force to be reckoned with, so he turns his attention into Israel.

He ousted the High Priest and replaced him with a pro-Hellenist priest, who paid a great sum of money for the office. This priest encouraged the Hellenists, who had sought his election. A gymnasium was built in Jerusalem, Greek names became commonplace, and Hebrew Orthodoxy was considered obsolete. Another Hellenist of the tribe of Benjamin offered a higher tribute to Antiochus and had himself installed as High Priest.

The Orthodox Jews who were scandalized when the first priest was appointed were intolerant of a Benjaminite as their High Priest. They raised an army to fight, but Antiochus staged a sneak attack on the Sabbath day (when the Orthodox would not fight) and slaughtered a large number of them.

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Antiochus was determined to remove all traces of Jewish faith. He declared the Jewish God to be Jupiter, he plundered the temple, entered the Holy of Holies and offered a pig to Zeus on the altar. Jews were forbidden, on penalty of death, to practice circumcision, to observe the Sabbath, or to offer to Yahweh. These laws were enforced with the utmost cruelty, and many were tortured for refusing to eat swine’s flesh or other practices that their Jewish faith forbade.

The exhortation to this point of Israel’s history is that, prior to Antiochus Epiphanes, there had been a rapid and voluntary accommodation to Hellenism by Jews, especially amongst the educated and wealthy upper class. Even the priest, like other Jewish men, began to dress like Greeks and became enthusiastic for the Greek athletic games. The average Jew was more concerned with enjoying the new culture, and the potential of what that offered them, than worrying if the High Priest was from Benjamin or Levi.

We can look around and see the same today? It was not until the time of persecution under Antiochus that caused them to stop and examine what was important to them. We saw the same problem throughout history. During times of prosperity we find the Truth in declension, but when persecution comes, the Truth revives.

Moses warned Israel of this in Deut. 8:7-14: “For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass. When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee. Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; And when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.”

Again in chapter 6:10-16 he warns them: “And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and

goodly cities, which thou buildest not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

398—The Berean 2005 **Then beware lest thou forget the LORD,**
which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of
bondage. Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt
swear by his name. Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the
people which are round about you; (For the LORD thy God is a jealous
God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against
thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth. Ye shall not tempt the
LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.”

We today, enjoy prosperity and the society encourages us to join in to get ahead in this life, to assert ourselves and look out for our rights. Israel's history should ring in our ears with the words of Moses "BEWARE".
Bro. Jim Sommerville

Almost Persuaded

"For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." Hebrews 3:14

When we come to the table of the Lord do we thoroughly realize the great privilege that has been granted to us? When we examine ourselves, can we be always satisfied that we value the privilege of daily companionship with the "Glorious Gospel of our blessed Lord?" We should never forget it is by the goodness of our Father in heaven that we are enabled to assemble ourselves together once more, to remember Jesus our Redeemer, and to let our thoughts dwell on all that he has done for us.

What has persuaded us to come here this first day of the week? Was it the urgent desire to render unto our Father in heaven homage and worship that is due unto His Holy Name? By coming here each week have we grown in grace, and in godly virtues, in sincerity and sobriety, and in our walk and conversation? God is working out in each of us a testing process. From that process, do we feel cleansed and purified, do we truly feel that from week to week we can say with sincerity - "Master, it was good for us to be here?"

Or, are we content to come week after week and be quite forgetful of the great task that lies before all of us to "work out our own salvation?" And that word "work" means in itself effort and labor. Happy are we if we realize fully what it means.

When we give these things our serious consideration, what do we find the results to be? By taking the right attitude we will leave with a blessing; for we will be in that frame of mind that gives a new determination, we feel that our faith has grown, that our strength and courage has been fed

and watered; and we can feel that we are ready to go out against the world with all its deceptions and temptations and snares. By "casting our bread upon the waters" it has returned to us manifold.

In John 6:51 are these words – "I am the living bread which that came down from heaven: if any man eats **The Berean 2005—299**
of this bread he shall live forever."

The disciples could not understand what he said unto them, "and from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). They had been "Almost Persuaded", but the Scriptures tell us.

"Let every man be FULLY PERSUADED in his own mind"(Rom. 14:5).

In Acts 26 there is recorded the incident of Paul before King Agrippa. Reading that chapter, no one who understands the Truth can fail to be stirred in their Faith. Reading v. 1 we can picture in our minds Paul standing fearlessly before the assembled chief captains and principal men of the city. Then King Agrippa said unto Paul— "Thou art permitted to speak for thyself."

"Then Paul stretched forth his hand and answered for himself" (Acts 26:1). We are safe to assume that the writer of the Acts has given us but a very brief outline of all that Paul had said. Paul's defense may have been of considerable duration, for during his discourse he is interrupted by Festus, who said in a loud voice—v. 24:"Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

But Paul answered, v. 25-27: "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner...King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know thou believest."

Then Agrippa said unto Paul v. 28: "ALMOST thou PERSUADEST me to be a Christian."

There is but very little known of Agrippa, but from Paul's testimony he was undoubtedly familiar with the writings of the prophets. Because of that knowledge, and also, because of Paul's sincere and powerful speech, Agrippa was "Almost Persuaded" to become a Christian. But like many others, that was as far as he got - "Almost Persuaded." Perhaps the thought of all he would have to give up overwhelmed him, many are like him.

Agrippa would have to give up his position, his wealth, his prestige and power, and become as a child in humility, to become a servant of Christ. So he chose to not serve Christ. He let the golden opportunity go by of changing his pitiful, perishing earthly crown as "King" Agrippa, for a real

enduring crown of victory which could have been his. Both he and his crown are now in the dust - lost forever. Yet, he was "Almost Persuaded."

There are some things worthy of note in the prominent personages in that drama. We know that Agrippa was the son of Herod Agrippa, who 16 years before had murdered James the brother of John. He was the grandson of Herod Antipas who had killed John the Baptist, and great-grandson of 300—The Berean 2005 Herod the Great who murdered the children in Bethlehem, after the birth of Christ. Bernice the queen was Herod's sister, acting as his wife.

Festus could see no difference between Paul and his accusers except that Paul believed Jesus had risen from the dead; while his accusers maintained that Jesus was dead. It would seem that Festus had considerable respect for the dominating personality of Paul, for no ordinary prisoner could have called forth such a display of pomp and splendor. Also noticeable is Paul's extreme courtesy throughout the whole proceedings, although he must have been well aware of the dissolute character of Agrippa.

It can be readily recognized that Paul considered the matter of the resurrection of Jesus as the one great issue. To the carnal mind of the heathen Festus such a thing as a resurrection from the dead could only be thought of by a madman. But Paul, with the greatest courtesy, reminds Festus that Agrippa was aware of the story of the resurrection of Jesus. And when we read v. 31-32, we can realize that they were agreed that Paul was innocent—

"And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

In Matthew's Gospel (19:16) we find another instance of one who was "Almost Persuaded":

"And behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God."

Then Jesus named the commandments that the young man must keep if he would enter into life. And he answered v. 20-22: "All these things have I kept from my youth up, what lack I yet? And Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions."

Yet, he had been "Almost Persuaded"! In Mark we read- "And one of the scribes came and having heard them reasoning together, and

perceiving that he had answered well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?" (12:28).

And Jesus named the commandments to him, and the Scribe said to him - "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other than He."

And when Jesus saw he answered discreetly, he said to him v. 4: "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." **The Berean 2005—301**

All of these men were not far from the Kingdom. They were "Almost Persuaded"—but they lacked the strength of will and the courage to give up the worldly things. But such as they, we fear, are only laying up wrath that Christ required of them, and requires of all that would follow him. They passed across the stage of life and into the silent oblivion of the graves. How many others have been "Almost Persuaded" to accept Christ, but the seductive pleasures of the world seemed far more attractive than to take up the Cross and follow Jesus Christ; for that means trials, that means giving up those little personal pleasures that many think they cannot do without. But what do we read? Heb. 12:1—

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

King Agrippa, the rich young man, and countless others have laid much value on their titles, their positions of honor, and all those things that seem so desirous and precious to the worldly.

But what are these things in the sight of God? They are just weights that must be laid aside for that which is of far more value. How many there are who in their desire to indulge in passing pleasures are unwittingly placing a stumbling block in their own way. These things may seem small at first but they grow as they are fed by the desire for greater enjoyment of the worldly things. But, "Can a clean thing come from an unclean?" Can the things of the world be of value to anyone if they have their mind fully set on that precious jewel which a loving Father has invited us to run for - a "Crown of Righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8)?

Is there not great wisdom in casting aside the weights that would hinder us, as they have hindered countless others of all generations in the world's long and sad history, who have had to face the same decision and have turned the other way, although they were "Almost Persuaded"?

Why do we hold on to even a few of the worldly treasures? God has declared we cannot successfully do that—"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Luke 16:13). If we let anything interfere or come in the way of our serving God, are we not serving Mammon? In the Revelation we find these words:

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:15-16).

There is a question that all in the Truth must answer: are we "Fully Persuaded?" We would like to be in the Kingdom, but is our heart, and soul, and mind fully occupied in winning the race? Let us give heed to the Scripture which saith—"Give yourself wholly to these things."

302—The Berean 2005 In Heb. 11:13-14 we are told - "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were PERSUADED of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."

And in Romans (4:18) Paul says of Abraham - "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations." And being FULLY PERSUADED that what God had promised He was able also to perform."

Let us turn the thoughts of these things to ourselves. If we are "Fully Persuaded" of the Truth of the Gospel, then are we not "Fully Persuaded" of what it can do for us? It will guide our feet past snares and pitfalls which the world lays before us in such tempting displays.

In time of sorrow (and who can escape sorrow?) it will bring comfort. If we live just for the present, then we will suffer with the world.

Is there not wisdom in striving to find that peace of mind, that calmness, that sublime serenity which comes with the fullness of Faith? To not think it a sacrifice, the giving up of once-desirable things; but rather to think of it as a privilege, and as an opportunity to be called to work for Christ, that we might have something acceptable when he comes.

Would not our gift to him be to be able to stand before him at the bar of judgment as faithful stewards and servants? What else could we offer him? Nothing. We will have no gifts, no jewels, no treasures of any kind. Just ourselves.

If we are found acceptable, happy will we be in that day. Every day we see that the world is not happy—how could it be? All things that man has received from a beneficent Father, they take the glory of unto themselves. The people weary themselves with their vanities.

But those who live by the Truth become reconciled to God, and live in a more peaceful state. They have their heartaches and deprivations. They have to carry a cross which many times can be a cruel trial, trying to live as saints in an evil world.

But with all the trials we are "Fully Persuaded" we can be happier; we can have more interest in life than those who know not God, and make no

effort to know the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The world has all the fear and fretfulness propagated by its lusts and vanities, and its cravings for positions of honor and power.

Do we fully realize our great opportunity and privilege of being in the favorable position of knowing God, and by being known of God? If we do, realize it, then we know how difficult it is to express, and that it is impossible to exaggerate the glory that will be ours in being—

(Eph. 2:19): "Fellow citizens with the saints, **The Berean 2005—303** *and of the household of God.*"

Brethren and sisters, beware of those who have become a dead branch on the vine, whose desire is more of the world's goods. You will find them standing in the way of sinners; and in the seat of the scornful. Their hearts have become hardened and they stoop to many follies in which they blithely profess to see "no harm."

But such as them, we fear, are only laying up wrath against the day of wrath of the righteous judgment of God, Who will render to every man according to his deeds. Listen to the words of Paul (2 Tim. 1:12): "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know Whom I have believed, and am PERSUADED that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Paul had not committed gold or silver, for these he had none. But by his life he had formed and laid up a character that will shine for all time. Yea, in the day when the true eternal values shall be made manifest he shall receive the crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give him; and not to him only, but to them also that love his appearing; for he had fought the good fight "Let us go and do likewise."

Bro. Harry Thompson

Bible Readings Notes - October

"All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He [God] doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4: 35).

THE Psalmist declares, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." It is the guiding light for all who aspire to follow the Narrow Way which leads unto life, and it cannot be dispensed with for a single day. Let the seeker of the Kingdom of God adopt the method of daily reading suggested by the accompanying table, and he will find invaluable assistance in maintaining a sustained interest throughout the year, enabling him to cover the whole of divine revelation.

The allotted readings for October are 1 Chronicles 15 to 29, 2 Chronicles 1 to 29, Ezekiel 27 to 48, Daniel 1 to 9, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, the Gospel of John, and Acts 1 to 9.

1 CHRONICLES 15 TO 29.

These chapters record the establishment of the kingdom of Israel under its most illustrious ruler, David. This ancient kingdom was the Kingdom of God, having its king, capital city, land, laws, and people divinely appointed. David recognized it as God's Kingdom (chaps. 28. 5; 29. 23). Though this Kingdom was subsequently overturned, it will be re-established as the nucleus of the divine constitution upon earth to be set up by Christ at his second coming (Amos 9. 11).

Chapter 17 records the covenant made with David. Its terms were that David's seed should rule upon his throne for ever (verse 14). The seed was Christ (Luke 1. 32), who will fulfill the covenant at his return to the earth (Isaiah 9:5). Like David, he will "reign over all Israel, and execute judgment and justice among all his people" (chap. 18:14).

Chapter 21 records David's sin in numbering the people. The inclusion of this episode in the narrative is evidence of divine inspiration. It would probably have been omitted by a human writer in describing the career of Israel's most famous king.

The term "Satan" (verse 1) signifies an adversary, and is a word used in a good or a bad sense (see Num. 22. 22, and Job 1. 6). It does not convey the meaning of a spirit of evil, as popularly supposed.

The division of the sons of Aaron by lot into twenty-four orders, and a similar division of the singers (chaps. 24 and 25), is typical of the immortal officers in the Kingdom of God, who are alluded to in the figure of twenty-four elders (Rev. 4. 4). They will be the administrators of the divine law which will issue from Jerusalem for the government of the whole earth.

2 CHRONICLES 1 TO 29.

Solomon's reign commenced well. He was endowed with wisdom above any who had preceded him. The riches and greatness of his kingdom are described in chapters 1 to 5. Solomon's glory was proverbial (Matt. 6. 29). After the dedication of the temple, God appeared to him, promising blessings for obedience, but threatening curses for disobedience. Notice particularly chapter 7. 20, "If ye serve other gods, then this house will I cast out of my sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all nations." History records the exact fulfillment of this prophecy. Solomon failed to maintain his faithfulness because he contracted alien marriages,

contrary to God's command (Deut. 17. 17). Separation from the world of the ungodly has been enjoined upon God's servants in all ages, and is equally obligatory to-day (2 Cor. 6. 17).

After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided, ten tribes revolting under Jeroboam, and only Judah and Benjamin remaining loyal to David's throne continued through Rehoboam. Of the kings who reigned over Judah, Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah were outstanding characters on account of their righteousness.

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Notice Asa's faith (chap. 14. 11), and his covenant with God (chap. 15:12). His career beautifully illustrates the words of God to him (chap. 15:2), "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him." Hezekiah's reign was marked by a restoration of the worship of Jehovah, and fitly illustrates the principle of faith combined with works as the only basis of acceptability to God.

EZEKIEL 27 TO 48.

Chapters 27 and 28 describe the irrecoverable fall of Tyre on account of her pride. The same fate awaits all that are proud and lofty when the day of the Lord comes (Isaiah 2. 11).

Chapter 29 depicts the desolation of Egypt. The kingdom was not to be utterly destroyed, but to remain "base" (verse 15). Strangers were to rule therein (30:12). Egypt's history has amply fulfilled the prophecy, for the Persians, Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes, Turks, and British have successively ruled the land.

Chapter 36 contains promises regarding Israel's restoration. Notice particularly verses 24, 28, and 34. Chapter 37 speaks of the same event under the figure of the resurrection of dry bones in a valley. It foretells the joining together of the restored tribes with one king over them all (verse 22).

Chapter 38 depicts the final struggle of the nations upon the mountains of Israel, resulting in their complete overthrow, the triumph of Israel, and the magnifying of the God of Israel throughout the earth (verse 23). For a lucid exposition of this remarkable prophecy, read Elpis Israel.

Chapters 40 to 48 describe the specifications of the house of prayer for all people to be erected in Jerusalem when the kingdom of God is established. It will be the centre of the universal religion to be practiced (Is. 2. 2), and its keynote will be "Holiness to the Lord." The name of the city will be "The Lord is there" (chap. 48:35).

DANIEL 1 TO 9.

Daniel was among the captives carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. He is an outstanding example of faith, courage, and humility, and is

divinely commended on account of his righteousness (Ezekiel 14. 14). His book contains prophecies having especial relation to the time of the end.

Chapter 2 records the prophet's explanation of the metallic image seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar. It foretold the existence of the four great empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, the subsequent division of Europe into smaller kingdoms, and the final establishment of the Kingdom of God (verse 44). This kingdom would be literal, political, **306—The Berean 2005** universal, and everlasting, and would displace all the kingdoms of men. Chapter 7 describes a vision seen by Daniel, portraying the same events, but supplying greater detail. Verse 13 identifies the predestined king, and verses 18 and 27 his co-rulers. They are Jesus and his immortalized friends. The eleventh horn seen by the prophet (verses 8 and 20) represented the papal power which appeared after the Roman Empire was disrupted. It was to continue for a time, times and a half, which prophetically understood signifies 1,260 years. This period commences with the decree of Phocas, A.D. 606-8, appointing the Bishop of Rome supreme pontiff, and terminates in 1866-70, when the papacy was deprived of temporal power. Some time subsequent to this development, the Kingdom of God would be established.

Chapter 4 describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the hewed-down tree, the stump of which was to remain for a period of seven times. The prophet explained the vision as signifying the duration of the kingdoms of men from the fall of Babylon. Seven times represents 2,520 years, which dated from the year of the Medo-Persian victory over Babylon, 540 B.C.. The incident recorded in chapter 5 concerning the writing on the wall should be understood as typical of the final destruction of all the kingdoms of men. "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians." These words are equally applicable to all the kingdoms of men whose end at the hands of the anti-typical Medes and Persians will be just as complete as was that of Babylon.

GALATIANS.

The epistle to the Galatians was written to combat the false teaching of certain Judaizers that salvation could be obtained by adherence to the Law of Moses, and not necessarily by faith in Jesus. In chapter 1 Paul demonstrates there is only one Gospel. Notice the apostle's insistence upon right belief. Sound doctrine must precede right practice. The keynote of the epistle is contained in chapter 2:16, "A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ." Paul shows that this faith was exhibited even before the law through Moses was given. It moved Abraham to obey God (chap. 3:6).

The gospel was preached to him in the words, "In thee shall all nations be blessed" (chap. 3:8). Abraham was promised that he and his seed should inherit the earth for ever (Gen. 13. 15). Paul says that the seed was, firstly, Christ (chap. 3:16), and, secondly, all baptized believers (chap. 3: 27-29). These promises are the basis of God's plan of human redemption, and will be fulfilled at the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom. Participation in them is predicted on a renouncing of the works of the flesh, and a cultivation **The Berean 2005—307** of the fruits of the Spirit (chap. 5:19-24).

EPHESIANS.

The Ephesians was written to impress upon believers their exalted position as the recipients of the Love of God and the far reaching blessings of the sacrifice of Christ. Formerly these Ephesians were "dead in trespasses and sins" (chap. 2:1), without Christ, and therefore without hope (chap. 2:12), but by their belief in the mission of Christ and the promises which centre in him, they had become a part of the One Body of which Jesus is the Head (chap. 4:15). Paul exhorts them to holiness, love, and purity of life, as the only possible standard consistent with their exalted calling (chaps. 4, 5, and 6).

PHILIPPIANS.

The epistle to the Philippians was written to encourage the believers to steadfastness in the faith. Notice Paul's reference to the hope of all the faithful (chap. 3. 20, 21). It is described as a "change of this vile body." Immortality is to be enjoyed corporeally, after the pattern of the Lord himself (verse 21). He was a real, tangible being after his glorification, eating, drinking, and conversing with his disciples. His friends will be made like him (1 John 3. 2), changed from flesh and blood to flesh and bones, energized by spirit.

JOHN.

The purpose of the gospel record by John is expressed in chapter 20. 31. "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Nowhere does it teach that Christ was "God the Son." In chapter 1 it portrays him as the Word made flesh, i.e. the fulfillment of the promise declared from the beginning concerning a seed who should come, whose mission it would be to destroy the power of sin and death (Gen. 3. 15). The divine origin of Christ is clearly portrayed (chap. 3:3), his divine authority (chap. 7. 13), his possession of human nature (chaps. 11:33; 12. 27), his blameless character (chap. 8:46), his mission as the

Saviour of Mankind (chap. 3:16). These are the things concerning Christ which it is "life eternal to know" (chap. 17:3).

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

The Acts of the Apostles describes the means by which the Truth was established in the earth in the first century. It opens with a reference to the infallible proofs of Christ's resurrection, and then refers to the promise of his return (chap. 1:11). These two doctrines were foremost in all the **308—The Berean 2005** recorded discourses of the apostles (chaps. 3:19; 4:10).

Chapter 8 contains a beautiful description of the purpose and mode of scriptural baptism, without which there can be no entrance into the Kingdom of God (John 3:5).

Chapter 9 contains the account of the conversion and baptism of Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul.

As Ye See The Day Approaching

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." - Hebrews 10:24, 25

There has never been a time in the past when believers could see the day approaching as clearly as we can today. Why did Paul think it more necessary for those in the time of the end who were contemporary with the closing scenes of Gentile times to exert themselves in a special way in the matter of more intense ecclesial activities? Why did he think the need in our time for considering one another, and of provoking to love and good works, would be "so much more" than had been the case with all previous generations of Christadelphians?

In studying the import of these words, and their special application to our time, we need to consider first the fact that there is a necessity, according to the will of God, that there be a people prepared for the coming of the Lord, as there was at his first appearing.

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." (Isa. 62:6-7)

Now these watchmen on the walls of Zion, waiting and watching for the signs of her glad morning, are the Israel of God of the time of the end who would "see the day approaching." As they prayed for the peace of

Jerusalem, asking that it may be made a praise in the earth, they would find these words of Paul especially suited to their needs; for they would be living in a world ripe for destruction, abounding in iniquity and every evil way. Jesus said:

"Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved." (Matt. 24:12, 13)

An abiding and lively faith, a strong and continuous effort directed to the maintenance and development of the **The Berean 2005—309** household, as they stand out against the prevailing influences of their times, was what the apostle was directing them to in the words quoted at the beginning.

Paul had written to Timothy: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1).

The perils peculiar to these times are not physical dangers and open persecution as it was in the days of Paul, who suffered imprisonment, shipwreck and stoning because of his testimony for the Truth. The forces of evil now are more stealthy and dangerous; they are more subtle and insidious, though no less powerful to the detriment of a wholesome walk in the Truth. The problems that now work against us and endanger the purity and strength of the body are harder to recognize and more elusive than they ever were before. The enemy has now gone underground, so to speak, and his assaults, are no more made on the open field of battle, but behind the lines, where he appears in the clothing of a friend and ally.

Such a sad condition of affairs was anticipated and foretold by the Spirit: "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

But that there will be a few who are able to detect the fangs of the wolf underneath the sheep's clothing, and be found of the Lord in peace at his coming, without spot and blameless, is evident. There will be some who give diligent heed to the words of the spirit that apply to our needs as we consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

The apostle speaks of some who will be alive and remain to the coming of the Lord, ready to be caught away in clouds, with the awakened saints, to meet the Lord in the ariel of that new age, when they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament.

These few who will not sleep, but be changed that mortality might be swallowed up of life, will find in that day that they have been wise in giving up and standing apart from all the subtle influences that would corrupt them. They were able to do this, and so obtain the Lord's approval,

because they kept well in mind the elevating and sustaining words of the spirit by means of which they could draw nigh to God in the spirit of Truth and righteousness, and thus obtain the strength to go on without wavering to the end.

Their interests and activities were centered around those things that brought them together in love and unity, in the wholesome atmosphere where God and His Word were truly magnified and revered to the exclusion of all else. With this Word as a generating and directing force in their **310—The Berean 2005** lives, and with the strength of the Great God of Israel on their side, there was nothing that could weaken or draw them away from the course of wisdom.

We are only on solid ground, and firmly holding our place as the "little flock" to whom the Lord will give the kingdom, if we are alive and awake to the separateness and holiness to which we are called by the gospel.

Bro. Emmitt W. Banta

Hymn 156

LOV'D OF GOD—our Father is a personal God Who knows and loves each of us—IN SORROW MOURNING, BOW'D IN SADNESS,
BATH'D IN TEARS—chastened as His children,

LIFT THY HEAD: FOR LO! THE MORNING—that glorious morning,
WHICH SHALL END THY GRIEF, APPEARS at last,

CHRIST THY HOPE, WILL SOON APPEAR, HE THY DROOPING
HEART WILL CHEER.

DOST THOU WEEP, THY FOES OPPRESSING, ARE THINE
ENEMIES TOO STRONG? Enemies may be encountered during our
days of probation from within our own weaknesses and those who are
adversaries from without.

HAST THOU DOUBTS AND FEARS DISTRESSING, THAT THY
SAVIOUR WAITS SO LONG? There will soon come a day when he
tarries no longer.

SOON BY HIM FROM ALL SET FREE, THOU SHALT SING OF
VICTORY. *“He shall swallow up death in victory, and the Lord GOD will
wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he
take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”*

DOST THOU NOW IN SORROW LANGUISH, THAT THE HEARTS
OF MEN ARE COLD? Few possess that true heart of the chosen.

IS THY HEART WRUNG DEEP WITH ANGUISH, THAT THUS 'TIS
EV'N IN THE FOLD? Though there may be no justice in the world,
Christ's judgments will be perfect.

LOV'D OF GOD—the loved of God know **The Berean 2005—311**
Him and love His Word, unlike those of the world who think of Him as
some vague nebulous entity, THY GRIEF SHALL CEASE; QUICK
THY SAVIOUR BRINGS RELEASE.

HAST THOU LONG A WATCH BEEN KEEPING, WAITING FOR
THE PROMIS'D DAY—It will come.

WHEN FULL JOY SHALL END THY WEEPING, CHASING ALL
THY FEARS AWAY? *“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh
in the morning.”*

THEN LIFT UP THY HEAD ON HIGH; THY REDEMPTION
DRAWETH NIGH. *“Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption
draweth nigh.”*

Righteous Mammon

How would you not spend your money for the Lord if He asked it. He does not need it; but he has asked it for all that. He that spends it upon the least of the Lord's servants spends it upon the Lord.

Give as he has given. If a brother in the Truth secretly withholds his substance from its service, or savingly refuse to lose his mammon in the interest of Christ's work, the likelihood is that he will lose it in some other way. God is not mocked.

Money is God's invention. It is good, and the gift of God. But it must be divinely used, or it turns to mammon. Give it plenty of air and it is as sweet as the hawthorn; shut it up and it cankers and breeds worms. It is an angel of mercy whose wings are full of balm and dews and refreshings if you let him on his errands. But if you lay hold of him and pen him in a yard and worship him, he deals plague and confusion and terror.

Art Thou a Servant of Mammon?—Yes, thou art, if when thou makest a bargain, thou thinkest only of thyself and not of thy neighbour; if thou sayest to the rich man, “Sit here in a good place,” and to the poor man,

“stand there;” if thou favourest the company of the well-to-do (that is, the well-to-eat, well-to-drink, or well-to-show) and declines that of the simple and of the meek; if thy hope of well-being in time to come rests upon houses and lands or business, or money in store, and not upon the living God; if the loss of thy goods would take from thee the joy of thy life, or if the thought of to-morrow makes thee quail before the duty of to-day. Lord, **312—The Berean 2005** defend us from mammon. Hold thy temple against his foul invasion. Purify our money with thy air and thy sun that it may be our slave and thou our master.

A brother, calling attention to Paul’s command, “owe no man anything;” and Christ’s words “from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away;” says: “Some seem to be of opinion that the latter renders the former null and void, and are ready to borrow for purposes of speculation.—My view is that we should not borrow unless compelled by dire necessity—caused by circumstances over which we have no control, such as a want of employment, sickness, &c., and that a brother under such circumstances should (if applied to and has the wherewithal) not turn away.

On the other hand, if asked for the purpose of paying debts incurred in speculation, he would be justified in not lending, as the speculation if a failure, might become the lender’s loss, and not borrower’s, and might disable him from providing things honest in the sight of all men. I have a horror of borrowing myself, and an old adage is that “if you want to convert a friend into an enemy, lend him money.” These remarks are self-evidently discreet. Paul’s advice to keep out of debt is not inconsistent with the merciful attitude prescribed by Christ to those who may be in a position to help the distressed. On the other hand, Christ’s command to be ready to help will never be used by a true man as a pretext for evading the words of Paul which are of equal authority. A righteous man will be as afraid of burdening his neighbour as he will be of getting into debt.

As to debt, it is often asked whether the modern system of credit is inconsistent with Paul’s command. Attention to the context ought to dissipate anxiety on this point. Paul is commanding the payment of dues. “Render to all their dues: tribute to whom,” &c. This is equivalent to commanding the payment of debt, for a “due” is a debt. Do not put off the meeting of your obligation. Paul does not forbid the incurring of obligations, but the punctual discharge of them when due. Your rent is not “due” till a certain day. Your quarterly account is not due till the end of the three months: so in business, if a man give you goods on credit (which of course you won’t accept unless you are sure you can pay), the payment of them is not due till the time stipulated. The spirit of the two (not at all

contradictory) precepts, may be expressed thus: “Pay your debts,” and “Don’t shut your ear to genuine distress if it is in your power to help.”

There are such things as crochets: but there are things that people call crochets that are not crochets, but points of wisdom. Which is which is the puzzle we have to learn.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1888
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The Theatre

Its Greatest Danger—Unreality. From time to time in our pages attention has been called to the great influence now wielded in this and other countries by the “pictures” or “movies”.

Several objections to frequenting cinemas have been raised by brethren. The commonest is: “Would I like Jesus to find me there if he came suddenly?” Another is, that to go there is to “sit in the seat of the ungodly.” A further objection is, that the pictures exhibited are not of a healthy type, being mainly exhibitions of the evil in human nature.

Well, if all the picture palaces combined to give only healthy travel studies, and to depict the great glories of nature, or even to exhibit accurately current events, we should have nothing to say against them, but we are afraid they would fail to attract the public. From Eden till now man loved “the imagination of his heart”, rather than any kind of Truth.

To our mind, however, the greatest danger to healthy-minded people is the atmosphere of unreality created by the cinema graph. Along with the broadcasting by wireless telegraphy, now so popular, the people are being led into constant contact with unreality—make-believe. The “life” depicted is not a true picture, yet continued association with it produces grave illusions and leads to a lack of grip on truth and reality. Vice is glorified, and many a film villain is popular. Every kind of evil passion is depicted, and the spectators’ minds are affected as strong drink affects the liver: they become jaundiced. Look at the popularity of “sheik” pictures where women are rushed away by Arab chiefs.

What sense is there in it, and who can really visualize such doings as even remotely resembling real life? “Evil communications corrupt good manners”. Many a woman has developed into a jealous fiend because her mind has been filled with romantic suspicions by constant attendance at the “pictures”. Many a youth has learnt crime and developed lust through having his adolescence adulterated by the cinema’s portrayals. It has been truly said, that to be saturated with the “gas” of the films is to become insensible to the real facts of life. The Truth and the film in its present development are wide as poles apart, and we cannot imagine how a brother or sister who loved such stuff could remain faithful to Christ. There is no fellowship between Christ and Satan: between the Truth and lies—1932.

Bro. George Denney

Hezekiah's Conduit

Jewish World says:—"One of the most interesting chapters is that giving a full account of the discovery of the Siloam inscription, that is, the inscription on the tunnel which connects the Virgin's Fount with the Pool of Siloah to which we made a slight reference some weeks ago. The exploration of the tunnel, which is about 600 yards long, was first undertaken by the Palestine Exploration Society, under the direction of **314—The Berean 2005** Colonel, now Sir Charles Warren, and was attended with great danger and difficulty.

The passage through which the explorers had to crawl on their stomachs, was only one foot four inches high for some distance, and as there was one foot of water, they were submerged to their chins, having only four inches of breathing room, with the additional danger of being drowned by the rising of the waters. Their mouths were sometimes under water, and a breath of air could only be obtained by twisting their faces up. To keep a light burning, to make measurements, was a work of extreme difficulty, but the explorers persevered, and four hours kept crawling through mud and water, but without result. Some years elapsed before the inscription was accidentally discovered by a naked urchin, who, while playing about in the stream, perceived some writing on the wall.

On this becoming known, three enthusiastic archæologists, "Professor Sayce, Herr Schink, and Dr. Guthe, plunged naked into the muddy stream, and having crawled under the tunnel with acid solutions and blotting paper, and everything necessary to make squeezes, emerged shivering and triumphant with the most interesting Hebrew inscription that has ever been found in Palestine, which is now admitted to be as old as the time of Solomon. The inscription, having been deciphered and interpreted, is to the following effect:—"Behold the excavation. Now this is the history of the tunnel; while the excavators were still lifting up the pick to each other, and, while there was yet three cubits to be broken through, the voice of one called to his neighbour, for there was an excess in the rock on the right. They rose up. They struck to the West of the excavation. They struck each to meet the other, pick to pick. And there flowed the waters from their outlet to the pool for one thousand two hundred cubits, and...of a cubit was the height of the rock above the excavators.' From this it would appear that there were two working parties, working from opposite ends, and the inscription records the spot where the excavators met." —1888

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil"-1 Tim.6:9-10.

Let us note here that the apostle is not speaking of the effect of the possession of riches, but the effect of the pursuit of riches. The possession

of great riches, as Jesus taught, is an almost certain bar to faithful service to God.

But Paul is speaking of that desire for wealth and the love of money which may dominate the life of a person whether they actually possess it or not. It is a craving for money and the things money can buy, the pursuit of which may occupy the time, energy and affections of the disciple as to dwarf, and even destroy his interest in divine things, causing him to "err from the faith."

"Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," The Berean 2005—315 is
just as true today as when spoken by the Lord. How much idleness in the Lord's vineyard; how much lack of interest in the study of the Truth; how much carelessness and unconcern about preserving the Truth in its purity; how much spiritual weakness in general is attributable to a greater desire for material wealth than for the true riches!

* * *

"For since I spoke, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" Jer. 20:9-9.

To all who sought to preach and teach the Word of God, there came times when the words of Jeremiah came home with telling force. We, too, feel like quitting; feel that our labours are in vain, when the world turns away from hearing the Word of God, often with derision and contempt. Sometimes even the brethren do not seem to give heed to what we have to say in such proportion as we feel our efforts deserve.

Even the apostle Paul had moments of weakness when he felt that much of his labour was in vain, but he could not hesitate nor slacken his efforts, as he said, "For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

The test of a faithful preacher of the gospel comes not when success appears to crown his every effort, but the test of a true soldier of Christ is when apparent failure marks all his efforts. It is then that it becomes clear whether the Truth is "like a burning fire in his bones," or whether it is half-hearted interest which can only be kept alive under considerable encouragement; whether he feels that it is a choice to work or desist, or whether he feels the "necessity" of working all the harder.

A valiant soldier of Christ, will, as any other good soldier, fight all the harder in defeat, and seek to train himself so that he can perform his work better and with more success.

* * *

"From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the LORD's name is to be praised" Psa. 113:3. Praise to the Lord is not to be spasmodic, neither reserved for special occasions. But the children of God,

surrounded as they are with manifold blessings, spontaneously give forth praise to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

* * *

"By his light I walked through darkness." Job 29:3

The natural human mind is enshrouded in impenetrable darkness so far as divine teaching is concerned. That darkness cannot be dispelled by human reasoning, speculation or philosophy.

He who seeks true wisdom and spiritual understanding by searching **316—The Berean 2005** through the tomes of worldly "thinkers" is only plunged deeper into the morass of jumbled, contradictory thought and philosophy which is the product of the natural mind of sinful man. Paul said: "The world by [its] wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor 1:21).

Such thinkers can neither understand the past nor know the future of God's purpose with the earth and man upon it. It is only when we turn the searchlight of divine truth upon a matter that we can walk through thick darkness, confidently and securely, as a path of light is opened up for us all the way.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness. They know not at what they stumble" (Prov. 4:18-19).

* * *

"And lo, thou art unto them as a lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not" (Exodus 33:32).

Is this not the same attitude as the one who says— "That was a fine lecture," or "that was a wonderful exhortation," and then straightway forgets what it was about and makes no effort to abide by the divine truth given in the "lovely song."

Just as the very eloquent words of the prophet were lost on the children of Israel to whom he spake, so the word of exhortation, no matter how well delivered, will not profit us unless we keep it in mind and try hard to apply it to our own ways.

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

The Spirit Of Christ

To bear the name Christadelphian is indeed one of the greatest privileges to which mortal man can attain. It means that we claim to be the brethren and sisters of Christ, and the sons and daughters of God; that we are members of a Divine family, having been taken out from amongst the sons of Adam, to be sons of God.

That is our high calling and our privileged position: the highest attainable at present. There is, however, an infinitely higher position to which we may attain in the mercy of God, and to which the beloved apostle John directs our

thoughts. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God... Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is " (I John 3:1-2).

We are thus called to be sons and daughters of God in a far higher and a perfect sense, which is to be realised by our attainment to the same nature, and the same unending and unlading existence as God himself. At present we are sons of God by adoption; having been adopted into the Divine family, upon the principle of faith and obedience.

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In the future, if we are permitted to attain to it, we shall be the sons and daughters of God by identity of nature; God dwelling in each of us by reason of our having been made partakers of His own perfect and glorious Spirit nature.

This is our hope; but meanwhile we are, as it were, in a waiting period; having attained to the privileged position of sons and daughters of God by adoption, we are waiting for the manifestation of the glory which belongs to those who attain to the fullness of that relationship in the age to come. The present is a period of preparation and qualification for the future.

The fullness of this relationship has already been reached by Christ. He has obtained the victory; death hath no more dominion over him; he is alive for evermore, having been made a partaker of his Father's nature, and in Christ we have an example, which if faithfully followed will lead us eventually to the same victory over sin and death.

The principles affecting our attainment of this future glory are very clearly enumerated by the apostle in writing to the saints in Rome:

"Now if any man have not the Spirit [mind, disposition] of Christ, he is none of his. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs ; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together...For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:9-19).

From these inspired utterances of the apostle, it is perfectly clear that without the mind or disposition of Christ, we cannot hope to attain to membership of that glorified family of God, of which Christ is the firstborn. Let us then endeavour to realise this fact. Christ is our example, and we are exhorted to "walk in his steps." He was of our own weak, sinful, human nature, "tempted in all points like as we are"; having the same weaknesses and temptations, calling for the same continual effort on his part to keep in subjection "the mind of the flesh," and to conquer it, and thus to "walk after the spirit." If it were not so, he could not possibly have been an example to us: he would have been different from us, and there could have been no exhortation to us, to walk in his steps.

The "spirit of Christ" is clearly exhibited in his separateness from all which comprised the world in the days of his flesh, and his ever-present realisation of God, and the things belonging to Him.

The first fact is plainly declared by Christ himself in his wonderful prayer recorded by John: "I have given them thy Word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14).

Separateness from the world is the fundamental principle of the example of Christ; the "spirit of Christ" was manifested in a complete separation from all that belonged to the "evil and adulterous generation" with which he was contemporary, and if we are his true brethren and sisters, we shall be found walking in his steps, and maintaining the same separateness in relation to the things which belong to this present evil world.

On this subject Paul's teaching is emphatic and not to be mistaken:

318—The Berean 2005 *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. vi. 14-18).*

Such was the mind or spirit of Christ, and it must be ours if we are to attain to the glory of the coming day. There is much need to be reminded of these simple facts, for the conditions existing in the world today constitute a grave danger to the sons and daughters of God. We are living in the days which Christ has compared to the days of Noah, when by reason of almost universal wickedness; God destroyed all but Noah and his family.

Moral conditions in the world today are such as to call for the gravest warning. Amongst the young of both sexes, disobedience to parents, unruliness of every description, impurity and a general laxity are everywhere discernible, whilst amongst the men and women of the world a truly shocking state of immorality exists.

The daily newspapers reveal a moral condition comparable only to Sodom and Gomorrah, and in which such sins as lying, stealing, blasphemy, adultery and immorality of every description not only pass uncondemned, but are actually and openly encouraged by such devices as the cinema, and in the degrading literature which is greedily devoured by both young and old alike. Let us not shut our eyes to the danger of being unconsciously contaminated by our evil surroundings.

There is only one safe course for Christadelphians to adopt, and that is to imitate the example of Christ, by maintaining a rigid separation from the prevailing wickedness. Let us remember that we are the "house of God," and that we are being built for an habitation of God through the spirit. In the natural world, a house exists for two purposes. Firstly, to keep certain things inside the house; and secondly, to keep certain undesirable things outside.

It is the same in regard to the spiritual house of which we have the honour to form a part. Let us keep inside the "house of God" the things belonging to

God and His Holy ways; love, temperance, righteousness, holiness, purity, etc., and let us see that we keep outside the "house of God," all that belongs to the world; its disregard of God and His Word; its amusements; its literature; its laxity and immorality; it is only by maintaining this attitude that we shall finally be accounted worthy to be numbered amongst the true sons and daughters of God, in the day when "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God will abide for ever" (I John 2:17).

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:2-3). Bro. W. J. White- 1932

What Does That Mean?

"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev.21:8)

Why are the "fearful" included in the list of those who are unfit for the kingdom? Haven't we been told to "fear God"?

Whenever this word "fearful" (deilos) is used, it indicates a fearfulness which springs from unbelief and lack of faith. "And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." (Matt. 8:26) "And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" (Mark 4:40)

To the Greeks this word expressed the ideas of worthlessness, vileness, and cowardice. Clearly as we are told in Rev. 21:8 if this sums up our character we will not be pleasing to God nor fit for a place in His kingdom. We must be as Paul exhorts, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." (Eph. 6:10)

It is an altogether different word from that which tells us to "fear God". This fear connotes a wholesome respect of the Great and Eternal.

Solomon defines it for us: “The fear of the LORD is to hate evil.” (Prov. 8:13) When we have the proper reverence for God it will cause us to bring ourselves into submission to His will.

Job 1:1 “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.”

Psa. 89:7 “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him.”

Mal. 3:16 “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.”

This fear means to have respect, to view as reverent, to regard or treat with awe, or to inspire with awe. It acknowledges a higher power than self. “Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.” (Prov. 3:7)

The concept is summed up nicely in, Heb. 12:28 “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”

Bro. Jim Sommerville