

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness, and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed.

Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom.

Upholding the Truth as Bereans since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

Chesapeake, VA ----S.S. 10:00 AM; Memorial Service 11:00 AM; Eureka class alternating Sunday afternoons; meetings held at members' homes on an alternating basis; please contact Dale Lee, 321 Woodbridge Drive, Chesapeake, VA 23322, (757) 547-5816 for specific directions.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Hope of Israel:
Loving greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

We want to advise the brotherhood of our study weekend planned for the last weekend in the month of May (the 27th and 28th), God Willing. The subject of our study will be "The Apocalyptic Epistles of Christ to the Ecclesias". We have contracted with the Holiday Inn Hanes Mall, located in Winston-Salem, NC, to be the site for our studies. This is the same site where our 2004 study weekend was held. We have arranged for a room rate of \$ 69 per night plus tax, single or double occupancy. Included in this room rate is admission to the hot breakfast buffet that the inn provides. The cutoff date for this group rate is April 20th. As in the past, we ask that you book your rooms directly and advise us that you have done so, that we may plan the food accordingly. We plan to have a catered lunch on Saturday and Sunday. Everyone is on their own for dinner. There are a number of eating-places nearby as well as a very large shopping mall with a food court. The phone number for the Holiday Inn Hanes Mall is (336) 765-6670. The nearest airport is the Piedmont Triad airport serving Greensboro and Winston-Salem. Alternative airports that are reasonably close are Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte, NC. An outing is also being planned for Monday, May 29th.

We are pleased to report that we have been visited recently by Bro. David and sis. Kelly Sommerville and their children, and by Bro. Matthew Hughes. We appreciated the words of exhortation provided by Bro. David. We also appreciated doing the daily readings with all our visitors and Bro. Matthew's involvement with our Eureka class.

Bro. Matthew Hughes, Bro. Bryan Lee and the undersigned journeyed to Richmond and to Lunenburg County, Virginia to visit some landmarks associated with the recovery of the Truth by our Bro. John Thomas. In Richmond, we viewed the exterior of the Malone house, where Bro. Thomas lived off and on from 1844 through 1852. It was here that Bro. Thomas labored through the inconsistencies of popular theology, including those of Campbellism, and where he broke from Campbellism. The group that met in this house during the mid 1840's was described by Bro. Roberts as "the first organic manifestation of the truth in the present age". The house is still lived in today, but like the Christadelphian community of today, is in an obvious state of decline. While in Richmond, we walked the grounds of the state capitol where a friend encouraged Bro. Thomas to go to New York to teach of the truth which he had uncovered. The following day we visited the hall of the Good Hope ecclesia (unfortunately described as a chapel today). The building

has been moved from its original site, but in most other respects appears as it did in Bro. Thomas' day. The podium that he spoke from and a bible presented by his daughter to this ecclesia are items of interest to the student of Christadelphian history. Good Hope was visited often by Bro. Thomas and he reported the highlights of his visits in the Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come. The rural setting of Good Hope reminded us of the considerable difficulty of travel in the mid-nineteenth century and the effort that it took for both the speaker and the audience to attend meetings. In an age where Bro. Thomas' efforts are less appreciated and his works are more and more being disregarded and ignored, we thank Yahweh that He provided such a diligent workman to uncover the Truth after centuries of apostate abuse.

We encourage all to visit us if able and to attend our study weekend in May. May Yahweh uphold us all as we journey Zionwards.

On behalf of the Chesapeake ecclesia,
Bro. Dale Lee

Ecclesial Correspondence

Dear brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus.
Greetings in Christ's saving name.

We have just completed a joy filled weekend here in the Boston Ecclesia. Last Sunday before memorial service Sara Garvey requested to become a member of the body of Christ through immersion into His name. David and Kelly have been working on a large addition to their home, so we moved the hot tub into the addition and strung some lighting to prepare for her immersion Saturday evening. Saturday afternoon the examining board met with Sara and witnessed a good confession of her faith. Upon completion of the interview Joanne Osborne requested an interview. The whole ecclesia along with several brethren and sisters from other groups were present to witness Sara's immersion and enjoy supper together.

We decided that since the addition was all set up with chairs and the organ that we would interview Joanne this morning and have the second immersion in place of Sunday School. Then have memorial service after that. As we were conducting the interview with Joanne our phone rang and I was handed a note saying that Ben Naglieri also wished to be interviewed. Upon completion of Joanne's interview we proceeded to interview Ben.

It certainly reinforces the benefit of the daily reading of God's word in the home and attendance at Sunday School. All three of these Sunday School members understood the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. We then immersed both Joanne and Ben in the hot tub in the presence of the gathered ecclesia.

This afternoon we held our memorial meeting and welcomed all three new members into our ecclesia and the Berean body as we extended to them the right hand of fellowship. We look forward to working closely together with them as we labor together in the vineyard. It is very encouraging to see the

next generation embracing the only hope offered to mankind. May God be with them in their journey toward his kingdom.

With love in Christ ,
Bro. Jim Sommerville, Recording Brother

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias - Corrections

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FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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

NORTH CAROLINA–VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 27–28, 2006
Bro. Dale Lee at dleecpa2@mindspring.com (Details to follow shortly)

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

Give Thanks Unto the Lord – Psalm 105

"Seek the Lord, and His strength: seek His face evermore. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."—Psa. 105:3-4

We have for consideration a very beautiful Psalm. We value the Psalms more and more as we grow older. We see their reason and purpose. We recognize our need for what they supply.

The Psalms are deep spiritual food—divine nourishment—bread from heaven. If we do not regularly feed upon these things, then we are sick, weak, undernourished, carnal, fleshly. Failure to fully draw on this transforming nutrition is the cause of most of the fleshly weakness, and poor spiritual memory, and lack of faith and spiritual cheerfulness that we bemoan and profess to deplore.

The proper food is all there in abundance. We inadequately take advantage of it, and then make unworthy excuses for the inevitable result.

A deep, constant imbibing of these things God has provided is the **ONLY WAY** to life. It is impossible to be spiritually healthy and strong

without it. There is no "light within"—only evil and corruption requiring constant treatment with strong spiritual medication to keep it in check.

The book of Psalms is frequently quoted or referred to by Christ and the apostles, not just as expressions of beautiful thoughts and feelings, but as specific, word-for-word, divinely-inspired doctrines and prophecies and commands. If we accept Christ, then the Psalms are for us—on his authority—imperative divine law, acceptance of and obedience to which are essential to salvation.

The basic theme of the Psalms is deep and unshakable thankfulness to God, rejoicing, spiritual peace in the midst of any sorrow, because of the infinite love and power and goodness of God to men. Thankfulness that we are in direct, personal, beneficial contact with the omnipotent power of goodness that rules the universe should overshadow every other consideration in our lives and minds.

Whoever really HAS this in truth has GOT to be happy. It would be impossible to be otherwise. And this is freely available to all—urgently pressed upon them by the appealing grace of God, but very few are willing to put the misguided thinking of the flesh aside and follow the way of life required.

The Psalms are full of God, full of Christ, full of what God has done in the past and will do in the future.

The Psalms represent the frame of mind—the ONLY frame of mind—that is acceptable to God. If we are not in tune with the spirit of Psalms, we are not the children of God.

Psalms 105 begins with 9 exhortations, 9 plain commands, and only if we sincerely endeavor to remember and obey these commands can we consider ourselves possible candidates for eternal life through the love of God.

These commands are as important as any others, perhaps much more important, though all commands are important, for our reaction to them immediately manifests the state of our heart toward God. The 9 commands of Psalm 105:1-5 are—

1. Give thanks to God.
2. Call upon His Name.
3. Make known His deeds.
4. Sing unto Him.
5. Talk about His Works.
6. Glory in His Name.
7. Rejoice.
8. Seek the Lord, and--
9. REMEMBER!

They begin with "Give thanks to God"—give thanks in everything, and always. They end with "Remember"—keep always in memory, in the forefront of the mind, where action and character are determined. Let us think upon these 9 points, one by one in order.

1. "Give Thanks Unto the Lord"

This is fittingly first, for it is basic; it is the most important. Cheerful thanksgiving based on an intense appreciation of God's infinite beauty and goodness, MUST be our basic frame of mind ALWAYS.

For this alone is life in the true sense—a living awareness of divinity and glory, an overflowing gratitude, irrepressible love welling up from within in reciprocation of divine love poured down on us from above.

If we have not got this, we are dead. We are cold walking carcasses; mere creatures of flesh like the dead world about us.

Thanksgiving is a beautiful frame of mind—healthy, wholesome, upbuilding, beautifying, inspiring to others. It leads to all other beauties of mind. It drives away all contrary characteristics: self-pity, envy, dissatisfaction, dissension, criticism of others. True, humble thankfulness to God for His infinite patience and goodness makes us want to help others, not to criticize and condemn.

God's children are guaranteed perfect peace of mind, if they do their simple little part—

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Psa. 119:165).

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee" (Isa. 26:3).

If we do not have this, we are not yet deep enough in the Truth; we have not yet put down our roots deeply enough into the rich soil of the Spirit-Word.

If we do not have the perfect peace of mind that God promises all His children, and that only He can give, and that can only be found by seeking it from Him, then wisdom cries that we should apply ourselves to it while it is yet called today. We should make it our most urgent matter of attention.

We must look in the right place for the trouble—for the reason we lack peace. We must look within our own fleshly hearts and minds—within our own weakness of faith and love.

No one outside of us can make us happy or unhappy. Happiness or unhappiness is from within.

It is so easy to criticize and blame others because we lack peace of mind. It is so easy to shift the blame from ourselves to our external

circumstances. This has been the miserable way of the world from Adam on.

But if we truly do believe what we SAY we believe, then continual, cheerful thanksgiving is not just the only reasonable and sensible frame of mind—it is the only possible frame of mind. We couldn't be unhappy if we tried.

In the light of the greatness and goodness of God, we should be overwhelmed with joyful thanksgiving continually. After all God has done, and is doing, and promises to do for us, if we are not happy we are reproaching God, ignoring and belittling His love and care.

If we are unhappy, we are unspiritual, we are carnal, we are dull and unresponsive to divine things. The infallible Word assures us, and the assurance should be all-sufficient for all time—

"All things—ALL things—work together for good to them that love God."

Do we BELIEVE this? It is God's Own guaranteed Word. Does our life and our attitude toward everything give evidence that we believe this? This is the essence of Faith—

"The assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen."

If we have not found this divine, unearthly peace of mind within ourselves, and largeness of heart toward others, then something is wrong. We are missing life's meaning and joy. We have not really found the saving Truth of God.

We take our own affairs too seriously. Our petty, passing affairs are not important. It is only God's purpose that matters.

The present is nothing—just a striving after wind. The future is everything. The present with all its ridiculous little concerns will be gone in a moment. The future will last forever.

If we are wrapped up in ourselves, we have never grown up. We are mentally stunted. The whole purpose of life is to grow up, to mature and develop spiritually by the study and absorption of the Word of God.

We cannot be self-centered infants all our lives. We must get our minds on something real and worthwhile, outside of ourselves and our petty little affairs and problems.

Now the Psalms will do this for us—IF we will let them, if we will get down to work and take advantage of them.

As natural creatures we are no use to God. He pities us but cannot use us eternally.

There must be great changes made in our minds and our characters. He has given us the tools. He has furnished us the power. He tells us how. All we have to do is to follow the instructions and USE the tools.

What must we do? We must read more, we must meditate more, we must think more, we must DO more.

"Faith"—the power that moves mountains and overcomes the world—that turns sorrow to joy, and frustration to peace—"comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Our baptism is just the beginning, the very barest, most elemental beginning. The preparing process takes the whole life—all our strength, all our interest and attention.

The difference between being dyingly natural and livingly spiritual is simply a matter of nourishment: spiritual food, spiritual growth, spiritual exercise, spiritual interests, spiritual activity.

We are still considering this "giving thanks" to God—what it really means, what it involves, how it must be the permanent, consistent basis of our mental outlook at all times. Paul says (1 Thess. 5:18)—

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God."

—in EVERYTHING—good and bad. It takes faith and understanding to give thanks for trouble and suffering, but Paul could do it. He had enough spiritual understanding to see the reason and purpose and necessity for trouble.

We have got to learn this too, if we want to be any eternal use to God. Any position of usefulness and responsibility takes learning and practice, and this is the highest position in the universe.

It is not easy. No real learning is easy. Look at the effort the people of the world will put into passing, worldly things. They do it because their heart is there. They love money, or fame, or power, or importance, or the sense of achievement.

Look at the effort and time Christadelphians are willing to put into things they want and are interested in.

Yet so many seem to assume that they will just coast automatically into eternal life without any real effort and application at all.

EFFORT is the secret, and LOVE is the power. What are we doing for God? If we haven't this kind of consuming thankfulness to and love for God that will drive us to joyful action and service to the limit of our ability, then let us have wisdom to do something about it without delay.

Let us put this down on our daily schedule as No. 1 at all times: "Give thanks!" We should carry these 9 commands with us always, and refer to them frequently—keep them in the forefront of our minds. And first of all is, "Give thanks!"

We cannot be unhappy when we are giving thanks; we cannot be sorry for ourselves; we cannot be angry at or unkind to others.

Truly we can alternate with marvelous inconsistency and breathtaking rapidity between blessing God and cursing man, as James points out. This is a highly-developed fleshly accomplishment, but such have not truly found God, or peace, or the joyful reality and power of true thanksgiving.

2. "Call Upon His Name"

—His Name Yahweh. What does it mean to "call upon His Name"? How would we specifically define it?

The basic meaning of this word "call" is to call out to someone to get their attention, to address by name, to greet or accost, to make contact with someone. It is derived from the word meaning "to meet, to come together."

If we compare this root meaning with the way it is used in Scripture, we shall get the full picture. These are the 2 steps in studying:

1. Get the real meaning of the word according to the best authorities.

2. Compare the uses of the word throughout Scripture.

The latter is the most important, for how God Himself uses the word is the final determination.

This is why all modern versions are useless for satisfying and profitable study. They are not direct translations but just vague paraphrases according to the ideas of men. We cannot dig into man's conclusion as to the meaning. They might be right, but we have no way of comparing and checking, so they are dangerous.

A word derived from this word "call" means exactly the same in Hebrew as "ecclesia" does in the New Testament—"A group called out to assemble in worship." As, for example, Ex.12:16—"An holy convocation."

Now, proclaiming God is covered in the 3rd command; talking together about Him in the 5th; asking for help in the 8th. What then is specifically meant here in the 2nd?—"Call upon His Name."

It appears to mean identifying ourselves with God—making ourselves His—separating ourselves unto Him in allegiance and worship. The first use of this phrase is significant—To Seth was born a son..."Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26).

This clearly does not mean the first appearance of worship, but it does appear to mean the beginning of SEPARATION in worship—the clear, healthy separation between the sons of men and the sons of God, which was broken down later and led to the worldwide corruption that brought the judgment of the Flood.

3. "Make Known His Deeds"

We must speak of God to those around us: not simply as a matter of preaching, but naturally and inevitably as the greatest and most basic fact

of life. No thought or conversation has any relation to reality that is not built on this foundation.

If our belief is real and living, then it will color and control ALL our conduct and conversation. If it doesn't, we are living a lie.

David in the Psalms speaks naturally of God in all aspects of his life. In ALL that befell him, both for good or ill, he could vividly discern the loving and guiding, though often chastening, Divine hand.

And for the benefit of all subsequent generations he was caused to record his inmost thoughts, making known God's wonderful works among the children of men. The Psalms are the outpouring of this desire to make the greatness and goodness of God known, that all men may come in joyful wisdom to the beauty of holiness.

We must, like David, fill our minds and thoughts with God and His goodness, and then we too shall be moved to speak in the fullness of our hearts—not in contention and condemnation but compassion and invitation.

4. "Sing Unto Him"

The Psalms are songs. They go beyond mere proclamation of God. They go beyond mere prayer. They have far greater depth and intensity and feeling than mere words.

Singing is a vital part of worship: both public and personal, both with the lips and silently in the heart. Paul speaks of—

"Making melody in your hearts unto the Lord."

People who do this are beautiful people, desirable people, people whose company is joyful and inspiring. The truth of God is a living thing. It must fill the heart as well as the understanding.

Could OUR normal frame of mind be described as "making melody in our hearts to the Lord"? If so, we have found the secret of life. If not, let us find out what is wrong and what we are missing, before it is too late!

5. "Talk of His Wondrous Works"

This is best illustrated by the words of Malachi (3:16)—

"Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another."

This is the bond of their communion together—the "wondrous works of God." What we say is the measure of what we are. The content of our normal conversation is the indicator of the spiritual fruitfulness or barrenness of our mind.

This Psalm, like many others, speaks of God's wondrous works in delivering His people from Egypt. Why is this theme repeated over and over—the blood, the frogs, the lice, and the firstborn slain?

Some feel they must pass quickly over these things. They are embarrassed and uncomfortable. They prefer to dwell only on God's love

and mercy. Others glory and rejoice in these terrible judgments, with personal pleasure and vindictiveness.

Both views are wrong. We are told (Eze. 33:11)—"God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

—nor should His servants. They should sorrow and grieve, like Christ over Jerusalem, though Jerusalem cruelly slew him. The judgments of God on wickedness are dwelt upon in the Psalms, and we meditate upon them, because—though sad—they are essential to the world's salvation—

"When Thy judgments are in the earth, THEN will the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."

It is an undeniably desirable thing that the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Therefore His judgments that lead to that righteousness are desirable.

But He calls on US to learn from the recorded lessons of the past, and to learn the wisdom of righteousness without the necessity of judgment.

The judgments on Egypt are a great type of the judgment of the world in the last day, when fleshly folly will be wiped out, and godly righteousness established.

We meditate upon these judgments upon Egypt, and take comfort from them—especially in this foolish, evil, violent day—because they show, not only that God can control all things, but that at the proper time He will control them. It seems today that vice and violence are expanding unrestrained, and things going rapidly from bad to worse throughout the earth.

But God is just as deeply interested, and just as closely in command, as He was when Egypt oppressed Israel, though He was silent until the appointed time arrived. There are no mistakes. Nothing goes beyond its appointed bounds. God is working His will in the Kingdom of Men as surely as He was in the terrible days of the Exodus from Egypt. That is why the Psalms say so much about that time.

God only rarely openly bares His arm. But those rare times are the key to all history.

Therefore His people talk often one to another of all His wondrous works. This is the central command of the nine. Let us be ever found so engaged.

We all can talk at endless length upon what interests us and fills our hearts—mostly things to do with ourselves. But how much of our talk is idle chatter, because our interests are so shallow!

6. "Glory in His Holy Name"

Three deep and wonderful things are combined: glory, holiness, and the Memorial Name of Yahweh.

What does it mean to "glory"? What are we here commanded to do? Is it more than rejoicing, for that is the next command. "Glory" as a noun means "supreme splendor or excellence." The highest, finest attribute or characteristic of anything is its glory—

"The glory of young men is their strength."

Of course, here more than physical strength is meant, for John says—

"I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong."

The young have strength and vigor to accomplish. The old have wisdom and experience to direct. These are their respective glories.

To "glory in His Holy Name" is to make it our highest aim, to "seek FIRST the Kingdom of God," to—

"Set our minds on things above, not on earthly things"

—to center and focus our lives upon attainment to an eternal part in that glorious Memorial Name of Yahweh, the manifestation of God's glory in a purified multitude.

"Glory ye IN His holy Name."

Shine forth that Name and purpose in all you do. Put off the Old Man of the flesh; put on the New Man of the Spirit.

7. "Rejoice Ye That Seek Him"

WHAT else could they do than rejoice, if they are truly seeking Him? What other possible frame of mind is there that fits the situation? Paul said (Rom. 5:3)—

"I rejoice in tribulation"

And James said (1:2)—"Count it all joy when ye meet various trials."

Why? God is thereby working out our glory. Jesus said—

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad."

—when you suffer in faithfulness. "Leap for joy" about it, he says (Matt. 5:12; Lk. 6:23).

"Leap for joy" because of suffering! What a strange thing to say! Why such strong and striking language? Clearly he is trying to impress us with something very important.

"Leap for joy" when you encounter tribulation. Not just bear it well. Not just be patient. Not just control yourself and see you are not provoked to retaliation and wrong doing.

These are all negative virtues. Jesus' approach is positive: rejoice, be thankful, welcome it, leap for joy, praise God for your rigorous spiritual training and discipline that is lovingly preparing you for eternal glory.

Have we really comprehended the full picture of what our holy calling means, or are we still groping on the outer fringes of the glory of godliness? Let us ponder these marvelous things, and extract their

transforming power, especially this strange command to "leap for joy" at tribulation.

8. "Seek God and His Strength"

"Seek and ye SHALL find," said Jesus. And through Jeremiah, God said (29:13)—

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

"Seek His face forevermore," the Psalmist says. Clearly then the seeking is a perpetual activity.

Truly we have found much. We have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light. We have found the Way of Life.

But seeking the Lord is an endless duty and an endless pleasure—a constant striving for deeper understanding, greater comprehension, fuller discernment of God's great revelation of Himself and His Word.

And finally—

9. "REMEMBER!"

"Remember his marvellous works that he hath done: his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth."

His works: the marvels of Creation. His wonders: the specific manifestations and working out of His purpose. His judgments: that which He has recorded for our instruction, training, and guidance.

"Remember!" How often the Scriptures sound this warning note!

Some things we remember indelibly from childhood. Some things we forget the next day. How clear our memory often is for worldly things, while so forgetful in spiritual things!

Why? What is the answer? We reveal where our heart is by what we remember and what we forget. We remember worldly things best because our minds are on worldly things.

Let us face it and not make excuses, or blame it on "poor memory." We shall never cure it if we do not face it. Let us test our heart by this rule—

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

What are we fluent in—remembering all the details, and able to chatter on endlessly about? Is it the things of God, or our own passing, personal things? This 9th command says:

"Remember HIS marvellous works, HIS wonders, and the judgments of HIS mouth."

Fill the mind with God, and we shall gradually become like God. Fill the mind with the things of the flesh, and we shall be mere creatures of the flesh.

1. Give thanks to God.

2. Call upon His Name.
3. Make known His deeds.
4. Sing unto Him.
5. Talk about His Works.
6. Glory in His Name.
7. Rejoice.
8. Seek the Lord, and--
9. REMEMBER!

Bro.G.V.Growcott

Psalm 23

Once again we've been given a chance to remember the Lord Jesus Christ. His flesh and blood are represented by the emblems we'll partake of, and let us give our undivided attention to why our Master was crucified. God allowed His only begotten son to be killed, because He loves us and wanted to give us weak, sinful human beings a chance for eternal life.

While remembering Christ, we'll be speaking about David's words in Psalm 23. This is a beautiful Psalm. I remember when I was around 10 years old; I recited this Psalm in a Sunday School Program. It wasn't until now, that I really gave each verse much thought, and really broke it down. Each year when Psalm 23 would come up on our daily Bible reading schedule, and we would read it, I would just think of remembering the verses for the Sunday School program, but I knew that the point of this Psalm was taking comfort in the Lord, and realizing he provides us with the essential needs in our lives.

It's important to remember David was a shepherd. Also, Christ's own words tell us, "I am the good Shepherd and know my sheep and am known of them." Notice the comparison and how well this Scripture relates to David and Christ -- two men after God's own heart. What makes this Psalm so special is that David, with the words of his own individual experience, wonderfully and prophetically describes the Greater Shepherd of the sheep that would come into the world after him, and we know that this man is the Lord, Jesus Christ.

At many points in the Bible, Jesus is referred to as the shepherd and we, his followers, are his sheep. For example, in Matthew 26:1, when speaking of Christ's crucifixion, "Then saith Jesus unto them all, ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad." The sheep here are God's chosen people, being separated from the Shepherd (Christ) and having to live without him in their presence like he had always been. In another verse, Christ tells Peter to "feed my sheep". By this he meant to

preach the Word, it was “spiritual food he was to feed them with; the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

When we think of a shepherd, we should think of the job that is at hand. David was a shepherd, who at times had to risk his life fighting off the beast of the fields that could harm his sheep. A shepherd is a guide, a leader, someone who shows the way. We can envision David leading his flock to a pasture. Maybe for a couple of days the sheep can graze in the field, eat plenty, drink water, and have enough to just stay in the same spot until all the pasture was used up. At the end of the day, David was most likely very thankful to God for providing enough so that he didn't have to go on a long journey; leading the sheep, defending them, and taking them to different pastures for better food. Just like us, David had days when his life, or safety, was put in danger and he had to put his trust in God to help him make it through. Let us remember that David was a man after God's own heart, so we know he was a man of prayer, and depended on God's love and protection, as we all must do.

We can imagine David going on journeys with his flock, trying to find good pastures to let them graze. Sometimes he had to travel through rough places, maybe the road wasn't wide enough for all the animals to be comfortable traveling down. Maybe a wolf or pack of wolves would come along looking for a lamb to kill for a meal. David would always be on guard, with the 'rod' in his hand to defend his sheep and keep them from harm. David traveled through valleys and over hills, walking miles at a time, not knowing what was in the paths ahead of him.

Another thought that comes to mind is that David grew very close to his sheep. Being a shepherd, he would have had to be with them all day long, everyday. Those of us, who have or had a family pet, know that they become part of the family, though they cannot speak. Every time we leave home for a while, we find that we miss our four-legged friend and companion and we may find ourselves talking to them, like they can actually respond back.. I'm sure all of us do it. In any case, we do this because our pets are close to us and we care for them as if they were one of our children. David had the same or even a greater love for his flock of sheep because he “lived” with them all day, every day – for this is the shepherd's job.

Focusing on Psalm 23, David applied these words to Christ, and Christ would apply the same words to our Almighty God, his Father, and our Father too. As I explained, the shepherd's job can be related to Christ leading and guarding his flock, us, from the dangers of this world. The same love that David provided to the sheep of the pastures, Christ provides for us, the inhabitants of this corrupted world. Remember that we are the scattered sheep of this world, trying to separate ourselves from the goats, or non-believers.

A wolf looking for its prey amongst the flock is like worldly things coming at us everyday trying to overcome and take us away from the ways of God. We must remember that Christ, and God, will protect us from the evils of this world and that God may put trials in our life, to serve as “wake-up calls”, or He will chastise us as we have need. The “rod” that David would use to defend himself and his flock from an intruder, can be the same rod that our Father would use (in a symbolic sense) to chastise us and correct our ways when we wander off the straight and narrow path that would lead to life eternal. A brother told me that the rod had a crook on the end of it, this would make it possible for the shepherd to pull something toward him, or maybe tug on a leg to make a lamb wandering away to come back to the flock and set it straight again.

This also can be related to God or Christ as well. When something happens to us to make us realize we were going astray, let us see this as God's love, not that he is out to get us and cause trouble in our life, but if it will make us come back to Him and he knows that our heart and mind has the potential to serve and please Him, He will pull us back towards Him for our own benefit, regardless if we see it or not. That is our decision to accept it or not.

So if we read Psalm 23, verse by verse, verse 1 states: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.” What is there to want in this life when we have made the commitment to serve the Lord and follow in his footsteps? We have all we need when we really think about it. This first verse is showing us how having Jesus Christ as our Shepherd, our guide, our deliverer, our savior, we need nothing else in this present life. What we need is to be alive, with good health and the ability to study His Word. It is fair to say that God has provided most of us with these two things, although our health may fail as we get older, God has told us our days are numbered, so we must make the best of what we are given.

Moving on to verse 2, “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures”, here we must realize why these pastures are detailed as green. The rest of the verse states “He leadeth me beside the still waters”. Here, the Word still is key to understanding what is meant by the Psalmist's words.

Why would a shepherd lead his flock to green pastures and beside still waters? Well, we know that sheep eat the greener grass, and a shepherd wouldn't have his sheep grazing in a field where there was all dead grass, dirt spots, rocks and trees. A green pasture shows us healthy well grown grass, where the sheep can eat and gain good nourishment. David, or any shepherd, would also have to find water to keep his flock hydrated. The still or quiet waters are indicative of rest.

So, these green pastures can be related to us by representing them as having a quiet home, reading the Bible, and studying God's Word daily, attending Sunday School weekly, having a means of transportation to get

us there, having loving brothers and sisters to fellowship with, living in a quiet part of the world away from war and turmoil. These things are our essential needs to have a good life in the eyes of our Master and not having the fear of being killed for the One we worship.

A nice home with a family and no fear for serving the Almighty God can be related to the quiet waters where the shepherd would lead his flock. Sheep cannot drink from moving water such as a river with a strong current. They drink from where they can be comfortable and feel safe and protected.

In Isaiah chapter 49, we see a futuristic view of Christ, the shepherd, leading his sheep to the fountains of living waters because they (hopefully us) will have attained “the rest that remaineth”. Surely, this is the rest that can never be disturbed by the turbulence and strife of a sinful state and world. The true followers of Christ will have passed into the happiness of perfect calm into an atmosphere of purity and holiness. They will be surrounded by Divine righteousness that can never be dimmed by gathering clouds of disappointment and trial. Surely, they will dwell with the “Son of Righteousness”.

“...for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.” Isaiah 49:10

It is important to realize the “green pastures” and “still waters” Christ our shepherd has provided for us. Whatever situation our lives are in, whatever trial we endure, however long, let us realize the good that can come from it, things could always be worse, but with Christ as our Shepherd we do not have to be afraid, this Psalm should comfort us, as well as any follower of Christ.

In verse 3: “He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.”

We know that a shepherd would lead his flock safely to the green pastures and still waters. He has provided a way for us and we must follow in his footsteps, it is the only way to attain salvation. Christ tells us “He that cometh unto me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” Also, Christ says, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” Christ tells us and encourages us to follow him and we will be blessed.

This verse tells us that he will “restore our soul” and in this Psalm we see how it relates to Christ by him telling us: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:28-29. How clear it is that Christ will restore our souls if we desire to search out his ways and follow the path he has made. Speaking of this path, Christ again says: “I am the light of the

world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” Our Lord and Saviour is telling us that he is the path, he has paved the way, he cleared the path for us, all we have to do is follow Christ through this path, like the sheep would follow their shepherd they trust in.

Moving on to verse 4: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Here we must use our imagination while thinking of why David would write this. It would be fair to say that the pastures and still waters weren't always right there for David and his sheep. Depending on where he was, eventually a pasture would be all used up, or perhaps the pasture still had a lot to offer, but the water was a way off. David, many times had to just walk and walk, taking different routes, hoping to find a different place for the sheep to drink. A few things David may have encountered along his way, as mentioned earlier, were beasts of the field that could harm the flock, such as bears, wolves or lions. David was the sheep's only source of protection. His rod, staff and sling were his weapons of defense, and wouldn't appear to be sufficient. In traveling he may have had to follow a trail that was very narrow and dangerous and any little straying off that straight and narrow path could lead to a serious fall causing serious injury or possibly even death. David was there to risk his life for the sheep and although danger could arise, he trusted in the Lord for comfort.

In our walk in the Truth, trials will certainly come our way and there may be occasion when we wander off the path we are supposed to be following, and we are very lucky to know we are always accepted back, no matter how far astray we go, but we must not develop the attitude that Paul refers to in Romans 6:

Rom 6:14-16 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

The way of righteousness is not a joke or something to be tampered with, it is a blessing that we can even find it, for most people do not. The valley of the shadow of death can relate to any life struggle we experience. The point is that if we keep our trust in God, He will help us. It may not be as quick as we would like, but God will not forsake us, and this we see as Christ struggled on the cross, with his flesh pierced with nails, bleeding, feeling weaker and weaker, he kept his mind focused on the goal ahead. As I said, David would put his life on the line to protect his sheep and Christ's words relate so well when he tells us, “the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep”. Christ did not run from his Father's plan, he prayed

for the cup to pass from him if possible, but in the same statement said, "Let thy will be done."

So Christ's followers must sometimes pass through these dark valleys of tribulation and adversity that they may learn obedience and be developed in character. How necessary it is, at such times, to keep strictly to the narrow way and walk in the very footsteps of our Master and Savior. Christ has shown us the way through these dark valleys of trial, just look at his crucifixion. Here was a man perfect in the eyes of God, who was brutally murdered on the cross of Calvary to pave a way of salvation for us sinners, and all he requires of us are in his words "follow me".

Before his death Christ said to his disciples: John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ died and rose again, and he's still with us, responsive to every appeal for help. When we feel in danger or heavily burdened we may pray for help and ask the Lord to deliver us from evil. It is not until we pass through these valleys of trial and tribulation that we realize our Shepherd's love and care for us, or what he can actually do for us. He says, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Continuing in this Psalm, we read "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:" Here David is referring to the care of the shepherd in searching out the surrounding ground for things like snakes and other reptiles that might injure the sheep, and by his thoughtful care allowing them to feed in safety. The shepherd doesn't leave his flock for a moment. And again Christ so beautifully relates, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." After a season of trial, there is a period of rest and refreshing. So we go through our individual life's journey sometimes through the dark valleys of trial and adversity and other times enjoying a season of rest and refreshing. Through this all, we realize more and more as we journey along the road, the love and care of our Master and Savior, our Good Shepherd with our characters developing and our lives growing more and more in harmony with the will and purpose of our Heavenly Father, until we approach the end of day.

Finishing up this verse we read the words, "thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over". The shepherd anoints with oil the scratches and sores the sheep may get from briars and thorns, along a days' journey to the pastures and wells of water, sometimes they may slip or stumble along the rough places. The shepherd gives them a cool drink of water. So too, are Christ's weary sheep anointed with the oil of gladness and given to drink more and more of the water of life as they seek for it. They realize how much they have been blessed through all the times of being in the valley of trial and trouble. They have been preserved through all and developed and strengthened in their spiritual life.

Let us remember, we all go through our own life's experience. Whether we suffer a lot, or maybe only a little, there is a reason. We have a loving savior, Jesus Christ, our shepherd, here for us at all times. We are the flock of sheep, together. We are all following the shepherd, hoping to gain eternal life. It isn't until we are baptized that we can consider ourselves a lamb of the flock of sheep. We must remain together as a group, not letting anyone go astray because we are aware of the dangers of this world and the hope this world has to offer us, and that is no hope at all. Let's strengthen each other as we like sheep graze in the green pasture, as we try to follow after our Shepherd's lead. Let us take advantage of the "stillness" of waters, as we gather around these emblems remembering the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us remember why we are here on earth, and why God has allowed us to live. What are we doing with the time He has given us? Are we able to call Christ our shepherd? Do we know his voice?

One thing that comes to mind, as we close here today, is that many of us, sometime along our journey, have witnessed someone fall astray and never return to the flock. How sad it is to witness someone lose the hope of eternal life. As a wolf would come along and try to attack a lamb, the shepherd might not win the battle every time, and sometimes may be forced to let one go. The cares of this world may try to pull us away from our Shepherd's lead. Let us all be strengthened here today and depend on each other to help us through the dark valleys and to make the best use of what the shepherd has provided for us in the green pastures. The pastures may not always be so "green" and the waters won't always be "still".

Hopefully at the end of our journey, we will, like David and Christ, feel privileged to say "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever."

When the faithful sheep have followed their master through trial, tribulation or beside sweet pastures and living waters, wherever he had led them, trusting in him through storm and sunshine, comes the blessed rest which remaineth to the people of God. Though they may lie down in the sleep of death for a season, there will be a glorious awakening, and it surely will be "Come ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you. Enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

Bro. Joshua Garvey

Bible Readings Notes - February

"Thou, even thou, art to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry? Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still" (Psalm 76, 7-8).

"Search the Scriptures." These words of Jesus contain an exhortation applicable to all, but observed by few. Even among those that search, there is

not always a disposition to believe. Jesus chided the very community to whom these words were first addressed, because of their unbelief. "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5. 46). This inspired utterance of Jesus concerning the books of Moses should be sufficient to establish their authority in the minds of all who claim Christ as their Master. According to the plan of reading known as the Bible Companion, the second of the five books of Moses comes under review in February. In addition, the Bible student will read Psalms 58 - 104, Romans 10 - 16, the Gospel record of Mark, and 1 Corinthians 1 - 13.

EXODUS

This book is so named because it describes the departure of Israel from Egypt. Chapter 1 covers the period from the death of Joseph to the birth of Moses. A brief glance at Bible chronology shows that this period was 74 years, during which the Hebrews increased in numbers and influence, though most of them became steeped in Egyptian idolatry. (See Ezekiel 20:6) Amram and Jochebed, the parents of Moses, were notable exceptions. Paul declared (Heb. 11:23) that in hiding Moses they performed an act of faith. The deliverance of Moses from Pharaoh's decree, and his upbringing at Pharaoh's court by his mother (chap. 2:8) illustrate the ways of Providence in bringing about the fulfillment of divine purposes by apparently natural means. At the age of 40, Moses slew an Egyptian who was smiting an Hebrew. The reason for this act is revealed by Stephen (Acts 7:25). "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." It required a further period of 40 years (during which Moses was a fugitive in Midian) to develop his character and fit him for the great work of delivering Israel. At the end of that time, his attention was arrested by the phenomenon of the burning bush (chap. 3). Notice how the terms "angel" and "God" are used interchangeably in the narrative (verses 2 and 4). An understanding of the position of the angels as God's representatives elucidates many otherwise obscure references. The plural term "us" as applied to God in Genesis 1:26 is to be understood upon this principle, as also is the incident recorded in Exodus 24:9 concerning Moses and Aaron seeing God. The Memorial Name (chap. 3:14) by which God made himself known to Israel embodies within its meaning the purpose of the Almighty yet to be realized in the earth. It is rendered in the Authorized Version, "I am that I am." It is more correctly rendered, "I will be who I will be". See "Phanerosis," by Bro. J. Thomas. The name was subsequently expressed in the Hebrew by the term "Yahweh Elohim," signifying "I will be mighty ones." It foreshadows the purpose of God to manifest himself by his Spirit in a glorious multitude of earth-born, styled "His Sons," of whom Jesus is the chief (See John 1:12; Col. 1:15; 1 John 3:2). The Name will have become an accomplished fact when God is "all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28; Rev. 21:3). Moses was very diffident about going to Pharaoh, but God mercifully allowed him to take Aaron as his spokesman. Pharaoh refused to accede to the request for the liberation of the Hebrews, and

the ten plagues followed. Their purpose was to vindicate the supremacy of the God of Israel. "The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (chap. 7:5; 8:10). For this reason, the plagues were especially directed against the gods of Egypt. Some have questioned the historical reality of the plagues, and others have doubted their miraculous features. It must be remembered, however, that the plagues, the institution of the Passover, and the crossing of the Red Sea, are the only explanation extant of the origin of the Jewish nation, and their customs practiced to this day. Divine operations are indelibly impressed upon Israelitish history, both ancient and modern, and no other nation can claim the same. The Feast of the Passover (chap. 12) embodied many features typical of Christ. The Israelites were to take a male lamb, without blemish, to kill it, and to sprinkle its blood upon the side-posts and lintels of their houses. They were to eat the flesh that night, and be ready to depart from Egypt in the morning. The destroying Angel would pass over all the houses bearing the mark of identification. Paul speaks of "Christ our Passover" (1 Cor. 5:7), and Peter of the redemption obtained "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). The type of the Passover emphatically teaches that there is no salvation apart from the benefits obtainable by association with the sacrifice of Christ. The route followed by the children of Israel when they left Egypt was not as might be expected along the sea coast to the north-east, but in a south-easterly direction towards the Red Sea. This route was by God's direction (chap. 14:2), and was intended to prepare the way for the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. God declared, "I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host" (chap. 14:4). The effect of the miracle upon Israel was to cause them to "believe the Lord and his servant Moses" (chap. 14:31). Traveling still further south through Marah, the people passed through the wilderness of Sin, where they were miraculously fed with quails and manna (chap. 16). The manna represented Christ who was the Bread of Life sent down from heaven (John 6:33). At length they arrived at Sinai (chap. 19), where they received the law "by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53). Care should be taken in reading chapters 19-40 to avoid confusion regarding the ascents and the descents by Moses of Mount Sinai. At least five separate occasions are recorded, as follows:- first, chap. 19:3-7; second, chap. 19:9-14; third, chap. 19:20 - chap. 24:3; fourth, chap. 24:9 - chap. 32:15; fifth, chap. 32:31 - chap. 33:4. Notice the order of man's obligations as divinely appointed in the ten commandments (chap. 20). It is firstly, to God; secondly, to family; thirdly, to fellow-man. The instructions concerning the tabernacle and its furniture were to be minutely observed. "Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount" (chap. 25:40). Paul quotes these words (Heb. 8:5) to demonstrate that the various features of the tabernacle were a "shadow of heavenly things," of which the substance is Christ (Heb. 9. 11 and 24). For a lucid exposition of the types and shadows of the law as apostolically explained, the reader is recommended to read the "Law of Moses," by Robert Roberts.

PSALMS 58 - 104

Simple as are the Psalms, they can be appreciated in their beauty and sublimity only by those who understand the Truth as taught by Jesus and his apostles. They express the mind of David, but portray the mind, sufferings, and glory of Christ, and the truths which centre in him. Many verses of Psalm 69 are quoted in the gospel records as referring to Christ, notably verse 9, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"; verse 21, "they gave me vinegar to drink." Similar references will be found in Psalms 71, 91, 102. There are many clear allusions in the Psalms allotted for reading during February to the blessings of Christ's coming kingdom upon earth. In this connection, notice particularly Psalms 67, 68, 72, 85, 87, 97. Psalm 58 contains a sentiment endorsed only by those who take God's standpoint in utter detestation of wickedness. "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (verse 10). Psalm 78 contains a striking summary of Israelitish history with especial reference to the nation's shortcomings. "They tempted God in their heart" (verse 18); "they limited the Holy One of Israel" (verse 41); "they provoked him to anger with their high places" (verse 58). The punishment which later came upon the nation provides a strong warning against rebellion or unbelief. Psalm 90 contains a much-needed reminder of the brevity of life, and the necessity for a wise use of opportunities. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (verse 12). Psalm 91 possesses a wealth of comfort for the distressed in times of trouble. Psalm 103 teaches the lesson of the ephemeral character of human life. "As for man, his days are as grass the wind passeth over it and it is gone" (verse 15). But "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" (verse 17). In the light of this fact, the righteous will declare with the Psalmist, "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord" (Psalm 104:33).

ROMANS 10 to 16

These chapters contain the practical exhortations which arise out of the important doctrinal matters, of which the apostle has treated in the earlier part of this epistle. He had demonstrated that justification was not by the works of the law, but by faith, and was attainable by both Jews and Gentiles. Nevertheless, Jews had precedence in the matter. "To them pertaineth the adoption" (chap. 9:4). The word of salvation was "nigh them" (chap. 10:8), but Isaiah had asked, "Who hath believed our report?" (chap. 10:16), and had declared of Israel, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (chap. 10:21). Israel nationally were rejected by God, but a remnant were saved "according to the election of grace" (chap. 11:5). The Gentiles were subsequently added to this remnant. Israel's fall has brought riches to the world, and their diminishing, riches to the Gentiles (chap. 11:12). Their restoration to divine favor will result in nothing less than "life from the dead" (chap. 11:15). Well might the apostle exclaim,

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (chap. 11:33). Chapters 12 - 15 indicate the manner by which the believer can show his gratitude to God for all his mercy. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice" (chap. 12:1). This can be done by subjection to the will of God (chap. 12:2), by love one towards another (chap. 12:10), by subjection to magistrates (chap. 13:1), by sympathy and consideration towards all (chap. 15:1). Chapter 16 contains Paul's salutations to the believers, and concludes with an ascription of praise to God.

MARK

This beautiful record of the life and sayings of Christ requires little explanation. The following first principle matters are worthy of notice, however, in the course of a reading of the book. Jesus preached "the gospel [good news] of the Kingdom of God" (chap. 1:14). Doers of the will of God are styled "Christ's brethren" (Greek, Christos Adelphoi; anglicized, Christadelphian) (chap. 3:35). Jesus inculcated a belief in his second coming (chap. 8:38). He proclaimed the Unity of God and repudiated equality with him (chap. 10:18). He taught that belief and baptism are both essential to salvation (chap. 16:16).

I CORINTHIANS 1 to 13

Paul's object in writing this epistle was to combat the influence of worldly wisdom among the Corinthian believers and to settle many questions and disorders which had arisen among them. He first demonstrates the incompatibility of worldly wisdom and the wisdom of God (chaps. 1 and 2). He warns against the evil of strife and division (chap. 3), and reprimands the Corinthians for condoning immorality in their midst (chap. 5). He teaches that holiness of life is indispensable to an entrance into the Kingdom of God (chap. 6), and that the marriage tie, as it affects believers, is sacred (chap. 7). In chapter 8 the apostle emphasizes the Unity and Fatherhood of God. "To us there is but one God the Father" (verse 6). This doctrine is in total opposition to the popular doctrine of the Trinity.

As Ye See The Day Approaching

Beloved in Christ Jesus, the day of our Master's return is drawing ever nearer. We know this by way of exhortation week after week. We know it even more perfectly by the reading of God's Holy Word of Truth and the fulfillment of prophecy before our very eyes. We are also aware that through time many have wearied of hearing these warnings. They have been desensitized to sin and evil through following the natural desires of the flesh and mind. Many, continuing in sin, have their consciences seared as with a hot iron. They fall away from the Truth, loving this present world (order of things) and finding the way too difficult and confining. There have ever been those who have said: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3:4) We must stay alert to avoid the error of those who have lapsed or have been lulled into a false sense of security by the here-and-now. We must

remember that we are in open warfare with the flesh. We are commanded to walk after the Spirit. Clear are the commands. “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.” (Gal. 5:16-26)

In Rom 8:1-8 we read: “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” John commands us: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (I John 2:15-17)

The warfare that we wage is just as real as any warfare waged in the natural world around us. It is very much a warfare of the mind. The mind of the Spirit, found alone (in this age) in God's Holy Word of Truth, must be written on the fleshy tables of our hearts. It can only be inscribed on those fleshy tables by constant prayerful reading, study and calling to remembrance. We must ever strive to keep it before our mind's eye. Proverbs 7:1-4 comes to mind: “My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye. Bind them upon thy fingers, write them upon the table of thine heart. Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman...” We must desire God's Word and diligently seek to know what His mind or will is.

Remember the Scripture that says: “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.”?

The mind of the Spirit is in constant battle, or combat, with the ideas, suggestions, ways and promptings of the fleshy mind if we are doing as we should. The problem is that we often have or let our guard down. When our guard is down, we are in serious and constant peril. If we habitually are not watching and vigilant, we are merely coasting down the easy way to death. The two minds, or ways of life, are utterly contrary and incompatible to each other. We must keep ever clear just what the enemy we fight is. It is the law of sin in our very members. It is the propensities, motions and lusts of the flesh we must ever be on guard against. Our defense is to know the divine commands and will and to comply through obedience. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isa. 55:7-11)

Our elder brother and high priest, Jesus Christ, is the first from among the race of Adam to have truly overcome the flesh. He completely prevailed in the long and arduous struggle, as the conquering lion of the tribe of Judah! He held it powerless, even unto the end of his course. He did not, nor ever could have, prevailed in his own strength alone. We are informed that Jesus: “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” (Heb. 5:7-9) We are told that he destroyed the devil and the works of the devil! This we know he accomplished in his victorious triumph in death over sin! “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.” (Heb. 2:14-18) “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose

the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” (I John 3:8)

Jesus strove against the flesh all the days of his sojourn like Jacob who wrestled with the angel at Peniel. “And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed”. (Gen. 32:24-28) This wrestling of Jacob with the angel pointed forward to Christ who is truly and in the fullest sense The Israel – Prince with El, i.e. Prince of and with Power. Yahweh is the Most High, All-Wise, Everywhere-Present, Ever-living, All-Powerful and only true Deity of heaven and earth and all that in them are. He has underived immortality and power. His only begotten and well beloved son truly is the Israel of God, in that Yahweh raised him up from the death state and gave him the power of an endless life and also all power in heaven and earth. So now he, Jesus, ever lives; having been given consubstantiality with the Father and all power as Chief Prince of power under Yahweh! Yahweh, his Father, is manifested in and through him. He is truly and justly the King of Israel in that he is the most holy one of the nation of Israel and the first born (in the complete sense of anastasis – standing up again) from among the dead! What a great and marvelous victory! He trusted wholly in his Heavenly Father, never once allowing natural thought to cloud his mind. He continually resorted to his Father in prayer and relied always upon the Word of God. What is more, he rightly divided it, understanding it as none of his enemies did. Though his enemies continually charged him with sin and iniquity, he could truthfully say: “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (John 8:44-47)

Jesus' enemies followed and still do follow the thinking of the flesh. We must follow him. We profess to be his disciples. He is the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by him. It must be on the Father's terms that we draw nigh to Him. He will be sanctified by those desiring to come to the throne of grace. Jesus is that one through whom we must approach that august throne. He is the doorway both to Yahweh and to life! It is all we like sheep that have gone astray. It is Yahweh's prerogative alone to have set the terms by which we may approach Him and eventually be, in the fullest sense, part of the Divine family. Even now are we called the Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. However, when Christ, who

is our life appears, we (if found faithful through Yahweh's grace) will be like him; for we shall see him as he is! What joy! What inspiration! Let us war a good warfare and fight the good fight of faith, steadfast and unmovable, abounding in the work of the Lord. Bro. David VanPelt

Hymn 41

LORD, THOU HAST SEARCHED AND SEEN US THROUGH;

O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Psalm 139

THINE EYE COMMANDS, WITH PIERCING VIEW, *“The eyes of Yahweh are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”* (Proverbs 15:3)

OUR RISING AND OUR RESTING HOURS,

Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off.

OUR HEARTS AND MINDS WITH ALL THEIR POWERS.

Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

OUR THOUGHTS, BEFORE THEY ARE OUR OWN,

ARE ALL TO THEE DISTINCTLY KNOWN; “Yes, He knows the very thoughts of our hearts, even if we say nothing about them.” Instructor,

Questions for Children #11

**THOU KNOWEST THE WORDS WE MEAN TO SPEAK,
ERE FROM OUR OPENING LIPS THEY BREAK.**

For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.

**WITHIN THY CIRCLING—never ending— POWER WE STAND;
ON EVERY SIDE WE FIND THY HAND;**

Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me.

**AWAKE, ASLEEP, AT HOME, ABROAD,
WE ARE SURROUNDED STILL WITH GOD.**

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me.

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee.

**AMAZING KNOWLEDGE, VAST AND GREAT;
WHAT LARGE EXTENT! WHAT LOFTY HEIGHT!**

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.
OUR SOULS, WITH ALL THE POWERS WE BOAST,

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.

ARE IN THE BOUNDLESS PROSPECT LOST. Yet, we are as nothing in comparison to the vastness of Thy great creation—infinity and eternity.

**OH, MAY THESE THOUGHTS POSSESS EACH BREAST,
WHERE'ER WE ROVE, WHERE'ER WE REST;**

How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

**AND, SINCE THOU DOST THY CHILDREN SEE,
MAY WE BE HOLY LIKE TO THEE.**

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Jubilee Banner to Queen Victoria

Outside the [Birmingham] hall was displayed the Jubilee banner across the street. It was almost unanimously considered a Scriptural thing to “Honour The Queen” (“King” in Peter’s day) especially in a form that gave the chief honour to God in proclaiming the opening of the Scriptures to have been the glory of her reign. We must bear with those who think otherwise.

Their feeling is chiefly due to their desire to see the kingdom here, and the glory of man laid low in the dust. We all share this desire most strongly; but there is a present duty in the present situation. So long as God permits the kings of the alien to reign, it is our duty to defer to them, as did Joseph (Gen. 41:14–16) and Daniel (2:37), and even as did Paul, saying “Most noble Festus” (Acts 26:25), and who commanded to give “honour to whom honour is due” (Rom 13:7) remembering that while they possess authority “they are God’s ministers, attending continually on this very thing” (verse 6). For this reason, the brethren were satisfied to appear loyal to the throne by the exhibition of the banner, but more loyal to God by what was written thereon.— The Christadelphian 1887

Texas Gathering - 1895

Fraternal Gathering at Marble Falls.—It was decided at our last annual gathering in Bastrop Co., Texas, that our fraternal gathering for this year

(1895), should be held at or near Marble Falls, in Burnet Co., Texas, beginning on 23rd day of August, 1895, and continuing until the 26th or longer, if it is the wish of those in attendance. All are cordially invited to attend and help to make the meeting an enjoyable one. Our statement of the faith and basis of fellowship are too well known to need to be mentioned here.—John Banta.

[We have also a letter from brother M. B. Dabbs, announcing a gathering at Belton, in Bell County, to commence July 28th and last till August 4th; but there is some obscurity as to its relation to the other gathering. Is it in harmony? It would seem not. We feel some perplexity as to the correct line of action except that there should be no doubt as to the priesthood of Christ.—Editor] Bro. Robert Roberts

Comfort In Despair

Things have been very difficult for me. I have found myself struggling to keep my head up high. And just when I think things are getting better, they just get worse. When will it all stop? When will the pain cease? When will my heart stop hurting? I can’t answer these questions and neither can you. However, there is one thing that we must hold onto and that is love. The love of God. Without love, I can’t fight the fight. My brothers and sisters in Christ have been here to support and love me and without their love to strengthen me, I don’t know what I’d do.

So if you are one who is struggling with life and all it’s trials, just remember that love has so many ways of showing a person, rather making a person strong. I may cry today, but tomorrow will be a new day where my tears will all disappear and I will be filled with joy and happiness and love.

I look forward to the day Christ returns and the day when all our sadness and tears will disappear. All our heartache and pain will go away... I look forward to....”The Reward”!
Sis. Laura Pando

Clean Flesh

It is a first principle of the truth that Jesus, at his first appearing among men, was of the identical flesh of all men—the flesh derived from the condemned transgressor in Eden. His mission required that it should be so, both that he should conquer sin morally by obedience (which he could not have done in “pure flesh,” as Renunciationism teaches), and that he might nullify its hereditary condemnation by offering it up in sacrifice on Calvary as required. Those who teach otherwise unwittingly make void the sacrifice of Christ. They intend to honour Christ perhaps: but it is only as Peter honoured him in saying, “Lord, this shall not be unto thee,” which evoked the Lord’s prompt rebuke: “Get thee behind me, Satan.”

The Christadelphian 1894

The Sacred Scriptures

For myself, I believe, that the Holy Spirit is the only authoritative, infallible, efficient, and sufficient teacher of the Christian Religion in all its parts. If I be asked, what is the manner in which he teaches this religion? I reply, in the same way that all teachers convey instruction to their pupils: by words, either spoken or written. Hence it is by the Sacred Scriptures that He convinces men of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come in these times, and indeed, in all the times subsequent to the Apostolic Age. God is simple in all His plans. He appears never to use intricate means, when the end to be effected can be produced by simple ones. Simplicity is the characteristic of all that He performs. He rules the heavens, he regulates the seasons, and He saves men, upon few but powerful principles. If one means is able to make man wise, we need not expect to find any other institution than that one to effect the same end. Now, Paul, the author of my friend's text, says, that the Sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise to salvation by the faith, (or Gospel) which is through Christ Jesus.

What more do we want than wisdom in relation to this matter? If the sacred Scriptures are able to make us wise, we need no other instrumentality. The Holy Spirit by the word, without infusing a single idea into it, more than it actually and ordinarily contains, and without any collateral influence, teaches us all wisdom and knowledge that is necessary. It instructs man concerning his origin, his constitution, his sinful state, and how he may, though mortal, absolutely and unqualifiedly mortal, yet attain to life and incorruptibility; it informs him concerning the attributes of God, the creation, and the destiny of the earth and the race by which it is inhabited. Why, then, my friends, can we not be content with the means within the grasp of everyone who owns the volume of inspiration? If the Ecclesiastical World were content to learn the truth from 'the Bible alone,' and it honestly desired to obey Messiah, there would soon be an end to the Presbyterian and every other ism, by which 'Christendom' as it is called, or 'Anti-christendom' as it should be termed, has been for ages desolated. But the world loves not the truth; because therefore, they have 'not embraced the love of the truth that they might be saved, God has sent them strong delusion that they might believe a lie; that all might be condemned who have not obeyed the truth.' The Sacred Scriptures are not a dead letter, as the clergy teach you; they are 'living and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword;' this is Paul's testimony, and ought, therefore, to be received as true by all believers."

Bro. John Thomas – Apostasy Unveiled

What Does That Mean?

“So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.”
(2 Kings 6:23)

The above verse says that the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel but the very next verse tells us; “And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.” (Verse 24) Aren't these two verses contradictory?

The apparent contradiction comes about because we tend to misread what is being told us. 2 Kings chapter six tells us of the several attempts that Benhadad made to ambush Joram. He failed in his secret attempts every time because the prophet Elisha tipped Joram off. “And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. (verse 9&10)

Benhadad had entrusted these secret plots to no one but his own inner circle of servants; yet each time his plans were made known to his enemy. He supposed that one of them was betraying him. “Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?” (Verse 11)

When he was told that it was the prophet Elisha revealing his secret he made an ambush for the prophet. This too was foiled by Elisha when he smote the Syrians with blindness. This would have made at least four times (probably even more) that he had attempted to gain victory over Israel by using a secret ambush. Benhadad now comes to the conclusion that he cannot succeed this way. Elisha cannot be taken, and as long as Elisha is helping the king of Israel, sneak attacks will be of no value. He therefore discontinues these. “So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.” (2 Kings 6:23)

He comes to the conclusion that his best bet was to defeat his enemy by his superior forces. His new strategy was to make open war against Israel. It makes sense then that the next verse would tell us, “And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria.” (Verse 24) We find no contradiction simply a change in his military strategy.

The Bible, God's Word, is something we can trust to be accurate. Let us read with understanding in full assurance of faith.

Bro. Jim Sommerville