

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

LITTLE ROCK, Arkansas. Sunday meeting: Memorial, 10:00 am; Genesis study 11:00 am. Bro. Bob Widding, 1490 Joyner Dr. Conway, AR 72034. Telephone 501-329-5013. E-mail, piano.techno@gmail.com.

Dear brothers and sisters,
Loving greetings in Yahshua Anointed,

I want to thank all of the ecclesias and brethren and sisters for your encouraging cards and prayers. I also wish to thank my wife, Mary. She is most precious to me.

I am home now, and thankful to the Lord for His abundant mercy and blessings.

All of these experiences teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto the wisdom that is from above, which James declares, is first pure, then peaceable.

May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all as we walk Zionward.

Fraternally,

Bro. Bob Widding

BRISBANE, Australia—Sunday Memorial Meeting, 10.15am; Bible Class Wednesday, 7.30pm; Meetings are held at 14 Gregory Court Cleveland. Bro. Ted Mingham 8/2 Denison Court, Capalaba, Queensland, 4157, Australia Telephone/Fax 617-32451971, E-mail tmingham@hotmail.net.au

Dear Brethren and Sisters,
Loving Greetings in our Master's Name and Service,

It is with extreme pleasure that we are able to bring some good news from this part of God's vineyard.

Sis. Sharon Johnatty, having moved residency to this area from Florida, U.S.A., has now become a member of this ecclesia for which we are very thankful. Then on Saturday, 13th May 06, Sis. Sharon entered into the bonds of matrimony with Bro. Peter Small of this ecclesia. We wish them God-speed in their new relationship as "*heirs together of the grace of life.*" As an added encouragement to the ecclesia, Sis. Sharon has kindly taken up the pianist's role to support us in joyful and solemn singing unto our Lord.

On behalf of the Brethren and Sisters of the Brisbane Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia,

Bro. Ted Mingham

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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

NE FRATERNAL GATHERING – BOSTON.....Sep 30–Oct 1, 2006

Bro. Len Naglieri, romans6@mac.com, USA. 1-603-598-1745

Every Man Purifieth Himself

“*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves*”—John 1:8.

No one, it would seem, would make that bare statement. We all are only too fully aware that we are far from sinless. But there is a kindred frame of mind that is perhaps more common and more deceptive. It is a form of self-satisfaction. It says, “We are doing as well as can be expected of us.” In Bible words—

“*We are rich, increased in goods, and have need of nothing.*”

This attitude can too easily indicate a total lack of comprehension of the whole purpose of life and condition of natural man. It isn't a case of just getting through life, like a routine to be done. Life must be regarded rather as an *opportunity*—not merely a duty. The span of our life is the period given us to accomplish *certain definite results*. These things, if our life is to be regarded as a success, *must be done*, and this is the only time in which they can be done.

We are born in a certain condition—with certain propensities, certain characteristics. In the aggregate these are known as the “flesh.” *There is nothing good or wholesome about them*. They are unpleasing, unholy and unlovely—crude, selfish, earthy. That is our nature. It can be pleasant, but its pleasantness is of the thin and self-centered kind that vanishes when it is annoyed. It can love, but its love is rooted in self-gratification. Broadly speaking, where its own interests and pleasures and emotions are not concerned, it is thoughtless and heartless.

The world in general would not concur in this analysis. We ourselves would hesitate to express it if solely based upon our own observation. If we permit ourselves to be influenced by common opinion of the world's general self-approbation, we shall regard *this* view as hard and extreme, but if we fully accept the authority of God's Word, we must accept His appraisal of human nature.

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This then is the foundation with which we start. This is the rough material with which we must work. But we are called from it to holiness, perfection

and purity. A complete transformation from the ugly, repulsive, selfish thing we first discover ourselves to be, to a lovely, glorious likeness to the character of God. Not as a present achievement, but as the *unceasing incentive of an ultimate goal*.

And it is the apostle John whose name is most closely linked with the powerful agent that is to accomplish this transformation. That agent, of which John speaks so fully, is *love*. The greatest danger, it would seem, in regard to this subject, is misunderstanding, or not fully comprehending, what is scripturally meant by love.

It is not an emotion. It is a far bigger, better thing than that. It is a *principle of life*. It is the adoption, as the determining influence of every action, of the revealed divine viewpoint. God is love. Love is God. No definition of love is true which limits this conception. Love is godliness of character and action. Love is the enlightened expression of the mind of God. It is divinity. *It is the antithesis of everything human*, carnal and earthy.

Love is an expanding, uplifting influence, wholly pleasing and wholly satisfying, based on broad and eternal principles, with all the smallness and pettiness of human nature put away.

How does love transform us? We know that every thought leaves within us a permanent effect for good or evil. As individuals, we are merely the sum totals of all our thoughts. We cannot separate ourselves *from* them, because *we are* them—

“*As he thinketh in his heart, so is he.*” (Prov. 23: 7).

Every thought leaves its actual, physical effect upon our constitution. Thoughts are the small units of construction of which our characters consist. Every good thought is beneficial and works toward the final desired result; every distracting thought is a useless impediment; every evil thought is a ruthless breaking down of what faith is laboring to build. Therefore we are told—

“*Bring into captivity every thought*” (2 Cor. 10:5).

Our thoughts, and consequently our speech and actions, are influenced by many things—our nature, people, and circumstances, among others. Slowly we are molded by these influences, and upon them our character depends. Of *all* the influences which bear upon us and form our character, there is only *one* which can benefit and improve us to any extent and *that is* the influence of *God*.

We cannot create goodness or holiness within ourselves. We *become* what we are *made*. But we *can*, to a determining extent, choose the influences which **164—Berean 2006** are to make us. That is our responsibility. We cannot be *free*. In the nature of things, we must serve some master. If we

choose sin or the world, we become its servants, its slaves, and it gradually shapes us to its hideous pattern of death.

But this is where love can play its saving part, and if submitted to, can mold us to the beauty of everlasting life. Love cannot be separated from God. Love is divinity and godliness—wisdom, holiness, purity, kindness and patience combined.

Above all, *patience*. Paul *begins* his analysis of love by saying, “*Love suffereth long and is kind.*” Patience holds the keys. As long as patience holds open the door, all other virtues may and will develop. As soon as impatience closes it, all hope of peace or advancement is destroyed. John says—

“*Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure*” (1 John 3:3).

And he continues:

“*Little children, let no man deceive you—he that doeth righteousness is righteous.*”

What is John driving at? Is he not trying to impress us with the fact that our effort must show some *tangible* results?—that good intentions are not enough. There must be *visible improvement*—a steady growth of godly attributes and weakening of earthly ones.

“*Unto him that overcometh*” are promised many things but nothing for him that *meant* to overcome. We *must* overcome—we *must* advance. What was acceptable yesterday is not good enough today. Yesterday's goal must be today's starting point. “*Therefore,*” says Paul (Heb. 6:1)—

“*Leaving the first principles . . . let us GO ON to perfection.*”

It is a long way to perfection for the natural man. We have far to go and much to do. We must increase the talents entrusted to us. There was nothing but bitter condemnation for the servant who buried his lord's money in the earth. True, he kept it safely—but that is NOT ENOUGH. He didn't *increase* it. The warning is clear. There must be *tangible RESULTS*.

There is no excuse. We know the formula. We have only to make the effort to apply it. It is inevitable that we shall be molded and shaped by the influences with which we come in contact. It is a universal law. It is up to us to choose the influences wisely. WE CANNOT REMAIN UNCHANGED. Every experience and action has its effect, whether of death unto death or life unto life.

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If we subject ourselves to the influence and thinking of the world, we shall bring forth fruit unto the world. It is a natural law of our constitution. If we subject ourselves to the influence of the Word of God with a consistency

and intimacy that permits it to have its perfect work, we shall gradually acquire a godlike character. It cannot fail. **AND IT MUST BE DONE.**

“*We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory*” (2 Cor. 3:18).

Pretty words indeed—BUT—do they really mean anything specific to us?—can we give any EVIDENCE of their operation IN OURSELVES? Can we point to spiritual fruit?—gentleness, patience, purity and truth? This is the most important question that can ever be asked us. It *will* be asked us *soon*. The world is rapidly approaching chaos. *What have we to show at the final reckoning?*

Talk is cheap—very, very cheap. Fine phrases are sweet, and profession is easy in these tolerant, friendly days. But *the real battle is just as hard*, and just as important as ever.

“*If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live*” (Rom. 8:13).

AND NOT OTHERWISE. Do we even know what it *means*? We shall find out some day if we don't. Some day it will be burned into our minds to the exclusion of every thought. Thousands are already standing silently at the Bar, waiting for the number to be made complete. Many of them we have known intimately. Soon *we* shall join them. Let us ponder it well.

Having a smattering of the “First Principles” and being, as the phrase is, “in the Truth,” is no stopping point or guarantee. Can *any* be *so* self-deceived? Do any feel that in doing this we have done all that is necessary and can wait in assurance for the final divine approval, in the meantime busying ourselves with such transient things as attract our attention? Is it *that easy*?

We have set our hand to a lifelong work, and have *promised to put it foremost*. The baptismal examination is just to see if we *understand* the promise we are making and the responsibility that we are solemnly taking upon ourselves.

The transformation from the course of death to the course of life is a long and painful process, requiring constant fortification. We promise, at baptism, to adopt an entirely new course of life, based on revolutionary principles. We promise to put away forever the motive of pleasing ourselves and adopt the motive of pleasing God alone. We promise to apply this to every action, knowing that the only way to become godlike, and finally immortal, is to *minutely* and *consistently* follow a God-directed course of action which gradually puts the flesh to death.

This applies to *every* action and decision, particularly the everyday ones, for it is the small, hard-to-control reactions and emotions that hold the balance **166—Berean 2006** of power, for good or ill. The smaller an action is, the

more fundamental it is and the more it reveals character. It is much easier to key ourselves up for the *big* things than to be consistently true in the *little* ones.

This requires a continuous absorption of incentive and direction and power from the Spirit of God, through His recorded Word. This is the whole secret. Success or failure depends directly upon it. If we put ourselves, by constant study and reflection, in permanent contact with godliness, we shall be gradually transformed by it. If we don't, then it won't happen. Everything is the result of cause and effect—

“As a man soweth, so shall he reap.”

“Think on these things,” says Paul, *“Meditate on them—give thyself wholly to them.”* GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM. That leaves room for *nothing* else. Such other activities as are necessary for the sustenance of life and the fulfillment of legitimate obligations, instead of being interruptions or violations of these principles, should be made opportunities of practicing them and putting them into actual service.

How can holiness and godliness and purity and faith be *applied* to office work and factory work and housework? Does it seem incongruous? If it does, there is something wrong—there is something warped and clouded about OUR VIEWPOINT. The command is—

“Whatever ye do, do it heartily, AS UNTO THE LORD, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward” (Col 3:23).

We may get *part* of the reward now, a small meaningless part of it—enough to keep our bodies functioning—but the *real* reward is later. The less we get now, the more we have in store—THE MORE WE GET NOW, THE LESS WE HAVE IN STORE. Of some it is said, *“Verily, they HAVE their reward.”*

This is a vitally important point. It lifts our daily work out of the dull mundane sphere of carnal things and brightens it with the opportunity of serving God in the Spirit while attending to necessary temporal burdens. John says (1 John 2:15-17)—

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.”

This is not an arbitrary prohibition. It is the guidance of wisdom. We are not taught arithmetic at school just to rob us of the pleasure of figuring incorrectly. That would be a childish, petulant way to view helpfully-intended instruction.

So with *God's* instruction. None of it is harsh or unnecessary. It is meant to *help* us—to put us on the right road to life and happiness and well-being in a real, permanent, substantial sense. John does not stop with the bare command; he gives the *reason*:

“All that is in the world is not of the Father”—it is alien and out of harmony—“The world passeth away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.”

The world passeth away and takes all its friends and participators with it. Its fellowship is the sinister fellowship of death.

Many worldly things are not in themselves *wrong*. Many worldly acquaintances are not specifically *wicked*, but they all belong to a state of things that is ready to vanish away. To take part in their interests warps and cramps and beclouds our perception. We cannot hope to ever be part of a large and eternal *heavenly* order if we think small petty *worldly* thoughts.

The Old Testament chapter in the same daily readings (Isa. 40) brings this even more vividly into focus. The prophet urges upon us a conception of God and the purpose of life that is overwhelming in its immensity. If we can, by a supreme effort, get in tune with His viewpoint, present things shrink into their true insignificance.

“Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure?” (v 12).

“Behold the nations are as the small dust of the balance.”

“Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding” (v 28).

“Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things . . . by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power” (v 26).

This is the scale of conception that it is wholesome to dwell upon, and get away from the pettiness of our present surroundings. It is strengthening. It is uplifting. It engenders a sober, godly frame of mind.

This is the true state of affairs. The world but a handful of dust—its troubled history an insignificant fraction of eternity—the seemingly real and actual present but a brief interlude that will pass like shadows before the rising sun.

This is the sphere of thought that is comforting and worthwhile. Keeping our minds in *this* channel will result in a course of action in harmony with these things and which will fit us for a place in them.

We are told by well-meaning but worldly-minded counselors that if we want a better position we must fit ourselves for it. We must fill our thoughts with its responsibilities and requirements. We must, as it were, mentally live in that sphere and accustom ourselves to it.

Now of course this is entirely out of the question for those whose minds, in obedience to the counsel of the Apostle, are wholly given to *better* things—they **168—Berean 2006** just haven't the time for it—but it illustrates the

effort we must make on a higher and more satisfying scale. Often, sadly enough, the children of this world show more wisdom and initiative and energy in *their* aspirations than the children of light do in things eternal.

The human mind is not bound to its immediate surroundings. If it were so, life would often become unbearable. But consciousness is largely made up of memory and hope, beside that which is present to the senses.

Many people choose their solace by living in the past, comforting themselves with reminiscence and recollection, escaping monotonous or unpleasant reality by absorption in what is gone.

Most are wrapped up in the immediate present and the very limited future which comes within the scope of present undertakings. But such a course does not satisfy the contemplative mind. “*Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die*” is the universal doctrine, but only the shallowest, dullest minds can find merriment satisfying under such circumstances. Such an attitude requires the cruelest, bitterest form of self-deception and willful blindness.

But, in the mercy of God, there is a third alternative for those who feel the need. *How is one brought to feel the need?* By a recognition of the sadness and perversions of the present dispensation, due to the incapability and inhumanity and physical frailty of man. Is this brought home to us easily or quickly? Usually not. At first the world is a place of bright promise, of comradeship and love, of gay and thoughtless adventure. This is the impression of inexperience's innocence and buoyancy.

How do we learn differently? What prompts us to turn for comfort and satisfaction elsewhere? Usually it requires the rough hand of misfortune and disillusionment to make us fully appreciative of the vanity of present things. We are aware, it is true, of the vast preponderance of sorrow over joy in the world, but we feel nobody's troubles as keenly as we do our own. This is in the very nature of things. Our minds can only work on what is being continually presented to them in some form or another. Unless constantly reminded either by circumstances or direct efforts of our own will, we soon forget, and our attention is taken by other things.

This, too, demonstrates why we must constantly supply our minds with material for thought from the Word of God. If we don't, our minds will feed on other and unwholesome things that so easily present themselves to them.

What is the course of mental satisfaction that is offered, to counteract the depressing effect of present considerations? **Berean 2006— 169**

“*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned*” (Isa. 40:1).

Such are the opening words of the reading from Isaiah. “*Her warfare is accomplished and her iniquity is pardoned.*” These things have been recorded for over 26 hundred years—and the end is not yet. Some may be reminded, perhaps a little bitterly, of the statement by Paul to the Romans (4:17) that:

“*God calleth things which be not as though they were already.*”

Clearly there could be no more striking example. To speak assuringly of warfare being over when it still had a cruel course of over two thousand years to run may seem poor and misleading comfort—but *is this the truth of the matter?* Thoughtful consideration shows this but a narrow, unreasonable viewpoint.

Comfort depends upon the *state of the mind*. The comfort offered by the Scriptures is not dependent upon immediate fulfillment. It is the *assurance* of an ultimate reign of peace and good, that is separated from no individual by more than the brief span of a human life-time. Its comfort is not that distress is *finished*, but that distress is a *controlled and necessary ingredient of the final result*.

This is the viewpoint that prophet and apostle exhort us to maintain. We must live in patience and godliness, buoyed up by hope. We must center our minds resolutely upon that which is to come and face all present troubles in the confidence of this expectation. “*Sorrow endureth for the night,*” says the Psalmist—and the night may be long—“*but joy cometh in the morning.*” The course of wisdom is not to ignore or belittle the sorrow, but to balance the whole picture. We shall not be overwhelmed by the one if the other is kept brightly in mind.

Then we can enter into the spirit of these words of Isaiah and reap the comfort intended. We are not to regard the delay with skeptical impatience or lagging faith, but we are to build our lives and hopes upon these things in the quiet and calm confidence that they represent the realities and that in God's good time all will be accomplished.

V. 6 – “*The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry?*”—What good tidings is there?—“*All flesh is grass. The grass withereth . . . surely the people is grass.*”—Where is hope?

This is the thoughtful, but purely natural, view. It sees things only as they *appear* and leaves out the most important feature. V. 8 answers: Truly “*the grass withereth*”—truly present things are a shadow—

“***BUT the Word of our God shall stand forever . . . Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid. Say, Behold your God! Behold He will come and His reward is with Him.***”

Then the chapter breaks into the long, exalted eulogy to the power and greatness and unchangeableness of God, of which we have spoken. What is its

170—Berean 2006 purpose? *To raise and broaden the mortal conception of the meaning and purpose of life.* To train the mind into channels that give a proportioned outlook.

The human mind can be engrossed in the meanest and most trivial matters, or it can be devoted to the highest and loftiest considerations of divinity and holiness. The natural tendency of gravity pulls it downward, but the magnetism of the Spirit draws it upward.

As the mind thinks, so it becomes. A man is but the aggregation of his own thoughts. Therefore sons of Adam may be transformed into sons of God by a gradual displacement of the natural by the spiritual.

Every spiritual thought is an ingredient of the new creature—a strengthening of the spirit—a step towards life.

Therefore, says Paul (Phil. 4:8): “*Whatsoever things are true, lovely, gracious and just, **THINK on these things.***”

—and thereby gradually become like them. John continues—

“*Every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as **He** is pure*” (1 John 3:3).

“*Be ye holy,*” we are commanded (1 Pet. 1:16): “*for He is holy.*” Cleanliness, holiness, purity—these are attributes of *entirety*. A man is not *clean* if he is partly dirty. *Half* pure means *impure*. Perfection is demanded. Jesus said—

“*Be ye therefore **PERFECT**, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*”

“**BE YE PERFECT.**” How can we be PERFECT?

“*If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*”

But it is not a perfect *obedience* that is expected. Our perfection is a *gift*, not a personal accomplishment, for John goes on to explain (1:9)—

“*If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and **CLEANSE** us from **all unrighteousness.***”

“*If we walk in light . . . the blood of Jesus Christ **cleanseth us from all sin.***”

This is the secret of perfection. We cannot approach Him acceptably unless we are clean and pure in His sight. The Law of Moses teaches us this. Therefore *we must at all times maintain our purity from worldly thought and contact by the merciful cleansing of humble repentance and forgiveness.*

And so we meet together clean and pure and perfect and acceptable before him—not sinless, but repeatedly *washed from sin.* **Berean 2006— 171** How merciful a provision—but let us never abuse it. Should we regard sin with less fear, because God cleanses us so freely? “*God forbid!*” says the Apostle Paul (Rom. 6:2). Rather should His mercy be an incentive to greater effort.

It is a grave and solemn calling—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Tremendous privileges—tremendous responsibilities. Of him who treats it lightly, it will at the last be said: “*Better were it for that man if he had never been born.*”
Bro. G.V. Growcott

Matthew 10

When we meet around the table of our absent Lord and Savior, we are meeting because we love God. We pray to Him. We believe in what He said. We accept that His Word, the Bible, is the most important book in the world to us. We believe that He is going to reward us in His Kingdom for our faith in Him and obedience to Him now.

James 1:12 “*Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him*”. Without hope in those promises, we would truly be lost. For some reason, maybe slightly different for each of us, we heard about the Word of God. We learned how to read it. Then we decided to heed it.

It plainly says in the Bible that we love God because he loved us first. God loved each of us before we loved Him. 1 John 4:19 says that. We learned about the promises that God made to Abraham 2,000 years ago and we believe those promises. We believe that through Christ, because we love Christ too, that we are heirs of those promises also just like Abraham is. We know a little bit about what those promises are. We know that they involve land, a great deal of land in the Middle East. We know those promises involve us living forever, and a great deal about the end of the World and the defeat of evil. There are countless other things we are promised too, things we don’t even know about. It says in 1 Corinthians 2:9

“*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*” Those kinds of things don’t just naturally occur to us, but have been promised to people who love God. It takes God’s Word, spelled out in writing in the Bible, for us to understand what those promised things are.

All who love Christ come to understand these things, because Christ taught these things. If we love him, we will make it our business to learn what he taught so we can obey it all and teach it to others. Those teachings of Christ

are what we delight in and what we thrive upon. John 14:23 *“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”*

Those who love God, also love God’s Son – the Man Jesus Christ. Jesus revealed God to us. He brought into our plain sight who God is, what God is all about, and Jesus showed us God’s teachings in action. He also showed us all that God loves every one of us who come to Him. In our Bible readings in Matthew 10, we see the calling of the twelve apostles. Apostle means “one who is sent out”. We see that Jesus sent twelve people, who were named, on a mission. That mission was to bring his words out into the world at that time. That time was the Roman world, and it was not a world who would be ready to accept the message they would bring. It would take a great deal of love for Christ and God for them to carry out that message to a hateful and violent world.

Those apostles, at that particular time were told to help Christ bring God’s message of love and warning to the Jews. We are told in Matthew 10 that Jesus said – *“Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

Although later we were told to expand our preaching to the non-Jews, we still are to bring the same message to the people around us. That the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. That does not mean of course that Heaven is at hand. It is the Kingdom that is important here. But it is not the Kingdom of Bush, or the Kingdom of the Arabs, or even the Kingdom of Europe or Asia or Africa. It is the Kingdom of Heaven. In other gospels and in the rest of the Bible, it is called the Kingdom of God.

That message still stands and we love that message. It is a message from God to the people on earth. The Kingdom of Heaven is about to happen, are we ready? That is our message. The Kingdom of God is coming, if you love it, you can be part of it. How well do we get across that message to the people we meet? Do we leave it to other people to teach that message? Do we hope that maybe we won’t have to talk about it?

If there was somebody you loved very much who had a message for you to deliver, would you do it? A person who truly loves someone would be delighted to deliver a message for them.

Jesus said to those disciples not to worry about the money they might need, or the clothes they would have to wear, or what kind of boots or shoes to bring. Jesus said to go into places and announce that they would talk about the Bible with anyone who would listen. I know it was not called the Bible yet at that time, but it was the word of those whom they loved, it was the Word of

Christ and therefore it was also the Word of God. Jesus was as man sent on his mission by God.

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Jesus stands as our high priest and intercessor. Jesus is the only person we have between us and God. We don’t believe in the validity of worldly priests. We don’t respect them or even believe they actually are priests in the Bible sense. We have one high priest, the man Jesus Christ. We love Him because he has showed us the way of life and taught us the Truth.

However, few people love Christ. Most hate the things he taught. Jesus told us: *“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.”* People don’t like to forgive others. They love to be forgiven. Most people only want to hate and not to love. Some people use to claim the United States is a Christian nation. But that makes little sense with all the political and moral problems. Firstly, the very idea of a nation is to toss aside the words of the Bible. Christians must love, they must not take revenge, but rather they are to take any wrath, vengeance, malice or evil intent and get rid of it. Christians must live their lives forgiving people all day long.

How could the type of government in this country exist with such people running it? They could not. Also, the idea that a majority of unbelievers could make decisions for everyone is foreign to the Bible teachings.

In the Bible that we love, is a teaching. That teaching is that we love, that there is only one way and there is only one God. There are not many paths. There is not room for diversity of ideas about right and wrong. There is one love, one faith, one hope. There is only one correct religion and that is it. In the Bible way there is not room for 3 main religions. There is no room for 3 main Gods. There is not even room for other holy books. There are none in the way that we live by. There is only one.

But in that one there is room for plenty of people. Notice that in the readings there were twelve different people mentioned. Simon Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

Twelve men. These men, as we could observe after studying about them in the Bible, were all different in their ways. Some were quiet and reserved, and did their work closely and diligently. Others were rash, and most of them complained a lot about stupid things like who would be greatest in the Kingdom. But they were required to love God and love Christ. In their diversity of personalities there was something that God saw and wanted. He wanted their **174—Berean 2006** devotion, love and faith.

But Christ warned them – beware of men. Men above everything else love power. They use that power to hurt one another. Men don't want to forgive and forget. Men want to make people pay no matter how long it takes. Men want to exact the last penny of debt from everyone. Men want to harm those they hate, and block the stranger from entering their gates. The warning is here today as it was then – Beware of Men.

We are warned that for following Christ, members of our own houses will definitely become our enemies. Fathers against children, brother against brother, children against their own mother or father. Jesus told us not to worry about that. It is remarkable how the natural love that should exist, that the world teaches is so valuable, is a lie and a fake. Family love is weak and shallow because once you give your life to God, your own families will often hate you for it. They believe that you owe THEM your devotion, and goods and love. They believe you owe them your warm thoughts and wishes. When they realize that those things are for God as far as you are concerned then they hate you.

Jesus warned us, beware of men. Matthew 10:21-22 says “*and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endures to the end shall be saved.*” Most people don't want this. They want the love of their friends and families more than the love of God. So they make God second in their lives. They begin putting the needs, wants and activities of friends and family first instead of God. Their love for God grows weak and begins to die. They lose their first faith and start to leave Christ behind. We must not be deceived; we must be prepared today to hate our family and friends when it comes to God. We must make God our first and only love and everything else can be accomplished by loving others in the way God says to love them, not in the way our flesh would have us do.

Jesus said it would not be easy. For those who love God, it is a battle that begins when we first begin to read and understand God's Word, and our sword must not be put down until we die. It is the sword of the spirit indeed, but it is a powerful blade, able to cut through all that would hinder us. Our sword is the Word of God. We, like Christ, like Abraham, like the apostles, sometimes, will flee from city to city as it says in Matthew 10. It was like that for Christ, why NOT for us? Few believed in it then, why should it be different for us? We are not above our master. We like the saints of old may sometimes have to hide in caves and dens as it says in Hebrews. We may be treated like the Jews of old, hated, marginalized, persecuted and even killed. But what of it? If we love God, then we will win.

Jesus our Lord said in Matthew 10:26 “*Fear not therefore*”. Never deny him but always confess his name. Always say “I am a brother in Christ.” Never be afraid to admit you are a Christadelphian. Never fear the ridicule or

the hatred. Never apologize for what we believe. Never hide what Christ taught. Our words may be the only time a person **Berean 2006— 175** ever hears the Truth in their life. Don't hide it from them.

Remember that God loves us; the hairs of our head are numbered. Jesus told us that he did not come to bring peace to this earth. That peace will never come until the Kingdom of God firmly rules over the world. In this, the age of men, our position is one of not being in charge. Our position is one of being on the run. Our position is one of being among the poor and the weak. Jesus said all these things plainly. Look what they did to him.

Jesus taught these things and then was put to death for it. Should it be any different for us? We are a little tiny voice of Truth in the midst of hundreds of large crowds all screaming lies. We cannot let that throw us. Jesus was put to death for his teachings and his beliefs. We remember that with the bread and wine that we share. We realize that as brothers and sisters in Christ we are in this together. It is together that we can succeed and endure to the end. It is together that we can “*beware of men*” and still succeed. Only together will we run the race and win the prize.

Bro. Michael Morrell

Bible Reading Notes —June

Paul counseled Timothy, “*Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them . . . for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee*” (1 Tim. 4:13). The daily readings for June from the Old Testament are Joshua, chapters 18 to 24; Judges; Ruth; 1 Samuel, chapters 1 to 12, and Isaiah, chapters 24 to 55.

JOSHUA

Chapters 18 to 22 describe the division of the land by lot among the tribes of Israel. Each received an adequate settlement, as God had promised them. “*There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass*” (**chap. 21:45**). No nation could have had a more favorable beginning. An understanding of their especial privileges helps to explain the severity of the Divine judgments which subsequently came upon them because of their disobedience. A further lesson is to be learnt from the fact that God fulfilled His promise to bring Israel to the land covenanted to them, though few of those who originally sought it gained an entry. God has promised a Greater Rest in the Kingdom which Jesus (Heb., Joshua) will establish at his coming, but it will be attained only by those who manifest faith and obedience. “*Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief*” (Heb. 4:11). **Chapters 23 and 24** contain

Joshua's parting words to Israel. He warned them to keep separate from the **176—Berean 2006** surrounding nations and to refrain from making marriages with them. They were not to copy their idolatrous practices, but they were to love the Lord their God. These same precepts have been enjoined by Christ upon his followers (2 Cor. 6:17; 1 John 5:21).

JUDGES

This book covers about 450 years of Israelitish history from the death of Joshua to the birth of Samuel. The judges (rulers) were men and women raised up by God from time to time to deliver Israel from their enemies (**chap. 2:16**). The key to the understanding of this book is contained in the very last sentence: *"In those days there was no king in Israel : every man did that which was right in his own eyes."* It is a record of continual departure from the ways of God. The Canaanites were allowed to remain (**chap. 1**); idolatry was practiced (**chap. 2**); ingratitude was shown to God for His goodness (**chap. 8**); debauchery was prevalent (**chap. 19**); civil war was waged (**chap. 20**). Nevertheless, many instances occur of men and women who were imbued with robust faith in God. The apostle Paul mentions four by name : Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah (Heb. 11:32). **Chapters 6 to 8** describe the exploits of Gideon against the Midianites. He was endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, and with a small force he put to flight the Midianites, who slew one another in their confusion. The victory of Gideon is a type of the vastly greater conquest by Christ of the entire kingdoms of men (Isaiah 9:4). Jephthah's vow (**chap. 11**) has given rise to much hostile Biblical criticism. It is unlikely that this man of faith would pledge himself to an act involving a breach of the Law of Moses (Deut. 12: 31). The most probable explanation is in the marginal rendering of the words of the vow, *"Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house . . . shall surely be the Lord's, or I will offer it up for a burnt offering."* This involved that Jephthah's daughter should be consecrated to the Lord, and remain unmarried (**verse 39**). The career of Samson should be understood as an exhibition of Divine power operating through a man of faith for the deliverance of Israel from their adversaries. Notice his final appeal to God in the day of his death (**chap. 16:28**).

RUTH

This book is historically connected with the Judges. It narrates the interesting though pathetic incidents which led to Ruth, a Moabitess, being incorporated in the nation of Israel. The outstanding feature of her character was her supreme faith in the God of Israel (**chap. 1:16**). The book furnishes an instructive illustration of the operation of the levirate law (Deut. 25:5). Ruth became a mother in Israel and an ancestress of David and of Christ (Matt. 1:5). It is possible that her Moabitish origin renders her a type of the Gentiles who, in the goodness of God, have been permitted to share in the Israelitish hope (Rom. 2:17-25).

1 SAMUEL

The opening chapter describes the birth of Samuel, the last of the Judges. His godly disposition manifested in his early years demonstrates the value of faithful parental training. He was impervious to the evil influence of Eli's sons, which was the cause of so much trouble for Israel. **Berean 2006— 177** Notice the swift retribution which followed the sin of the men of Beth-shemesh in looking into the ark (**chap. 6:19**). God will not brook willful disobedience. He will be sanctified in them that draw nigh to him. **Chapter 8** marks a turning point in the history of Israel. They desired a king to rule them like the surrounding nations. Hitherto, God had reigned over them. Their request constituted an act of rebellion. God acceded to it, but the kingdom still remained the Lord's. For about five hundred years a line of kings *"sat upon the throne of the Lord over Israel"* (1 Chron. 28:5). It was then Divinely overturned because of the nation's wickedness and has not again existed (Ezekiel 21:25). The throne of the Lord will be restored in Jerusalem when His appointed king, Jesus, sits thereupon and the sovereign rights of God are acknowledged by the whole house of Israel. Samuel anointed Saul to be the first of these kings. He was a man of fine physique and prowess in battle, and appealed to the human vanity which had prompted the request for such a king. He proved, however, to be entirely unworthy of the honor bestowed upon him by Yahweh, and was at length rejected by Yahweh in favor of David, *"the man after God's own heart."* Saul's continual disobedience is the subject matter of the chapters due to be read next month.

ISAIAH

Chapter 27 foretells the coming judgments upon the nations and the deliverance and regathering of Israel. The nations are symbolized in **verse 1** as "leviathan," "the serpent," and "the dragon." These terms are constantly used in the Scriptures to denote the strength, wickedness, and oppression of the kingdoms of men. (See Psalm 44:19; Jer. 51. 34; Rev. 12. 15, 16.) Isaiah predicted the final overthrow of all these kingdoms (**chapters 27, 47, 63**). Israel were also to be punished for their manifold transgressions, chief of which were their pride (**chap. 28**), their hypocrisy (**chap. 29**), their reliance upon Egypt (**chap. 30**), their obstinacy (**chap. 48**), and their rejection of Christ (**chap. 49**). The faithful remnant among them were comforted, however, with gracious promises of the coming of Christ and their ultimate salvation. Notice the many references to the first and second advents of Christ and the extent of his mission. His first coming is referred to in **chapter 28:16**, as the stone laid in Zion for a foundation; in **chapter 42:3**, as the meek and harmless servant of God; in **chapter 52:13**, as the prudent servant with marred visage and form; in **chapter 53:2**, as the tender plant, despised and rejected of men; in **chapter 61:1**, as the preacher of good tidings. His second coming is predicted as the king who shall reign in righteousness (**chap. 32**), whose kingdom will bring joy, peace, and salvation (**chap. 35**). He is spoken of as the Arm of the Lord, having his reward with him and his work before him (**chap. 40**); as the leader and commander covenanted to David (**chap. 55**); as

the Redeemer to come to Zion (**chap. 59**); as the Light of the Gentiles (**chap. 60**); as the blood-stained conqueror of the nations (**chap. 63**); as the creator of the new heavens and earth (**chap. 65**). The incident concerning the lengthening of Hezekiah's life narrated in **chapter 38** is instructive in its allusions to the nature of man and **178—Berean 2006** the state of the dead. Hezekiah described the unconsciousness of the dead in the following terms: “*I have cut off like a weaver my life; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me*” (**verse 12**). “*The grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee*” (**verse 18**). The lengthening of his life is spoken of as a deliverance “*of his soul from the pit of corruption*” (**verse 17**). This reference proves that the soul is the creature whether living or dead. **Chapters 40 to 46** contain many references to the unity and supremacy of God. “*All nations before him are as nothing*” (**40:17**). “*I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me*” (**45:5**). He has declared the end from the beginning (**41:22; 46:10**). Israel are His witnesses (**43:10**). His declared purpose is to fill the earth with His glory (**45:18**). The chapter due to be read on the last day of the month contains God's gracious invitation to Jews and Gentiles to forsake the way of sin, to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to participate in the sure mercies of David “*without money and without price*” (**chap. 55**).

The readings from the New Testament for the month are: Hebrews, chapters 6 to 13; the epistles of James, Peter, John, Jude, and the book of Revelation.

HEBREWS

This epistle was intended to teach Jewish converts the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant over Moses and the Old Covenant. **Chapter 1** demonstrates Christ's superiority over the Angels, **chapter 3** his higher authority than Moses, **chapter 7** the greater dignity of Christ's Melchizedec priesthood than the Aaronic, **chapter 8** shows how the New Covenant is “better” than the Old, **chapter 9** the contrast between the sacrifice of Christ and the animal sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual. Many first principles are taught in this epistle; chiefly, the nature and character of Christ (**7:26, 27**), the purpose of his sacrifice (**9:26**), his second coming (**9:28**). **Chapter 11** teaches the imperative need for faith in God and His promises (**verse 6**), the nature of those promises (**verses 8-16**), and the practical effect of faith in those who possess it (**verses 33-40**). **Chapters 12 and 13** contain many exhortations for the guidance of faithful men and women, all of which are summed up in the statement, “*here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come*” (**chap. 13:14**).

JAMES

This epistle is largely devoted to exhortations for the observance of the followers of Christ. Notice how the apostle speaks of temptation, “*Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed*” (**chap 1:14**).

There is no countenance here of the doctrine of an outside tempter in the form of an immortal, personal devil. Observe the reference to Abraham as an example of faith and works (**chap. 2:22**). Mark the allusions to the root causes of war and all wickedness (**chap. 3:15; 4:1**), and **Berean 2006— 179** to the second coming of Christ as the only hope for mankind (**chap. 5:7**).

PETER, JOHN, JUDE

Attention is drawn to the following doctrines of Divine Truth taught by the apostles in the letters bearing their names; the inspiration of the Scriptures (**2 Peter 1:20**); the Fatherhood of God (**1 John 1:3**); the Sonship of Christ (**1 John 4:15**); his participation in human nature (**1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 4:3**); his sinless life (**1 Peter 2:22**); his atoning work (**1 John 3:8; 4:9**); his resurrection (**1 Peter 1:3**); his second coming (**2 Peter 3:4**); his judgment seat (**1 Peter 4:17; Jude 6**); the reward of the righteous (**1 John 2:25**); the necessity for baptism (**1 Peter 3:21**); the mortality of man (**1 Peter 1:24**); the declension from the One Faith (**2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4**); the necessity for correct belief (**2 John 10**). These doctrines are comprehended in “*the faith once delivered unto the saints*” (**Jude 3**) for which true believers should earnestly contend.

REVELATION

The understanding of this book is dependent upon a knowledge of “*the things concerning the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ.*” It treats of the events leading up to and consequent upon the revelation (appearing, second coming) of Jesus Christ. Its scope is defined (**chap. 1:1**) as being “*to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass,*” *i.e.* from the days of John (A.D. 96) to the consummation of the Divine Purpose in the earth. These matters were revealed by sign, or symbols (**chap 1:3**). The book consists of four main divisions, *viz.*, an introduction, the opening of the seven seals, the blowing of seven trumpets, the pouring out of seven vials resulting in the completion of the purpose. Each division is prefaced by a vision of the Kingdom of God. The introduction contains seven letters of warning and encouragement. The first six seals deal with the conflict between paganism and Christianity from A.D. 98 to 324. The seventh seal comprises the period covered by the trumpets and vials. The first six trumpets relate to the inroads of the barbarians upon the Roman Empire, the uprising of Mahomedanism, and the growth of the Papacy. The seventh trumpet covers the period of the vials. These date from the days of the French Revolution to the establishment of the Kingdom of God. A simple exposition of this interesting and important book will be found in the work entitled “*Thirteen Lectures on the Apocalypse,*” by Bro. Robert Roberts.

The Time For Reading God's Word

He demands the highest place in all our affairs, which is His reasonable place. Let us render the service He requires. His word is in our houses. Don't let us insult Him by giving our feeblest moments to the reading of it. Don't let

us wait till all our energies are worn out, and our faculties impaired in attending **180—Berean 2006** upon the affairs of the natural man.

Don't let us sit down to the Bible when nature is exhausted, and sleep hovers on the eyelids. Let us give the best time of the day. It is a matter of contrivance. There are difficulties, but difficulties can be overcome. Where there is a will, there is a way. Besides, who knows but our difficulties are God's tests. He may want to prove us—to see and let us see whether we will honour Him or not. It is no new thing for God to leave a man that He may see all that is in his heart.

Therefore, our increasing business—our growing affairs—may be a part of the machinery by which our probation is accomplished. If we resist the clamours of the flesh—if, notwithstanding the pressure of worldly affairs, we turn aside daily in reading, prayer and meditation, we overcome; but if on the contrary, we are carried before the stream, and leave God behind, we are overcome, and will awake sooner or later to a sense of our great folly.

If we do our duty in this matter, we shall be assisted. This is matter of promise. If we are attentive to God, He will be attentive to us. *“Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.”* The converse is true. Neglect God and He will allow you to fall. There have been many illustrations of this in history. One of them is mentioned in the chapter read this morning.—(Rom. 1:28.) *“Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.”* *Bro. Robert Roberts—1874*

Whatever manner of men we become would depend largely upon the means we take to secure the result for which we aim. Therefore read the Word, persistently, carefully and faithfully. That is to say read it every day, and read it at that time of the day when our energies and surroundings help us most to understand its meaning. For God speaks to us when we read His Word, and with many, many other sayings, too numerous to record.

Bro. Henry Sulley from North American Travels—1900

Coney Island

Having a spare day on hand a week before sailing from New York, sister Roberts and I concluded we would have a trip into the country. Not being much acquainted with the country round, we did not know exactly where to go, and preferred not to ask, so as to enjoy the stimulus connected with discovery. We saw mention of steamers to Coney Island. We knew nothing of Coney Island, but imagined from its name and the fact the excursion steamer sailed to it, that it must be the kind of rural seclusion we desired. So we took the steamer, and after a half-hour's sail across New York Bay, we were landed at a port on what seemed the mainland. We were given to understand that this was not Coney Island, but a point *en route*, and that we had a journey by rail of half an hour before getting to that place. **Berean 2006— 181**

We got into a train along with the rest of the passengers who landed with the boat, and after half an hour's run, we stopped at a station where all were told to get out. We were informed this was Coney Island. Why “island?” Well, a narrow brook, which we had crossed on the railway, ran from one side of the land to the other, and so literally made the end of the land an island but by no means a “sea-girt isle” such as we had expected to see. This was not the worst. “Oh, solitude where are thy charms?” Certainly not on Coney Island, for on emerging from the “deep-o” [depot] we found ourselves in a perfect pandemonium of the Vanity Fair order. To the right was the form of a monster artificial elephant, towering above the houses, with windows in its body, and a sign-board across imploring visitors not to leave till they had paid a visit inside. In the square in front, beautifully laid out with grass and flower-plots, and an asphalt walk, were four gigantic merry-go-rounds, driven by steam, and running to music produced by machinery. The music was of the most prodigious character. It consisted of sounds blared out with the utmost force of which the machine was capable. The sounds had a musical relation one to another, but this relation was lost in the force with which the music was performed. To make matters worse, the music of the several merry-go-rounds was at a different pitch. It was simply a horrible din, made quite depressing by the accompanying spectacle of grim-looking men and women considering it a fine way of spending time and money.

All around were gimcrack establishments of the various kinds required and patronised by the kind of people that pay money to be whirled round on the backs of wooden horses, lions, &c., and swung through the air in dizzy painted cars. We were in the wrong place altogether. We could not but pity the people. In the circumstances of the present dispensation, it is the best they can do for themselves. At the same time, we could not stay with them in such a sickening association.

We got away to the quiet of the seabeach for a little rational tranquility in listening to the music of the waves and contemplating the far blue distances of sea and sky in the direction of the Atlantic. Even here our sense of sobriety was outraged; for there sailed backwards and forwards close to the water's edge a light yacht displaying on outspread sails an appealing advertisement of somebody or other's nostrum. Oh, this sinister quackery everywhere! It is one of the most offensive excrescences on the face of boasted Columbian liberty. We got home quickly, with this lesson learnt: that it is just as well to make some inquiry about a much-advertised place before you go with the expectation of finding seclusion, reason, and peace—especially in America. There are such spots, but one of them is not Coney Island.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1888

Snatching the Emblems

We are passing through a severe time of trial here [since Bro. Roberts left **182—Berean 2006** our midst last year]. A brother and sister have for many months shown themselves out of harmony with us owing to our judgment in a personal matter having failed to accord with their sense of right, and who have manifested a vehement opposition to us in consequence. We bore this patiently, in hope that they would be able to regain their balance, and look at the matter calmly and in a manner becoming saints.

Things came to a climax, however, when one of them forcibly prevented a brother breaking bread, and made such a scene that the meeting could not be carried on. The result of this action was that they were disfellowshipped at a special meeting of the arranging brethren, but they still persist in coming to the table, snatching the emblems that are refused them.

Christadelphian Intelligence—1899

Don't Look For Flaws

Don't look for flaws as you go through life;
And even when you find them,
It is wise and kind to be somewhat blind,
And look for the good behind them.
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light
Somewhere in shadows hiding;
It is better far to look for a star,
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

Condemned

No man should be condemned without the fullest opportunity of answer, whatever his crime may be. If on a proper hearing, he is found guilty, the apostolic rule requires that he should be "*rebuked before all that others also may fear*" (1 Tim. 5:20). If he defends his sin, or is without token of repentance, the same rule requires that he should be repudiated in all spiritual and social relations (Matt. 18:17; 2 Cor. 2:7). But it does not require this line of action if there is manifest repentance. If he confesses and forsakes his sin, he is to have mercy (Prov. 28:13) for "*all manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men but the sin against the Holy Spirit*" (Matt. 12:31). If duly sensible of his offence, he is to be forgiven and comforted, "*lest such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*" (2 Cor 2:7). This is according to the character of God revealed so abundantly, leading Him to say in Ezekiel, that "*he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather that he should turn and live*" (Ezek. 18:23).

Bro. Robert Roberts 1898

Certain Rules

Nonconformity to which makes Salvation impossible.

Rule I

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Except a man's righteousness exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, he can, in no case, enter the kingdom of the heavens.—(Matt. 5:20.)

Rule II

Except a man be a doer of Jehovah's will he cannot enter the kingdom of the heavens.—(Matt. 7:21; James 1:21.)

Rule III

Except a man become as a little child, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.—(Matt. 18:3; 19:14; 21:16, 9; 1 John 2:12.)

Rule IV

Except a man REPENT (*metaneete*) he must inevitably perish.—(Luke 13:3.)

Rule V

Except a man be born again, γεννηθη ανωθεν he cannot enter into the kingdom of the Deity.—(John 3:3–5.)

Rule VI

Except a man have the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.—(Rom. 8:9.)

Rule VII

Except a man eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, he cannot have eternal life.—(John 6:53.)

Rule VIII

Except a man strive for eternal life lawfully, he cannot obtain it.—(2 Tim. 2:5.)

The Law of Faith

He that believes the gospel of the kingdom, and is immersed, shall be saved.—(Mark 16:16; Rom. 1:16.)

Bro. John Thomas notes prior to his death

Meditations

If you want to be of service to a man in trouble, put yourself in his place, and speak sensibly and sympathetically. A man in this position doesn't want to listen to a flood of unfeeling, unpractical utterances; he needs wise counsel

and comfort. Take pains, therefore, to enquire into the ins and outs—the drawbacks and trials—that surround his case, and then advise as a brother.

Husbands, listen to your wives' counsel. If it be good, appreciate and adopt **184—Berean 2006** it. Do not forget the wisdom and devotion of Abigail. There are Abigails now, though they are often hidden from view by the conceit and boorishness of men.

If a man sin, he should confess his sin, but there is a confession that must be infinitely more pleasing to God—the confession of right-doing. See the words which God puts into the mouths of His dutiful children in Deut. 26:13, and also in the Lord's prayer.

Some complain about not being loved. It may be so, but what is the cause? Let unloved ones apply at home for the answer. To have friends a man must show himself friendly. If he show himself unlovable—grumpy, fault-finding, spiteful, treacherous, what can he expect?

The Christadelphian

Commit Thy Way To God

Commit thy way to God,
The weight which makes thee faint—
Worlds are to Him no load—
To Him breathe thy complaint:
He, who for winds and clouds
Maketh a pathway free,
Through wastes, or hostile crowds,
Can make a way for thee.

Hope, then, though woes be doubled,
Hope, and be undismay'd;
Let not thy heart be troubled,
Nor let it be afraid.
This prison where thou art,
Thy God will break it soon,
And flood with light thy heart
In His own blessed noon.

Up! up! the day is breaking;
Say to thy cares, good-night!
Thy troubles from thee shaking
Like dreams in day's fresh light.
Thou wearest not the crown
Nor the best course can tell:
God sitteth on the Throne
And guideth all things well.

Trust Him to govern, then—
No King can rule like Him.
How wilt thou wonder, when

Thine eyes no more are dim,
To see those paths which vex thee
How wise they were, and meet;
The works which now perplex thee
How God-sent and complete! **Berean 2006— 185**

Reflection In The Hymns

“Put on the NEW man which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him” (Col. 3:10).

KNOWLEDGE is the key to the whole process. Knowledge is a matter of learning and effort. We should ALL know the Scriptures FAR better than we do. Daily we are reminded of our ignorance in this direction-of the countless wasted opportunities for learning and study. In verse 16 of Colossians 3, Paul says-

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

There is much material for reflection in the hymns we sing, on this matter of KNOWLEDGE, as on the others—*“O, how love I Thy law! It is my study ALL THE DAY.”* But IS IT? Or are we just mouthing meaningless words?

Again we sing: *“Firm to the fight I stand! What terror can confound me?”* and *“Thy way, not mine, O Lord.”* Noble words! But IS God's way, and not our own, always the paramount consideration with us? *“Not mine, not mine, the choice, in things or great or small.”* Truly godly sentiments-IF they are consistently followed out. Our hearts can say.

“Tis not for present power or wealth, or worldly fame we look to Thee” . . . “All I ask for is enough.” Do we, as we sing, consider the REAL MEANING of these things, and frankly examine our own activities in the light of them? *“Life's fleeting treasures I resign.”* Does it come from the heart-or just the lips?

There are many subjects in which we can find scriptural admonition in the hymns. *“We should learn the rather free from wrath and strife to live, FAR REMOVING ALL THAT MIGHT OFFEND OR GRIEVE.”* To what extent can WE declare before God that we sincerely try to avoid ALL things that offend and grieve others? We can all think of several things among us-some quite easily dispensed with-which grieve our brethren. Even if these things were right in themselves, it is clearly evident that the spirit of Christ is lacking in us if we persist in them when we know they trouble others. Some day God will ask us just WHY we followed this course. WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

Then we sing so heartily to each other, *“Work, brethren, work!”* But are WE working? A cardinal element of TRUE religion is to visit the afflicted (Jam. 1:27; Matt. 25:43). How much visiting do WE do? In other words, how much true religion do we actually possess? And to the alien we take pleasure in singing: *“How long your strength and substance waste on trifles light as*

air?" **186—Berean 2006** Let us make sure that EXAMPLE corresponds with PRECEPT.

The whole of Hymn 170 is a searching indictment of a common failing—"The thoughtless still with levity and mirth delight to dwell." Paul says "Foolish talking and jesting are not befitting" (Eph. 5:4-Revised Version). And in this very epistle we are considering (4:6)-

"Let your speech be ALWAYS with grace, seasoned with salt."

The important word is the "always." To mean anything, it must be a consistent principle of life, faithfully applied in all circumstances.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved" (Col. 3:12).

These are very exalted titles. They define a people of a character, disposition and purpose far removed from the world. "Elect of God, holy and beloved." A rare and different kind of people who are strikingly outstanding-as the apostle continues-for "kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." IS THAT US? Does the description fit?

"And let the PEACE OF GOD rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15).

We are told, "Great peace have they which LOVE THY LAW and NOTHING shall offend them." Peace is a precious gift of God, bestowed ONLY where HIS conditions are complied with. We are told "*the work of RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be peace*" (Isa. 32:17). And conversely (Isa. 48:22), "*There is NO peace to the wicked.*"

Peace is spoken throughout the Scriptures as a supreme divine blessing. Like many blessings, it requires a certain amount of spiritual discernment to even RECOGNIZE its desirability, and usually too, a certain amount of previous worldly disappointment. Peace is a spiritual quality that has little appeal to the pride and ambition of the flesh.

Do we have peace with God? It is not just abstract peace, as such, that is the promised blessing. It is "*peace WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (Rom. 5:1). It is a living, personal relationship of joyful unity and harmony with the Eternal Creator.

Jesus laid the foundation for this peace in the bitter road he trod that culminated in Calvary. Peace with God is clearly not a lightly-won privilege. Nor is it lightly HELD. Its requirements are summed up in the following verses (Col. 3:16-17)-

"Let the word of Christ DWELL IN YOU richly in all WISDOM-whatsoever ye do, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Here again, "all" is the key. Bound up with this "all" lies life and peace. Short of that, there is only conflict. Again we sing: "*Yet while I seek, but find Thee not, NO PEACE my wandering mind shall see. When shall all my wanderings cease, and ALL my steps to Thee-ward tend? Is there a thing*

beneath the sun that strives with Thee my heart to share? Tear it thence and reign alone the Lord of EVERY motion there." **Berean 2006— 187**

When we ACCOMPLISH in our lives that of which we SING in our hymns, THEN-and ONLY then-have we "*peace with God.*" Paul, who said "*Be ye followers of me,*" said also -

"I count ALL things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of ALL things, and count them but refuse that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:8).

And he continues, a little farther on, "Be careful for nothing," we sing that, too!, (Phil. 4:6)-

"Be careful for NOTHING: in everything rely on God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

In very similar terms our Great Example said (Matt. 11:29)-

"Learn of me, for I am MEEK and LOWLY: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

THAT is peace. HOW MANY FIND IT?

Bro. G. V. Growcott

Analecta Apocalypticae (2)

As the Acorn is to the Oak, so is Daniel to the Apocalypse

The book of Daniel is to the Apocalypse as the acorn to the oak. The latter is the mystery of Daniel's prophecy symbolically revealed. This mystery of things he ministered he thought much upon, and sought to find out with great diligence, but without success; for he was informed that the mystery was hidden, and could not be penetrated until a time appointed.

The Two Scrolls

As already intimated, Daniel saw a scroll, as indicated in the phrase "the words and seal the book," as well as John. He was told that "the words were closed up and sealed till the time of the end." Hence, these were to Daniel "a scroll at the right of Him seated upon the throne written within and on the outside, sealed up with seven seals." That closed and sealed against Daniel's understanding was the mystery or secret of the words of the book.

But one might inquire, If the mystery were to be concealed “till the time of the end,” in what sense can John's apocalyptic scroll and seals **188—Berean 2006** be a revelation of the hidden wisdom of Daniel's book, seeing that John's age was not “the time of the end” — a time which is only just now dawning upon the world? This we consider a very pertinent inquiry. In answer, the reader may be reminded, that the revelation to John was symbolical. He did not see the actual, but only the acted or dramatized events he describes. What he saw was a pictorial representation, as it were — a speaking hieroglyphic signifying to his understanding things which in the time of the end shall all have become accomplished facts, so that, in this end “the vision shall speak, and not lie” — Hab. 2:3. The Apocalypse in its word-painting is the unrolling to the understanding of the servants of the Deity the series of events that should be successively unfolded, and which in their time of the end consummation should manifest as an accomplished result “The end of the matter”— Dan. 7:28.

The scroll had to be unrolled and its seals loosed before the vision it contained could be read and perceived, or intelligibly comprehended, when it should “speak at the end.” The speaking at the end truthfully, is what is styled in modern phrase the denouement, a word signifying the discovery of the plot, the unravelling or issue of the matter, termed in Daniel “the end of the matter.” This denouement was revealed to him; but the unfolding of the particular series and succession of events thereunto leading, was not made known to him. He was informed in general terms, that the powers of the fourth beast dominion should make war upon and prevail against the saints until the Ancient of Days should come; and that then the saints should become a power mighty enough to destroy the fourth-beast system of powers; and to set up the kingdom of Deity. In the establishment of which as the great political fact of the age and generation, the denouement of God's dealings with the nations all the time of their ascendancy over the saints, would be manifested. He was instructed that “the end of the matter” was to be a crisis elaborated providentially from antecedents evolved in the history of the fourth-beast nationalities; but what was the particular vein to be worked out in its several lodes to conduct to the main and terminable results, he did not “see.”

In dramatical representation, the spectators behold the unrolling of the author's scroll, as the acting is in progress; but they have to wait till the end of the piece, the time of the end, for the dramatist's conception to “speak and not lie.” Unless they have read the play, or seen it acted before, they have to “wait for the end of the matter,” ere they can tell how the matter will come out, or what the ingenious dramatist designed should be the end of the whole, or the issue of the plot. It was thus with

Daniel and John. The end of the matter had been revealed to them both. They had read the denouement of the **Berean 2006— 189** drama to result at the end from all its shifting scenes; but they had never seen nor read the play. The acting had not been revealed to them. In Daniel's time the stage had not been prepared, nor the dramatis personae, the company of performers, collected and arranged in their several parts for the performance of the tragedy to be played. There was no fourth-beast dominion then; nor any saints who had “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” — Rev. 7:14 — to be prevailed against thereby; and without these important parties in the premises, the actual tragedy could not begin; nor could a representation or rehearsal of the performance have come with any enlightening effect upon Daniel's mind, being ignorant as he was of the mystery afterwards revealed in the apostolic ministration of “the word.”

The Mystery Revealed

But by the time that John had come to be an exile in Patmos, all this was changed. Daniel's situation was no longer that of John and his brethren. The fourth-beast dominion was now upon the world's stage; and, as the Little Horn, not then as yet decorated with “Eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things,” had “taken away the Daily, and had cast down the place of its sanctuary,” and practised and prospered. Messiah the prince, though faultless, had been “cut off” by this horn; and by the teaching concerning his kingdom and name, a people composed of Israelites and Gentiles according to the flesh, had been developed as the seed of the great father of the faithful and “friend of God,” by adoption through Jesus as the prince; and stood confessed of heaven before “the inhabitants of the earth and sea” — the whole habitable — as “the Israel of God.”

In these two hostile communities exist all the elements to be afterwards developed into the parties of the play. The Israel of God on the one side, and the Fourth Beast, on the other, contained the germs of the conflicting good and evil of the ages and generations from John's day to the giving of “the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under all of the heavens to the people of the saints of the Most High Ones, whose kingdom is the kingdom of Olahm (the hidden period), and all dominions shall serve and obey him;” which is “the end of the matter.” While the apocalyptic tragedy was being rehearsed before John in Patmos, God's Israel was already constituted of “two manner of people” — they who walked after the flesh; and they

who walked after the spirit, which is the truth. Out of the former were afterwards developed the worshippers of demons and of “idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood” — Rev. 9:20: also, “the **190—Berean 2006** Mouth speaking great things and blasphemies — 13:5; the image of the beast; the drunken woman, and all the daughters of her prostitution, and abominations of the earth” — Rev. 17:1-5. These all are the fruit of the Mystery of Iniquity that was at work in the mystical body of Christ, in the time of Paul and John. The apostolical epistles are full of protest against its insidious and corrupt working, which they clearly saw would “eat as doth a gangrene;” and therefore earnestly warned all who would be approved of God to have nothing to do with those who favored it — 2 Tim. 2:15-18; 2 John 10.

On the other hand, from the Israel of God who walked in the truth were developed in after ages and generations, “the souls under the altar slain for the word of God” — ch. 6:9; “the servants of the Deity sealed in their foreheads;” the 144,000, or “holy nation,” (1 Pet. 2:9); the white-robed palm bearers — ch. 7; the temple of the Deity, the altar worshippers, and the holy city — ch. 11:1-2; the four and twenty elders, and the four living ones; the fugitive woman and the remnant of her seed — ch. 12:14, 17; God's name and tabernacle, and them that dwell in the heaven — the saints — ch. 13:6, 7; the redeemed from the earth, the virgins, the first-fruits unto the Deity and the Lamb, faultless before the throne — ch. 14:1-5; them who had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, having the harps of Deity — ch. 15:2; the kings of the east, who watch and keep their garments — ch. 16:12, 15; the called, and chosen and faithful with the Lamb in his wars — ch. 17:14; the prophets and saints slain — ch. 18:24; the Lamb's wife arrayed in righteousness; and the squadrons of his power — ch. 19:7, 8, 14; them to whom judgment is given, the beheaded souls, who worshipped not the beast, nor his image, and who reign with Christ as the priests of Deity for a thousand years; the beloved city — ch. 20:4, 6, 9; the holy city, New Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, the municipal aggregate of all written in the Lamb's book of life — ch. 21:2, 27; whose foreheads are enstamped with the name of Deity and the Lamb — ch. 22:4.

These all constitute “the Israel of the Deity” upon whom Paul invoked “peace and mercy” — Gal. 6:16; and for whose special information the apocalypse was rehearsed to John in Patmos; and who

were, and are yet to enact a most conspicuous part in its public exhibition upon the platform of the habitable dominated temporarily by the fourth-beast system of powers, so dreadful and terrible to Daniel's sight — Dan. 7:7.

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Arranged from the writings of Bro. Thomas by Bro. Bob Widding.

What Does That Mean?

“Moreover the LORD saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the LORD will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, The changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils.” (Isa.3:16-23)

These verses describe the dress of the females, but can you explain what it was that they were wearing?

Isaiah is taking note of the activities of the women in Jerusalem. If any think that is inappropriate he is simply stating what he was told to say. He begins with: *“Moreover the LORD saith”* The important thing that we all must realize is that God takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the folly and vanity of proud women, and His law takes cognizance even of their dress. They revealed the disposition of their mind by the way that they dressed, their gait and gestures.

We cannot be certain exactly what these woman were doing or wearing. This may describe the dancing girls that were trained for service at idolatrous temples, or it may be “the latest fad” that was introduced into their culture.

Mincing: refers to a tripping step. This may have been caused by the golden chains reaching from one ankle to the other which compelled them to take short and rapid steps.

Tinkling with their feet: They wore anklets of gold, silver or other metals which they could strike together as they walked. Some anklets had bells attached. This may have been the way Abijah knew the wife of Jeroboam, “when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet”.

Cauls: This refers to “net-works” which would either be gold or silver netting worn over the hair; or the way the hair itself was arranged into tresses.

Round tires like the moon: These were metallic moon-shaped ornaments hung around the neck and in the hair netting. Originally they were part of the worship of the moon but women of Judah adapted this as a form of dress.

Chains: these were pendants or ear-drops.

Mufflers: They were thin veils. This Hebrew name was given to them because of their fluttering motion.

Tablets: (Literally-house of breath/soul) This name was given to golden ornaments which were shaped like homes or temples and richly adorned with precious stones. It appears that the woman in Judah adopted this name for bottles or small boxes of perfume fastened to the necklace or the girdle.

Wimples: Wide upper garments worn outside of the other garments as a fashion statement.

Crisping-pins: This has nothing to do with hair, but to richly ornamented purses of gold or embroidered work suspended from the girdle. In 2Kings 5:23 it is translated “bags”.

This condemnation of the dress of the women of Judah clearly tells us that outward appearance does matter to God. It reflects who we are and what we

are thinking and stands directly contrary to that modesty, shamefacedness, and sobriety, with which women ought to adorn themselves. (1Tim.2:9)

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