

# 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

**GOLDTHWAITE**, Texas – Sunday School 10am (Nazareth Revisited); Memorial 11:10am; Study Class 1pm (Eureka & Nazareth Revisited); Wed. 7:30pm . Meeting Hall address: 1109 Reilley, Goldthwaite, TX 76844 . Bro. Vernon Hurst, 6082 FM 1047, Goldthwaite, Texas, 76844; phone: 325-948-3839; email: [vmhurst@centex.net](mailto:vmhurst@centex.net)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
Loving greetings in Christ Jesus,

It is with great joy that we of the Goldthwaite Ecclesia would like to report, that after receiving a letter from sis Julie Rhoades on Aug. 16, 2006 applying for readmission back into fellowship, she was received back into fellowship on Aug. 20.

Also, we are happy to report that Bro. Curtis and Sis. Cindy Hurst and Sis. Amy Hurst have joined the Goldthwaite Ecclesia. We are very happy to have them with us, but we know that they will be missed by the Lampasas Ecclesia.

Love in the One Hope we share,  
On Behalf of the Goldthwaite Ecclesia  
Bro. Vernon Hurst, Recorder

**BOSTON**, Massachusetts---S.S. 9:00 A.M. Memorial 10:15 A.M. Mid-week Study Class Friday evening. Recording Bro. James Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd. Northboro. MA 01532

Dear brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Since our last report we are pleased to inform the brotherhood that on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Bro. Jose and Sis. Liz Vargas gave birth to a son, Ashton. A brother for Kenny and a future Sunday School scholar.

On April 16<sup>th</sup> we held our annual Sunday School Program. We were pleased to have many visitors from another fellowship present for the afternoon. Our Sunday School has been greatly reduced by all the immersions we have had but it is certainly encouraging for us all to see them grow in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and take on their responsibility when the time comes.

**Julie Osborne** took that step this summer at our annual Sunday School Picnic in Carver, MA, on Saturday July 1st. We were pleased to welcome her and extend the right hand of fellowship the next day at our Memorial Service on Sunday morning.

On a sadder note Sis. Sara Garvey withdrew from the Berean Fellowship to join a local fellowship. She has announced her engagement to a brother

from that assembly. We are pleased that she is marrying a brother in Christ but are saddened that she has left our ecclesia.

Bro. Noah Brown has moved back to Texas and is now in the Austin Ecclesia. We have had a few visitors this quarter: Bro. Michael and Sis. Leslie Morrell of Las Cruces, NM, Ecclesia Bro. Lynn Osborne of the Denver, CO and Sis. Jessie Prentice and Sis. Norma Rankin of the Worcester, MA, Ecclesia. We thank our brethren Morrell and Osborne for their words of exhortation.

Arrangements are complete for our fall gathering, God willing, to be held at The Highlander Hotel in Manchester, NH. The subject will be: ***“Kingdoms of This World- Past, Present, Future”*** All talks will be exhortations concerning our life in this present world based on things we learn from the history of the nations under consideration, their interaction with Israel and what God has in store for them in the future. This will be held on the weekend of Sept 30, and Oct. 1 & 2, 2006, God willing. We welcome any that will be able to attend.

On behalf of the Boston Ecclesia,  
Jim Sommerville, Recording Brother

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## FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

- NE FRATERNAL GATHERING – BOSTON.....Sep 30–Oct 2, 2006**  
Bro. Len Naglieri, romans6@mac.com, USA. 1-603-598-1745 ***“Kingdoms of This World- Past, Present Future”***
- EDMONTON STUDY WEEKEND.....Nov 11-12, 2006**  
Bro. Steve Armstrong, Box 16, site 440, rr#4 Stony Plain , Alberta, T7Z-1X4. Canada  
Tel:780-963-7115, [stevearm@cruzinternet.com](mailto:stevearm@cruzinternet.com) ***“Called Out Of Egypt” “Ye shall Henceforth Return No More That Way “; and the Sunday Exhortation “A Prophet Like Unto Moses”***
- NORTH CAROLINA–VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 28–29, 2007**  
Bro. Dale Lee at [dleecpa2@mindspring.com](mailto:dleecpa2@mindspring.com).
- LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 8–10, 2007**  
Bro. Jerry Connolly, 12609 Dessau #404, Austin, TX 78754 USA 1-512-251-5101
- RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....July 6–9, 2007**  
Bro. Sid Jones, RR #1, Richard, Sask, SOM-2P0, Canada. 1-306-246-4468
- HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Jul 23–29, 2007**  
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868  
***Study Class Topic: 1Thess. 6- and Titus; Daily Bible Readings; Discuss on Zech. 8-7***

## The Law Made Nothing Perfect

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree”—  
Galatians 3:13*

THE Law, says Paul, was “*holy, just and good*” (Romans 7:10). He says it was “*ordained unto life*” (Romans 7:10). Like David (Psalm 119:77, 97), he said he “*delighted in the Law*” (Romans 7:22). But elsewhere he calls it the “*ministration of death*” (2Cor. 3:7), a “*ministration of condemnation*” (2Cor. 3:9) and a “*yoke of bondage*” (Gal. 5:1). He notes this apparent paradox (Romans 7:7-13)—“*Is the Law sin? ... Was that which is good made death unto me?*”

Can we blame the Law of God for sin and death, and for the failure of man to attain to the life which was ordained by the Law? In both cases he immediately answers, “*God forbid!*” (more correctly, “Let it not be!”). Do not entertain such a God-dishonoring thought, for the Law was a holy ordinance of God. He says—

*“We know the Law is **spiritual**; but I am **carnal**, sold under sin.”*

The Law was ordained to Life; it was man who failed. The Law had its perfect fulfillment in Christ. It was designed for him, and he for it. But the Law could not give life to even a perfectly righteous man without first an atoning death. This arose from a condition previous to the Law, which the Law was powerless to overcome. At the very moment of birth, the Law recognized the condemnation and defilement that man was born into, and the penalty he came under, as part of the condemned race.

Even for the birth of Jesus, Mary must be unclean and in the process of purifying 40 days, and then offer a sin offering—

*“A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”*

Those turtledoves under the Law had no efficacy except in the true sacrifice they foreshadowed beyond and above the Law. “*The Law made nothing perfect*” (Hebrews 7:19)—it just signified and symbolized the way by which perfection must come.

Christ himself came under the curse of the Law, for—

*“Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13).*

This is one of the marvelous details of the working out of God's wonderfully intricate plan, but here again, it was **sin**, and not the Law, that was to blame. This particular ordinance of the Law was perfectly just: only especially evil sinners were to be hanged. But sin banded together and hanged a perfect man. The Law did not contemplate the hanging of the innocent: only sin could do that. The obvious spirit and intention of the Law was—

*“Cursed is every one that is deservedly hanged on a tree.”*

Christ personally in character was free from the slightest shadow of a stigma of this curse in its true intention. Did he then just come under the letter and not the spirit of the curse, and forfeit the life to which the Law was ordained by an unjust legal technicality? This would not be a fitting ingredient in God's great and glorious plan. His death was to declare the righteousness of God, and this could not be done by merely fulfilling the letter in violation of the spirit. We must look deeper than this. God's arrangements are not technical and mechanical, but living and just.

As a strong, sinless, acceptable, voluntary representative of the defiled race, and covering for his weak but humble and repentant brethren, Christ's sacrifice was beautiful and just. He became a curse for us, not merely when the technicality of the curse of the Law was fulfilled in the actual hanging on the tree, but when he freely and voluntarily submitted in obedience to the Father's will that he nailed the body of sin to the cross.

*“He bare our sins **in his own body** on the tree”* (1 Peter 2:24)

*“Our OLD MAN is crucified with him”* (Romans 6:6)

There was no mere technicality about the curse on this “old man,” or about the justice of his hanging. The crucifixion on the cross was the symbol and climax of a lifelong victory in the crucifixion of the flesh. That flesh came under the just condemnation of the Law as sin-defiled, and hung upon the tree in perfect justice.

These thoughts arise from a consideration of Deut. 22. With David we are led to exclaim (Psalm 119: 18)—

*“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law.”*

**Deut. 22:1—“Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again to thy brother.”**

“Brother” here has the same broad, liberal meaning that Christ gave the word “neighbor,” for in Exodus 23:4-5 the same command is—

*“If thou meet thine **enemy's** ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it to him again. If thou see the ass of **him that hateth thee** lying under his burden and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.”*

Could a law of this character be found in force anywhere in the world today? This was a binding, legal, national precept. What of the modern nations who considered their laws so much more enlightened than the Law God gave through Moses? What have they got to compare?

It is the principles behind the commands that we must grasp and apply. The Law was holy, just and good. Christ came, not to destroy it, but to fulfill it in all its beauty. “*Do we then make void the Law?*” asks Paul (Romans 3:31). Again that same emphatic “*God forbid—Let it not be so!*” “*Rather, we establish the Law.*” And he explains that God, through Christ—

“*Condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us*” (Romans 8:3-4).

The principle in this first command in Deut. 22 is identical with the principle of Jesus' beautiful words on the Mount—

*"Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you."*

This is the new-old commandment that Jesus brought, and perfectly exemplified—new in that it had (and has) so rarely been understood and used; old in that they had had it 'from the beginning.'

**Deut. 22:5**—“*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garments; for all that do so are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.*”

The word “abomination” is a very strong term. It denotes utter abhorrence. The principle here is crystal-clear: each sex has its proper place in the all-wise arrangements of God, and each in its place is beautiful and fitting and a glory to God. But for either to attempt to fill the position that God has designated for the other is intensely displeasing to Him. The world, in a misguided zeal for what it terms equality, uses all its powers to destroy the individuality and distinction and complementary harmony that God has created in making man and woman. In all its works, the world knows not God. Unless we study deeply, and take great care, we are inevitably influenced and contaminated by the world's views.

**Deut. 22:8**—“*When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house*”

The principle? Responsibility. We are our brother's keeper. No man liveth to himself. We are responsible for others to the extent that our actions do or could affect them, for good or ill. We think of Jesus' solemn words (Matthew. 18:6)—

*“Whoso shall offend—or cause to offend—one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”*

And Paul's inspired commentary on this (Romans 14:21)—

*“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”*

*“If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth” (1 Cor. 8:13).*

We cannot run away from this heavy and ever-present responsibility. Every action, and every failure to act where action is called for, will have its inevitable effect upon others for which we must answer to God. It is easier, and cheaper, to build a house without a parapet around the roof. It has certain advantages. We may feel (and be) quite safe ourselves. But God says that in whatever we build, the protecting wall must be there for the sake of others who may not be as surefooted or as quick to perceive the danger as we.

**Deut. 22:9—***“Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be DEFILED.”*

*“The seed is the Word of God,”* said Jesus. And Paul says—

*“If any man preach any other Gospel, let him be ACCURSED!”*

Hard words indeed, but they are not ours: they are the necessary words of life and death from God. In all the world, there is no hope of life except in the true seed—kept pure. Whoever contributes in the slightest way to the contamination of that seed is a murderer, however good his intentions may be. Very, very few things in this world really matter or are important, but here is one that is vital. Whoever we cannot conscientiously meet with around the table of the Lord has another Gospel. We dare not encourage them in their course, nor bid them Godspeed. It is neither kindness to them, nor faithfulness to God, to allow the seriousness of the issues to be lost in a haze of ill-advised fraternization. We are stewards and custodians of something far more important than ourselves. Great plainness of speech is called for, although at the same time great kindness and forbearance.

It is always easy to condemn and destroy, but to build takes time and work. Those who by nature are firm have a natural tendency to be harsh and bitter: those who by nature are soft have a tendency to be weak and compromising. Whatever comes naturally to us must be distrusted, for in our flesh dwelleth “no good thing.” There are no natural virtues. *“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit.”* To pride ourselves on our natural reactions—what ever they are—is to glory in our shame. We are only safe when we are consciously restraining nature and following the Spirit's express and flesh-crucifying instructions contrary to nature.

**Deut. 22:10—***“Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.”*

An ox and an ass: clean and unclean: a true believer and one with another gospel (or no gospel). Can they plow together? Can they have joint

activities? Can they join hands in anything and expect God's favor and blessing? What saith the scripture?

**Deut. 22:11**—“*Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together.*”

A variation of the same basic principle, with certain different aspects. What could possibly be wrong with a mixture of weaving materials?—combining the best features of both. God is simply driving home the same old lesson: purity, separation, holiness—over and over again, even to the point of not mixing materials in their weaving. A mixed covering, a mixed protection, a mixed dependence: wool and linen—the natural fleshly animal covering, or the Spirit's glorious white garment.

If God is our covering, it must be God alone. We must choose, and be faithful to that choice. How often that lesson is repeated, and still it is so hard to learn!

G.V.Growcott

## **The Ecclesia at Sardis**

Sardis was once a great and splendid city. Located on the banks of the Pactolus River, Sardis was 60 miles inland from Ephesus and Smyrna. It has a long and impressive history. It was the main city in the kingdom of Lydia, under its richest king, Croesus. Saracens, Turks, and natural disasters, such as earthquakes, have brought this once opulent city to a state of utter ruin. Arundell in his book “Discoveries in Asia Minor” wrote, “If I were asked what impressed the mind most strongly in beholding Sardis, I should say its indescribable solitude, like the darkness of Egypt—darkness that could be felt. So the deep solitude of the spot produces a corresponding feeling of desolate abandonment in the mind, which can never be forgotten.” As we shall see, there is a great lesson for us in this natural aspect in the removal of Sardis. Among the ruins there now stands a small village called Sert, a corruption of its ancient name.

While the Apostle John was in Patmos, the Apostasy in Sardis was working to corrupt the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. As in our day, there were two classes of people who came to a knowledge of the Truth—those who were Jews inwardly and those that said they were Jews but were liars. In Philippians 4:3 we read of Clement whose name was written in the book of life. “*And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life.*”

Profane history also tells of a Clement who was at Sardis. Those who know not God consider him to be one of their early church fathers. Whether the two Clements are one and the same is a matter of speculation. We do

know that the Clement of profane history lived during the time of the apostles, A.D. 30–100, and appears to be of the stamp who said he was a Jew inwardly, but was a liar.

There is a record of the letter he wrote to Corinth for the purpose of resolving a conflict in the church. He wrote of Peter and Paul, “But not to dwell upon ancient examples, let us come to the most recent spiritual heroes. Let us take the noble examples furnished in our own generation. Through envy and jealousy, the greatest and most righteous pillars [of the Church] have been persecuted and put to death. Let us set before our eyes the illustrious apostles. Peter, through unrighteous envy, endured not one or two, but numerous labours and when he had at length suffered martyrdom, departed to the place of glory due to him. Owing to envy, Paul also obtained the reward of patient endurance, after being seven times thrown into captivity, compelled to flee, and stoned. After preaching both in the east and west, he gained the illustrious reputation due to his faith, having taught righteousness to the whole world, and come to the extreme limit of the west, and suffered martyrdom under the prefects. Thus was he removed from the world, and went into the holy place, having proved himself a striking example of patience.”

Bro. Thomas says of this paragraph, “There is a paragraph in this epistle, much approved by “the evangelists” of our day, which if taken in the sense they put upon it, place him in fellowship with the class in Sardis, termed by the Spirit “dead.” Whether it is taken in the evangelical sense or not, when his letter is read the corruption occurring in his day is obvious. Clement is arguing for the resurrection and with that the return of Christ, which is one of the most apparent scriptural first principles. It is clear things have not changed between their day and ours. The “truth” will always be under attack by the woman sitting upon a scarlet-colored beast.

Before going on with the continuing corruption of the Truth in Sardis, where the works of the dead in the Truth overcome those who love the name, there is one more quote from Clements epistle to Corinth that is interesting to consider. After many scriptural quotes he turns to nature to prove his point, “Let us consider that wonderful sign [of the resurrection] which takes place in Eastern lands, that is, in Arabia and the countries round about. There is a certain bird which is called a phoenix. This is the only one of its kind, and lives five hundred years. And when the time of its dissolution draws near that it must die, it builds itself a nest of frankincense, and myrrh, and other spices, into which, when the time is fulfilled, it enters and dies. But as the flesh decays a certain kind of worm is produced, which, being nourished by the juices of the dead bird, brings forth feathers. Then, when it has acquired strength, it takes up that nest in which are the bones of its parent, and bearing these it passes from the land of Arabia into Egypt, to

the city called Heliopolis. And, in open day, flying in the sight of all men, it places them on the altar of the sun, and having done this, hastens back to its former abode. The priests then inspect the registers of the dates, and find that it has returned exactly as the five hundredth year was completed.”

Herein is the lesson. When we attempt to (1 Thess. 5:21) “*Prove all things;*” we should “*hold fast that which is good.*” The best source that can be used is the Word of God, for it “*is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*” (2Tim 3:16). Man’s knowledge changes but the “Word” is unchanging.

Those in Sardis did not see themselves as God saw them. God saw them as ready to die. This Sardian state, then, is characterized as the death state. And we only have to look a couple of centuries later to see how dead they were. It is worth remembering that it is only slightly less than 150 years since Bro. Thomas wrote the third volume of Eureka. A mere 150 years after the death of the Apostle John, a man named Valerian came to power. For a short period, approximately three years, he was able to be a friend and protector of the Christians. During this time of peace and safety an assembly was held in Africa, by 66 bishops, with Cyprian at its head. There was a huge debate on whether infants should be immersed within the second or third day of their birth. A minority thought that should be done on the eighth day after the ancient law of circumcision. But a majority of the 66 were of a different opinion. They decided infant baptisms were “spiritual circumcision” and ought not to be impeded by the law of carnal circumcision. This is a striking illustration of the spiritual death or Sardian state. From this council we learn five interesting points. They had a belief in—

1. The immortality of the soul according to Plato.
2. Immersion without knowledge or faith imparted remission of sins to infants.
3. The soul of an infant two or three days old would be lost if they were not immersed.
4. Baptism in the case of infants was not for the remission of their own sins but for that of another, Adam.
5. Infant immersion was spiritual circumcision.

Interestingly enough Milner commends them and pronounces them Christians of a holy and vital sort.

The mechanical holiness of the tabernacle and its service had been misapplied in the ecclesiastical corruption of the gospel that set in after the apostolic age. The first century believers included (Acts 6:7, 21:20) “*a great*

*company of the priests,*” which may have influenced the Judaizing corrupters that arose. It is a practice of “the church” to “consecrate” buildings, cemeteries, water, vestments, bells, and many other things. It is a tradition of the people that such things are “holy” and can not be used casually without desecration. The mechanical and ceremonial holiness of the law have been applied in customs that result in disastrous effects to the saving work of the Gospel. We could go on and on with historical examples showing the corruption of the vital principles taught by the apostles and Jesus, but this is sufficient to show how those in Sardis had allowed themselves to be corrupted and lost those things that are most precious. The light of the Word became dim through apostasy and men became enthralled in a ritual system as lifeless and superstitious as the worship of the heathen.

Looking at the opening verses that were written to Sardis we find they were written by “*The Seven Spirits of the Deity and the Seven Stars.*” We realize from the writings of Bro. Thomas that seven is a symbol of perfection and the “he having the Seven Spirits” can only be the resurrected and glorified Christ—He who was filled with the Spirit and has become “*the image of the invisible.*” What was done with the Seven Spirits and the Seven Stars? “*The Seven Spirits of God were sent forth into all the earth*” that ecclesia light stands proclaiming the Truth might be set up. This is a reminder to the Sardian ecclesias, as well as all others that they go forth, not of their own volition, but they are under the orders of Christ. The Spirits are fitly represented by “Seven Stars,” and as they were sent forth to the Seven Lightstands, as well as elsewhere. Continuing on, we are hearing the proclamation of judgment on Sardis and all similar communities wherever found.

In a quote from Philippians earlier it was stated that Clement's name was written in the Book of Life; just as every baptized brother and sister has their name inscribed in that very same book. We realize that knowledge brings responsibility but the most knowledgeable man in the world will not have his name written until he fulfills that important act of obedience. Having your name inscribed in the Book of Life does not guarantee eternal life. That would require having your name inscribed in the Book of **THE** Life. Only those whose garments are undefiled have their names written therein; their names written therein since the foundation of the world. These are brought out by the Spirit in writing to Sardis where Christ says, “*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.*”

We might also point out that *garment*, as a figure, clearly represents character. It is our duty to keep our character unspotted from the cares and corruptions of the world around us. As we have seen earlier, there was a very general corruption and departure from the first principles at the close of

the first century. The perversion started in the first century and continues on today.

The words written to Sardis are an example of the difference in the judgment of God and of men. With the flesh reigning supreme, the general population felt they had a flourishing spiritual life. It was the same then as it is now. All the denominations of Christendom regard themselves as being in high favor with the living God. The flesh wants to glorify itself rather than realize how weak and dependent on God it truly is. Those who have their names written in the Book of Life must continually strive to overcome the natural, fleshly, self-indulgent desires. As the world goes so we should not go. God does not require massive edifices built by man's hands. His requirements are far simpler but so much harder to do, as evidenced by those few who are continuing to do them.

The warning given to those in Sardis, as well as to us, "*thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee,*" shows that retribution could come at any moment. This is not referring to the judgment seat where we shall stand at Christ's return. That will be open and visibly recognized by all who are there. This is referring to a retribution in which the hand is not visible. The wrecking of an ecclesia, or the separation of several brethren through some apparently human issue may be the result of this type of intervention. Esau's case is a fair illustration of God's coming upon a man as a thief. He took away his birthright in a way, and at a moment, when Esau was unaware of the operation. God is unchanging, and He will do things His way. Our only safety lies in the attitude of constant watchfulness over our tongues and our hands that word and deed may be in harmony with the will of God. Practically, this is to be accomplished in the daily reading of the Word, and at all times, continuing instant in prayer. Pleasure, and too much business, frustrate the operation of these, and leave us a casualty to indifference and neglect, wherein we may fall from our steadfastness and lose our birthright.

Not only is it promised to him who keeps his garment undefiled that he will be clothed with incorruption, his name forever inscribed among the deathless, but also his name shall be honorably mentioned in the presence of the Deity and His angelic hosts. This is an awe-inspiring thought. Bro. Thomas brings out in Eureka that the portion of this fifth verse of the third chapter which says, "*I will confess his name,*" is emphatic. It has a much stronger import than appears in the English version. He says it should be translated thus, "I will connect myself with his name as one selected from among others whom I reject because their works have not been found perfected in the sight of the Deity." The name that will be confessed before the Father is one that is honorable, excellent, and holy.

The ecclesia at Sardis had a name that it lived. They call themselves Brethren of Christ, but in Christ's estimation they were equal to the Pharisees. This is apparent because they are exhorted to become vigilant. Examples of the corruption that brought spiritual death to Sardis are still at work today. If we are not vigilant we will succumb to the same toxic effect, become deluded, and blind. We must continually examine ourselves so that when we are at the judgment seat we will not hear the words, "thou art dead," having deceived ourselves into thinking that we are alive and well.

*"Be watchful"* is rendered by Bro. Thomas as "be vigilant," which could only be said to those professing to watch but who were slack in their duties. They were watchmen who had ceased to watch and fooled themselves into thinking they were fully alive and safe. They were not fully performing the works required to bring them into perfection, being slack in the application of the principles and commandments of the word committed to their trust. Their indifference to these principles had caused them to lose understanding and forget that life can only be manifested in those who incorporate Divine values. The duties of the watchmen are given in Ezekiel 3:17 – *"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me."* And from Ezekiel 33:6 – *"But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."* These are left on record for all those who would keep their garments clean.

Bro. Roberts wrote of the duty of watchmen, "One of the especial requirements of a watchman is to keep an eye to the movements of the enemy, and sound the alarm when danger is near. Satan, as the great adversary, sometimes appears as a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8); sometimes he transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14); and sometimes he assumes men's persons in admiration because of advantage (Jude 16). The work of the watchman is to detect this foe, whatever disguise he may wear, and put all on their guard against his wiles."<sup>1</sup>

We would additionally include, the active watching under prayer, as given in Luke 21:36 – *"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."*

All these lessons Sardis received, and therefore they were commanded by Christ to remember. If the warning was not observed, then they would lose through darkness of mind what knowledge and gifts they had. We can

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<sup>1</sup>*The Christadelphian*, Volume 9, 1872, Page 362

see with our own eyes they were taken away, although their successors, to this day, claim to have possession of them.

The one body in Sardis receives this solemn assurance, "*I know thy works.*" Here is something that every person and ecclesia should reflect upon. Jesus, our High Priest and Judge, is not one that has to depend on what he sees and hears. He knows! What did he know of the Sardian ecclesia? "*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*" If, in the days of John with the gifts of the Spirit still visible, an ecclesia could be dead, should we not worry 20 centuries later? What type of an ecclesia do we live in? One like Sardis? If so, what is our position in the ecclesia? Are we one of the few with clean garments?

We often hear of battle cries in the ecclesia, but how often do we hear of true love? Jesus tells us in John 13:35 – "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" There is a tendency in connection with the Truth in our day to exalt knowledge over the love of God and His service. Many times we hear people speaking of a brother's excellent knowledge of the Truth. How often do we hear comments on how great a love the brother had for the ecclesia? Or for the "Truth"? Love is a requirement to having our name written in the "Book of The Life." If it is a requirement for that Great Ledger, then it must also be a requirement for an ecclesia of God. Love is self-sacrifice in action and demonstrates the Divine attitude. The love I am speaking of is like God: long-suffering, forbearing, patient, compassionate, kind, considerate, affectionate, merciful, gracious, sympathetic, concerned and tender-hearted; the very essence of benevolent goodness, loving-kindness and tender mercy.

Sardis was to "*remember therefore how thou hast received and heard.*" They were to hold the truth in an unadulterated form. This can only be achieved by constant study. Take a moment, and consider, what is your favorite book? When you are traveling, what do you bring with you to read? Is it something by a current novelist? Is it a book by Bro. Thomas? Maybe an exhortation by Bro. Roberts? What is brought to read for pure enjoyment? How often do we pick up the Bible to read for pure enjoyment? Are there favorite sections we like to read when happy or sad, or for comfort? If we do not read the Bible for the sheer joy that we can find between the pages, then how can we expect to remember what we have received and heard? Can an ecclesia maintain sound doctrine and teach the Gospel without a loving desire to constantly peer between the pages of Scripture? Titus writes in chapter 2 verse 1, "*But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.*" We are commanded to make our main topic of conversation about the things concerning the Name and the Kingdom. Can this be done if the Scriptures are not our chief joy in life?

The ecclesia should be a light to the world around it. It is written, Matthew 5:14 – “*Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.*” Our light should shine forth in our conduct and proclamation of the Gospel. It is the duty of each and every brother, sister, and ecclesia to have an active role in the proclamation of the Word. If we could save a life, would we not do it? Preaching is an opportunity not only to save a life but to obey the will of our Heavenly Father. Preaching the Truth helps us to remain focused on the first principles and assists us in realizing what is truly important in our lives.

It is our duty to be of service to one another. The apostle Paul left us with this commandment, in Galatians 6:10 – “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.*” This verse is not saying that we should do good only to the household of faith. It says to do good unto *ALL* men, especially to the brethren and sisters. Service to the household of faith comes first, but then the rest of mankind is included. Preaching is an important service to the rest of mankind. An ecclesia must make the effort to expound the Truth to the world and to do good whenever and wherever possible. If an ecclesia is not making this effort, it must be prepared to bear the name of Sardis in that day of judgment when the Master shall proclaim, “*I know thy works.*”

Jesus said of the ecclesia at Sardis, “*Be watchful and strengthen the things that remain.*” Here again is our responsibility for others and for the body as a whole. Is our purpose in life to strengthen, to help, and to serve our brothers and sisters?

We are to bring up our children “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Ephesians 6:4). As one brother put it, “Children are the gifts from God, entrusted to us to raise to God’s honor and glory.” We should make the ecclesia an oasis from the world for the children. It is felt that many children have left the Truth due to the behavior of an ecclesia. Members letting the flesh reign supreme in anger and bickering during ecclesial meetings is not a nurturing environment. Making a child comfortable with the Bible and allowing them to see a high moral standard, with true Godly love, is how the ecclesia should help raise the children in the Lord. Children are keen observers. They know when an ecclesia is warm and welcoming. They see how well an ecclesia handles problems.

The Bible contains many commands on how to handle problems. Many ecclesias refuse to address problems when they should be tackled head on. If they can be anticipated and worked on in love and understanding, they could be resolved long before it becomes a major issue. Problems should be met with friendship, insight, and sensitivity. Anyone can brandish the sword of destruction in zeal for the Lord. This can be very satisfying to the flesh. But

it is not healthy for the ecclesia and will not help solve the problem. The flesh finds it easier to cast blame and point fingers than do true self-assessment as to what the actual problem is. No ecclesia in the proper state of spiritual life gives place to error, but it is possible to argue from aggression, so the flesh may perceive itself as knowledgeable and powerful in the Word. It is possible to enjoy attacks on or refuting the opinions or principles of another. This can be done even in the depths of spiritual death. The ecclesia at Sardis was torn by schism and false teaching. They were unable to make an honest self-assessment—unable to fix the problem because they could not identify it. The history of Israel and the history of the first century ecclesias show time and time again that unless a problem is resolved in a righteous, just, scriptural manner, it will fester and destroy the life of the ecclesia.

These few thoughts may help us determine how our ecclesia stands in the manner of having a name to live or being dead. Let us try ourselves by the Word of God. We realize God is patient with the erring and gives plenty of time for repentance. This is illustrated in the parable given in Luke 13:6-9, *“He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why encumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”*

There are few, relatively speaking, who have been called to a knowledge of the Truth. Fewer still heed the call to God's kingdom and glory. And of those, an even smaller number keep their garments unspoiled from the world. It is hard to put away the flesh and walk in light. We tend to act as though our salvation is assured, and we can engage in all sorts of unnecessary activities and still easily pass the scrutiny of the judgment seat. Are we that sure of our salvation? Does not common sense tell us, our efforts to obtain life eternal ought to be the most important thing in our lives and receive all our efforts? Is that not the only way to achieve a goal? Not 50, not 90, but 100 percent of our efforts focused toward life eternal. *“The righteous shall scarcely be saved”* (1 Peter 4:18). And Christ said, *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”* (Luke 17:10). Can we ever feel that we have done enough? Those in Sardis must have felt they were doing extremely well.

A man may be socially agreeable, extremely friendly, and not have any spiritual life in him. We should not therefore, flatter ourselves because we shake hands and smile and ask after each other's well-being and think that

we are full of spiritual life. I do not strive to lessen our friendliness to one another. We should strive to stand out in this, as in every other good work. But let us not mistake the manifestation of natural friendliness for a state of mind that the Lord would pronounce as “*a name to live.*”

The human mind is a very flexible thing and adapts itself to various pressures. The pressure of the Truth continually brought to bear on the mind would change the condition into a state required. This state of mind is so opposite to that of the natural man that it scarcely receives recognition from the world. The people of the world are not attracted to such a mind, they naturally shrink from it. The favor of God and the favor of man are founded on such totally different mental conditions that they do not by their nature mix.

The Spirit gives us indication that in Sardis there were a few, who by diligent daily application of the teachings of the Word, kept their garments undefiled and were accounted worthy. With their character being pure and unstained, their nature must be made to correspond. Thus they received the promise that they should walk with Christ in white, symbolizing the immortal state that they will be elevated to.

Jesus gives guidance to those “*that hath ears to hear*” so that they may be clothed with raiment pure and white. The counsel is to hold fast. There is no good to be done by giving in to failure. Sometimes we are inclined to say, “Why go on?” Repetitive failures drain the life from us and cause us to want to lie where we fall. This is a mistake. We must continue, our efforts redoubled, to be obedient. When Adam committed his offense he had no high priest. We do have and are invited to make confession of our failures and to try again. We are not to lose hope, but we must put ourselves on guard that we fail not. If we overcome our struggle with the flesh, letting our light shine forth in this age of darkness, Christ is well pleased. If on the other hand we abandon hope and give ourselves over to the world, we are doomed. We must hear what was said to Sardis, “*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*”

Christ will come upon us, undetected, and bring about our downfall. Remember the lesson of Sardis, that ecclesia which is now gone from existence. We do have comfort in the realization that this message from Christ is addressed to his brethren. We are commanded “*to hold fast and repent.*” We can be comforted by the thought that God would not command us to do the impossible. We are invited to renew our ways before God. We have this day the opportunity to be renewed, strengthened, and encouraged while looking at the sacrifice we will present in ourselves when our Lord and Master returns. Let us never give in. Let us die fighting!

*Bro. Beryl Snyder*

## Bible Reading Notes —October

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

The Psalmist declares, *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”* It is the guiding light for all who aspire to follow the Narrow Way which leads unto life, and it cannot be dispensed with for a single day. Let the seeker of the Kingdom of God adopt the method of daily reading suggested by the accompanying table, and he will find invaluable assistance in maintaining a sustained interest throughout the year, enabling him to cover the whole of divine revelation. The allotted readings for October are 1 Chronicles 15 to 29, 2 Chronicles 1 to 29, Ezekiel 27 to 48, Daniel 1 to 9, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, the Gospel of John, and Acts 1 to 9.

### 1 CHRONICLES 15 TO 29

These chapters record the establishment of the kingdom of Israel under its most illustrious ruler, David. This ancient kingdom was the Kingdom of God, having its king, capital city, land, laws, and people divinely appointed. David recognized it as God's Kingdom (**chaps. 28:5; 29:23**). Though this Kingdom was subsequently overturned, it will be re-established as the nucleus of the divine constitution upon earth to be set up by Christ at his second coming (Amos 9:11). **Chapter 17** records the covenant made with David. Its terms were that David's seed should rule upon his throne for ever (**verse 14**). The seed was Christ (Luke 1:32), who will fulfill the covenant at his return to the earth (Isaiah 9:5). Like David, he will *“reign over all Israel, and execute judgment and justice among all his people”* (**chap. 18:14**). **Chapter 21** records David's sin in numbering the people. The inclusion of this episode in the narrative is evidence of divine inspiration. It would probably have been omitted by a human writer in describing the career of Israel's most famous king. The term “Satan” (**verse 1**) signifies an adversary, and is a word used in a good or a bad sense (see Num. 22:22, and Job 1:6). It does not convey the meaning of a spirit of evil, as popularly supposed. The division of the sons of Aaron by lot into twenty-four orders, and a similar division of the singers (**chaps. 24 and 25**), is typical of the immortal officers in the Kingdom of God, who are alluded to in the figure of twenty-four elders (Rev. 4:4). They will be the administrators of the divine law which will issue from Jerusalem for the government of the whole earth.

### 2 CHRONICLES 1 TO 29

Solomon's reign commenced well. He was endowed with wisdom above any who had preceded him. The riches and greatness of his kingdom are described in **chapters 1 to 5**. Solomon's glory was proverbial (Matt. 6:29).

After the dedication of the temple, God appeared to him, promising blessings for obedience, but threatening curses for disobedience. Notice particularly **chapter 7:19-20**, “*If ye serve other gods, then this house will I cast out of my sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all nations.*” History records the exact fulfillment of this prophecy. Solomon failed to maintain his faithfulness because he contracted alien marriages, contrary to God's command (Deut. 17:17). Separation from the world of the ungodly has been enjoined upon God's servants in all ages, and is equally obligatory today (2 Cor. 6:17). After Solomon's death, the kingdom was divided, ten tribes revolting under Jeroboam, and only Judah and Benjamin remaining loyal to David's throne continued through Rehoboam. Of the kings who reigned over Judah, Asa, Hezekiah, and Josiah were outstanding characters on account of their righteousness. Notice Asa's faith (**chap. 14:11**), and his covenant with God (**chap. 15:12**). His career beautifully illustrates the words of God to him (**chap. 15:2**), “*The Lord is with you, while ye be with him.*” Hezekiah's reign was marked by a restoration of the worship of Jehovah, and fitly illustrates the principle of faith combined with works as the only basis of acceptability to God.

#### **EZEKIEL 27 TO 48**

**Chapters 27** and **28** describe the irrecoverable fall of Tyre on account of her pride. The same fate awaits all that are proud and lofty when the day of the Lord comes (Isaiah 2:11). **Chapter 29** depicts the desolation of Egypt. The kingdom was not to be utterly destroyed, but to remain “*base*” (**verse 15**). Strangers were to rule therein (**30:12**). Egypt's history has amply fulfilled the prophecy, for the Persians, Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes, Turks, and British have successively ruled the land. **Chapter 36** contains promises regarding Israel's restoration. Notice particularly **verses 24, 28, and 34**. **Chapter 37** speaks of the same event under the figure of the resurrection of dry bones in a valley. It foretells the joining together of the restored tribes with one king over them all (**verse 22**). **Chapter 38** depicts the final struggle of the nations upon the mountains of Israel, resulting in their complete overthrow, the triumph of Israel, and the magnifying of the God of Israel throughout the earth (**verse 23**). For a lucid exposition of this remarkable prophecy, read *Elpis Israel*. **Chapters 40 to 48** describe the specifications of the house of prayer for all people to be erected in Jerusalem when the kingdom of God is established. It will be the centre of the universal religion to be practiced (Isaiah. 2:2), and its keynote will be “*Holiness to the Lord.*” The name of the city will be “*The Lord is there*” (**chap. 48:35**).

#### **DANIEL 1 TO 9**

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

commended on account of his righteousness (Ezekiel 14:14). His book contains prophecies having especial relation to the time of the end. **Chapter 2** records the prophet's explanation of the metallic image seen in vision by Nebuchadnezzar. It foretold the existence of the four great empires, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, the subsequent division of Europe into smaller kingdoms, and the final establishment of the Kingdom of God (**verse 44**). This kingdom would be literal, political, universal, and everlasting, and would displace all the kingdoms of men. **Chapter 7** describes a vision seen by Daniel, portraying the same events, but supplying greater detail. **Verse 13** identifies the predestined king, and **verses 18 and 27** his co-rulers. They are Jesus and his immortalized friends. The eleventh horn seen by the prophet (**verses 8 and 20**) represented the papal power which appeared after the Roman Empire was disrupted. It was to continue for a time, times and a half, which prophetically understood signifies 1,260 years. This period commences with the decree of Phocas, A.D. 606-8, appointing the Bishop of Rome supreme pontiff, and terminates in 1866-70, when the papacy was deprived of temporal power. Some time subsequent to this development, the Kingdom of God would be established. **Chapter 4** describes Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the hewed-down tree, the stump of which was to remain for a period of seven times. The prophet explained the vision as signifying the duration of the kingdoms of men from the fall of Babylon. The incident recorded in **chapter 5** concerning the writing on the wall should be understood as typical of the final destruction of all the kingdoms of men. *"God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it." "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."* These words are equally applicable to all the kingdoms of men whose end at the hands of the anti-typical Medes and Persians will be just as complete as was that of Babylon.

## **GALATIANS**

The epistle to the Galatians was written to combat the false teaching of certain Judaizers that salvation could be obtained by adherence to the Law of Moses, and not necessarily by faith in Jesus. In **chapter 1** Paul demonstrates there is only one Gospel. Notice the apostle's insistence upon right belief. Sound doctrine must precede right practice. The keynote of the epistle is contained in **chapter 2:16**, *"A man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ."* Paul shows that this faith was exhibited even before the law through Moses was given. It moved Abraham to obey God (**chap. 3:6**). The gospel was preached to him in the words, *"In thee shall all nations be blessed"* (**chap. 3:8**). Abraham was promised that he and his seed should inherit the earth for ever (Gen. 13:15). Paul says that the seed was, firstly, Christ (**chap. 3:16**), and, secondly, all baptized believers (**chap. 3:27-29**). These promises are the basis of God's plan of

human redemption, and will be fulfilled at the return of Christ and the establishment of his kingdom. Participation in them is predicated on a renouncing of the works of the flesh, and a cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit (**chap. 5:19-24**).

### **EPHESIANS**

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

### **PHILIPPIANS**

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

### **JOHN**

The purpose of the gospel record by John is expressed in **chapter 20:31**. “*These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*” Nowhere does it teach that Christ was “*God the Son.*” In **chapter 1** it portrays him as the Word made flesh, i.e. the fulfillment of the promise declared from the beginning concerning a seed who should come, whose mission it would be to destroy the power of sin and death (Gen. 3:15). The divine origin of Christ is clearly portrayed (**chap. 3:13**), his divine authority (**chap. 7:13**), his possession of human nature (**chaps. 11:33; 12:27**), his blameless character (**chap. 8:46**), his mission as the Saviour of Mankind (**chap. 3:16**). These are the things concerning Christ which it is “*life eternal to know*” (**chap. 17:3**).

### **ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

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

discourses of the apostles (**chaps. 3:19; 4:10**). **Chapter 8** contains a beautiful description of the purpose and mode of scriptural baptism, without which there can be no entrance into the Kingdom of God (John 3:5). **Chapter 9** contains the account of the conversion and baptism of Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul.

## Signs of The Times

*“Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong.”* (Joel 3:9).

Striking a defiant note in the face of growing Western criticism of Russia's democratic record and foreign policies, President Vladimir Putin accused his critics of hypocrisy and said Russia needs to strengthen its military might to resist pressure from abroad.

Pointing out that the United States is spending 25 times more on defence than Russia, Putin stressed “it is premature to speak of the end of the arms race” and said Russia needs to catch up.

“Their house is their fortress – well done! But it means that we must build our house strongly, reliably, because we see what is going on in the world,” he said. “We must always be ready to counter any attempts to pressure Russia in order to strengthen positions at our expense,” he said. “The stronger our military is, the less temptation there will be to exert such pressure on us.”

Putin said the military would work to boost both Russia's nuclear deterrent and its conventional armed forces, but without repeating “the mistakes of the Soviet Union, and of the Cold War” by draining the country's resources.

He said the government would soon commission two nuclear submarines equipped with Russia's first new intercontinental ballistic missiles since the collapse of the Soviet Union and land-based strategic forces would soon get their first unit of mobile TopolM missiles.

He said that the new missiles and warheads would be able to foil advanced defence systems by changing direction in flight.

Analysts said the speech was a response to Putin's critics in the West and a signal that Russia would not back down from promoting its interests abroad.

“What we saw was a declaration that Russia is coming back as a global power and will pursue an aggressive foreign policy,” said Petrov, a political analyst with the Moscow Carnegie Centre. “And while he only mentioned the U.S. a couple of times, it was clear that Putin sees the U.S. as his major opponent.” — Toronto Star, 5/06

## Where Is Your Treasure?

In answer to the kind salutations and enquiries of many correspondents, I am thankful to say that I am fairly well, and still rejoicing in the hope of Israel, which I find the only thing left to rejoice in at my age. I am now over 80 years of age, and you will understand that I am not able to write and talk so well as I used in days gone by. I greatly appreciate your enquiries and loving remembrances, in a variety of ways, and am as well as I can expect to be at my time of life, and certainly as much interested in the truth and all that belongs to it as ever, and in the many signs of the near approach of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose advent is “all my salvation and all my desire,” as it was to our father David.

I may refer to my past writings in “Woman: Married and Unmarried” as examples of what I should perhaps wish to say in another form did strength permit. It would only be repetition however, and I have recently contented myself with distributing some of these.

I am glad and thankful that the work of the truth is being carried on so faithfully in many hands. The twelve years of my widowhood have been cheered and brightened by this. The greatly enlarged distribution of *Christendom Astray* and the steady circulation of *Elpis Israel* and *Eureka*, Dr. Thomas’ standard works, are most encouraging, and both Dr. Thomas and Bro. Roberts, in the day of resurrection, will be very much interested to find out to what an extent they, “*being dead yet spoke.*” And we trust the Lord will approve of the testimony maintained. Paul gave thanks for the faithful testimony of the Thessalonians, saying, “*Ye were examples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia, for from you sounded out the word of the Lord*” (1 Thess. 1:7, 8). This is how I feel. Both Dr. Thomas and Bro. Roberts desired that their writings should be kept in circulation if they died before the Lord’s return.

When, after the Doctor’s death, it was suggested to Bro. Roberts that he would be preserved until the glorious event, as it was thought he could not be spared, his reply was, “Ah! we don’t know what God’s purpose may require—more may be accomplished by my death than my life.” When Bro. Roberts died, the brethren everywhere seemed to be stirred up to do their utmost to fill the gap, till now we have just the kind of activity going on in regular, organised methods for the extension of the work of the truth, which gives scope for the capabilities of both old and young, and seems to bear out and justify the thought that Bro. Roberts entertained. It is arduous work, and many-sided; but if it be done as to the Lord, it will bring joy and gladness at last. We must “*maintain good works,*” and to all, and especially to the

young, I would say, “*Let your treasure be in heaven, and not on earth,*” as the Lord commands. How can we “lay up treasure in heaven”? Whatever we devote to God is treasure laid up in heaven. Nothing is too small to be noted in His book of remembrance, if given in the right spirit. We are but stewards of whatever talents the Lord may entrust to us; as we sow, so shall we reap.

There is treasure laid up in heaven by God for those who keep His commandments. His laws were strictly obeyed by His beloved Son, and he is already enjoying the treasure he laid up by his loving obedience. He requires his brethren and sisters to keep his commandments and makes this a test of their love for him. He is our example, and we are asked to follow his steps, and endure as seeing God who is invisible. Some of the commandments are hard, but not so hard when we keep close to the encouragements we receive day by day from intimacy with the scriptures. The hope of deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of spirit-nature will nerve us often to overcome the weaknesses of human nature, and to rejoice in the hope of the inheritance laid up in heaven for us by the abounding grace of our Father, which He has purposed in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world. Let your treasure be in heaven, where it will be in safe keeping.

Treasure stored or laid up on earth is liable to come to nothing. I was much impressed with the story of the poor Roman lady whose remains, with the hands full of jewels, have just been found in Pompeii. Here is the report from *The Daily News*:—

“An important discovery has been made at Pompeii, where, in the course of building operations outside the area of the buried city, the petrified body of a woman has been unearthed, with both hands full of jewels. Evidently the woman fled when the eruption began, carrying all her jewels, but was overwhelmed by the rain of ashes when just outside the city.

“The jewels are numerous and valuable, consisting of bracelets, necklets, rings, and chains. All are admirably preserved, as they were protected from the molten lava by the owner’s hands. Among the jewels is a pair of earrings considered to be a unique specimen of ancient goldwork of extraordinary value. Each earring is shaped like a bunch of grapes with 21 perfect pearls representing the grapes, set in gold of exquisite workmanship.”

Poor lady! Where is she, and where is her treasure? We may not be overtaken in a tragedy like that, but the Lord has warned us of the great danger of being surcharged with the cares and pleasures of this life, that when he returns, we may be left to struggle with the terrible judgments that will befall a heedless world (Luke 21:34–36). “*Let your treasure be in*

*heaven,” and when you get to my age in the flesh, which I pray you never may, by reason of the Lord’s speedy return, you will be satisfied, in measure, to look back upon a lifetime spent in the service of God (with whatever imperfections) in the ardent hope and desire for the realisation of “the hope of Israel.”*

*I may live till the Lord comes, if not then, like Simeon of old, I will say, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”*

I have not indeed seen the Lord, but in these latter days I have seen such assurances of his coming again, that I am sure God will soon perform all the rest of His purpose concerning him—With love in his name, your sister and fellow-pilgrim, —Sis. Jane Roberts

### **Magazine Policy on Fellowship**

We merely wish to protect ourselves against the currency amongst us of a doctrine, which we regard as destructive of the foundation on which we stand. For such protection, the guarantee we ask has become necessary in the situation, created among the brethren throughout the world by the introduction and advocacy of the doctrine of partial inspiration. We shall consider that you afford us all the guarantee that is necessary, by your assenting to the declaration to which we ourselves have assented; and by you requiring every person in your midst to assent to it (the mode in which you ask that assent is immaterial, provided you agree to require it individually); the declaration in question, being as follows:—“We here by record and profess our conviction that the doctrine of the divine inspiration and consequent infallibility of the Scriptures in all parts of them (as originally written by prophets and apostles and now known as the Holy Bible) is the first principle of that system of truth which forms the basis of our fellowship one with another in association with those who either believe or tolerate the doctrine...” Bro. Robert Roberts—1885

### **Fault finding**

It is certainly true that no man ought to speak of a brother’s faults behind his back until he have spoken to himself alone and afterwards with others. But even then, you must be quite sure that the fault is of a kind that would warrant you in withdrawing if he do not submit. If there is any doubt on this head, be silent, and leave the Lord to judge at his coming. We generally find men unwilling to leave things to the Lord. They act as though they had no faith in the Lord’s coming, and as if Paul had never written, “Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come who will make manifest the counsels of the heart”—(that is, the secret motives which no man can know, and which

require to be known before a correct estimate of his action is possible).—  
1898 Christadelphian

### **Judge Not: Condemn Not**

The remarks in the *Christadelphian* for February, in answer to “A. H.,” had no reference to any particular person, so far as we are concerned. “A. H.” did not mention any person, but put abstract questions, which were answered in the same way. It is impossible for us to express an opinion, and it would be wrong for us to judge, in personal cases. It is possible to say what ought and what ought not to be done, as a matter of duty for all men; but when it comes to be a question whether these are or are not done by particular men, we enter a forbidden field. We must not judge; we must not condemn. We must leave the Lord to do that at his coming (1 Cor. 4:5). We can of course withdraw from a brother who walks disobediently and defends it; but even this we must not do till we have seen him a few times and given him every opportunity of justifying himself. If men were more busy judging themselves, which they are commanded to do, they would not have so much propensity for judging others, which they are forbidden to do. —1898 Christadelphian

### **Spirit Gifts Removal**

On the day of Pentecost the gift of holy spirit was promised to those who were added to the name of Jesus Christ by baptism. As they were about to return to remote places, where they would carry the gospel to Israel there, it is probable all the visitors to Jerusalem so returning would receive it, that through them God might confirm the word when they preached it. But though promised to all such, the cases of the seven chosen to serve tables (Acts 6:1-7); of the Samaritans; of Saul (Acts 9:17); and of the twelve at Ephesus (Acts 19:6 and 7), show that the divine appointment for imparting the spirit was prayer and the imposition of the hands of the Apostles, or of a presbytery of inspired men, or of an inspired individual believer, as Timothy. These elements of the appointment do not now exist among men. We have no apostles but false ones; and all the presbyteries, or leaderships, are uninspired; and there is no individual on earth the imposition of whose hands is of any value in the premises. A man must be a saint, and must have the gifts with himself before he can impart them; and then even if he had gifts, if among them he was

deficient of the “*inworking of powers*”, (See Eph 3:20) he could not transmit what he possessed to others. Philip could expel unclean spirits, and heal the palsied and the lame; but he could not impart spirit-gifts to the baptized. The apostles had to be sent for to accomplish this. —Bro. John Thomas

Baptism of spirit, then, was only partially bestowed even upon the saints in the apostolic age. It was an outpouring of divine power upon certain of the saints having natural and moral qualifications fitting them for the administrative use of it. They were not only to be “*faithful men*”, but “*apt to teach*”, “*able to teach others*”, “*holding firmly according to the teaching of the faithful word, that by sound instruction they might be able both to exhort and to convince opponents*”; and good rulers of their own houses (1 Tim. 3:2,4; 2 Tim. 2:1,2; Titus 1:9). Having these and certain other qualifications, they were considered eligible for baptism of spirit by prayer and imposition of hands. They must be saints first; for no apostle nor presbytery, nor inworker of powers, would lay hands upon sinners to impart divine power to them “*for the work of the ministry*”. (Eph. 4:12) When the Laodicean Apostasy which now fills all “*Christendom*”, as the heathen call their Babylonish system, came to be established, sinners laid hands upon sinners, as at this day, but notwithstanding all their prayers for the gifts and graces of the spirit, no other spirit comes into manifestation but “*the spirit of error*” (1 John 4:6) which strongly works in all “*the children of disobedience*” (Eph. 2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6) —the spirit of their own nature, “*sin's flesh*”, in which “*dwells no good thing*” . . . (Romans 7:18)

The fitness of things requires this. “*To whom much is given, of them is much required.*” The first-century believers enjoyed the privilege of the Spirit gifts and the company of personal acquaintances of the Lord; and they were required to prove their faithfulness in confiscation and prison, and at the executioner’s block. We of the latter days have no open vision or witness of the Spirit in its wonder-working power. We have but the written and historical evidence of God’s operations in the past. Having received “*less*” than our brethren of old, we are not called upon, like them, to go to prison and to death, but have times of liberty and peace wherein to manifest our love. In the age to come, privileges such as have never fallen to the lot of mortal man will be enjoyed by the peoples, nations, and languages, who will rejoice in the rule of Christ and the saints. Instead, therefore, of their position calling for exemption from death, it rather requires that their faith and obedience should be developed and tested by its prevalence until the time for its destruction as

the “*last enemy*” arrives, in the resurrection and glorification of all who in that blessed age secure the approbation of God. —Bro. Robert Roberts—*Christendom Astray*

The ability to pass on the Spirit gifts seems to have been the special privilege of the Apostles only (Ananias being a possible exception—Acts 9:17). This is indicated by the fact that although Philip’s preaching was accompanied by miracles (Acts 8:7), the Apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to Samaria to transmit the Spirit gifts by the laying on of hands. (Acts 8:14–18). Why should Peter and John be sent to Samaria to transmit Spirit-gift powers, if this power were available to all believers? Hence, with the death of the Apostles, there was no one able to transmit these gifts and so they ceased. As Peter said, the gift of the Holy Spirit was promised “*to you [the Jews to whom he was speaking], and to your children, [two generations], and to all that are afar off, Gentiles, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*” (Acts 2:38, 39).

In 1 Cor. 13, the Apostle Paul contrasts the temporary character of the gifts with the permanence of faith, hope and love. “*But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way*”. “*Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, [i.e., the gift of prophecy, 1 Cor. 12:1, 9, 10] they shall fail; whether there be tongues, [i.e., gift of tongues, 1 Cor. 12:10], they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, [i.e., gift of knowledge, 1 Cor. 12:8] it shall vanish away.*” (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:8). When is this to take place? Paul says, “*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*” (1 Cor. 13:10). Two interpretations are usually given to this verse. Pentecostals argue that the “perfect” which is to come refers to the return of Christ, while others, such as the Christadelphians, argue that it refers to the maturity which would come to the ecclesia with the completed Scriptures. If the latter could be proven, then, of course, this would amount to a proof that the Spirit-gift powers ceased about the end of the first century. The following is advanced in support of the latter interpretation:

i. The Spirit gifts would pass away before the advent of Christ since Paul says, faith and hope *abide* (vs. 13). But when Christ returns one will have no need of hope, for “*hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?*” (Romans 8:24). Nor would one have need for faith, since faith is “*the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*”. (Hebrews 11:1, RSV).

Therefore, there must be a period of time *after* the passing of the Spirit gifts in which faith and hope “*abide*”. Hence the passing of the Spirit gifts cannot be at the return of Christ, but must be at some time prior to this.

ii. The Apostle stressed, “*Now abideth faith, hope, charity ...*” (2 Cor. 13:13). This stress indicates that the Apostle did not consider the Holy Spirit gifts would continue past his age.

iii. The immediate context to verse 10, (“*But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away*”) is the knowing “*in part*” and prophesying “*in part*”, (vs. 10). The term “perfect” is, therefore, qualified by the subject in the context—the possession of the knowledge of the purpose of God. The impartation of this knowledge was dependent in the first century upon the presence of believers with the gifts of “knowledge” and “prophecy” until the completion of the New Testament. Since the completion of the New Testament no claimants to Spirit-gift powers have been successful in adding to the perfected (completed) Scriptures. Why this lack of new knowledge, if in fact the Spirit gifts have been available from the first century until the present day?

iv. The most frequent use of “teleion” is for the maturity of believers. It is sometimes used in contexts which imply that the maturity is reached *before* the judgment at the return of Christ. Note the following:

“*Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect* [teleiois, “mature”, RSV] ... ” (1 Cor. 2:6).

“*Let us therefore, as many as be perfect* [teleioi, “mature”, RSV] (Phil. 3:15).

“... *in understanding be men* [teleioi, “mature”, RSV]. (1 Cor. 14:20).

“*For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, [teleion, “mature”, RSV] even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*” (Hebrews 5:13, 14).

The purpose of the Spirit gifts was to confirm the word which was spoken (Mark 16:20), and to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and for edification (Eph. 4:12), but when the mature state of the ecclesia was reached with the completion of the New Testament Scriptures, that which was “in part” (the Spirit gifts, for example some had the gift of tongues, others the gift of prophecy, etc.) ceased.

An explanation must also be offered for two comparisons which the Apostle makes:

a. *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”* (1Cor. 13:11). The Apostle’s personal life illustrated the development of the ecclesia, (the comparison of the ecclesia to a human body is made in chapter 12, compare also Romans 12:4–8) from the immature state which depended on Spirit gifts, to the maturity reached with the completion of the Scriptures. There may be a subtle allusion to the gift of tongues (“I spake”), and the gift of knowledge (“I understood”), and the gift of prophecy (“I thought”, “reasoned” mg.). These would “be put away”—rendered inoperative by maturity.

b. *“For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”* (1 Cor. 13:12). By looking into the partially revealed Word, man obtained a partial picture of the revelation of God to himself, but with the completion of revelation, man could then see himself as he was seen by God in the divine purpose.

Since Jesus Christ is *“the same yesterday, and today, and forever”* (Hebrews 13:8), the modern tongues movement claims that the Spirit gifts must be available today. It is argued that Jesus can do today what he did in the first century—send the Comforter to divide *“to every man severally as he will”*. (1 Cor. 12:11). Two points require stressing:

a. It is not a question as to whether Christ can make the Spirit gifts available today. He obviously has the power to do so. The

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mg. Alternate translation given in the margin

question is rather, is it his purpose to make the Spirit gifts available today?

b. To argue that Christ must do today what he did in the past is to put a limitation upon his sovereignty. Jesus is immutable (unchanging in his character and person) as is his Father (Num. 23:19; Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1: 17), but he is not confined to do in the present and the future what he has done in the past. To argue otherwise is to ignore the history of the relationship of God and Jesus Christ with men. Two examples illustrate this point:

i. The disciples were told not to preach to the Gentiles—“*Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*” (Matt. 10:5, 6). After the resurrection of Christ, the disciples were told to preach the gospel to all nations. (Mark 16:15). Philip preached to the Samaritans (Acts 8), and Paul was specifically sent to the Gentiles. (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11).

ii. Nearly all Pentecostals would agree that Apostles who strike liars dead (Acts 5:3–10) and raise the dead (Acts 9:40) are no longer in existence. The fact that such are not in existence, does not reflect on the essential character of God, but rather indicates that the purpose which they served is now past.

The afternoon was occupied with correspondence (a by no means insignificant item on a trip like this) at the house of Mr. Morse, whose wife is in the faith. Mr. Morse is an intelligent, active farmer, who, with his partner, cultivates five hundred or a thousand acres, I forget which. He is friendly to the truth, and was exceedingly hospitable to us. May he make friends with Him who sticketh closer than a brother, so that his intelligence and capacity may be used to the honour and service of Him who giveth life and breath and all things, and whom we ought to honour with our substance, and to whom our allegiance should surrender. [Mr. Morse has since obeyed the truth in baptism.—ED. Robert Roberts]

This disregard of God, while receiving daily blessings from Him, is a sin for which the world will give account by-and-bye. God has long held His peace, but will soon break silence, and call the world to account for its wickedness and disregard of Him. In view of this

purpose it seems a fitting thing that the brethren of Christ should be lifting up their voice in warning. Past records show that Deity always warns mankind before He delivers His judgment stroke. He did so before the flood, before the dispersal of Israel, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and before the removal of the light of prophecy and spirit gift in the first century. In fact, His own divine principle in this respect is illustrated in the law of Moses, where it was commanded to proclaim repentance to certain cities before destroying them. It seems a strange thing in the age which verges so closely upon coming judgment, that brethren should exist whose teaching *tends to weaken this warning voice*. As in England, so in America, some of the brethren are troubled about a question which, in its essence, touches the prerogative of the Deity. Why should we trouble about the destiny of those who, upon arrival at a knowledge of the gospels, do not think well to express their joy and obligation to their Creator in the form of baptism? Why should we afflict ourselves with such a question? It pertains to the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the judge of the quick and the dead. The words he addressed to his hearers in his own day and generation are, “*Whosoever rejecteth me and my words hath one that judgeth him, my words shall judge him at the last day.*” And of the scope of his words he asked, he answers, “*He who heareth you heareth me, and he who rejecteth you rejecteth me, and he that rejecteth me rejecteth Him (i.e. God) that sent me*” (Luke 10:16).—Bro. Robert Roberts—1885

***Analecta Apocalypticae (6)***  
**The Colorful and Zestful Language**  
**of the Apocalypse**  
**Sent in the Language of Sign**

The nature of the Apocalypse is defined in the same verse that tells us whom it was sent to. “He sent and *signified* it by his angel to his servant John.” It was not sent in a plain form but in an enigmatical or sign form. To *signify* is to represent by sign or symbol. That this is what is meant by the use of the verb “signify” in this case, is shown conclusively by what John saw and heard. He saw certain things which he describes, and concerning these he is repeatedly informed that the mystery or meaning of what he saw was this and that. Thus, the very first object he saw was a luminous

personage standing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and having in his hand seven stars.

That this was an exhibition of something in symbol would be suggested by the thing itself, but is put beyond a doubt by what was addressed to John thus (chap. 1:20): “The mystery of the seven stars: the seven stars are the angels of the seven ecclesias (the ecclesias enumerated in verse 11) and the seven candlesticks are the seven ecclesias.” Explanations such as these are scattered through the book, and furnish the clues by which the whole may be worked out and understood. To have given the signs without any explanation of their meaning, would have been to give that which would not be a revelation but a concealment and bewilderment.

#### *The Use of Sign Was Nothing New*

The use of sign or symbol is very characteristic of the divine mode of communication. The literal is the basis, but there is much garniture of figure from the very beginning. The Mosaic system was one elaborate system of symbol, as we learn from the New Testament. The messages of the prophets are largely figurative in their dress, though literal in their structure and in their bearing. The Apocalypse is not the first time pure symbol was employed to represent events. The book of Daniel is almost entirely of this character. The vision of the image and the stone, the vision of the four beasts, the vision of the ram and the goat, will occur to everyone acquainted with that book as pointed examples. Even in the plainer prophets, there are examples of pure symbol. Jehovah alludes to the fact in Hosea thus: “I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets” (chap. 12:10). If the similitudes were employed without any clue to their significance, their use would not be enlightening, but the clues, in almost all cases, are supplied—if not in the immediate context, in some corresponding part of the word. Diligent search and comparison will find them.

In some cases it requires no such search; they lie on the surface. Thus Jeremiah, at the commencement of his ministry, was caused to see an almond rod. He was asked what he saw; he said, “I see a rod of an almond tree”. “Then said the Lord unto him, thou hast well seen, for I will hasten my word to perform it” (1:12). Here an almond rod is constituted the symbol of speed in the execution of the Lord's purpose, so that every time it was

seen, it would carry that meaning with it, in the same way that the scales in modern allegory represent justice.

The same prophet was shown a seething pot with its face towards the north, the explanation of which was added in these words: “Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land” —namely, a military invasion, as the next verse shows. Consequently a seething pot would become a symbol of the affliction arising from the war. Amos was shown a basket of garnered fruit (chap. 8:1), and informed that it signified the ripeness of Israel's iniquity, because of which Jehovah would bear no longer with them.

#### *Why Not Set Forth Plainly?*

At first sight, it might seem a matter of regret that symbol should be employed at all. It might seem so much better that all matters should be set forth plainly. This thought will give way before experience. Purely literal talk lacks the color and zest of communication spiced with figure and concealed meaning. This is apparent in even ordinary conversation. The man who signifies more than he actually says, and who by a slight obscurity of style imposes upon the mind an effort to penetrate his meaning, is a more interesting talker than the man who lets all out in a plain way. The effect of symbols after understanding is attained, is to make the matter set forth much more vivid and striking than it would be in a merely literal presentation.

The symbols of the Apocalypse are very graphic of the things symbolized; but it is necessary to realize that they are only symbols. Thus John, when he saw seven candlesticks, saw something that had no actual existence. The actual things signified were seven communities of men and women in Asia Minor. He saw a drying river, he saw three frogs, he saw a seven-headed dragon. But there was no literal river or frogs or dragon. These were the signs of something else. Unless this discrimination be carefully exercised, the effect of the contemplation of the objects exhibited in the Apocalypse will be to bewilder and daze, whereas when it is the meanings that are kept before the mind as the important thing to be looked after, the effect is enlightening and calming as intended.

#### *Needless Observations?*

You may think these are needless observations. They will not appear so when you remember there are people who say the Apocalypse is to be

understood literally, that Babylon is Babylon; a dragon, a real dragon; the prophets, two men, the locusts, locusts, the fire, real fire, and so on. Such people teach that the Apocalypse is a revelation of something that is to happen after Christ has come. The baselessness of such an idea will be manifest at once when it is recollected that the Apocalypse was sent to seven ecclesias existing in Asia Minor in the time of John for the information of all who should afterwards listen. All were pronounced “Blessed” who should keep the things written in it (verse 3, and frequently throughout the book).

Now, of what value could the pointing out of this blessedness be to the seven ecclesias in Asia and all the brethren of Christ who should live after them till his second coming, if the things set forth in it were things to be developed after Christ shall come? The force of this becomes very strong when you consider the character of the class to be accepted when Christ comes as described in the Apocalypse. They are described as *“those who have gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark and over the number of his name”* (15:2). How could this be descriptive of the saints if there were no beast and his image and his mark and his name to overcome before Christ had come? I will not enlarge this argument, though it might be enlarged. This indication of it is sufficient to show the groundlessness and mischievousness of the futurist idea.

*Arranged from the writings of Bro. Roberts. by Bro. Bob Widding.*

### **What Does That Mean?**

*“And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.”*  
(1Corinthians 11:24)

Why did Jesus say the bread represented his *“body which is broken for you”*? We are told in John that the soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs and gives the reason. *“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”* (John 19:36)

There are two ways of looking at the idea of his body being broken. Although no bone was broken truly his body was in the sense that Jeremiah uses the term. He prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem. *“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter’s vessel, that cannot be made whole again:”*—broken in the sense of being destroyed. Think of what Christ went through, suffering like no one before or after him ever did. His body was wounded, bruised, and broken, through buffetings, scourging, putting a crown of thorns upon his head,

piercing his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a spear; never was any man's face more marred, or his form more altered, than his was. Isaiah tells us that, "*his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.*" (Isa. 52:14)

Another way to look at this is to understand that Christ broke his body in the way that we talk of "breaking a wild horse." It implies subdued, trained, and tamed. Christ was able to subdue his feelings and keep his body under subjection to his Father at every turn. It is very fitting that we take both the bread and the wine. We see in the wine, the blood shed—his crucifixion. The bread additionally shows the goodness, fullness and fatness of life. This he broke or kept under at all times. This demonstrates an accomplishment far greater than just his death. The bread and wine together shows far more to us than just martyrdom. There has been plenty of people that have died for a cause that they truly believed in; freely giving their life for their country or a purpose. However, no one has ever been able to accomplish what Christ did. He "broke his body" subdued it and kept it in check every hour of the day. He was always doing the will of His Father and never allowed the flesh to get control. Thus his body was truly broken for us. Christ himself took the bread and brake it, denoting far more than just his willingness to lay down his life, to suffer and die. It shows a body broken in the service of his Father.

How well have we done since we last partook of the bread and wine? Is our life a living sacrifice as his was? We too must break this body of sin and live unto God.

*Bro. Jim Sommerville*