# 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. Vol. X No. 3 (XCV) MARCH, 2007 Please send Ecclesial communications to: Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A. Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 349-6304 e-mail: fhigham@gmail.com Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com EXHORTATION......Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear ......74 EXHORTATION.....The Letter to Ephesus......84 STUDY......John Thomas and Fellowship......93 THOUGHTS......Duty of Brethren as Christ's Bowmen.................99

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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**

**AUSTIN**, Texas — Memorial Meeting 11:00 AM, in homes; Bro. Jim Phillips, 12707 Dove Drive, Buda, TX. 78610

Loving Greetings,

The brethren and sisters of the Austin Ecclesia regret that we have received the following notice.

"Dear Brothers & Sisters of the Austin Ecclesia,

It's with sadness that I write this letter to you today. I have decided to step aside from fellowship. I feel that I have not been following the example of our Lord. I pray that I will soon return to join you all on the path that leads unto life eternal. Brother Craig Kiley"

Let our prayers be with our brother in hope that he will soon find his way again.

Love in Christ, Bro. Seth Brown

#### **Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias - Corrections**

AUSTIN, TX, Bro. Jim Phillips, 12707 Dove Drive, Buda, TX 78610 LAMPASAS, TX Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628 WORCESTER, MA Sis. Jessie Prentice, 339 Greenwood St. #55, Worcester, MA 01607

### FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

#### **Perfect Love Casteth Out Fear**

"We, being many, are one body - (One body) in Christ, and everyone, (everyone), members .....of another." Romans 12:5

For an acceptable walk in the Truth, and for ecclesial health and harmony, and a state of true, mutual, spiritual joyfulness, to which we as the sons and daughters of God are freely invited, it is necessary that the Spirits teaching on the subject of love be continually and repeatedly presented before the mind. Paul tells us that love is the bond of perfectness. The bond - the binding together - the uniting - the unifying power of perfection. Unity of perfection - perfect oneness - based upon the only possible base for a perfect oneness and enthusiastic mutual striving toward perfection. Any aim short of perfection is not unifying, but dividing and breaking up. No group can have true unity unless it is whole-heartedly dedicated to the

pursuit of divine perfection. Love is the bond of perfectness! Unless we as a group mutually possess this bond together, we might just as well go our separate ways — "one to his farm and another to his merchandise," because we shall never - never have any true ecclesial unity without it.

Let us face this basic fact of ecclesial life. If we are not prepared as a whole body to love each other with a pure heart fervently, then our assembly together is utterly meaningless. We are just another poor little lost group - among millions of others. The body of Christ is not a limited association - merely for form and convenience. It is one, intimate, closely knit, intensely interdependently unity. By one spirit are we all baptized into one body.

"The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee. Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee."

God hath tempered the whole body together that the members would have the same care one for another. The Scriptures are very specific about what this love is, of which it speaks. What are the evidences of its presence or absence among us. This is no indefinite thing. It can be very easily checked. And it is a terribly sad fact that many accept the Truth and spend their whole lives in it (often very actively,) without ever perceiving this basic first principle of godliness. It is always more profitable, whenever possible, to allow our train of thought and meditation to be shaped and guided by some specific portion of scripture. For there is never any

same care one for another. The Scriptures are very specific about what this love is, of which it speaks. What are the evidences of its presence or absence among us. This is no indefinite thing. It can be very easily checked. And it is a terribly sad fact that many accept the Truth and spend their whole lives in it (often very actively,) without ever perceiving this basic first principle of godliness. It is always more profitable, whenever possible, to allow our train of thought and meditation to be shaped and guided by some specific portion of scripture. For there is never any better or more powerful, or more effective way of presenting a subject than the way God presents it in his Holy Words. The principle of love is very prominent all through the Scriptures, as Jesus points out, and as the Jews failed to realize. The two greatest commandments of their law concern love. And further more he told them that love was the fulfilling of the whole law. That all the law hung upon these commandments concerning love. Love is the declared basis of all God's dealings with Israel, but when we think of a specific portion of Scripture we naturally turn to the first epistle of John. John's words throughout are beautiful and sublime. If we could continually live in their atmosphere, it would cleanse and purge us of all fleshliness or earthiness.

John's first use of the word love, in this epistle, emphasizes the Truth which is essential to make clear at the outset, that love in the true Scriptural sense is not a flabby, shapeless, foggy, sentimentalism, but a clear, precise, careful adherent to specific Divine instruction. Based upon a pure zeal and affection for God. Love is not something contrary to law and command, but rather that which gives all Divine law it's power and purpose and meaning.

Beginning then with John on this subject; 1st John 2:4-5; the first mention of love:-

"He that saith, I know him and keepeth not His commands is a liar."

We shall find that John uses very strong language, because the issues at stake are vital.

"He is a liar, but whoso keepeth His words, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

Verses 7-9 of this 2nd chapter, he speaks of the new commandment which was not a new commandment, but which was the same from the beginning. Jesus had said, speaking to his disciples upon His last evening before the crucifixion:-

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you," He said; - "Ye also love one another."

By this, he continued, by this manifestation that all men know that ye are my disciples, if we have love one to another. Are we Jesus' disciples? Do we measure up to this first test that John gives. He said that this could be determined from whether we manifest love to one another. The special spiritual love that he describes, "Brotherly love", was an old commandment, in that, as pointed out, regard the law, it was at the heart and root of all commandments. It was a new commandment, in that it was the foundation of the new man - the new birth - the new and living way - the new creation - the new name - the new covenant - the new Jerusalem - the new heaven and the new earth. It was new in the depth and beauty - which Jesus' own example gave it:- "As I have loved you, greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Before John goes further into the subject of love, he speaks of what must not be love. Verses 15 thru 17 of this 2nd chapter of the 1st epistle of John:- "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

There is no room for both, and John makes that vitally clear right at the beginning - no room for both. These are serious words. We do well to ponder them deeply and to honestly test ourselves by them. We all desire eternal life. We all recognize the great desirability of God's love and favor and blessing and acceptance. Let us then have the wisdom to face and accept this clear instruction in the way of life. Surely it is very small and unworthy to want to have it both ways. What are the things of the world we cannot love if we truly love God? If we truly understand what the love of God means; its honors, its associations, its pleasures, and its amusements - all its interests; for the world is pressing in on us during all our waking hours, seeking our love and attention and interest. It takes a deep and strong comprehension of the love of God to withstand and hold firm. John continues:-

"For all that is in the world, (all that is in the world,) the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away." That is the saddest part of it all. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Here then is the choice - John is about to tell us of the lifegiving joys and glory of Divine love, and he must clear the ground first. He must make the issue crystal clear. He must leave no misunderstanding about the fact that we must put away all interest, desire, and affection for things of the world, if we want to be part of that glorious company that are united in the unspeakable joys of the love of God. Beginning chapter 3 John says,-

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

What greater condescension could God have made. What greater honor - what greater incentive - that we should be called the sons of God. It is fitting that he should begin there, for as he tells us, the love of God for man is the root and well-spring of all our love for God and for each other. It is the motive and source behind all love. God's love for man, so supremely manifested in His only begotten son is

his ways. For nothing can stand before the invincible power of righteous prayer.

Bro. G. V. Growcott

from Pergamos to Rome and Constantinople, Antipas fled into the wilderness, and was protected there during 1260 years. But at the end of that period, the adversary made war upon the Antipas, and slew them; for being against all, in their testifying, they incurred the wrath of the self-styled christians who ruled and argued with the word—Rev. 11:1, 2, 7.

Antipas, however, though put to death, hath been resuscitated; and they now "stand upon their feet," and their enemies are afraid of them. The Satan of Pergamos is still prosperous in the enjoyment of the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life; with a dominion coextensive with christendom. Their church is large, and embraces within its pale all sects, and parties, names and denominations, except Antipas; who is still, as in apostolic times, against all. Antipas, who holds fast the name and denies not the faith of Christ, has no fellowship for any of them; but protests against them all as the Satan. As he is against all, so all are against him. No "orthodox christian" of the Satan's synagogue will admit an Antipas into their pulpits, because he is not in what they term "holy orders;" -- he has not been ordained by the imposition of the hands of those "reverend divines," who say that they are "apostles;" the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and successors of his apostles; "and are not, but are found to be liars." Antipas has no more respect for these than Jesus had for the "scribes, pharisees, and hypocrites;" or Paul for "the false apostles and ministers of the Satan," who perverted the gospel, and sought to exclude him on every side. The author of this exposition is an Antipas; and would rather stand alone, faithfully adherent to the name and faith of the Spirit, than redolent of the odors of sanctity burned to his honor by all the clergy and pietists of "Christendom."

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

### What Does That Mean?

"Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20

1 John 5— Of the epistle of John...John expresses a very important principle in this respect. One which we do not fully realize the importance and power of. He shows us the proper way to handle evil.

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

Therefore, when others injure us or we see them doing things that grieve us as not in harmony with the Truth, we have a great responsibility on their behalf - for their salvation may rest in our hands, in the power of prayer. This is how love, instead of spreading a matter or taking offence, or causing agitation, or trouble, may cover a multitude of sins and save a sinner from the error of his ways. Not "in" the error of his ways, but "from" the error of

the transforming power of all holiness and righteousness. We are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. 2:20)

That was the power behind it all. The love of Christ constraineth us. He loved, because He first loved us.

Beginning chapter 3 and arising from the thoughts of the marvelous manifestation of God's love in calling us as weak erring mortals to be his children in glory, the apostle stresses how this hope and promise must lead us to holiness. How out of place and out of harmony any worldliness or ungodliness is with this Divine relationship. Verse 10 of the 3rd chapter of John says:- "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

"Neither he that loveth not his brother." Any ill feeling to any of our brethren and sisters cuts us off - cuts us off from relationship to God. In this are the children of God manifested.

"For this", John continues, "is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."

We notice that he divides all mankind into two relationships. The children of God and the children of the devil. This is a very sobering thought. If we are not one, we are the other. There are no neutrals. We are either of the seed of the woman, that is of Christ, in harmony with the mind of Christ, or we are the seed of the serpent. And John gives us two identifications of the children of God for our own self examination. First, doing righteousness and second, loving his brother. Let us strive to fully realize the prominent and vital place that this matter of loving our brethren is given in the commands of God. It is not something that is presented as just desirable, its something that is repeatedly presented as vital - essential. We find that John returns to it again and again. Let us closely follow his thoughts here as he continues in verse 14:-

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."

Here the simple, yet deeply searching test - that we could each apply to ourselves, to see if we really have passed from death to life. To see if we really are in the faith. Do we find ourselves powerfully moved and motivated by love, kindness, concern, gentleness, sympathy, patience, a desire to render comfort and service to our brethren? All our brethren - not just a limited few, who happen to please us or appeal to us, but to <u>all</u> as brethren. But especially to those who seem the least lovable. For these are the ones who are most in need of love, and guidance, patience, brotherly kindness. If this is not honestly true of us, and we can tell whether it is or not, then we must face the implications of John's searching words:-

"We have not passed from death unto life."

We are not in Christ. We are not in the faith. We have not properly learned the Gospel. We have not entered the Divine Family, we are still children of the devil. For John continues, pressing home the point in the 14th verse:- "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." He says in verse 16:-

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us:

He is beginning to show us what this love really means. The depth and significance of it. Another version puts it: "By this we know love" - from this we learn what love is, "that He laid down His life for us."

That is the kind of thing that John is talking about. When the Scriptures speak of love, they do not mean some puny little part time hobby. Love, in the Scriptural sense, is a tremendous, all-consuming passion for goodness and service to others. And if we haven't got it, we are not the children of love. John goes on:- "And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Not just be willing to face death for them in some unlikely far off emergency, but to give our whole present lives for them right here and now. The next verse, verse 17, should be imperishably engraved upon our hearts, for it carries the seed of a deeper, broader, more world shaking revolution than this planet has ever seen.

"Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

It is for each alone to search his heart, and as standing in the presence of God, to decide just how and what and how much that statement means to him. Remembering that it is impossible to obey it too much, but very easy to obey it too little.

"Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need .... how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

Let us remember that the Scriptures are not speaking of little conscience solving token handouts, but on the large scale of the love of Jesus.

"Love one another, as I have loved you."

Are we big enough to be the children of God? Are we big enough to be the children of God? Or are these teachings too vast and nobel for our petty, selfish, earthy natures to rise to. John presses the point still further in verse 18:-

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

There is much, so much talk about love; but where shall we find that life-giving, self-sacrificing love of which John speaks as essential to salvation? Is it the rule among us? Are we the children of God? Or is our love that of words and tongue - such kind words of sympathy as James points out - "depart in peace - be ye warmed and full - we are so sorry - so sympathetic to hear of your troubles and we hope that everything will be all right, and we'll come back again and see you soon."

What a noble feeling it gives us to be so kind and sympathetic in tongue and in word. Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. There is a terrible reckoning in store on the matter of unfaithful stewardship.

It would be profitable at this point to give some thought to just what the Scriptures mean by love - some of the details - and for that the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians is the most informative. Paul tells us there in detail, just how true love acts. For by comparing ourselves (and the emphasis is upon ourselves,) by comparing ourselves with what he says, we can easily determine whether or not we are really children of God and on the way to life. After telling us, with the strongest possible emphasis, that no other service or sacrifice is of any value in the absence of this Scriptural love, the apostle says, beginning to describe it:-

## Analecta Apocalypticae (11) Antipas: My Faithful Witness

The Spirit says to the Star-Angel or Elders in Pergamos, "Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, as in the days in which Antipas was my faithful witness, who was put to death with you where the Satan sojourns." The Star-Angel was still faithful, and had been so in former days of trial, characterized as days in which Antipas was put to death in Pergamos. Antipas is styled "my faithful witness." Hence the name is identical with him, or them, who held fast the name and denied not the faith of Christ, whether in Pergamos or elsewhere, in the midst of persecution. The name is typical of a class at that time related to "the things that are." The word Antipas signifies "against all," and is doubtless introduced here as the apocalyptic designation of those who were the faithful in opposition to all pretenders to Christianity. Paul and all who adhered to his teaching were Antipas. They were against all Nikolaitans, Balaamites, children of Jezebel, false apostles, and spurious Jews, who, as Justin says, "are called Christians, but are atheists and impious heretics, because that in all things they teach what is blasphemous, ungodly, and unsound."

The Antipas Christians were subject to the hatred both of the Diabolos and the Satan. The Satan were sometimes persecuted by the Diabolos; but the Antipas were persecuted by both. The Satan, however, who called themselves Christians, when hard pressed by the Pagan Diabolos, would, as Pliny relates in his letter to Trajan, deny the faith to save their worthless lives; but the Antipas were always "faithful unto the death." The Satan was contending with the Diabolos for supremacy in the Roman State, which brought them into collision and bloodshed; but the Antipas party were "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," that they might be approved of God, save their contemporaries, and transmit it uncorrupted to the next generation. The Antipas, or Christ's faithful witness, cared nothing about the riches, and honors, and power obtainable in the present evil world. His affections had loftier aspirations. Not so the Satan. They were ambitious of all these. They aspired to political ascendancy, and when they found themselves powerful enough, they appealed to the sword, and conquered. And when the Diabolos found that the cause of paganism was lost, the religion of the Satan, the Catholic, became the religion of the State, under the old style of "the devil and the Satan." But Antipas still continued in affliction. The victory of the Satan professing christianity was of small advantage to Antipas. The faithful witness had to fly into the wilderness from the face of the New Power, which sought to sweep them from the earth. —Rev. 12:6, 14-17.

But, it is said of Antipas, that he was put to death in the Satan's kingdom—"Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death with you where the Satan sojourns"—at Pergamos, the place of their throne. When the Satan removed

the whole spirit of the Old Testament, as well as the New.

And thus the final command and urgent warning:

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matt. 7:15-20)

Here is a place where we must judge—not in condemnation, but in self-protective discernment — care concerning being How are we to judge? —"By their fruits."

Jesus closes with the two builders; one on Rock, one on Sand.

The builders on the Rock are those very few who hear these wonderful teachings of Christ and faithfully OBEY them, even to the end.

-Bro. G. V. Growcott

### **Self Righteous**

"If thou seest the oppression of the poor and the violent taking away of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for one higher than the high regardeth; and there be higher than they" (Eccl. 5:8 A.S.V.). Let such take care and consider their ways lest they be numbered with those who learn the ways of the "scorners," who "whet their tongues like a sword and aim their arrows even like bitter words: that they may shoot in secret places at the perfect" (Ibid). Those who do not observe the precepts of Christ and who condemn others feed their own self-esteem. As an English poet has said, "They compound for sins they are inclined to, by condemning those they have no mind to." This habit grows until the spiritual perceptions of the man in Christ Jesus are dimmed. Bye-and-by they "stay away." They cannot come to the meeting because some other man whom they hate is there. No one is good enough for their fellowship, and they die in isolation. However great their knowledge it only serves to sink them in the abyss of despair. As with a millstone they sink, and all the deeper because they have "known" Christ. More than one instance of shipwreck from this destroying agent has passed under my notice during my connection with the truth. —Bro. Sulley's Travels

# **Odious Prayer**

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matt 6:7)

"Saying prayer" is not praying. Prayer is the sincere and fervent address to the Father that would be natural in solitude, and at all events that does not depend upon the presence of fellow-worshippers. The prayer that is humanly-inspired is acceptable to neither God nor man. There are prayers that mortify and crush, because they are not prayers, but performances, and odious at that. Sincerity is the virtue that gives grace to all action. *Bro. Robert Roberts—1896* 

"Love is longsuffering."

Longsuffering means: long and patient endurance of offence - long continued gentleness in the face of provocation. Why? Because love desires only good. Works continually for good. Love is saddened by the failures of others who manifest goodness. But it has the divine wisdom to realize that only by infinite patience can good be accomplished. Good is worked out very slowly. And yielding to impatience is failure and defeat. The word "longsuffering" carries the sense of a tremendous power of self-restraint and self-control. More powerful than the natural passions of anger and impatience. Love is first and foremost "longsuffering". When we find ourselves becoming angry or impatient, or irritated, or annoyed, that is the danger signal. The time to stop and examine our hearts to seek the help of God to overcome where we are slipping. It is a sign that the diabolos is forging another link in the chain of our bondage to sin and death and only the power of God can break that fatal chain. Paul continues:-

"Love is kind."

Kind means having a continued disposition to do good, confer happiness, and to avoid anything that creates offence or unhappiness. Kind is the opposite of harsh, stern, unfeeling, or selfish. No one who is kind in the Scriptural sense, can be any of these things. Kindness often has to be very, very straight forward and firm. It is never harsh, never bitter, never rough or rude. And no one who manifests these opposites of kindness is kind according to the divine definition, regardless of what zeal they have. They do not, therefore, have the love, without which, Paul says, all else is useless. These two characteristics then are the two main pillars of Spiritual love - longsuffering and kindness. Within that framework most problems can be solved. Longsuffering and kindness - not just as strained surface effort, and on certain occasions, but consistently manifested in all circumstances as the deepest and strongest motive of life. Let us take a moment to stand alongside of the scriptural standards and see what our actual stature is. The Apostle continues:-

"Love envieth not."

Love desires nothing that others have, but is completely satisfied and content with the infinite riches of the glory of God. The glory and the grace of God. Knowing that if a man truly has that - he has everything for all eternity, and there is nothing more to be desired. Nothing anyone can give him.

"Love vaunteth not itself."

It does not vote, or seek attention or notice. It does not seek self-gratification to the manifestation of its abilities, or knowledge, or accomplishments. It keeps self carefully in the background. With divine wisdom it sees through the pitiful childishness of seeking to impress others, which is at the root of a large proportion of all human conduct - Trying to create an appearance - to impress others.

"Love is not puffed up."

It is free, not only from outward show, but also from inward pride, a much more subtle evil. To be pleased and satisfied with ourselves is the most disastrous form of self deception. For love knows that all mankind is week, and ignorant, and helpless, and all good is solely of the grace of God. Jesus said:-

"Why callest thou me good - learn of me for I am meek and lowly - for I can of mine own self do nothing."

If that is the mind of Christ, what room is there for any self-approval in the sin stricken sons of men? The love of which Paul speaks as vital to salvation is no small or common thing. He continues:-

"Love doeth not behave itself unseemly."

No excuse, no excuses for outbursts of temper or passion. Love does not act out of harmony with the holiness of its relation to God, does not speak foolishly or according to the sudden impulses of the flesh. Love is always gentle and gracious, and courteous, and well behaved. Nothing silly, or changeable, or erratic, or course, or rude.

"Love speaketh not her own".

Her own what? Her own anything. Her own way. Her own desires. Her own right. Her own advantages. Her own comfort. Her own honor. Her love just does not seek at all, but gives. Loves greatest secrets is the knowledge that all true worth-while pleasure is in giving and not seeking. There is no real satisfaction in seeking and accumulating whatever it may be, but only disappointment and frustration in the end. But giving, whether it be goods, or labor, or time, or the foregoing, or yielding of any advantage - giving is deeply satisfying and rewarding and uplifting, and ennobling. It is getting closer to God and that always yields pleasure and blessing and satisfaction.

"Love is not easily provoked."

In selecting of this word "easily" by the translators, who apparently couldn't rise to the conception, is utterly unwarranted. It is not in any way in the original or supported by the original. For it takes all the power out of the expression and all other versions correct this. The true translation is as the revised version has it: "Love is not provoked." When we say, "I am provoked," or "that is provoking," we are actually saying, (if we will stop to translate it into Bible terms), "I do not love. I am permitting the flesh to rule, and not the Spirit. I am not big enough to be on God's side." If we examine ourselves by the light of God's Spirit Word we shall find very, very often, that in our fleshly self-assertion we are declaring our own condemnation and glorying in our shame. Let us think of this before we blurt out our feelings of which we are so proud.

David, in Psalm 119, takes this same searching truth that love is not provoked, and therefore if we are provoked, we have not found the power of love, without which all else is hopeless. He says:-

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

"Love thinketh no evil."

The revised version gives the meaning a little more clearly:-

"Love taketh no account of evil."

That is, overlooks it. Does not impute it. Bears no resentment. Literally it is:-

"Love reconneth not the evil."

Passes it by. Makes loving allowance. Love shall cover a multitude of sins. No ecclesia can be a true joyous ecclesia of God where this loving passing over of evil is not practiced. It does not mean condoning of evil - never that. The Scriptures are very clear on that point. The truth must be defended, both in doctrine and in

GOD HIMSELF, and as those who aspire and claim to be His children, we must always strive to be like Him.

"When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking." (Matt 6:7)

Public prayer especially should be simple, brief and unembellished. Mere repetition, he says, is vain and worldly. We must always remember with deep reverence that we are talking to God in reality and sincerity, and not giving a public performance to influence and impress others.

"Forgive men their trespasses." (Matt 6:14)

We must forgive freely and fully, from the heart. This is absolutely essential to a Christ-like character. Ill feeling and resentment and taking offense and unforgivingness and fleshly sourness make divine beauty of character utterly impossible.

And we must forgive EVERYTHING—whether forgiveness is sought or not. It is very self-gratifying to graciously forgive when forgiveness is asked in repentant humility. There's little virtue in forgiving under those conditions. But Christ prayed for forgiveness for those who were in the act of putting him to cruel death, and Stephen did the same.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt 6:33)

This must be the center of our interest and desire. This is the pure and single eye, the body full of joy and light.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. 7:1)

Probably no command is more often broken than this. Much of our conversation is judgment, criticism or condemnation of others.

This is an evil condition, and displeasing to God. We must truly judge circumstances and conditions where our own conduct is affected, or where fellowship is involved; but unless it is necessary for us to judge others in order to know what we ourselves should do, we should very carefully refrain from forming any judgment of another, and especially we should not express judgment.

This is a very important first principle of the Truth. The warning is—"With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged" (Matt. 7:2).

Therefore, it is always wisdom to judge with mercy and kindness and compassion and fellow-feeling, wherever we must judge at all.

When we indulge in the flesh-satisfying practice of judging and criticizing others, we are not only directly disobedient to this command—we are also manifesting that we do not have the mind and spirit of Christ, and therefore are none of his.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 7:12)

The "Golden Rule"—best known and perhaps least obeyed command of all. It has a pleasing, soothing sound, and many pay it zealous lip-service, but how it rarely is practiced!

Note that Jesus says this command is "all the Law and the Prophets"—this is

goodness that service will be rewarded. The highest reason enjoins the attitude prescribed by Jesus. After we have done all that is commanded, we have only done our duty and have not profited God. In this sense, the accepted will acknowledge themselves unprofitable servants.

But in this there is no ground of consolation for those who are truly unprofitable. On the contrary, it forbids hope for such; for if those who have "done all those things which are commanded them," are instructed to regard themselves as "unprofitable servants," what is the position of those who have neglected "all those things which are commanded them," and who have made self-interest their rule? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" The answer is plain; "Every man shall receive according to his work".

Bro. Robert Roberts — 1875

#### **Notes From Christ's Commands**

I have been always strongly impressed that these three chapters (Matthew 5 thru 7) are the living and vital heart of the Truth. If we are familiar with these teachings and sincerely trying to obey them at all times, we are on the way of life. If we are not, we have no chance of life.

These three chapters, commonly known as the "Sermon on the Mount," contain 40 commands. They are presented in various ways, but are all actually commands of Christ, to which he refers when he says, (John 15:14) — "Ye are my friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you."

He sums it all up in his final words. If we hear and do, we build on rock, and will stand forever. If we hear and do not, we build on sand—our house will collapse and fall.

There are two ways of life-the way of self—assertion and self-advantage; and the way of manifesting love and goodness toward all with a view to awakening love and goodness.

We cannot be half-and-half. We must make our choice between them. Christ is the perfect example of the way of love. He went through life completely unselfish, completely unresisting, and he has had more influence for good than all other men put together.

The non-resistant, Christ-like life is the ONLY pattern of life, if we desire to do eternal good. Truly a time of judgment upon evil will come, and if we are worthy, we shall be used with Christ to carry out God's will at that time, and establish the universal triumph of righteousness, but our present duty is to try to win men to God by the Christ-like way of good for evil.

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt 5:48)

Does He really expect us to be perfect? What He expects—what He DEMANDS—is that we strain every effort in that direction. He requires no more than the very best we can do, but He will accept no less.

The command leaves us absolutely no excuse for relaxing our efforts at any point short of perfection. The great example that is set before us in this verse is

precept. But the reference here is to personal reaction through personal injury. The attitude that love takes toward the offenders.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Chapter 5, of the epistle of John, to which we shall return, John expresses a very important principle in this respect. One which we do not fully realize the importance and power of. He shows us the proper way to handle evil.

"If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death."

Therefore, when others injure us or we see them doing things that grieve us as not in harmony with the truth, we have a great responsibility on their behalf - for their salvation may rest in our hands, in the power of prayer. This is how love, instead of spreading a matter or taking offence, or causing agitation, or trouble, may cover a multitude of sins and save a sinner from the error of his ways. Not "in" the error of his ways, but "from" the error of his ways. For nothing can stand before the invincible power of righteous prayer.

"Love rejoiceth not in iniquity."

Love enjoys no gossip, gets no satisfaction out of trouble or suffering of others, even when it is well deserved. Love can have no part in unfairness, or injustice, or discrimination of any kind. Gets no enjoyment from anything unclean or unrighteous, or unholy.

"But rejoiceth with the Truth."

All loves allegiance, and pleasure, and rejoicing are on the side of the Truth.

"Rejoiceth with the truth."

Here is something very important. In all our emphasis upon love, we must never forget that it must always be grounded on and in the truth. Love is the power of life. The truth, and truth alone must be its form and faith. All these beautiful qualities of love exercised outside the Divine framework of truth, loose all their beauty and divinity and power and become mere things of the flesh. Divine love is always rejoicing in, within the Truth and never wanders outside of it. Nothing masquerading under the guise of love, it is out of harmony with truth, is anything but a deceptive counterfeit.

"Love beareth all things."

The word for beareth means to contain - to hold in - to be watertight. Love is strong enough to hold in and contain all other emotions and desires. And love is the only power that can. Apart from this power, which arises, as John says, from prolonged contemplation upon the love that God has freely manifested to man. Apart from this power, the control of the flesh, according to the will of God, is hopeless. But love can contain and restrain all things. And the word means to keep out as well as to keep in. Love is an impervious seal and protection against all destructive, misleading or contaminating influences from without.

"Love believeth all things"

What are the "all things" that love believes? And is it particularly a virtue to believe all things? Love's infinite capacity for belief of ultimate good is one of its greatest duties; belief in God and belief in the capabilities and possibilities of man, with the help of God. James says:-

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"The wisdom from above is easy to be intreated", or literally, "easily persuaded." Not vacillating, but easily persuaded on the basis of love. It takes a tremendous power of belief to truly forgive seventy times seven and to wholeheartedly mean it. There is nothing cynical or pessimistic or sour about love. It is always willing to believe the best and to give the benefit of every doubt. Through the wisdom of the world this is gullibility or stupidity, but love will be found in the end who have been the wiser light.

"Love hopeth all things."

Love comprehends all hope as it does all belief or faith. Love never gets discouraged. Never gives up hope regardless of circumstances or appearance. It is clear from the general trend and direction of the apostles remarks that the hope that he has in mind here is hope for and in regard to others. He is speaking of love as a relationship, as a way of conduct, an attitude toward others. Love never gives up sighing and hoping, is never soured or imbittered by failure or rebuff.

"Love endureth all things."

The word means to stand firm and correct any misapprehension we may have of love believing all things. It means to be unshaken and unmoved in the face of difficulty, attack or hardship. Finally, says the Apostle:-

"Love never fails."

Never wears out. Never dies. Never comes to an end. The Apostle points out that it is the only human attribute that carries over into eternity. If we have this, we shall endure. Lacking it, we shall pass away with the world.

We turn again to John's epistle and we begin the words with which he left us. The 1st epistle of John 3:18:

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." And he continues:

"And hereby ,(that is by this), we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

That is if we are living and rejoicing in this divine love, which the Apostle has so beautifully described. And John goes on:-

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

Do our hearts condemn us? Have we measured ourselves by this one and only way of life? Do our hearts condemn us? Verse 23:-

"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

Why does John keep saying it over and over? Isn't once or twice enough. Nearly 20 times in this epistle, the same command is emphasized and reemphasized that we must "love one another." It is the key and theme of the whole epistle. John picks up the same theme again in chapter 4:7:-

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

When we consider all that is involved in the love of which he speaks, we can well realize that we must be born of God to be able to manifest it. And that to

The idea is expressed by Paul where he says, "Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother PERISH, for whom Christ died"—(2 Cor. 8:11). Woe to the man who turns believers out of the way.

Here is a lesson of a sobering character which wise men will apply in many ways. It is a check against reckless independence of action. We have to consider consequences as affecting others. We may feel ourselves at liberty to do many things as between ourselves and God, which we shall be deterred from doing if we consider its probable effects upon those who may not discern so clearly. It is in this respect that Paul says, "We that are strong ought to bear with them that are weak, and not to please ourselves." He advised the strong-minded brother of the first century not to eat meat in the idol's temple, though to good sense, the idol was nothing, and the meat good, and the temple a beautiful shelter from the weather; because a weaker-minded brother might construe his act into a participation with the idolatry, and might be emboldened to do things which would defile his conscience. In our day, the duty of consideration for others has shifted from idolatry to the ways of the world. There are many things we might do if we had only ourselves to consider. But when we reflect that our liberty may help to drive back into bondage those who are struggling to be free, it will help us to deny ourselves. If we abandon circumspection in such matters, we shall find at last we have made a mistake. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the question of Cain, and all who go through life with this sentiment in their mouths will find themselves in Cain's company on the day of straightening. Christ's commandment is "Love one another," and the only thing that will yield satisfaction in that great day, will be the knowledge of having obeyed the commandments of Christ.

This brings us to a saying of Christ's which is written in the chapter read from Luke: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." Several things suggest themselves as we reflect on this. The first is an apparent contradiction between this and that part of Christ's teachings, wherein he says the unprofitable servant will be cast out and the profitable servant only accepted. The apparent contradiction arises from the use of the same word in two connections. There is no real contradiction. The unprofitable servant to be cast out was one who yielded no fruit, who lived in disobedience of his Lord's commands; the "unprofitable servants" of the saving under consideration are those who have "done all those things which were commanded them." The question is, in what sense are those unprofitable servants who have "done those things which are commanded?" The answer is not far for right reason to seek. In the utmost we do in "working out our own salvation," we cannot profit God. The benefit is all to ourselves. God condescends to count our faith and obedience for righteousness; but it is not for any advantage it is to Him, He is pleased with our submission, but not advantaged by it. We cannot advantage Him, for of Him and to Him, and through Him are all things. Consequently, when we come to stand before the judgment seat of Christ with ever so good an account of our stewardship, we can claim nothing on the score of services rendered. It is of the goodness of God we are permitted to serve, and it is of His

### **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

### **Hurting People's Feelings**

"Woe unto that man by whom they come: it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones." (Matthew 18:6)

Here is a great caution to our ways. Let none of us suffer as an evil doer.— (1 Peter 4:15.) Let none of us be in trouble through misdeeds; let none of us be on the wrong side of the "offences" when they come. It is well to realise what "offences" mean here. Does it mean hurting people's feelings? If so, how shall we obey the command to reprove the "unfruitful works of darkness?"—(Eph. 5:11.) Christ hurt the feelings of the Pharisees: for it is written that on one occasion, the Pharisees were "offended" when they heard what Jesus said.— (Matt. 15:12.) It is impossible to avoid hurting the feelings of those who are in the wrong in testifying against the wrong. This is not what Jesus meant by "offence." The word "offence" had a stronger meaning in English in the days of James I. than it has now. It fails now to convey the full meaning of the original word, which is to hurt substantially; to cause to stumble; to bring into mischief.

achieve this love is truly to know God. And it further follows, as he says in verse 8:-

"He that loveth not, (he that does not manifest these qualities) knoweth not God; for God is love."

Now Jesus said that to know God is life eternal. And so the implication is clear that the achievement of this love of which Paul speaks is a necessary step to obtain eternal life.

"God", says the Apostle, "God is love."

Here he reaches the heart of his subject. For "God is love." He is not just loving, but He is love itself. That is His essential nature and personality. And as we shape ourselves to this Divine ideal of love, we make ourselves one with God. We can form ourselves to, and lay hold upon eternity, and it is the only way. Verse 10:-

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Love does not originate with us. It is not in return for our love that God sent His Son. All the love originated with Him, while we were yet loveless sinners. He did not wait until we were loveable before He put His redeeming love into action on our behalf. And, nor does He withdraw the offer and the manifestation of His love because we continually fail and disappoint Him in our reciprocation of it. This gives great force to the exhortation that follows in verse 11 of chapter 4:-

"Beloved, if God so loved us, (and continues to love us in all our weakness,) we ought also to love one another."

Love is most needed where it is at first deserved and appreciated least. Surely we realize that in our own hope of salvation, God sent his infinite love in motion toward the ungodly in order to create and kindle love in them. If then, we are to follow God's example and be God's children, we can never justify not loving by the fact that the recipient is not lovable. For that is all the more reason for giving them our love. Verse 12:-

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."

Here is a powerful promise and incentive indeed. We cannot see God. He is unapproachable, but He says, "If we love one another, God dwells in us." He will draw near. He will make His comfort and His presence felt. He will work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure and He will perfect His love in us so that we are one with Him. Again the Apostle repeats the glorious revelation and comments. Verse 16:-

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Love is the meeting place. The sphere communion and communication. Verse 17:-

"Herein, (notice the connecting links all the way through. How John follows the implications of his words through our application to us. "Herein, (that is in his way through this divine bond), is our love made perfect."

But we may have boldness, that is confidence; appearance; freedom from fear; hope in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Are we? Are we by this oneness of love as He is, in this world? For that alone can be the

ground of hope and confidence. He has shown us clearly what He is. "God is Love." Infinite love, and endless and inexhaustable fountain of love, seeking to bring blessings wherever it flows. Verse 18:-

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

#### "Perfect love casteth out fear."

I believe this is the deepest and most beautiful statement in all the Scriptures. The world lives in fear. It is an ugly place. The whole framework is based upon mutual fear, hatred, suspicion, selfishness and greed. It has always been so and especially today. The special mark of the last days is:-

"All men's hearts failing them for fear."

There is this today; the two greatest human powers that the world has ever known, and they live in mortal fear of each other. Constantly at trigger points. But fear goes deeper than international problems. Fear is at the roots of all human life, and much of man's efforts and contrivance is motivated by it. The Scriptures go right to the heart of the problem in declaring that the sacrifice of Jesus was to deliver them full through fear of death. For all their life time subject to bondage. The bondage and sorrow in which the creation groans. Sin and death are at the roots of all fear.

"But perfect love casteth out all fear." Cleanses, purifies. "He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

This is love's greatest blessing and beauty. Only God can bestow this glorious freedom from all fear and He will bestow it; upon those, and those alone who dedicate their lives to the love of Him and of their brethren. Verse 19:-

"We love ....., because he first loved us."

All love must grow from the ever expanding realization of the glory of the infinite love of God. God's desire to draw near and to be <u>so</u> good. Verse 20:-

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

-Bro. G. V. Growcott

### The Letter to Ephesus

Brethren let us walk together this morning to a city called Ephesus. Ephesus was considered one of the eyes of Asia, as it was one of the most spectacular cities of the area. It had an excellent harbor and was just three miles from the sea.

The apostle Paul first came to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila. As his usual practice was, he reasoned with the Jews in the temple. After he left, Apollos came teaching the Baptism of John. Priscilla and Aquila, heard him and taught him a more perfect way, showing him that Jesus was the Christ. When Paul returned he found there were certain disciples who knew only of the baptism of John. Paul broadened their understanding, re-immersed them; and then laid his hands on 12 of them. This gave birth to the Stars of light in the city

put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. She does not invite the crazy old man of the flesh to discuss the truth, if by "discuss" is meant to ventilate, or fan it with the wind of his stupidity. We used to invite discussion until we found the general public incompetent to the work. Erratic geniuses would start up under pretence of discussing the subject before them, for no other purpose than to preach their own crotchets and vagaries. We take higher ground. We undertake to teach, not discuss with the ignorant; yet to answer any questions put for the purpose of obtaining information. An ignorant man cannot discuss any subject profitably to himself, and certainly only to the annoyance of those that hear him. No man can examine an object without light. The ignorant are in darkness, and can see nothing; so that to discuss with them is to throw pearls before swine, and give things holy unto dogs. The first thing to be done is to "declare the testimony of God;" then reason out the propositions contained therein so as that the blind may be made to see out of obscurity, and the deaf to hear the words of the book. Let them ask as many questions about the testimony as they please, and even show the fallacy of the reasoning if they can; but not to introduce their wild crotchets as they are too apt to do. In short, it requires tact, as well as talent and information, to conduct impromptu a public discussion with and in the presence of a promiscuous concourse of brains, ignorant of the whole subject in all its premises and conclusions, anterior to its special introduction by yourself.

In regard to "sacrifice" and "the year-day" principle of interpretation, we must defer their consideration till we return from our visit to Virginia, on which we set out in about twenty-four hours. They are two very interesting subjects, and important as interesting to the believer.

In our experience of men and things, we have found for the most part, that they make the most outcry about "hard," and "uncharitable writings," who have the most sympathy with error, or are least enlightened in the truth. Their faith and comprehension of the truth are so faint and feeble that they cannot discern the broad, distinctive line of demarcation, or great gulf rather, that divides Immanuel's ground from Satan's. When error is wounded, they wince and become hysterical at the sight of blood. We have not found such equally sensitive at the throes and agonizings of the truth; and as far as their efforts are concerned, it might be consumed of its own anguish so that their quietude and silence were not disturbed. But what do such out cries effect in this world? What mark do they leave upon their generation for good? Compare the results of our, hard uncharitable, course with their soft and oily displays; "by the fruit the tree is known," Many are now rejoicing in this truth by our means; but who ever hears of them or theirs? They are too soft and unctuous to hew the men of this perverse and wicked generation into a living image of the truth. The "style" of popular religious writing is too insipid—the little salt in it has too completely lost its sayour—to be received without disgust. We write with "the spirit of faith" which endures no compromise with error in matter or style "I believed," says David "and therefore have I spoken;" "we also believe," says Paul, "and therefore speak;" to which "Amen" is heartily acclaimed by the EDITOR.

—Bro. John Thomas—Oct. 12, 1858.

complacent quietude," doing nothing. Though much may not be effected, yet as we do not know how much and when, it is our common duty to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints," and with as much energy as though we were going to hurl all the ecclesiastical potentates of gentiledom from their crumbling and tottering thrones. We do not believe in any of Christ's brethren purchasing exemption from this laborious duty. If they be rich, or flush of means, it is their privilege to give as well as do, if they be poor, to do and to receive, which is less blessed than to give, that an equality may obtain.

Brethren, whether rich or poor, should all remember that when they are redeemed from the sins of the past in putting on the Christ-robe of righteousness through the obedience of faith, they are "a purchased people;" and that when so purchased, the purchaser bought all they possess; so that they are no longer their own, but the property of another. Now when a man purchases a servant, he does not buy him to sit all his days with a bushel on his head in complacent quietude. A [dulos]  $\delta o \dot{\nu} \lambda o c$  or slave, owns nothing, neither himself, not any thing belonging to self before he became a slave. Such is the relation of brethren to Christ their Lord and Master. A complacently quiescent Christian is one who will never inherit the kingdom, though his faith be ever so orthodox, or his baptism ever so valid. He is an unprofitable concealer of his Master's property in a napkin. He is the napkin, and the property the truth he has received, and concealed within himself. Woe be to the Christian brother who presents himself at the tribunal of Christ with nothing else to offer but a hidden truth. Ill starred will he be who can only say, "I received the truth and was immersed, and henceforth enjoyed myself in silence!" Quietude and silence are not the prerogatives of the Saints in this present evil world. Their duty is to "cry aloud and spare not; to lift up their voice like a trumpet and show the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." They have nothing to do with results and consequences—let them make the truth known, and leave the rest to him who gives the increase. Every one can do something for the extension of the truth, if it be only trying to extend it among his acquaintance, and as an element of "the Bride" through whom the Spirit operates, "say come."

The Bride is the community of the Saints—a community anointed with, and the pillar and support of the truth. "The Spirit and the Bride say, come!" Is this done without means? Is it done by complacent quietude and silence? By each individual of the community exhausting his energies upon the secular affairs of life? Surely, if there is one thing more than another we have to guard against in this age, it is against being docketed as slothful, unprofitable, parsimonious, donothings—lavish of time, labor and riches in the service of the flesh; but covetous of all in the extension of the truth. It is the duty of the Bride to sustain the truth by the press and oral proclamation, individually and collectively. Let her voice be heard in reverberating echoes amid the hills and mountains of the world till the isles break forth in song, and forests clap their hands. True this consummation will not obtain till the grand master be apocalypsed; nevertheless, when he comes let him find us so doing.

The usefulness of *public* discussion depends very much upon the way it is conducted. The duty of the Bride is to proclaim, teach, convince gainsayers, and

of Ephesus. These men, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, were able to spread the word through this great city. Paul spent 2 years teaching and preaching, giving life and light to this new ecclesia. By this time, the number of the faithful had greatly increased; for "many who believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds, and burned their books of magic...; so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed."

Paul had committed to the Asian converts, as to all believers, a standard of doctrine. The word doctrine, as used in the New Testament, means teaching. This has a wider meaning than the term doctrine as we use it. It refers not only to the things most surely believed among us, but also to the changed manner of life which must result from these beliefs. In 1 Tim. 1:9-10 Paul lists moral evils as contrary to sound doctrine. He says, "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;"

Paul on his way from Macedonia to Jerusalem stopped at Miletus, a city, about thirty-six miles south of Ephesus. Here he met with this star Angel or light source, the Ephesian elders. He admonishes, strengthens and warns them of the things that were to come. We read his exhortation in Acts 20:28-31where he says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the ecclesia of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Paul had asked Timothy to stay at Ephesus, while he went into Macedonia, and to charge some that they "teach no other doctrine. This word "charge" is a very strong word, it is a military command, an order, not something optional. Timothy was to insist with authority that no other doctrine be taught. We can see there is truth and there is error. When it comes to the core of the gospel there is black and white. It is a serious problem when error it taught and it must be stopped.

Paul also warns Timothy to not allow them to "give heed to fables." In his letter to Titus he writes "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Also to be avoided were "endless genealogies," which minister questions, rather than godly edifying." Apparently there was a custom to search into one's genealogy and look up the meaning of names and try and determine a message or prophecy from the meanings.

Another problem Paul explains to Timothy is they desired to be "teachers of the law". Those in Ephesus desired to be like the Pharisees. They were trying to keep to strict rules, which amounts to saying that we can save our selves by our works.

Timothy is warned that the time would come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Timothy was instructed to guard the deposit, 1Tim. 6:20, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:"

There was a lot of work to be done in Ephesus, he, was to work hard and endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist.

Paul puts great emphasis on sound or healthy doctrine. He uses a word from which we derive our word "hygiene." The use of sound words will build up the spiritual health of the ecclesia while the infiltration of wrong doctrine would break down and ultimately destroy, as did the *gangrene* of Hymenaeus and Philetus.

The ecclesia at Ephesus received a letter from the apostle Paul around AD 61. About AD 96 the ecclesia received another inspired communication, this time from Jesus through John on the isle of Patmos.

This letter to the Star-angel of Ephesus, begins:

Rev 2:2-3 "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted."

Here, as in all the letters, Jesus first acknowledged whatever good he found in the ecclesias. Sometimes we tend to forget his example and concentrate on the faults and failings of fellow disciples.

The works at Ephesus consisted of toil, patient endurance and resistance to the false teaching. Wouldn't we like to have this on record of our ecclesia? Persistent in toil, unwavering in service, maintaining purity of life and doctrine, and enduring all trials. Paul's teaching had taken a strong hold here. The word toil means labor to weariness, work till exhausted, and yet they had not grown weary.

They did not tolerate evil men. They had tested and rejected false apostles. There is a play on words here, as they did not bear evil men, but they could and did bear reproaches for the name of Christ.

However, we must continue to read this letter:

Rev 2:4 "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

The word "somewhat" may cause us to think that the fault was small and insignificant. "Somewhat" is not in the original and should be left out.

was ignorant of the purpose of God in relation to Palestine, the Twelve Tribes, and the nations, with Abraham, Christ, and the Saints' connection therewith; it is therefore certain, whatever he may have believed about Jesus, that he was ignorant of the gospel or *the truth*. Devoid of this, no man can be sanctified, for it is the sanctifying principle. When Jesus prayed for the sanctification of his disciples he said, "Sanctify them by the truth: thy doctrine—  $\delta \lambda \delta yo\varsigma \delta \sigma c\varsigma$ —is truth." The Spirit sanctifies when the doctrine of God sanctifies; and a man's sanctification by the truth is known when, confessing what Jesus confessed before Pilate, he is "washed, sanctified, and justified, by his name and God's Spirit"—1 Cor. 6:11; Rom. 10:8; 1 Tim. 6:3, 4, 12-13. The sanctification of men, be they dipped or sprinkled, baptized in ignorance of the promises covenanted to them who love God, is a dogma of the Apostacy, which we sincerely, earnestly, and faithfully, advise all to repudiate, who favour a return to the doctrine and practice of the primitive believers. EDITOR.

This article had been preceded by a similar expression concerning fellowship. A reformist again gave lip service to maintaining principles of fellowship, but then excused them. Bro. Thomas pointed out that such men find the principles of the Truth to be exclusive, unchristian, and Ishmaelitish (meaning in harmony with Bro. Thomas). Does this not sound familiar? Is this not exactly what our Nicodemite brethren say of us? Bro. Thomas and those with him are condemned for "judging thy brother." Bro. Thomas points that these are tools used by the unfaithful to silence the application of the principles of the Truth. (to be continued)

—Bro. Jim Phillips

### The Duty of Brethren as Christ's Bowmen

As to the duty of brethren in relation to the proclamation of the truth, we would remark that our own practice is an illustration of our conviction of their duty and privilege. We have been studying the Holy Scriptures for the past twenty-five years, during all which time we have been running to and fro, and making known to the people what we found therein. We have visited the Old World, and travelled through Britain thrice, addressing the people (sometimes by thousands) two hundred and seventy times, besides writing and publishing Elpis Israel while there. Since our return hither we have travelled extensively in America, ranging from Halifax to Mississippi; and of late years our circuits have been over four thousand miles per annum. Now what are we more than a brother in Edinburgh, Halifax, or Nottingham? Have we been "specially called and sent" to draw the bow? We have had no dream, nor heard any voice which they have not heard. Did they then, ever hear that we were called to do what they are privileged not to do? Have they not heard the voice of the Spirit as well as we, saying, "Let him that understandeth—ο ακονων—say, come!" And they know that the Spirit saith, "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Ecclesias." We confess that we cannot perceive that we are bound to wear ourselves out by much labor, while they are free to "fold their arms in

Clearly by 1856, the fellowship policies which require separation from error now practiced by Bro. Thomas, are coming under severe attack by his former friends. The following is a response to an article written against his new fellowship practices which exclude old associates, who in some cases did not know, and in other cases did not obey the gospel. The following is very significant, for it shows that Bro. Thomas now not only requires belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, but he also requires those he meets with to require the same. This is the Berean position. He writes that the rule of sanctification is faith in the things of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, and that these principles must be applied by them whose fellowship is sought.

The removal from the reformists camp got Bro. Thomas branded with the name of an Ishmaelite, and an Iron Bed Stead maker, expressions his critics felt indicated a position of constant strife. In making his charges against Bro. Thomas, the man started out with the obligatory, "Of course we should not receive the unsanctified into our bosom." This is not unlike our Central brethren, who also give lip service to fellowship, saying that of course they cannot receive the heretic into fellowship. Then, just as this critic of Bro. Thomas, they do.

#### Herald 1856, pg. 69 - 70 PROOF OF SANCTIFICATION

"We should not receive the unsanctified into our bosom;" that is, we suppose the writer means, into our fellowship. This is also true. But by what rule or standard is their unsanctifiedness to be determined? And by whom are the principles of that rule to be applied? An Ishmaelite, or iron bedstead manufacturer, says the rule of sanctification is faith in the things of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 8:12), and the baptism of such a believer "into the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;" and in answer to the second question, he says, the principles must be applied by them whose fellowship is sought. A man claims admission into their bosom who says he is sanctified. Are they bound to receive him on his simple assertion? If it be answered "yes," then they would be bound to receive Archbishop Hughes and his master the Devil, for they both say they are sanctified! It is evident, then, that a man's sanctification cannot be admitted on mere assertion.

Evidence of sanctification must be adduced. But it is no use producing evidence, if it is not to be judged, "Judge not that ye be not judged," does not then apply to judging the evidence. Men are commanded to "try the spirits" which can only be done by examination of evidence and testimony. A man, then, must produce proof of his assertion before his sanctification can be admitted by those whose fellowship he claims. This is Scriptural and rational, however much of bigotry and sectarianism there may be in it according to modern Christian liberalism, which after all is said, is but a species of infidelity. If said claimant say, "I was sanctified when I experienced a hope of pardon;" and on further inquiry, he confess that he

Rev 2:5 "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

The light was not out yet. There were hard workers enduring difficulties, keeping the correct doctrine, and yet there was a serious fault, which if not corrected would lead to the removal of the lampstand. Again let us take a minute and consider our own ecclesias. How would the letter read if it was addressed to our ecclesia? Would it be a letter of commendation or condemnation? Is our lampstand still burning?

"Thou hast left thy first love."— How can an ecclesia, correct in doctrine, exemplary in works (especially in the performance of duty), and patient in adversity still be deficient in love? The word love is agape. It is used of the love of God for Jesus and the love of God and Jesus for us. It also refers to the love disciples have for one another. The love of Christ aught to control believers so that through love, we can be servants of one another, ready if need be to lay down our lives for each other. Divine love goes beyond the call of duty, and it enables the disciple to accomplish extraordinary things. It shows enthusiasm that does not calculate the cost or consider the effort. For example, a lover may travel hundreds of miles to see his girlfriend, but finds it a chore to stop on the way home to pick up a loaf of bread after they have been married several years. Divine love is patient, it endures all things and thinketh no evil.

It is to the Ephesians that Paul writes in Eph 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." This standard applied not only to husbands but to all. In Eph 5:2 we read, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us."

These lessons can be applied to ourselves. We all will fail and our failure gives our brethren and sisters the opportunity to show the qualities of love, to be very patient and kind to us in our failures. They should not be rude to us, or irritated by us, nor should they impute bad motives for our actions. They should not be easily offended but will overlook our weaknesses and be slow to talk about our failures to others. "Brethren let us walk together in the bonds of love and peace."

I'm sure the Ephesian ecclesia did not decide to abandon their love, as a conscious decision. Love can go gradually from an ecclesia without those concerned being aware of it. The Lord's diagnosis that they had lost their first love may have come as a shock to them.

Perhaps the testing of the evil men and false apostles affected their attitude towards one another, which lead to mistrust and suspicion. Every word and action was subjected to intense scrutiny to ensure that they each were free from any error. They were preserving the truth and guarding it, but they emphasized its negative aspects and removed the positive quality. The love was gone. They had preserved the ecclesia, but had failed to feed it.

Our Statement of Faith is only part of what the New Testament calls doctrine. It must be combined with the Commandments of Christ. Our beliefs

are of no value if they do not control our words and actions, our manner of life. We must not emphasize the importance of sound doctrine and forget the love that should issue from it.

This does not mean we can be lax. We can not fellowship evil nor can we fellowship any who do not believe the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. We must speak the truth in love, remembering always to stir up one another to love and good works.

The Ephesian ecclesia was commanded to do the first works and repent. If our zeal is strong and we are laboring hard but we have lost the love for the brotherhood, we also must repent and change our way before it is too late. This was not merely just a change of heart, a "feeling" or emotion, it was more than this, it was a change of mind which would produce works.

There were some who eventually taught a new Gospel as shown in Acts 15;1-5 Their new-fangled crotchet was, that the belief of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and baptism, were not sufficient for salvation; but that a Gentile must also be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses. They kept the gospel preached by Paul and added to it. They were known as the Judaizers or the Ebionites. What they taught denied the whole mission and purpose of Christ. It basically says that nothing was gained thru his sacrifice and poured out blood. It implies that the death burial and resurrection of Christ is still not a sufficient sacrifice for sin. Even though the apostles fought against this doctrine it took hold.

Paul was amazed he said to the Galatians, which had accepted these Juadiser's beliefs, (Gal 1:6-9)"I marvel that ye are turned from him that called you into the favor of Christ to another gospel. which, however, is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But, though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than that we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." This is plain and unmistakable language. They were preaching "another gospel" than Paul's, which was communicated to him by the Anointed Jesus himself; and, therefore, he pronounces them "accursed." We can clearly see the answer to the question, "does it matter what we believe?" We either believe the gospel as it was preached by Christ and the apostles or we are accursed.

Paul knew what was happening. He speaks of false brethren unawares who came in privaly to spy out our liberty. He says "I would that they were cut off which trouble you." They were trying to blend in a bit of Christianity with the law. They had no objection to being Christians but they did not want to suffer the consequences of being Christian from the Jewish powers. They determined, therefore, to blend Moses and Jesus in such a way as to avoid persecution. But Paul would not allow them to compromise the gospel.

So long as they continued faithful, the congregations flourished in the midst of persecution; but when men stood up against the apostolic teaching and authority, affairs began to go wrong. The hidden principle of lawlessness began to work like leaven until the whole body was leavened with iniquity, and Satan triumphed for a time. The false prophets were at the door just as Paul had

**The Herald, 1853** The Truth creates "sides;" the *for-it side*, and the against-it side; and between these two sides there is no neutral ground. He that is not for me, said Jesus, is against me; and he styled himself "the Truth." If we are for the Truth, we cannot encamp with the enemy, and co-operate with them. Being for the Truth, it will place us in the minority, and identify us with those who suffer for the Truth's sake. He that runs with the hare, but holds with the hounds, will never save the fugitive from being worried to death. There were men in the days of Jesus who would preach his doctrine and not speak lightly of him, but would also carefully avoid identification with his unsayoury name. This is referable to the pride of life, love of popularity, or to some other equally unworthy thing. It is certainly a course not prompted y a devotion to the Truth, or a love of righteousness. Moses acted not thus. He renounced the throne and treasures of Egypt for the society of enslaved brick-makers. The other course evinces indecision of character which cannot be approved of the Lord when he comes. Sky-kingdomism is unscriptural and wholly false, and therefore subversive, wherever it prevails, of "the Gospel of the Kingdom of God," which is wholly Scriptural and only and altogether true. If I identify myself, without a standing protest against it, and with those who believe and advocate it, I become by example an enemy of that which I believe is true.

Note the change over two years. In 1851, it didn't matter who he broke bread with, or cooperated with in various projects. Now he says, he cannot co-operate or encamp with those who do not hold the Truth. It is, in fact, our Nicodemite brethren that Bro. Thomas is writings about here. They hold doctrine with the hare (the Bereans,) but they run with the hounds (Central). We next see the change in attitude in the recording of a baptism of a former Campbellite.

Herald, 1854, November "The discourse being finished, Mr. Harris, a member of the Campbellite church meeting at Corinth, in that county, a respectable man, and of good standing with his brethren, applied to me to assist him in obeying the gospel of the Kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ. It was therefore arranged that he should meet me there on the morrow with changes of raiment, and that I should immerse him after the people were dismissed. On his return home he communicated his intention to his ecclesiastical associates of putting off Campbellism with the old man, and of putting on Christ by being immersed on an intelligent belief of the Kingdom's gospel, and from whose fellowship he announced his purpose to withdraw. He did this, not that it was necessary, but to prevent them from saying that he had treated them with disrespect."

So in 1848, brethren could be baptized and maintain their relationship with Campbellism, now the baptism was recognized as "putting off Campbellism" and a withdrawal of fellowship from that group. Note the change in Bro. Thomas' attitude towards fellowship. Prior to this, he wasn't willing to say that we could be in fellowship with error. Now he acknowledged that the brother had, in fact, been in fellowship with the Campbellites, and he was coming out from that fellowship. This demonstrates a further change in attitude.

ecclesiastical relation. In March, 1847, we left friend Nathaniel in fellowship with all the sentiments (though in the following September he renounced "the Reformation" of A. C.); for at that time we publicly renounced all fellowship with "Christendom," and its names and denominations, one and all. Friend Joseph was then floundering in Millerism, and contending with "the saints" above named, and against the items of what , he called "carnal Judaism," wherever they chanced to show themselves. Upon this subject, brethren Joseph Pierce and McMillan, both of Rochester, and members with Mr. Marsh, can tell a tale showing the awful darkness that beclouded his mind.

Commenting later about the same Reformists' complaints, Bro. Thomas says:

Herald 1859 pg. 84 Nathaniel the Adventist says to the two thousand subscribers of his brother Joseph's Expositor. Referring to the resolution he remarks, " from this it will be seen that Dr. Thomas once acknowledged, in obedience to the dictum of Alexander Campbell, that the doctrine he is now teaching, and for not believing which, he now non-fellowships everybody, was of no practical benefit!!! "Now, when Nathaniel, the gentile indeed, penned this, he doubtless gleefully thought he had cornered us up into a very tight place, indeed; but when he had done laughing and rubbing his hands, and about to eat us up like bread, he would find that we were not there. There are just three falsehoods in the four lines we have quoted. We do not say that they are wilful lies; but the lies of ignorance or stupidity, or of both. If Nathaniel and Joseph cannot interpret scripture more luminously and accurately than said resolution, and our position, they had better stop and go to grass with Nebuchadnezzar, until seven times pass over them, and their reason return unto them. We did nothing "in obedience to the dictum of A.C.," for A.C. said nothing in the premises; secondly, the doctrine we are now teaching "as the gospel and its obedience, we were ignorant of in 1838, when said resolution was so written and its recommendation accepted; and therefore, we could not, and did not, nor could our friends and enemies agree to say that that doctrine of which we were then all ignorant, "was of no practical benefit." As to fellowship, we fellowship all who can prove by the word that they have believed and obeyed the gospel of the kingdom prophesied of by Moses and the prophets, and preached by Jesus and the apostles; but as President Campbell and the Arcadian brothers, Joseph and Nathaniel, cannot work out the demonstration, we cannot admit that they are anything more than a theoretical improvement upon Millerism.

So in 1847, he had non-fellowshipped everyone, but broke bread with everyone. Now in 1859, we find him explaining his position and responding to critics irritated that he will no longer fellowship with them, break bread with them, or cooperate with them in any way. His position has completely changed. We can see the change coming in his writings. By 1853, Bro. Thomas' position as to meeting with the enemy has significantly changed. Writing in the Herald he wrote:

feared. The errors at Ephesus seem to have spread throughout the province of Asia, as Paul later wrote that "all who are in Asia turned away from me." Hadn't Paul invested more than two years educating and teaching them? However, there was still some light in the area as Paul said when he was in Rome, Onesiphorus sought him out very diligently, and found him, 2Tim 1:17.

Paul could no longer lead them; they had to stand on their own. They fell apart from within. They projected Paul as weak and contemptible in speech. They had lost their first love and started to follow cunningly devised fables. Taking the authority that Paul had, making a name for themselves and claiming that God spoke through them just as through Paul. They became blind leaders of the blind, claiming the priesthood and divine authority saying they were God's ambassadors to the world.

At this crisis the Spirit addressed the Star-Angel of the Ephesian Ecclesia through John. It was in a fallen state. They had forsaken their "first love." Grievous wolves had secured a foothold, and were ready for every evil work. The opponents of Paul's teaching were among the elders of the ecclesia, and nothing but perversion of the truth could be expected. Still there was hope for recovery. They had not gone the extent of denying the faith, hence, the Spirit exhorted them to "remember from whence they had fallen"—to recollect the spiritual health they enjoyed when Paul went in and out among them for three years, declaring to them "all the counsel of the Deity." They were exhorted to retrace their steps. To put themselves in their original mode of thought and disposition, when in their first love, and to do the first works, lest the Spirit should come and remove from them the gifts he had bestowed; and leave them in outer darkness, a prey to all the wiles and ravening of the grievous wolves. This would be removing the light, there would be no more lightstand. As we know from history, the star angel did not recover from their fall and things went from bad to worse.

As a result the gifts of the spirit were withdrawn. No more prophesy, preaching ceased, the gift of tongues was withdrawn. It was to a remnant only, that faith hope and charity remained. Charity encompasses faith and hope. Bro. Thomas says that love is the greatest of these and yet is a houseless wanderer in the religious world where none will take him in.

Even after all this Paul had not given up. There was still one thing that they had going for them, they hated the works of the Nikolaitans which," says the Spirit, "I also hate." The word, *Nikolaitanes* is a symbolical name, like Balaam and Jezebel, in the same chapter.

The original word is a combination of two words. *Nikos, victory,* and *laos, people;* and as a mystical name, signifies (Vanquishers of the people). They were another group of grievous Wolves that crept in unawares and lead the people astray. These men by their works and by their teaching deceived the people. They persuaded them that they were the ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and true successors of the apostles. One was told to look only to them for a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures. The people were swayed by their teachings

and not holding on to their first love, neglected the study of the word for themselves. This is why God sent them a strong delusion so that they might believe a lie. The truth then became a mystery beyond their comprehension. As we see from the world around us this delusion continues in the religious systems today.

The Nicolatians professed to have the truth and yet the immoral lives they lived were inconsistent with it. They taught that the body was of no importance and therefore immorality ran rapid.

Another faction arose from among the Gentile element of the Star-Angel. These are called the Gnostics. These were referred to in Paul's first letter to Timothy 6:20, where he says to him, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane, vain babblings, and oppositions of Gnosis, or knowledge falsely so called; which some professing have erred concerning the faith" These men professed to have a knowledge, which was really a false science, whose principles were subversive of the truth. The same thing is styled in our day "theological science," "divinity,". Paul refers to them again in his second letter, ch. 2:16, saying, "Shun profane, vain, babblings; for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their word will eat as a gangrene; of whom are Hymeneus and Philetus; who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some."

They had been immersed, had a bit of the truth, but wanted to hold on to the ideas of the philosophers of the world, like Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and those who enjoyed speculating on the unknown.

The first dogma taught by the Gnostics was the same as that which was expressed by the serpent in the garden of Eden. Instead of accepting the fact that man dies and returns to dust, as the scriptures state, they reason that it is just the body that dies, but the soul lives on for ever.

Another of their false doctrines was that Jesus did not die, but just appeared to die. They admitted that Jesus was the Son of God, but not that he came in the flesh. They believed he had an immaculate appearance, entirely free from all the emotions and affections of our nature. This belief destroys the truth and our hope. If Christ did not have our nature, then how could he have been tempted in all points like we are, or how could he bear our sins in his body on the tree?

They, along with the Ebionites, set up a Jesus and a Gospel which were totally at variance with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" by the apostles. As a whole, it constituted the *Nikolaitanism* of the first century, and became the foundation of the kingdom of the Clergy. Well might the Spirit say, "the works and doctrine of the Nikolaitanes I hate." They had "a form of godliness, but they denied its power." These were they "who crept into houses, and led captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts. Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. They blended law, gospel, and heathen philosophy all together, in one indiscriminate hodge-podge, and called it "Christianity."

essence lies in the remark, that the position was one of "bearing and forbearing with one another in hope that all will come to see the real truth, on which side soever it may be."

The time came when decision on this issue had to be taken, and then, with a new situation, new phases of duty forced themselves on the Doctor's recognition, and among others, the duty of receiving those only who received the Truth. His negative reference to Paul's Corinthian attitude was not one he afterwards insisted on. As for "the dark spirit of Popery," &c., it is his description of the spirit he recognised in the man to whom he was writing. He could not mean that the spirit of conformity to apostolic precept was of this character, and among other precepts is the one to "withdraw from every brother" who refuses to consent to the wholesome words and works of truth (1 Tim. 6:3–5; 2 Thess. 3:6). But, as before said, Dr. Thomas would not be put forward as an authority for any course that could be shown to be opposed to the teaching of the Word.

In the above, Bro. Roberts gives us a very clear and precise answer to the questions advanced by some Central web sites. The writings they quote do not represent Bro. Thomas' final conclusions, but were his practice for a period when there were no ecclesias, per se; but only those starting to separate themselves from the fog of Christendom. But we don't simply require Bro. Roberts testimony of Bro. Thomas' belief. It is clear enough in all that he writes after his very early period.

#### **Bro.** Thomas Himself Sets the Matter Clear

The change in the fellowship position of Bro. Thomas was drastic, from 1851 through 1856. In 1859, Bro. Thomas responds to a reformist about his behavior in 1847, and observe the change in position he has, in responding to an attack on his belief of fellowship. The reformist argues that he had "non-fellowshipped" everyone. Of course this had been true of his position in 1847. Now, he says, he fellowshipped those in the Truth.

Bro. Thomas, for himself, believed he had "non-fellowshipped" the Reformist movement. This is why he could tell the Campbellites in Britain, that he had not disfellowshipped them. He had "non-fellowshipped" them. The "Non-fellowshipping of the brethren," as stated by Bro. Thomas, is the belief expressed by our Nicodemite brethren that fellowship is between themselves and God, but not necessarily those who broke bread with them. [A Nicodemite brother is one who appears one way, but in secret is another, like Nicodemus following Christ.] As Bro. Thomas went away from this view, he drew the criticism of those he now refused to fellowship. He was then criticized a lot by his former friends for his "non-fellowship" of them. He responded to one, a Millerite, this way, and note how he now denies his former position of "non-fellowship" by affirming he is, in fact in fellowship with certain brethren.

**Herald 1859 pg 65-70** In the days of our ignorance of the Gospel of the Kingdom we were in denominational fraternity with Nathaniel Field, M. D.; but with Joseph Marsh, as a Christyan, Millerite, or ought else, we have had no

"Partial Inspiration" division of 1885, where Bro. Roberts and the faithful ecclesias withdrew from many brethren, those withdrawn from created a separate body which ultimately became known as the "Suffolk Street" fellowship. In 1891, a member of the Suffolk Street meetings advanced a pamphlet he called "Open Door." It was so called, because it argued for fellowship to be practiced as an Open Door. The pamphlet argued that the actions taken by Bro. Roberts and the faithful ecclesias in 1885 were wrong, and had in it, these same quotes now advanced by so many in Central.

The author of the "Open Door" advances these same arguments in opposition to the teaching and practices of Bro. Roberts. He also quotes from an even earlier, 1837 article by Bro. Thomas. Here is Bro. Roberts' response to this article, and the ideas advanced by the pamphleteer:

"The argument from Dr. Thomas is inapplicable, unless our friend maintains that the doctor's scriptural enlightenment was complete from the very start. In 1837, he was only beginning to feel his way in many things. He spoke of the whole Campbellite community (to which he belonged) as persons only "beginning to emerge from the smoke of the great city (Babylon)," and it was to persons in this position that he applied the expression of opinion quoted by our friend, in italics, that in performing acts of dis-fellowship, they were "overstepping the bounds of modesty, decorum, and discretion and propriety." In later writings, from which we could precisely quote, if need arose, he plainly laid down the apostolic doctrine that to have fellowship with error in doctrine or practice, was to be responsible for it. Why should our friend go back to 1837, when Dr. Thomas was still in darkness? Why should he have the doctor's remarks of that date "written in letters of gold on every Christadelphian periodical"; and the doctor's later utterances concealed away out of sight in common printer's ink? If Dr. Thomas of 1837, is "our justly esteemed Doctor," what is Dr. Thomas of 1862 when he advised us to withdraw from the fellowship of Dowiesm because of its ambiguous attitudes? Is he not likely to have been more "justly esteemable" after 25 more years acquaintance with the Scriptures than when he was "just emerging from the smoke of the great city?" Why should we be asked to "go the whole way with the Doctor" in 1837, and not the whole way with the Doctor in 1862? There is manifestly here a sympathy with the immaturities of partial enlightenment.

"The quotation from the Doctor's answer to David King in 1848 seems to bear out our "open door" friend's view about non-fellowship, but only seems. Even if it really did so, we could not allow it to have any weight against Paul's doctrine on the subject. But it does not do what it appears to do.

"The situation must be taken into account. There were no ecclesias in existence. There were Campbellite meetings disposed (some of them) to receive the truth. Dr. Thomas was operating in connection with them in the public exhibition of the truth. David King found fault with the Doctor for doing this, and said he ought to have nothing to do with them after practically disfellowshipping them by his re-immersion on receiving the hope of Israel. The letter from which the quotation is made is the Doctor's answer to this. Its 94-Berean 2007

Bro. Thomas in Eureka says, "The Protestant abominations are all based upon immortal-soulism. With respect to this dogma, they are as pagan as Plato and the papists. Their superstitions are all Gnostic schemes to save a "soul" that has no existence, save in the imagination of the flesh. Their heaven and hell are as fabulous as purgatory, and the paradise of Mohammed. In short, "the Mother of Harlots and All the Abominations of the earth"—the Babylonish Jezebel of Rome, and all her Protestant and Sectarian progeny, are Nikolaitanism fully manifested —the plant of the first century become a tree in the midst of the earth, in whose boughs the fowls of the heaven rest, and by which all the beasts of the nations are sheltered and fed. "I hate it, saith the Spirit. Then hew it down why encumbereth it the ground?" This is its coming fate."

The light of Ephesus was eventually extinguished. The pagan worship of Artemis later became a center for the worship of Mary as "mother of God". Today it is predominantly Muslim under Turkish rule. It is called by the Turks Ajasaluk, or the temple of the moon, from the magnificent structure formerly dedicated to Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians. Later the temples were represented by spiritual bazaars which were called churches dedicated to guardian saints called, St. John, St. Mark and Saint Paul.

But all is not lost. God in his infinite love has made us an offer. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Another translation of the word overcometh is conquers.

We are not to be quitters, but rather soldiers, or warriors who overcome and vanquish the opposition of sin. Christ accomplished this as he said, "Be of good cheer I have overcome the world".

Notice this promise is not to every one, only to those who overcome.

John says, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 5:4-5. No other class of persons can gain this victory. There are some who professed to believe that "Jesus is the Son of God," who did not overcome the beguiling influence of the world, namely "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" The Nikolaitanes professed to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, in a sense of their own; but their "faith" did not drive them to leave the world behind. Many, however, did overcome the world. The apostles overcame it, and all who adhered to their teaching.

To him, then, who "believes the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ;" and has therefore been immersed "by a patient continuance in well doing, seeks for glory, and honor, and immortality" and thus overcomes the world—"to him, saith the Spirit, I will give to eat from the Wood of the Life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of the Deity."

The phrase "of the Tree of Life," should be translated "from the Wood of the Life". In the Apocalypse there are two Greek words, rendered tree, one is *xulon* and the other dendron. Dendron is singular, but xulon can be plural. Unfortunately our English versions do not show the difference between these

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two words. To get a clearer picture let's read together what John was shown from Rev. 22:1-2 "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

Bro. Thomas translates this a bit differently, his translation reads, "In the midst of her broad place and on this side and that side of the river a Xulon of life, bearing twelve fruits," etc.

A tree can not be on both sides of a river, but a forest can. It can still be just one forest or wood.

He calls this a singular of plurality. The principal is many in one. There are other examples in scripture where this principal is found: many sons of men in One Son of man; many emperors in One Head of the Beast; many popes in One False Prophet; and many *dendra*, or trees, in One xulon, or Wood.

The idea of plurality in "the Tree of Life," is first suggested in Gen. 2:9, where it is called by Moses, A TREE OF THE LIVES. In this phrase, the tree is the type of the lives, and though single represents plurality. This tree in the Mosaic Paradise was allegorical of the wood referred to the apocalypse.

If understood correctly, the tree of lives in Genesis represents the wood or trees of life in Revelation. We can then extend the idea so as to embrace "the multitude which no man can number"—all IN Christ.

Another aspect of this blessing is "I will give to eat." Chewing, swallowing, and digestion, constitute the whole process of eating, which is the conversion of food into blood, which is the life. The life of the saints in the Millennial Aion is not blood; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" Their life in that Aion is spirit. When this is poured out upon their bodies, after their judgment, they become transformed into incorruptible, deathless, and glorious bodies. When the victor has thus eaten he becomes an element of the wood, whose leaf shall never fade and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

The wood is to stand "in the midst of the Paradise of the Deity." This word paradise is merely transferred from one language to another,—that is, it is not translated. It is originally, a Persian word, transferred to the Hebrew; and from the Hebrew to the Greek; and from the Greek to the English. Pardais, means, a tract of land well watered, and abounding with choice trees, pleasant to the eyes, and yielding luscious fruits, and fragrant flowers; and rich in gold, and pearls, and precious stones.

The Paradise of Deity is a real, visible region on earth. The literal Paradise, however, is also symbolical and allegorical of "the Saints." Thus its literal river is symbolical of the spirit to be received from the throne, and through the altar Jesus, by the trees of righteousness that come out of the earth by resurrection.

The GREAT WOOD, on both sides of his river, represents the saints, each saint being an element of the wood. The prophet Ezekiel is shown a vision of this. We read this in Ezekiel 47. The leaf of the Ezekiel wood is for healing; as

an apocalyptic symbol it is representative of the saints, who are leaves as well as trees of the *xulon of life*, through whom the Spirit breathes "for the healing of the nations," symbolized by the waters of the Dead Sea.

To eat of the wood of the life in the midst of the Paradise of the Deity is to be an unfading leaf—an immortal possessor of the glory, honor, and incorruptibility of the kingdom.

May we all be ready and watching with our lamps burning brightly and hear the words "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, so that we may partake of this wood of life."

— Bro. Stephen Osborne

### John Thomas and Fellowship

#### **Bro. Roberts Sets the Matter Clear**

We are told by our Central brethren, that while no one would take this matter to the extreme of Bro. Thomas, these writings still show his mind on the subject, and therefore we are not justified in ever withdrawing fellowship from other Christadelphian groups. Some even argue that we should extend fellowship to Christadelphian offshoots, such as Benjamin Wilson's "Church of God of the Abrahamic Covenant discussed below." In fact, some in Central have already begun to fellowship these groups. So, if this is the case, why have Christadelphians over the last 150 years refused to behave this way?

The answer is that these ideas advanced by Bro. Thomas were rejected by Bro. Thomas in his later writings, and that rejection is confirmed by Bro. Roberts. Here is Bro. Roberts writing in Bro. Thomas' biography, on these very things advanced by some Central brethren, concerning Bro. Thomas' early position.

Life and Times of Dr. Thomas: "Shortly after his arrival in London, Doctor Thomas called upon Mr. John Black, elder or pastor of a Campbellite congregation, meeting at Elstree Street, Camden Town, and delivered to him a letter of recommendation from a Campbellite friend in New York. His reception was friendly. A few days afterwards, however, he was requested to meet Mr. Black and Mr. King, as "they deemed some conversation requisite" before inviting him to take part in their fellowship. At the interview, he was asked "whether, when in the States, he refused to fellowship those Christians who had not been baptised while possessing the opinions which he held?" To this the Doctor answered in the negative, which was the fact, for he had not, at that time, arrived at the conviction he afterwards reached, that duty required separation at the breaking of bread from all who had not been immersed upon a faith in the hope of Israel."

So here we have a very clear statement from Bro. Roberts that these events which are now trumpeted by Central, did not represent Bro. Thomas' final views. It is hard to imagine how he could have been clearer. But this matter had more play in Christadelphian circles of the past, than just this. Following the