

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 The Berean Christadelphian's since 1923.

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

LAMPASAS, Texas – Sunday School 9:50am-adult class Nazareth Revisited; Memorial 11:00am; Eureka class 1:15pm; Wednesday Bible readings 7:30pm in Lampasas and Austin area. Bro. Lee Freeburg, 200 Gabriel Forest, Georgetown, TX 78628; 512-869-2008, email freebs@gtwn.net

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Greetings in the faith we hold so dear,

Since Bro. Jerry Connolly's last communication, we have a few changes in our meeting as a result of our annual ecclesial business. Bro. Jerry resigned from the position of recorder and Bro. Lee Freeburg was elected to replace him. Please address all ecclesial communication to Bro. Lee Freeburg. Any matters pertaining to our June gathering should be addressed to Bro. Ricky Hurst. Any Hye news to Bro. Curtis Hurst of the Goldthwaite meeting.

We are pleased to have Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune, Sis. Lori Gustavsson and Sis. Casey Burgamy as members of the Lampasas Ecclesia by way of transfer from the Austin Ecclesia.

Our February Hye gathering took place on February 3rd and 4th. Sis. Julie Rhoades of the Goldthwaite Ecclesia gave us a 4 hour introduction to the uses of Power Point. Those who were in attendance learned how to use Power Point in their talks. It was well done and all learned a great deal from her. For those of you who are not aware of it, Sis. Julie teaches Power Point on a college level. We appreciate all her hard work on Sunday.

Bro. Jerry Connolly delivered a talk on daily life in the Truth. We all enjoyed warm fellowship together uninterrupted by the world and look forward to the time when there will be many such times spent together in the presence of our Lord and Master. On a sadder note we must report the withdrawal from fellowship by Bro. Dylan Foley for personal reasons. We hope and pray that our brother will return to fellowship soon.

In the Hope of Israel,
Bro. Lee Freeburg

RICHARD, Sask., Sunday School 10:00 am; Breaking of Bread 11:20 am; Young People's Class every 2nd Sunday 3:00 pm; Wednesday night class 8:00 pm; Friday evening class; Bro. Terry Readman, RR# 1, N. Battleford, Sask, S9A 2X3, Canada

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ,

Since our last report, we have had quite a busy term with both good and sad news to report. Bro. Jon and Sis. Liz Jackson were blessed with the safe arrival of their new beautiful daughter, Stephanie Danielle Jackson, born on October 21, 2006. She is the little sister to Angela.

As our year drew to a close, we held our annual Sunday School program on December 17, 2006. All the students did a great job in displaying what they had learned in the previous year. We all enjoyed watching our Sunday school students develop in their knowledge and understanding of the truth which we all hold so dear.

Before the year could draw completely to a close, we were all saddened by the loss of our dear Bro. Ralph Rafuse, who fell asleep in Christ, on December 24, 2006, after a lengthy battle with cancer. A memorial service was held at the Richard Hall, led by Bro. Sid Jones. Bro. Ralph now lies awaiting the return of his Saviour in the Richard Cemetery.

Most recently, we just completed our youth study weekend, held on February 17 and 18, 2007. The theme of the weekend was character studies of Samson, David, Peter and Paul, with a lighter version for the young and a deeper version for the teenagers. Bro. Dave Humphreys gave the Sunday School address on "Being different from the world". Bro. Kelly Readman led an interactive discussion on Saturday evening on "Why I like being a Christadelphian". We also thank the other brethren who gave of their time and effort to participate in doing the talks - Bro. Ben Darter, Bro. Dan Jackson, Bro. Steve Armstrong and Bro. Lynn Osborne. All the students enjoyed the weekend, expressing a desire to do this more often!

During this term, we have been blessed with several visitors to meet with us around the table of the Lord, including Sis. Grace Punter from Kindersley, SK, Sis. Carolyn Dylla from Houston, TX, Bro. Lynn Osborne from Denver, CO, Sis. Anne Harris, Sis. Brenda McChesney, Sis. June Jones, Sis. Shirley Luard, Bro. Ben and Sis. Jen Darter and Bro. Steve and Sis. Gwen Armstrong, all from Edmonton, AB.

As we look forward, we are planning our 2007 Fraternal Gathering to be held, God Willing, on June 29-July 2, 2007. We hope to see as many of you as possible, if our Lord remains away. A warm welcome to all.

On behalf of the Richard Ecclesia,
Bro. Terry Readman

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

NORTH CAROLINA-VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 25-27, 2007

Bro. Dale Lee, 1-757-547-5816, dleecpa2@mindspring.com.

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 8-10, 2007

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 29 - July 2, 2007

Bro. Terry Readman, RR# 1, N. Battleford, Sask, S9A 2X3, Canada

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 23-29, 2007

Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

Study Class Topic: 2Thess. and Titus; Bible Readings; Discuss. Zech. 8-14

CANTON SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC..... Aug 25 - 26, 2007 Bro. Don Miller, 6695 Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 330-494-7717

NORTHEAST FRATERNAL GATHERING - DETROIT.....Oct 5-7, 2007

Bro. Fred Higham, 1-586-790-2156, fhigham@gmail.com

The Oil of Gladness

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people, and thy father's house"—Psa.45:10.

PSALM FORTY-FIVE

WE tend to regard the Psalms as emotional songs of worship and praise and thanksgiving, expressing the inner feelings and spiritual mind of David and of Christ. Truly they are this, but they are much more. The book of Psalms is one of the most specifically prophetic and doctrinal books of the Bible. Of the nearly 300 direct quotations from the Old Testament in the

New, much more than 1/3—almost 1/2—are from the Psalms alone, and they are quoted for their specific doctrinal and prophetic evidence.

Psalm 45 is very closely related to both the Song of Solomon and the closing chapters of the Revelation. It uses very similar wording and imagery. It concerns the manifestation of Christ in power as a Man of War subduing the world—

“In righteousness doth he judge and make war” (Rev.19:11).

—and it concerns the Bride, the Lamb’s Wife, and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The theme of this Psalm is Truth, Righteousness, Beauty, and Meekness. All the glory of Christ and the Bride is attributed to goodness and purity of character. All the purpose is righteousness and blessing—

“In thy Seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen.22:18).

The Psalm begins—

“My heart is inditing a good matter.”

“My heart”—here are the deepest inward feelings and emotions—my heart, my whole inner being.

“Is inditing”—literally, as in the margin and RV, *“is bubbling over—overflowing—with a good matter.”* It is the figure of a fountain irresistibly gushing forth an abundance of waters: an eager enthusiasm that cannot be restrained or held in.

If we are to be accepted by Christ, this must become our frame of mind and basic mental condition: overflowing with interest and enthusiasm and thanksgiving for everything to do with God and His Truth and His Purpose and His People. We have known such, and they are a joy to be with. It is the characteristic of the true saint, though it will manifest itself in different forms in different people, for we vary greatly in our way and degree of expressing our inner emotions. The most demonstrative are not always the most deeply emotional.

We must—absolutely must—develop a frame of mind where we begrudge any time taken away from communion with God and study of His Word and the joyful work of His Truth. This will never come naturally of itself, though we may be ‘in the Truth’ for 100 years. It will come only by meditation, and prayer, and an intelligent, mature realization of the facts and realities of life in their relation to God and to eternity. But it must come if we hope for life. Verse 1 continues—

“I speak: my works are for the King.”

So must our works ever be: all that we do, all day, every day. All must be consciously for God in Christ. We are not our own: we are bought with a price (1 Cor.6:19-20). We have agreed to a complete servitude. We have no right to do anything outside the thankful service of God. If we do not realize this, and rejoice in this privileged spiritual bondage of love, we shall find at last to our sorrow that God will not be mocked (Gal.6:7) and that He—

“Hath no pleasure in fools” (Ecc.5:4).

Let us therefore, as the Preacher there advises, wisely pay our vows.

“My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

This is because the heart is overflowing with joy and thanksgiving concerning the King. If the heart is devoted to the right things, it will inevitably be manifested in the conversation: silliness and emptiness of speech about meaningless present things will be eschewed; gossip and rumor and criticism of others will be abhorred. The heart and mind will rather be full of spiritual things. Kindness, love and joy will be the sweet waters of every true and godly heart’s-fountain.

Verse 2: ***“Thou art fairer—more beautiful—than the children of men.”***

So in the Song of Solomon—*“My beloved is altogether lovely” (5:16).*

Literally, it is—*“Thou art made, or become, fairer than, etc...”*

It was a process, a development, a becoming. It is speaking of the only true beauty, the ‘beauty of holiness,’ and Jesus was—

“Made PERFECT through sufferings” (Heb.2:10).

The beauty was the character he developed under terrible trial and affliction. We must be able to see him as the most beautiful, most attractive, most desirable object of our affections. Nothing must share that affection with him. If we love beauty and holiness, we shall love him. The love of holiness is a painstakingly learned quality of the spiritual mind: the natural fleshly mind loves fleshly things.

“Grace is poured into thy lips.”

“*Poured into*”—it was from without—from above. All good, even in Christ, is from without, from above. He was “*full of grace and truth*” (John.1:14) because he “*emptied (ekenosen) himself*” (Philippians 2:7 RV) and submitted in love to God’s filling.

“*Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.*”

Let us note the connection indicated by the ‘therefore.’ Because he manifested the beauty of holiness and was perfectly obedient and submissive to the divine filling, therefore God has blessed him for ever. So it must be with us. God does not play favorites. There will always be a ‘because’ and a ‘therefore’ to all His ways.

The world is full of people—teeming with them—millions and millions and millions of them: all God’s people in a generic sense. 100s of 1000s are born, 100s of 1000s die, every day. Why should God bless *us*, and not them? Only because (and if) we are entirely—in our whole life’s pattern—*different* from them; entirely dedicated, our hearts overflowing with love for God and desire to serve Him.

Verse3: **“*Gird thy sword upon thy thigh.*”**

Prepare for battle. Prepare to destroy all evil, and to establish world-wide righteousness and good—

“*In righteousness doth he judge and make war*” (Rev.19:11).

Surely in these last evil, violent, morally corrupt days, just prior to its glorious fulfillment, this must represent our prayer more directly than the prayers of any previous generation!—

“*Give Him no rest till He makes...Jerusalem a praise in the earth*” (Isa. 62:7).

“*With thy glory and thy majesty*”

These are to be ‘girded on’ with the sword. Truly he has them now, but the Psalmist is speaking of the manifestation and exercise of these attributes openly before mankind in the earth. Put on and manifest thy power. Become world ruler. Establish thy Kingdom by the righteous sword of judgment against all evil and corruption.

Verse 4: **“*In thy majesty ride prosperously because of Truth and Meekness and Righteousness.*”**

This must be the foundation of any true power or glory, and Jesus by submission and sacrifice and suffering laid this foundation first within himself, that he might be eternally God’s beloved and honored Son. These are essential qualifications for acceptance with God. All His family without exception must be thus developed by overcoming in this present probation. Jesus said—

“*LEARN OF ME, for I am meek and lowly in heart*” (Matt. 11:29).

The spirit of the world is pride and self-assertion. The spirit of Christ is lowliness and self-abasement. We must realize our complete helplessness and ineffectiveness in anything worthwhile and divine. A little present success and prosperity and accomplishment in the world’s meaningless tinker-toy economy immediately goes to our heads and makes us think our natural folly is wisdom. But at best, we are but unprofitable servants to God, the only meaningful activity. Even Christ could do nothing of himself: all he accomplished was of and through God. Pride and self-assertion are at the root of all fleshly contention—

“*Only by pride cometh contention*” (Prov.13:10).

Where there is lowliness and intelligent humility, and no foolish worldly desire or ambition or covetousness or greed, there is joy and peace and happiness and satisfaction. The world has everything backwards, everything upside down. The proud and self-assertive—they who *desire* things—are never happy, never satisfied. They cannot be.

“*Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*”

The root of the word ‘terrible’ here is ‘fear.’ It does not necessarily mean bad things, but dreadful in the sense of being awe-inspiring, like the manifestation of God on Mt. Sinai. Of course, destructive things are involved, for the rebellious must be utterly destroyed—

“*The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the Day of His wrath.*”

This is how Christ’s ‘right hand’ shall teach him terrible things—it is *guided by God* in the conquering of the nations of the earth.

Verse 5: **“*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies. The people fall under thee.*”**

They can be sharp in two ways, and people can fall before or under Christ in two ways. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, his hearers were ‘pierced thoroughly (katanusso) to the heart’ (Acts 2:37), and repented. When Stephen spoke before the Council, they were ‘cut to the heart’ and stirred up to greater enmity, and brought on themselves final destruction. It is the same arrows and, at the root, the same enemy, but how different the result in different people!

Verse 6: ***“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.”***

Paul applies this to Christ in Heb. 1 to show his superiority over the angels. The angels are spoken of as ‘gods,’ but none is ever addressed in this special and exalted way.

The term ‘god’ (*elohim*: the word here) is applied in Scripture to all who represent or manifest God—all on whom God conferred power or rulership: angels, judges, rulers of Israel. Angels said, *“I am God,”* as at the burning bush. Christ pointed out—

“God called them gods unto whom the Word of God came” (John 10:35).

Christ was pre-eminently and without any close parallel the supreme manifestation of God of all time: the One above all *“to whom the Word of God came”*—

“God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim.3:16).

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor.5:19).

“The sceptre of thy Kingdom is a right sceptre.”

That is, literally, a *straight* sceptre: true, just, fair, undeviating. The sceptre is the rod or staff of ruling power. The word is sometimes translated ‘rod.’ It is interesting that the word here translated ‘sceptre’ is the one usually translated ‘tribe,’ apparently because each tribe was under the rod or staff of a prince, just as we use the word ‘staff’ for those under a leader.

It will be a ‘rod of iron,’ truly; but it will be absolutely just and impartial and pure and holy. This is the world’s greatest need. Today there is no holiness; and ‘justice,’ even at best, is a pitiful, foolish, bumbling affair of human ignorance and error.

Verse 7: ***“Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness: therefore God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”***

The beauty of the Bible and the purpose of God is that all is based on goodness and righteousness. We are impressed with this beauty more and more as we see the world’s morality and decency collapsing, and lust and pleasure and wealth and power increasingly becoming the objects of worship and praise.

Christ loved righteousness and hated wickedness. This is wisdom. This is understanding. This is godliness. This is the way of life and joy.

There is such a thing as righteousness and goodness, and there is such a thing as wickedness and evil, and God is the Allwise One Who defines them. And happy indeed is he who has the sense to love the one and hate the other. Thank God for this glorious revelation that gives us an unerring compass; a true, unwavering leading star in the darkness of the ignorant, fleshly, human night.

To *“love righteousness and hate wickedness”* does not just mean to be abstractly in favor of good and against evil. All would claim that. It means to actively practice righteousness, and have absolutely nothing to do with anything or anyone wicked.

“Therefore God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”

The anointing ‘oil of gladness’—how much we all need it! All are seeking gladness. The Scriptures tell us that there is only one hard, narrow way to it, and that one way is guaranteed infallible success—complete devotion of the heart and soul to God. This was how Jesus received the comforting oil of gladness, and this is how all his brethren and sisters must.

There are difficult times in the ecclesial world today. They sadden us, but they cannot touch our basic joy and gladness, if we are wholly at one in our hearts with God. No outward sorrow or disappointment or problem can affect our joyful inner relationship to God, except to deepen and strengthen it, and increase its value—

“Thou WILT keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee” (Isa.26:3).

There are no exceptions, no deceptive small print, in this glorious promise. If we do not have perfect inner peace, whatever comes, the trouble is within ourselves, and curable by ourselves, by taking advantage of the guaranteed help of God. No one outside us can affect it. We have no one to blame but ourselves for its absence.

“Above thy fellows”

Who are Christ’s ‘fellows’ here referred to? The meaning of the word seems to lead to only one answer. The basic meaning is to join. It means to share, to participate, to be joined together, to be knit together. It means, and is usually translated ‘companions.’ It is interesting that our English word ‘companion’ means to eat bread together, from *com*, ‘together,’ and *panis*, ‘bread.’

It is not a deprivative or competitive; it is simply a superlative. It is a harmonious supreme gladness among gladnesses. All his ‘fellows’ will, in their own proper order, share in his oil of gladness, but Jesus is supreme and pre-eminent above them all. The essential pre-eminence of his gladness will, in fact, consist in the joyful knowledge that his labors and sufferings are the root and source of all the gladnesses.

‘Fellow,’ again, turns our minds to fellowship—the most solemn and beautiful of scriptural conceptions. Fellowship is the core and nucleus of God-manifestation. Let us treat it scripturally and holily, and never degrade it to mere association for numbers or advantage.

Verse 8: *“All thy garments are myrrh, aloes and cassia.”*

(The italic word ‘smell’ is not in the original).

These are the sweet and precious spices of anointing and of burial. It was a huge and costly store of myrrh and aloes that the suddenly-courageous Nicodemus lovingly used in the burial of Christ. Somehow death and burial are always in the background of the divine picture of redemption—but not as a tragedy or a finality: only as a marvelous and beautiful means to a joyful and triumphant end.

Myrrh and cassia were ingredients of the holy anointing oil that sanctified the Levitical priests, and certainly this verse is related to the anointing oil of gladness of the preceding verse.

These precious perfumes and spices radiated a pleasing and enjoyable fragrance to all who came within their far-reaching range. Here is a perfect figure of the character and influence of Christ, and to a lesser degree of all who sincerely endeavor to pattern themselves after him. Primarily the fragrance ascends to God—a savor of a sweet smell, well-pleasing unto Him. But it also radiates to the comfort and blessing of all mankind.

His garments *are* these joyful, healing, preserving spices. He is clothed and beautified and glorified by the virtues they represent, of character perfected under trial.

Garments are ‘for glory and beauty’ (Ex.28:2); they are to protect; they are to cover natural nakedness and shame. Garments represent state or condition or position: royal, prisoners’, widows’, virgins’, etc. In Isa.59:17, Christ is clothed with righteousness, salvation, vengeance and zeal. These are the fragrant spices that identify his work and character, and which he irradiates to all who draw near to him.

“Out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made thee glad.”

That is RV, Rotherham, etc., and appears more correct.

Ivory is a very interesting figure. It is white and smooth and beautiful and precious. It is a living substance of great durability. Solomon made an ivory throne, typical of the Great White Throne of peace and righteousness from which Christ shall rule the world, after his purifying judgments.

In the Song of Solomon, both the Bridegroom and the Bride are likened to the beautiful rich creamy whiteness of ivory.

The word for ivory—*shen*—is exactly the same word that is usually translated ‘teeth.’ In the Song, the Bride is praised for the white, even, regular beauty of her teeth. Teeth give to words form and decisiveness. Teeth divide and masticate and prepare for assimilation the food that gives the body life and health and strength.

Ivory palaces are dwellings of glory, majesty and beauty. Stringed instruments, again, stir many thoughts of rejoicing, worship and praise. The basic characteristic of the Cherubim of Glory, the host of the glorified Redeemed, is intense, incessant praise. They ‘rest not day and night’ (Rev. 4:8) from crying ‘*Holy, holy, holy,*’ unto God. The ‘stringed instruments’ that make Christ glad are the ‘*harpers harping with their harps*’ (Rev. 14:2&3—the 144,000 singing the triumphant Song of Moses and the Lamb.

Verse 9: *“Kings’ daughters were among thy honorable women”*

This *may* refer to the submission of all the great among the Gentiles, as in v.12, and ‘kings’ (in the plural) would seem to support this. But on the other hand, its position at this point seems to indicate closer relationship to the King and Queen. That is, the individual saints who make up the Bride collectively. A possible solution that would explain and harmonize these considerations is that the ‘kings’ daughters’ are natural Israel, now restored and purified and honored and in close and special

relationship with the King and Queen. The absence of Israel elsewhere in this picture of the consummation adds probability to this application.

“Upon thy right hand stands the Queen in gold of Ophir.”

The right hand is the position of acceptance and privilege and honor and power. The ‘gold of Ophir’ was the finest, purest, most beautiful gold. Pure, refined gold is victorious, tried and tested faith.

The word for ‘Queen’ is not the usual one. It is only used twice elsewhere. It does not refer to a Queen who reigns in her own right, but to the chief and special and pre-eminent wife and consort of a King. Some versions translate it ‘Bride’ here, some ‘Wife,’ some ‘Consort.’ It relates her closely and directly to the King, who is supreme.

Verses 10 and 11 are the heart and exhortation of the Psalm—by far the most significant and practical part for us—

Verse 10: ***“Hearken, O daughter: consider: and incline thine ear”***

A solemn, urgent, 3-fold charge; not just to listen to this particular message but, as the words mean, to permanently and continuously meditate and ponder: Hearken, consider, incline thine ear

“Forget thine own people, and thy father’s house.”

Put out of your mind all your past natural connections. Put out of your mind everything to do with the world and natural things. Give yourself wholly and wholeheartedly to the King. *“Let the dead bury their dead.”* Paul says:

“I have espoused you to one husband that I should present you a chaste virgin unto Christ.”

Abraham was commanded—*“Leave thy kindred, and thy fathers house.”*

Henceforth we know no man after the flesh. The only real relationship we recognize now is that with Christ and those who are his. Truly we are kind to our relatives after the flesh. We try to do them good as we are able, and as they need. We try to manifest in love to them the more excellent way. We constantly pray they will be drawn to the Way of Life and the fellowship of Christ.

But we have left the natural world of the dead, and have entered a new, glorious, living world in Christ: and between them there is a great gulf fixed—*“Forget thine own people, and thy father’s house.”*

The family of God now need the utmost of your care and attention and love and companionship. Have we resolutely made this called for break and transfer in the bindings of our hearts and minds, as God requires? Let us, in wisdom—*“Hearken, consider, and incline our ear.”*

Verse 11: ***“So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty”***

Two things are to be noted. The ‘so’ tells us that the King’s desire depends upon our faithful compliance with the previous verse. He will not desire us if we do not resolutely ‘forget’ and put behind us all the things and people of the world.

And secondly, *‘The King shall desire thy beauty.’* What beauty? Do we have, have we developed, are we straining every effort to develop—a beauty that he *can* desire? Remember Esther—

“Six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odors” (Esther 2:12).

Esther here is just a type. The real thing goes much deeper and takes much longer. It is the real inner fragrance and beauty. And the beauty had better be there when the time comes to go in unto the inspection of the King: the beauty of holiness, the beauty of character, the beauty of knowledge and wisdom in God’s Word. We haven’t any time to spare on the passing rubbish of this world.

“For he is thy Lord, and worship thou him”

Literally, ‘Bow down to him’—as Abigail and Bathsheba bowed before David. *“For he is thy Lord.”* This is given to emphasize and enforce the command to *“Forget thy father’s house.”*

Let us not presume. Let us never be careless or thoughtless. Truly he is a gracious, loving Bridegroom, but he is also the stern Lord, Master and Judge. To bow down is to submit completely to the will and authority of another—

“Ye are bought with a price: ye are not your own.”

Verse 12: ***“And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift: the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.”***

Here clearly is the submission of the Gentiles: the riches and glory of the nations being brought unto Christ and his Bride. Isaiah calls Tyre ‘the crowning city’ (Isa.23:8). It was the richest city of the ancient world. It was close to Israel. It helped

David and Solomon prepare for and build the Temple. Tyre was the world center for industry, commerce and merchandising: the mart of the nations. All this will flow to Christ: all the earth's power and industry and wealth—such as is permitted to continue, will no longer be for the benefit of the greedy rich and powerful, but for the righteous use of the earth's new King. Isaiah says the merchandise of Tyre shall be 'holiness to the Lord' (Isa.23:18).

Verse13: ***“The King’s daughter is all glorious within.”***

Surely this needs no searching out of the meaning. This is the beauty the King shall greatly desire. This is the beauty we must diligently devote our lives to cultivate—the all-gloriousness within. If there is any foolishness, or unfaithful stewardship of our Lord's goods put in our trust, or worldly desire, or covetousness, or unkindness, or harshness, or gossip, or criticism, or any other fleshly, worldly thing, then we are not 'all-glorious within,' and there is no beauty for the King to be able to desire. Jesus said to the Pharisees about what was within them—

“Ye are full of dead men’s bones” (Matt. 23:27).

How easy it is to be full of the dead men's bones of the things of the dead world! It is the natural way. It is the automatic, inevitable way—unless we make a supreme effort, with God's help, to be different.

“Her clothing is of wrought gold.”

'Wrought' simply means 'worked.' Gold is faith. Her clothing is a worked faith, a tried faith, a faith manifested and developed and strengthened by works of faith. Gold is worked first by a fierce crucible of fire; then by pounding and cutting to the final desired shape and pattern of beauty. It is interesting and thought provoking that gold is perhaps the most universal of metals. It is in practically everything, even in living things. There are 10 billion tons of it in the waters of the oceans. But rarely is it found in useful and practical quantities, and even there it takes great effort to produce even a little. So 'faith' is found everywhere in microscopic quantities, but rarely is it found in sufficient amount to have power and influence on the life.

Verse14: ***“She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework.”***

Needlework is the slow, careful, steady, gradual creation of a pattern of beauty on a prepared and suitable surface and material. It can be seen to grow daily, if the worker is industrious and diligent. Its growth is obvious to the eye; its extent is measurable. If the work has not been steadily done in the time allowed for it, it will not suddenly appear at the last moment, merely by wishing. In all this there are deep lessons. How is our daily needlework coming on our garment of beauty and glory? How much of the divine pattern is complete and visible? What do we have to show? And shall we have anything ready to wear for that great assembly soon to be called?

Verse15: ***“They shall enter into the King’s palace.”***

That is, those who are properly clothed. Those who have faithfully wrought their gold and applied themselves to their needlework. And the door will be shut. The King's palace is his dwelling place, and the center from which he rules. This King is also a Priest, and his palace is a Temple: a holy, living Temple, comprised of faithful foundations, tried pillars, and living stones of the translucent beauty of the finest polished white marble. The righteous people who keep the Truth enter in with joy—with 'gladness and rejoicing' (v.15), and go no more out. They become God's eternal dwelling place.

Verse16: ***“Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
whom thou mayest make princes in the earth.”***

Verses 2-9 were addressed to the King: verses 10-15 to or about the Queen. The final two verses seem most appropriately addressed to the King, or perhaps even more fittingly still to both combined, for now they have become One. The King and Bride are now the Multitudinous Christ.

Christ's fathers—natural Israel—rejected and crucified him: and in so doing they cut themselves off from being the Princes of the earth. Truly natural Israel shall be cleansed and redeemed and raised to honor in the Age to Come. But the real Princes will be Christ's children by faith; those who wholly devote themselves to him in these present dark days. These are the cherished, joyful fruit of the bitter travail of his soul, when for them he poured out his life unto death—

“He shall see his seed: he shall prolong his days...he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied”
(Isa.53:10&11).

Verse17: ***“I will make thy Name to be remembered in all generations;
therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.”***

Bro. G.V.Growcott

When Saw We Thee Hungry?

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me”—Matt. 25:40.

CHRIST referred to his followers as *“the light of the world.”* Light was the first thing caused to appear upon the earth when, it being formless and void, the Spirit of God moved upon the waters. And so, as it is with the natural, so it is with the spiritual.

“For God, Who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6.)

When we think of light, the case of the foolish virgins requires our earnest attention—how they allowed their oil supply to dwindle until the light flickered and died, and in the end their Lord refused to recognize them. Do we find any similarity between their case and ours?

We all profess to know where the oil can be purchased, but how often do we go and buy it?

“In Thy light shall we see light” (Psa.36:9).

“The entrance of Thy words giveth light” (Psa.119:130).

The exhortation of the Mosaic parable is plain. The priests were to replenish the oil-lamps and offer incense before the vail every morning and evening. It was a perpetual service—it had to be done every morning, just as the gathering of the manna had to be performed daily.

If we light the lamp and leave it, it will go out. The mind enlightened by first principles and neglected will become dark again. The daily dressing of the lamps is a command to those who are now a holy priesthood, as Peter says:

“To offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.”

Although we have understood these things since the beginning of our probation, can we truly say we are *“the light of the world?”*—a Body *“sanctified by the Word,”* who truly *“study to show themselves approved, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed”*—distinguishing ourselves as *“Bereans”* because of our ceaseless search of the Scriptures?

We know that the flame DOES flicker and die; that the candlestick CAN be removed—ecclesiastically as well as individually. But do we realize the gravity of the matter? What a grave responsibility rests, not only upon the serving brethren, but also upon each individual member of the body, to see that they are in a position to supply food to the hungry—the water of life to those athirst—the Word of God to heal the sick and free the imprisoned.

Do we have it to give? Are we prepared to pour out our lives unto the brethren, even as Christ poured out his life for us? Are we truly awake to the need of the various parts of the Body? Or will we stand among those who say *“Lord, when saw we thee an hungred?”* (Matt. 25:37).

THESE thoughts were brought into clearer focus by an article on “Education” which appeared in a '43 Berean. It was brought out that the root meaning of the word “educate” is to enlighten or “draw out.” Jesus said (John 6:44)

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Here the meaning is that where a man has the ability to appreciate and obey the Truth, he will be attracted, DRAWN OUT, and developed by it. The same word is used in John 12, where Jesus said,

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, WILL DRAW all men unto me.”

But the people were unbelieving because they thought—*“Christ abideth forever. How sayest thou, The Son of man Must be lifted up?”*

Jesus' answer is most significant *“Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”*

The same word is used in the Song of Solomon (1:4). Here the bride, which we know is the ecclesia, *cries “DRAW ME, we will run after thee . . . we will be glad and rejoice in thee.”*

Again, Jeremiah speaking of Israel's restoration, says, *“I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I DRAWN thee. Again I will build thee and thou shalt be built”* (Jer. 31:3&4).

The word is used again in Hosea 11, where the Spirit says—*“I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms: but they knew not that I healed them.”*

“I DREW them with cords of a man, with bands of love, and I was to them as they that take off the yoke from their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.”

But he concludes *“My people are bent to backsliding from me . . . Ephraim feedeth on wind.”*

We find the word used again in the prophetic name of Moses, *“Because I DREW him out of the water”* (Exo. 2:10). The same word is used in Psalm 18:16, where the Spirit says:

“He took and DREW me out of many waters.”

* * *

WE ARE the ecclesia, or *“called out.”* Yet this process of being *“DRAWN OUT”* by the Spirit through God's Word, only just begins when we become a part of the Christ-body. Between the first understanding of the Truth and the final salvation offered at the last day, there is a gradual EDUCATION in the holy things of the Spirit—gradual subjecting of ourselves to the Light, a gradual yielding out of growing love and trust to the development possible through the Spirit. First the milk for the babes, then the meat.

This points out the great responsibility that each member of the body has—to see that all joints are supplied. Are we equipped to do this work—to feed the sheep? Do we know the state of the flock (Prov. 27:23)? Serving brethren must be dedicated to seeing that the EDUCATION of the ecclesia is continuous and comprehensive.

Each joint must be able to do its part in leading those who are sick or in prison back to the WORD that can heal them and free them and make them change their allegiance from the old man of the flesh before the current of the time sweeps them on to destruction. We are our brother's keeper in this respect: we must be *“ready to every good work.”*

This vital process of education was pointed to in the law concerning the characteristics of the clean and the unclean animals. What sort of men correspond to the type of cud-chewing and hoof-parting animals? Literally, the act of chewing the cud is a part of the process of preparing food for assimilation by animal tissues. The digestion of the food is, of course, the grand requisite. But the thorough preparation of food for its conversion into life is the essential idea.

There is spiritual food, and there is spiritual life that results from eating and assimilating that food. Jesus said,

“He that eateth me, shall live by me” (John 6:57).

“The words I speak unto you are spirit and life” (v. 63).

Men, then, who are given to turning over the knowledge of the Truth in their minds, are men who spiritually chew the cud, and therefore are *“clean”* in the sight of God among men (John 15:3).

“Ye are clean through the Word I have spoken unto you.” The Truth is the sanctifying power, but the sheep must nibble all the day long (Prov. 23:17).

“Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.”

The cud-chewing has no arrest or suspension; it goes on and on. Israel were to eat the clean animals. Men figuratively eat one another in taking in what they say and do. They assimilate each other. This is where we gain from that which every joint supplieth.

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise” (Prov. 13:20).

Let us all remember Israel of old, who looked to the sociality of their Gentile neighbors, and tried to be like those about them in thinking.

“What shall we eat, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” They hated knowledge and chose not the fear of the Lord, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”* (Hos. 4:6).

Will the same thing happen to us? Or will we hasten to buy oil while there is time?

God has told us that He will approve of those ONLY who KNOW Him, who delight continually in His wondrous works, His service and His praise.

Only animals that chew the cud were to be eaten, all others were unclean and defiling. But this was not the only disqualifying characteristic. They must part the hoof also. The divided hoof causes sheep to walk among the rocks and difficult places with ease. Sure-footedness is the result of the divided hoof. This is walking in the light.

A man that is all theory and no action, unable to put into practice what he has learned, is one who chews the cud but does not divide the hoof. He must do both if he is going to be able to help his brethren—to give food to the hungry and the water

of life to the thirsty. He has to be able to “walk in wisdom toward them that are without,” as well as being an example to his brethren.

This is nothing new. We have known from the beginning that those men only are acceptable to God who long to feed and reflect on His Truth and who direct their ways in harmony with His commandments.

But why is it that we have so often failed in times of testing? And what can be done about it? One of the Psalms speaks about the confidence of not failing.

“Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in mine integrity...therefore I SHALL NOT SLIDE” (Psa.26:1).

What is this “integrity” that can give us this confidence? We find the original Hebrew word (*tom*) means “quality of being complete, undivided, unbroken, entire, sound, pure.”

To have confidence, then, that one is walking in “integrity” is to know that you love the Lord and serve Him with ALL your mind, heart and might—that you are completely His; that your affections are undivided, that your sacrifice is unbroken and entire—your faith sound and pure. No wonder the Spirit says, “Therefore shall I not slide.”

“Ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall SEARCH FOR ME WITH ALL YOUR HEART” (Jer. 29:13).

Christ was our example in all these things, that we should walk in his steps. Even as he was able to overcome through the Spirit, so we too can say with confidence (Phil. 4:13)—

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

* * *

WE WHO are in the process of being educated in the great University of Truth, have “whatsoever things were written aforetime for our learning.” We are fitting ourselves now for positions in that great movement which will end in the knowledge of God covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. Failure now, means no part then. If we cannot even feed our brethren now, how can we expect to be a part of that handful of corn in the top of the mountain then?

Our success in the Truth will depend entirely on our carrying out of the assignment to SEEK WISDOM AS FOR HIDDEN TREASURE. For, in many respects it is hidden, and only by laborious digging will we find it—line upon line, here a little, there a little.

But there must be a pattern of daily, obedient, constant, prayerful search before the Spirit will engrave its words upon our hearts. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; man must realize his utter dependence upon Him, even for his breath of life, before he will hunger and thirst after righteousness and long to be filled.

If he is the type that looks unto the perfect law of liberty and forgets what manner of man he is, and is content with himself and with the alienated condition of things about him, he will never come to appreciate the mind of the Spirit; for the things that belong to praise are “*spiritually discerned*” and the carnal mind is not subject to them. As Paul says (1 Cor. 2:10)

“The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” Jesus said (John 12:46)—

“I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me shall not abide in darkness.”

The believer has put on the armour of light and cast off the works of darkness. He fears and trembles before the Almighty, thinking

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24).

The new man in Christ Jesus knows the conditions of his deliverance. He must overcome; and he is equipped with Truth, Righteousness, the Gospel of Peace, the Shield of Faith, the Helmet of Salvation and the Sword of the Spirit—everything needed to fight the battle against the flesh,

“If God be for us, who can be against Us?” (Rom. 8:31).

* * *

ONLY IN the ceaseless tasting, “*to see that the Lord is good*” will we find the narrow way clearly charted. We must escape the fate of those who are not able to discern it, and who are destroyed for lack of knowledge.

Did not Esau, Gehazi, Hophni and Judas all have opportunity to learn of God and apply their hearts to wisdom? They are all sad examples in the called-out body, and there were many more such. Let us take warning. Paul spoke of some in his day “*who did not like to retain God in their knowledge*” and, “*God gave them over to a reprobate mind.*”

Isaiah spoke of Israel's punishment for their neglect of God. God took away the light. Also, He made the heart of the people fat, and “*their ears heavy and shut their eyes.*” And the veil is over their eyes until now. Jesus said:

“*Unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken that which he hath*” (Mark 4:24&25).

As the ecclesia of the living God, “*called out*” according to His purpose, we have chosen His honor, His fear, as the mainspring of our lives. If we commit our way to Him, magnifying His word as He has magnified it, giving it the first place in our lives, then He will guide our steps and lead us to greater spiritual attainments, strengthening us with all might in the inner man and filling us with the knowledge of His will. Then we shall be “*filled with all the fulness of God,*” even as our elder brother.

—Bro. Charles Banta Sr.

John Thomas and Fellowship

Intolerance And Liberalism

“In endeavouring to guard against sectarian **intolerance, we are liable to treat the strict requirements of the gospel with looseness...** Because others have rejected from their fellowship the humble Christian, we should not receive the unsanctified into our bosom”—*Expositor*, p. 175.

The above is true. The treating the strict requirements of the gospel with looseness, is the crying sin of the piety of this age of gospel *profession*. By “the requirements of the gospel” are meant, we suppose, the requirements of the Lord Jesus and his apostles in their teaching. He required that, for men to be recognized as his disciples, they should believe the word or gospel he preached in Judea; and that such believers should be baptized. This requirement, however, is almost universally disregarded. It is too sectarian and intolerant for the generality, whose “Christian charity and liberality,” rejoices in unbounded toleration of “**opinions**” for all who do not call in question their Christianity; that is, the scripturality of what they teach as gospel, and the obedience it requires. With all their “liberality,” they have no tolerance for such an “opinion” as this. It is “exclusive,” “unchristian,” and Ismaelitic. To try their foundation by a logical application of the word, is to become “greater than our father Abraham or the apostles,” and to set up for a Pope, or a manufacturer of iron bedsteads! Admit that their recognition of the divine sonship of Jesus, with ignorance, or **denial, of the gospel he preached, is a scriptural** foundation for a man to be placed upon by immersion, and you are a very liberal, Christian, and charitable person. This admission, with piety, constitutes a “humble Christian” of modern type, who cannot be rejected from fellowship by any without universal condemnation and execration. Upon such premises, however, the Pope and all his associates are admissible to fellowship, and the man is an Ishmaelite that rejects their Christianity by a logical application of the word against it. He sets up for a pope who denies the Pope's gospel to be the gospel of Christ by a logical application of Scripture! “Who art thou that judgest thy brother?”—“Who made thee the judge of another man's servant”—thus, by such taunts as these, they would silence the *application* of your discourse! It is the essence of “liberal Christianity” to riot in unbounded licence of discourse, with intense and angry intolerance of the “*application*” of the same.

In 1859, Bro. Thomas travelled to Shady Grove, Ill. Here he made comments about how the brethren should develop their ecclesia. In a recent article about Bereans, the writer condemns the Bereans for their lack of interest in worldly success. This article, besides lending proof to the change in Bro. Thomas and his position on fellowship, also deals with the subject of wealth.

Herald, 1859, pg. 276-277 “From Good Hope we went to Shady Grove. This is a house recently purchased of the Methodists, with about two acres of land attached; or, if not purchased directly from them, was last in their possession. “The Court,” we believe, had something to do with the sale of it. It is now, however, owned by those who have understandingly obeyed “the gospel of the Kingdom;” a small nucleus of whom, quite sufficient for a healthful beginning, have been organized in the interests of the faith. We trust they will have more regard to the *quality* than the quantity of members. Paul has declared that “the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;” and among these he enumerates “covetous, drunkards, revilers, &c.,” and any that walk according to and sow to the flesh. It is the duty, therefore, of the brethren to receive none such into their nucleus if they would acquit themselves of the responsibility resting upon them and walk before God to all well pleasing. Christ's body is not to be used for the promotion of unhallowed purposes.

When scripturally constituted it is a company of poor men and women, “*rich in faith*, and heirs of the kingdom God has promised” to those who evince their love of Him in keeping his commandments. Occasionally, a man rich in this world's goods may be found among them; but for him, owing to “the deceitfulness of riches,” it is as difficult to enter the kingdom as for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle. The besetting sin of the rich is “covetousness,” or a *desire to heap up wealth*, to which they are devoted because of the ability it confers of gratifying the lusts and devilish ambitions of the flesh. Hence, Paul styles it “*idolatry*” and says, “no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the

kingdom of Christ and of God.” A rich Christian, who is not an idolater, is one “who is not high minded, or trusts in uncertain riches, &c.; who does good, is rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; so laying up in store a good foundation for the future, that he may lay hold on Aion- Life.” He is one who, although his riches are able to give him a commanding position among the splendid fools of “this present evil aion,” prefers, like the anointed Jesus, to “be conducted with the despised”—to consort with them; “he rejoices in his humiliation; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.” A rich Christian, who comprehends the perilousness of his position, uses the riches he commands as the mere steward of another's wealth—of Christ's; to whom he will have to render an account of what he has done with Christ's property in the promotion of truth and righteousness in the earth. A rich Christian, who understands his true position and relation to God, does not devote the energies of his body, soul and spirit, to the heaping up of “goods, chattels and effects,” for the children of the flesh, whether of his own or somebody else's body that may come after him. He does not imperil his own salvation for the benefit, or rather fleshly gratification, of the sons of Belial, who are enemies to the truth; and care no more for him than what they can make by his suicidal folly.

A Christian, rich *in* faith, and abounding in the good things of life, which he administers after a godly sort, is one whose praise is in the mouth of all his brethren, and commands the respect and admiration, if not the love, of all who know him. He has a good report with those who are without. He is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He eschews the friendship of the world which is at enmity with God; knowing that “whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” The world is crucified to him, and he unto the world. He minds the things which are anew, not the things at present upon the earth; for he knows that the minding of these is death; and that they who are in the flesh, that is, who live after the flesh, cannot please God.

To “the poor in the world,” then, who are “rich in faith,” we may say, how thankful, brethren, ought we to be that we are not rich! Nor let any be envious against those that are; but rather commiserate their misfortune, and as much as possible strengthen them against the perils by which they are besieged. Our heart aches for the rich professors of our day; for we perceive that very few of them, judging by the fruits of the tree, have faith enough to be saved. “The rich fade away in their ways.” They value themselves upon what they possess, being, for the most part, full of goods, but empty of head and lean of soul. But God esteems them no more than a beggar full of sores; for there is no respect of persons” with him. Let us, then, imitate God; and “hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus anointed of the glory, in respect to persons.” Let character and devotion to the truth, and active repudiation of all sympathy with the “Names of Blasphemy” around us, and not pelf and position, the admiration and idolatry of a vain and shallow world, be the conditions of our sympathy with persons. For ourselves, be they rich or poor, we desire cooperation and fellowship with such only. “The truth as it is in Jesus,” is the basis of our relations and intimacies with mankind; when this is repudiated or betrayed, or crucified, we consider ourselves as put to an open shame, and repudiated or betrayed, or crucified, we consider ourselves as put to an open shame and repudiated likewise. We have no use for those who cause the truth to be evil spoken of by their malpractice; and certain we are [sure] they can have no use for us. If people who profess the truth dishonor that truth, they dishonor us; and we do not want, nor will we condescend to have, any co-operation with them, be they rich as Croesus or as poor as Job. They are only stumbling blocks and hindrances in the way; and the truth can never progress in the halo of their obliquity.

In former years, we used to address the people at Ledbetter, some three miles or so from Shady Grove. But we forsook that house in despair, as a mere mausoleum of the dead. Instead of this, we commenced on Sept. 6, to experiment upon the public mind at Shady Grove. If things assume a better aspect there we shall rejoice. Our future visits “will depend upon this; for nothing can be done with the unbelieving where the brethren are unfaithful to the truth. If the people are disposed to hear, and will come out largely, as they did at Ledbetter; but they will not obey the truth, if the manifestations at the Grove are no better than there. We hope, then, better things, and shall be greatly mortified if they do not appear.”

Next we see the change in Bro. Thomas' attitude towards fellowship, in the writing of Eureka, Volume I, which was printed in 1860. Now, remember what the issue was in 1851. The issue was never, ‘am I in fellowship with all congregations in which I am associated?’ Bro. Thomas always believed that there was a sense in which he was, though not a spiritual sense. This was very clear from his speech to the Church of Christ convention in Glasgow, in 1848. The question was, ‘is my fellowshiping of error my responsibility, and if I fellowship error, is it sin?’ In 1848 and to a lesser degree in 1851, Bro. Thomas denied that this was the case. But now we come to his writing in Eureka, where he is very clear.

Eureka I: page 328 “Paul’s anxiety was that the Corinthian brethren should ‘not have fellowship with demons,’ or deified imaginary ghosts called ‘immortal souls.’ These demons had a table and a cup, as well as the Lord; and Paul taught that they could not partake of both without sin. The same demons have a table and a cup now, modified, however, in this, that bread cut up into pieces, emblematic of the divisions of antichristendom, is substituted for meats offered to the demons. The table spread by the clergy, and called by them ‘the sacrament,’ is the modern table of the demons. It is the table of those who believe in deified immortal souls, who are the gods of the clerical system. It is Jezebel’s table, at which a saint cannot eat without having fellowship with the demons she funeralizes to glory, which is sin. Her churches are a

synagogue of unbaptized 'miserable sinners,' as they proclaim themselves to be in their prayers, and consequently, her table cannot be the Lord's, for his teaching has no place for such there—the miserable patrons of demons belong to Jezebel, not to the spouse of Christ.”

Here again we see a significant change in the teachings of Bro. Thomas. Here he recognizes that to eat at the table, is to fellowship. This is the exact point clung to by Nicodemite brethren, clearly denied by Bro. Thomas. And finally, we have this clear statement from Bro. Thomas, again exhibiting his change in fellowship position. The following is a condemnation of forming committees to accomplish some purpose. Bro. Thomas points out that it shouldn't happen. Each ecclesia must handle its own affairs. Each ecclesia must decide for itself who it is willing to fellowship, and who it is not willing to fellowship. The great damage done to the truth has been done by committees getting together to forge reunions, where the original basis for the division was not resolved. These committees were made up of men who disregarded the original cause, forged unions which caused the Antipas brethren to withdraw, and greatly weakened the hands of those brethren who profess to uphold the Truth.

Herald, 1861, page 262 “Now, as to all these things, as far as we know the views of the brethren in this country, with a few exceptions, are utterly opposed. We have no “conferences.” The conferences referred to in “The Messenger” are such as that described by the brother in Michigan. They are Adventist Conferences, and their leaders Adventists, who in the main are characterizable as Campbellists, Baptists, and Methodists who believe in the second advent; or professors immersed in ignorance of the truth, who, after their immersion, have acquired a smattering of it. We do not fellowship and cooperate with such. By *we* is meant, those who believe the truth first and obeyed it next; and who contend earnestly for it unmixed with crotchets and traditions. There may be some who have scripturally obeyed the truth, who believe in conferences in Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin; but of that some, we know that they have said, they will attend no more. They see that their influence is evil in the absence of divine authority and wisdom to enlighten and keep things straight. They are ecclesiastical schemes for the promotion of the hireling system, and for the working out of lay and clerical speculations. We protest against them all as incipient tyrannies. Let every church manage its own affairs; let its members exert themselves in their own spheres for the diffusion of the truth; and if any can publicly “preach the word,” let him go forth as we do without stipulation, and trust to the appreciation of his labors by his brethren, for his expenses and support. We start on a journey of a thousand or more miles at our own risk, and trust to the spontaneous liberality of brethren for results. Why cannot others go and do so likewise? This has been our course for nearly thirty years. We went to Britain upon this principle, and labored there. “Conferences,” and “committees on evangelists,” never created the means to send us out. We went of our own accord, and many profess to have been benefited. If a man be really devoted to the truth he will not wait for money to be raised to send him out. When by his earnest and self-denying labors he makes his influence felt, means will come in with the labor to extend its field. An “evangelist” who waits to be sent out by subscription, is just the man who should stay at home and take care of his own household. Conferences and committees and subscription lists, cannot make “evangelists;” they can make public talkers for the lucre's sake, but not scriptural evangelists. This is the name of what does not now exist. It was one of the creations of “the grace which came through Jesus Christ.” It was a creation of holy spirit— a saint who carried to and fro the good message, which God confirmed by his operations; and who could ordain elders by the inworking of powers for the work of the ministry. If we have the name, brethren, pray also let us have the thing.”

By 1862, a group of brethren from Scotland that Bro. Roberts had a strong personal relationship with, were clearly not willing to defend the truth. It was not so much that they personally believed error (though some of them clearly did) but it was more a problem that they would not defend the truth from error. Most of them affirmed the positive aspects of the truth, but would not condemn the negative aspects of Christendom.

The leader of this group of brethren was Bro. George Dowie. Bro. and Sis. Roberts had been married by Dowie. Bro. Roberts was reluctant to withdraw fellowship from these brethren, mostly because he, himself, had not yet come to a perfect understanding of the doctrine of fellowship. His reluctance strained his relationship with Bro. Thomas. He records these events under a title “*Strained Relations with Dr. Thomas*” in his autobiography, “*My Days and My Ways*.”

“DEAR BROTHER ROBERTS,—I have received from you two letters —one dated February 11th, and the other May 30th —to neither of which have I been able to find time to reply. In relation to the former one, I consider the delay has been an advantage to us both; and in regard to the last, I do not think the procrastination will have resulted in any harm. Had I replied to the former, I should have had to do battle with you to bring you into the position you now occupy with regard to those blind leaders of the blind—Duncan, Dowie, Fordyce and Co. When the truth is in question, the benefit of all doubts should be given to it, not to those whose influence with respect to it is only evil and that continually. You erred in giving them any benefit of doubt in the premises; but I rejoice that you have seen the error, and will no more send inquirers after the truth to inquire at such Gospel nullifiers as they.

“I have a copy of your letter to Dowie. It is straightforward and to the point. We can have no fellowship with men holding such trashy stuff as the April number of the falsely-styled *Messenger of the Churches* exhibits. A man who

believes in the Devil of the religious world and that he has the powers of disease and death, etc., is ignorant of 'the things of the Name of Jesus Christ.' If what are styled 'the churches' are not delivered from the influence of the above firm of pretentious ignorance, our endeavours to revive apostolic faith and practice in Britain will be a miserable failure. No one should be recognised as one of Christ's brethren who is not sound in the first principles of the Gospel before immersion. The Kingdom and the Name are the great central topics of the Testimony of Deity. These are the things to be elaborated; and he that is not well and deeply versed in these only shows his folly and presumption in plunging head over ears into prophetic and apocalyptic symbols and mysteries."

By 1866, there was no longer any question in anyone's mind, about whether or not action could be taken against another for false doctrine. But a question came up as to whether or not action could be taken against a brother whose walk was disorderly. The following exhibits how a withdrawal from false doctrine was given and Bro. Thomas answers the balance:

Christadelphian 1866, page 206 "I hope that all things are rectified in a certain direction. It is a monstrous conceit that "the only discipline the Ecclesia can enforce in these times is against false doctrine, and not against immorality of conduct." Such a rule as this, approved by any society of professors, would make it a fellowship of iniquity. For myself, I would not belong to such a body of evil doers. The conceit is itself false doctrine, and, therefore, a matter of discipline. Such a dogma is symptomatic of immorality in the holder. An ecclesia should, at least, aim to keep itself free from the corruptions that are in the world through lust, though it may not succeed to the extent desired. To fellowship iniquity knowingly, and without rebuke, makes us partakers in the guilt."

In observing the development of Bro. Thomas, we see that in 1851 and before, he felt it was not wrong to break bread with most all error, including the immortality of the soul, or with unbaptized believers. In 1860, in the writing of Eureka Volume One, he plainly states that to eat at Jezebel's table is to fellowship deified immortal souls, and was sin. In 1866, he writes to knowingly fellowship iniquity makes us partakers in the guilt. Note how significant of a change takes place in Bro. Thomas. But to be fair to Bro. Thomas, he himself was quite clear to the Campbellite folks in 1851, that he had not made up his mind on the doctrine of fellowship. Remember this now. The brethren who are arguing for these words to be considered Bro. Thomas' teaching, are taking words from a period when he himself says, he hadn't made up his mind as to what the teaching of the Spirit was in this matter. In responding to the Campbellite criticisms, he wrote to them:

From Life and Works of Dr. Thomas by Bro. Roberts "1.—You have no right to construe for me, neither have you the ability till you are made intelligent upon the subject of my views of fellowship. I claim the sole right of construing my own sentiments, and when I shall have construed and published them to the world in their application, it will be high time for you to express your approval or rejection of them and their author. You have your views of fellowship; they may or may not be mine: I discuss them not. My duty is to state and advocate what I believe to be God's truth according to the manner which appears to me (not to you) most scriptural. It is for me to state, illustrate, and prove principles, and to interpret the word; and to leave men's consciences to make the application—it is not for me to adjudge them to ecclesiastical pains and penalties. I have stated in my writings that 'the immortality of the soul, as taught in dogmatic theology, is the Hymenean and Philetan heresy; and I have shown from Paul's words that it is in his estimation a 'damnable heresy.' The arguments you have not seen; yet you judge. Is this wisdom? I have received the conclusion to which Paul leads me. Did he tell the orthodox Corinthians to cast their heterodox friends out of their synagogue, or to non-fellowship them? No; and further than this, he still fraternised with the church, although they gave him so much annoyance on this very subject. His object was to enlighten and reclaim, not to cut off, and treat as enemies those whom this cancer-eating sentiment led to the denial of the resurrection of the dead, and by implication, the resurrection of Jesus himself, and the subversion of the doctrine of the kingdom of God."

So with this clear testimony from Bro. Roberts that this behavior did not reflect correctly on Bro. Thomas' ultimate views, and with this clear change from Bro. Thomas' own pen; why should any one suggest that these primitive ideas formed before there were ecclesias, were Bro. Thomas' mature views. An article critical of "*The Doctrine of Fellowship*" claims that it is strange that we did not include these writings in our booklet. In view of Bro. Roberts emphatic position that he changed from this position, and in view of Bro. Thomas' later writings, and in view of the writings in the *Ambassador* and the *Christadelphian* during the last ten years of Bro. Thomas' life; we find it far stranger that these things are advanced by some Central brethren now!

Bro. Jim Phillips

The Bible Companion

Here [in the steerage house of the ship] were men with chart, compass, and log, who thoroughly understood their business; but who, nevertheless, would have inevitably got into trouble had they not exercised the greatest care and circumspection. Pacing the deck in the dark, I thought how helpless we were without the chart, compass, and log. How foolish and suicidal it was to neglect the chart, *i.e.*, reading the Scriptures. How many hidden rocks and quicksands which wreck godly vessels would have been avoided had brethren constantly read the Word; or would re-read it when winds and

adverse currents come along (Matt. 7:24–27). Then, what will become of those mariners who disregard the compass by failing to commit their way to the Supreme, and watch for the scintillation of His directing hand? How needful, also, it is to keep the “log,” to note what progress we make, so as to be able to see “where we are.” The *Bible Companion* is a handmaid to this end; and the word of God itself a “mirror,” in which a man may see his face and know what manner of man he is (James 1:23–26).

Bro. Sulley’s Travels — 1901

Matthew 18

The eighteenth chapter of Matthew opened the way for remarks upon the sacred duty which members of the flock hold towards each other, so often violated, and the supreme privileges we possess in Christ so easily forgotten—if ever realized. Even the twelve apostles needed conversion from their natural ignorance of divine ways. How much more we poor sinners of the Gentiles, and, if I might venture the opinion, prosperous, zealous Australasia needs guidance in this respect as much as any part of the world; yet not in the direction of mistaken emulation, so much as in the disregard of one’s own members. How easy it is when we see a wrong act to speak of it to others, instead of covering it with the cloak of charity! Yet Jesus said, “*If thy brother trespass, tell him his fault between thee and him alone.*” To speak of a trespass in any other way is a sin. James, in his epistle, defines the position of such a sinner, and the terrible consequences which follow: “He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art *not a doer of the law*, but a judge” (4:11). Solemn words these. *He that speaketh evil of his brother, speaketh against the law!* (R.V.) What! Speaketh against God’s law? Yes, for such an one despiseth it. Dare any man or woman, realizing this, continue the evil habit? Surely not; for, “he that despised Moses’ law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28–29). The writer can imagine someone exclaiming, “What an extreme way of putting the matter. How can you apply this passage to the subject in hand, when Paul is speaking in Hebrews of those who forsake the assembly of the saints?” Ah! that is the way brethren be-little the Father’s commands. Know ye not that some sins which are considered small, may be more serious in their working than those we think the greater? A flagrant act of disobedience is more easily avoided than a small offence; yet the latter, by use, may destroy, even as the former. Seldom does any man turn away from the truth in a moment: he becomes callous by degrees. Besides, God does not look upon sin as we do; sometimes that which appears to us a trifling offence, has received the chastisement of death (1 Chron. 10:13–14; 2 Sam. 6:6–7). Who can tell what will happen when one despises his brother and despises God’s law?

During the past thirty years, the writer has witnessed the result of despising the Word of the Lord on the part of some who were given to evil speaking. They one and all have disappeared in gloom, and in every case such have defended the practice. Some emphasize the words, “*If thy brother trespass against thee,*” just as if a man may plaster the wall with infamous statements against his brethren when the trespass is against God and not against himself! Then, sometimes, when speaking of sins, the excuse is put forward, “Everyone knows about it.” A pretty excuse, indeed. It is equal to saying, “Because fifty have transgressed, I may do so also.” What an absurd contention! Yet a whole ecclesia will be in ferment from this cause, and their power to restore one erring brother lost because the whole body has become infected by this fretting leprosy. James says: “The tongue is a fire” (*fire burns*), a world of iniquity (its outpourings have produced *a world of iniquity*). So is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body (*true, true, everywhere*), and setteth on fire the wheel of nature (*which is the emotion of sin*). And it is set on fire of Gehenna. A metonymical expression in which the result is put for the cause. Than which a more emphatic way of telling us *that the tongue, uncontrolled, will be consumed in Gehenna fire* could not be adopted. (See also Ps. 16–17; 15:1–3; 120:3–4). But how simple and lovely the law of Christ! How equitable! How effective! It is based upon the law, “Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.” No one likes to be spoken against: then see thou do it not to others (Matt 7:12). Everyone likes the stretched-out hand when falling: see thou extend it to others. I have not seen a single instance in which full compliance with the precepts enjoined upon us in Matt. 18 have failed either to *restore* the sinner or to sever a root of corruption from the body without injury to that body. Such a sublime law! No need for “king’s counsels” with their long array of swearing witnesses, jury, or judge. The elements of the case are always clear and undisputed, and the body is able to administer admonition which will either save or sever.

In many instances brethren forget that the command of Christ in Matt. 18. is not merely a method of procedure, when it is desired to withdraw from a sinner, but a *method of restoration*, to be used for the welfare of those who fall into error. Failing restoration, withdrawal should only take place after there is a manifest continuance in wrong doing, or contention for that which is wrong. Many brethren do the last thing first. Instead of telling a brother his fault alone, they tell everyone else, and thus create an additional barrier between the offender and the offended. In such a case, it is impossible for an ecclesia to exact righteousness. Besides which, the mental state of the offended brother is at fault. He requires to cast out the beam from his own eye before he can see clearly how to pluck out the mote from his neighbour’s eye (Matt. 7:3–5). Many troubles have come from lack of this necessary preliminary. If a brother cannot adopt the mental attitude against sin defined by Jesus, when he said, “When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any” (Mark 11:25), he is not in a fit position to help his brother out of the ditch. And if he cannot pass over a personal slight, and look at the offence only as a transgression against God, on behalf of which he is very much concerned for his brother’s welfare, he lacks the first element necessary for a

successful gatherer of straying sheep, or a competent cleanser of himself from complicity in sin (Lev. 19:17, 18; Psa. 50:18; Ezek. 3:21).

Bro. Sulley's Travels—1902

Funeral Singing

Fitchburg, Mass.—Bro. Cullingford writes... “An unusual incident occurred at the funeral of our late brother.

A number of members of a Baptist choir in this place came forward and earnestly requested Sister Tuttle to allow them to sing at the service, which was conducted by Bro. Isaac N. Jones, of Worcester. She consented, on the condition that they sang hymns selected from our hymn book, which they did, to the gratification of the brethren and sisters assembled, from pages 161 and 174. Thus were persons who are connected with a system that is a corruption of ‘the faith that was once delivered to the saints’ singing some of the sublimest truths of God’s Word at the grave of a man who, for eleven years, had testified that such an apostacy, and all who countenance it, will receive Christ’s repudiation at his coming. We are sowing the good seed of the Kingdom wherever an opportunity occurs, and as best we can in our weakness. Some are interested in the grand truths, but do not seem to rise to the apprehension that ‘this is eternal life.’”

The Christadelphian—1883

A CHRISTADELPHIAN “LETTER OF COMMENDATION”

ON the 23rd of last month, Philemon Coley, a member of the Birmingham ecclesia, left the town with his family to join the emigrant ship, *Southern Ocean*, at London, with the view of proceeding in that vessel, (by government free passage,) to Queensland, Australia. Previous to his departure, he was presented with the following credential of Christadelphhood, so that he might be able satisfactorily to answer the enquiries of strangers, and secure the confidence and fellowship of those of like precious faith with whom he may meet in the distant country to which stern “circumstances” have driven him:—

Ann Street School Room, Birmingham,
Sunday, Jan. 21, 1866.

This is to certify, that the bearer, Philemon Coley, has been in fellowship, for the past two years, with the church of God, assembling in Ann Street Schoolroom, Birmingham,—a church distinguished from all other sects and denominations in Birmingham, in the following respects:—It repudiates and protests against the universally received doctrines of the immortality of the soul, sky-kingdom rewards and hellfire punishments at death, or any other time, which doctrines it believes to be nothing more than fables concocted by the philosophers of ancient paganism, and predicted by Paul to become universal in christendom, in 2 Timothy 4:3, 4, which came to pass in the early centuries, through the perversions of men of corrupt minds, and was even well nigh accomplished during the very lives of the apostles when as Paul testified “the mystery of iniquity already worked.” (2 Thess. 2:7.) They also, as a consequence, reject the collateral doctrines of infant salvation, and the salvation of idiots and pagans. They believe mankind to be constitutionally mortal, under the decree of Eden, which sentenced Adam to a return to the dust of the ground, from which he was taken, and they believe death to be a state of unconsciousness and non-existence. They disbelieve in the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, believing in the only true God, the Yahweh Elohim of Israel, as the Father of all, above all, and through all, dwelling in the heavens, in light which no man can approach unto, and everywhere present by means of his spirit, which fills all space, and permeates and sustains every form of existence, animate and inanimate. They believe in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God, miraculously begotten of the virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and anointed with an unmeasured effusion of the Spirit at his baptism in the Jordan, and thereby constituted a manifestation of God in the flesh. They believe this manifestation took place for the purpose of destroying the devil and his works. This Devil they understand to be sin, abstract and concrete, that is, sin as a principle, and sin as embodied individually and politically in human life. They reject the theory of a personal supernatural Devil as a myth, and believe the holding of that theory, to be subversive of the truth. The destruction of the scripture, “Devil and his works” they believe to be accomplished on the following principle:—Jesus, as a sinless “prepared” body of sin-nature, suffered in himself the penalty due to the transgression of Adam and us his descendants, of whom Jesus, by the side of his mother, was one; but by reason of the moral spotlessness which he was enabled by the power of his paternity to develop, God raised him from the dead, (as he could not suffer an Holy One to see corruption): and having in himself conquered the power of death,—that is, destroyed the devil, or taken away sin—he is exalted as a representative individual of our race, by connection with whom in the way of God’s appointment the unredeemed members of Adam’s progeny are permitted to acquire a title to the life and promises vested in Him. He at present fulfils the priestly office, for all who are of his household by the truth. He will return to consummate the destruction of the Devil’s works by releasing them from the power of the grave, and investing them with immortality, (after having judged them “in body”) and by putting down all the authority and power now established on the devil basis throughout the world, and ultimately abolishing death itself from the face of the earth.—The church in Ann Street, Birmingham, also believe that at his second personal appearing (which they believe will be at the expiry of the times of the Gentiles,) Jesus will set up the Kingdom of God, by restoring the twelve scattered tribes of the ancient nation of Israel, to their territory of the Holy Land, and by forcibly subjugating all the kingdoms of the world to His power. They believe he will set up the ancient tabernacle of David and sitting on David’s throne in Jerusalem, will rule in the Holy Land as King of the Jews. and throughout all nations as monarch of the whole earth, in which position, he will associate with himself, his immortalised people as kings and priests. They believe this will be the time when all nations shall be blessed in Abraham and his seed. They believe this state of things will last a thousand of years, at the end of which, having subdued all enemies, even death itself, he will give up the Kingdom of God, that the Eternal Father may, without intervention, be manifested as the Only True Governor.

These elements of truth which they glean from the scriptures of Moses, the prophets and the apostles, they believe to be comprised in the New Testament definition of the gospel – “The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12.) and therefore they hold that these things must be believed in order to salvation.

They further believe baptism by immersion in water, to be the divinely appointed mode of becoming savingly connected with Christ on a belief of the gospel, but that baptism is of no avail, without a belief of the gospel, and that on the other hand, belief of the gospel is of no avail, without baptism. They also believe that all obedient believers of the gospel should meet every first day of the week to break bread in remembrance of Christ, in the way appointed and should in all things be submissive to His commandments, loving each other and all men and doing good on all hands as they have opportunity.

Philemon Coley has, during his fellowship with the church aforesaid, adorned his profession of the faith by a becoming walk and conversation, and they therefore recommend him to the fellowship and confidence of all in every part of the world of like precious faith with whom he may be thrown in contact.

[Signed by twelve brethren and sisters for themselves and 41 others.]

The Christadelphian—1866

Can We Repair?

Can you put the spider's web back in its place
That once has been swept away?
Can you put the apple again on the bough
Which fell at your feet today?
Can you put the lily-cup back on the stem,
And cause it to live and grow?
Can you mend the butterfly's broken wing
That you crushed with a hasty blow?
You think that my questions are trifling, dear
Let me ask you another one:
Can a hasty word be ever unsaid,
Or a deed unkind, undone?
Selah. 1899

Analecta Apocalypticae (12) The Balaamite Class

Though the Star-Angel, or eldership, of the ecclesia in Pergamos in the general answered to Antipas, the Spirit's faithful witness, “Yet,” said he, “I have against thee a few things, because thou hast there them holding fast the teaching of Balaam who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat idol-sacrifices, and to fornicate. So hast thou also them holding fast the teaching of the Nikolaitans, which thing I detest.”

A Typical Name

Balaam, like Nikolaitan, and Antipas, is a typical name. It is written *Bilaam* in the Hebrew; from *bela am*, signifying wasting of the people. A Nikolaitan is a vanquisher of the people; and a Balaam is a waster of the people; qualities uniting in the same class. It is also the name of an ancient prophet, who, in the days of Moses, resided at Pethor on the Euphrates, in Mesopotamia, among the mountains of the East. Though a believer in the true God, he practiced divination for the discovery of enchantments, and was held in high esteem by the Baal-worshippers of his time; who declared their conviction, that “whom he blessed was blessed, and whom he cursed was cursed.”

Balaam the Son of Bosor

On a certain occasion, when the Israelites were encamped in the plains of Moab, on the east of Jordan by Jericho, Balak, the king of Moab, in concert with the Midianites, sent princes to Balaam, with the rewards of divination, to request him to come and curse them, that being devoted to destruction, he might prevail over them, and expel them from the country. But God said to him, “Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.” Upon this he refused to go, and the princes returned to Moab.

But Balak was importunate. He sent again by more princes, and of a higher rank, and with promises of great honor and riches, if he would comply with his request. But, though he loved the wages of unrighteousness, he was afraid to encounter the consequences of violating the interdict he had received. He concluded, however, to try the Lord again, and see if He would not relax in favor of his covetousness. At night he received the answer, that if the men came to call him, he might rise up and go with them; but he was to speak only the word revealed to him at the time. It seems, however, that he was so keen after the honors and rewards, that he did not wait to be called, but of his own accord rose up, and posted off with two servants. Balaam was evidently a man of bad principles. No further account would be necessary to prove this. Yahweh had told him that the people were blessed, yet he sought to gratify a Baal-worshipper for a reward, in seeming to comply with his request. Had his heart been right, he would have accepted God's interdict as final, and have refused to consult the Lord any more upon the subject. He would have dismissed the princes of Moab with an unqualified and emphatic denial, and have commanded them to appear no more in his presence with their bribes to sin. But no; he professed a zeal for the word of

Jehovah his God, while he was anxious to please the worshippers of Baal for reward. "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of Yahweh my God, to do less or more; "but stay; don't go away; I will see what I can get Him to let me do. If he had been an honest and upright man, he would not have said "I cannot," but he would have declared, "I will not go beyond His word."

But he went with two servants, and therefore God's anger was kindled; "and an angel of Yahweh stood in the way for a Satan against him," with a naked sword in his hand. When his eyes were opened to see the peril, he fell prostrate; and having received a severe reproof for the perverseness of his way, he was permitted to go with the princes.

Balak hearing of his approach, went forth to meet him. Balaam having explained his position, accompanied Balak to Kirjath-huzzoth, the capital of Moab, where he ate of the idol-sacrifices with the princes of the king; and on the morrow, they took up their position on one of the high places of Baal, commanding a view of the four-square encampment of Israel. But Jehovah would not allow him to defy them, but compelled him to utter those beautiful predictions of their future glory under the Star and Sceptre of Jacob, recorded in Num. 23 and 24. Seeing he could not reverse Yahweh's blessing upon His people, and knowing that His favor is consequent on keeping His commandments, he counseled Balak to cast a stumbling block before them, causing them to sin. Instead, therefore, of advising him to war, he suggested the policy of seducing them from their allegiance to Yahweh and his law, by sending in the daughters of Moab among them, and enticing them, to impurity and idolatry. Balak followed his advice, and by the means proposed, caused Israel to be joined to Baalpeor, which caused the anger of Yahweh to smoke against them.

Following the Way of Balaam

Such, in brief, is the history of the prophet who caused a wasting of the people; for Yahweh commanded their chiefs to be hung, and all who had offended to be slain to the number of twenty-four thousand. The points of his character were covetousness, perverseness, presumptuousness, unrighteousness, beguiler of unstable Israelites, apostasy from the right way. Where such attributes of character meet in a class of persons, they are said in the New Testament to be "following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor;" and Balaam becomes the representative of the class.

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

What Does That Mean?

"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13)

We hear a lot today about our right to privacy. Does God respect our privacy?

Our right to privacy protection is indeed a big focus today especially in the western world. No one, especially government or big business has the authority to probe into something personal that we believe they have no right to know. No one can be punished for personal thoughts no matter how bad or dangerous they may be. No one is forced to reveal their thoughts to any they choose not to. Personal privacy must be respected.

Against this common notion, God makes a startling revelation: He knows our thoughts! Instantly any claim to a right to privacy from God is declared null and void. It never existed and cannot be claimed. God knows our deepest secrets. *"All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."* (Heb. 4:13) David acknowledges, *"O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether...Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."* (Psa. 139: 1-6)

How many times do we read phrases like the one in Mat 9:4 *"And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"* or in chapter 12:25 *"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them..."* How would our days be different if we had someone in our midst that knew our thoughts? Would we make any changes? Thinking on this can be both comforting and terrifying.

How many times have we been "misunderstood" and accused of doing something for a reason that we never thought of. Once again David, knowing that God understood his thoughts was able to pray: *"All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me."* (Psa. 119:86)

On the other hand, because God does know our thoughts He does in a sense respect our privacy. God does not impose His will on us if we are unwilling to hear and respond. He respects the fact that we are rebellious and He allows us to follow the dictates of our own evil thoughts. We are far better off if we can respond like David: *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."* (Psa.139:23)

The fact that God knows our hearts, should provide profound comfort, and influence the way we act and think every hour of the day.

Bro. James Sommerville