

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 Christadelphians since 1923.

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ECCLESIAL NEWS	Las Cruces, Hengood
EDITORIAL	The Berean Constitution 295
EXHORTATION.....	Jeremiah – Prophet Of Judgment and Glory..... 299
EXHORTATION.....	Nehemiah 308
EXHORTATION.....	Clad With Zeal As A Cloke 311
THOUGHTS.....	How Should He Be Dealt With? 314
THOUGHTS.....	Should Believers Eat Blood..... 315
THOUGHTS.....	The Policy Of The Christadelphian 316
THOUGHTS.....	Breaking Bread Alone 316
THOUGHTS.....	Fellowship In The Truth..... 317
THOUGHTS.....	Ecclesial Discipline 318
Analecta Apocalypcticae (16).....	319-324

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

LAS CRUCES, New Mexico, Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia,

— Memorial 10 AM; Key Lesson Bible Seminar 1 PM; Tuesday 7 PM Mid-Week Bible Class; Tuesday and Thursday 7:30 PM Walk and Conduct Class & Social Time; Bro. Michael Morrell, 200 Cervantes Village Apt. E15A, Las Cruces, NM 88001-6312; phone, 505-312-1025; morrell@morrellcom.com Web Page <http://lascruces.bereans.org/main>

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

It is our joyous pleasure to announce the baptism of **Maria Angeline Woodard**. Sister Maria's address is: 200 Cervantes Vlg. Unit J5A, Las Cruces, NM 88001. Her email is mawmaw@nmsu.edu. Her phone is: (505) 574-7036.

Sis. Maria gave an excellent confession of her faith, on August 8, 2007, after studying with us over the last year. We wish her well on her walk.

We welcome brother Malachi Morrell by way of transfer from the Boston Ecclesia into the Las Cruces Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia. He will be living here at 200 Cervantes Vlg. E15A, Las Cruces, NM 88001. He will be going to school here starting this fall.

Our contact phone number here is 505-312-1025. Our meeting place and mailing address is: 200 Cervantes Vlg. E15A, Las Cruces, NM 88001.

Love to you all,
Brother Michael and our Ecclesia.

HENGOED, Wales, Breaking of Bread – 10.45am; Sunday School – 12.45pm; Lecture – 2.30pm; Bible Class and Elpis Israel Class – held alternately in the homes of the brethren and sisters. Youth Evening – held every 2 weeks on Friday at the Aberdare Country Park Village Hall at 6.30pm.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters in the bonds of the Abrahamic Covenant,

Please note that we plan, God Willing, to have a Study over the weekend 14th to 16th September (2007) and a Gathering over the weekend of 7th to 9th March (2008), if our Master has not returned by then. A warm invitation is extended to any who are able to be with us on those occasions. Please contact Bro. Steve Male for further details.

With love in Elpis Israel and on behalf of the brethren and sisters of the Hengoed Ecclesia,
Bro. Phillip Hughes

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

NORTHEAST FRATERNAL GATHERING - DETROIT.....Oct 6–7, 2007

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

HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Mar 7–9, 2008

Bro. Stephen Male, 63 Ty Llwyd Parc, Quakers Yard, Treharris, South Wales, CF46 5LB, United Kingdom, Phone: 011 441 44381 3828

NORTH CAROLINA–VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 31–Jun 1, 2008

Bro. Dale Lee, 1- (757) 620-6639, dleeepa@cox.net

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 13–15, 2008

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

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 23–29, 2008

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

Study Class Topic: Hebrews 1-13; Bible Readings

Editorial – The Berean Constitution

In establishing the rules for the early Christadelphians ecclesias, Bro. Roberts made the observation that “Ecclesial independence is a principle essential to be maintained.” (Ecclesial Guide #42.) Every ecclesia is responsible for its own actions, and its own judgements; and it is essential that ecclesias make their own decisions with the goal of their own well being. A healthy ecclesia will make these decisions without interference from other ecclesias and a healthy ecclesia will always resist such interference. No one understands the peculiar needs and requirements of the members of an ecclesia, better than those in the ecclesia and interference from outside, while possibly well meaning, can never take into considerations all the strengths and weaknesses, blessings and hardships brethren have, or have to endure.

Even if invited to become involved in another ecclesia's problems, one must exercise great care, for often, the invitation comes from a dissatisfied element in the ecclesia, who seeks to have their views forced on the wisdom of the ecclesia. While greatly satisfying to the ego to be so called as an “arbiter,” usually the result is engendering resentment in a neighboring ecclesia, where none should exist. *When no divine principle is at stake*, it is always better to let an ecclesia work out its own salvation, in trembling and in fear before God.

The goal for the rules of an ecclesia should be to establish such a situation, where first and foremost, the divine worship of God in peace is enhanced (Matt. 22:36-38.) Second, the ecclesia's goals should be the strengthening and edification of the membership in wisdom and in love, and where necessary administering spiritual and material aid to those in dire need (Matt. 22:39.) These are the most important goals for the rules, and should remain preeminent in any discussion.

The rules should also be created with the goal of being a candlestick placed upon a basket, a beacon to those searching for the Truth, showing forth (and that word really means exhibiting) the death of Christ, until he comes. The rules should be created in such a manner that the ecclesia serves as a hedge against the world, and that members are able to walk in love and peace with those brothers and sisters who are also interested in walking in light, and to be afforded as much protection as possible from those who are walking in darkness.

Rules are generally necessary that the ecclesia can carry out this work decently, and in order. The larger the ecclesia, the more necessary the rules. In order to obtain order, brethren must be willing to submit to one another in peace, according to the will of the ecclesia. This is sometimes a hard thing for those called to an understanding of the Truth. The independent characters we individually have, the same independence which gives us the courage and self confidence to stand aside from the common run of man and what the world calls the traditional Christianity, can, if we allow it, make us unwilling to

embrace and enthusiastically work with ideas of the ecclesial leadership which we may view as inferior to our own. But this is a part of our learning process in this lifetime, that we learn to submit to one another in love.

Bro. Thomas, in his article "Man and Society" pointed out the absolutely essential requirement, that we surrender a part of our individuality for the benefit of the whole body. He wrote:

"From the constitution of society, then, at the foundation of the world, we see that law was an essential element of the social state; and that social liberty is freedom restrained by law. Absolute liberty, or freedom unrestrained by law which defines "order" and "decency," has no place in the divine plan. Man aimed at this. He virtually asserted, that he had a right to do what he pleased with the Tree of Knowledge as with all other trees; but experience at length proved to him that he had no unconditional rights; but a right only to do according to the law. He did as he pleased, and in consequence lost the favor of God, as will all others who pursue a similar course.

And again:

"Absolute liberty, which is licentiousness, does not belong to God's society. The members of it surrender some of their individuality for the benefit of the whole, of which each person is a very small part. This is a first principle, and there can be no society without it. Now, that portion of individuality which each foregoes, he transfers from himself to the functionaries of society in assenting to their appointment, or in applying for admission, and in being received, into a community where they exist; so that he consents that he has no right to do individually what pertains to them officially. Functionaries, then, are the acting members of the body, administering to its social requirements-its eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet; while the body in which they are placed itself is constituted of the generality of its constituents. These things being understood, there will be no difficulty in comprehending those which more especially pertain to what is commonly termed "a church."

In the early days of the truth, when many were separating from the churches, Bro. Roberts produced the "Ecclesial Guide" as an aide to those who were coming out from the world, and gathering together into faithful ecclesias. The Ecclesial Guide included a "Constitution" which was actually the rules used in Bro. Roberts' home ecclesia at Birmingham. Many of the ecclesias copied the one used by Birmingham, making modifications where necessary, to maintain their own decency and order.

This constitution was a guide for other ecclesias to use and modify, according to their individual needs. Many ecclesias accepted it, having small numbers and no real reason to seriously consider a constitution. Ecclesias with real needs modified it for their own use. Still others in those days, used a completely different constitution.

Following the turbulence and divisions of the early '70s, coupled with the attack from Central that the Berean position as "Andrewim" Bro. Growcott considered it helpful to re-order ourselves, and examine our foundation. He published various articles on various topics, helpful to such organization, such as his modified Roberts Rules of Order (1979 pg 89), the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, and the Berean Restatement. Along with this he published a work he called "The Common Constitution of Berean Ecclesias" in 1980.

The Common Constitution of Berean Ecclesias was simply an article by Bro. Growcott. It was not a unilateral forcing of a common constitution upon the brotherhood. It was an attempt by Bro. Growcott to take the Birmingham Constitution, and highlight by emboldening those clauses which are vital to fellowship within and between the ecclesias. It was very well done, and passed among us unquestioned for some years. But certain questions have now arisen concerning this term "vital to fellowship" and these questions are being brought forward to criticize Bro. Growcott's work, and argue that the Berean position somehow changed in 1980, as a result of this article.

A meaning and intention is being placed upon the Common Constitution which it never had. There never was such a thing as a Common Constitution for Berean Ecclesias. The Common Constitution was an article in a publication, not an attempt at unilateral legislation. Bro. Growcott's article was never endorsed by all Berean ecclesias, nor were the ecclesias ever asked to endorse it. The larger ecclesias in 1980 already had their constitutions in place, and these remained in effect with no objection from any corner for over 27 years.

Still, this article called "The Common Constitution" was useful in creating and defining guidelines. It explains to ecclesias how the body of ecclesias will view matters. For instance, if an ecclesia has in its constitution the current Clause 5 and establishes a rule for their ecclesia, and, if a minority objects and departs from the ecclesia, *no first principle being involved*; then the will of the majority will be recognized by the body.

Such would be the case with all the various clauses of the Constitutions. Where rules exist, they must be acknowledged, and this is vital to fellowship. But that is not to say that these rules cannot be changed according to the needs and will of the individual ecclesias. Bro. Thomas' ecclesia surely never recognized the will of the majority as expressed in Clause 5 and he complained about this to Bro. Roberts, calling Birmingham's rules "altogether too democratic."

The Berean Magazine in 1980 was the personal responsibility of Bro. Growcott. He was free to write in it what he wished. Individuals were free to disagree with what they didn't like, and those of us who knew Bro. Growcott, know how painfully aware he was of this fact. His goal was to be a constant, loving, edifying force in the brotherhood. He personally counseled us that all things had to be done in love, or shouldn't be done at all. He counseled, "If what you are doing is not motivated entirely by love, *even if you are right*, it should not be done at all." He would never have considered any step that would have created discord, such as attempting to force a constitution upon distant ecclesias.

The workings of our individual ecclesias, and our Basis of Fellowship is near and dear to each one in the Berean Fellowship. It has only been with great effort that we have been able to remain a beacon of the true light in this increasingly dark and degenerate age. We should refrain from removing the old landmarks which have guided us through difficult times, and focus on the productive edification of one another in love, in these latter days.

— Bro. Jim Phillips

1. There is no demand that all Ecclesias endorse the Bro. Growcott emphasized version of The Constitution under threat of disfellowship.
2. All Ecclesias are perfectly free to have their own constitutions tailored to suit their specific needs. Any Ecclesias are also free to adopt the 1980 version if they so choose.
3. The statement, "*rejection of any part of them or holding of any view contrary to or subversive of any part of them, is an urgent matter of fellowship*," only has reference to (1) *The Statement of Faith*, (2) *The Doctrines to be Rejected* and (3) *Commandments of Christ*.
4. In the paragraph dealing with the Constitution, Bro. Growcott writes that the boldface distinguishes the "vital fellowship" parts.
5. Bro. Growcott also calls the achievement of the "Common Constitution", an "ideal" for all the ecclesias. He was setting before the Ecclesias a goal or end to be sought for. This implies that 27 years ago, at the time Bro. Growcott added the emphasis, the goal had not been achieved. This places his effort into a proper perspective that we can all live with—an exhortation for all of us.

It has not been the policy of this publication to alter the "*old landmarks*" provided us by those who have fallen asleep in the Lord, nor are we likely to do so in the future.

Bro. Fred J. Higham—Editor

Jeremiah – Prophet of Judgment and Glory

For the past few weeks we have been with the prophet Jeremiah in his trials and sufferings. His life was one of the loneliest and saddest in Scripture. His personal experiences were bitter. The message of disaster he had to proclaim was depressing and unwelcome. And the times in which he lived were of unparalleled national calamity. His efforts were foredoomed to failure. It was a lost cause from the beginning. He was everywhere hated and misunderstood. While intensely loving and grieving for his countrymen and his nation, he was despised and persecuted as an enemy and a traitor.

But amidst all this background of thick gloom, there shines in a few chapters in the center of the book the glorious picture of the eternal kingdom of righteousness that will finally triumph, and in which this rejected prophet will have an honored part.

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise up into David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely" – chapter 23.

Chapter 31 – *"He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."*

Jeremiah was born in the closing years of the long evil reign of Manasseh. This king's reign sealed the doom of the kingdom and brought to an end God's much-tried longsuffering and patience. Jeremiah records, in chapter 15, God speaking, *"I will cause them to be removed into all kingdoms of the earth, because of Manasseh the son of Hezekiah king of Judah, for that which he did in Jerusalem...I am weary with repenting."*

The evil Manasseh was born during the fifteen years that were added to Hezekiah's life, when he pleaded with God. Far better for Hezekiah and for Israel, if Hezekiah had submitted to God's wisdom and gone to his rest with his glorious record of faith unsullied, as God in His mercy had planned.

Jeremiah begins his ministry in the reign of the good king Josiah. It was a bright brief interlude of righteousness, but it did not last. Josiah began to reign when he was eight years old. When he was sixteen, he dedicated himself to serve God, and when he was twenty, he set about purging Judah from all their wickedness and idolatry. Jeremiah began his ministry in the next year—the thirteenth of Josiah's reign. Jeremiah would be about the same age as Josiah—about twenty.

It is truly a touching picture of these two young men—king and prophet—laboring to turn the nation to righteousness, as the smoldering judgments of God hovered over the land, just as two young men—a prophet and a king, John and Jesus—did in the days of the nation’s final judgment.

It is notable that Jeremiah’s ministry began just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Babylonians. We remember that Jesus began his ministry just 40 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple by the Romans. In each case a 40-year period of final probation was given to the city.

Jeremiah’s mission was to witness for God against apostate and worldly Israel. The Jews today still jealously preserve and revere the prophecy of Jeremiah, though it contains their condemnation as a nation and the record of God pleading in vain with them to return and be saved.

Jeremiah’s work was not only as a witness of condemnation. It had a far more glorious purpose. It was principally to encourage and strengthen the scattered faithful remnant of his own day and of all ages since. In this sad time of present crisis for the Truth, its message of comfort has great and sustaining power.

When the terrible judgments came, it would appear that God had completely repudiated Israel and that all hope was gone. But the lonely prophet with his message of eventual glory was a symbol that God was still concerned with them, though they were unfaithful. And his prophecies gave comforting assurance that those who held fast would never be forgotten. And that though these dreadful evils were to come, still the latter end would be blessing and peace.

The name Jeremiah has become in the world proverbial for a ‘killjoy,’ for one who foresees only doom and disaster. But we know Jeremiah better than that. The world hates those who call attention to its wickedness and folly, and who raise their voice to warn of the judgments that will come upon it. The Jews of Jeremiah’s day are typical of human nature everywhere. Though they recognized that he was sent by God, still they blindly hated him for his faithful testimony and resented his foreboding of disaster.

The world powers at the beginning of Jeremiah’s time were Assyria and Egypt. During his ministry the Assyrian Empire was completely obliterated, and its mighty and splendid capitol Nineveh, long the wonder and terror of the whole earth, was leveled to the ground so completely that it was soon forgotten and lost. Only in modern times have the ruins of Nineveh been found and identified. And during Jeremiah’s time, Egypt was cast down from its age-old preeminence and has ever since been a base kingdom, enslaved and ruled by foreigners.

Jeremiah’s day marked the beginning of the great image of Nebuchadnezzar—the kingdom of men— just now running out.

Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of Judah’s last five kings—Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah. The chapters of the book of Jeremiah are not in chronological order. Unless this is noted and effort is made to get the right sequence of events, it would be quite confusing to attempt to place these various kings in relation to each other.

When the zealous young men—Josiah and Jeremiah—set out together to bring Israel back to God, the picture looked very promising. In cleaning out the temple, which during Manasseh’s long evil reign had become broken down and neglected, there was found the book of the law. It is hard to realize that the book of the law had been so completely forgotten that Josiah, though seeking God, was for years unaware of its content. How impressive is the lesson that this could happen in one generation! This was six years after he had begun his great reformation. And still, when this book was discovered and read to him, he rent his clothes and sent in haste to inquire of God what should be done to avert the evils therein prophesied.

God’s answer to Josiah was that it was now too late! The evils were on their way and could not be turned aside, but because he was faithful and God-fearing, it would not come in his day.

It was testified of Josiah, 2 Chronicles 34, that “*all his days they (the children of Israel) departed not from following the LORD.*” What a wonderful tribute! What better record could any man leave behind him than that! That all his days, his zeal and example and influence were such that he had kept his people wholly in the right way.

As a result of finding the book of the law, Josiah kept a great passover in Jerusalem—the greatest and most solemn passover since the days of Samuel.

Did the people, who flocked joyfully to that celebration, realize that this was the end? They had received and taken for granted God’s forbearance and mercy for so long. But this passover was terribly ominous in its seeming peacefulness and sense of endless blessing.

God had always been there to welcome and to forgive, whenever Israel tired of sin and its consequences. But this passover was different, as time was soon to prove. It was the final burst of divine glory and witness before the long Gentile night closed down upon them. They partook of this feast all unheeding that they were on the brink of the chasm into which they were soon to be cast.

The providential finding of the book of the law, the provision of a righteous king and a faithful prophet, and this great passover—all these combined to make God’s last manifestation of mercy to them before their impending national destruction. But all this had no permanent effect. They seemed very enthusiastic and sincere while Josiah lived, but it was all on the surface. He did not reach to the transforming of their hearts. They were still just ordinary human people, like the countless millions that have come and gone. Though there was a great show of piety, they failed completely to make contact with the spirit of life.

Thirteen years after this passover, Josiah met his death in a strange and tragic way. He was still only 39. What caused Josiah to go out against the host of Egypt? And to persist in joining battle with Pharaoh, even when the latter warned him away and assured him he had no quarrel with him? It is very hard to fathom.

The record strongly gives the impression that God was warning Josiah through Pharaoh. This too is very strange, but perhaps in keeping with the circumstances.

We wonder why such a man as Josiah would not seek counsel of God before setting out to defeat a great empire. But there are other cases of very good men neglecting to follow divine guidance in matters of great importance, and while well meaning, bringing themselves and others much trouble. The incident seems to come under the heading of a tragic mistake, rather than a sin.

Pharaoh had entered God’s land, though just to pass through, and Josiah, strong in faith, went out to oppose the invader. But God did not desire him at that time to set out to conquer his mighty neighbor. The defeat of Egypt by Judah did not fit into God’s purpose. So apparently the time had come for Josiah to be removed, so that the determined course of history could proceed. The evil was not to come in his day.

It is recorded that Jeremiah lamented for Josiah. Well he might, for he above all would realize that with Josiah’s death the last curtain fell on the happiness and well being of Judah. The nation now had 23 appointed years of existence left, and they were to be a terrible 23 years.

The most prominent part of Jeremiah’s ministry would now begin. We know little of his life up to this time. But now he finds himself at increasing variance with his nation and its rulers, as they plunged down the path of destruction.

All Josiah’s reforms and arrangements were soon swept away. The illusion of national righteousness that had been maintained by the king’s zeal and influence dissolved before the ugly realities of hatred and bitterness. The people made Jehoahaz, Josiah’s son, king, but he lasted only three months. The king of Egypt took him prisoner, and set up his brother Jehoiakim in his stead. A heathen presumed to designate the ruler of God’s kingdom for the first time! Egypt was to pay dearly for this presumption. Foreigners were to set up her rulers – Ezekiel 30. So it has been for over 2000 years since.

Jehoiakim reigned eleven years, and Jeremiah had much to do with this ungodly man. In the first year of his reign, Jeremiah was commanded to stand in the court of the temple and proclaim to all the people that came to worship that unless they put away their wickedness, God would make the temple a desolation and the city a curse to all the nations of the earth.

Exactly the same charges were brought against Jeremiah by the priests and false prophets, as were brought against Christ that he had spoken against and threatened the temple of God. They said, “Thou shalt surely die.” But at this time the princes and the people saved him from the priests. For in God’s purpose, he had much work yet to do.

And this was just one year after Josiah’s death—the 1st year of Jehoiakim. In the 4th and 5th years of Jehoiakim, a very significant chain of events occurred—one of the great turning points of history. We are told in Jeremiah 25 that the 4th year of Jehoiakim was the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar. This, incidentally, is a very important connecting link between Scriptural and profane history. In indication of a great change in God’s relationship to Judah, Jeremiah proclaims to the nation that he had now warned them for 23 years and that they had not hearkened, and that consequently, the long foretold evil is about to begin. Judah has now 18 years to go.

It is at this time that the Spirit reveals through Jeremiah that the captivity by Babylon will last 70 years. And, at the same time Jeremiah is commanded to write all his prophecies in a book, and to have it read before all the people as a solemn witness. This was completed in Jehoiakim’s 5th year. The book was publicly read as commanded, and the princes who heard it immediately took the matter before the king, and began to read it to him. When two or three columns had been read, the king seized the book, cut it with a knife, and threw it into the fire.

That was the point at which the nation’s doom was finally sealed. That event ranks in significance with the rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. “*His blood be upon us and upon our children,*” they cried, as the living Word was cut asunder, and he was cast into the sacrificial fire.

Jeremiah records with sadness and wonder that when the roll of God's Holy Word was divisively cut and burned, "*Yet they were not afraid, nor rent their garments, neither the king, nor any of his servants that heard all these words.*" They were all in it together.

At the same time, in this 5th year of Jehoiakim, which was the 2nd of Nebuchadnezzar, another event of immense importance took place, which though a long way away and under very different circumstances and surroundings, we can see was directly connected with and dependent upon this final appeal and witness by God and His official rejection by the king and the Israelitish nation.

As Israel was rejecting God, God was revealing to an alien that He was rejecting Israel—the Kingdom of God was to be cast down and the kingdom of men to be given unrestricted sway for seven times—2520 long evil years.

For it was in this fateful year, we are told, Nebuchadnezzar received his dream of the great and terrible image. He is told that it represents the kingdom of men that is to rule the world in violence, bloodshed, and lust, until God's rejected kingdom is reestablished. Measuring from this event—604 BC—it was exactly 2520 years to 1917, when the last desolator was driven out of the land.

Because of the proclamation of Jeremiah's book of prophecy, Jehoiakim sought to seize Jeremiah. But it is recorded that the LORD hid him.

He was commanded to write the book again and to add many words to it—make the judgment even greater. More evils were included, because of Jehoiakim's insolent rejection. And among them may well have been the prediction that this king, of all the long line of mostly evil kings, this one should have the crowning indignity of the burial of an ass—his body cast out to abuse and insult.

Jehoiakim doubtless felt he was quite a hero in daring to flaunt the Word of God, as is the custom of modern thought today, but "*God is not mocked.*" The final end of the matter will show where wisdom lies.

All, who reject God's Word, will suffer the same end—the burial of an ass, or as David expresses it, "*Like sheep are they laid in the grave; death shall feed on them; and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*"

We can afford to wait in patience, seeking humbly to work out our own salvation in fear and trembling. Popular ideas of manliness are the direct opposite of godliness.

Now that this final written testimony of God has been nationally rejected, a new phase begins. Jeremiah is commanded to keep himself separate from this people as a witness of their rejection. He is forbidden to join with them either in mourning or in feasting. He found himself in the same isolated position as the faithful find themselves in the world today.

Much contention may stir up such feeling as to defeat its own purpose. But a silent, consistent, public course of action is a continual reminder that may eventually provoke sober thought and accomplish good. God often used the personal lives of the prophets in this way—living examples and object lessons. Like Jeremiah, God's people today are required to manifest a striking difference in their lives from the surrounding world, so that they will be unmistakable beacon lights of truth, for any seeking truth.

Jeremiah was forbidden to marry. To the natural mind it may seem hard and unfair to impose this restriction on a faithful man through no fault of his own. But wisdom will realize that all pleasures and comforts are from God, and that He will surely see that none of His obedient servants will ever lose out because of their obedience. There was no fatted calf in Jeremiah's life to make merry with his friends. But he was among those few who live close to God, and of whom it is transcendently true that "*thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*" This was a far deeper and more satisfying bond between Jeremiah and God than can ever have been conceived of in the natural relationship of human beings.

Jeremiah lamented, as have many other men of God, "*Thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention to the whole earth!*" It is not a pleasant course, but when things are not right, no other course is possible.

Would it have been a true kindness for Jeremiah to have gone along with them for the sake of peace and friendship, ignoring what was wrong, when his duty was to warn and to save them? As Paul had to exclaim to those for whom he had labored so hard, "*Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?*" The truth is often not pleasant, but it must be spoken. Jeremiah was told they would not hearken, but would simply intensify their anger and resentment against him, because of his warning words.

The time came when he was forbidden to pray for them – Jeremiah 14, "*Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry.*" Forbidden to pray! It had now come to that! "*I will not hear their cry.*" Opportunity had finally past. This would apply nationally, not individually. As a nation, they were doomed—the calamities and the destruction would come. It was irreversible; nothing they could possibly do could avert them now. But, there would always be the remnant drawn out. So Jeremiah continued to preach and to warn.

A little while before Jeremiah's book of judgment was made public, as if to providentially create a background of urgent necessity for the message, Nebuchadnezzar had made his first invasion of Jerusalem—a shadow of what was to come. They were warned.

He had put them under tribute and had carried certain selected ones away, including Daniel. Though this would give a tremendous emphasis to Jeremiah's warning, still in the face of everything they stubbornly refused to even listen, let alone obey.

We are still in the 11-year reign of Jehoiakim, whom Necho, king of Egypt, had set up when he carried captive Jehoahaz, who had reigned three months following the death of Josiah. Jehoiakim's reign was troubled throughout by plundering raids from the surrounding nations, whom God was sending to gradually reduce Judah to misery and helplessness.

Jehoiakim died and, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, his carcass was dragged out through the gates of Jerusalem and cast upon the rubbish heap of Gehenna. It was an ominous symbol of what was about to happen to the throne and the kingdom. Eleven evil years had passed, since Josiah's death; eleven worse years were to follow, and then the end.

Jehoiachin, Jehoiakim's son who followed him, lasted only three months and was then carried prisoner into Babylon, spending the rest of his life in captivity. But he managed in those three short months to leave behind a record that "*he did that which was evil in the sight of God.*"

Then came Zedekiah—weak, cowardly and evil, but not as bitter against Jeremiah as Jehoiakim had been. However, with the increasing disasters of the country, the general antagonism to Jeremiah grew. The better and more godly of the people had been carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar—those among whom Jeremiah could have found friends and supporters. This is shown in the vision of the two baskets of figs in chapter 24. The very good figs are those like Daniel, whom God had caused to be taken to Babylon to save them from the miseries of Jerusalem's last dying days.

We see how strangely God works. Would the ones who were carried captive realize that they were the blessed and favored ones? Though torn away from their homes by these cruel invaders and marched off in chains to a foreign land? Very often, what seems to be most distressing circumstances are provisions of God for our own ultimate good. God's beloved children are never at the whim of time and chance. "*All things work together for good for them,*" we are divinely assured – Romans 8.

With the good people removed from the city, we can picture the hardness of Jeremiah's lonely position, left behind as a witness to this rejected and doomed remainder. It was his heavy lot to stay with them to the end, just as Ezekiel at the same time was chosen to proclaim God's words to the captives in Babylon, and Daniel was placed where he could speak to and influence the Babylonian conquerors according to God's purpose.

In the 1st year of Zedekiah, Jeremiah came into contact with the false prophet Hananiah, who said that within two years Babylon would be broken and Judah freed. Jeremiah replied that, for speaking lies in the name of God, Hananiah would die within one year. This happened as foretold—a further divine confirmation of Jeremiah and warning to Israel. The warning was ignored and the hatred for Jeremiah intensified.

At this time Jeremiah sends a letter to the captives in Babylon. In it he says, Jeremiah 29, "*Seek the peace of the city whither I (God) have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.*"

It is always somewhat of a task to adjust our relationships to the countries of our pilgrimage. Complete separation is, of course, the primary requirement. And we must be very careful to maintain a strict aloofness, even in our sympathy, from all the politics and regional factions. We are citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel; to every other affiliation we are strangers and pilgrims. But our general attitude must be as Jeremiah cautioned—no bitterness, no antagonism, no deliberate provoking of the authorities, who are at their wits end in a crumbling world. But rather a detached, but not unfeeling, kindness and goodwill, praying to the LORD for them, "*for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.*"

In this letter Jeremiah tells the Babylonian captives, as he had previously proclaimed in Jerusalem that the captivity should last 70 years, so that the land might enjoy her sabbaths of rest, which the people had neglected to observe. There is a striking lesson here. We see from this that all down through their occupancy, God had been keeping an accurate record of all the years they had failed to rest the land according to His law, and now they were to be driven out, while this full time was to be measured off.

God may appear not to be noticing—someday the reckoning comes. "*The lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.*" As a man soweth, so shall he reap. It is inexpressibly sad that this often attested principle is so generally forgotten.

It is interesting and significant that God said for their final punishment that He would render to them double. He said, Jeremiah 16, *“First I will recompense their iniquity and their sin double; because they have defiled my land.”* And Isaiah proclaims in the final call, chapter 40, *“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people...her warfare is accomplished...she hath received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”*

Now it is difficult to determine the exact year, but the general periods are clear. From the call of Abraham to the destruction of the kingdom is in the very close neighborhood of 1260 years, or 3 ½ Scriptural times. This throws light on the 7 times—double 3 ½—of the scattering of Israel (Leviticus 26) and the 7 times of the Gentile tree (Daniel 4). Seven times is 2520 years.

We are today living near the end of the 70-year time-of-the-end period, measured 2520 years from the beginning and the ending of this 70-year Babylonian ascendancy. It runs from 1917 to 1987. In this 70-year period at the latter end of the great 2520-year arch of time, we are in exile, waiting as the captives were waiting for Cyrus to destroy Babylon and issue the proclamation for all God’s people to go up to Jerusalem.

The events of the years that have past since 1917 make it very clear that the time of redemption is at hand.

There is another statement in this letter of Jeremiah’s that stands out from its immediate context with eternal beauty and power. *“Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”*

We have now come to the final years of the kingdom. Zedekiah plotted and intrigued with Egypt against Babylon, until Nebuchadnezzar decided that the only solution was the complete destruction of Judah. And we are to read in Jeremiah to see how this finally came upon them.

Bro. G.V.Growcott

Nehemiah

As we read Nehemiah, we see the Jews in captivity, being given a respite by Darius the Persian and this respite is continued under Artaxerxes, whose butler was Nehemiah. Some of the Jews that were left in the land have been organized under Nehemiah to rebuild the city walls of Jerusalem and to restore the keeping of the Law as it was supposed to be kept.

They had a reading of the Law for the people to reacquaint themselves with it, seeing as the Priests had not been doing their job as instructors of the people; and the people had fallen into the ways of the nations around them, which included the marrying of foreigners and the adopting of their customs.

Because of this God had sent Prophets to them to warn them and eventually when they would not listen they were sent into captivity. Apparently, some of them must have realized that they were at fault and were receptive to the hearing of the Law and were brought to remorse and repentance for it. This caused great rejoicing in the City and Nehemiah declared a day of feasting, gift giving, music and, no doubt, much socializing and rejoicing.

Let’s go back for a closer look and some of the lessons that we can learn from this bit of history.

In the very first chapter and verses we have Nehemiah, while serving the King in captivity, receiving a visit from Hanani who brings news of the broken down condition of Jerusalem and the affliction of those who had ended up there. Nehemiah is greatly moved to tears and weeps and mourns. Not just for a few minutes, but for days. And as he mourns, he prays. (Neh. 1:5-11)

Nehemiah demonstrates complete comprehension of the facts of the case and of God’s pronouncements in the past. He shows his trust in God, and he appeals to God’s mercy once more to give his people Israel another chance to do the right thing in these extremely difficult circumstances.

The next thing to happen is that the king notices Nehemiah’s sadness. Now this could have been a very dangerous thing for Nehemiah, however, he comes forward very honestly and tells the king what is making him sad. This also could have turned deadly for Nehemiah, but his trust in God was sufficient to carry him through on this.

So he presented his requests to the King, wisely asking for documentation to get by the governors and other despots that he would face. He makes a whirlwind tour of Jerusalem, even viewing it at night to avoid suspicion. He presents his plan to the Jews who were in sympathy with his desires and gets them onside, especially once they hear of the King’s cooperation. He is constantly harassed by Sanballat, Geshem and Tobiah. (Neh. 2:19-20)

The work began: Hard, strenuous work, dangerous work, under constant threat of attack from enemies, and to top it off a severe drought at the same time. And to make matters worse, the nobles and rulers were charging interest to their brethren, increasing their distress. Nehemiah was burdened with threats from without and threats from within. Some of the Jews were

on Tobiah's side and communicated Nehemiah's words to Tobiah. The threat of attack was so great that the gates of Jerusalem were not opened until midmorning and then were closed immediately after entry.

Nehemiah initiates a registry by genealogy so that the Law could once again function as it was designed to do. This revealed who the priesthood were, and also the number of the congregation. He was able to assign people into the services some of which had not been since the time of David and Solomon.

This brings us to the chapter where the congregation assembles to hear Ezra read the Law for one half day. The people were very receptive and respectful. They also repented with genuine remorse.

Nehemiah ordered celebration, to be followed by the feast of booths. There was great gladness intermingled with the reading of the book of the Law for seven days. This had not been kept since the days of Joshua.

This is followed in the ninth Chapter by a recounting of the work of Yahweh with Israel right from the time of Abraham until that time, recounting the promises made, and many of the miracles done to and for Israel! All through this there was the theme of repentance and recognition of their past waywardness as the cause of all their present distress. This was followed by oaths to serve God and to redouble their efforts to do as the Law prescribed.

The Twelfth Chapter records the dedication of the wall, with parades and musicians; all in celebration that they had revived a portion of the Jewish people and their Law complete with the feasts and jubilees for the good of all and the praise of Yahweh.

In Chapter Thirteen we see some further problems cropping up. The Moabites had been admitted to the congregation when they should never have been admitted. Eliashib the Priest had allied with Tobiah, the enemy of the Jews, even providing him with an apartment in the temple courtyard! Furthermore, the tithes had not been passed on to the Levites, so that they were no longer able to serve in their capacities, but rather had to go farming to survive. As well the people had started doing their regular work on the Sabbath, all of which was prohibited. On top of all this, the Jews had intermarried with the Ammonites and Moabites, worshippers of Ashdod, and had produced children, some of which did not even know the Jewish language. Some even were of the priesthood who had done this! All this had happened because Nehemiah had gone back to his job as butler to the King of Persia and left the people on their own.

Through all of this Nehemiah would correct the situation, sometimes in what we might think a rather rude manner, none of which he enjoyed doing, and then he often in exasperation would exclaim: "Remember me, O my God, for good."

What then are some lessons that we might take from this record, for we know that these things were written for our admonition, not just for a nice story?

First of all we cannot miss the gravity of the situation the Jews had gotten into before they even seemed to wake up to the seriousness of the situation or the cause of it. Why did they have to go so far down into near ruin, before getting the message? The lesson for us is too clear to be missed! Correct our ways before we get like them.

Another lesson might be that it always seems to take a man, like in this case Nehemiah, to rally a people. If Nehemiah had not done what he did, would any changes have taken place? Why do we seem to wait for someone else to take the lead?

Bro. Gordon Jones

Clad With Zeal As a Cloak (An Exhortation by a young brother)

"His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bone...I could not stay"—Jeremiah 20:9

ONCE again our Heavenly Father has truly blessed us, for this morning He has graciously allowed us to assemble again to study and meditate on His Word, to offer up thanksgiving and sing praise to Him, to hear the word of exhortation and examine ourselves by it and the Word, & then to commemorate the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, thru this bread and this wine.

This is a matter of both joy and commandment for those of us who have passed thru the waters of baptism, and have put on the Name of Christ, and are daily striving to crucify the flesh.

It would be wise for each one of us here to think and meditate on all the *wonderful blessings* God has blessed us with in our lifetimes; and that thru His Word He has assured us that He will *'never leave us nor forsake us'* if we draw close to Him in love and service. These words of promise should truly move us, and make us more strongly determined to obey and trust in Him; for we have the greatest assurance possible: the personal assurance of the Creator of heaven and earth.

Our High Calling in Christ Jesus is our greatest blessing: knowing the true God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob, Who appeared to them thru angelic visitation; and knowing the true Purpose with the earth & man upon it. Perhaps in a few hours, perhaps in a few years, our Lord will return in power and glory, and we will be called away to give account of the stewardship of our goods and time and talents and opportunities. And we shall meet our Lord *face to face!*—the Greatest Man the earth has ever known: the beloved, only-begotten Son of God!

And all the faithful thruout the ages will be there. And all of us here *can* be among that faithful and honored throng, for we all know in our hearts that God calls no man to condemnation, but is anxious to teach us, and guide us, and help us to overcome, if only we submit to Him in all things, and make His will ours.

So let us, by filling our minds with these things, try to develop some *enthusiasm*. Let us ponder some of the things we should be enthusiastic about—

1. We have the Truth.
2. God has called us to His High and Holy Calling.
3. We have become members of His Royal Family.
4. Jesus Christ is now our loving Elder Brother.

We are related to the great Patriarch Abraham, and heirs to the same Eternal Promise God made to him.

Truly NO ONE in all the world is as well off as we are!

Let us take David's enthusiasm as an example to strive toward. Imagine him dancing before the Ark '*with all his might!*'—totally carried away with his love for God, and joy in His service. No wonder he was called 'a man after God's Own heart.' *Are we such?*

How are *we* reacting to the 'good tidings of great joy' that God has revealed to us thru the pages of His glorious Book? Does the Gospel message thrill us, and fill us with holy enthusiasm? Are we *excited* about our high and holy calling? When we wake up each morning, do ²³⁹ we immediately think upon the words, '*Today is the day of salvation!*'

And do we truly believe the Divine assurance that (Heb.11:6)— "*God is a Rewarder of those who diligently seek Him*"?

Just a few more hours, or days, or weeks, or months, or years—and the present will all be over. At the very longest it is but a moment, compared to the glorious eternity the faithful will enter. And just stop Sc think, brethren and sisters, it is closer now, as Paul says, than it ever has been in our lifetimes. Every tick of the clock brings us closer to the longed-for but dread Day of the judgment seat of Christ, and the great issue of Life or Death for the everlasting ages.

"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous! And SHOUT FOR JOY, all ye that are upright in heart!" (Psa.3 2:11).

We should never let any passing problems worry us. Let us take the inspired words of Habakkuk deeply to heart as an example of the spiritual mind that is well-pleasing to God-

"Altho the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

"Yet will I rejoice in the Lord: I will JOY IN THE GOD OF MY SALVATION!" (Hab. 3 :17-18).

Let us keep our hearts and minds on the *important* things—and *God* is by far the most important thing of all.

We do not find many people 'rejoicing in the Lord' nowadays. We *do* find people *complaining* about the stock market, the high cost of sugar, the shortage of gasoline, the sluggishness of business, and the high unemployment. But we do not find them expressing their joy in the God of their salvation.

How about ourselves? Are we so full of the love of God that it shines thru and radiates from us, even when we are sick or out of work? Do we recognize that '*The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away,*' and, in each case, say in patience and faith with Job

"Blessed be the Name of the Lord!...Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 1:21; 2:10).

How do we stand up to the troubles that come our way? Whatever trouble comes to us is allowed by God, for His good and wise purpose, else we would not have it. Do we honestly believe that,

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man. But God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor.10:13).

By studying the lives of the faithful of other ages, we can get an insight into how we should act when we are faced with trials. We know that we are going to be tried, and that it is necessary, for

"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6).

Chastening must draw us closer to God and His Word: that is its primary purpose. It is this Word of God that must *fill* our minds & hearts if we are to love Him, obey Him, and receive from Him the crown of righteousness. There is so much that is wonderful and beautiful in the Word. It can give joy and peace when all else fails us.

To ignore the Bible readings is to ignore God. It won't make much difference what else we do, if we neglect that. They contain God's instructions for putting away natural foolishness, and learning wisdom.

That's the trouble with the world today. Every man is doing that which is right in his own eyes. The world expresses it as 'doing your own thing. *'Our own thing' will be of no value in the day of judgment.*' Solomon tells us that as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. No wonder, therefore, that the world is in such a mess today. It is evident that the world is not thinking right. They do not like to retain God in their thoughts: So their minds are filled with all kinds of wickedness. This is evident from the type of entertainment and literature that is being brazenly offered today. It is embarrassing to even walk past most magazine stands. When people feed their minds garbage, then crime and violence are the natural result. Can a clean thing come out of something unclean? Certainly not.

But we know we cannot solve the problems of the world. In these last days it must get worse and worse. Jesus told us that it was going to get like this: total corruption and violence as in the days of Noah.

But we *can* do something about our *own* situation and characteristics and way of life: if we will only take the time to listen to God, and to talk to God. He seeks our closeness and devotion and attention. We listen to God thru reading our Bible, and we talk to God thru prayer. Combined, these are a mighty power. If we do this as a consistent way of life to the best of our ability, then Jesus when he comes will be pleased to separate us from this evil world, and give us eternal life in his Kingdom. *Truly no one in all the world is as well off as we are!*—R.W.

How Should He Be Dealt With?

"If a brother have this world's goods, and see his brother have need, and assist him not, how should the first-named brother be dealt with?" The obvious answer to this is, that as we cannot properly judge of each other's private affairs, it must be left to each man to decide with himself what he can do, and ought to do in the service of Christ—"not by constraint but willingly." If, in this process of self-assessment, a man cheat Christ, he will have to answer bitterly for it in the day of account. We must leave all such presumed offenders to the Lord at his coming, "*judging nothing before the time.*"—(1 Cor. 4:5). It is only in the case of open and indisputable breaches of the apostolic law that we are allowed to apply the remedy of withdrawal.

Bro. Roberts—1870

Should Believers Eat Blood

The Gentile believers in the days of the apostles were commanded to abstain from blood, in the same sentence that prohibited the eating of "things offered in sacrifice to idols...and things strangled" (Acts 20:29), a prohibition which, as you point out, coincides with the command to Noah, (Gen. 9:4), "Flesh, with the life thereof *which is the blood thereof* shall ye not eat." Those who think the prohibition not binding, argue in this way:—First, that the command of the apostles was resolved upon with a view to avoid offence to the Jews, this being the idea supposed to be hinted at in the reason given by James, for his recommendation (Acts, 15:21); that therefore it was a precept of policy, and not of principle, and suited only to days when the believers were principally a Jewish party operating among the Jews.

Next, it is argued that as Paul, in a letter written subsequently (1 Cor. 8:7–9, 10:27), recognizes the eating of things offered in sacrifice to idols as permissible, with certain limitations as to others who may be "weak," so doubtless would he have recognized the eating of blood. Both arguments are doubtful. The jealousy of the Jews in such matters might lend additional weight to the resolution of the apostles, without involving the conclusion that it constituted the sole reason, and in view of the command of Noah to abstain, it is safer to conclude that respect for divine precept had as much to do with their decision as the other reason.

Then, as to Paul's latitude on the eating of things offered in sacrifice to idols, there is a reason for it in this case which does not exist as to the other. As he says, "*an idol is nothing,*" and the presentation of an animal before it, made the animal no less fit for food than before, and no less suitable to be eaten by a believer, so long as his eating was not an endorsement of the idol worship. The impropriety of eating, in any case, arose from the probability of misconstruction, and not from divine interdiction. Idol worship was *a human invention*, and in so far as the use of flesh that had been employed in connection with the invention might be misunderstood as sympathy with it, it was expedient to abstain as from all other "*appearance of evil.*" But the case of eating blood stands in a different position.

The prohibition in the case is in harmony with a prior *divine command* to abstain. While Paul could recognise liberty in relation to a superstition, it does not follow that he would recognise it in relation to a divine prohibition. It is safer to assume otherwise, and to obey the apostolic command to "*abstain from blood and things strangled.*" No great deprivation is endured, though if there was, it would make no difference. On the other hand, we are quite sure that in such a course there is no wrong, and it is best to be on the safe side. "*He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*"—(Rom. 14:23.) Bro. Roberts—1871

The Policy Of The Christadelphian

We are prepared to explain such passages of scripture as you suppose to be in favour of the Calvinistic doctrine of election; but must decline entering into controversy in the sense of admitting articles in advocacy of that doctrine. The odium of unfairness popularly associated with this line of action, we must endure. Such a charge has no foundation in truth. In a public newspaper which is common ground, or a meeting called for public deliberation, both sides of a question are equally entitled to exhibition, and the men in charge would be guilty of unfairness in giving one more prominence than another: but the case is different with *The Christadelphian*. It is not a public vehicle. It does not invite the public to discuss what truth is. It represents the truth as a foregone conclusion, and is dedicated to its advancement.

It is as if a man asked the public to hear an exposition, or invited those espousing the same principles to meet and deliberate upon the best mode of promoting their advancement, in which case an opponent would clearly be out of place in seeking to be heard, and could make no just complaint at the opportunity being denied him. This may be regarded as a narrowminded policy, but it is a policy that private individuals are at liberty to adopt without justly incurring the charge of unfairness. It is the policy of *The Christadelphian* in relation to the truth, and a policy that will be carried out to the end as long as it is under its present management—the dissent of friend or foe to the contrary notwithstanding. No one is compelled to listen. Therefore no injustice is done. It is a matter of taste or choice. Bro. Roberts—1871

Breaking Bread Alone

There is no reason why a brother or sister, having none to assemble with of "like precious faith," should not break bread every first day of the week alone. The object of the act is to bring to remembrance the sufferings and coming revelation of our Lord Jesus, and which is just as important to one as to many that these events should be brought to mind. We all—whether in solitude or in the company of fellow-believers—ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we let them slip, and doubtless the weekly breaking of bread is a great help.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1870

Fellowship In The Truth

IN a private communication to a friend in the North, who had put some questions, Dr. Thomas writes on this subject, as follows:

The Lord Jesus said: "*I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me, that they may be one, being sanctified through the truth; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us, as we are one, made perfect in One.*"—(John 17.) This unity of spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3), is what John styles *our fellowship*, the fellowship of the apostles, resulting from sanctification through the truth. Hence all who are sanctified through the truth, are sanctified by the second Will, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once. For by one offering he hath perfected for a continuance them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:10, 14), which one offering of the body was the annulling and condemnation of sin, by the sacrifice thereof.—(Heb. 9:26.) This body, which descended from David "*according to the flesh,*" was the sacrificial victim offered by the Eternal Spirit.—(Heb. 9:14.) if David's flesh were immaculate, this victim, descended from him, might possibly be spotless; but in that event, it would not have answered for the annulling and condemnation of sin in the flesh that sinned.—(Rom. 8:4.) If it were an immaculate body that was crucified, it could not have borne our sins in it, while hanging on the tree.—(1 Peter 2:24) To affirm, therefore, that it was immaculate (as do all papists and sectarian daughters of the Roman Mother), is to render of none effect the truth which is only sanctifying for us by virtue of the principle that Jesus Christ came IN THE FLESH, in that sort of flesh with which Paul

was afflicted when he exclaimed “*O, wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?*”—(Rom. 7:11, 24.)

It is not my province to issue bulls of excommunication, but simply to shew what the truth teaches and commands. I have to do with principles, not men. If anyone say that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh common to us all, the apostle John saith that that spirit or teacher is not of God; is the deceiver and the anti-Christ, and abides not in the doctrine of Christ; and is therefore not to be received into the house, neither to be bidden God-speed.—(1 John 4:3, 2; 2 Ep. 7, 9, 10.) I have nothing to add to or take from this. It is the sanctifying truth of the things concerning the “*name of Jesus Christ.*” All whom the apostles fellowshipped, believed it; and all in the apostolic ecclesias who believed it not—and there were such—had not fellowship with the apostles, but opposed their teachings; and when they found they could not have their own way, John says “*They went out from us, but they—the anti-Christ—were not of us; for if they had been of us (of our fellowship), they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*”—(1 John 2:19.) The apostles did not cast them out, but they went out of their own accord, not being able to endure sound doctrine.—(2 Tim. 4:3.)

Then preach the Word, &c., and exhort with all long-suffering and teaching. This is the purifying agency. Ignore brother this and brother that in said teaching; for personalities do not help the argument. Declare what you as a body believe to be the apostles’ doctrines. Invite fellowship upon that basis alone. If upon that declaration, any take the bread and wine, not being offered by you, they do so upon their own responsibility, not on yours. If they help themselves to the elements, they endorse your declaration of doctrine, and eat condemnation to themselves. For myself, I am not in fellowship with the dogma that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh, or that he died as a substitute to appease the fury and wrath of God. The love of God is manifest in all that He has done for man. “When all wish to do what is right,” the right surely is within their grasp. I trust you will be able to see it from what is now before you. And may the truth preside over all your deliberations, for Christ Jesus is the truth, and dwells with those with whom the truth is. Where this is I desire to be.

If I believe the truth as it is in the Jesus Paul preached, and fellowship the doctrine of an immaculate Jesus Paul did not preach, in celebrating the death of the latter with those who repudiate the maculate body set forth by God for a propitiation, is affirming one thing and practising another. Those who hold Paul’s doctrine, ought not to worship with a body that does not. This is holding with the hare and running with the hounds—a position of extraordinary difficulty. Does not such an one love the hounds better than the hare? When the hounds come upon the hare, where will he be? No; if I agree with you in doctrine, I will forsake the assembling of myself with a body that opposes your doctrine, although it might require me to separate from the nearest and dearest. No good is effected by compromising the principles of the truth; and to deny that Jesus came in sinful flesh, is to destroy the sacrifice of Christ.

Bro. John Thomas—1870

Ecclesial Discipline

When a brother or sister falls into open sin (“known and read of all men”), an ecclesia is bound in an open manner to signify its reprobation of the offence, to prevent the taunt arising among “those without” that iniquity is fellow-shipped with impunity. The enemy is too ready to make use of such a misfortune for malicious purposes. “We are not ignorant of his devices.”—(2 Cor. 2:11.) The “very appearance of evil” must be avoided.

An evil report obstructs the cause of the truth. Paul evinces the utmost sensitiveness on this point in all his epistles, and it will be shared by every man of honour and good sense. What course should be pursued in the matter? If the brother or sister offending is callous and indifferent on the subject, there is only one course, and that is, the public repudiation of their company. If they are sincerely repentant, the duty of the ecclesia is to receive them and help them, but at the same time, to vindicate the ecclesia’s regard for righteousness, and the sullied honour of Christ, by subjecting their action to some open mark of disavowal. This is best done by asking them to refrain for a time from the breaking of bread, while not absenting themselves from the meetings. In this, there is an exhibition of humble submission on the part of the offender which is a guarantee of the genuineness of his sorrow; and on the part of the ecclesia, an effective washing of their hands of all complicity with his transgression. This is the only remedy in our hands at the present time. It has nothing to do with judicial action.

The friends of Christ are not allowed, in the present state, to employ coercive measures, in any form. The execution of the judgment written is a prerogative in reserve for such only as come through the present probation, with divine approval. Meanwhile, we are allowed to use the defensive weapon of non-association where there is non-compliance with the precepts of Christ. “Excommunication” is an ordinance of the apostasy; ecclesial withdrawal is of apostolic prescription.

Bro. Roberts—1870

Analecta Apocalypticæ (16)

To the Victor Will I Give to Eat of the Hidden Manna

The Spirit says, "to the victor, to him will I give to eat from the Manna which has been concealed; and I will give to him a white pebble, and upon the pebble a new name that has been engraved, which no one knows but he that receiveth." The manna, the pebble, and the new name, are here added to the wood of life in Paradise. They are symbols of blessings; or blessings disguised in symbols. Let us, then, examine them, and see what honey they contain. And first, of the hidden manna:

Manna in the Wilderness

"The Manna which hath been concealed" is a form of speech to be understood by comprehending the signification, first, of "the Manna;" and secondly, of its concealment; the latter of which will be found intimately connected with the gift of it to him that overcomes.

When the Twelve Tribes had arrived in the Wilderness of Sin, they murmured against Yahweh, because they apprehended that they would perish there from hunger; as if, had that been his intention, he would not have left them to die in Egypt. But the Spirit had heard their murmurings, which showed their want of confidence in his promises; for he had promised to plant them in the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey: but they let go this hope in saying to Moses and Aaron, "Would to God we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

These murmurings being heard, Yahweh said to them through Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." Having made this promise, before it was fulfilled "the Glory of Yahweh appeared in a cloud," as they looked toward the wilderness; and the whole congregation saw it. And the Spirit said, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread;" and ye shall know that I, Yahweh, am your Elohim." And it was so.

But when the morning came they at first saw only "the Dew," sparkling in the light of day. But "when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness a small round thing small as the hoar frost upon the ground." The people had seen nothing of the kind before deposited by the evaporation of the dew; therefore they inquired of one another, (!Hebrew!) *Mahn hu*, "What was it? For they knew not what it was." And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which Yahweh hath given you to eat."

And at this point of the narrative it may be worthy of note and emphasis.

1. That Israel saw the glory of the Eternal before they received either flesh or bread;
2. That they received flesh first, that is, "at even;"
3. That they received bread the succeeding morning; so that there was an intervening night:
4. That they beheld the glory, and received the food in the wilderness, and forty years before they received the promised land.

Manna: A Type

Now, as we are taught in the New Testament, the signification of the things that happened to Israel in the wilderness was not confined to that generation. Their baptism into Moses, their eating of the Manna, their drinking of the Rock, their overthrow in the wilderness, the apostle Paul says, "were types of us." Read what he says in 1 Cor. 10:1-10. After this enumeration, he adds in the eleventh verse, "Now all these things happened unto them for types !greek!; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the Aions (the Mosaic Aions) are come."

The Flesh and the Manna then, according to Paul, were "spiritual meat." In regard to the manna, it is styled in Psa. 78:24, "the corn of the heavens," "the bread of mighty ones" — "man did eat the bread of mighty ones." This and the flesh, by which the life of Israel was sustained, was "spiritual meat;" it was, nevertheless, material and corruptible flesh and bread; for under certain conditions, it stank and bred worms. But it was "spiritual" in the sense of representing something else than its own material constituents; in other words, the flesh and the bread were types of something that was afterwards to descend from the heavens, and to become the life-sustaining principle of all that should receive it. What was that something?

This question has been answered by Jesus in John 6. The Jews had said, "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread out of the heaven to eat." But in reply to this, Jesus said "Moses gave you not the bread out of the heaven; but my Father giveth to you the true bread out of the heaven. For the bread of the Deity is He, who descendeth

out of the heaven, and giveth life to the kosmos." This was as much as to say, that the manna was representative of a life-imparting agent from heaven; even the Logos speaking by Jesus. "In him," the Logos, "was life," says John; "and the life was the light of men." The Logos, or Spirit of Deity, was the manna, or true bread. It was this Logos who said, I am the Way and the Truth and the Resurrection, and the Life;" I am the Bread of Life," or the Manna; "I came down from heaven;" "this is the bread which descendeth from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die ... if any man eat of this bread he shall live in the Aion: and the bread that I, the Logos, will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the kosmos."

Thus spake the Logos, who was in the beginning the Deity. He promised to give "His Flesh" for the sustenance of the kosmos. This flesh was the Son of Mary and David, named Jesus; and the Logos appointed that Jesus should be eaten, and his blood drunk, in the even, by all who would become the subjects of resurrection to the life of the Aion. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." This saying is fatal to the heathen dogma of an immortal soul in Sin's flesh; for they only eat the flesh and drink the blood of Jesus, who "discern the Son and believe into him;" and this can be affirmed only of an almost Noachic few in this evil generation. He that believes the written testimony of the Logos concerning Jesus, set forth in the prophets and apostles, and becomes the subject of repentance and remission of sins in his name, eats his flesh and drinks his blood, and "hath aion-life" in the sense of Apoc. 22:14 — "blessed they doing God's commandments, that they may have the right to the Wood of the Life:" "and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54). Thus, "he that eateth me, even he shall live by me," and none else.

The Apocalyptic Manna

The Christ, then, or the Logos become flesh, is the "spiritual meat" represented by the flesh and manna in the wilderness. Hence, the apocalyptic Manna is representative of the last Adam, whom Paul styles "a life-imparting spirit;" and to eat from this manna, is to be the subject of incorruptibility of body and life, which together constitute "immortality," in the thousand years' Aion; which deathlessness is imparted by the Spirit which raised up Jesus from among the dead.

We may here recall the attention of the reader to the four points already before him. These were typical conditions, the antitypes of which may be thus stated in a corresponding order:

1. It was typically necessary that Israel see the Glory of Yahweh before they eat heaven's flesh at even, and eat from the Manna in the morning;
2. That they eat the flesh first;
3. That they eat the bread afterwards;
4. That they eat both before they obtain Aion-possession of the land promised to Abraham and his Seed.

Under the first head I remark that Jesus Anointed was the Glory of Yahweh. This is proved by John's testimony, that "the Logos became flesh, and dwelt among us (Israelites), and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace: for the law was given through Moses, the grace and the truth (represented by that law) came through Jesus Anointed." This Glory of the Father was seen by "Judah and his companions" in the evening of the Mosaic Aion; and he was seen in the wilderness, as Isaiah had predicted, saying, "The Voice of him that proclaimeth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Yahweh, make straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim ... and the Glory of Yahweh shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together" (Isa. 40:3,5). This was partially fulfilled in the evening of the Mosaic Aion, as related in regard to John the Baptizer. He was that voice; the Spirit descending in the form of a Dove was Yahweh, or the Logos; and Jesus, the Eloah of Israel, who, when anointed, became, as the voice of John proclaimed, "our Elohim," or the Logos, the Eloah from heaven, become flesh in Jesus, the other Eloah of the house of David. These two Elohim dwelt among the Jews, as "the Only Begotten of the Father" — Son of Power and Son of Man — who hath declared the Invisible Deity to men.

But "all flesh" have not yet "seen together." Judah and his companions have seen; but Israel and his companion-tribes have not. Multitudes of the former have eaten the flesh, and drunk the blood, of the Son of Man; and are now sleeping out the intervening night, that in the morning they may come forth as dew, and when it hath gone up, they may be as manna upon the ground. But the Ten Tribes did not see the Glory of Yahweh in the days of John. It is, however, typically necessary that they do see it in the wilderness before the morning, that they also may eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Logos, before they eat of the manna hidden in the dew, preparatory to their admission into the covenanted land. The whole congregation of Israel must see the glory together; and, as Jeremiah saith, "thy words were found, and I did eat them;" so Israel has to come to the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus," inwardly to digest it, and to feed upon it in the wilderness-probation that awaits them in the matter of their restoration.

In the morning, they who have seen the glory, and eaten the flesh "at even," or believed the gospel of the kingdom and name of Jesus Anointed, will behold "the Dew" before "it is gone up." The bread to be eaten was concealed in the dew, and

did not appear until the fluid matter in which it was suspended was evaporated by the action of the sun. Now, the manna in dew suspension is apocalyptically styled "the manna that hath been concealed." The manna concealed in dew is a type of the resurrection of the first-fruits of the Spirit. When they that now dwell in the dust awake and sing, they are at their awaking the Spirit's Dew; which the prophet saith is as "the Dew of herbs" (Isa. 26: 19). They remain in this Dew-state until the Sun of Righteousness acts upon them, and transforms them into Manna; that is, makes them corporeally like himself—transforms the body that comes out of the grave into a like form to that with which he descends from heaven (Phil. 3:20). To be the subject of this transformation by the Spirit is "to eat of the manna which has been concealed."

But the concealment of the manna has also especial reference to Jesus who is himself the type of his companions. In the historical type, the manna appears in two forms — first, as susceptible of corruption; and secondly, as incorruptible. "If left until the morning it bred worms and stank." Ordinarily it would not keep from morning to morning; but in the manna gathered upon Friday this tendency was restrained, and it remained perfectly good; and "did not stink, neither was there any worm therein." Now Jesus, as we have seen, being the Logos become flesh, was both evening quail and morning bread. He was gathered by the nation on Friday, or the sixth day, when they crucified him. They gathered him in the morning, but they did not leave him on the cross till the following morning; still, they kept him laid up in the sepulchre on Saturday; nevertheless, he did not stink, neither was there any worm in his body. The Spirit "would not permit His Holy One to see corruption;" for the tendency natural to the flesh was restrained.

Israel gathered a double portion on Friday; so that when they went out on Saturday to look for it, "they did not find it in the field," as Moses said: so when they gathered the bread of heaven, and laid him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, those who might go out to look, could find the Son of Man no longer sowing the words of eternal life in the field.

But some of the manna was incorruptible for a longer period than the sixth and seventh days. It was made to last for generations. Moses was commanded to put an omer, or tenth part of an ephah of manna into a pot, and to lay it up before the Testimony, to be kept. Every day this was preserved (and it was kept for centuries), evinced the presence of the Spirit in the Most Holy; for ordinarily it would not keep. It was deposited in the chest, called the Ark of the Testimony, which was overlaid with gold; whose lid was termed the Caphporeth, propitiatory, or Mercy Seat; and upon which the Cherubim were based. This Ark of the Covenant contained the Tables of the Law, the pot of Manna, and Aaron's Rod which budded; things all representative of the Logos in his incarnate manifestation.

Now as Aaron laid up an omer full in a pot, and concealed it from view within the Ark of the Testimony there to remain for centuries; so the Eternal Spirit concealed in Jesus, the antitypical Ark of His Testimony, that deposit of Manna, from which it shall be given to those who overcome to eat. We feed upon this manna from day to day in feeding upon the truth. But what we eat today will not suffice for the morrow. We must keep it in memory. But though we thus feed, and rejoice in "the right to life," yet it is life-manna concealed; for "we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory (Col. 3:3, 4).

The night, then, of the Life-manna's concealment in the Spirit's Ark, is far spent; and the morning of its manifestation at hand. Jesus Anointed, who is the Glory of the Eternal, has been "hid in God" concealed from human kine "at the right hand of Power," for many generations and centuries. Though once like the daily manna, corruptible; during that long period he has been, and will ever continue to be, like the Manna in the Ark, incorruptible. We look for his appearing, that we who are dead, who are corruptible and mortal, and also by nature "dead in sins;" but pardoned, and therefore dead to the world, and buried with Christ in baptism, and risen with him out of its waters in hope of being planted in the likeness of his resurrection—we wait for his coming, that the spirit may be in us as in him; and that being made like him, we may eat of the manna that hath been so long concealed.

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