

# 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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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.

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

## **Ecclesial Correspondence**

My Dearly beloved brethren and sisters in Christ,

One could never even contemplate a method of repayment for the efforts that have been extended in support of Bro. Joshua. The Brotherhood heard of one of its own in need, and responded with an effort that I am sure our Master is proud of, "*if ye have done it unto the least of one of these my brethren ye have done it unto me*" the cards, the letters, the visits, the encouragement, the love, the phone calls, the efforts and expense to have him be able to sit in

classes on a Friday evening for the past two and a half years, and never once a complaint from anyone involved, only a willingness to extend a loving hand in any way that they possibly could.

When tragedy strikes, or so we assume it to be, we as human beings venture down a path of grumbling and self pity, now some five years and six months later from its inception, we see our heavenly fathers guiding, and loving hand so aptly displayed, in one of my last coherent conversations with his Mom before her death, she looked me in the eye and said you take care of my babies, and you make sure they know the truth. Possibly one may have had some idea of heading in another direction, but the Almighty's hand turned things around so that the prayer of one, who is not even now able to witness it's results, will be fulfilled through what we thought at its infant stages was a tragedy, how blind and shortsighted we can be when in the throes of despair.

Well my son is home, and your brother has been delivered from a situation that I am sure he never wishes to return. Although the lesson is great for which we are extremely thankful, and the refinement process, though painful at times, always will yield a better servant in Christ for whatever the future holds. Once again the entire Berean Community has earned the right to hold its head up high and take comfort knowing that at least I think you all performed above and beyond the call of duty in supporting one who needed your help, when our Lord and Master returns with the ability to extend righteous judgment, may we all be found recipients of his mercy and forgiveness, and be blessed with life everlasting.

With Love in the One Hope,

Bro. Paul Garvey

## **FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES**

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

**HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Mar 7-9, 2008**  
Bro. Stephen Male, 8 Gwaun Henllan, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, SA18 2FD, West Wales, UK.  
Telephone +44 1269 591924

**NORTH CAROLINA-VIRGINIA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 24-25, 2008**  
Bro. Dale Lee, (757) 620-6639, dleecpa@cox.net

**LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 6-8, 2008**  
Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

**HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 21-27, 2008**  
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868  
**Study Class Topic: Hebrews 1-13; Bible Readings**

**CANTON ECCLESIAL PICNIC..... Aug 23-24, 2008** Bro. Don Miller, 6695  
Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

**CANTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Oct 11-12, 2008** Bro. Don Miller, 6695  
Carriage Lane, North Canton, OH 44721 1-330-494-7717

**GOLDTHWAITE STUDY WEEKEND..... Nov 28-30, 2008**  
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

## Fellowship With the Father

*“God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth”—1 John 1:5-6*

THE subject of fellowship is a very deep and beautiful one—far deeper than we are apt to realize.

In its fullness it is PERFECT ONENESS, as expressed by Jesus in prayer to the Father (John 17:21-23)—

*“That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us.*

*“The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.*

*“I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”*

***“The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one.”***

Let us try to elevate our minds to a full realization of the greatness—the infinite immensity and glory—of the fellowship of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

Glory is light, brightness, splendor, beauty, honor, praise.

Paul describes the Gospel as the *“Gospel of the Glory of the blessed God”* (1 Tim. 1:11), and he says that, steadfastly beholding Christ, we are transformed into his image, *“from glory to glory.”*

This is the essence of fellowship—a oneness of glory and beauty.

\* \* \*

THE word for Fellowship—*koinonia*—occurs in its different forms about 50 times, and a study and comparison of these 50 scriptures reveals a picture of marvellous spiritual depth and beauty—the divine ideal of the intimate oneness in all things of true ecclesial fellowship.

The word for fellowship means a “having or being in common.” In its scriptural use it portrays a perfect oneness of heart, mind, desire, interest, effort, faith, hope, sorrow, joy, and worldly possession.

John lays the clearest foundation of the subject in the first chapter of his first epistle. He says, beginning at verse 3—

*“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us . .*

*—the first element of fellowship is the knowledge and belief of certain divine things—*

*“ . . and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”*

—God and Christ are the eternal and immovable Rock-foundation of all true fellowship. They set its pattern of perfection and beauty, and give it all its purpose, meaning and life. John continues (v. 4)—

*“These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”*

We must fully realize the great and basic fact that all the commands of God are for the purpose of joy and blessing and well-being. We are being invited, in the goodness of God, to the treasures of glory and joy forevermore. It gives God pleasure to create joy.

We are being invited to ascend out of our natural condition of evil and darkness and sorrow and death, up to eternal light and joy and divine fellowship.

It is absolutely essential that we clear our minds completely of any childish notion that the commands of God are harsh, restrictive, or burdensome. They are the pure expression of infinite divine love and wisdom, to be lovingly conformed to in thanksgiving.

It is the height of folly to yield to them but grudgingly and half-heartedly, fearfully fighting the glorious depths of their full implications. **Fully** yielded to, **eagerly** sought after, they lead to the infinite joy of the unity and fellowship of the divine mind.

All that stands between us and the glorious satisfaction of the divine fellowship is our pitiful, deluded clinging to the empty and rotting husks of the perishing present. Verse 5—

*“This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is NO DARKNESS AT ALL.”*

God is all Light, all Goodness, all Beauty, all Spiritual-mindedness. In Him is no darkness—nothing evil, small, petty, mean, ugly, foolish, childish.

What is John's point? He comes to it in v. 6—

*“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth.”*

If we want God, if goodness and love and joy and light appeal to us, if we want to escape from the great evil enemy, Death, who is remorselessly approaching closer to us with every swift-passing day of our lives, then we must cast all else aside without a backward glance.

If we cling to ANY of the things of darkness, the things of the flesh, the things of the world, there is no fellowship with God, no hope, no future, no divine joy.

This is fundamental. It is basic. It is the Great Divide between life and death.

\* \* \*

JOHN continues (v. 7)—

*“But, IF we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”*

This last point is a vital aspect. In vs. 8-10 he speaks of the great paradox of sin and perfection. Divine fellowship can only be on the basis of perfection. Perfection is humanly impossible.

But if we walk in the Light, honestly and sincerely straining every effort to avoid sin, to put away sin, then—**and then alone**—the blood of Jesus Christ His Son mercifully cleanses us and covers us with his perfection and we have life-giving fellowship with God.

There is no halfway. God's holiness demands perfection in what He fellowships, and He provides that perfection only on the basis of our straining eagerly toward His holiness.

If we know a thing is wrong (be it large or small) and do not make a sincere, prayerful, agonizing, persevering effort to put it from us—never relaxing our effort until we succeed—then we are stupidly deceiving and destroying ourselves—

*“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him” (1 John 2:4).*

**Hard, but necessary, words, for the issue is life or death.**

\* \* \*

*“IF we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another.”*

Fellowship one with another springs from fellowship with God. Fellowship one with another is the greatest, deepest, most searching and most revolutionary thing in our lives.

**The fellowship of the Sons of God is a thousand-fold more intimate than the extremist concept of communism It is perfect oneness in everything, even as God and Christ are one.**

\* \* \*

WE would like to follow the thread traced by the use of the word Fellowship—*koinonia*—through the New Testament Scriptures. It occurs 50 times, although this fact, and its deep significance, is obscured by a variety of translations and shallow renderings. It appears as: distribution, partaking, communication, partnership, contribution, communion and companion, as well as fellowship.

It is from the root meaning “common.” It is just an ordinary word, but the Scriptures have given it tremendous depth and beauty by choosing it as the word to express the relationship between God and His children, and between the children themselves in their union in and through Christ.

It first occurs twice in the Gospels in a general sense; but thereafter, beginning at Acts 2:42—the key introductory verse in the new dispensation in Christ's shed blood—its 48 (4x12) remaining occurrences have a restricted, spiritual sense. A few are negative warnings against false fellowship, but the great majority are positive, glorious, and heart-searching.

\* \* \*

THE first is Acts 2:42—

*“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

Here, at the very beginning of the infant ecclesia, on the day of Pentecost, there is laid the 4-square foundation of doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer. This is no accident.

But is not the breaking of bread the same as the fellowship? Not at all. Truly, they are related, just as all four are related. None can break bread who are not in the fellowship, and all in the fellowship must break bread. This is equally true of the doctrine and the prayer.

Breaking bread is a united act of obedience and remembrance. Fellowship is the all-embracing way of life and mutual relationship of the brethren. Fellowship is the form of their organization and oneness. It comprehends infinitely more than an eating bread and drinking wine together. It is all-pervading. It is the framework of their life. It is their ceasing to live as an individual—their complete dying unto themselves, and a living henceforth as an intimate, integral, inseparable member of the Body of Christ. This begins to come out two verses later (44)—

*“And all that believed were together, and had all things common.”*

“Common” here is from exactly the same basic word—fellowship—they had **all things in fellowship**.

Again, this is not an accident. Nor is it a passing incident. It is an essential, basic principle—

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

*“If ye have not been faithful in that which is another's—the unrighteous mammon—present possession—who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* (Luke 16:11-12).

*“None of us liveth to himself”* (Rom. 14:7).

*“He died for all, that they which live should **not henceforth live unto themselves**”* (2 Cor. 5:15).

The next appearance of the word gives us the same picture (Acts 4:32)—

*“The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own: but they had all things in **common.**”*

Again the same word: **all things in fellowship.**

We begin to get a picture of what fellowship really means—"one heart, one soul, ALL THINGS IN FELLOWSHIP."

This is the basic principle of fellowship. The means and method of its manifestation must vary with circumstances.

With inspired apostles, filled with the Spirit, able to detect and destroy the Ananias' and Sapphiras, certain methods would be wise and beneficial which would not be wise today.

Even then, there was no compulsion. It was all spontaneous freewill, as the words of Peter to Ananias make clear. Everything must be pure, joyful enlightened freewill. Consider well the vital, repeated emphasis on the "willing heart" in Exo. 35, where God seeks material for His Tabernacle.

But the basic principle is as individually binding today as then—

*"Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own."*

**All is God's. All is a trust, a stewardship, an administration of divine property for divine purposes, of which a strict accounting will be required at the last day. May we meet that day with approval and not shame!**

\* \* \*

*"Fellowshipping the necessity of saints...given to hospitality. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"—Rom. 12:13-15*

The next occurrence (Rom. 11:17) is a deep and beautiful figure hidden under the shallow translation, "partake"—

*"Thou (Gentile) partakest of—fellowshippest—the root and fatness of the (Israel) olive-tree."*

The next occurrence is equally beautiful (Rom. 12:13)—

*"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality."*

"Distributing" here is the same word; "Fellowshipping" the necessity of saints.

We may get the impression from the references so far that the principal aspect of fellowship is the sharing of material possessions, but this would not be correct. The picture will balance out as we proceed.

But God knows the hearts. He knows what is necessary to emphasize. Truly, fellowship is an infinitely deeper thing than mere material sharing, but this is one of its most practical and searching tests.

If we are not willing to lay down our lives for the brethren, then WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND FELLOWSHIP. We are yet carnal, and walk as men.

Furthermore, "Fellowshipping the necessity (or need) of saints" means much more than their material needs.

The word translated "necessity" occurs 49 times, and the great majority of occurrences refer to much deeper needs than material things. A few examples will show this—

Eph. 4:29: *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying"—literally: "that which is good to the edifying of need."*

So all our words must minister to spiritual need. Again—

Phil. 4:19: *"My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."*

Heb. 5:12: *“Ye have need of milk.”*

Heb. 10:36: *“Ye have need of patience.”*

We must bear in mind that fellowshiping is never just a giving, but a **sharing**. There is its beauty. Cold charity can give, but it takes warm love to stoop down and share.

“Fellowshipping the needs of saints”—joining in them and taking them upon you.

Paul speaks frequently, as we hope to point out as we go along, of “fellowshipping the sufferings of Christ and the brethren.” There must be a oneness. “Fellowshipping the needs of the saints” must be done in a way and in a spirit that draws both closer to each other and to God, or it is not fellowship at all.

\* \* \*

THE next two occurrences are Rom. 15:26 and 27—

*“It hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution (fellowship) for the poor saints at Jerusalem.”*

*“If the Gentiles have been made partakers (fellowshippers) of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.”*

We note how a confused translation misses the depth and obscures the beautiful thread of revelation.

We would do well to go through our Bibles and mark each of the 50 occurrences of this word in the margin.

Paul is not merely interested in collecting money for the poor saints. His use of this word “fellowship” shows that his concern is spiritual oneness through mutual sharing of the blessings of God—blessings given for the divine purpose of BEING SHARED

\* \* \*

NEXT is 1 Cor. 1:9—

*“God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

And the next verse (10) defines that fellowship—

*“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*

How? Just by willing, or declaring, it to be so? Truly, a desire for unity of mind is essential, but it requires more than that. There must be A COMMON DIVINE STANDARD LOVINGLY ACCEPTED BY ALL, a seeking to know more and more of the mind of God, a striving for a closer and closer obedience, a getting deeper and deeper in the Truth.

Only in this way can brethren get closer to each other—by mutually getting closer to the perfection and wisdom of God.

\* \* \*

THE next 4 occurrences are in 1 Cor. 10, verses 16, 18, 20. He is speaking of idolatry and partaking of meat offered to idols, but his great underlying point is the oneness of fellowship, and its reaching the apex of its significance in the breaking of bread and drinking wine together in memory of Christ, whose perfect obedience and sacrifice destroyed all disunity and made us one in perfectness—

*“The cup of blessing . . . is it not the communion (fellowship) of the blood of Christ?”*

*“The bread we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ?”*

*“For we being many are one Bread, one Body.”*

He says in v. 18 that Israel fellowshiped together through the Mosaic altar of sacrifice: in v. 20 that the Gentiles fellowshiped together through partaking of the meat offered to idols. The same word “fellowship” is used in each case.

The meat itself as such was nothing, but the implications of eating it were everything (v. 23)—

*“All things are lawful, but all are not expedient.”*

—not wise—not edifying—not contributing to the deep harmony, of fellowship, which is all-important.

Here is another vital aspect of fellowship—another serious and searching divine principle—**Anything, though quite harmless and lawful in itself, that mars, hinders or detracts from the perfect unity of true fellowship, is evil and forbidden—**

*“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit—my own selfish pleasure, satisfaction, desires, comforts—but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:33).*

Therefore, beloved brethren and sisters, as James exhorts—

*“Let us so walk in relation to the welfare of one another, as they that shall be judged by the law of perfectness.”*

\* \* \*

ANOTHER strange and beautiful aspect of fellowship appears in the next occurrence (2 Cor. 1:7)—

*“Our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers—fellowshippers—of the sufferings, so also of the consolation.”*

The great object to be accomplished is the deepening and purifying and enriching of our fellowship together, and with the Father and Son.

**Whatever contributes to this is good**, though it may be grievous to be borne. Paul says in v. 6 that his affliction was for their consolation and salvation, and he explains this as the “fellowship of suffering.”

Seeing the glory to be thereby accomplished, he said (Rom. 5:3) he rejoiced in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, because the love of God is spread abroad in our hearts—not only Paul’s own patience, but the patience of all, through the deep sympathy and oneness of true fellowship.

\* \* \*

THE next occurrence is a very serious one (2 Cor. 6:14)—

*“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion—fellowship—hath light with darkness?”*

*“Wherefore come out, be separate, touch not the unclean, and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”*

HOW MORE PLAINLY AND STRONGLY COULD GOD TELL US THAN THIS? What could we possibly add to make it any clearer or more impressive?

Do we care anything about God at all, or is our whole profession a hypocritical mockery of His love and fellowship?

**“Come out! Be separate! Touch not! Be not unequally yoked!”**

\* \* \*

THE next occurrence is remarkable for its vivid expression of the true spirit of fellowship, the intense desire to minister. It must be freewill, from the heart.

Commands cannot make us holy: commands cannot create fellowship. They merely guide us how to channel our efforts and labors in beneficial and God-pleasing directions.

**The POWER and MOTIVE must be freewill love and from the heart.** 2 Cor. 8:1-7—

*“Brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia . . .”*

(When we speak, as Paul speaks here, of eager, freewill offering, let us never lose sight of the fact that all good is of God, all our goodness is of the marvellous grace of God upon us. Let us never for a moment be self-confident or self-satisfied, but fearfully and humbly pray to be guided by the grace of God.) Paul continues—

*“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.*

*“For to their power, I bear record, yea, and **beyond** their power, they gave of their own accord.*

*“Praying us with much entreaty that we would receive the gift . . .”*

There is nothing about “receiving the gift” in the original. Other versions express it better—

*“Beseeching us with much entreaty for the grace of fellowshiping in this ministry to the saints.”*

Though very poor, they begged for the divine privilege of deepening their own poverty in order to alleviate the deeper poverty of their brethren in Judea.

**That is true fellowship, with the Father and with the Son. HOW MUCH DO WE KNOW ABOUT IT?**

How could Paul accept it under such circumstances? But even much more so, how could he refuse this grace of the fellowship of suffering with their brethren which they so longingly desired?

\* \* \*

IN Gal. 2:9 we have the expression, “*the right hand of fellowship*,” extended by the apostles at Jerusalem to Paul and Barnabas.

The hand in Scripture is a symbol of power and control. To take by the hand is to show favor, to guide, to help, to protect. The right hand represents approval, acceptance, honor, blessing and intimacy.

Jesus, the well-beloved Son, is the Man of God's right hand, the Man made strong.

So the right hand of fellowship is a fitting symbol of the united strength and intimacy of our fellowship in Christ Jesus.

\* \* \*

IN Gal. 6:2 we read—

*“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

This is the basic spirit of fellowship. In v. 6 we read—

*“Let him that is taught in the Word communicate unto—fellowship—him that teacheth in all good things.”*

Goodspeed translates this very bluntly and strikingly—

*“Those who are taught the message must share all their goods with their teacher.”*

This seems to be roughly the sense, but it gives too shallow a picture.

It is another statement of the basic principle of fellowship—as we are introduced into the Body, we give up all personal exclusiveness, and all our powers and possessions are for the common good.

We can see the power by which the Truth first triumphantly spread through the Roman Empire, before its “first love”—divine, self-sacrificing zeal—burned out.

Each new believer dedicated himself and all that he had to the welfare of the Brotherhood and the furtherance of the Gospel. What marvels could be accomplished in and by any community wherein this devoted flame could be generally kindled!

Herein the children of this world are often wiser in their generation than the children of Light, for we see such organizations as the Jehovah's Witnesses rapidly building their power and influence by such a dedicated zeal, though a zeal without knowledge.

\* \* \*

IN Eph. 5:11, Paul commands—

*“Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.”*

God is Light and Truth. All error is Darkness.

\* \* \*

*“That I may win Christ, and be found in him...that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings”*—Phil. 3:8-10

PAUL was very close to the brethren and sisters at Philippi. 'Fellowship' is the theme of his epistle to them. Six times the word occurs. Phil. 1:3-5—

*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now.”*

Verse 7—

*“I have you in my heart, inasmuch as in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers—fellowshippers—of my grace”*

Paul had a strong and vivid sense of their everpresent spiritual fellowship, both of his sufferings, and in his work for the Truth. They shared the joy and the understanding of the infinite grace of God manifested through the instrumentality of Paul. This is fellowship.

\* \* \*

IN Phil. 2:1-5, there is another beautiful delineation of true spiritual fellowship—

*“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions,*

*“Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, one mind.*

*“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory: but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*

*“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

These are not just pleasant words—**they are solemn, specific, divine commands**—the narrow and only appointed way to life. We should read them daily, and gradually be transformed by their infinite divine beauty.

Unless we eagerly, longingly, desire to manifest these characteristics, unless we constantly examine ourselves in the light of them, seeking to bring every thought into obedience, **we are not in fellowship with the Father.** Yea, we do not even understand the meaning of fellowship.

In Phil. 3 Paul speaks freely and intimately of his yearnings toward Christ. How different this is from some other epistles! How personally he opens up his inner heart!

It is comforting that even Paul had no full, complete sense of accomplishment—

*“I count not myself to have apprehended, but I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,*

*“I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ...*

*“That I may win Christ, and be found in him . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS.”*

The “fellowship of his sufferings.” The Philippians were in their heart and spirit in the fellowship of Paul's sufferings, and they greatly comforted and strengthened him.

Do we know what the “fellowship of sufferings” is? Are we large-hearted and spiritually-minded enough to comprehend these things? To the natural man, all this is meaningless foolishness. We remember that Paul said—

*“Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not? (2 Cor. 11:29).*

*“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

*“And this I do for the Gospel's sake, that I might be a partaker—**fellowshipper**—thereof” (1 Cor. 9:23).*

*“If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).*

*“He bath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed” (Isa. 53).*

DO WE KNOW WHAT IT ALL MEANS? Is our whole heart's desire like Paul's—to know the fellowship of his sufferings?

\* \* \*

IN the last chapter, verses 14 and 15, he says—

*“Ye have well done, that ye did communicate with—**fellowship**—my affliction.”*

*“Ye Philippians know also that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated—**fellowshipped**—with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.”*

The Philippians comprehended the true meaning of fellowship and fulfilled it in themselves, to the great joy and comfort of the apostle.

\* \* \*

IN 1 Tim. 5:22, the negative aspect of fellowship again appears—

*“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker—**fellowshipper**—of other men's sins.”*

This is in harmony with the general principles the Scriptures lay down for separation in fellowship from that which is not in harmony with the Light.

\* \* \*

IN Titus 1:4, Paul addresses this faithful helper as—

*“Titus, mine own son in the common faith.”*

“Common” here is the same word as “fellowship,” and is used in that sense—the faith in which we are united—the faith that makes us one.

\* \* \*

IN the short personal letter to Philemon, the word occurs twice in significant ways, though obscured by translation. Paul, in his entreaty to Philemon, lays stress on the responsibility and intimacy of their mutual fellowship in God—

*“That the communication—**fellowship**—of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus” (v. 6).*

What does he mean? The sense is this: He is commending Philemon in verses 5 and 7 for his acts of love and goodness toward the brethren, and he here prays that this beautiful, practical manifestation of the fellowship of Philemon's faith may be effectual in bringing more people to a knowledge and acknowledging of the great goodness, and joy, and desirability, of the divine provision and relationship in Christ.

He is emphasizing the practical excellencies of this glorious spiritual communion, and praying for their diffusion through the example of Philemon.

He is strengthening and deepening Philemon's realization of the greatness of his duties and privileges in Christ Jesus. The same thought occurs in Jesus' words—

*“Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

**The mutual joy and love and comfort and intimacy of God's people MUST be such as to attract the wonder and admiration of the world.** Jesus said again—

*“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).*

What cold, broken, smoky, useless lamps we are if we do not have among ourselves a glorious and manifest relationship of love infinitely exceeding anything the outside world knows!

In no better way could he assure Philemon's eager compliance than by reminding him of this great matter of divine fellowship and its heavenly fruits and purposes.

After gently laying his plea before Philemon, he comes back to this great theme (v 17)—

*“If thou count me therefore a **partner**...”*

“Partner” here is the same word—“fellowshipper.” He is saying this—

If we are united in the greatest, most holy, most intimate, most beautiful of all possible relationships between mankind, centering in God Himself—then receive Onesimus as you would receive me—he is now one with us—as you receive him will be the measure of your affection for me.

The lesson is for us. **THE TRUTH IS INFINITELY TOO BIG FOR ANY PETTINESS AMONG ITS MEMBERS.** To be in any way cramped in the broad flow of our affection is to be small, and carnally-minded, and *“to be carnally-minded is DEATH.”*

\* \* \*

IN Heb. 2 the theme is the natural oneness of Christ with his brethren, and the basic essence of that oneness is their common mortal nature. Verse 14—

*“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.”*

Rotherham, one of the most careful and discerning of the translators, renders this verse—

*“Seeing therefore the children have received a FELLOWSHIP of blood and flesh, he also in like manner took partnership in the same.”*

In chapter 10 Paul reminds the Hebrew brethren of their earlier zeal and steadfastness in the face of great danger and suffering (verses 32-33)—

*“Call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction.*

*“Partly whilst ye were made a spectacle both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly whilst ye became companions—**fellowshippers**—of them that were so used.”*

The Weymouth translation seems to make a little clearer the thought we wish to emphasize—

*“Partly through allowing yourselves to be made a public spectacle amid reproaches and persecutions, and partly through coming forward to share—(that is, **fellowship**)—the sufferings of those who were thus treated.”*

*“Ye took JOYFULLY the spoiling of your goods.”*

How much of this glorious conception of brotherhood and fellowship can we recapture in these easy, comfortable days? Has the way to the Kingdom been made any smoother or broader? Are we really facing the facts of our responsibilities to God, or are we just taking the easy way? Paul exhorts in Heb 13:16—

*“To do good, and to communicate—to **fellowship**—forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”*

WHAT “sacrifices”? What sacrifices have we made and are we making to the great and glorious cause of fellowship? We have seen many of the aspects that fellowship meant to Jesus, the apostles, and the early believers. What comparable sacrifices have we laid upon the altar of our Faith?

\* \* \*

PETER says (1 Pet. 4:13)—

*“Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers—**fellowshippers**—of Christ's sufferings, that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”*

He had said at the beginning of the chapter—

*“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*

*“That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”*

What is the connection of thought? What is the exhortation he is basing on Christ's suffering in the flesh? What is our fellowshiping of that suffering, that we may fellowship his glory?

It is first of all our STATE OF MIND. He says—

*“Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.”*

Arm yourself against what? Against the lusts—the desires—of the flesh—the things that appeal to the flesh. Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil—the desires of the flesh.

The mind of Christ was—

*“I come to do THY will, O God” . . . “I do always those things that please Him.”*

His sufferings were that he might lead many sons to glory. The “fellowship of his suffering” is following in the pattern of self-denial, self-emptying, that he laid down.

The fellowship of his suffering is to walk always in the shadow of the cross—humbly, reverently, meekly, joyfully, fearfully—in constant remembrance—

*“Do this in remembrance of me.”*

Does that mean our personal thoughts of him are to be called up but once a week? We are no friends of his, no disciples, no followers, if he is not **always** before us.

The fellowship of his sufferings should never leave us. It should mold our lives and color every act, every thought.

\* \* \*

IT is Peter who carries the subject of fellowship to a glorious climax. He says—

*“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.*

*“According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called as to glory and virtue.*

*“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers—**fellowshippers**—of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Pet. 1:2-4).*

“FELLOWSHIPERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE”—if we have the wisdom to separate ourselves entirely from the corruption that is in the world through lust. *“The whole world lieth in wickedness.”*

While keeping before us the glorious prospect that Peter presents, it is fitting that we close with a note of urgent warning. John says (2 John 9)—

*“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.*

*“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.*

*“For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker—(fellowshipper: the same word we have traced all the way through)—of his evil deeds.”*

*“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.”*

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

## God Or Mammon

I think you would be hard-pressed to find a Christadelphian that would deny that we are living in the times of the end. There are signs around us that clearly point to this undeniable truth. In 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Paul tells us what the last days will be like. Now, as I read these verses, I'd like you to really think about the current state of humanity. Paul writes,

*“In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*

These words ring eerily true when compared to this world in which we live: a world where the morality of mankind has almost universally fallen apart.

Left to our own devices, we too, like those “unholy” men spoken of by Paul, will surely fall short. Our goat-like nature ensures that, on our own, we will stray from the path of righteousness. And this is a common theme woven throughout the scriptures. “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*” (Proverbs 14:12).

### **Parable of the Unjust Steward**

As we see the day of Christ’s return so rapidly approaching, we must be increasingly on guard against the evil that is in the world, and we must continually take stock in ourselves: what manner of person are we? Are we serving ourselves and the things of this world, or are we serving God?

This leads us to the subject of this morning’s exhortation centered on the 16th chapter of Luke. In this chapter we find the parable of the unjust steward. In it we have a particularly pertinent lesson to us all. And it forces us to ask ourselves the question: “Whom do we serve?” It is on this subject that I would like to focus our attention this morning, so, let’s read the parable again:

*“And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord’s debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord (that is, the lord of the steward) commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely” (Luke 16:1-8).*

And then Christ adds the comment, “*The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*”

This steward, upon realizing that his opportunity to earn a living was quickly coming to an end, made the most of his time remaining as his master’s steward. He made no attempt to either defend himself or refute the accusation. He did what many debt collectors do today when the debtor is unable to pay the account in full: he collected a percentage of the balance due. It is not because of this action that he is called unjust, but because in his previous stewardship he did not come up to the full, perfect demands of his lord. Collecting a percentage of the debt was a good course of action on the part of the steward to provide a future for himself which it did not yield in itself. His slothfulness would not allow him to “dig,” or perform manual labor, and his pride would not allow him to beg. Instead, he appeased his lord by collecting some of what was owed him, and at the same time he befriended the debtors by decreasing their debt. This was purely a strategy, intended to ensure he had a roof over his head in the event his lord relieved him of his stewardship.

And the point of Christ’s remark that “*the children of this world are wiser than the children of light,*” is that those who embrace and profess the Truth (i.e. the children of light) do not, as a rule, always put forth the same amount of effort towards performing the stewardship of God, making a wise use of their vanishing opportunity to serve Yahweh, as much as the people of the world do when they put their mind to attaining fleshly goals. The enormous effort and self-sacrifice and dedication that people give in their worldly endeavors is astounding. It seems that there is nothing too complicated for a man if he just puts forth the required effort. Even if that

might mean losing some sleep, losing some other comforts and pleasures—even losing one’s own friends and family. An ambitious man can gain all the riches of the world, albeit corruptible and fleeting, lasting only but a few short, burdensome years.

We are all familiar with the saying: “If something is worth doing, it is worth doing right.” If something is worthwhile, it is worth putting forth a single-minded effort to which all else is secondary. And that is the mantra of this self-serving type of man. But shouldn’t it be ours as well? Our walk Zion-ward must be with every bit as much zeal and enthusiasm, but directed towards the service of Yahweh instead of the service of “self.” We must each examine ourselves and determine how much effort and sacrifice we each are giving. If Christ asks us at the judgment seat what is it that distinguishes us from the rest of the world, what will be our reply? That we believed the Truth? That may be true, but *“the devils also believe, and tremble”* (James 2:19). We each have only one life to live, and no one knows how long we will be afforded the present opportunity to serve as Yahweh’s stewards. What will we have to show for this time granted us? We must not live this life as if it will last forever, or as if its purpose is to gain natural and personal desires. We know the consequence of leading such a life, *“for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption”* (Gal 6:8). We must make the most of our time during this probationary period and put aside the fleshly things and reach for the Spiritual, for *“he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”* (Gal 6:8).

That is the message that Christ conveyed in this parable, and this is clear upon a further study of the comments that go along with it. Christ adds, *“And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations”* (Luke 16:9). The “mammon of unrighteousness” is a phrase that Christ uses to denote worldly wealth. So how can worldly wealth be turned into a friend to ensure an everlasting habitation? It is the **manner** in which we handle our wealth and worldly possessions now that they become a friend, providing us “everlasting habitations,” as indicated by Jesus when he says that *“he that is faithful in that which is least (i.e. earthly possessions) is faithful also in much (that which is to come)”* (Luke 16:10). If we are not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, true riches will not be bestowed upon us.

So, much like the steward made friends with the debtors, that when his stewardship was removed from him, he might be received into their houses, we must make proper friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that it may aid us in attaining a place in that soon coming Kingdom.

### **God or Mammon**

Christ emphasizes his exhortation by next declaring that *“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon”* (Luke 16:13). When we put the possessions and pleasures of this world in their proper place well behind the things of God, then we choose to serve God and not mammon. But if we think that we can serve both equally, then we are ignoring the words of Christ.

If we are to be brethren of Christ, then our whole interest must be in his purpose with the earth. Our hearts and minds must be shaped by his commandments. His law (and therefore God’s law) must be first. No matter how inconvenient. No matter how inopportune the occasion may be. There is little wonder how the world will hate us. How can someone of this composition feel at home in the world? In fact, it is a bad sign when someone who professes to be a friend of Christ is at home in the world. Of course there must be a certain amount of interaction with the world, but to be *“unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* is disobeying a command of Christ. For, as Paul taught, *“What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”* (2 Cor 6:14). Living and walking in the “Light” requires that we

separate from that which is ungodly and associate with those who also hold to the doctrines of Christ. We read in Luke 12:51 that Jesus told that his teachings would bring division. He said, *“Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay, but rather division.”* Christ intended to separate out of the world a people unto God. We are to *“Come out from among [the world], and be separate”* (2 Cor. 6:17).

The “narrowness” of the Truth is one of the great obstacles to its popular adoption. By nature, people generally do not like to be restrained in any aspect of life. For this reason, there has been a tendency towards corruption since the day the Truth was apostolically established at Jerusalem, as is evident from the saying of John that the spirit of antichrist already existed in the world (1 John 4: 3).

It is inconvenient to be restricted in our dealings with fellow men, whether in the Truth or out of it. Given the choice, I’m sure we would all prefer absolute freedom in all matters of life. But then we would be like the wicked spoken of in Psalm 12:4 who say, *“Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?”*

But no one who truly knows Christ would desire this freedom. All who accept Christ recognize his law as vital to salvation. This law was not set down on a whim, as merely an interesting point of conversation to be discussed along with politics, geography, and the many topics of discussion that saturate the minds of the worldly. His law is meant to mold its followers into something useful, suitable to be used by God at Christ’s return. We read in Ephesians 2:19-22:

*“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit.”*

Willing-hearted followers of Christ separate themselves from the world to join together with other brethren of like faith. It is through the law of Christ that we are molded into a stone fit for use in that holy temple to come. The commands of Christ are not intended to help us now. Their purpose is to prepare us to be suitable servants of God.

### **Commands of Christ**

And to obey the commands of Christ is to show love of Christ, for *“love is the fulfilling of the law”* (Rom 13:10). To not obey is to deny Christ, and if we deny Christ he will deny us before his Father, which is in heaven (Matt 10:33).

We know that the path to the Kingdom is not easy. Jesus told us that we must be prepared to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow him (Luke 14:27). Paul tells us *“that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22). Each of us will have our own set of trials because God knows what is best for us to prepare us for the Kingdom. But throughout our trials we can always remember that God has promised us that He will never leave us or forsake us (Heb 13:5), and He will not try us beyond what we are able to bear (1 Cor 10:13).

It is good to take stock in our spiritual well-being to ensure that we have not lost our first love. Do we still have as much of a joy for the Truth as we did when we emerged from the waters of baptism? Do we treasure the times that we have to gather with the brethren and discuss matters of the Truth? Or has our walk in the Truth become a mundane routine. If so, we have lost focus and become a victim of the flesh, and our heart is in the wrong place, *“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”* (Luke 12:34).

It is for this purpose that we meet here each week: to bring Christ's sacrifice, death, burial, and resurrection to the forefront of our minds. But we are also here to examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). But this self-examination should not only be for merely one hour a week. If we are not constantly taking stock in ourselves, in how we are living our lives in the Truth, we know that the flesh will creep in.

The way to stay spiritually minded is to constantly busy ourselves with spiritual things. However, this holds true, also, for things of the world. If we are constantly busying ourselves with worldly things, only to occasionally study the Scripture, then the worldly things will be what define us. That will be who we are. And that will be our reward.

Let us, therefore, continually remind ourselves of the sobering and humbling truth "*I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth NO GOOD THING*" (Romans 7:18), but always keeping in mind the glorious assurance of the Lord: "*My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*" (2 Cor. 12:9) that we, too, might say with Paul, "*when I am weak, then am I strong,*" (2 Cor. 12:10) "*I can do ALL THINGS through Christ which strengtheneth me!*" (Phil 4:13).

As children of light, we must separate from the darkness of the world around us. The signs of the times point directly at the Lord's imminent return. What a tragedy it would be to miss out on the glories of the Kingdom because of succumbing to the desire to indulge in fleshly pleasures for a season. At all times and in all places we must ask ourselves the searching question: Whom do I serve?

The unparalleled wealth and innumerable distractions that exist today to draw us away from our studies and our brethren can cause a lax attitude toward the Truth. Without continually and eagerly resorting to the Word of God, it would be much too easy to fall into the cares and imitations of the world.

Let us make the most of this time that Christ remains away to attend to the things that we know will meet with Christ's approval upon that day of his return, that we each might find grace in his sight and hear those long awaited and welcome words, "*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*" (Matt. 25:34).

—Bro. Mark Braune

## Signs Of Ecclesiastical Deflections

Not long before Dr. Thomas died, he said to brother Roberts: "Do what is right; be valiant for the Truth, teach it without compromise, and all lovers of the Truth will approve you. For all others you need not care a rush." To that advice brother Roberts was true till his end came. He was a good soldier, brave and competent; quick to detect wrong doctrine and to condemn un-Christlike conduct. As with Dr. Thomas, death in due course removed brother Roberts some 24 years ago. At that time I wrote the following paragraph in *The Christadelphian* :—

"An influence for good and a source of strength has left us; brother Roberts is with us no more. In him we have lost a sterling friend, an able leader and an exemplary lover of God. Before most of us were born our brother was toiling in the Truth, and he was fighting to the moment of his death. From his labours we have all incidentally derived more or less benefit. Wherein shall come the compensation for our bereavement? The compensation will come in viewing his beautiful character, his great work, his weighty exhortations, and allowing them to live in our memories. Our brother, in this sense, will always live to faithful brethren. The writings of brother

Roberts to such will shine in increasing lustre, for ever freed from the clouds of dust raised by his narrow-minded critics. . . .”

What gave these two brethren their influence and their value to the brotherhood? Their knowledge and love of the Bible, coupled with their zeal, enthusiasm and courage in the Truth’s service; and the nearer we approach to their likeness, the safer and more satisfactory will our ecclesias be. The writings of these brethren are with us; their expositions and exhortations are unequalled, and we are wise if we cultivate a liking for them.

Now with the departure of these two exceptional men a new age in the history of the brotherhood was started. Spiritual robustness lessened and as a result an era of decline set in. The decline, if insidious in its commencement, has today become visible to all who have eyes to see. The condition of our ecclesial world today is saddening, and thoughtful brethren and sisters are filled with dismay, misgiving and apprehension. From all quarters comes news of dissension and laxity in spiritual doctrine and teaching. These defections have not merely to do with doctrine but also practice. Is it not a fact that marriage with the alien is on the increase? In last month’s *Christadelphian* there are no less than three such cases recorded. Is it not a fact that passing through the ecclesias are to be seen strife and contentions, laxity in regard to fellowship and worship, a sentimental regard for men, a coquetting with partial inspiration? Is it not a fact that outside works are being eulogised and advertised, that brethren and sisters rush for a lantern lecture but will not attend to hear a solemn exhortation that brethren are being asked to exercise their minds over speculative and scientific subjects, meretricious and questionable? Food that is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness is being elbowed out of the way.

Now what is the remedy for all this, for it is with that that we are all concerned? . . . What can we do? Why, we must look to ourselves; we must be circumspect and redouble our vigilance. We must keep close to the Word of God and give heed to exhortation. The time for resting from exhortation is never. “Preach the word,” said Paul to Timothy, “be instant in season and out of season.” We know, on the basis of what the apostle Paul has said, what he would say today. He would say: Be pure in fellowship, keep separate in worship, contend not only for the first principles but for abstention from ungodly lusts, whether in pleasure seeking, money making, novel reading, foolish talking, and other things we might mention. We know also that Paul would say, Bring up your children in apostolic ways.

Our times are perilous—if the Truth is to survive we must all wake up. A great responsibility rests at this time on those who undertake to lead. May it please God to multiply leaders of the right stamp; not impatient aspirants after power and notoriety, but zealous, courageous, self-sacrificing, able brethren, who by ability and good works can gain our respect and confidence.  
*Bro. A.T.Jannaway—1922 London Gathering*

### **Dr. Thomas As An Editor—(1851)**

“THE present is the last number of the first volume of the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*. In commencing it, we promised no more than is implied in the title—to publish the things concerning ‘the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ.’ This implied promise we have not failed to perform; but have laboured diligently, and in all good conscience and sincerity to enlighten our subscribers, and to make them ‘wise’ in the wisdom and knowledge of God, as He hath revealed it to His servants and prophets of Israel and the apostles of Jesus. We have earnestly endeavoured to enlighten them that they might be saved in the kingdom; so that being there, they may ‘receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing’ (Rev. 5:12), with David’s Son and Lord as joint-heirs with him who is heir of all these things for

evermore. We have burned gallons of ‘midnight oil’ in the development of our arduous, but self-improving and agreeable enterprise. We have suffered indeed from weariness of flesh and spirit; still, though surrounded by discouragement on every side, we have never flagged—our course has been onward, untiring, and as yet untired.

“And, be it remembered, this uncheered perseverance is not a thing of yesterday, but an affair of seventeen years’ persistence. He that knew us in the beginning finds us now as then, ‘examining all things: seizing upon the good’ (1Thess. 5:21), and, without reward or fear of consequences, making it known that others may share and enjoy with us the fruits of our research.

“We speak boldly, and, as some may suppose, boastingly in these details. Be it so. ‘As the truth of Christ is in me,’ said Paul, ‘no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.’ We testify of facts, and commend not ourselves in doing so: for we have done no more than we ought to have done, and could not have done less without hazard of condemnation by the Lord at His coming. But we remind others who believe of these things, and who are better able than we to go and do likewise, that we may ‘provoke them to love and to good works,’ that they may lay up in store for themselves a good foundation for the future that they may lay hold of the life of the Age to Come. . .

“In regard to the *Herald*, seeing that we have done our part, we would inquire, Have our subscribers performed theirs? Some of them have not—why, we are not prepared to say . . .

“There ought to be no necessity for an editor even to hint a word about money in a paper subscribed for by persons who profess to be in search of truth by which they hope to ‘make their fortunes’ to all eternity. Would they not willingly pay *two dollars* to a man who would only show them where by hard labour they could dig out gold by little at a time? And do they begrudge to pay the same paltry sum to another who they profess to believe is able to show them where they may find, and how they may secure, eternal riches? There is an appearance of ingratitude, ignobleness of mind, and ungenerousness of disposition in such treatment of their friend who is subjecting himself to much trouble and some hazard for their improvement and everlasting weal. ‘The liberal deviseth liberal things; and *by liberal things shall he stand.*’ Is it a liberal thing to make an editor work for nothing and find himself? Will our subscribers in arrears study this text, and in as short a time as may be make a practical application of the discourse?

“We say so little about our wants that we fear our friends, with very few exceptions, have taken up the notion that we have no necessities at all. They receive their papers regularly; they read of our journeying from the States to Britain, travelling over that country in all directions, visiting Europe, returning to America, ‘running to and fro’ in Virginia, and finishing for the time being with a tour to Baltimore, New York, Boston, Halifax in Nova Scotia, and return—a journey exceeding 2,000 miles; they find no appeals to their pockets for money to indemnify us for our time, labour, information and expenses before we will go forth to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom. When among them, they see us well clothed; they hear no tale of distress. Contributions of money are not solicited; if they give, they give; if they don’t, they don’t. We make no personal applications for subscriptions to our works and so forth, but leave all the co-operation we receive to emanate spontaneously from our friends themselves as the result of the inworking in their hearts of the truth believed. Knowing what incessant appeals are made by others for money to carry on their operations, they naturally, but not scripturally suppose, that if we were in want of funds we would dun the public likewise; but if they really imagine this they neither know us nor the principles and spirit which animate us. When it comes to this that we can only carry on the work by squeezing unwilling counters from our friends, we shall wash our hands of their co-operation, and retire to private life. . . .

“The capital we have devoted to the service of the truth for years would have made us rich in the things that perish had we applied it to the practice of our profession. Our old religious

enemies in this city that hate us cordially would employ us nevertheless if we would return to Esculapian pursuits. But no: shall we turn from the service of the Gospel of the Kingdom to serve ourselves in patching up the crazy mortalities of the children of dust for filthy lucre's sake? Not so long as we can make the world our debtor, and by labouring in the vocation of the Gospel, 'lay up for ourselves a good foundation for the future.' The time of a physician is valuable, for when professionally employed in a city it will yield greater returns than most other pursuits. We regret not the sacrifice we have made of the last seventeen years of our existence. We would repeat it could we retrace our steps; and, God willing, we intend to spend the remainder of our days after the same sort. That is possible. More than this none can expect us to perform.

"But, oh, this 'co-operation,' what do men mean by that? And what is this delectable co-operation for? For our own individual advantage and behoof? We refuse to accept it upon any such understanding. When we want money for our personal necessities, we can do better than toil night and day for 63 dollars, 80 cents per annum. Is it then the co-operative contribution of the many for the service of the gospel? Is this the estimate the many put upon the gospel of the kingdom which they say is defined, proved, and advocated in no other paper in the world? "Co-operation is two or more persons working together to one end. What is that 'one end' in the case before us? Is it to support the editor of the *Herald*, or to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel of the kingdom among the people? If it be said, 'to support the editor of the *Herald*,' the editor begs leave most earnestly and respectfully to rejoin that he wants no such co-operation, and thanks nobody for even suggesting it. But if it be said, 'the one end of our co-operation is to diffuse the knowledge of the gospel of the kingdom for the obedience of faith' that is *a working together to a mutually profitable, honourable, and praiseworthy end.*"

The plain words above were written by the Doctor in 1851, when editor of the *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, of which magazine the *Christadelphian* is the lineal descendant. The name of the magazine has changed, but its aims and principles are the same.

Times have changed, and the editorial troubles of 1923 are not the same as those of 1851; but there is not wanting in these reproduced words of our sleeping brother very much that remains true for the present editor, and indeed might have been written of him. Some parts would to-day bear even greater significance, as where the Doctor speaks of his "seventeen years persistence" in editorial work.

Whether of 1851 or 1923, the editor of a Christadelphian magazine must suffer from "Weariness of flesh and spirit" and "discouragement," if not on every side, yet on many sides; and the editor of to-day could truly echo the voice of 1851, and say "We regret not the sacrifice of the past years. We would repeat it could we retrace our steps, and God-willing we intend to spend the remainder of our days after the same sort."

The end and aim of the co-operation of editor and readers of the magazine is still the same as it always was, which is "to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel of the Kingdom for the obedience of faith. That is a working together to a mutually profitable, honourable, and praiseworthy end."

If the main editorial troubles are still the same, some of the minor ones are lacking at the present time. The doctor's troubles with his printer, though serious enough to him, were at times almost comic. His chagrin is to be detected beneath the dry humour of such a notice as this, written in 1847:—

"The sickness of our compositor has thrown the current number into arrear. Editors are not omnipotent (neither in 1847 nor 1923.—C.A.L.); they can will, but how to perform they too often find not. One thing we can truly say, namely, that we have never kept a compositor waiting for copy since our first connection with the Press. If printers would work with as much forecast, promptitude and diligence as we write (sickness excepted), there would be no delay in the publication of the *Herald*. We do not put the name of the month to our numbers, because

perverse circumstances retard their periodicity, and cause them to fall behind the lunations of the earth's satellite. The discrepancies are too notable for display."

Another editorial note of the same year (1847) ran thus:—

"Let everyone interested in the truth the *Herald* advocates, and who would serve his generation in promoting the work of faith and labour of love, righteousness and liberty, consider himself an agent for the *Herald* in his own individual sphere. There is a great work before us, noble and glorious in its consummation, to compass which, a self-denying, valiant, and continued effort must be made. If the professed friends of this press would awake to action and exert themselves only one tithe as much as the Editor, the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and of His Christ would have an effective agency at work which no combination of wicked spirits could intimidate or overcome. . . . We invite you to this labour and self-denial and devotion. We are experimenting therein. It is a daily crucifixion of the flesh; let him who doubts it, try."

The scarcity of printers and the difficulty of publication are troubles unshared by the present editor; rather, indeed, does embarrassment arise from reasons precisely the reverse of those that vexed Dr. Thomas in 1847. It needs must be that vexations and embarrassments come, be they of the nineteenth or the twentieth century; all that matters is how they are faced and overcome. There was one in the first century who wrote in discomfort of mind and body, who lamented over and fought apostasy, who exhorted, encouraged, and strengthened his brethren, who through evil report and good report strove for the Faith embodied in "The Hope of Israel, with a view to making ready a people prepared for the Lord. He laid down his pen in all confidence that he had fought a good fight and kept the Faith, and that he would receive the crown of life in the day of Christ's appearing. To those with him, and to those who would come after him he said, "Be ye followers of me even as I am of Christ."

### **Bear Ye One Another's Burden**

It is very common to praise virtue in the abstract, and admire it in remote times, but to pooh pooh it when the occasion for it comes to our own door: and on the other hand, men unite with refreshing unanimity in the condemnation of selfishness and rapacity that have become historic, but at the same time practice every day the same thing without a compunction. In the name of our eternal well-being, let us be on our guard. There were men in the days of Christ who made a great show of religion, but of whom he said they bound heavy burdens on other men's shoulders, but would not so much as lift a little finger to ease them. And there are the same sort now. We must not take our morality from them. Only the well-doing prescribed by the King will pass the King's muster in the day of account, and we shall stand with Paul in that day if we adopt his principles now, and do not take our cue from the world that lieth in wickedness."—*Bro. Robert Roberts*

### **Come Unto Me: I Will Give You Rest**

[Christ's] words are not mere words: that is, our confidence in them does not rest on the words alone, though the words alone greatly inspire confidence. They come from the mouth of one who wrought miracles, and as he said, "*though ye believe not me, believe the works.*" They come from the mouth of one who rose from the dead, and therefore they are words sealed, ratified, and confirmed as no words have been that ever came out of human mouth before. They are the illustration of God's meaning when he said to Moses concerning him: "*I will put my words in his mouth.*" They are therefore words that we can trust absolutely, and to which we can commit our lives without the least reservation. *Nazareth Revisited, p.204—1892*

## HYMN 6

FOR EVILDOERS FRET THOU NOT THYSELF UNQUIETLY,  
NOR DO THOU ENVY BEAR TO THOSE THAT WORK INIQUITY.

Psalm 37:1 – *“Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.”*

To ‘fret’ is to irritate, vex, annoy, or worry. “NEVER WORRY... Worry is stupid, juvenile, faithless, nonproductive, round-and-round-in-a-circle thinking.” (GVG) Worry is a huge waster of our precious time.

FOR EVEN LIKE UNTO THE GRASS, SOON BE CUT DOWN SHALL THEY;  
AND, LIKE THE GREEN AND TENDER HERB, THEY WITHER SHALL AWAY.

Verse 2 – *“For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.”*

“The world that we see with all its apparent finery and glitter, the joy that seems to be theirs as they revel in pleasure and wantonness, is soon to be swept away like the chaff of the summer threshingfloor, and no place will be found for them.” (E. W. Banta, BCM, 11/59 p. 352)

SET THOU THY TRUST UPON THE LORD, AND BE THOU DOING GOOD;  
AND SO THOU IN THE LAND SHALT DWELL, AND VERILY HAVE FOOD.

Verse 3 – *“Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.”* Continue in patient well doing and He will provide for us. Trusting in the Lord is the opposite of worry.

DELIGHT THYSELF IN GOD; HE'LL GIVE THINE HEART'S DESIRE TO THEE.

Verse 4 – *“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of the heart”*—eternal life and a place in His Kingdom.

THY WAY TO GOD COMMIT, HIM TRUST, IT BRING TO PASS SHALL HE.

Verse 5 – *“Commit thy way unto the LORD: trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”* The promises of the LORD are sure.

AND LIKE UNTO THE LIGHT, HE SHALL THY RIGHTEOUSNESS DISPLAY;  
AND HE THY JUDGMENT SHALL BRING FORTH LIKE NOONTIDE OF THE DAY.

Verse 6 – *“And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noontide.”*

Verse 7 – *“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him...”* Let us not be weary with the waiting.

Verse 9 – *“For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait /upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.”*

## Analecta Apocalypticae (22)

### The Ecclesia In Sardis

Here the Revelator introduces himself to the Star-Angel, or Eldership, of the ecclesia in Sardis as “HE having the Seven Spirits of the Deity and the Seven Stars.” He that hath these spirits and stars in possession and at his absolute disposal is the resurrected, exalted, and glorified Jesus, who at his last interview with the apostles said, “All authority hath been given to me in heaven,

and upon earth." This was not so before his crucifixion, for he was not then "in the right places of the power divine," or "on the right of the Majesty in high places;" or, as it is also expressed by Paul, "sitting on the right of the throne of the Deity;" all of which are kindred to that of Stephen's who said, when the heavens were opened to him, and he saw God's glory, and Jesus who had stood out from the right (or heavenly places Eph. 1:20) of the Deity, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man who has stood out from the right places of the Deity" (Acts 7:55,56; Matt. 26:64; Heb. 1:3: 12:2).

"All authority hath been given to him," although "the power" of the Deity, or Theos, has not yet been exerted to put all things in the heavens and earth political in subjection under him. This was very plainly taught by Paul some thirty years after Jesus declared that all authority was given to him, in Heb. 2:6-9, where, in commenting upon part of the eighth Psalm, he says, "We see not yet all things put under the Son of Man; but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of the death, crowned with glory and honour." The possession of all authority and power, though not necessarily exercised because possessed, is intimated in the writing before us by the declaration that "he hath the Seven Spirits of the Deity" at his command. As we have seen elsewhere, "seven" is the symbol of perfection; and consequently expressive of the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of the Spirit — the Holy Spirit — in inseparable combination with the exalted Jesus; who has thereby become "the Image of the invisible Theos;" the Image, in whom "all the fulness dwells;" "the Anointed in the Theos," or Deity the "Theos manifested in Flesh" by the Effluent Logos; and "the King of kings and Lord of lords." All these sayings are apocalyptically represented by "the Lamb that had been slain, having Seven Horns, and Seven Eyes;" which are interpreted as representing "the Seven Spirits of the Deity sent forth into all the earth."

The exalted Jesus then, is now the embodiment of the Seven Spirits, also represented by "Seven Lamps of Fire burning before the throne" (Apoc. 4:5). Hence also, "he holds the Seven Stars in his right hand." These seven stars, the reader will not need to be informed, are no longer upon earth. The Embodied Seven, in present individual development, has exercised his authority, and withdrawn them from the corrupt and faithless constituents of the defunct presbyteries of the ecclesias. The starry fires have been extinguished, as threatened in the epistle to the Star-Angel of Ephesus. "Be changed, and do the first works," saith the Spirit; "but if not, I come to thee speedily and will remove the lightstand out of its place except thou repent" (2:5). But instead of an alteration for the better, the pre-Constantinian Christendom became worse, until it attained the condition typified in that of the ecclesia in Sardis, which had only "a few names who had not defiled their garments." There are now no presbyterial stars in Asia, nor elsewhere. "The Spirits," or gifts, have been withdrawn by him who gave them, when he had ascended and received gifts for men; and will be withheld until "christendom" arises from the death into which it has sunk to the life of the coming Aion.

The Spirit still shone in the angel of the ecclesia in Sardis, to which John was ordered to write. But, though "the Angel" had the gifts, these did not perfect the works of the members of "the Angel," nor preserve them from death in trespasses and sins. The Angel-Presbytery had "the name," or reputation, among its contemporaries, of being alive, but, in the estimation of the Eternal Spirit they were pronounced to be "dead." There must have been a very general corruption, and departure from first principles, at the close of the first century, for the Eldership of the ecclesia in Sardis, which was really in a dying state, to be regarded as living in health and power. This was, doubtless, the opinion of Nikolaitanes, false apostles, Balaamites, and the children of Jezebel, constituents all of the synagogue of the Satan, whose "depths," "teaching," and seductions, had swamped the truth in Sardis. They proclaimed "the Angel" there to be a star of living brightness; for had not they of the angel the gifts; and if they had not a living name before the Deity, would he not withdraw them? But these spiritual gifts only remained because of "the few names which had not defiled their garments;" with these exceptions, "the Angel" was dead.

The presence of this few constituted it a body "about to die," or a dying body, so that in their absence, it was "dead." They were the only living element in it, and when they should be removed, the extinction of the Spirit-Light in their midst would come upon them "as a thief."

How different is the Deity's judgment of men and things from that of the thinking of the flesh. The case of the Star-Angel in Sardis proves it. The general christian public regarded it as flourishing in spiritual life, while the Spirit pronounced it to be actually dead. This diversity has obtained ever since. In our day, the dead bodies of "the religious world," styled "names and denominations of christians," all consider themselves to be in the enjoyment of the health and vigour of spiritual existence, and high in the favour of the Most High. They call themselves "the churches of the living God," and their temples, the houses of God, They glorify themselves as the especial favourites of heaven, and their clergies as the ambassadors and ministers of the Lord. But, were the Spirit to write to them as he did to Sardis, he would say, "I know thy works, that thou hast the name that thou livest, but art dead." They do, however, differ from "the Angel" in Sardis in this, that whereas the Sardian body was once alive, they never were. However, so much the worse for the Sardians, for, as Peter says, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." They "had received and heard" what the clergies and peoples of the pious world of this day have no conception of. They had "received" "the things of the kingdom of the Deity, and the name of Jesus Anointed;" and had heard them to "the obedience of the faith" in immersion into and for the name of the Holy Ones. But "it had happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2:21). The moderns are "dogs" that have never turned from their vomit, and "sows" that have never been "washed" from the native mire. Their end will therefore be less bitter than that of "the Angel" in Sardis. This body has passed away, and so will our contemporary names and denominations, by the judgments of the Lord; but the professors constituting "the Angel" must rise again, and stand in the presence of the Deity, who will condemn their works as "not perfect," and expel them from his presence, to be "hurt of the Second Death" (2:11). Not so, however, the constituent members of the sects and parties of this day. These have never lived. They have always been "dead in trespasses and sins," and, however pious, have been always hopelessly ignorant of the truth. The people and the "reverend" Sin-spirituals who "guide" them, are a region of the shadow of death, into which the light cannot shine, so as to dispel the darkness, until "the Lord the Spirit" is revealed in his glory. Like the helpless heathen in Paul's day, who found the God of Israel without seeking after him, because he forced himself upon their attention, the moderns are living under "times of ignorance," which "God winks at." They have the scriptures, it is true, but the traditions of the schools, dogmas and institutions, imposed upon our generation by its darkminded progenitors, have enslaved the minds of clergy and people, so that they cannot and dare not think in opposition to established opinions; and being so thoroughly imbued with these, the scriptures to them have become sealed and unintelligible. They are dead, and consequently "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them." The Angel in Sardis was "twice dead," and since "plucked up by the roots;" but the moderns, never having had spiritual existence in God, will be less sorely dealt with; yet they will not rise to life, the primary sentence upon our race binding them hard and fast with chains of darkness in the dust (Gen. 3:19; Isa. 26:14; 38:18,19).

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

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

"Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth." (Luke 3:5)

In what way did John the Baptist fulfill this prophecy?

This is an allusion to the preparations which were made in rough countries to facilitate the march of mighty kings and conquerors. Luke is quoting Isaiah 40 and John's preaching accomplished in part what Isaiah was saying. Those in Israel that were lowly, humble and depressed with the sense of sin, were raised up; while those that were elated with their own abilities, boasted of their righteousness, trusted in themselves, and looked with disdain and contempt on others, had their haughtiness made low. All were to repent - all were to be baptized and be "born again" – all were brought to one level.

However there is much more in Isaiah's prophecy: "*The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*" Both John and Jesus declared and manifested the glory of the Father, however, all flesh did not then see it together, and the highway for our Elohim was not then cleared and leveled. Countless mountains and valleys and rough and crooked places remain in the way to this day.

We get a glimpse of the ultimate "making straight in the desert a highway for our Elohim," in the later prophecy given by Jesus himself in Revelation chapter 16:12. Here we are told that the waters of the great river Euphrates are dried up, "*that the way of the Kings of the East might be prepared.*" These "*Kings of the East*" are members of the body of Christ who will march as the "rainbow angel" of Revelation chapter 10. "Who are thou, O great mountain?" asks Zechariah who adds "Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." (Zech. 4:7)

The "great mountain" of Gentile power (Babylon the Great) shall be leveled to a plain before the might of the antitypical Zerubbabel (the Lord Jesus Christ). He will put down "all rule, authority and power" (1Cor. 15:24) "*And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.*" (Isa.40:5)

John cleared the rubbish out of the way so that a new and clearer path could be revealed. We can only ask as Peter did: "*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*" (2Peter 3:11)

*Bro. James Sommerville*