

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.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

Nakalira Ecclesia, Kenya, Sunday School at 9:30am, Memorial at 10:30am, Bible Class Friday at 2:30pm, Bro. Paul Walukana, PO Box 65. Kamukuywa, 50216 Kenya, Phone +254735191850

Beloved Brethren and Sisters,

Greetings in the Hope of Israel we share and peace in Christ, amidst a very troubled world. The current world wide problem of many sorts is signs of the imminent return of our Master. Governments all over the world are grappling with difficult conditions not realizing that the only lasting solution is based in the True Faith we share; Peace and goodwill towards man is when the key holder of the Royal House of David, the Lord Jesus Christ takes over and controls the governments of this world – Psalm 72. When will it be?

As we start this year, we do not know when it will be? Salvation is in God's hands.

Our work, in the Truth, at home, at work, in isolation, in the ecclesia, wherever, must be aware what little time remains, must be redeemed "until he comes", working out our salvation with fear and trembling. Phil. 2:12.

Our prayers and hope is that we may be among those acceptable, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to accomplish the purpose of God with the earth.

(From earlier correspondence) On 17th October we were disappointed with the disaster of fire that caused great damage to Bro. Patrick Wafula's house.

With love from the Nakalira Ecclesia,
Bro. Paul Walukana

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias - Corrections

DALLAS/FT. WORTH, TX, Bro. Bob Bent, 3032 San Martin Drive, Arlington, TX 76010

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HENGOED STUDY WEEKEND.....**Mar 27–29, 2009**
Bro. Stephen Male, 8 Gwaun Henllan, Ammanford, Carmarthenshire, SA18 2FD, West Wales, UK. Telephone +44 1269 591924

HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**April 11–12, 2009**
Bro. David Lauck, 1-936-856-9702 — "Be Ye Doers of the Word and Not Hearers"

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 12–14, 2009**
Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....July 3 – July 6, 2009
Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada,
sc.jones@sasktel.net

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 20–26, 2009
Bro. Curtis Hurst, Rt.1, Box 40, Mullin, TX 76864, USA. 1-325-985-3868

TENNESSEE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Oct 3–4, 2009
Bro. Jim Rankin, 115 Sherwood Dr., Camden, TN 38320 USA. 1-731-584-6039

As Beloved Children

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

Our New Testament reading this morning (Eph. 5 and 6) brings before us two chapters of great beauty and practical power. No words of men can approach the power of these words. Our wisdom lies in centering our minds continually upon them, endeavoring to extract a maximum of their spiritual value.

Verse 1: *“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.”*

Literally, *“Become”*—a stronger word than just *“Be,”* indicating a process and an accomplishment.

“Be ye therefore”—this turns our attention to something preceding, and we look back to the end of chapter 5, beginning at verse 30:

“Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

What greater incentive could there be to love and holiness? *“Do not cause sorrow or grief to the One Who has manifested so much love to you.”* Consider the infinite graciousness of God's condescension—that the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth, has, by loving us, made it possible for us to grieve Him!

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, (that is, loud, angry words) and evil speaking, be put away from you.”

All these things grieve the Holy Spirit of God. *“Evil speaking”* is anything that we say about others that is not in the true spirit of the love that covers a multitude of sins. Straightforward things must be said when Truth is at stake, but how careful we must be that the Spirit, not the flesh, motivates them!

“And be ye kind to one another—tenderhearted—forgiving, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

There is not much virtue in forgiveness when one comes to us humbly repentant. Forgiveness is then a comparatively easy and pleasant operation.

But Jesus said, while they crucified him, “*Father, forgive them,*” and Stephen followed his example.

And while we were yet sinners he died for us to make manifest the power of a love that could lift us out of our sins. Forgiveness to mean anything, must be, as Jesus says, freely from the heart; grudgingly given as a duty, it means nothing.

5:1—“*Be ye therefore followers of God.*”

The word for followers means “imitators,” as the Diaglott and RV give it. *Pattern yourself after God*—the greatest achievement man can strive for, for God is love and holiness, hating evil, but infinitely patient and understanding and slow to anger, rejoicing in mercy and forgiveness.

... *as dear children.*”

“Dear” should rather be “*beloved*”—again as in Diaglott and RV. Love is the power, and the motive, and the reason for everything. Children must be beloved, or they cannot grow up to be lovable. Love is not just food and raiment, but warmth, sympathy and the closeness of heart to heart. God's children are beloved children. Because they *know* He loves them, they see love even in His wise and necessary chastisement.

“And walk in love” (verse 2).

This sums up all the teaching that follows in both chapters, in fact, *all teaching*—“*All the law and prophets are comprehended in this.*” This cannot be too strongly, or too often, emphasized. So much of ecclesial trouble, and of all trouble, is a direct result of failure in this. “*Love seeketh not her own.*”

Without love, all else is vain, all else is hypocrisy. Irritation, impatience, bitterness, harshness, self pleasing—are *not* love, and such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. “*Walk in love.*” We ourselves are our own greatest problem.

Verse 3: “*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you*”

Have we not often noticed the significant association of “*covetousness*” with these other evil things? In these days of abundance and infinite variety of desirable things, covetousness is a basic problem to those in whom the Spirit is striving against the flesh, though covetousness can equally be manifested in connection with the simplest of objects and activities.

Paul says that covetousness—the *desire to have things*—is idolatry. The Spirit's instructions (1 Tim. 6:8) are:

“*Having food and raiment, therewith be content.*”

Anything desired beyond this, except strictly and sincerely for spiritual purposes, is covetousness or idolatry. God is the all-sufficient desire and portion of the true saint, and any desire outside of God is to that extent an indication of imperfect love and incomplete spiritual satisfaction.

Verse 5 tells us that *foolish talking and jesting* are utterly out of place and unbecoming in those who claim the holy and exalted position of children of God.

Here we all stand condemned. Here is one of the childish and juvenile things among the hardest to put away when we aspire to be mature and spiritually-minded men.

The perfect pattern of a Christlike life is too beautiful and gracious to be cheapened by foolishness. Humor is the world's poor, thin substitute for the deep happiness and joy of the Spirit. Let us strive to say nothing we would not say in the presence of Christ, remembering that—

“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. 12:36).

And Solomon testifies similarly in solemn warning—

“The thought of foolishness is sin” (Prov. 24:9).

“Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor” (Eccl. 10:1).

A few foolish words can make all our preaching seem like hypocrisy and destroy all the good we have tried to do among men in manifesting the joyful beauty of a holy life in Christ.

Verse 6: *“Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things—including foolishness and coveting—cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.”*

“Let no man deceive you”—do not be deceived by any who belittle the seriousness and importance of these things. The way is narrow, and few find it. It will only be those who *tremble at God's Word* and take it all in utmost seriousness. Light, foolish talk and desire for earthly things are incompatible with spiritual-mindedness (verse 8)—

“For ye were darkness, but now ye are light in the Lord.”

From here to verse 15 the apostle speaks of light and darkness. Darkness is the natural state—the state of all the world. Light is the wisdom to realize that the natural way of the world, though appealing to the flesh, is darkness, and can end only in darkness. *All natural thought is darkness*—God's Word alone is light. A full realization of this is the finding of life.

“Let your light shine,” said Jesus—quietly, gently, but brightly and consistently—let your Christlike character and conduct be your witness and your preaching of Christ to the world.

Verse 15: *“Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”*

The world walks as fools, foolishly drifting away the time with their merriment and covetousness till death swallows them at last. This state of affairs is the evilness of the days. But the saints of God realize the preciousness of every passing hour as the brief time of opportunity to lay hold on wisdom and life.

Verse 17: *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of God is.”*

Don't be unwise by accepting the world's general view of things, or what yourself naturally thinks, but be anxious above all things to know and obey the will of *God* in everything.

Verse 18: *“Be not drunk with wine, but **be filled with the Spirit.**”*

Does this seem a strange comparison? A little meditation will manifest its fittingness. Wine has an exhilarating effect on the mind, giving a sense of well-being. It is typical of all the world's false and passing excitements.

“But be filled with the Spirit.” The Spirit is to wine as the true is to the false. It gives in eternal reality what men vainly seek in wine. It too has an exhilarating effect and gives a sense of well-being and comfort, but this time it is not false and transitory, but deep and true and everlasting.

Verse 19: *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs”—not only among yourselves, but within your own selves—singing and making melody **in your heart to the Lord.**”*

What a joyful and delightful and desirable character is portrayed! No anxiety, no self-pity, no childishly hurt feeling, *which are just the flesh's wounded vanity*, no dissatisfaction with present circumstances, *which is ingratitude to God*, no disquieting desire, *which is idolatry*; but relaxed, contented, joyful, thankful singing in the heart to God—perpetual sunshine within, regardless of what is without.

*“Giving thanks **always for all things**”* (verse 20).

Here is the perfect antidote for all the evils that trouble the mind. The true children of God are always so intensely and continually thankful that all that is unpleasant and unlovely is crowded out of their minds.

Verse 21: *“Submitting one to another in the fear of God.”*

This is very important in our relationship in the Truth. It will naturally follow the development of a contented mind. The one who has accomplished contentedness is ready to contribute to general harmony and the wellbeing of others. There will be no self-assertion, no desires demanding attention and satisfaction—but a gentle, Christlike yielding and serving and pleasing of others. Jesus said, “I am among you as one that serveth.”

* * *

From this point well into the following chapter, the apostle applies these divine principles to specific circumstances.

The first, occupying the remainder of this chapter, is the relationship of husbands and wives. It is a relationship of love, just as all relationships must be.

He states first, in two verses, that the wife must be subject to the husband in everything. Wisdom and harmony require that there be a recognized head and authority on whom the responsibility before God for all family decisions and arrangements rests. Any deviation from the divine standard is confusion.

But then, in nine verses, he speaks of the height and breadth of the love that is necessary to bring to fruition the fullness of the divinely-intended pattern from the beginning, as the beautiful type of the eternal, perfect union of Christ and his Bride.

Christ first, by the power of God, perfected himself, in the doing of which he laid down his life for his Bride. And now he ever liveth to make loving intercession for her—

Verses 25-27: *“Christ also loved the Ecclesia—the Called-out—and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.*

“That he might present it to himself a glorious Ecclesia, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

Has he the power to do it? Can he accomplish this in those who wholly and unreservedly cast themselves upon him? *Who dares to deny it—blindly measuring themselves by themselves and setting limits to the power of God?*

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands in everything . . . This is a great mystery . . . I speak concerning Christ and the Ecclesia.”

Are we part of the operation of this glorious divine mystery?

To whom does the apostle address himself next?—

Eph. 6:1: *“CHILDREN, obey your parents.”*

This is one of the very few places in Scriptures addressed directly and

specifically to children. It is very important. It is the one great thing that children have to be concerned with in pleasing God.

Parents will not always be perfectly just and right, for they too have much to learn, but that is not the children's concern—their command and duty is clear, if they desire to please God and be blessed by Him, and be used and useful in His purpose. The full command is—

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord.”

The obedience must be for, because of, and in harmony with the Lord. This is the great reason and motive of obedience. Parents will vary, just as masters will vary, but the one must be obeyed, and the other served faithfully, *as unto the Lord*. Obedience to parents is obedience to God, and disobedience to parents is disobedience to God.

Here again is the divine provision for family harmony and any violation of it creates serious responsibility for all the evils that may follow.

The command does not cease when the child ceases to be dependent upon the parent. It becomes even stronger in later years as the child reaches developed maturity. Then it becomes—

Verse 2: *“Honor thy father and thy mother.”*

—a guiding principle through life. All God's arrangements are beautiful; all violations of them are ugly and self-destructive.

Verse 4: *“And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.”*

What does the apostle mean? Why does he begin with and emphasize an aspect we might think very minor and negative?

“Provoke not your children to wrath.”

This command is worthy of much meditation. It warns of a danger that can destroy all good efforts, and one that only true divine love can protect against. In giving the same command to the Colossians, he adds—

“ . . . lest they be discouraged.”

It does not mean that there should not be strict discipline for fear of arousing anger. The Scriptures are very clear on the necessity of that. In fact, *the necessity of strict discipline is what makes this command so essential*

The parent is in the position of the strong having complete control over the weak. The bully is latent in us all, ingrained in our fleshly natures. There are a thousand subtle ways in which a parent can provoke a child to wrath, agitating and arousing the natural evil of the flesh, often with great and pompous self-righteousness, and the parent can always save face by taking refuge behind his divinely-given authority.

The child has no recourse except to impotent, inward turmoil against sarcasm, and oppression, and impatience, and foolish teasing, and habitual unjustified harshness in giving instructions, and passing whims and passions of the flesh, and a discouraging attitude of petty fault-finding and antagonism.

“Provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.”

There *must* be a basic foundation of gentle love, manifest even in correction. We cannot teach what we do not practice. Teaching is by example, and a bad, fleshly example is much more quickly imitated than a good one, that is the natural trend of the flesh. We cannot *teach* gentleness without consistently *manifesting* gentleness. Whatsoever is not done in godly love and patience is evil, and out of evil will come evil.

“Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

“Nurture and admonition” means *“chastening and instruction,”* as the RV has it. Here again, it is “of the Lord”—“in the Lord.” Everything must be done in the Spirit, and according to the instruction, of the Lord—within the circle of the Lord's blessing and superintendence—in *God's way*—or all will fail.

Verses 5 to 8 concern servants—our daily work—our relationship to our employers. No brother of Christ is a slack, or careless, or disinterested workman, whatever he may be doing. Christ's brethren are only those who do the will of his Father, and his Father's expressed will is that *everything* be done *heartily and cheerfully*, with singleness of heart, as if each task is done for God Himself. And work so done, whatever it may be, will be so accepted by God as service to Him.

Brethren of Christ must be constantly on guard against drifting into the world's evil way of serving as little as possible, afraid of giving more than enforced minimum, always seeking more payment for less labor. *This is an evil, selfish, grasping manifestation of the flesh that brethren will have no part of.*

Verse 9 concerns those who in any way have oversight over others. Such are instructed to apply the same principles—to be more anxious to give abundant measure than to take. This is not the way the world's industry is run, and a brother of Christ will often find himself very much out of place.

Verse 10: *“Finally, my brethren, be strong **in the Lord**, and in the power of **His** might.”*

(Always, and in everything, “*in the Lord*”). Jesus said to Paul—

“My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12:9).

And Paul, in response, recognizing the principle, said—

“When I am weak, then am I strong.”

It is a contrast and a comparison between natural and spiritual strength. To the world, Christ's brethren are weak. Instead of being strong and self-assertive they are mild and yielding and submissive to evil. But the brave strength of the flesh is but a passing and impotent shadow—the foolish puffing up of a toad in a pond. The worms of the grave soon conquer the mightiest among men. We must seek a more substantial strength and satisfaction than that.

*“Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of **His** might”*

How can *we* be strong in the power of *God's* might? Do these words have any real meaning? *If they have any meaning at all, then surely they refer to something very marvellous and unearthly.* Paul fervently prayed, earlier in the epistle (3:16), that God would grant them—

*“ . . . according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by **His Spirit** in the inner man.”*

—and that they may be—

“ . . . FILLED with all the fullness of God ” (3:19).

And he speaks (3:20) of God being—

“ . . . able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us ”

Surely there is a glorious reality to these things that we must strive to attain unto—even the things of the Spirit of God which are foolishness to the natural man—the transforming power that can overcome the evil motions and reactions of the flesh and perfect characters of beauty and holiness in the fear of God.

Verse 11: *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”*

Paul continues his comparison between the strength of the flesh and of the Spirit. He says further (verse 12)—

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood . . . “

Paul's fight was not against *people*, and neither is ours. We are sometimes apt to forget this and slip into the world's way of antagonism and belligerence against people.

“ . . . but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

What are these *“principalities and powers”*? The word translated

“principality” is *archee*, commonly rendered “beginning,” “old,” “chief or ruler,” throughout the New Testament.

Here it means leadership—rulership—control—dominion. The word for “powers” is not the Greek for power as *strength*, but the word meaning *authority*. What then is the headship and authority against which Paul fought?

We know it was not the *political* powers of the world, for he testified that such governments, though evil, were ordained by God for the present for general order among men, and he commanded submission and obedience to them.

When Jesus appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus (Acts 26:18), he said he purposed to send Paul to the Gentiles—

“ . . . to open their eyes, and to turn them from **darkness to light**, and from the power (authority—same word) of Satan unto God. “

And Paul told the Romans brethren that they *had been* the servants, or slaves of *Sin*, but that they were *now* servants of God and of holiness. It was *this* kingdom, rulership, dominion, authority, of Sin against which Paul fought. This Kingdom of Sin is personified and corporealized in the Kingdom of Men, but it was not the Kingdom of Men as such that Paul fought. *He went deeper than any outward manifestations to the basic individual elements of fleshly motives and conduct.* Rom. 7:23—

*“I see a law in my members warring against the law of mind, and bringing me into **captivity** to the law of sin.”*

That was the arena of Paul's warfare—the battle for, and within, each mind and heart. He is very clear in Eph. 2:2-3—

*“In time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.*

*“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in **fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.**”*

What then was the “*spiritual wickedness in high (or heavenly) places*” of which he speaks at the end of verse 12 of Ephesians 6?

The Pharisees are surely the best illustration of that, and Jesus' encounters with them well illustrate the warfare of which Paul speaks. They sat in Moses' seat—in “heavenly places”—they even controlled the High Priesthood and the House of God and the worship He had established.

Among the ecclesias the same things soon became manifest, and we see the result in the ecclesiastical institutions of today. It is an ever-present danger and requires a perpetual warfare—*the mind of the flesh exalted and*

ruling in the very Temple of God. All the things he warns them of in these two chapters illustrate the same warfare against Sin's principalities and powers, for *its seeds are in every heart.*

Verse 13: *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God."*

We notice that the armor is *"of God"*—from God—for it is only in the power of *His* might that we can be strong—

"That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."

Let us never presume on our ability to stand. The Spirit warns:

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Without the whole armor of God we have no hope of success, but are like soldiers going to battle lacking essential equipment.

". . . and having done all, to stand."

—having accomplished the warfare—when it is all over—when the last enemy is destroyed—to be found among those who are found still standing alive on the battlefield, and to join in singing together the glorious victory song of Moses and the Lamb.

Verses 14 to 17 particularize the whole armor of God—the belt, or girdle, or binding together of *Truth*; the protective breastplate or heart-covering of *Righteousness* (not self-accomplished, but *"it is God that worketh in you"* and *"we are His workmanship, created unto good works"*), feet shod with the "preparation"—the preparedness—the eager, enthusiastic readiness to serve the Gospel of *Peace*—*"How beautiful are the swiftly running feet of him that bringeth good tidings of peace!"*

"Above all," the shield of *Faith*—belief, confidence, assurance—the unassailable conviction that *God is*, and that He *will* unfailingly reward all who diligently seek Him with all their heart. This shield will defend against every attack, every assault of the enemy—all his inflammatory darts of temptation and evil desire—all his shafts of discouragement and doubt.

And take *Salvation* for your helmet, or more fully, as in 1 Thess. 5:8—*"for an helmet the Hope of Salvation."* Why a helmet and a breastplate, if the Shield of Faith is all-sufficient protection? Because *"Faith without Works is dead."*

The head must be enclosed by the hope that Paul says comes by a tested steadfastness, and the heart must be covered by the righteousness that comes from God.

And finally, the Sword of the Spirit, which is the *Word of God*: That is the weapon against all the rulership and authority and dominion of evil, both

within and without. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, the one and only weapon of offence—sharper and more piercing than any literal sword—searching and dividing between soul and spirit—between that which is fleshly and that which is of the Spirit. Only the Word can discern, and *teach us to discern*, our own hearts and motives.

He has mentioned six elements of the armor of God. What is the seventh? That he describes in verses 18-19—*Prayer*.

“Praying always, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”

Another version puts the thought perhaps a little clearer—

*“Use every kind of prayer and entreaty, and at every opportunity pray in the Spirit. **Be on the alert about it**; devote yourself constantly to prayer for all God's people.”*

It is those who bring their lives to this state of devotion who will stand approved before Christ. There must be an urgency and intenseness about our supplications—a great consciousness of inadequacy and shortcoming and spiritual need.

“Fear and trembling” is the required frame of mind, as specified in verse 5. The slightest tendency to complacency, or to relax our efforts, or take salvation for granted while we please ourselves from day to day, is fatal. There must be a constant pleading—a constant sense of abasement and unworthiness—*never of despair*, but always of earnest entreaty. The Great Example was pre-eminently a man of constant, fervent prayer—

“ . . . offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him Who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared ” (Heb. 5:7).

* * *

Verse 19: *“And for me, that utterance may be given me that I may open my mouth boldly . . . as I ought to speak.”*

Even Paul's preaching was not something to be taken for granted, great and especially-appointed apostle to the Gentiles though he was. Even Paul felt the need of their prayers, that he might have the courage to carry on his ministry to the end. Paul, too, was just a man like us, of our own same weak flesh and blood. Weariness, and labor, and pain, and ridicule, were just as real and hard for him as for us.

“To make known the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds” (literally, “in chains,” as RV).

An ambassador in chains! The great God of heaven had graciously sent an ambassador to men, fully verified by divine credentials, and they had put him in chains! *Had we forgotten that Paul was writing all these beautiful things from the confinement of a prison cell?*

Paul could have been very bitter about his unjust detention, and about not being able to be where he wanted to be. He could have depressed all around him by his childish moping and ungraciousness. But rather in all things he gave thanks and was not only *content*, but intensely *joyful*, accepting the will of the Lord as best, and doing all he could to spread the sunshine of his contentment and joy.

He concludes with his usual gracious salutation—peace, and love, and grace to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity.

“Sincerity” here is literally “incorruptness.” He is speaking of the unchanging, spiritual, and enduring love that united Christ and his brethren—

“Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with an imperishable and unconquerable love.”
—Bro. G. V. Growcott

Garden in Eden to Eden in the Kingdom

Our subject this evening, takes us back to the beginning of our Bible. In Genesis chapter 2, we find something which is not a mere story with a moral lesson, but a record of things that actually took place. We will also find that the things then present, while of deep interest to us, had a two-fold application. First, they referred to things as they were in an historical sense in which a foundation was laid for the development of the second. Second, the things recorded are a representation of something metaphorically suggested, but not expressly stated, which will become evident as we proceed. This particular record is not unique, for we will find many things in the early chapters of Genesis that were allegorical of things that developed many years later.

We turn now for a few minutes to the last book of the Bible—the Book of Revelation. The first verse indicates the character of the book—

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.”

It will be noted here that this last message of Jesus was NOT sent to the world in general—it was sent to his friends, or as he says, “unto his servants.”

The messages sent to the seven representative ecclesias, recorded in chapters 2 and 3, are of great interest. We speak of the seven ecclesias as being representative. We do so because the seven did not constitute all of the servants of Christ; and further, that these messages were intended for every believer as indicated by the postscript at the end of each message—

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”

Among the things we are to hear are the warnings and predictions of a great departure from the Truth as taught by Jesus and the apostles. How that gradually laxity would develop in religious matters, and because of that, false teaching would enter in, and people would turn away their ears from the Truth, and would wander into fables and myths.

But there are other things that the Spirit wants us to hear, and that is **THE GLORIOUS PROMISES THAT GOD HAD MADE TO THOSE WHO ARE FAITHFUL**: Those who believe the Gospel and are baptized into Christ, and remain faithful to him, would eventually attain unto unending life. Then the nations would be subdued, and reformed, and the earth would be a glorious place in which to live.

Another thing the Spirit wishes us to hear is the warning of Jesus concerning his second advent—how that he will come back to the earth in a time when he is least expected. Therefore, said Jesus, *“Blessed is he that watcheth.”*

There is another extremely important element in these messages, and that is, the promises of good are only to those who overcome. The first promise of this nature is the one we are particularly interested in just now—

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

The word *paradise* is a Persian word which had been adopted into the Greek, and later transferred into the English without translation. It signifies a park, or a forest, a garden of trees of various kinds, or a delightful grove. As the word signifies a garden of trees, or a delightful grove, the contemplation of it directs our minds to the opening chapters of our Bible, where we read,

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil”—Gen. 2:8-9.

There are five points in this passage which I think we would do well to note:

1. God planted a garden, or paradise, eastward in Eden.
2. Man was placed there.
3. The trees were caused to grow in the garden.
4. Among the trees were the Tree of Life, in the midst of the garden, and
5. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

That this garden, or paradise, was a beautiful place is evident from some of the references to it—

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places; and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord”—Isa. 51:3.

“And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden”— Ezek. 36:34-35.

At this point, it is well for us to realize that these passages from Isaiah and Ezekiel both refer to the time when Jesus shall be in the earth again, and the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters now cover the sea. Therefore, they reveal a future state in regard to Eden of which the original garden was a beautiful representation.

Adam was not placed in the garden for the purpose of passing the time in idleness; for we read in Gen. 2:15,

“And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it, and to keep it.”

Another feature of his life in the garden is revealed in Gen. 1:26,

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”

It will be noted in this passage that in granting the power to man to have dominion over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth, man’s fellow creatures were exempt. He was not given the power to exercise lordship over his fellow man, except in the circle of his own family. It is by the grace of God that man rules in his family. As Paul said, *“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”*

Under the Law of Moses, Israel was commanded to—

“Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Eph. 6:2-3).

One might ask then, under what authority do kings rule, for they found kingdoms and empires, and rule over their own people with a rod of iron? It is not, however, a question of authority: there are some things that God appoints, and many that He merely permits.

For the time being, God permits self-government. But the time is coming when that will be completely abolished, and man will not be permitted to rule over the earth, for that is what Jesus is destined to do. This is evident from his testimony before Pilate, in John 18:37,

“Pilate said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.”

But let us go back to the Garden of Eden, where we behold the most remarkable trees that have appeared on the earth:

1. The tree of knowledge of good and evil.
2. The tree of life in the midst of the garden.

These trees are of deep interest to us, because of the law under which our first parents—Adam and Eve—were placed. We read in Gen. 2:16-17,

“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”

Time passed, and finally the day came when they were put to the test. They failed, under temptation, and ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of their transgression of the law of God, they placed themselves in a state of sin.

Expecting that they would be equal to those described as “gods,” they ate of the tree, but soon discovered that something serious had taken place. Truly their eyes were opened, but not to what they expected. They had both fallen into unbelief. Apparently, they did not think that God would do what He said. This was their fatal mistake; and likewise it is fatal to all who presume upon the goodness of God.

They realized later, but too late, that in their sin, they had charged God falsely. And they also found by experience that what God promises He will perform without fail.

Thus, unbelief prepared and led them to disobedience; and disobedience separated them from God. Having transgressed the Divine law, their eyes were opened, and they discovered they were naked, and they were ashamed.

Sin had taken away the answer of a good conscience, and converted it into an evil one. They were then brought before the judgment seat, and sentence was passed upon them in the following manner. Gen. 3:17-19—

“And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

In his letter to the Romans, Paul has a lot to say about the transgression in Eden. Every one of us should be familiar with the fifth chapter, from which we quote the 12th verse (Diaglott rendering),

“As through one man sin entered into the world, (in which all sinned,) and through sin, death; so also, death passed upon all men.”

The next step taken by God is worthy of mature and thoughtful consideration. In Gen. 3:22-24, we read—

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

Mankind had lost God’s favor; they were expelled from paradise, and it was lost to them for many ages.

While it is true that the wages of sin is death, it is also true that the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore the Gospel introduces us to a way of escape, which leads to Eden to be regained in the Kingdom of God. Since the first transgression of Divine Law, there has been a gradual change. The introduction of sin, as we have shown, caused a breach to ensue between man and his Creator.

This, however, was not a fixed principle: For God, in His great wisdom and mercy, planned a healing of the breach by a gradual process which

would eventually bring more joy and glory than that which existed in Eden, because it will be on a much greater scale.

This began with worship at a distance through the medium of sacrifice by the death of an animal to provide a covering for Adam and Eve. In the next stage, a whole nation was brought close to God, and through Moses they were given a system of worship by ritual and sacrifice. Paul describes it as a shadow of good things to come, and it became a schoolmaster to lead the nation unto Christ. The apostle deals with this at great length in the letter to the Hebrews. In chap. 9:6-12, he says,

“The priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: The Holy Spirit this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands . . . but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.”

This stage of the Divine plan introduces Jesus, and offers him to the world as the medium of approach on the part of those who should respond to the invitation of the Gospel. Since then the Gospel has been preached, and from that day to this men and women, here a few and there a few, have responded to the gracious invitation to come out of the world of darkness, and become sons and daughters of the Eternal Father in heaven. They read the Scriptures daily, and pray daily, and do all in their power to walk “worthy of God,” watching daily at the posts of wisdom, waiting patiently for the coming of the Lord.

Writing to such a class in Corinth, Paul said,

“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”—2 Cor. 11:2.

In harmony with this we read in Rev. 19:7-8,

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

From this we realize that the marriage of the Lamb is the union that takes place between Christ and his faithful followers in the day of his manifestation upon earth in power and great glory. Consequently, the bride stands for the saints, and the saints are those who have believed and submitted to the requirements of the Gospel. This is evident from the way Paul addresses the believers in Rome—

“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints ”—Rom. 1:7.

And in the same manner, he addresses them in Corinth. All such believers, in every age, constitute the bride of Christ, to whom he (as the Lamb of God) is to be united at his coming, in the day spoken of by Paul *“when the Lord comes to be glorified in his saints. ”*

Christ is now alive forever more and, therefore, immortal, while his followers are either in their graves, or living in a weak or mortal state. At his coming, the dead saints will come forth by resurrection, and the living, with them, will be joined in the act of marriage with him, and their natures assimilated with his. At this stage in the Divine plan, the saints become kings and priests for the purpose of bringing the world to God. This is made clear in Rev. 5:9-10,

“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. ”

During the 1000 years of this arrangement, there will be taken from among the people a sufficient population of obedient men and women to occupy the earth as its immortal and God-glorifying inhabitants. A great change will take place in the earth as we read in Rev. 21:4,

“And God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. ”

This is the long-promised *“new heavens and new earth”* of the prophets. The making of the *“new heavens and new earth”* begins at the commencement of the millennial reign of Christ. But they are not seen in their finished state until the consummation depicted in the 21st chapter of Revelation. The people of the world will then be one race and one family—a race of people possessing unending life. Like Christ, they will be alive forever more.

“He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. ”

This is the glorious hope of the Gospel. The earth on which we live is to be renewed by the removal of the curse that came upon it when Adam and Eve were driven from the garden of Eden. We have God's assurance that there is a good time coming, and it will be accomplished in the way He has planned and promised.

Here is the invitation—

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son”—Rev. 21:6-7.

If those who are faithful to the requirements of the Gospel find themselves few in number, scattered, tired and faint. If the road is rough, the air is cold, and the long night is dark; if they become discouraged, and feel like giving up, then let them consider this beautiful picture of Eden in the Kingdom of God, and let them remember how it is written,

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him”—1 Cor. 2:9.

Our final picture of Eden in the kingdom comes before us in the opening words of Rev. 22—

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.”

Water is used by the prophets, and by Jesus in a figurative sense symbolizing eternal life. Isaiah's words are, *“Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”* And Jesus, addressing the woman of Samaria—

“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”—John 4:14.

This great power that Jesus possesses is beautifully symbolized in Rev. 22:1 by a flowing river from the throne. On each side of the river are trees, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. We learn from Isaiah, where he speaks of trees of righteousness, that trees used figuratively represent persons. Therefore, the persons that grow like trees planted by the river of life are the saints in Christ Jesus. Their leaves are for the healing of the nations. That is, their work and mission, and the effect of all they do as kings and priests with Christ, will be to cure the world of all the woes that now afflict it.

This is a message of truth, beauty and consolation. It has come to us from the Lord Jesus—

“I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify unto you these things in the ecclesias.”

We have the assurance of Jesus that if we walk in the Truth and overcome the things of the world by our faith and works, we will be among those who will eat of the TREE of LIFE which is in the midst of Eden in the Kingdom of God.

“For the Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places: and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody”—Isaiah 51:3.

Bro. George A. Gibson

Art Thou Come To Take A Spoil

President Obama's first phone call as President went to President Abbas, of the PLO, Fatah party. This is, of course, the rulers of the West Bank, and the party most hurt by the rise of Hamas in Gaza.

President Obama is said to have promised to keep Hamas from rearming.

Quote:

“The spokesman for President Abbas revealed that Mr. Obama had told the Palestinian leader that their conversation was his first with a foreign statesman since taking office. Mr. Obama also spoke to President Mubarak, of Egypt, Ehud Olmert, the Israeli Prime Minister, and King Abdullah of Jordan.

Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, said that the talks with Middle East leaders underlined a “commitment to active engagement in pursuit of Arab-Israeli peace from the beginning of his term”. He added: “In the aftermath of the Gaza conflict, he emphasized his determination to work to help consolidate the ceasefire by establishing an effective anti-smuggling regime to prevent Hamas from rearming, and facilitating, in partnership with the Palestinian Authority, a major reconstruction effort.”

That he made his first call to Fatah, and not to Hamas, is quite telling. Clearly this is the path to establish peace in the region, and not to foster the Arab/Israeli conflict. Fatah proved quite reliable in controlling the Arab street during the Gaza invasion.

We will have to wait to see what “active engagement” means. Could this finally mean placing US troops in Israel? Egypt has proved unreliable in trying to stop the smuggling. Both the Israeli and Arabs want US involvement. The US has steadfastly refused to become involved with troops, remembering Britain's experiences in the late 1940s.

But, as the saying goes, fools rush in where angels fear to tread. It could be that the lack of foreign policy experience by President Obama, may give him confidence to think he can succeed where others have failed, thereby placing troops in the region, setting up the fulfillment of an important prophesy of the latter days “Art thou come to take a spoil.”

Bro. Jim Phillips

Nebuchadnezzar's Image: The Islam Error

While the following deals primarily with the Islamic nations of the Middle East, the consequences of transferring such a belief to Europe - that is to *Islamacize* it - is the same: Rome – *especially the Papal aspect* - is removed from the prophecy. The result is expressed in the closing exhortation.

We might also add that the following argument was written to address the specific error within Unamendia of which it treats.

Quote:

“In Daniel, chapter 2, the Bible student is presented with an outline of relevant world history from the Prophet's time through the day when the Kingdom of God is established in the earth. It is revealed through a symbolic statue: Nebuchadnezzar's Image. Assyro-Babylon is represented by a head of gold. This is followed by Medo-Persia, shown by breasts and arms of silver. Then, Greece by belly and thighs of brass, and Rome [including the Romanish Papacy] by two legs of iron. The remnants of Rome are depicted by feet and toes of iron and clay. Russia provides the clay in both feet and toes (Hab. 2:6) which completes the Image allowing it to stand in full confederated manifestation in the latter days preparatory to the Stone that smites it: the Multitudinous Christ.

This has been sound, Biblical Christadelphian teaching since the revival of the Apostolic Faith in 1847. But the winds of error are ever blowing and attempting to knock down anything that is Scriptural, wholesome and good. Once again, the faith and understanding of Christadelphians are being undermined by an alternative interpretation based wholly upon specious reasoning. This erroneous view assigns the identity of the 10 toes to Arab kingdoms instead of Europe. The proponents of this notion base their support for it on four points: (1) the origin of the traditional Christadelphian interpretation; (2) the fact that the European Union has more than 10 members; (3) the Biblical use of the words “mixed” and “mingled”; (4) the locale of the Stone's impact.

We shall now examine each of these in detail.

(1) PROTESTANTISM OR TRUTH?

The proponents of the Arab-Moslem interpretation have asserted that “Christadelphians have quite simply borrowed” their traditional teaching (as well as other interpretations of prophecy) from “popular theology, modifying them to suit our unique doctrines when necessary.”

This assertion not only undermines Christadelphian teaching, but it impugns the integrity and scholarship of our pioneer brethren, and would contaminate their able expositions with the aura of orthodoxy. The implication is made that because elements of the Christadelphian interpretation are found in Protestantism, such must, therefore, be incorrect. The truth of the matter is that for many years certain Protestant expositors have promulgated both teachings concerning Nebuchadnezzar's Image: Arab-Moslem as well as European.

Church of England Clergyman, E. W. Bullinger, presented the Arab-Moslem view as early as 1922. In *The Companion Bible*, he suggested that the feet and toes of the Image represent the power that took Jerusalem in c.636 A.D., namely the Mohammedan or Arab. The first appearance of this teaching appeared in Christadelphia when Central Amended writer Harry Whittaker echoed Bullinger's theory in his writings from 1967-1976, adapting it to his understanding of Christadelphian doctrines as needed.

The Protestant promulgation of the European view is also well documented. Witness E.B. Elliott, et al. Mr. Elliott's work, *Horae Apocalypticae*, was published some 12 years after Dr. Thomas' various Apocalyptic exegeses in *The Apostolic Advocate*. The Doctor's articles would lay the foundation for both *Anatolia* and *Eureka*, later works that favor the European view, but offer a significantly different approach from the typical Protestant teaching of the day, both doctrinally and prophetically.

And so, in light of these facts we ask: Since either the Arab-Moslem or European view is believed by certain Protestants does it follow that one or the other is incorrect? No, such reasoning is non sequitur. Is the Christadelphian belief in the Millennium made null and void due to some Protestants believing such? Is our use of the Bible wrong because Protestants also use it? What is important is that which the Scriptures clearly teach. And, as we shall see, Biblical doctrine along with the record of history demonstrate beyond all doubt that the European view is sound, and the Arab-Moslem notion is not.

(2) EUROPEAN UNION MEMBERSHIP

The second point of the current Arab-Moslem presentation argues against the Christadelphian application of the 10 toes to European kingdoms or nations. The argument is presented that the European Union has over 20 members and thus there is no numerical assignment to the 10 toes. Therefore, it is asserted that the 10 toes must relate to the 10 so-called "Arab-Moslem" powers listed in Psalm 83: 6-8.

Actually, it matters not how many EU members there are at present. When the Russo-Gogian clay is sundered from the Image at Armageddon, there will be in Western Europe 10 toe-powers remaining, plus the papal horn, to fulfill destiny. We must remember that Roman Iron is in the legs, feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's Image. Rome's seat of geopolitical power, authority, religion, culture and influence was headquartered in the territory we know today as Europe: a collection of countries born of Rome's eclipse.

This is, therefore, the precise area wherein the feet and toes are to be manifest. Psalm 83 is irrelevant to the issue.

(3) THE "MIXED" OR "MINGLED" PEOPLES

The third "proof" offered for the Arab-Moslem identification of the 10 toes concerns the phonetic rendering of the word translated "mixed" in Daniel 2, verses 41 and 43. Because this word is phonetically rendered "ar-ab" by Strong's and others, it is deduced that the 10 toes must therefore be the arab "mixed" or "mingled" people of the Middle East.

Such reasoning is fallacious, ignoring both the sense of the passage and grammatical rules. The word in question is not a noun, and, therefore, can be neither the subject nor object of the verse. The word is a verb, in participle form. As a verb, it is exclusively an action word, meaning simply to mix or mingle. To attempt using a verb as either the subject or object of the sentence is shameful sophistry. The grammatical sense is clear to the honest Bible student: the Roman (iron) peoples would "mingle", or "mix," with others. Nothing in the verses indicates the removal of Roman influence. It is to remain until the Image is destroyed.

In addition, the concept of "mixed" or "mingled" is applied by the Scriptures to Israel (Psa. 106:35; Ezra 9:2) as well as to gentiles (Ex. 12:38; Jer. 25:24). The context of Daniel 2 and its relationship to the subject matter of Daniel 7 and the Apocalypse preclude the application of the term to either Israel or the Arab-Moslem peoples as far as the toes are concerned.

(4) INITIAL IMPACT OF THE STONE

The fourth 'proof' offered for the Arab-Moslem theory asserts that since the initial impact of the Stone is in the Middle East, the feet and toes of the Image must be standing there. This view is not really new either. It was implied long ago by Methodist Clergyman Adam Clarke (b.1762) in his Commentary, and is still promoted by theological seminary and college textbooks of the apostasy. These suggest that the Image stands in the latter days in the old Grecian areas of Syria and Egypt, in effect, ignoring some 20 centuries of subsequent Roman history.

Bible prophecy, however, along with the established facts of history, reveals the final posture of Nebuchadnezzar's Image: One leg in Western Europe and the other in Eastern Europe, or Constantinople. This is precisely where the Roman legs of Iron were historically situated. Moreover, the iron in both feet and toes is an extension of that in both legs. It is the same iron. And it is Roman-European. There exists no Scriptural justification to think otherwise.

When the epoch of the Russo-Assyrian clay laden feet commences, and the Image stands in full manifestation, the confederacy of Ezekiel, chapter 38 will be realized. The dominion of the Image shall be inclusive of the territory of these nations and by necessity must comprehend a larger geographic area than the Middle East. Indeed, when one compares the historic territorial extent of the Image to the Prophet's enumeration of nations, a virtual match is seen.

The Arab-Moslems are, therefore, not the 10-toe confederacy that the Stone smites. At the time of the end, the Russo-Gogian armies will move from Europe into the Middle East arena, and, upon the mountains of Israel, shall suffer the initial impact of the Stone (Ezek. 38-39). Certainly the Arab nations have their role to fulfill, but this is not to usurp that which is relegated to the Roman-iron nations. In the words of Bro. John Thomas: "It is impossible that Nebuchadnezzar's Image can represent any other imperial confederacy of nations than that under the King of the North in the time of the end."

CONCLUSION

Dr. John Thomas, has tied end-time events together quite well as they relate to Nebuchadnezzar's Image. His words that follow constitute an accurate portrayal of that which shall take place when the time comes for the powers represented in the Image to be destroyed by the Multitudinous Christ. He writes:

"We consider Nebuchadnezzar's Image the symbol of Gog's dominion when he, the King of the North (Dan. 11:40-45), and of Assyria (Isa. 30:30-33), encamps with his army, drafted from all subject-nations (Hab. 2:5), on the mountains of Israel (Dan. 11:45; Ezek. 38:8) on all sides of Jerusalem, and is in actual possession of the Holy City (Zech. 14:2) in the latter days (Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28).

"He is not the last Beast, however. Till Gog is broken, the lamb-horned and dragon-speaking Beast (Apoc. 13:11) is an Iron Leg of the Image: a co-partner with Gog, yet inferior to him in the majesty of the Greco-Roman-Dragonian dominion of 'The End.'

"But when the Clay is sundered from the Iron by the stroke of the Stone-Power, this is, when Gog is broken, the Western Leg and Toes, or 'Beast and the Kings of the Earth' (Apoc. 19:19) have still to be subdued. These are of the Fourth Beast of Daniel (7:11, 19-26), which has to be slain, and his body destroyed in the burning flame by the Lord Jesus, his Saints, and Israel. [1]

"The Image never existed as a whole elsewhere than in the dream. In the Latter Days, however, the thing signified by the Image will appear as complete in all its parts as the statue itself before it was smitten by the symbolic Stone."

EXHORTATION

Taking Rome out of Biblical prophecy and replacing it with other entities [such as Islam] is nothing new. It is a practice commenced centuries ago by Roman Catholic clergy loyal to the Papal Harlot: the enemy of the real Christ, and the notorious persecutor of the true ecclesia (Dan. 7:21). That some have chosen to join hands with her in either doctrine or practice is one of the great tragedies of our time. May faithful brethren and sisters continue to eschew such a union and stick with Biblically sound teaching believed by the true servants of the Deity since the time of John's exile on Patmos and

the rise of “the mystery of iniquity” already at work in Paul’s day (2 Thess. 2:7).”
—Bro. Bob Widding /Bro. Dale Lee

FOOTNOTE

1. For the complete disposition of the toes in the latter days, readers are encouraged to study the “Unique Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s Image,” by brother Thomas (Herald 1852, pp 3-19) in conjunction with *Anatolia*.

Forgiveness

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matt 6:12-15)

* * *

“So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” (Matt. 18:35)

Let us then, brethren and sisters, try to discover what may be at the root, giving rise to these offences, and if we are unable to discover anything obvious, imagine that every one who offends us personally has a hidden problem that has caused him/her to commit an offence, and with understanding, to forgive as our Father in heaven forgives us, for our constant offences against Him. Remember Christ forgave those who crucified and vilified him when he said,

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Stephen said, in his agony,

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” (Acts 7:60)

This is the attitude we need to have if we claim to be followers of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Bro. Ted Mingham

HYMN 11

**YAHWEH REMEMBERS WE ARE DUST, AND HE OUR FRAME
WELL KNOWS. FRAIL MAN, HIS DAYS ARE LIKE THE GRASS; AS
FLOWER IN FIELD HE GROWS:**

Psalm 103:14-15 – “For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth.”

FOR OVER IT THE WIND DOTHT PASS, AND IT AWAY IS GONE. We are reminded of the little puff ball of the dandelion that children like to blow and watch it float in the wind. AND OF THE PLACE WHERE ONCE IT WAS IT SHALL NO MORE BE KNOWN.

Verse 16 – “For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.”

BUT UNTO THEM THAT DO HIM FEAR GOD'S MERCY NEVER ENDS;
AND TO THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN STILL HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS EXTENDS:

Verse 17 – “But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children’s children;”

Verse 11 – “For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.”

TO SUCH AS KEEP HIS COVENANT, AND MINDFUL ARE ALWAYS OF HIS MOST JUST COMMANDMENTS ALL, THAT THEY MAY THEM OBEY.

Verse 18 – “To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.”

“Our fight with evil is only short in each individual case. It is long for the whole family, because, in the barren state of the human race, it takes a long time to develop a multitude that no man can number, who, out of great tribulation, will victoriously come at the last. But the battle of the whole exists not for any one member of the body. We have only our own day. The head alone is contemporary with the struggles and prayers of the whole multitude of his brethren; and he is made strong for the shepherd work. The others fight their own fight and win their own race—a brief conflict of three score and ten at the outside—and then lay down their burdens and their toils, with the sweet consolation that the Lord will take care of his own glorious work, and wake them from the sound and short rest of the grave to rejoice with him on the arrival of the morning of the salvation which will usher in eternal day.” (RR)

Analecta Apocalypticae (33) The Name of the City Within

To write the Name of the City of the Deity upon one already inscribed with the Name of the Deity, is indicative of all such constituting a Body Politic — a Divine Municipality. It is called “New Jerusalem” in contradistinction to the Old Jerusalem under the Mosaic constitution, “in bondage with her children.” The latter was the mother of those whose name

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was good for nothing, but the former is the mother of all who believe the promises concerning the glorious things spoken of her approaching future. At present she is barren and desolate, having no children, nevertheless, this same shall break forth and cry, and become the higher Jerusalem, “the free city,” which is the mother city, or metropolis, of the kingdom and dominion of the Millennial Aion. Jerusalem under Solomon the Second will be “higher,” or more exalted, than Jerusalem under Solomon the First, because the Municipality — THE INCORPORATE DEITY — will be her glory. In the time of Solomon her state and municipal corporations were mortal men, and the glory of the Deity was confined to the temple between the cherubim; but in the coming reign, the administration from the King to the least in the kingdom, will be immortal and greater than all that are born of women, and of such excellency in the estimation of Deity as to be compared to “gold and precious stones” (Gal. 4; Apoc. 21).

But in the writing before us, it is said to “descend out of the heaven from the Deity.” The reason of this is, because he in whom the fulness dwells is there, and the city will not be manifested until he descends. The Holy City consisting of the saints, is at present trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and will so continue to be until the end of the forty and two months of day-years — 1260 years. Its fortunes are parallel with those of the city under the Turks, and the tribes scattered abroad. The Holy City lies in the dust, with only here and there a stone monumental of its ruin. But when power descends from the heaven with Jesus, he will by that power refashion the ruins, and bring them forth for a Name and City of his Deity — a name and city composed of the Sons and Daughters of Omnipotence. Thus the city is “out of the Deity,” for it can have no existence apart from his wisdom and power. The ashes of its dead would never be refashioned spontaneously. If this were possible, the city might be said to ascend from the dust; but this is not possible, therefore the city is represented apocalyptically, as “descending out of the heaven from the Deity,” to indicate the direction from which the formative energy is derived, and to connect the operation with the appearing of Jesus Christ. But, in relation to the New Jerusalem, I shall defer the further consideration thereof until I come to consider John’s vision of its descent in Apoc. 21.

A Clerical Exposition

I shall conclude this exposition of the epistle to the Angel-Presbytery at Philadelphia, by reproducing what the Church of England Bishop Newton has said upon the subject. It will afford the reader a specimen of high orthodox apocalyptic interpretation, of which the humblest among the saints would be thoroughly ashamed.

“Philadelphia, so called,” says he, “from Attalus Philadelphus its builder, is distant from Sardis about twenty-seven miles to the southeast. It is called by the Turks Allah Shah, or the beautiful city, on account of its delightful situation, standing on the declivity of the mountain Tmolus, and having a most pleasant prospect on the plains beneath, well furnished with divers villages, and watered by the river Pactolus. It still retains the form of a city,

with something of trade to invite the people to it, being the road of the Persian caravans. Here is little of antiquity remaining besides the ruins of a church dedicated to St. John, which is now made a dunghill to receive the offal of dead beasts. However, God hath been pleased to preserve some in this place to make profession of the Christian faith, there being above two hundred houses of christians, and four churches, whereof the chief is dedicated to Panagia, or the Holy Virgin, the other to St. George, who is of great fame among the oriental christians; the third to St. Theodore, and the fourth to St. Taxiarchus, as St. Michael the archangel is called by the Greeks. Next to Smyrna, this city hath the greatest number of christians, and Christ hath promised a more particular protection to it. See Apoc. 3: 8,9,10. Than which, as Dr. Spon saith, what could be said more formally to foretell the coming of the Turks, the open enemies of christianity, who seem to be sent on purpose for the punishment of our crimes, and to distinguish the faithful from the false christians, who pretend to be so, and are not?"

This is all the bishop has to say in exposition of the letter before us and his remarks upon all the other letters are as vapid and shallow as the specimen here given. He evidently knew more of geography and archaeology, than of the christian faith; and evinces a very low conception of the divine character in supposing a special preservation of the worshippers of the Virgin and the saints "to make a profession," which makes the name of christianity a stench in the nostrils of the followers of Mohammed, who justly regard them as a set of contemptible idolaters.

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

(Continuation from back cover)

attention of the arranging brethren of his ecclesia a course, known publicly, being pursued by one of their number which was in direct opposition to the law of Christ. Rule 29 should have been applied at once, but the brother was promptly told that it was none of our business what a brother did in his private life. This concept of ecclesial responsibility is not new.

Bro. Thomas had to contend against it as is manifest by what appeared in Oct. 1866 Ambassador of the Coming age, where he said:

"It is a monstrous conceit that the only discipline the Ecclesia can enforce in these times is against false doctrine, and not against immorality of conduct. Such a rule as this, approved by any society of professors, would make it a fellowship of iniquity. For myself, I would not belong to such a body of evildoers. The conceit is itself false doctrine, and, therefore, a matter of discipline. Such a dogma is symptomatic of immorality in the holder.

"An ecclesia should, at least, aim to keep itself free from the corruptions that are in the world through lust, though it may not succeed to the extent desired. To fellowship iniquity knowingly, and without rebuke, makes us partakers in the guilt."

Any ecclesia that does not aim to keep itself free from corruptions that are in the world through lust, is in the position of having a name of being alive, but in reality is dead and headed for extinction by the removal of its lightstand. No ecclesia can expect to prosper (in the Bible sense) and find favor with God, if its members (especially the prominent ones) use tobacco, attend picture and other theaters, have television in their homes, and are members of business men's clubs, and other worldly organizations.

If morals are not guarded, it is useless to talk about believing our Statement of Faith. Discipline is an outstanding characteristic of the Word of God. It appeared first in Eden, and finally in the Apocalypse. It was one of the great basic principles of the law of Moses, and when disregarded it brought disaster upon the people of Israel. As the Law was a shadow of good things to come, it is not surprising to find the same principle in the law of Christ. By using the Revised Stand. Ver. we get this rendering where the A.V. uses "chasten"—

"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by Him. For the Lord disciplines whom He loves, and chastens every son whom He receives"—Heb. 12:5-6.

Therefore, disaster will likewise come upon the Christadelphian body if discipline is not exercised in our ecclesias. Never, in the history of the body, have we faced such grave issues as we do today. *What are we going to do about it?* Can it be possible that we will cover up the past, and ignore it altogether? It was the past that Paul used for one of his strong appeals in these words—

"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope"—Rom. 15:4 (RSV).

Jesus will soon be in the earth again—there is no doubt about *it*, and we all know that we must appear before him for acceptance or rejection. We also know whom he will choose to be associated with him in the age to come. It will be those who have *devoted themselves to the service of God*, and have walked in the Truth, being exercised by the discipline of the Word. We know, too whom he will reject. It will be those who have refused to submit to the discipline of the Word, and have made friendships of the world, and participated in its corrupted pleasures, thereby shutting out of their lives the love of the truth.

We all have freedom of choice. Therefore, let us exercise it. But, by all means, let it be in favor of him we call "MASTER,"

". . . who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world"—Gal. 1:4. —Bro. G.A. Gibson

Discipline

The basic meaning of the word *discipline* is instruction and chastisement, but it has several shades of significance. It is used to indicate training to act in accordance with rules designed for proper conduct or action. It is also used to denote the system of government regulating the practice of a church as distinguished from its doctrine. It is in that sense we will consider it in this brief message.

In the Christadelphian body, we have been fortunate in possessing a system of rules embodying the suggestions set forth in a Guide to the formation and conduct of ecclesias. This was written by bro. Roberts, and published for the first time in 1883. We call *it* our Constitution. As one reads this excellent work of our beloved brother, *it* becomes apparent that the aim of these rules is to conduct our ecclesial affairs in the most harmonious manner; to *give* our brethren and sisters the benefit of long experience; to save them retracing unguided steps; to assist them to grow in the knowledge of sound scriptural principles, that they may walk in the truth, and conduct themselves in a way that will be pleasing to our Father in heaven.

If we were to attempt to classify our rules, it might be said that their general purpose is threefold and, therefore, respecting—

A—The routine operation of our meetings.

B—Our moral walk.

C—Our doctrinal walk.

It should be noted, however, that while “A” is independent of “B” and “C”, the latter, to be efficacious, must be maintained in unity. For it is possible to hold to a very high state of morals and, at the same time, to be astray from the truth as it is in Jesus: and, likewise, it is possible to believe, without reservation, our Statement of Faith, while our conduct may indicate that we are conformed to this present evil world.

If we are to be protected from such confusion, and from corruption of the faith, then discipline must enter and perform her work. The word appears but once in the authorized version of the Scriptures of truth, but it *is* both arresting and significant. Elihu, speaking on God's behalf, said—

“He declares to them their work and their transgressions, that they are behaving arrogantly. He opens their ears to instruction (AV: discipline) and commands that they return from iniquity”

It has been said, and it is too often general practice, that the only discipline our ecclesias can enforce is against false doctrine. Personal conduct, unbecoming a brother of Christ, is quite often frowned upon, but no action is taken. We know of a case where a brother brought to the

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