

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.

Vol. XII No. 3 (XCVII)

March, 2009

Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.

Phone: (586) 790-2156 Fax: (586) 349-6304 e-mail:

fhigham@gmail.com

Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

ECCLESIAL NEWS.....	Houston, Boston, Sabata
EXHORTATION	Beware of Hypocrisy 72
EXPOSITION	War..... 83
THOUGHTS	Re "D.V." 91
THOUGHTS	With Our Brother 92
Analecta Apocalypticae (34).....	To The Ecclesia At Laodicea..... 95
THOUGHTS	Forsake Not The Assembly 100

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

HOUSTON, Texas – Sunday School 10am (1,2 Corinthians); Memorial 11:10am; Study Class 1pm; 4th Sunday 1pm (Open discussion, roundtable Bible class); Thurs. 7:00pm. Meeting Hall address: Bro. Michael Kramer, 8008 Junius Street, Houston, TX 77012

Greetings to all in the brotherhood,

Since our last correspondence we have received visits from bro. Jason Carroll, bro. Jon Lorquet, sis. Casey Burgamy, bro. Bob Bent and bro. Lee, sis. Kristi Smith and family.

Likewise, we are happy to report the interview and baptism of **Darin Anderson** which took place in Houston on August 30, 2008, followed by the right hand of fellowship the next day. Please welcome bro. Darin on his walk toward Zion. He resides in the Waxahachie area of Texas and will join our brothers and sisters in the Dallas ecclesia.

We are also happy to report that sis. Carolyn Dylla, after an absence from the table of the Lord, has returned to fellowship on September 7, 2008. We welcome her back and hope she continues steadfast in her walk Zionward.

On a sad note, we have withdrawn fellowship from bro. Greg Maier, due to lack of communication and continued absence from the table of the Lord. It is our hope and prayer that he returns to the brotherhood before that day of judgment is upon us all.

We would like to remind all (especially those near Houston) of our planned study weekend to be held (Yahweh willing) on April 11,12 at the Lake Houston State Park. This is the same place that we held the study weekend, last year. Please see further details in the “Fraternal Gatherings and Activities” section of this printing.

With all the political activity in this country and the world, we are reminded that our Master will return very soon, let us all be prepared with oil in our lamps, for that day of judgment and the Kingdom to be re-established upon this earth.

Love, in the common Hope we share,
Bro. Mike Kramer, Recorder

BOSTON, Massachusetts---S.S. 9:00 A.M. Memorial 10:15 A.M. Mid-week Study Class Friday evening. Recording Bro. James Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd. Northboro. MA 01532

Greetings in Christ our Lord.

It is with great joy that I report the following information from the Boston Ecclesia.

Friday evening February 20, 2009 the examining brethren conducted a baptismal interview with **Kerri Scott**. She is the daughter of Brother and Sister Wayne and Pam Johnson of our ecclesia and has come up through the Boston Sunday School. She gave a good confession of The Faith and was baptized at the end of the interview. She will be given the right hand of fellowship and accepted as a member of our ecclesia

tomorrow at the memorial service, God willing. We wish her God speed in her new life. Any wishing to communicate with her can do so at the following addresses:

Kerri Scott, 22 Jacob Amsden Road, Westborough, MA. 01754 or via e-mail at kerri1359@aol.com

Our Friday evening class is now taking up the book "The Law of Moses" by Bro. Roberts. We have the joy of discussing and reading together with many of the household of faith by the computer. It is permitting those in isolation like Sister Jennifer Weseloh to be virtual members of our ecclesia. She also joins us on Sunday mornings for Sunday School and memorial service. Brother and Sister Gilles and Lynn Robineau have now joined us and although his health does not allow him to get around we are able to enjoy discussions and fellowship on line. We also have members of other ecclesias join with us in our study class, these include, members from Goldthwaite, TX; Detroit, MI; Moyock, Newton, and Windsor, NC; Canton, OH; and Holladay, TN. We enjoy and look forward to the input and uplifting time together each week.

On January 17, 2009, Brother and Sister Jon and Jean Garvey had a healthy son named Kevin. We look forward to him growing, "In the nurture and admonition of the Lord" as a future member of our Sunday School.

On behalf of the Boston Ecclesia,
Brother Jim Sommerville

SABATA, Kenya – Sunday School 9am; Memorial Service 10am; Friday – Bible Topics; Saturdays – Lectures; Bro. William Kilui, Recorder, P.O. Box 27, Kamukuywa 50216

Dear Bro. Fred,

Re: Change Of The Name Of Our Ecclesia

Warm and loving greetings in the hope of Israel,

May I express my appreciation for your continued support of the BCEN Magazine, which is of great value to us both for ecclesial information and Spiritual welfare. For it guides, enlighteneth and also upholds the Berean belief as part of the salvation we seek in our Lord. I also thank the brethren who may be contributing in one way or the other towards the production of this magazine, God bless all.

Please may I request you to publish to the Brotherhood that we no longer use the name of (Kamukuywa) but the above as Sabata Berean Ecclesia, P.O. Box 27, Kamukuywa Code No. 50216. The address remains the same but Name is changed. Thank You.

May God continue to bless all yours in the Master's Vineyard,
Bro. William Kilui, Recorder

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias - Corrections
SABATA, Bro. William Kilui, PO Box 27, Kamukuywa, 50216

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

NORTH CAROLINA STUDY WEEKEND.....May 16–17, 2008

Bro. Dale Lee, (757) 620-6639, dleecpa@mchsi.com

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

Beware of Hypocrisy

“Sell that ye have, and give alms. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not—Luke 12:33

Luke chapter 12 is an important chapter. It is an important part of the brief but infinitely deep teachings of the Greatest Teacher who ever lived—the Teacher who was a perfect Example of his own teaching.

The lessons he taught constitute the Way of Life. There are many teachers, many schools, many courses of instruction in this world, but this one stands out from them all, like light from darkness.

According as we pass or fail THIS course—according as we learn or do not learn it—so our eternal destiny is determined. Surely then there is nothing in the world that approaches the importance of the earnest, eager, continuous prayerful study of these things!

Let us not take Salvation for granted. So many appear to, by the unconcerned way they give energy and attention to so many unimportant and passing things.

Salvation is well within the grasp of all, but it is only promised to those who devote ALL their heart, and bend ALL their energies, to obtaining it.

Remember the Pearl of Great Price. He “sold all that he had” to get it. Think of that continually—many times a day—

He sold ALL THAT HE HAD to obtain it.

* * *

THIS chapter deals with the basic realities of Truth, of character, of conduct. It has to do with our daily lives—all the simple but basic day-to-day activities that form the pattern of our existence.

It manifests the mind and wisdom of the Spirit. It is essential for our salvation that we learn the lessons that God seeks to teach us through this Perfect Teacher that His love provided.

These are the truths that shall “*make us free*”—free from the mind of the flesh, the natural mind, the natural, animal way of death, the “*corruption that is in the world through lust.*”

It is revolutionary. It is transforming. It is fresh, and new, and different. It is not just repairs and patches and alterations on an old familiar garment. We must be prepared for a complete change of thinking from the natural way of sinful, fleshly man.

We MUST come to the words of Christ as to a Great Light, in the full assurance of faith—realizing our own darkness and ignorance and need for complete transformation from natural to spiritual—praying that we may be blessed to understand, and comprehend, and absorb into our minds and lives these wonderful teachings of the Spirit of God.

* * *

“There were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trod one upon another”—v. 1.

The leaders he denounced in terrible, scathing words, directly dictated by the Holy Spirit to which he was always completely subject. His words were the words of God.

But the people he looked upon with sorrow and compassion, as “*sheep without a shepherd.*” They flocked to hear him, seeking help, light, guidance, comfort, and answers to the dark enigma of life, escape from the burden and sorrow and plodding meaninglessness of natural existence.

But very few comprehended. All except a handful turned away. They could not face the dazzling, searching glory of these words of eternal life. They were too deep, too vast, too revolutionary, too upsetting.

They meant too much of a change in the familiar, comfortable, deep-rooted patterns of flesh. His hearers sensed that he was asking them to break loose from all the fixed and stable and respectable principles the wisdom of the flesh is built on, and plunge with him in faith into the uncharted and the unknown.

He spoke words that could only be spiritually received and understood, words that could be understood only by those who—above all else—WANTED to draw nigh to God in love and worship and service and eternal, thankful joy.

* * *

“He began to say unto his disciples first of all...”

If “*First of all*” is made the beginning of his statement, as some

translations show it, it would be clearer—

“He began to say unto his disciples, First of all...”

But **either** way still gives strong emphasis to his warning:

“Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

He does not mean beware of hypocrisy in **others**: he means beware of it in YOURSELF. This is clear from what he says further, in vs. 2-3.

First of all, ABOVE all, *“Beware of hypocrisy.”* Because of the deceptiveness of the mind of the flesh, **this** is our greatest danger and stumbling block. This is the biggest hazard to our attainment of the Kingdom.

The original word for *“hypocrisy”* literally means *“acting a part on the stage.”* It means creating an appearance of being different from what we really are, or—and this is even more subtle and dangerous—**thinking** ourselves, our conduct, our motives, our characters, to be different from what they are.

Acting instead of really BEING is the great problem with us all. And we get so adept at **acting** a transformation, we think we're really transformed.

Naturally, by birth of sinful flesh, we are all hypocrites. The natural mind of the flesh is wholly hypocritical and false:

“In me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth NO GOOD THING” (Rom. 7:18).

Only the light of the Spirit-Word, diligently studied and sincerely applied, can enable us to discern this natural, inbred hypocrisy of the flesh.

The diabolos is the great deceiver. The Spirit-Word is the great enlightener.

One of the 6 occurrences of this word *“hypocrisy”* is applied to Peter when he would not eat with the Gentiles (Gal. 2:13), there rendered *“dissimulation.”*

Peter was sincere, but he was deceived by the flesh. He did not see himself clearly. Let us constantly, searchingly, examine ourselves, our actions, our motives: WHY do we really do, say and think what we do?

God hates anything false and artificial—all hollow show and appearance and pretense. All such is out of harmony with truth, reality and eternity.

SO much attention is paid to external appearance! SO much pitiful effort to deck and camouflage and glorify and glamorize a poor, corrupt, perishing body.

And so **little** concern or effort is shown for INNER reality and purification and transformation. *“Beware of hypocrisy”*—playacting, putting on a show, making clean and beautiful the outside, neglecting the inside that God alone can see.

Any form of religion that does not go right down to the deepest roots

of the heart and completely change and transform the whole life is HYPOCRISY—Pharisaism, counterfeit—powerless to save from death.

* * *

“For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; And that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops”—vs. 2-3.

The ACTING will be ruthlessly sifted from the true BEING. This is not a threat. It is a plain, simple statement of fact. And wisdom will be thankful, and guided by it.

God, we are told, is a “*God of Truth,*” and let us be eternally glad it is so. We cannot fight against God. We cannot fight against facts. God's Will—His glorious, perfect, all-righteous Will—will prevail at last. Everything out of harmony with it must disappear forever from the face of the earth.

Everything that is in any way false will be exposed to shame, and cleared away. Everything that is hidden will be brought out into the light, in the process of cleansing the earth for the habitation of God's glory.

When all external appearance is taken away, what shall we have of eternal reality, as we stand exposed at the Judgment Seat of Christ, before the eyes of all the ages? How much of all our life's effort and interest and accomplishment will pass through the fire, to stand to our account?

We read of Achan's childish attempt to hide something from God by burying it in his tent, and how the whole affair was openly exposed before the whole congregation, and he was destroyed.

We see the same pitiful pantomime being acted out again at the beginning of another dispensation, in the scheming folly of Ananias and Sapphira.

We wonder, in the superiority of our enlightenment, how people can be so stupid as to try to deceive God in such obvious, clumsy ways. But—“*Beware of hypocrisy*”: if we will examine ourselves, we will find Achan and Ananias right within our own hearts.

We shall find the same stupidity of the flesh that thinks it can please itself and gratify itself and cut corners in God's service and still out-manuever God into giving us eternal life.

Ananias and Sapphira “*kept back part of the price.*” They doubtless gave most of it, and felt noble in so doing, but the lesson is that “*most*” is not enough. God demands ALL—not as an “*austere man,*” but as our joyful and “*reasonable service.*” Less than all means the heart is not right, the value of the Pearl is not comprehended, and sacrifice is blemished and incomplete.

Are we exactly what we appear to be?

Are we, to the best of our ability, and to the full extent of our opportunity, ALL that implied in God's commands and our solemn covenant that—

“ALL that the Lord hath spoken we will do”?

To the extent that we are **not**, to **that** extent we are hypocrites—play-actors—holding back part of the price.

“There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.”

* * *

“Fear not man who can, at worst, only cut off your mortal life; but fear God who can end your life eternally”—vs. 4-5.

We all fear man. Man's opinion, man's favor, man's friendship, man's approval, man's help, man's ridicule, man's threats and powers of damage and harm—if we examine our lives, we shall find that these things loom large in all our calculations and provisions.

But what is man compared to God? What can man do beyond what God permits? The words of Jesus indicate the only way of wisdom—

“Frame your life and all your actions solely with a view to GOD's opinion, and approval, and favor.”

But this is hard. It is contrary to nature. It takes constant self-reminding and effort, and a deep, powerful, living Faith, to do everything we do solely as unto God with no deviation or hesitation out of fear of man or consequences.

But this path alone gives peace: this path alone gives life.

* * *

“Are not five sparrows sold for a farthing?—and not one of them is forgotten before God.”

This is a tremendous conception. We cannot comprehend God but it is essential to our salvation that we continually meditate upon His infinite greatness and marvelousness.

Nothing is too vast for His perfect control; nothing is too small for His observance and attention! Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing it. He is everywhere present, and universally aware of every minute detail of His vast and glorious creation.

All things are created by and out of His Spirit. All manifestations of creation are concretions of His Power, and atomic research has begun to reveal in this our generation the infinite power locked up in a single handful of dust. And beyond power there is—even in the sparrow—the unfathomable marvel and miracle of Life from God.

We must continually strive to get the fullness of this vast conception of God.

He is not a God afar off. He is not a God too busy or too occupied to take constant complete care of the least of His children. Any conception of God that is less than this does not have the full power of the Truth—either for comfort or for stirring up to the terrible responsibilities of holiness.

“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered”—v. 7.

Nothing is missed. Nothing is overlooked. Every giving in to the motions of the flesh, and every effort to overcome—no matter how small or insignificant—all are observed by a strict though loving Father.

* * *

“Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God”—v. 8.

To what extent do we make an effort to fulfill this requirement of discipleship in our daily life? The natural way is to delude ourselves with one of many lazy excuses—

“It wouldn't do any good...I have tried it before...It only makes bad feeling...People will think that I am queer...We shouldn't '*Cast pearls before swine,*' etc.”

This last one especially—so much unfaithful stewardship hides behind the misapplication of this quotation! But the words of Jesus still stand to judge us at the last day: *“Only those who make a point of confessing me publicly will I confess.”*

And this matter of *“confessing Christ”* is not just **talking** about the Truth. Actually that is just a very small part of the full picture. The main aspect is **LIVING** the Truth in an open, light-irradiating, consistent, self-controlled, beneficent godliness, graciousness and gentleness.

It should always be obvious in a courteous and kindly way, that we are a separate, holy people, that we are not part of the common, coarse animal run of the world, that we have *“been with Jesus.”*

“Let your light shine”—noiselessly but unmistakably—*“that men may see your good works and glorify your Father.”* The connection and motive must be clear and obvious enough so that **God** is glorified—not us.

* * *

In vs. 13-15 a man in the crowd, wholly absorbed in his own petty little selfishness and completely oblivious to the vast scope of Jesus' words of eternal life, broke in to demand—

“Master, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me!”

What an ugly, grating and incongruous contrast to the depth and beauty of Christ's words! But when we think upon it, do we not all fit into this picture?—so much more concerned with and wrapped up in our own petty little interests than in the great scope of God's purpose.

We see the world going its animal way—to the bar, to the racetrack, to the theater, to the television—and we tend, like the Pharisee, to congratulate ourselves that we are *“not as other men are.”* But we can so easily be going the same self-pleasing way on a different plane.

The question is: Are we, in our lives, primarily seeking to serve and please God, or ourselves? If the latter, then no matter how elevated and noble the activity, it is still the flesh.

Jesus' words are timeless and boundless in their gentle but clear warning—

“Take heed! Beware! Beware of covetousness—the animal desire for material things—for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”—v. 15.

A man's riches are what he IS, not what he HAS.

Out of this incident comes the parable of the rich fool, who planned everything so beautifully for a comfortable, plentiful old age—the normal pursuit of animal man today.

Jesus did not condemn him. He didn't say he was wicked to make such wise and practical provision for the necessities of the future. He just said—

“You poor fool! You poor, pitiful, blind fool! Today your life is done. All your opportunities of gaining real, eternal riches are passed forever. It's all over for you. NOW what good is all your carefully hoarded wealth?”

And so, says Jesus, is everyone who gathers for **himself**, rather than for **God**.

* * *

The next 10 verses put this lesson into direct, plain instruction, repeated for emphasis—

“Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on”—v. 22.

Consider the ravens: God feeds them. Consider the lilies: God clothes them with greater beauty and splendor than Solomon in all his glory. All these things do the animal nations of the world seek after. This is their wisdom, their way of life. This is all they know. They know nothing of spiritual values, spiritual riches, spiritual insurance for every conceivable eventuality of the present and the future. So they labor to load themselves with possessions and safeguards, driven by greed, and obsessed with fear.

But YE are called to something infinitely greater and more noble and more satisfying—even God's glorious eternal Kingdom.

Jesus is not teaching laziness or improvidence. We are clearly taught elsewhere to “*provide for our own*,” and “*If a man will not work, he shall not eat*.”

What IS he teaching? He is teaching first of all that we MUST NOT WORRY. This is a **positive command**. All worry is a lack of faith, a doubting of God, a triumph of fear over love. Having done our best, we MUST trust in God's care—

“If God so clothe the grass, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of LITTLE FAITH!”—v. 28.

Is that us: “*little faith*”? Worried about this, worried about that; fearful and concerned about life's passing problems which loom so large and so important to them of little faith?

And he is teaching that we must get the right perspective. We must learn and recognize and accept the relative importance and unimportance

of things. Truly we must eat, we must be clothed, we must have somewhere to live, but these are very passing, secondary things, the more simply taken care of and gotten out of the way the better, so the mind and time and energy can be given to REAL things.

Small minds are absorbed with food and raiment and all the passing things of this life. Spiritual minds dwell on the things of God—wonderful, glorious, eternal things.

Which are we?—small, childish, immature, concerned with and interested in the things of the present? Or are we truly endeavoring to GROW UP—and set our affections on things above, to grow in mental and spiritual stature, in knowledge and in divine grace?

We all start out small and childish. It's no sin to be small-minded. But it IS a sin, and a tragedy, to **stay** small-minded, to be **satisfied** with small-mindedness, to be absorbed and satisfied with earthly things—to want to just hoard marbles and play house.

It is said that very, very few people ever grow mentally beyond the age of 12 to 15. They get more knowledge and experience, of course, but they never get any more mature. Their type and depth of thinking as it is then stays with them all their life.

The great beauty of the way of God is that it develops the understanding of everything. It opens and enlarges the heart and the mind—

“Evil men understand not judgment, but they that seek the Lord understand ALL things” (Prov. 28:5).

“The natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, but he that is spiritual discerneth all things...”

We have the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:14-16).

* * *

“Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to GIVE you the Kingdom”—v. 32.

God does not measure and calculate in His blessings. His ways are vast and limitless. Upon those who, in submission to these words of life, **truly** seek to conform to the required pattern of godliness—upon such He has promised to pour out a limitless abundance of blessings forever without measure or end.

“Sell that ye have, and give alms. Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not”—v. 33.

What wonderful words! What searching words! What revolutionary words! But how do WE stand as regards getting our whole pattern of life into harmony with the glorious, overflowing spirit of these things? Beautiful thoughts—but how about the **practical** application? How often God's words to Ezekiel come to mind (Eze. 33:32)—

“Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.”

Most of us have been in the Truth quite a while—plenty long enough to be showing some results of the power of these teachings, if we are ever going to. How do we stand? Is our life in tune with them? And if not, WHY not? Do we foolishly expect the prize without conforming to the rules?

Are we givers or getters? Are we scatterers or hoarders? Says the Spirit through Paul—

“God loveth a CHEERFUL giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

That is, one who gives in the enlightened joy of reaching up toward the greatness of the mind of God, the Great Giver of all. Jesus said, in his one direct statement that is not recorded in the Gospels—

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).

“Blessed” means happy. It is more happiness, more fun, more sheer joy of living, to give than receive.

We tend to concentrate our attention, like the rest of the world, on the little childish, self-centered joy of receiving. But we are cheating ourselves out of the far greater and fuller joy of giving. Jesus said (Luke 6:38):

“Give, and it shall be given unto you—good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over. For with the same measure that ye measure, it shall be measured to you again.”

So the degree of our joy and fullness of life is entirely up to us. It's up to us whether we choose to live big or small—according to the glorious greatness of the Spirit, or to the cramped smallness of the flesh.

There's a very beautiful proverb that says (11:24)—

“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth. And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”

Cramped, calculating selfishness tendeth to poverty—shriveled poverty of heart, soul and mind. Parsimoniousness is not prudence: it is unfaithful stewardship and embezzlement of God's entrusted goods.

* * *

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”—v. 34.

If we have treasure—goods, possessions, interests—on earth, our heart will inevitably be there with them. Jesus says so. It is an inexorable law of our nature. Therefore the URGENT exhortation is—

“Sell that ye have, and give alms.”

Get rid of it, before it pulls you down to perdition. Get all your treasure transferred to the Bank of Heaven as fast as you can, where it will be safe, and where it will pull you UP instead of down—where it will still be to your eternal account when all human banks and insurance companies are liquidated in the great earthquake soon to come upon the earth.

* * *

Let us close with the thought of vs. 35-36—

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; Be ye like unto men that wait for their Lord.”

“Your loins girded”—the symbol of preparedness, readiness to move, to act, to respond instantly to a call. Active and awake, all affairs in order—not cumbered, cluttered and confused with present things.

Bro. Thomas said, 100 years ago, that the return of the Jew to Israel and the rise of the Northern Colossus to world power and with covetous eye on the Mideast, would be signs of the end that even the blindest could not fail to see.

We have seen both fulfilled to a degree that even bro. Thomas himself never dreamed of. Let us be ready momentarily, for he is even at the door.

“And your lights burning.”

ARE they?

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

Is our life a shining spiritual light, so that men may look upon us and glorify God? It **MUST** be that way, if we are to achieve salvation. These words of Jesus are the *“words of eternal life.”* His words describe and define the **only** possible way of eternal life, and they must be fulfilled in us if we are to be the children of God—

“Blessed are those servants—and they ALONE are blessed—whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching”—v. 37.

Bro. G.V. Growcott

War

Respected friends, brothers, and sisters, we are here to take a look at an interesting subject, war. War, children play it, men study it, and everyone talks about it. In my youth there was even a hit song about it, “War” by Edwin Starr. If I remember rightly it had a chorus that went something like, “War, what is it good for! Absolutely nothing!” As we shall see, the singer is mistaken. We shall turn to the Bible and find it records numerous conflicts and includes the purpose for the conflict.

If we would direct our attention to Noah Webster's (1828) Dictionary of American English we would find a very interesting definition and the etymology of the word. It says, “**WAR**, n. [G., to perplex, embroil, disturb. The primary sense of the root is to strive, struggle, urge, drive, or to turn, to twist.] A contest between nations or states, carried on by force, either for defense, or for revenging insults and redressing wrongs, for the extension of commerce or acquisition of territory, or for obtaining and establishing the superiority and dominion of one over the other. These objects are accomplished by the slaughter or capture of troops, and the capture and destruction of ships, towns and property. Among rude nations, war is often waged and carried on for plunder. As war is the contest of nations or states, it always implies that such contest is authorized by the monarch or the sovereign power of the nation. When

war is commenced by attacking a nation in peace, it is called an offensive war, and such attack is aggressive. When war is undertaken to repel invasion or the attacks of an enemy, it is called defensive, and a defensive war is considered as justifiable. Very few of the wars that have desolated nations and deluged the earth with blood, have been justifiable. Happy would it be for mankind, if the prevalence of christian principles might ultimately extinguish the spirit of war, and if the ambition to be great, might yield to the ambition of being good!" We all know what war is, but do we know how war came about and why?

If we open our Bibles to the beginning, in the book of Genesis, is where we will discover some of the answers. In the first chapter of Genesis is the history of the creation of man, including God's pronouncement in the 31st verse declaring His creations to be "*very good.*" Adam was free from contamination and depravity being freshly created, not yet having been a victim of temptation. In the 29th and 30th verses an important concept of life before Adam's transgression is shown. (Genesis 1:29-30) "*And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (30) And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*" For food Adam had every herb bearing seed and tree yielding fruit and the animals had every green herb. There was no striving or struggling at that time.

Looking at the third chapter of Genesis, the 17th verse, we find things changed. "*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;*" Many people in the world, even today, struggle to eke out a living as farmers and herdsmen. This happened because of Adam's disobedience to God.

In the 15th verse of the same chapter God promised a conflict of epic proportions when He said (Genesis 3:15) "*And **I will put enmity** between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" War is instituted! Notice who institutes it. God does, He said, "*I will.*" He doesn't say anyone or anything else does it. It is His sentence to mankind.

If we make a quick jump ahead in time to David we find God indicating that, (2 Samuel 12:11 KJV) "*Thus saith the LORD, Behold, **I will raise up evil** against thee out of thine own house,*" and (2 Samuel 12:10 KJV) "*Now therefore **the sword shall never depart** from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.*" When we read the account it appears, to the natural man, that God had nothing to do with it. The historical events give the impression of human passion and lust for power. But that is not the case. If we understand and believe in the absolute power of God we realize it is a simple thing for the Divine Power to affect and alter moods and desires of individuals. This can be done in ways they will be totally unaware of and cause them to react in a matter befitting their natural bent. It is easy to understand how God can elicit war or peace without

any noticeable demonstration of Divine power. But the fact of the matter is, God does it, no one else.

If we continue reading in Genesis 3:22-24 “*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: (23) Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (24) So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.*” Here we have the first war or conflict, when God drove out the man, which if we remember from our definition is one of the primary root meanings of the word war.

After Adam and Eve were removed from Eden mankind divided into two classes. One owing allegiance to God and the other following the ways of the natural man. These two classes are still here. They will always be here until God deems it time to remove the latter class. We see the two types in Adam's children, who, are involved in the next skirmish spoken of in the Bible. We read in the 4th chapter how Cain slew Abel, who was afterwards replaced by Seth, who then represented the first class spoken of and while Cain represented the second. Reading the chapter, we can perceive how out of the hardness of Cain's heart and his natural desires, the ways of man are typified.

Man caused war to come about. Many times people question, “why does God allow it to happen?” Could God possibly have a reason or purpose for it? As with all man's questions, the answers can be found in the Scriptures of Truth. In them, by searching, we can find the answers. The answer to, “why” can be found in Israel's exodus from Egypt. The Hebrews were in bondage to Pharaoh. They were foreigners, slaves, and burdens were put upon them from which the ordinary citizens of Egypt were exempt. Pharaoh did not know God and was ignorant of the character of the people he held as bondmen.



I believe that Amenhotep II was probably the pharaoh of the Exodus. One of the things we know of Amenhotep II is that he was a very proud warrior. Historians have found artifacts commemorating a time when he drove a chariot with a full complement of horses at full speed and with his bow, shot an arrow through an 8 in. bronze disk. He was a man who was hard, willful, with a violent temper, and no fear of God in his heart. Could you imagine such a man receiving demands, even if placed in the most diplomatic of terms, to let God's people go? The services of a million-plus men were valuable to him.

It is probable that as the most powerful man, of the most powerful country, it was naturally enjoyable for him to hold his heel upon a slave race. We have the picture a willful man raised to power with a perfect disposition to fulfill Gods purpose. Here was a military man who upon hearing the route taken by the Israelites and their current location by the Red Sea was able to say (Exodus 14:3) “*They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.*” Militarily they were in an indefensible position which was a temptation to the mighty pharaoh. Can you imagine

such a man willing to let a million-plus slaves slip away. The natural pride of the human heart was enticed into pursuit, capture, and re-enslavement of the escaping multitude. So we see it did not take much for God to harden Pharaoh's heart, that he and his advisers might say (Exodus 14:5) "*Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?*" This record of Pharaoh is a beautiful example of how God judgeth (Ezekiel 18:30) "*every one according to his ways*"

After many plagues of appalling magnitude and much destruction of the land of Egypt, including the loss of its military power, Israel was finally removed from Egypt. Why was there such a prolonged struggle when God could have simply killed the Egyptians in a single night like he did to the Assyrians in later times? God did it to make His existence known! This was done in the only manner in which mankind could appreciate. It was done by the manifestation of intelligently directed force to accomplish a specific object. Think about the result. The most powerful nation at the time surrendered its will to a man, Moses, with no army or military powers. The completeness of the result can be noted in the tenacious faith in which the Jews have maintained throughout all their generations. God was very specific in telling Pharaoh why he was ruler and His intentions toward him. He said in Exodus 9:16 "*And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.*" Israel also was made to understand for we read in Deuteronomy 4:32-36 "*For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? (33) Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? (34) **Or hath God attempted to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?** (35) Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.*" So we find from this example one of the purposes for war is to educate mankind that indeed, there is a God! And there is no power on earth like Him.

Next we shall take a look at David, a man after God's own heart. (1 Samuel 13:13-14, Acts 13:22) Do we perceive the type of man he must have been, to have that said of him. We have already pointed out that God said He would "*raise up evil against*" David. Why did that happen? Because as we have already read, (2Sam. 12:10 KJV) "*Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; **because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.***" David had Uriah killed so he could marry his wife. (2 Samuel 11) In this manner David disobeyed the commandments of God. Those who disobey the word and law of God, despise Him. These events show us an important point. God uses war as punishment for wickedness. People as well as nations are punished for disobedience to God! Is it not obvious, even to the most casual observer, that **war takes place because of man's disobedience to God?**

Moses told Israel (Deuteronomy 9:4, 5) that “*for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord doth drive them out before thee (5) not for thy righteousness or the uprightness of thy heart.*” Even the Canaanites, whom Israel succeeded in the land were examples of punishment for iniquity. Solomon, David’s son, wrote in Ecclesiastes (3:10.), “*I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*” Two ecclesiastical authors made interesting comments on this verse. Adam Clarke in his book (Clarke LL.D., F.S.A., Adam), *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* wrote, “**I have seen the travail** - Man is a sinner; and, because he is such, he suffers.” Dr. John Gill commented in his book, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, “**to be exercised in it**, or ‘by it’; or ‘to afflict’ or ‘humble them by it’” The Bible is full of examples of the proud and haughty men and nations being humbled by God.

Israel was destroyed by the Roman army A. D. 70. They were forewarned by God and Christ. When they were becoming a nation God told them of the blessings they would have for obedience and the curse for disobedience. Turn to the 28th chapter and the 47th verse of Deuteronomy. We shall just look at a couple of verses, but I would strongly recommend taking the time to read the entire chapter. *Wars of the Jews*, written by Josephus, a Jewish historian who was with the Romans at the time of the siege of Jerusalem will supply veracity to these verses. In addition it will supply a precise sense ‘of the time of trouble such as never was’ in the history of Israel. Deuteronomy 28:47, 49, 50, 53 “*Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; (49) The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; (50) A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young: (53) And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee,*” Notice again, the reason for this happening, “**Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God.**” Christ just before his Mount Olivet prophecy said, “*See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*” (Matthew 24:2) His disciples then ask, “*when shall these things be?*” They were told that they should see it, (Matthew 24:34) “*Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled*” God sent forth the apostles to invite Israel to receive Jesus for their King. But they made light of the invitation and spitefully entreated and slew them. This excited the indignation of God against them. What did he do? In the words of the parable (Matthew 22:7), “*He sent forth His armies and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city,*” or in the language of history, He sent the Roman armies under Titus against them, destroyed them, and burned Jerusalem. In this manner God came against them. The Romans were the executors of vengeance against Israel.

It should be evident by now that God uses war as a means of enlightenment and punishment. I don’t have to tell anyone, that we, for the most part, don’t like war. Children don’t particularly like getting punished either. Yet, it is obvious in Scripture, that God considers men

children. In Psalms 82:6 it is written “*I have said, Ye are gods; **and all of you are children of the most High.***”

Job 21:19 “*God layeth up his iniquity for **his children:** he rewardeth him, and he shall know it.*”

Psalms 90:2-3 “*Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. (3) Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, **ye children** of men.*”

Psalms 127:3 “*Lo, **children are a heritage of the LORD:** and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*”

Proverbs 4:1 “*Hear, **ye children,** the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.*”

Proverbs 5:7 “*Hear me now therefore, **O ye children,** and depart not from the words of my mouth.*”

Proverbs 7:24 “*Hearken unto me now therefore, **O ye children,** and attend to the words of my mouth.*”

Proverbs 8:32 “*Now therefore hearken unto me, **O ye children:** for blessed are they that keep my ways.*”

The bible, in Proverbs, gives us an idea how God feels about children and correction. (Proverbs 22:15) “***Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.***” (Proverbs 23:13) “***Withhold not correction from the child.***” This may sound strange to man, but it must be remembered, God uses our own foolishness against us. We as individuals do not like war, but as a people we are prone to it. Man, not God, loves war. It is one of our irrational behaviors. God specifically commands against war. How? He commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Leviticus 19:18 “*Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself:** I am the LORD.*”

Matthew 19:19 “*Honor thy father and thy mother: and, **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***”

Matthew 22:39 “*And the second is like unto it, **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***”

Mark 12:31 “*And the second is like, namely this, **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** There is none other commandment greater than these.*”

Romans 13:9 “*...and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***”

Galatians 5:14 “*For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.***”

James 2:8 “*If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, **thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,** ye do well:*”

This command is in the Bible seven times. Seven is a symbolical number showing completeness, not just completeness as such, but completeness in God. What would the world be like if all men practiced that commandment? Everybody has heard, “*Thou shalt not kill.*” (Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17, Matthew 5:21, Romans 13:9) How many wars have there been in the name of religion? In my lifetime there has been war in Ireland, Protestants against Catholics, and it has been so since I can remember. The true believers of Christ and God will make all possible attempts to be obedient to their commands. (Psalms 103:17-18) “*But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; (18) To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.*” If we look at the 22nd verse in Matthew chapter 5 we read, “*But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment:*” We are told it could be a reason for rejection at the judgment. It is a sin to be angry. The phrase, “without a cause,” should not be translated as such. For that reason it has been left out of the Revised Version, The Diaglott, The American Standard Version, the Bible in Basic English and many other translation. The Bible instructions on anger are unmistakable, Ephesians 4:31-32 “*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*” (See also Ecclesiastes 7:9, Galatians 5:19-20, James 1:20, Colossians 3:8)

There are many examples in Scripture where we are told to be tenderhearted and forgive.

Why lay stress on these commands. There is a reason. God requires obedience. It is written in 1Samuel 15:22 “*And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in **obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.***” and in Hebrews 5:9 “*And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal **salvation unto all them that obey him:***”

It is written in the prophet Amos concerning Israel. “*You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, **I will punish you for all your iniquity.***” God requires obedience from His chosen people. He gave Israel, a kingdom, knowledge of His ways and deliverance from their enemies. Until the time of Christ no other nation was given such a complete knowledge of the ways of God, and under the precept given by Jesus, “*To whom much is given, of them shall much be required*” (Luke 12:48), disobedience is punished. The calamities of war being one of the consequences of rebellion.

From this it might seem as if God would have discipline for Israel only. But this is not the case. The vision of Obadiah is a case of punishing, the Edomites, for their iniquity. A nation whom God did not “know” as he knew Israel. And it is far from the only case. We read in Obadiah, (Obadiah 1:2) “*Behold, I have made thee small among the heathen: thou art greatly despised.*” Why? God does not leave us blind. He does not leave things to our imaginations. He tells us why He has done this thing. (Obadiah 1:3) “*The **pride of thine heart** hath deceived*

thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; that saith in his heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?" and Obadiah 1:10 "*For **thy violence against thy brother Jacob** shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever.*"

However, there is one people which shall not be "cut off forever." (Ezekiel 16:60-62) "*Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. (61) Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. (62) And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD.*" As we shall see we are in a time when the preparation for the fulfillment of this verse is transpiring before our very eyes. In 1869 bro. Thomas published Eureka, An Exposition of the Apocalypse, volume three, and he correctly expounded (page 596) that the Jews would return to the land of Israel. The author was looking and noting things concerning their return as early as. (Herald Of The Future Age, Vol. 2, page 12, Restoration Of The Jews To Their Own (1845) & Herald Of The Kingdom And Age To Come, 1857, page 153.) It was not new and has been commonly taught throughout history and throughout the Bible. Authors Keil & Delitzsch wrote in 1861, in their *Commentary on the Old Testament*, "But this disgrace will not be the conclusion. Because of the covenant which the Lord concluded with Israel, Jerusalem will not continue in misery, but will attain to the glory promised to the people of God; — and that in such a way that all boasting will be excluded, and Judah, with the deepest shame, will attain to a knowledge of the true compassion of God." (K & D about 1861) After looking at one more verse showing the return of Israel we will look at the historical events that transpired to bring them back.

Taking a look at Ezekiel 38:8 we read, "*After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.*" From Keil & Delitzsch we read, "Preparation of Gog and his army for the invasion of the **restored land of Israel.**" (Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament) "These events will be **in the latter days**. It is supposed these enemies will come together to **invade the land of Judea**, and God will defeat them." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible 1704 - 1710) And from Eureka "It is evident from these last words, that "the land brought back from the sword" is not the land according to the original Abrahamic grant; but only that "tenth part" of it which Isaiah was informed in ch. 6:13, "shall return and be grazed". This tenth in the midst of the land is the locality of Armageddon." Here are a few more verses calling for the return, to note after which we will start looking at the hand of God in recent history. Deuteronomy 30:3 "*That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and **gather thee from all the nations**, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.*" Deuteronomy 30:5 "*And the **LORD thy God will bring thee into the land** which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.*" Jeremiah 31:8

“Behold, **I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth,**” Ezekiel 37:21 “And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:**” To be continued next month.

Re “D.V.”

In our day men are ashamed to acknowledge God. Even when there is a professional recognition of Him in a ceremonial way, it is obscured in Latin words (Deus Volente), and these are pared down to their smallest forms and their first letter. Men who think they ought at all points to appear pious propose to do so and so, D.V. It is very different from Paul's straightforward, sincere and manly, “If the Lord will.”

D.V. is reducing the recognition of God to its smallest dimensions. It is not in reality a recognition and confession of God, but a compliance with the conventionalism of the Gentile Apostasy from Apostolic Truth and simplicity — a respectable system which overshadows the world with the shadow of death; and from which every earnest man will seek to deliver himself, by a return to the clear and healthy and saving example of Paul. His recognition of God even in common things is constant and natural. He is in fact a good example of what James means when he refers deprecatingly to those who say “*To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain.*” Says James iv. 14, “*Ye know not what shall be on the morrow: ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that.*” This was the habit of Paul, our example from Christ. Also Acts 18:21; 1 Cor. 4:19. *Bro. Robert Roberts—1879*

With Our Brother

Association in the Truth is the aspect which more immediately affects us, It is here where we may be most damaged. We look for nothing in this world. We are apt to have too high ideas of what is attainable in the ecclesia. Christ gives a parable which has a bearing on this question. He likens the kingdom to a net cast into the sea, which draws all manner of fishes, both good and bad. Therefore, we must not come into the community drawn together by the preaching of the kingdom, with the idea that it is a perfect thing, that each person in it is really the son of God. There could be no more blissful state than that in which every man and woman should have a supreme sense of God, and with whom his law should be paramount. But such a state of things might not be good for us at present. We might, perhaps, get too much in love with mere persons and associations, and forget our present position in relation to eternal law.

Yet we must take care not to be disheartened in relation to the Truth, because we find all things are not to our mind. What we must do is to

pluck up a good courage, and move neither to the right hand nor to the left, but be steadfast, always doing what we ought to be doing, whatever others may be saying, thinking, or doing. Never mind other people. Wherever their influence is calculated to dishearten and discourage—*forbear—endure; mix kindness with resolution: this is God’s will.* We ought not to take notice of everything; we ought not to speak of every weakness we see, because the flesh is a weak thing at best. Let things slide, unless there is a breach compromising the authority of Christ, or dishonouring and weakening to the Truth. Where a man openly disobeys Christ, or corrupts the faith, that would be a thing to take notice of; a thing that we could not countenance, and be guiltless. But even then we are not to act as judges; and say “You are a miserable sinner, not fit for our company.” What we have to do is this: for our own sakes, and as a matter of individual duty, we say “You must step aside from us, please, because we consider that we should be doing wrong if we were to continue our connection with you, in your present condition.” That would be all we could do; but then there are a thousand little weaknesses and faults that do not amount to deliberate or intended violation of Christ’s law—the mere ebullition of weakness, which the individual is himself sorry for. If you take him to task, you destroy his sorrow and enkindle resentment, and evil is done.

The best thing is to *forbear*: this is the lesson of the apostle: “*Forbear one another in love, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.*” This view of the matter is always brought out by Paul in his letters—that if we ourselves were to be measured by the standard we may be disposed to apply to others, we should be found greatly wanting. We have to be forgiven much and must forgive. There are many derelictions of duty—oversights, faults, offences, it may be—that God is pleased to pass by, at our request through Christ; and we have to cultivate a similar disposition toward those who err through weakness. Be kindly and forbearing to everybody but yourself. Be very merciless with yourself. Judge yourself by the highest standard. Allow no excuse for your own deficiency. Ever afflict your soul and press higher. If everyone did this,—but that is coming back to that which I said could not be,—we should have a very delightful community.

Let us judge ourselves; others we must greatly leave alone, except under the special circumstances already hinted at. We are not to be indifferent about the Truth. Some people say that because Christ says “Judge not,” therefore, we are not to trouble ourselves as to who is in the Truth, and who is not. This is a misapplication of his word. The position of a man in relation to the Truth, is just what we are to judge. We are not to judge who of those having the Truth are really God’s, but we are to try the spirits whether they be of God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. We are “to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.” We are not, for one moment, to give way to those who would corrupt the Truth. Here we are to withstand delinquency. This is quite another thing. The principles laid down in the apostolic exhortation apply only to those who receive the faith, who believe the Truth, and reject the fables. With those who reject the Truth, we are not in association; but as to those who receive it, we are not to say that such and such are not of God’s; this is the place for our charity.

Where there is a profession of obedience, and an external consistency; we are to throw a broad mantle overall. Think the best and act the kindest; take no notice of all weaknesses you see—forget things. This is our duty. It is a misfortune to our own selves if we have that feverish tendency to be critical which some exhibit—that unhappy nervousness about other people’s failings. It destroys happiness. No man can grow spiritually who is in a continual state of acrimony. He cannot evince that kindness of deportment which ought to characterise the intercourse of brethren and sisters, certainly not to the individual against whom the bitterness is harboured. The latter sees the coldness and is repelled, and made cold in return. He mentions it to another; the other is involved in the heat, and thus the evil spreads. If there is a grievous departure from the way of Truth, we must speak to a brother about it, but let us speak about it privately. Don’t report the matter. If there is no departure from the way of Truth, but merely the exhibition of constitutional weakness, be patient; take no notice. Instead of this, you go to another, and say “Why So and So has been behaving shamefully, hasn’t he?” “How,” says the other, “what is it?” and then you let off your story, which, if ever so trifling in its origin in your mind, makes a deep impression upon the mind of the other—an impression, it may be, not warranted by the original facts, but inevitably created by your representation.

If you feel a thing strongly, you express it strongly, and the other having only your strong expressions to go by, naturally conceives a vivid and overdrawn picture of the matter. The result is that when he is thrown in contact with the man against whom you have been speaking, there is a coldness. Others hear of it and catch the cold, and there is a general brewing of bad feeling, all through next to nothing at all. It is as Solomon says, “A little matter kindleth a great fire;” “A tale-bearer separateth friends.” Talebearers ought to be kept down. They ought not to be listened to. It is their duty to go to the person themselves. This is Christ’s rule, and there are a lot of little rules, which if they were observed, would cause a much better state of things to prevail. If brethren are trying to do their best, encourage them.

Do not repeat things. Let us do our duty. All these things are hinted at in what Peter says in the chapter read: “Wherefore, laying aside all malice and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby.” Now, this is very beautiful. When a person is full of unfriendly gossip—under the dominion of cantankerous feelings, which burn in his own bosom, and spread wherever he goes, how can the Word have a place in his heart? It is impossible. There is no more fatal thing than the fermentation of roots of bitterness, and Paul puts brethren on their guard. But such spring up, and many are hurt by them. Peter says “Put these things away, and let your mind, as a new-born babe, desire the milk of the word.” We shall have a strong relish for spiritual things indeed, if this is the case. A newborn babe has an unquenchable affinity for its mother’s breast; nothing short of what it gets from its mother will make it grow.

Peter says this is how we ought to be in relation to the Word. If this is our state, we cannot be permanently hurt. The mind will soon get back to its tranquility and purity. A man who is under the control of the Word gets quickly over little disturbances; they are quite transient and

accidental, and soon go off; but if the mind is not under the control of the Word, it is the other way. The serenity is accidental; the malignity and unhappiness of the fleshly mind is chronic. True liberty and happiness that will not grow old are only to be found in connection with the things that are of God. They are a well-spring of everlasting life, from which we are invited now to drink deeply.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1868

Analecta Apocalypticae (34) To the Ecclesia at Laodicea

The Amen

This seventh epistle, like the others, is from the Spirit, who styles himself "The Amen, the Witness faithful and true, and the Beginning of the creation of the Deity." We have already expounded the title indicated by "the Amen." Jesus, by the transforming energy of the Father-Deity, became Spirit, and is now "the Lord the Spirit." Speaking some sixty years and upwards after the event of transformation, he said to John in Patmos, "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I have been dead, and behold I am living for the Aions of the Aions, Amen." He was the individual Amen — the incarnation of faithfulness, and therefore "the Witness faithful and true" — the Amen-Witness; "for," saith Paul, in 2 Cor. 1:19, "the Son of the Deity, Jesus Anointed, who was preached among you through us, through me, Sylvanus, and Timothy, he was not yea and nay, but in him was yea: for all the promises of Deity in him are the yea, and in him the Amen, to the Deity with glory through us." All the promises of the Deity in Jesus are the Amen. This is the definition of the individual Amen contained in this passage from Paul. Now, if only some promises were fulfilled in Jesus, such as those pertaining to the sufferings of the Anointed One; and some others, such as those relating to the good things promised to Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem, and the glory consequent thereon, are never fulfilled in and through him, then, instead of Jesus being "the Amen," he would be "the yea and the nay;" and if the promises concerning the sufferings and glory are not at all fulfilled in him, then he would be to ou "the Nay." But some have been fulfilled in him, and all the rest of the promises will yet be accomplished in him, and therefore he is to nai, "the yea," and to Amen, "the Amen," or the truth and faithfulness itself. When, therefore, the glorified Jesus says to the Star-Angel Presbytery of the ecclesia of the Laodiceans, and through it to all that generation of ecclesias, and to us of these later times in fellowship with them through belief of the same things they received — when He says, he is "the Amen," it is equivalent to saying, that all the promises not fulfilled in his first coming, will assuredly be accomplished when he comes again; and that this advent with glory is as certain as the existence of the Deity, which none but a fool would call in question. All the promises fulfilled in and through Jesus are the Amen. All who do not recognize this, do not accept him as "the Amen," and therefore in effect charge the Deity with unfaithfulness; for apart from Jesus Anointed they will never be performed. "I am the truth," said Jesus; that is, all the truth spoken by the Eternal Spirit received incarnate fulfilment in, by, and through him; and all this "to the Deity with glory" — to the manifestation of the Deity in his Sons with glory, styled by Paul elsewhere, "the manifestation of the Sons of the Deity," which is the full

development of the great mystery of godliness, "Deity manifested in flesh."

The Witness Faithful and True

As all the promises are to be fulfilled in and through Jesus Anointed, according to the testimony he gave in the day of his weakness, he is endorsed also as "the Witness faithful and true." He was "the Witness" by eminence. When standing at Pilate's bar, he said, in answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou King then?" "Thou sayest, for I am King. I have been born for this; and I came into the world for this, that I might bear witness to the Truth. Every one being of the Truth, hearkeneth to my voice." He bore this witness before the people, and at the bar of Caiaphas as well. Before these he testified, that he was the Anointed One, the Son of the Deity; and that his enemies should "hereafter see the Son of Man sitting in right places of the Power, and coming upon the clouds of the heaven" — Matt. 26:64. But, as he told Nicodemus, "We, (that is, the Father and Himself,) speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." His contemporaries in the flesh rejected him as a false witness; for John the immerser speaking of him, says, "What he hath seen and heard that he testifieth, and no man receiveth his testimony." There were but few exceptions to this, yet sufficient of them to be noted, for John also said, "He that hath received his testimony, hath set to his seal that God is true. For he whom the Deity hath sent speaketh the words of the Deity" — John 3:32. These words were set forth in "the Gospel of the Kingdom of the Deity," which Jesus declared he was sent to preach — Luke 4:13, 19, 43; and if it might then be said that "no man received his testimony," it might with great propriety be said so now, and for the same reason, because the pious and others seek honor one of another, and "not the honor which cometh from the Deity only."

Jesus admitted, that "if he bore witness of himself his witness was not true." This was incontrovertible. The Mosaic law, under which Jesus lived, required two or three witnesses for the establishment of truth, so that if Jesus could have adduced no other evidence than his own, the people of Judah would have been guiltless in rejecting his claims to the Messiahship, and in repudiating the gospel of the kingdom to be manifested through him. No man of himself can demonstrate his own parentage. Jesus claimed to be the Son of the Deity, a claim which could only be established, in view of the natural untruthfulness of humanity, and the frailty of woman, by the Deity himself. This was publicly and notably done before the multitude on Jordan's banks, when the Spirit of the Deity descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove, and the voice came from the excellent glory in the heaven, saying, "This is my Son the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased." Thus the Father attested him; and afterwards, John the immerser, who heard and saw the wonder; and all the apostles who were present, and especially Peter, James, and John, who afterwards, in the presence of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, heard the same declaration on the mount, with the addition of the words, "Hear ye Him!"

Here, then, were John the baptizer, "a burning and a shining light;" "the Father himself;" the Scriptures of the prophets; the multitude at his baptism; the apostles; and the sanction of the heavenly host which announced his birth to the shepherds; to say nothing of Joseph, Mary, and their immediate kin, who might be suspected of false testimony from interested motives — all testifying that he was "a witness faithful and true." In the salutation in ch. 1:5, John introduces this characteristic of Jesus: "Grace," says he, "unto you, and peace * * * from Jesus Anointed, the Faithful Witness." There has been none upon earth more faithful than

he; therefore, he is preeminently the faithful one — faithful to the Truth, and to him that sent him; “faithful as a Son over his own house” — Heb. 3:6; faithful unto death, as an example for all in him to follow. He styles himself “faithful and true” because his sayings are such. He testifies the truth in this apocalypse. The Lord God, or Adonai Yahweh, of the holy prophets — that is, Jesus Anointed — sent his messenger, to show unto his servants, through John, the things which must be shortly done: “and he said unto me,” saith John, “these sayings are faithful and true” — ch. 22:6. In ch. 19:11, the word “witness” is dropped, and the Lord the Spirit, who speaks to the Laodiceans, is styled “the Faithful and True, who judges and makes war in righteousness.” He does not come, then, as a witness, but to perform all the things which have been promised from of old — to destroy the Apostasy, and to bless all nations in Abraham and his Seed.

The Beginning of the Creation of the Deity

The third designation by which the Spirit characterizes himself, in his address to the ecclesia of the Laodiceans, is, that he is “the Beginning of the creation of the Deity” —

Now, this phrase might be supposed to mean that Jesus, and Jesus Anointed, were the beginning of the creation of which Moses treats in Genesis; or that they were the chief of that creation. But these suppositions cannot be admitted; and for the sufficient reason that Jesus unanointed, or Jesus Anointed, had no existence in the era of the Adamic creation. The anointing Spirit existed then, and was the creating energy; but at the same time an uncreated agent, and therefore not the first of a creation.

In the passage before us the Lord the Spirit, or Jesus Anointed, refers to another creation — to a New Creation. He is the beginning of that new creation of the Deity; even of that referred to in Rev. 21:5, in which Jesus Anointed says, “Behold I make all things new.” When all things are made new there will be a new creation upon the earth, adapted in all its elements to the new population prepared in the previous seven thousands of years to inhabit it. Jesus Anointed is the creator of this new creation; and himself also the first element of it that has been created without human intervention. Enoch, Moses, and Elijah were glorified men before his creation; but they were not a direct creation of the Deity; for their paternity was human. Jesus had no human father; but was created by the Spirit as independently of the will of the flesh as Adam, the Beginning of the Animal Creation of the Deity, was before him.

It is revealed that the Eternal Spirit will create from the dust, and establish upon the earth, a population, every individual of which shall be like Jesus is now — glorious, incorruptible of body, and deathless; the Deity bodily manifested in each of them — Rev. 21:3, 4; and that such a constitution and order of things will obtain in relation to them, as will be suitable to pure and immortal beings — to a world of gods, or elohim. This order, or kosmos, is styled “a New Heaven and New Earth” — a New Government and New People; a phrase which indicates that, although all men then upon the earth are immortal and free from all evils of the present state, yet are not all of equal rank and authority; and that government is designed for the purpose of affording scope for a diversity of honors, that he who has distinguished himself more than his followers in the cause of truth and righteousness in the previous animal existence, may be a more distinguished and brilliant star in the firmament “beyond” the Millennial Aions. This principle of diversity obtained in the kingdom of the Deity when David and Solomon occupied the throne of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Though all were Israelites and a holy people, all were not

equal in rank and authority. The principle also obtains in all the kingdoms of the world; all Englishmen are not dukes and princes; nor are all noblemen of equal rank, influence, and wealth, but the diversity in their original patents of nobility is predicated upon what the Devil, who promotes them, considers their merits in his service. No Englishman can become a member of the royal family who is not born such. It is an hereditary distinction, and eminently exclusive. So in respect of the New Government of the Post-millennial Aion, it will, we believe, be restricted to the Saints raised and transformed at the advent of the Amen. Jesus and the Saints anointed will rule the nations as kings and priests during the Millennium; at the end of which the priesthood will be abolished, but not the royalty. This will continue for ever, in an illimitable sense. But the Millennial Earth is to be abolished as well as the priesthood; not the globe, or planet, called Earth, but the world of nations, consisting of mortal men, over which Jesus and his glorified brethren reign during the thousand years. "Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee, O Israel" — Jer. 30:11. All non-Israelitish nations are to be abolished. That is, there will be no national diversities in the post-millennial ages. All will be righteous, deathless, and citizens of Israel's Commonwealth, which will continue eternally under a new constitution. There will then be no English, French, Spaniards, Italians, and such like; but all will be Israelites by the adoption or redemption from death, or the mortal state.

The Millennial Earth will then be purged of all sinful elements, and the remnant transformed; so that it will be essentially "a New Earth," or population, subordinate to Jesus and the Saints, who will constitute the luminaries of the "New Heaven," as they will have done of the heaven become old, and called by John "the former heaven." The position of these is fixed; they are the sun and fixed stars both of the Aions of the Aions, and Beyond. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the Stars for the Olahm and Beyond" — Dan. 12:3. Here is a marked difference, the generality of the saved being as "the brightness of the firmament;" but those who have distinguished themselves in the service of the Truth, stand out from the diffused brightness as brilliant particular stars. But one star differs from another in glory in the celestial arch; so will it be in the New Heavens of the Olahm and Beyond —

. There are places on the right hand and on the left in the glory "for whom it is prepared;" and there is a place for the Sun of Righteousness; and for the Twelve on the tribal thrones of the kingdom; and many situations in the royal house for the saved in general. A place for every one, and for every one a place; but each for the place as appointed. The apostles will certainly shine as a bright constellation, which can be constituted of no other stars than themselves — a constellation of twelve bright orbs, each one upon a throne of Israel — the thrones of the house of David. Yet is the least in the kingdom of the heavens greater than the greatest of all the prophets unglorified; so that while there is greatness for all, there will exist the least among the great.

Now this new creation, wonderful in its development and consummation began with the formation of a babe in the womb of the Handmaid of Yah; and ends with the cessation of "every curse" — Rev. 22:3. The power of the Deity overshadowed the daughter of Heli, and in the set time was born Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews. Here was a creation of the Deity; but it was only the "beginning of the creation" hereafter to be effected by the same power. When created and anointed, this new creation was Eternal Power manifest in flesh; and when resurrected and glorified, that flesh was transformed into Spirit, or Deity

— a substantial corporeal entity, called by Paul a “Quickening Spirit,” and “the Lord the Spirit.” Hence, viewing him thus, and not as a body of death lying in a sepulchre, the apostle says of him, “who is an image of the invisible Deity, first-born of all creation” (pases ktiseos). He then gives the reason why this first-born image of the Deity is preeminent over all; “because,” saith he, “were created by him the all things; the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the things seen and the things unseen, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities; the all things have been created through him and for him; and he is before all things, and the all things by him hold together; And he is the Head of the Body, the ecclesia, who is the beginning, first-born from among the dead, that among all he might become preeminent; for in him it pleased that all the fullness should dwell” — Col. 1:15-19. Compare this with Gen. 1:2, where the creation of the material world is attributed to Spirit of Elohim.

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

Forsake Not The Assembly

Some have asked where Christ has commanded this. We answer—when he said, “*Do this in remembrance of me.*” But where, say they, did he command us to do it on the first day of the week and every first day of the week? We answer, when the disciples of the first generation did so under apostolic auspices. Jesus said concerning the apostles, “*He that heareth you heareth me.*” Consequently, we hear Christ when we hear Paul referring to this breaking of bread. He said to the Corinthians, “*I praise you brethren that ye . . . keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread,*” &c. But, says the objector, he says nothing about the first day of the week. Not there: he does before he finishes—namely, five chapters further on: “*Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.*” What they did on the first day of the week, we are plainly told in Acts 20: “*Upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread.*”

Therefore, the command is clear, and the duty manifest, even if Paul had not said, “*Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is*” (Heb. 10:25). Even if it had not been quite clear, love would have inclined us to it. Love is quick to gather the will of the beloved. That the Lord wished us to remember him, no one can deny—still less that it is good to remember him, and the oftener the better. The utter demoralisation that sets in with regard to all spiritual things, when men neglect the breaking of bread, would of itself be a reason why we should “*do this until he come.*” Finally, who can think it possible that the Lord will be displeased at our breaking bread every first day of the week? On the other hand, is it quite certain that he will be displeased with those who are slack in the matter.

We are justified in taking the strongest possible ground.

This will we do, our absent Lord,

We will remember thee.

Remembering him, we call to mind many things—even, in a sense, all the things that are brought under our notice in the reading of any part of the Scriptures.

Bro. Robert Roberts