

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

Llan-Y-Bri, South West Wales. UK. Sunday Memorial Service 1.15pm. Study Class 3pm. Lecture 4pm. Tuesday Bible Class 7pm.

Loving greetings to all our brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus,

We have been well blessed with support, contact and visits with many in like precious faith. We continue to have regular contact with the Hengoed Ecclesia and are thankful that we can link into their Wednesday Bible Class and also hear exhortations, lectures and study talks via the internet. We are also grateful to Brother Rob Bennett for his occasional support at our own Tuesday Bible Class and his exhortations and lectures at our meetings on Sunday 4th October and Sunday 13th December.

We were the hosts for Hengoed's Youth Day on Saturday 20th March when Brother Rob gave an interesting talk on 'Salt' in the evening. We also enjoyed seeing Sister Annetta Jones again and her niece, Amber, on their visit from Canada in early April.

In these last days we all need the continued encouragement and support from our brothers and sisters.

Bro. Stephen Ford

Las Cruces, New Mexico

Hello Bro. Fred,

I wanted to give you just a recap for the Las Cruces ecclesia. We have been studying Psalms for the weekly Bible class, and for Sunday school, we have re-welcomed Bro. Malachi Morrell; he moved back to continue his school. We also welcomed back Sis Leslie Morrell, who was in MA for a while, but is now back at home. We welcomed Bro. Wayne Wolfe from the Lampasas, TX Ecclesia, a couple of weeks ago, which is always nice to have visitors. The members of our ecclesia include Bro. Beryl Snyder, (jr), Bro. Jonathan Morrell, Sis. Leslie Morrell, Bro. Michael Morrell, Bro. Malachi Morrell and myself, Sis. Maria Morrell. Hope you have a wonderful day.

Thank you, Sis. Maria Morrell

Sturgeon Falls, ONT, Bro. Gilles Robineau, 5 Third St, P2B 3E6 Canada

We are very grateful to all our Dear Brothers and Sisters in the truth,

Your help to us in so many ways, just knowing that you think and keep us in your prayers, reassures us that we are not alone. Your e-mails, cards and gifts are so much appreciated and needed.

With the coming of warmer weather, I hope to bring Gilles out onto the deck when we do some studies. His health has not gotten any better, but on the bright side, it has not gotten worse.

There never seems to be enough time in a day, but we always find time to study the Truth. Thank You to all of you for helping us in so many different ways.

With Love in the One Truth that we Share, Sis. Lynn and Bro. Gilles

Holladay, Tennessee

Loving Greetings in the One True Hope that we share,

It has been quite some time since we have submitted any news from our ecclesia. Over the past year we have been blessed with the opportunity each Sunday to meet around the memorials to remember our Lord and Master. Each of the brethren sharing the responsibility of exhorting, encouraging each of us on our walk and reminding us of the sacrifice our Lord gave, so that we might have hope for a small and humble place within Yahweh's kingdom. We eagerly look forward to our Lord's return.

We have been blessed to have had many visitors join us along our journey.

Bro. Noel and Sis. Brenda McChesney, Bro. Harry Phillips, Bro. Lynn Osborne, Bro. Steve and Sis. Sharon Osborne, Sis. Annetta Jones, Bro. Len and Sis. Pam Naglieri, Bro. Ben Naglieri, Bro. Dave and Sis. Kelly Sommerville, Bro. Scott and Sis. Lara Ricks and Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune. We appreciate the visiting brethren who provided us with exhortations on our walk in the Truth.

In October 2009, we hosted the N.E. Gathering at Montgomery Bell State Park. The study for the weekend was "The Cherubim". The brethren, who presented, did a wonderful job of bringing out all aspects of the subject. It was wonderful to have such a great turnout from all over the world. In the USA: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, N. Carolina, Ohio, Texas. In Canada: Saskatchewan and Alberta, and from the U.K.: Wales. During these difficult economic times, we appreciated all those who were able to come and pray that all were spiritually up-lifted and renewed in their walk. The talks were recorded and can be found on the website www.bereanchristadelphians.co.uk.

Recently, we have been blessed with the opportunity to witness Yahweh's call of two more people to join us on our walk Zionward. **Paul and Melanie Rankin** (Paul is son of Bro. Warren and Sis. Dorothy Rankin) gave a good confession of their faith and were immersed into Christ's name. We are thrilled to have them as our Brother and Sister and look forward to walking the path to the kingdom together. Sis Annetta Jones joined us for the joyous occasion. It was great to have her here and we appreciated her spiritual up-liftment and fellowship.

On behalf of the Holladay, TN Ecclesia,
Bro. Jim Rankin, Recorder

Holy Land Trip

Our plans are continuing for another trip to the Holy Land in May, 2011, God willing. We expect more people than we had on our first trip and should have prices firmed up in a couple of months. Instead of going down into Egypt we hope to visit a few places that Paul travelled to: Athens, Corinth and Cenchrea before departing for home. You may see the complete itinerary at the Richard web site (richardbereans.com). We look forward to the day when we will all assemble at Jerusalem to enjoy that marriage feast prepared for those that

are accounted worthy. What a glorious hope we can look forward to. Please contact Bro. Jim Sommerville for further information.

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 11–13, 2010**
Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **July 26–Aug 1, 2010**
Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Drive, Buda, TX 78610, USA. 1-512-295-2868, email
markbraune@gmail.com The Study Class will be on the book of Daniel.

NE FRATERNAL GATHERING – BOSTON.....**Oct 9-10, 2010**
Bro. Steve Osborne, 35 Shady Lane, Northboro, MA 01532 503-393-5721
steve.sharon@verizon.net The theme will be on “God Manifestation”.

The BCAA

A website called Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3.

The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please bookmark this link as we will be updating this archive with new material as much as possible.

The main purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard. The quality of the material will vary; they have been transferred from audio cassettes and reel to reel tapes. Some have occasional distortion and tape flips.

It is an ongoing project, and we have lots of material to work with. However, we are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email either Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) or Bro. Noah Brown (sbsugar@gmail.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to mp3 format and post them.

Any comments and questions are very welcome; we want this website to become a resource for brethren and sisters worldwide.

Straight Words to the Colossians

From Colossians 1:2 we get our name-“*Adelphois en Christo*”-Brethren in Christ. And this epistle well defines those who rightly bear this name. IF we truly ARE conforming ourselves to the marvellous spiritual picture it presents, we ARE Christadelphians.

Paul first thanks God for the joy and courage that their faith and love gave him. How COULD he have carried on if there had not been SOME evidence of success to his labours—some VISIBLE working of the Spirit, transforming natural, animal men and women into spiritual children of God? There are always a FEW faithful, carrying forward the divine purpose and bearing evidence-amid disappointment and distress-that that great purpose is still alive in the earth.

In verse 6 Paul speaks of the Gospel BEARING FRUIT in them—spiritual fruit to God’s glory—the pure beauty of the divine mind and character gradually beginning to glow among them, distinguishing them from common, ugly, perishing clay. The details of this fruit and character are brought out throughout the epistle.

FRUITS ARE REAL, MEASURABLE THINGS

The tree that does NOT bring forth fruit, said Jesus, will be cut down and burned (Matt. 7:19). These fruits are real, MEASURABLE things. In the last day God will measure them. He is no respecter of persons.

Treasure in HEAVEN is just as real and PRACTICAL an affair as treasure on earth. It is simply a matter of time, and effort, and desire. In NATURAL things we get results in direct proportion to how long, and how hard, and how carefully we work. When the books are opened at the last great day of account, exactly how LONG and how HARD we have worked for SPIRITUAL things will be found recorded in clear, impartial, unchangeable figures. There will be no argument or appeal. The full record will be there.

The first spiritual acquisitions that Paul mentions (v. 11) are *“patience and longsuffering.”* How is weak, natural, evil flesh to develop spiritual patience? By keeping the mind firmly FIXED ON GOD—His love, His desires, His greatness, His ever presence beside us—and upon that man who perfectly manifested Him. God’s great plan is being worked out with infinite, divine patience. If we are to be co-workers with God in developing a holy, eternal community for His glory, PATIENCE is essential.

SPIRITUAL PATIENCE

The Spirit through Isaiah, speaking of Christ, gives a wonderful picture of spiritual patience (42:2-4).

“He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly-burning flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment and truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged TILL HE HAVE SET JUDGMENT IN THE EARTH: and the isles shall wait for his law.”

A quiet, loving, persistent, IRRESISTIBLE determination for good—never rough, never discouraged. Infinite care to avoid injury, and yet an unswerving adherence to divine principles. That is patience, as exemplified by the Great Example. Paul continues (Col. 1:11)—

“. . . patience and longsuffering WITH JOYFULNESS: giving thanks unto the Father.”

Paul—beaten with many cruel stripes and chained fast in the inner dungeon at Philippi—could still at midnight JOYFULLY sing praises to God. He had the true and healthy outlook. God does not want a brooding and self-

pitying patience. Paul KNEW that ALL things-in the eternal, ultimate reckoning-work together for GOOD for those that truly love God. He KNEW he was faithfully doing God’s will and helping forward His purpose and that—regardless of the present—time would reward his efforts and justify his joy.

TOO BIG IN OUR OWN PERSPECTIVE

Joy and thanksgiving are the normal state of the spiritual mind. Depression is self-pity and a perverted form of self-glorification. We are too big in our OWN perspective. If we realize that God is ALWAYS in full and active, wide-awake control, overlooks nothing, makes no mistakes, and is steadily bringing to pass His glorious purpose of good, then we shall not be tempted to indulge ourselves in the destructive fleshly pleasure of self-pity.

Are we discouraged by our failure? There is nothing wrong with us-at the worst-that faith and hope and love cannot cure, and there is an abundant fountain where these may freely be found. There is no state of mind that a quiet meditation on God’s Word will not improve. *“Get thee up! Wherefore liest thou on thy face?”* said the Lord to Joshua (Josh. 7:10).

If there is something wrong, then there is something that can be DONE about it. The Scriptures leave no room for discouragement. The great purpose of God is too grand and triumphant. If, like Paul, we FILL our lives with LABOR on behalf of this purpose, and our hearts with THANKSGIVING that we have been offered a place in it, we shall find no room or time for discouragement or self-pity.

HOLY-UNBLAMABLE-UNREPROVABLE!

In the next few verses, Paul centers our attention on Christ the Head of the Body, in whom and through whom the whole purpose exists. It is HIS mission (v. 22) to present us holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in God’s sight. HOLY-UNBLAMABLE-UNREPROVABLE! The goal is very high. The POWER is God’s but the APPLICATION of it is up to us. Complete devotion to His Word is the way. The power lies there in abundance, waiting for the few wise who will heed, but He will not force it upon any.

“Warning every man, that we may present every man PERFECT” (Col. 1:28).

To the Ephesians he said (Acts 20:31) that for the space of THREE YEARS he had ceased not NIGHT AND DAY to warn everyone WITH TEARS. There certainly must be very GRAVE DANGER of failure, if such incessant and urgent warnings are necessary! Are we SURE we are fully alive to the deceptiveness of the danger that threatens us? “Narrow is the way, and FEW there be that find it”—but those few DO find it, and all others COULD if they were willing to make the necessary effort.

NO EASY SLIDING INTO GLORY

The warning is to seek FIRST the Kingdom of God-to make SURE of that ONE thing to the sacrifice of everything else. It is quite possible to ALL-but only with the utmost effort. There will be no easy sliding into glory. A constant, tearful warning is needed against the Truth-choking concerns of this life and the deceitfulness of treasure on earth.

“That your hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love” (Col. 2:2).

The only thing in which there is TRUE comfort, and the only thing that can effectively knit ANYONE together is-as he continues-“the riches of the full assurance of UNDERSTANDING . . . the treasures of WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE.” How much of this divine treasure have WE laid up?

FOOL’S GOLD

There is a mineral called “fool’s gold.” It resembles gold in glitter and appearance and is often gathered by inexperienced miners. This thought strongly presents itself to the mind when the scriptural picture regarding wisdom and treasure is considered, as also do the searching words of Christ-

“Thou FOOL, this night thy life shall be required of thee: THEN whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?” (Luke 12:20)

HEAVENLY treasures knit brethren together in love: EARTHY treasures separate them, as they did Abraham and Lot (Gen. 13:6-7). Lot’s choice of Sodom was the result of this separation. Trouble followed, then disaster. Was the wealth worth it?

“I am with you in spirit, joying and beholding your ORDER, and the steadfastness of your faith” (Col. 2:5).

Harmonious order and steadfast faith present a beautiful picture. The spiritual mind will delight in orderliness. All God’s vast creation, from infinitely great to microscopically small, reflects the beauty of ORDER. Disorder is destructive, and alien to God. Voluntary and mutually-agreed order-faithfully complied with-is essential to spiritual growth together. As Paul told the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:33-Revised Version)-“God is NOT a God of confusion.”

AN EASY, BUT UNHEALTHY, WAY

The larger an ecclesia is, the more order is necessary-IF all are to take a part. Of course, if the work is left to a FEW, then forms of procedure and detailed arrangements may be greatly reduced-this is an EASY, but UNHEALTHY, state. ALL should work while it is day.

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the SABBATH days: which are a SHADOW of things to come, but the BODY is of Christ” (Col. 2:16).

This is a clear charter of freedom from the ordinances of the Law of Moses, of which the most ardently advocated element today is the SABBATH. But God does not go backwards. If He THEN, in days of shadow, required one full day in seven for His service, He certainly requires NO LESS today. As Paul clearly shows later in this epistle, the ONE-day Mosaic sabbath has become the SEVEN-day Christian sabbath (3:17, 23-24)—

“WHATSOEVER ye do in word or deed, do ALL in the name of the Lord . . . WHATSOEVER ye do, do it HEARTILY to the LORD, and not to men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward.”

To what extent do WE consciously do ALL things as to the Lord? The COMMAND is clear enough. Its PURPOSE is self-evidently good and fitting. It gives ALL an opportunity for limitless service to God—regardless of circumstance. It fixes the mind ALWAYS upon God. Properly followed, it would completely eliminate from our lives all activities that could NOT be sincerely done as service to God, and it would ennoble all others and give the meanest task value and dignity.

“WHATSOEVER YE DO, DO IT HEARTILY”

God HATES half-heartedness. There is no pleasure in it to Him, or satisfaction to the doer. It is a burden on both sides. God requires our enthusiastic BEST in all things—lovingly given—because the only frame of mind that is pleasing to Him is that which is ever eager and ANXIOUS to give Him its utmost. Jesus said (Mark 12:30)—

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy mind, and with ALL thy strength: THIS is the FIRST commandment.”

The accent is on the “all.” Its essence lies in its COMPLETENESS, because unless it is complete and all-embracing, then it is not the genuine thing at all. Unless it consistently dominates the whole life, it is a mere EXTERNAL “*form of godliness,*” lacking the living power.

EVERY DAY A SABBATH

Unless we are truly keeping ALL days as holy sabbaths to God, and doing ALL things heartily as unto Him, we have a very unconvincing case against the sincere but misguided advocates of the old Mosaic “*shadow*” sabbath.

“IF ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are ABOVE” (Col. 3:1).

Paul is referring back to their baptism, mentioned in chapter 2, verse 12. The reasoning is this: —By your symbolic submission to death in baptism, you signify a willingness to die to all the things belonging to the world, and to attach yourself unreservedly to the things related to Christ, and you

entered a solemn covenant to set your heart and interest on heavenly things. ARE YOU LIVING UP TO YOUR WORD? A covenant with man is a solemn obligation—a covenant with GOD is infinitely more so.

“Set your affections on things ABOVE, and not on things on EARTH” (Col. 3:2).

Jesus tells HOW—“Lay up treasure in heaven and not on earth, for where your TREASURE is, there will your HEART be also.” That is, arrange your LIFE in harmony with your PROFESSIONS—accumulate nothing on earth to hold your attention and desires. Conduct your affairs so that ALL your prospects and pleasures and advantages are bound up with the FUTURE and not the present. Jesus’ way is very simple—IF we wholeheartedly accept it. It is the ONLY way.

“FOR YE ARE DEAD” (Col. 3:3).

A dead man has no worldly cares or attachments. The believer-in baptism—voluntarily dies to the world. There is no greater break that can be made than DEATH, yet how difficult it is to realize ALL that is implied in this symbolic action! Paul is pleading for the REASONABLE necessity of a WALK consistent with the position we have professedly taken—a position we voluntarily took in hope of great personal gain. If you are dead to the world, he reasons, WHY are you concerned with its empty, perishing possessions and customs and interests?

In the following verses he lists several things to be put away, most of which, fortunately, it is not necessary to mention among us. But the final crowning item in this list of ungodly vices is such a subtle part of our sin-flesh as to ALWAYS be a problem—“COVETOUSNESS, which is IDOLATRY.” The Spirit could use no stronger expression of abhorrence and condemnation than “*idolatry*” in describing covetousness.

“THE DESIRE TO HAVE MORE”

Covetousness—“*the desire to have more,*” as Young’s Concordance translates it. Why does God HATE it so? Because it is so DESTRUCTIVE of ALL the principles of the heavenly teaching of Christ upon which salvation depends. “*Having food and raiment, therewith BE CONTENT*” is the command—the PLAIN command—of our Master. The world is ENTIRELY given over to covetousness and greed. It is the root, says Paul (1 Tim. 6:10) of ALL EVIL. Jesus (Mark 7:22) associates covetousness with theft, wickedness and deceit. Again he says (Lk. 12:15)—

“BEWARE of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

It is an evil, consuming disease, a mocking waster of time and lives. Because of the infection in the Brotherhood of this universal malady, countless hours are spent in getting worldly things that could be given to the

service of God. When the Lord comes to demand an accounting of his servants, **WHAT SHALL WE SAY?** Shall we proudly show him our houses, our clothes, our cars? It will be difficult to explain to the Lord of heaven and earth that **OUR** standard of living and worldly possessions during our probation had to be so vastly greater than **HIS**. “The servant is not above his master.”

“Covetousness, which is IDOLATRY: for which things’ sake the WRATH of God cometh on the children of disobedience” (Col. 3:5-6).

RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE

“Put on the NEW man which is renewed in KNOWLEDGE after the image of Him that created him” (v. 10).

KNOWLEDGE is the key to the whole process. Knowledge is a matter of learning and effort. We should **ALL** know the Scriptures **FAR** better than we do. Daily we are reminded of our ignorance in this direction—of the countless wasted opportunities for learning and study. In verse 16 Paul says—

“Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

There is much material for reflection in the hymns we sing, on this matter of **KNOWLEDGE**, as on the others— “O, how love I Thy law! It is my study **ALL THE DAY.**” But **IS IT?** Or are we just mouthing meaningless words?

DO WE MEAN IT?

Again we sing: *“Firm to the fight I stand! What terror can confound me?”* and *“Thy way, not mine, O Lord.”* Noble words! But **IS** God’s way, and not our own, always the paramount consideration with us? *“Not mine, not mine, the choice, in things or great or small.”* Truly godly sentiments—**IF** they are consistently followed out. Our hearts can say.

“Tis not for present power or wealth, or worldly fame we look to Thee” . . . “All I ask for is enough.” Do we, as we sing, consider the **REAL MEANING** of these things, and frankly examine our own activities in the light of them? *“Life’s fleeting treasures I resign.”* Does it come from the heart—or just the lips?

There are many subjects in which we can find scriptural admonition in the hymns. *“We should learn the rather free from wrath and strife to live, FAR REMOVING ALL THAT MIGHT OFFEND OR GRIEVE.”* To what extent can **WE** declare before God that we sincerely try to avoid **ALL** things that offend and grieve others? We can all think of several things among us—some quite easily dispensed with—which grieve our brethren. Even if these things were right in themselves, it is clearly evident that the spirit of Christ is lacking in us if we persist in them when we know they trouble others.

Some day God will ask us just WHY we followed this course. WHAT SHALL WE SAY?

“PURE RELIGION BEFORE GOD IS THIS”-

Then we sing so heartily to each other, “*Work, brethren, work!*” But are WE working? A cardinal element of TRUE religion is to visit the afflicted (James 1:27; Matt. 25:43). How much visiting do WE do? In other words, how much true religion do we actually possess? And to the alien we take pleasure in singing: “*How long your strength and substance waste on trifles light as air?*” Let us make sure that EXAMPLE corresponds with PRECEPT.

The whole of Hymn 170 is a searching indictment of a common failing—“*The thoughtless still with levity and mirth delight to dwell.*” Paul says “*Foolish talking and jesting are not befitting*” (Eph. 5:4-Revised Version). And in this very epistle we are considering (4:6)-

“*Let your speech be ALWAYS with grace, seasoned with salt.*”

The important word is the “always.” To mean anything, it must be a consistent principle of life, faithfully applied in all circumstances.

IS THIS US?

“*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved.*” (Col. 3:12).

These are very exalted titles. They define a people of a character, disposition and purpose far removed from the world. “*Elect of God, holy and beloved.*” A rare and different kind of people who are strikingly outstanding—as the apostle continues—for “*kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.*” IS THAT US? Does the description fit?

“*And let the PEACE OF GOD rule in your hearts*”

(Col. 3:15).

We are told, “*Great peace have they which LOVE THY LAW and NOTHING shall offend them.*” Peace is a precious gift of God, bestowed ONLY where HIS conditions are complied with. We are told “*the work of RIGHTEOUSNESS shall be peace*” (Isa. 32:17). And conversely (Isa. 48:22), “*There is NO peace to the wicked.*”

Peace is spoken throughout the Scriptures as a supreme divine blessing. Like many blessings, it requires a certain amount of spiritual discernment to even RECOGNIZE its desirability, and usually too, a certain amount of previous worldly disappointment. Peace is a spiritual quality that has little appeal to the pride and ambition of the flesh.

PEACE WITH GOD

It is not just abstract peace, as such, that is the promised blessing. It is “*peace WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Rom. 5:1). It is a

living, personal relationship of joyful unity and harmony with the Eternal Creator.

Jesus laid the foundation for this peace in the bitter road he trod that culminated in Calvary. Peace with God is clearly not a lightly-won privilege. Nor is it lightly HELD. Its requirements are summed up in the following verses (Col. 3:16-17)—

“Let the word of Christ DWELL IN YOU richly in all WISDOM—whatsoever ye do, do ALL in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Here again, “all” is the key. Bound up with this “all” lies life and peace. Short of that, there is only conflict. Again we sing: “Yet while I seek, but find Thee not, NO PEACE my wandering mind shall see. When shall all my wanderings cease, and ALL my steps to Thee-ward tend? Is there a thing beneath the sun that strives with Thee my heart to share? Tear it thence and reign alone the Lord of EVERY motion there.”

HOW MANY FIND IT?

When we ACCOMPLISH in our lives that of which we SING in our hymns, THEN-and ONLY then-have we “*peace with God.*” Paul, who said “*Be ye followers of me,*” said also—

“I count ALL things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of ALL things, and count them but refuse that I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

And he continues, a little farther on, “Be careful for nothing,” we sing that, too!, (Phil. 4:6)—

“Be careful for NOTHING: in everything rely on God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

In very similar terms our Great Example said (Matt. 11:29)—

“Learn of me, for I am MEEK and LOWLY: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

THAT is peace. HOW MANY FIND IT?

Bro. G.V.Growcott

Signs—World-Wide Trouble and The Second Advent Of Christ

Our subject this evening has no charm for men and women in general because it is not congenial to their tastes. But is it wise to avoid a subject just because it is not pleasant? We think not. It is impossible to alter facts by closing our ears to the truth on any subject, therefore let us face the facts.

We introduce our remarks with a quotation from Jesus as recorded in Matt. 24:37-39—

“But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

Reading these verses in a casual manner, we would notice nothing unusual. Eating and drinking are both essential to the maintenance of life, and marrying and giving in marriage are essential to the continuance of the human race. It is evident, therefore, that Jesus wished to convey to the minds of the disciples, that when he comes the second time, there will be nothing unusual about world conditions—nothing spectacular.

However, they do indicate two outstanding conditions: 1st, that, generally speaking, world conditions would be similar to those in the days of Noah. And 2nd, that the coming of Jesus would be unexpected by the great majority of the people of the world.

But why should Jesus select that period in the world’s history and compare it to the day of his second coming? The answer is obvious, as we shall see when we compare the two periods. The days of Noah—Gen.6:5,11-12—

“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually...The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

- A. Wickedness was great.
- B. Corruption was general.
- C. Violence filled the earth.

Now, said Jesus, when I come again conditions will be similar to those in the days of Noah. The apostles spoke in the same manner. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul said,

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come...evil men and seducers shall go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”

Finally, we have the words of Jesus in the Mount Olivet prophecy, in Luke 21:25-26,

“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after

those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.”

And then note carefully, his warning in vs. 34-35—

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.”

At no time, since the days of Jesus, have these words of his found conditions to which they could apply better than these days in which we live.

Let us take a look at one issue of Time Magazine:

During Europe’s dangerous Dark Ages, the only safe haven was the castle; great moat, drawbridge, armed men glaring from turrets. Era seethed with raids, counter-raids, kidnappings, and ransoms. No traveler secure. World today startlingly resembles those times devoid of international order. Nasty, almost personal violence among nations. Taking hostages is more and more popular.

Terror’s another weapon: Iraq’s brutal hanging of 9 Jews clearly intended to intimidate Israel; so were Arab attacks on El Al jets. Former Congo Premier Tshombe still in Algerian jail, caught in ‘67 mid-air kidnapping.

Latest squeeze on W. Berlin is modern refinement of ancient siege tactic.

Legitimacy in world affairs fading; primitive diplomacy increasingly back in style. UN, once seen as potential peacekeeping force, can’t solve miniature clashes, let alone major ones. Violence in international relations growing in frequency and scope.

Here, also are a few news headlines:

Border wars around the world.

World back to Dark Ages.

Crisis in all U.S. cities.

Growing Crime among the young.

Russia-China Border Fights.

Mideast Border Violence Grows.

U.S. Millions Hungry and Sick,

Ugly Mood Grips Egypt.

School Violence Spreading.

The world is full of violence, corruption, and wickedness as it was in the days of Noah. Although not recovered from the destruction of the last great war, we see most of the nations struggling for existence.

They are burdened with oppression, and throughout all the world men's hearts are failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

Is this to continue forever? Must the human race face a future of suffering and bloodshed? No. Thank God. No.

In this book we have a vast storehouse of information regarding the great Creator, and His purpose with the earth, and the human race upon it, and it is available to all those who care to take the time to study it. From its pages, we learn that in place of the present state of chaos, suffering, sin, disease and death, God will establish universal peace, and fill the earth with His glory, as the waters now cover the seas.

How will this momentous change be accomplished? Will it be instantaneous, or the result of a slow process? Will Christ come during a period of peace, and quietly take charge of the world's affairs, or will he come during a time of war, and great trouble? Our answers come from the Bible, and leave no doubt in our minds.

Daniel 12:1—*“At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”*

Jer. 25:32-33—*“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.”*

These testimonies show that the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth will be accompanied by troubles such as never before. That the whole world will be involved in political distress, and suffer from the many evils incident to such a condition.

We shall also find that God Himself will operate in visible judgment upon the nations. Evidence to this effect is numerous, and deserves serious consideration.

Coming back to Jer. 25:30-31, we read—

“Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, the Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a

controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord."

Here is a direct pleading with all flesh, and the removal of the wicked from among men. This is supplemented by the prophet Isaiah in 30:27-28—

"Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err."

Who is the name of the Lord? The answer comes from Jesus in John 5:43, where he says—

"I am come in my Father's Name."

Of him, Peter declared, *"There is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."*

Isaiah speaks of him coming from far. What does this mean? We find the answer in one of the parables of Jesus, in Luke 19:12-27, from which we read vs. 12—

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return."

Therefore, this nobleman (Jesus) returning from heaven is *"the Name of the Lord coming from far."* Then we read in Isaiah 11:4, *"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."*

Very well, you may say, that is from the Old Testament; give us something from the New. We respond with the words of Paul in 2 Thess 1:7-9—

"To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

To show that this is not an isolated passage, it is well that we look at other evidence to prove that the teaching of the Bible is uniform.

Psalm 50:3-5 – *"Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people. Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."*

Just one more from Mal. 4:1-2,

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”

As we reflect upon these quotations, we find that there are two stages in the coming trouble: First, distress of nations; evil going forth from nation to nation; and men’s hearts failing for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. We might term that the natural stage. Second, a divine manifestation in the person of Jesus (the Name of the Lord) accompanied by sweeping judgments of fire and sword by which large masses of people will be destroyed.

In view of the signs Jesus has given us concerning the end of Gentile times, we must look for times of trouble and commotion on the earth. Then when natural trouble has advanced to a certain point, the Lord Jesus will be revealed. No longer the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, nor the man of sorrows acquainted with grief, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah taking vengeance on an unbelieving generation. Multitudes will perish by war and pestilence, and others fall victims of the divine judgments that will be poured out upon the earth.

Then, as we read in Jeremiah, *“The slain of the Lord shall be many, from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth.”*

Why do we combine these prophecies in such a manner? Because of the words of Jesus regarding the days of Noah, and the time of his coming when world conditions will be similar.

In Matt. 5:5, Jesus said, *“Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.”*

These are the people comprehended in the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-4, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.”*

However, as we intimated in our early remarks, these things will not be accomplished in a day. The subjugation of the world will take time.

You are all familiar with the divine manifestations that preceded Israel's departure from Egypt. Yet the Egyptians were not impressed, but finally pursued Israel until they were destroyed in the Red Sea, and so the Son of man will be opposed by the powers that be, but their misguided efforts will recoil upon their own heads.

This is revealed in the prophetic song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2:10—

“The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His anointed.”

From what we have looked at in the prophetic word, we learn that the entire system of human government will be shattered, and the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of our Lord, and he shall reign forever.

In the case of Egypt, God could have destroyed the Egyptians and released Israel at once. But if He had, the great lesson of their deliverance would not have been engraven on the pages of history.

The divine workings are always characterized by comprehensiveness of aim, and it is only ignorance of God's purpose that engenders contempt for the means He employs. Therefore, when the time of the end comes, and Jesus returns to take unto himself his great power, man will be allowed to oppose him to the utmost in a vain effort to withstand him. This will give time for the judgments of God to have their moral effect, for we read in Isaiah 26:9—

“When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.”

Truly, the picture we have placed before you is not one to admire, and one might ask, “Is it really true?” Well, let us look at some things in history that are true and yet generate horror:

1347 – The Black Death that killed almost three-quarters of the population of Europe.

First world war – 10 million people were killed.

Second world war – 15 million were killed.

Therefore, the words of Jeremiah cannot in any way be exaggerated when he says in 25:33—

“The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.”

This is not all, for there is another side to this picture, so we ask, “What about those who have given heed to the teaching of Jesus; who have accepted the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and have put on Christ in baptism?”

It is clear that they will not be left among the nations during this time of trouble such as never was, for we read in Rev. 17:14—

“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

Who are these spoken of as *“they that are with him?”* We read of them again 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.”

Our question is not yet answered, so we turn to Zech. 14:5 (the latter part of the verse)—*“And the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.”*

They that are with him are therefore the saints. But who are the saints? Well, one thing is certain. They are not those who have been canonized by any church organization. The answer comes from 1 Cor. 1:2—*“To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.”*

This is sufficient to show that men and women who obey the Gospel, and endeavor to work out their salvation, are saints, as compared to those who obey not the Gospel and are spoken of as sinners. In Psalm 149:5-9, we learn that the saints will cooperate with Christ when the Kingdom is being established.

Ps. 149:5-9—*“Let the saints be joyful in glory: Let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints.”*

It is obvious, therefore, that in the closing judgment scenes, the saints will be associated with the Lord Jesus in destroying the political, ecclesiastical, and social systems which now constitute this present evil world. It must be further obvious, that before this judgment period commences, the saints will be removed from the spheres which they occupy in the world, otherwise they could not be with Christ in executing the judgments.

In the marriage parable in Matt. 25:10, Jesus said—

“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

Now in Rev. 19:7-8, we find that this marriage is the union between Christ and his people—

“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.”

This is further manifest from Paul’s teaching in 2 Thes. 2:1—*“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.”*

And, 2 Cor. 11:2—*“For 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.”*

From what we have considered, it must be manifest that when Jesus returns, his dead servants will be raised, and his living servants gathered with them from every part of the earth, for Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:10—

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

Let us now summarize the events of which we have spoken:

1. On earth distress of nations, with perplexity, arising from the complication of international politics, described in the Bible as *“evil going forth from nation to nation.”*

2. The coming of Christ as a thief in the night, that is, unexpectedly.

3. Resurrection of the *“dead in Christ.”*

4. The gathering of the saints to Christ from all parts of the earth, including the living and those who have been dead.

5. The judgment of his servants, resulting in the acceptance of the good and faithful, and the rejection of the unfaithful.

6. War between the powers that be and the Lamb, who shall overcome them.

7. Heavy judgments inflicted on the nations by Jesus and the saints, resulting in the complete abolition of the existing order of things.

8. Setting up of the Kingdom of God in which peace will be established, and the world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

This will be so great a change, that Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:9—*“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.”*

Bro. George A. Gibson

Encouraging Words No. 9

THE Sadducees professed to accept Moses' writings and denied the resurrection of the dead. Did this arise from inaccuracy or lack of clearness in the Scriptures? No, Christ told them the reason, "Ye do err because ye know not the Scriptures nor the power of God." These men claimed to receive Moses, the chronicler of the Abrahamic covenant, and yet denied the resurrection to eternal life which that covenant necessitated! They pretended to receive Moses' account of Israel's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and yet denied God's power to raise the dead! The Sadducees do not stand alone in their stumblings over the Scriptures. Peter speaks of some who betook themselves to these sacred writings and came to perdition. Was this caused by errors and contradictions in the Word? No. Peter's explanation of the matter runs thus—"In which (Paul's letters) are some things hard to be understood which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest as they do the other Scriptures to their own destruction." The fault lay not in the Scriptures, but in the ignorant, unfair treatment meted out to them. Let us note this, dear sisters, for we also are liable to go astray. Peter emphasises this—"Seeing ye know these things, beware lest ye also, being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." We have nothing to fear from the Scriptures, it is our own folly and presumption in relation to them that we have to guard against. The Scriptures are "profitable"—they are able to instruct in righteousness—to "thoroughly furnish unto all good works." They were intended to make wise and enlighten, not to confuse and perplex. They do not, for example, teach at one and the same time that the dead are raised and that the dead are not raised; that the Scriptures cannot be broken and that they are a mass of contradictions and blunders hopelessly inconsistent with truth; that light or knowledge is the ground of divine condemnation, and yet, that not it, but something else is.

Dear sisters, how can we avoid being overtaken by heresy, or, in other words, the "error of the wicked?" We must first of all bear in mind the character of the Holy Oracles. The Bible contains "hard sayings," "deep things," "meats," but these never run counter to its plain elementary teaching. The claims set up by the Spirit-endowed men who wrote and enforced the Scriptures do not admit of these writings containing mistakes—"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable"—"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"—"The Scriptures cannot be broken." They are able to make "wise unto salvation"—to "build up" and give "an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." Not only must we recognise

all this if we would avoid the pitfalls of the wicked, but we must see to it that we exhibit a right character in coming to the Scriptures. The one who comes to these writings must act the part of a disciple, not that of a master—must submit to be handled by them and not attempt to do the handling. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and that trembleth at my word”—“Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Then there must be honesty and earnestness. There must be no adding to and no taking from, no “stealing” the sense by false interpretations, no “lightness.” Above all there must be a faithful putting into practice of that which is known. To walk contrary to that which we know to have been revealed is, for a certainty, to stumble and fall over Bible teaching. To hasten to perform God’s will is to be in possession of the assurance that we shall know the truth (Jno. 7:17), and not only so, it is to be related to the promise that God will reveal to us even that wherein we fall short (Phil. 3:15). Israel and Christendom are both standing examples of holding the truth in unrighteousness. Both became hopelessly astray as a result of wilful ignorance and hypocrisy in relation to the Scriptures. If we fall short, shall we in the day of Christ’s appearing have a more righteous excuse to offer?

—*Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1907*

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 12

Faith comes through hearing the Word of God. Faith is a matter of development. Let us not be utterly cast down at the small modicum of faith we may possess. It will certainly increase if we are diligent to cultivate it. Faith grows slowly but surely, provided we be “swift to hear.” Confidence in God is created in the same way as confidence is created in one another. If by experience we know a man to be kind, wise and upright, we trust him. On the same principle we require to know God in order to manifest that reliance which pleases Him. This knowledge can only come through familiarity with His sayings and doings as revealed in the Bible. In this book, God has proved Himself to be faithful, loving, merciful, just, almighty, infallible. The Israelites were styled “children in whom is no faith.” The reason for this deficiency is given by Isaiah: “This is a rebellious people, lying children, *children that will not hear the law of the Lord.*” Let us profit by the lesson.

The senseless and contemptible literary effusions that make their appearance every week strikingly indicate the frivolous, immoral and unreflective character of our generation. Brethren should shun such reading—it is worse than profitless. It enfeebles and corrupts the mind. Indulgence in it is a sin of no small magnitude—it is beholding vanity in one of its most naked forms—it is thwarting God’s work among men. God is

calling men to sobriety, thoughtfulness, and godliness. Those who deal in the current light, trashy literature are doing just the opposite. Of what use in Christ's service is a brother whose mind is filled with such nonsense? Can he retail it with profit? Surely enough of such matter is thrust upon us in our unavoidable contact with the world without our wilfully seeking it. Constant reading is a keeping company—"He that followeth vain persons is void of understanding." Half-an-hour's reading out of the said periodicals—what a preparation for that duty of dispersing knowledge which God has laid upon the righteous! Time is precious. If we have minutes to spare let us devote them to the perusal of that which will strengthen and not that which will weaken our faith.

God pardons transgressions. Yes, and heinous ones too! If God should mark sin (in the unqualified sense) who could stand? Not one, save Christ, for all have sinned, and, therefore, fallen short of His Glory. But God is very merciful. Provided sins be confessed and forsaken, He will lovingly and abundantly forgive. His anger remains only where sin is wilfully and persistently practised—where no effort is made to improve, and where every opportunity for redeeming the time is allowed to slip. The forgiveness of God is fully demonstrated in the lives of those whom we are told "died in faith." To cite one of them will suffice. David was guilty of more than one great crime, but for all that he was greatly beloved of God. He receives in the Word of Truth the highly honourable mention of being a man after God's own heart, and is set forth as an example for others to follow. Why is this? There is much consolation in the answer. David was not an habitual worker of unrighteousness—his life generally was characterised by uprightness and the fear of God. His sins were exceptional slips. When he sinned, he confessed his unworthiness with deep sorrow. This in itself forms a matter of example to us. Where David's disposition is wanting, there is the tendency either to falsely exalt ourselves or to pull the Bible standard down. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Prov. 28:13).

When God has said a thing, it is as good as done. His memory, His ability and His faithfulness never falter nor fail. It is because of this infallible certainty that the Spirit speaks of "things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17). We have a beautiful illustration of this in the references to the saints and their future state. They are said to be free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1), whilst actually under condemnation—to possess everlasting life (Jno. 3:36), whilst actually their days are numbered—to have been translated into the kingdom of His dear son (Col. 1:13), whilst actually but heirs of it—to have been made kings and priests unto God (Rev. 1:6), whilst actually poor, lowly, down-trodden and oppressed. This mode of speech is strengthening and encouraging. It lifts us out of the present, and makes the future more real. The disposition of man is to absorb

himself in the passing moment—to think that that which is will always be. God would counteract this disposition. As surely as sorrow followed the Edenic bliss, so surely will Millennial bliss follow sorrow. God foretold the one, and He has foretold the other. “The word of our God shall stand for ever.” The only doubtful element in the case is as to whether we *individually* shall real se the bliss. This point is left for us to settle. It can be No, or it can be Yes. It will assuredly be the latter “if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”

Through faith, many marvellous and terrible things have been successfully encountered. In considering them, we are apt to be distressed—to imagine that, if placed in similar circumstances, we should fall very far short. But if we are sincerely striving to be Christ-like, there is really no ground for such distress. If we maintain a willing, determined and watchful disposition, we need not fear the tribulation and hardship that may be brought upon us. We do not know what we can do till we try. Paul said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.” It is written, and the statement is to be dearly prized, that God will not allow His children to be tried above that which they are able to bear (1 Cor. 10:13), or, in other words, He will not permit them to fall to the extent that they will be “utterly cast down,” and not rise again (Psalm 37:23–24 ; Prov. 24:16). What our strength is God only knows. Let us beware of presuming upon our inability. To whom much has been given of them much will be expected. No unworthy excuse or subterfuge will shield in the day of reckoning. Our standard is the precepts of the Deity, and come what may, we must strive to obey them. To go on unto perfection should be our maxim. Christ is the only one who has reached the top of the scale. The Old Testament worthies reached a considerable height. The Scriptures bid us look to these exemplary men, not that we should be distressed, but encouraged and helped. Our spiritual walk is a matter of faith. Ability to walk arises to a large degree from observation. Therefore, let us not grieve, but rejoice when we contemplate the cloud of faithful witnesses.

Paul was an excellent soldier—a grand example for those who have joined the ranks. On every occasion, he gallantly acquitted himself. Paul sacredly observed that first duty pertaining to a soldier— OBEEDIENCE . He never deviated a single iota from his Captain’s orders. He was COURAGEOUS . If duty required it, he was ready to die anywhere and in any way (Acts 20:24 ; 21:13). He was ENDURING . For the truth he endured all things: hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness, imprisonments, cruel mockings, and scourgings (2 Cor. 11:23–27 ; 12:10 ; 1 Cor. 4:11–13). He was HOPEFUL . Though “troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair” (2 Cor. 4:8). He was SKILFUL . He knew wherein his ability and strength lay, and these he was masterly in employing (Phil. 4:13 ; Ephes 6:10–17). He was TRUE . He was staunch to the last, and died fighting A

“well done’ and a crown of glory await him. Paul has said, “follow me” Are we, like Paul good soldiers of Christ? Our circumstances may differ from those of Paul, still we are engaged upon the same work, and have ample scope for exhibiting the Apostle’s qualities Obedience is called for or we shall neglect to disseminate the good news of the Gospel. Courage is needed or we shall be deterred from letting the light shine by the ridicule or bitterness of the world; endurance, or our first zeal will wane; hope, or we shall get disheartened and faint; skill, or we shall bring shame upon our cause; faithfulness, or we shall become renegades. Let us fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

When a physician is successful in prolonging a patient’s life, his services are regarded as invaluable. How far more important are the services of one who helps his neighbour to reach the life that knows no ending! The kind word, the sympathetic shake of the hand, the quiet, patient, consistent walk, the homely but hearty exhortation, the sowing of the seed by means of word, tract or pamphlet, become when looked at in this way very weighty matters. Let us ever keep the object of our work in view—the work of preparing ourselves and others for life eternal. If our intended word or action is not calculated to advance this end, let us repress it. If we cannot help, do not let us hinder. Let us beware of discouraging others by receiving their labours in a carping, fault-finding spirit. Criticism is good if used kindly, wisely and justly. If by criticising, no laudable purpose is to be served, then let us refrain from it. Those who employ their time in condemning the work of their fellow-labourers are not the ones to do much towards building the temple of God. The future will, unquestionably, open out wonderful revelations in regard to this. When the time comes for God to glorify His elect, we shall see to whose instrumentality their enlightenment, edification and success have been due—whether those whose constant endeavour it has been to unhinge everybody and everything, or of the feeble, unassuming, industrious, plodding, faithful servants of Christ.

—*Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1887*

Love Is Of God

If we do not have love, we are NOTHING—just an empty shell, a rattling skeleton: love of God, love of Christ, love of the Brotherhood, love of mankind, love of every vital, living blade of grass in God's glorious Creation, so full of endless marvels of beauty and design. And love of Truth, of Beauty, of Holiness, Purity, Goodness, Nobility, Unselfishness: love of the bottomless richness of the treasures of the Word. Love scorns to descend to petty criticism and shallow victories, even in the cause of Truth. Love grieves at sin, strives for good, yearns for universal happiness and blessing. Love is life. Love is always busy, always building, always working and

praying for good. Love is compassionate, and patient, and understanding of weakness. But it does not condone, or belittle, or pamper sin and error, any more than a sensible doctor belittles or pampers corruption and infection. He fights it vigorously, and often violently, though an ignorant bystander might think him extreme and harsh. Love discharges its unpleasant duty toward sin and error faithfully and resolutely, though very carefully and self-searchingly and prayerfully—ever conscious of its own weakness and limitation and need.

—Search Me O God, bro Growcott

Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become your actions. Watch your actions, they become your habits. Watch your habits, they become your character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.

We are only given one life to develop our character. A bad character may be the one thing keeping us out of the Kingdom.

Analecta Apocalypticae (49)

The Woman Clothed With The Sun

You will recollect that at the end of chapter eleven we arrived at the time for the dead to be raised, and for the kingdoms of the world to be transferred to Christ as God's viceregent upon earth. In chapter 12, we find ourselves again face to face with the age of Roman imperialism and circumstances of persecution, as, for instance, in verse 17, "The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which kept the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." It must be evident that this is long before the transfer of the kingdoms of the world to Christ, for when that point is reached, all persecution will have ceased, power being taken from the adversary and vested in Jesus and his brethren. Hence, the conclusion is self-evident that as in the case of chapter 11, so in the case of this chapter 12, we are taken away back from the point reached at the end of the previous chapter, and brought to the consideration of other scenes having to do with the prior history of human government upon earth.

It may strike us as strange that there should be this zig-zag sort of order in the exhibition of the scenes of the Apocalypse. This feeling will disappear if we realize that there are various departments in the divine programme that have filled up the interval since Christ's departure from the earth -- various areas of the Roman habitable in which the plan has been worked out -- various channels in which providential superintendence has been actively giving shape to events with a view to the great consummation appointed, at one time east, at another west, at another both together. By these various roads, we are several times brought to the same general end to which they all reach. It is as if a guide conducted you by one route to some interesting spot, and then took you back through the air, if that were possible, to another outward place from which to conduct you again by a different route to the same spot, and repeated the performance for a third route, and so on.

The opening of chapter 12 takes us back to the place in history marked by the sixth seal, when a mighty revolution upset and abolished the Pagan government of the world, the avowed enemy of Christ, and established in its place a system based upon professed allegiance to Christ. This revolution, effected under the leadership of Constantine, "the first Christian Emperor", was a great revolution. It was in fact the inauguration of Christendom—the commencement of the nominal dominion of Christ on the earth, to be succeeded by his real dominion. That nominal dominion was far from being a system of real submission to Christ; still it was a great improvement upon the empire of polytheism in a variety of ways. There was hereafter at least a recognition (though in a corrupt form) of the God of Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the adoption of precepts having a humanizing effect on society. In connection with this change, there were details which could not be represented by the sixth seal. The sixth seal merely exhibited the occurrence of the revolution under the symbol of a catastrophe in nature. It could not show how it affected the friends of Christ among themselves. This is what is done in chapter 12.

John sees a certain woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet. This woman, like all the women of the Apocalypse, was a symbolic woman. There is no difficulty in seeing whom she symbolizes. The woman represents that section of mankind which had come under submission to God through Christ, as shown by the statement in the verse already read, that the dragon "made war upon the woman's seed" who are explained to be "those who keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." This use of a woman to represent the community of those who belong to Christ is common to the writings of the apostles, as you know. Paul writes to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 11:2), "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." Again (Eph. 5:23), "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church." The Church is apocalyptically described as "the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9), and his union with her at his coming is spoken of as "the marriage supper of the Lamb."

In this 12th chapter of the "Revelation", however, it is Christ's church or ecclesia in Christ's absence and in the land of his enemies, that is the subject of representation. Consequently there are features about the symbol that will not appertain to the Lamb's Bride in the day of her glory. In the day of her humiliation and trial many who are in her and of her do not belong to her, as the letters of the apostles show, and also the parables of Christ, and as the fact of a judgment for separation at his coming implies. It is while she is in this mixed state that the events of this chapter occur.

John sees her clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. The sun is always a symbol of power and prosperity. These in the Roman Empire were identified with the imperial throne. Hence; for Christ's community among men to be lifted from a position of proscription and persecution, into a position of political ascendancy and sunshine by the elevation of Constantine, the church's friend, to the throne of Pagan Caesarism, the church's enemy, was for that community, considered as a woman, to become a woman clothed with the

sun. The moon as a symbol stands in the same relation to the symbolic sun as the literal moon does to the literal sun: it is co-ordinate with the sun but not equal to it. It shines with it in the same heaven but borrows its light from it. What power in the Roman State sustained this relation to the Roman sun of imperial power? The priesthood of the national religion undoubtedly -- the religion of the gods of Rome. The Pagan hierarchy stood in the same relation to imperialism as the modern established clergy do to the State. They were a power in the State secondary to the secular power and sustained by it. The ecclesiastical order is symbolically the moon in any system. In view of this, we can understand the significance of the Christ-woman having the moon under her feet, when we realize that the pagan priesthood were by Constantine placed under the Christian party, then elevated by him to place and power.

The diadem of twelve stars is the symbol of the Pagan Caesars. There had been twelve Caesars on the imperial throne, from Augustus, the first Roman emperor, to Domitian, the emperor who reigned when John received the Apocalypse. As a matter presented to John, therefore, the diadem destined to be placed on the Church's brow, as the result of her conflict with Paganism, was a twelve-starred diadem. There were other Caesars after John passed away, but the number at the date of the vision continued to represent the imperial prize of the conflict that was in progress.

We have next to consider the meaning of the woman so situated being in the state described in the second verse of the chapter we are considering: "She being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered ... and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns ... and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born." We learn the meaning of this in the contemplation of the events characterizing the history of the epoch. Constantine did not at once ascend the throne of universal dominion. He was the woman's child—political offspring of the Church—for a considerable time before he grasped the reins of universal power. His career began in the West. He was the son of Constantius, one of the four Pagan emperors who ruled the empire conjointly at the close of the third century. Constantius, whose dominion lay in Gaul (France) and Britain, considerably sympathized with the Christians, and impeded the execution of the dreadful laws promulgated against them by Galerius, the chief emperor, who vowed he would obliterate the Christian name from the earth. But Constantius's son, Constantine, sympathized with the Christians more than his father did; and this being known at Rome, caused him to be regarded with great jealousy and aversion by the other emperors. When his father died (at York) in Britain, the army proclaimed Constantine his successor in the imperial purple. It was not the place of the army at this time in the history of the empire, to appoint a successor. The power lay with Galerius, the chief emperor, who, when he heard of the action of the army, was filled with rage. He, however, accepted the nomination, with the determination to set it aside by the sword as soon as it was convenient. He did not acknowledge Constantine in the full rank of emperor, but gave him the fourth rank among Roman princes, making, however, secret arrangements at the same time for

the invasion of the dominions of Constantine (the western section of the Roman empire), with a view to his deposition and destruction.

Here we have the situation of the first four verses of the 12th chapter. The emancipated woman was pregnant with a political son, whom another power in the east was waiting to devour. This power is symbolized by "a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads". The identification of this power with Pagan Rome is not only easy, but inevitable. We have an explanation of the heads and horns, which leaves no escape. The heads are declared to represent (17:9, 10) first, the seven hills on which the woman, at a later stage of Roman history, sat enthroned — (Rome is built on seven hills, and this literal feature is incorporated in the symbol by way of identification); and, secondly, seven sovereignties or forms of supreme power that had succeeded one another on the seven hills, of which the one existing in John's day was, in the verses referred to, declared to be the sixth. The ten horns stood for the division of the empire into ten contemporaneous independent sovereignties at a later time (17:12). The symbol was a prophecy, as well as an emblem. That is to say, it not only stood for the power of imperial Rome, in the way the lion stands for British power, but it exhibited details that were to be evolved in the course of its history. It is for this reason that we find Pagan Rome in hostility to the Christ-woman's political son, represented by a ten-horned monster, at a time when the ten horns had not as yet historically made their appearance. If there were no other evidence that the ten-horned dragon of the chapter we are considering stands for Pagan Rome at this juncture, it is found in the last six words of verse 3, which might easily escape the reader's notice as having anything in them: "seven crowns upon his heads." In the next chapter (13:1), the same symbol has ten crowns on the horns, and not on the heads. There is a very obvious reason for this difference. The crown is a symbol of sovereign authority. At the time of Constantine, the ten horns had not historically appeared. Therefore they are crownless; but the heads had appeared, and were in authority; for the emperorship was the sixth head, or form, of Roman sovereignty. The epoch current in Constantine's days was the epoch of the heads, and not of the horns, which had received no kingdom as yet; therefore the crowns are on the heads, which is, of itself, a convincing proof that the seven-headed dragon of Rev. 12 stands for Pagan imperial Rome in its attitude of hostility to the Christ-woman, or Church, who had in her midst a son, to whom she was about to give birth in the full-blown possession of imperial power.

The birth of this imperial son was brought about by the very attitude adopted by the Pagan dragon. When Constantine (the sun with which the woman had just become clothed), ascertained the hostile intentions of the Roman emperor, he resolved upon taking the first step himself in the war which was about to be forced upon him. He threw his army across the Alps before Maxentius (who had taken the place of Galerius, deceased) was aware he had begun to move; and encountering the opposing army — three times as numerous as his own — he overthrew it with great slaughter, and marched towards Rome. Another army, and another, were collected to oppose him; but both dispersed before the celerity of his movements and

the vigour of his blows; and the Roman senate, after his third victory at Saxa Rubra, threw open the gates of Rome, and proclaimed him Emperor of the Romans. Thus the woman's son was born after a season of acute parturition agonies.

But he was not yet what he was destined to become — sole monarch of the Roman world. This destiny is expressed by the symbolism of verse 5. "She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God and to his throne." Some apply this to the ascension of Christ. A moment's reflection will suffice to show this a mistake. What John saw was a representation of things which a voice told him (Rev. 4:1) "must come to pass hereafter." He was told this A.D. 96. How, then, could this scene represent an event that had taken place sixty years before? Besides, such an interpretation would ignore the primary characteristic of the Apocalypse as an exhibition of things in sign or hieroglyph. No; the woman in the case is the Christian community, and her son the imperial champion, begotten in her midst as the result of the operation of her principles on Roman society. This son in being born and caught up to God and to His throne, was (1) to become developed as an acknowledged emperor, and (2) to be elevated in the operations of Providence into the position of sole monarch of the world. "God ruleth in the kingdoms of men" (Dan. 4:32). Hence, for Constantine to be placed over them all by the force of circumstances, was symbolically to be "caught up to God and to His throne. This came about in due time.

Meanwhile, we have to consider the event of verse 6: "The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand, two hundred and threescore days". This seems a strange sequel to the events of the early part of the chapter. It is, however, in harmony with the course of affairs as they developed themselves after Constantine's elevation in Rome. While the woman, or Christian community of which Constantine declared himself protector, continued in the sun-invested position in the heaven to which events had elevated her, the woman in another sense fled the position and became the object of persecution of the new and nominally Christian government. To see this clearly, it is necessary to realize that the community developed by the labours of the apostles contained two elements — the real and the unreal, the actual and the nominal: those who were earnestly subject to the law of Christ and those who were professors without heart — who accepted Christ as a tradition but were uninfluenced by it in a practical way. The latter were in the majority. It was by their means that the political revolution in favour of Christianity was brought about. They were not fastidious about the commandments of Christ which forbid the use of the sword or identification with the politics of the present evil world. Therefore they felt themselves at liberty to plot and intrigue and fill the army and offices of State, and set up a military champion in Constantine. The other class, described (verse 17) as "those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ", were the minority, an element — a remnant in the midst of others. Broadly viewed, they were both one community and therefore in relation to the Pagan dragon, one woman. In another relation of things, they

were two — the one the shell, the other the kernel — the one the shadow, the other the substance. To the one class, Jesus tells us he will say in the day of account, "I never knew you" (Matt. 7:23). To the other, he will unite himself in glorious marriage as a bridegroom to a bride. In the ultimate aspect of things, the latter class only are the woman — the Bride, the Lamb's wife; and although in relation to the aspects of human history, the nominal are part of the woman as well as the true, yet in even the current recognitions of Christ, the true only are the woman. The false are finally symbolized in the Apocalypse as a shameless prostitute.

It is in view of these distinctions that we are enabled to understand how it came to pass that after the woman had been invested with the sun of imperial favour, the woman should "fly into the wilderness". As a matter of fact, ecclesiastically considered, the woman remained in the region of sunshine: the Christian party continued in the position to which Constantine's success elevated her. But shortly after its elevation, there was a schism which resulted in the separation of the community into two parts -- one of which "fled" from the presence of imperial favour, and became the object of the persecution of the other. One party was zealous for the commandments of God, and the other were worldly time-servers. The schism, though long existing as a spiritual fact, only became openly visible on the appointment to a bishopric of a man who during the dreadful persecution of Diocletian and Galerius, had given up the Scriptures to save his life. The faithful could not brook such a violation of Christian decorum and refused to recognize the man that had been appointed. The dispute raged with great bitterness. It came several times before Constantine, who decided in favour of the reprobate, who was the favourite of the Court party. The particulars you may learn in Eureka, where they are very fully set forth. The decision resulted in the flight of the woman both in the spiritual and the geographical sense. She fled from the presence of the Court, saying through one of their leading writers, "What has the Emperor to do with the Church? what have Christians to do with kings? and what have bishops to do at Court?" And she flew from the Roman soil and took refuge in the African provinces of the Roman empire -- the territory forming the southern margin of the Mediterranean, and the northern fringe of the African continent. Here she was fed and nourished, and afterwards spreading herself into the southern parts of Europe, she sustained in the capacity of the two witnesses, that 1,260 days (years) testimony in the presence of her persecutors which we had to consider in the last lecture.

Here a question will occur to many: "Are we to consider, then, that the churches in Roman Africa in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the various dissenting bodies in Switzerland, France, and other parts, were the true brethren of Christ? If so, why is it that what we, the Christadelphians, consider the truth is not to be found in their writings?" Some make use of this argument to reject the truth. This is a great mistake. The question of the truth is not to be settled by reference to human documents or human constructions of history. We must enquire concerning this at the holy oracles alone: "To the law and to the testimony; if any speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." Yes, yes, says the objector,

very good: but how are we to deal with the question asked? The answer is that though these communions were not in the mass the body of Christ, they contained it: while the church ascendant — the Catholic sun-invested woman, contained it not at all. There is evidence that the heretics as a class contained the brethren of Christ in their symbolization as the witnesses, but the same symbolization representing them as two, brings with it the evidence that, like Israel after the flesh, they were not all Israel that were of Israel. Fragmentary writings exhibiting affinities with the truth present the same evidence: they are quoted by Dr. Thomas in Eureka. But even if there were no such evidence, we should be unwise in allowing the uncertainties of history to weaken our perceptions of the truth. In all our conceptions of truth and duty, we must be governed wholly by the Scripture. We know we are safe here, whereas in dealing with matters of which there is no authentic record, we are on slippery ground. You cannot rely on the portraiture of ecclesiastical history. In after ages, Canon Bowlby, of Birmingham, would be accepted as a competent witness touching the Christadelphians: yet how little, as recent experience has shown us, could we recognize ourselves in his descriptions.

Going back to the days of her flight, before Constantine had yet become supreme ruler of the Roman world, we read (verse 7), "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death." In these verses we have a symbolical representation of the struggle that elevated Constantine from the position of ruler of a third of the Roman Empire (in conjunction with his Pagan colleagues, who ruled the remaining thirds), to the position of sole emperorship. It was a struggle in which the testimony for Christ — (sown in previous centuries of tears and blood) — obtained final victory over Paganism, and banished it from the system of the civilized world. It was a struggle conducted "in heaven", that is, it was war among the rulers. Maximin, the emperor of the eastern or Asiatic third of the empire, made war on Licinius, the ruler of the middle, or Illyrian third, with a fatal result to Maximin, whose dominions, on his overthrow by Licinius, were added to those of the latter. Licinius, emboldened by his success, and hating the pro-Christian policy of Constantine (the ruler of the western, or Roman third), resolved to put forth his power against Constantine; and to re-establish Paganism throughout the empire. This brought on war between Licinius and Constantine, which, after several great battles (each a victory for Constantine), ended in the complete overthrow of Licinius, and the expulsion of Paganism from the government of the Roman world. Constantine became sole emperor and Christianity the only recognized

religion of the State, from Persia to the Atlantic. This was the triumph of (the symbolic) "Michael and his angels" over the "dragon and his angels." Michael, meaning who like God, was the symbolic name of Constantine, as the instrument by which God cast the idols from the throne of the world, and substituted thereon, in a preliminary way, the name of His son. As opposed to this enterprise, Pagan imperialism was the political incorporation of the original diabolism of human nature, and, therefore, "that old serpent the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." The wrath of this Devil, on his ejection from heaven, i.e., Italy (the heaven-proper of the Roman system), and the woe announced for the inhabitants of the earth and sea on his descent among them, refer to the stages in the process by which, during twelve years, Pagan superstition was driven by degrees from all place and power in the Roman habitable. In the latter stages, when Licinius, after his overthrow of Maximin, conceived hostile intentions against Constantine, the devil was filled "with great wrath", knowing his time was short; and he "persecuted the woman that had brought forth the man child", that is, he promulgated oppressive laws against the Christian community in his dominions. The literature of the times bears evidence that there was a general presentiment that Paganism was doomed, which stirred up its supporters, under the leadership of Licinius, to supreme efforts, which brought war and devastation on the inhabitants of the eastern and maritime districts of the empire. In twelve years from the commencement of the conflict, the political Michael was entirely victorious, and the "old serpent, the Devil, and Satan", as incorporated in the venerable Paganism of Greece and Rome, was utterly cast down.

When these events were consummated, there were great rejoicings among the Christian party surrounding Constantine, and throughout the whole empire, who from that time imagined that the kingdom of Christ had really come by the hand of Constantine. This was the loud voice of verse 10 — a voice "in heaven" — in the ruling sphere, saying, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God," etc. It was only, however, in a preliminary, typical, and shadowy sense that this had come to pass. It is only when the seventh trumpet sounds that "the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of Christ", as we have seen. The "loud voice" represents the exultations that actually took place, as ecclesiastical history testifies, but does not necessarily guarantee these exultations as representing the accurate truth in all particulars.

In verse 14 we have the flight of the faithful woman again introduced. We have considered the meaning of this in connection with verse 6. Verse 14 adds to the information of verse 6, by telling us where the woman was to be nourished. "Two wings of a great eagle", or as it is in the original, "of the great eagle", were given to her that she might fly into the wilderness state. Understanding the Roman power to be meant by "the great eagle" (and this was one of Rome's leading symbols), the wings would indicate the outlying provinces of the Roman jurisdiction. The city of Rome itself was the head of the eagle; Italy its body; and the countries east and west, subject to its authority, its wings. History shows us that it was in these wings where the witnessing community were nourished. Dr. Thomas, in Eureka, illustrates

this in a very ample and satisfactory manner. I would recommend you to make the acquaintance of that wonderful work. Perhaps you may feel more encouraged to do so after the slight understanding of matters which these lectures may afford.

In verses 15-16 we have "the serpent", also styled "the dragon", exhibited as the persecutor of the woman for a lengthened period. After the overthrow of the Pagan dragon, the actual persecutor in the case was the government of Constantine, under the instigation of the bishops of the Catholic Church of the Court party. This creates a seeming difficulty in view of the fact that the Pagan dragon was finally disposed of by the victories of Constantine. It is staggering at first sight to find the dragon stand for Paganism, and then for the Christian government of Constantine, who overthrew Paganism. The explanation is to be found in the fact, that though in the conflict in which Constantine as the Christian ruler of a part of the empire, contended against Paganism as the champion of the Christian name, only Paganism could be considered as the serpent and adversary; yet, afterwards, when Constantine occupied the dragon capital -- Byzantium, afterwards called Constantinople — and had absorbed the dragon territory into his dominions, and became, in his turn, an adversary and persecutor of "the remnant of the woman's seed": his government became transformed into the political serpent and dragon, as distinctly as his Pagan predecessors. Therefore, the vision, which has more to do with the nature of things than their nominal distinctions, retains the serpent-dragon as the symbol of the Church's persecutors, when those persecutors were nominally the Church's protectors. The vision is thus in harmony with events as they unfolded themselves in fact, though out of it with historical nomenclature from a human point of view. In this it gives one of many marks of its divinity. It is after the analogy of the symbol of the woman, which in one relation of things is the community of the faithful; and, in another, the apostate Church in adulterous association with the kings of the earth.

In the water mentioned in verse 15, which the dragon cast out of his mouth, to overwhelm the woman, we may recognize the military expeditions dispatched by the Catholic government against the schismatics in the Roman "wings". In the earth helping the woman and opening her mouth to absorb the flood and to save the woman, we see prefigured the aid that was rendered to the faithful Christian community by the lawless lovers of liberty in Africa — emphatically the earth — who resorted to violent measures in their defence. The particulars, which are very interesting, will be found very fully set forth in the third volume of Eureka. We cannot do more on the present occasion than indicate the interpretation.

"The dragon was wroth with the woman and went to make war with the remnant of her seed." In the carrying out of this war during the ages that followed, the ecclesiastical enemy of "the remnant of the woman's seed" underwent various political transformations, which are the subject of representation in chapter 13. This chapter is full of interesting details. We cannot go into them with the minuteness which they deserve. We must be content to indicate the general outlines in a rough and ready way. They have to do with the new constitution of things in Europe springing out of the

Constantinian revolution. Such as desire to attain a more thorough acquaintance with the matter will do well to avail themselves of the opportunity so wonderfully brought within their reach in Dr. Thomas' Eureka. His exposition of this chapter alone occupies over 200 pages of the third volume.

Arranged from the writings of Bro. Robert Roberts by Bro. Bob Widding

Hints For Bible Markers

As was written last month the gospel light should shine forth from us so mankind will see and God be glorified. It is the essence of holding forth the word of life. The verse preceding the 16th declares, (Philippians 2:15) "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" And how can we hold forth the light of the word of life unless we have developed in our minds wisdom of that word? Faithfulness in dealing with God's revealed word, in all its aspects, will be the test of our acceptance in the day of judgment. It is our duty to say come. (Isaiah 55:1) "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

We are commanded to preach the truth. Instead of comment on this command at this point, an example of what happened to bro. Roberts while going to listen to a "signs of the times" talk by an alien preacher might be edifying. It should be an exhortation to us all. "They were, however, among those upon whom, though in time by the clock, being too late for the event, "the door was shut." The crowd outside increased every moment up to the hour of the lecture, and evinced no disposition to be discouraged by the situation in which they found themselves, They hung about outside with as much interest as if they had been inside, and perhaps a little more;...At twenty minutes past eight, the brethren and sisters having found each other out began to suggest whether the opportunity could not be turned to some account in the way of addressing the people (*a la* street preaching)... A brother volunteered to fetch a chair if the editor, who had been fished out of another part of the crowd, would consent to speak.

The editor, on a review of the general situation, consented, and the chair was brought and placed at the back of the hall, off the thoroughfare, in a large open square commodious for the purpose of assembly. Two brethren went round amongst the loitering people and announced an address at the back of the hall in the open air...He proved from Old and New Testaments (quoting, of course, from memory, as it was impossible to read from the testimony by the light of the moon) that it was God's purpose to send Jesus Christ back again to earth for the purpose of suppressing all the kingdoms of men and establishing his own authority as universal king... He then proceeded to speak of the times, and was demonstrating that the period of the Papacy's existence, as prophetically limited to 1260 years, was nearly up, and therefore that Christ might be expected soon, when some of the Pope's dear children (of whom there are thousands in Birmingham), happening to be in the crowd, raised a clamour in the interest of the Holy Father.

Their interruptions had been frequent throughout the discourse, but were always silenced by the exertions of the more civilized part of the crowd who were anxious to hear; but on reaching the stage of the subject referred to, their Popish propensities could no longer be controlled. They pressed in upon the crowd to the left of the speaker, with the object of dismounting the latter from his improvised elevation.... The brethren gathered close around the speaker, who by means of their shoulders was enabled to retain his equilibrium, although it was every now and then doubtful if he would not be posteriorly projected forward upon their heads. The commotion was no doubt greatly aided by the numbers of mere rollicking youths who, innocent of Papistical or any other sort of religious predilections, were interested in precipitating "a lark." The commotion ended in the triumph of the mob. Perceiving no chance of

regaining a hearing, the editor, who was at the posterior edge of the crowd, watching a favourable moment, got off the chair and escaped from the crowd behind. The enemy then came in like a flood, and swamped the chair and the brethren, some of whom were not so fortunate as the editor in escaping “apostolic blows and knocks.” The editor was walking quietly away when he was identified and immediately honoured with a numerous and rather turbulent escort, from whom two constables thought it their duty to protect him by planting themselves one at each side and walking him off like a felon. The procession grew large as it went **Berean 2010-251** on, and the officers of the peace assured their captive that the only chance of getting peacefully away with an unbroken head was to take refuge in some hotel till the turbulence subsided. “No sooner said than done.”

A temperance hotel offered the first asylum, and in we went. The landlady—a rather vinegar-visaged specimen of female loveliness – by no means accorded us a welcome, inasmuch as our entrance with two policemen drew a riotous crowd to the front of her house and suggested, no doubt, to her very judicious and matronly mind that we were the hero of some inebriate street orgy whom the constables had unthinkingly intruded upon the holy precincts of her temperance domain, for the sake of undeserved protection from popular pranks. A few minutes waiting brought no prospect of escape by the front of the house, so the good lady was induced to pocket her outraged feelings and allow us to get out by a back door, which through a dark passage led into another street. In this way, we jilted the expectant rowdies and found ourselves peacefully threading our homeward way, in the company of brethren and sisters, who had stuck fast to us through this the first exciting little episode of the agitation, which has not yet subsided.” We can see how the brethren took every opportunity to preach the gospel. The command of the Lord is absolute. We are to be as sheep in the midst of wolves. To be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves. This is difficult for the mind of the flesh. Agreeing with an adversary for the sake of peace. When we know we are right, submitting to wrong is not pleasing to man. But it is better to end strife in the shortest possible way. Submitting to wrong has always been a mark of a genuine servant of Christ. When Paul was getting ready to chastise the Corinthians he reminded them in the 2nd epistle (11:20) how well they had obeyed Christ’s command of submitting to wrong. “For you bear it if a man makes slaves of you, or preys upon you, or takes advantage of you, or puts on airs, or strikes you in the face.” (RSV) We are required to develop the same understanding, that God will repay. Deuteronomy 32:35 “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompense; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

—Bro. Beryl Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

Hold forth the word of life.

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. (Philippians 2:16)

Say to the perishing, come.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

Agree with your adversary quickly, submitting even to wrong for the sake of peace.

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. (Matthew 5:25)

Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? (1 Corinthians 6:7)

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Romans 12:18)

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. (Romans 12:19)

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