

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**

MTONDIA, Kenya, Brother Julius Gama

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Loving greetings,

In January and February of 2011 we were happy to be visited by Brothers and Sisters and is as follows; Brother Bob Bent from Texas, Brother Sid Jones and Brother David, Sister Dawn Humphreys from Saskatchewan and Sister Kaye Yuen from Vancouver. Others who joined them were Sister Mary Agnes Kariuki, Brother Epa Wekati and Brother David Gatua from Kenya.

We spent time together in the study of the word of God and the mutual encouragement of companionship in our shared faith. On Sunday, 30th of Jan, we had the Memorial services and shared the companionship in our faith.

Brother Epa was presiding, and Bro. David Humphreys took part of exhortation. He taught about the fellowship and also much about the Kingdom of God. This encouraged many of us and built our faith.

Recording Brother, Julius Garama

GOLDTHWAITE, Texas

We are happy to report the baptisms of **Bro. Jesse Gustavsson** on March 5, 2011, and **Bro. Adam Hurst** on April 3, 2011. It is such a blessing to see young ones choose the way of life. *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."* 3 John 4

We have the pleasure of having some new members in our ecclesia: Bro. Craig and Sis. Lacy Kiley joined our ecclesia in January 2010 when they moved to Goldthwaite, Bro. Lenny and Sis. Pam Naglieri and Bro. Ben Naglieri joined our ecclesia in July 2010 when they moved to Comanche, Texas, and Sis. Joanne Osborne joined in April 2011 with her move to Comanche.

We miss Bro. Glendon Rhoades since he moved to Canada and joined the Richard ecclesia in the fall of 2010.

We enjoyed visitors: Bro. Noah and Sis. Julie Brown, Bro. David and Sis. Kelly Sommerville, Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune, Bro. Phillip and Sis. Cheryl Hughes as well as Bro. David, Bro. Matthew, and Sis. Esther Hughes, Bro. Seth Brown, Sis. Sarah Brown, Bro. Ricky & Sis. Julie Hurst, Bro. Aaron Myers, Bro. Terry Readman, Bro. Caleb Hurst, Sis. Amber Jones. Thanks to Bro. David Sommerville, Bro. Aaron Myers, Bro. Phillip Hughes, and Bro. Terry Readman, we enjoyed visitor speakers.

In November, 2010, we hosted a study weekend and enjoyed visitors from Austin, Edmonton, Hengoed, Houston, Lampasas, Las Cruces, Richard, San Angelo, and Milan County Ecclesias. If the Lord remains away, we hope to host another study weekend in November 2011.

We are blessed to have a wedding planned to unite Bro. Matthew Hughes of Hengoed and Sis. Amy Hurst of Goldthwaite on August 2, after which they plan to reside in Wales, United Kingdom.

Stand fast in the way of life until that time that Christ returns and brings a righteous reign.

Love in Christ, Bro. Curtis Hurst

BRISBANE, Qld. Australia: Sunday Memorial Meetings 10.30 a.m.; Wednesday Bible Class 7.45 p.m. in Members' homes.

Loving Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ,

We are pleased to report the good and encouraging news that on Saturday afternoon April 9th 2011 our friend from Papua, New Guinea, **Macx Kota**, after a very successful confession of his faith, was baptised into the sin-covering name of Jesus Christ. He was officially welcomed into fellowship the next day at our Memorial Meeting. He is a valued addition to the Berean Fellowship, having spent many months not only grasping the fundamentals of the Truth but also understanding clearly the important differences between Bereans and other groups claiming the name of Christadelphian, especially on the doctrines of the Atonement and Fellowship.

Our Bro. Macx returns to Papua, New Guinea very soon when he will be the only Berean and understands the challenges he faces which include plans to witness for the Truth to other Christadelphians, family and interested friends, God willing.

Please note our brother's address is: P.O. Box 2583, Lae, Morobe, Province 411, Papua, New Guinea. His e-mail address is: macxkota@gmail.com

Our brother would welcome hearing from Bereans throughout the Brotherhood.

With fraternal regards to all of like precious faith,

Your brother in Christ, Ted Mingham

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 10–12, 2011**
Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX 1-325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July 1 – July 4, 2011**
Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada,
sc.jones@sasktel.net

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July 25–31, 2011**
Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-577-1119,
markbraune@gmail.com Study: "Zechariah"

Holy Land Trip

Our plans are continuing for another trip to the Holy Land in May, 2011, God willing. Instead of going down into Egypt we hope to visit a few places that Paul travelled to: Athens, Corinth and Cencrea 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.

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link often as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The 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.

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.

In the Image of God Made He Him-2

“In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven”—Matt. 18:10

SETH IN ADAM'S IMAGE, AS ADAM IN GOD'S

WE would like to direct attention to the exact parallel between Gen. 1:26—

“Let us make man in our image (tselem), after our likeness (demuth).

And Gen. 5:3—

“Adam begat a son in his own likeness (demuth), after his image (tselem).”

It will be noted that the original words are identical.

Surely these identical expressions—used in similar relation and so close together, and further tied together by Gen. 5:1—must mean the same simple thing. Surely it is highly forced and unnatural to suggest that we must interpret them in two entirely different ways, according to our own ideas of what they should mean.

REFERENCES TO BODILY PARTS

THERE is another aspect which we do not present as absolutely conclusive in itself, but which to us adds great supplementary strength to the picture. Beside the continual and natural references to God as a person as we know such—”Father,” “He,” etc.—there are the many allusions to Him that imply a form similar to man's—His face, His hands, etc.

It is argued that this is all “symbolic,” and that on this basis, He must also have wings (Psa. 17:8) and feathers (Psa. 91:4).

True, much is symbolic and figurative. Many such expressions are used of men in other than a literal sense, as to “*hold something in the hollow of one's hand,*” or to “*grind the faces of the poor.*” But, on the foundation already given, we believe the many places which refer quite naturally and apparently literally to God as an actual person with a form like man's carry great weight in presenting a consistent picture. It is just what we would expect, on the basis of Gen. 1:26.

We know “wings” are quite obviously figurative, but we experience no more difficulty with this than we do when we ourselves use the expression “take someone under our wing.” Such clearly figurative expressions—employed freely by men themselves—cannot be used as an excuse to brush aside all the natural and simple references to God's face, hands, eyes, etc., without some very real evidence that none of this is intended to convey the idea that it quite naturally and simply does convey.

If God is very anxious and concerned that we should NOT get this impression, it is surely strange that ALL the references to Him, from Genesis to Revelation, when accepted in their ordinary sense, so strongly lead TO that impression, whatever aspect of the subject we consider.

We are well aware that Christendom considers a literal sitting down in a literal Kingdom of God to partake of literal food with Christ as a gross and absurd notion, but—believing what God has said—we are quite unmoved by an apostate Christendom's views, or the views of the “wise” of the world. The same applies to this question.

VERSES USED IN ATTEMPT TO DISPROVE THE TRUTH

There are some verses that are quoted in an effort to prove that the form of man is not patterned after the form of God:

Deut. 4:15—“*Ye saw no manner of similitude (temunah) on the day that the Lord spoke to you.*”

Even on the face of it this does not in any way support the above contention. It is a perfectly true statement of fact, and it is emphasized to guard them against their very prevalent weakness of desiring to make and worship images. But of Moses—in whom there was no such danger—God said, “*The similitude (temunah: same word) of Yahweh shall he behold*” (Num. 12:8). And we are given an instance of this happening (Exo. 33:20-23).

* * *

Jer. 10:23—“*It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*”

The argument from this is rather obscure and hard to define. It lies in the suggestion that the phrase “that walketh” is given as a distinguishing characteristic of man, as contrasted with God. Surely the simple, reasonable meaning lies in the connection between “that walketh” and “his steps,” just as if we said, “It is not in man that laboreth to direct his labor aright.” Consider a very similar expression (Psa. 89:48)—

“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?”

Could this be used to prove that God has no life, simply on the ground that man is spoken of as living?

* * *

Eccl. 7:29—“God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”

It is inferred that this verse refers to the making of man in God's image and man's subsequent decline from that image. Apart from the fact that this suggestion contradicts the clear meaning of “image” in Gen. 1:26, we believe the clearest proof that this interpretation is impossible lies in the distinction that Paul makes in 1 Cor. 11:7 between the man and the woman as related to the image of God—

Man is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man.”

Both man and woman were made “upright.” Both were “very good” before transgression. If we say that being made “upright” was being made in the image of God, then we deny that the woman was made upright. If woman was not “upright” or “straight” when made, then the statement that they were “very good” would not be true, and God would be made the originator of sin.

* * *

Rom. 1:23—“They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man.”

We would like to call attention first to the fact that this in no way states or proves or indicates that man was not made in the image (form) of God. This should be clearly realized, for much has been made of this by inference.

It is simply a perfectly true statement of fact that—forsaking the true and pure worship of the Creator—they made and worshipped gods patterned after vile and corruptible men.

WHETHER OR NOT MAN IS MADE IN THE FORM OF GOD DOES NOT AFFECT THE SIN HERE SPOKEN OF.

Forsaking the true God—putting Him from their minds (v.28)—they followed the tendencies of their own lusts and desires, and created false gods, patterned after themselves.

“They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (v. 25).

That was the sin. The fact that—patterning idols after men—they would approximate the form of God, would be quite incidental. It was creatures, with all their vile passions and propensities; they were the patterns and ideals they were copying for their objects of degraded worship.

Bro. Roberts, says, in answer to exactly the same objection in the 1892 Chdn., pg. 133— “The allegation in Rom. 1:23 against the fools who had *'changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man'* has reference to nature rather than shape, as shown by the emphasis on the terms of the contrast—'corruptible' and 'uncorruptible' in connection with 'glory.'

“The mythology of the Greeks and the idolatries of the Canaanites may illustrate what is meant. They reduced the glowing fountain of Eternal Power to a mere creature like man with his weaknesses and passions.”

This is emphasized by the following verse: *“Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.”*

Some have thought, on the basis of v. 18 (“Who hold the Truth”), that this first chapter of Romans refers to believers who have gone partly astray. But the Rev. Vers. here has, “Who hinder the Truth.”

The original word is katecho, and while it admittedly is and may be translated “keep, possess, hold fast,” it is also just as accurately rendered “seize, stay, withhold, let, restrain.”

Surely it will be quite evident from a careful reading of this chapter that it is the whole mass of the Gentiles that is being spoken of, as chapter 2 speaks of the Jews. The whole scope and framework and plan of the epistle demand this. Paul says (3:9)—

“We have proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are ALL under sin,”

* * *

John 5:37—*“Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.”*

This is interpreted to mean, “nor seen anything of similar shape.” This is not sound interpretation; it takes all the point and meaning out of the passage. The passage says, “Ye have not seen His shape” (eidos—form, appearance). Consider the context of the same verse—

“The Father hath borne witness of me, ye have neither heard, etc . . .”

The point at issue is WITNESS, testimony, evidence.

It is God's **OWN authentic voice** or **visible manifestation** that is in question as a matter of genuineness and witness. Whether or not they had seen countless men fashioned after His shape is entirely irrelevant.

It will be noted that all the foregoing “proofs” are based on inference. Not one of them actually says what they are used to try to prove. This is true also of Psa. 73:20, which was considered earlier.

MALE AND FEMALE FORMS

AS a further objection, it is said that if we accept the natural and literal sense of Gen. 1:26, we immediately introduce the question of sexual characteristics (because of the distinction of 1 Cor. 11:7). This is a train of thought—in relation to God—that we are very reluctant to even consider, much less discuss. Jesus said (Matt. 22:29):

“Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures . . .

“They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage . . .

*“They are the **children of God**, being the children of the resurrection.”*

But still they are **real, actual, perfect spiritual bodies**, with head and limbs, etc. Let us not be like the Sadducees who confused the incidental and passing with the essential and lasting. Let us take a larger, truer view.

To say that apart from sexual differences there is no distinction between the male and female forms is just not true. (This argument is put forward in an attempt to show that 1 Cor. 11:7 cannot refer to form, because there the man is said to be the image and glory of God in distinction to the woman who is but the glory of the man and not the “image of God.”)

Male and female are two distinct forms. All general proportions, and many important details, vary. Examine any book on figure drawing or anatomy. The facts of the case are just what we would expect to find in the light of Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11:7—similarity throughout with just sufficient difference to create a clear distinction between the two forms and to show that one is the original creation and the other is a modified reflection of it.

This point, instead of weakening the case, when examined beautifully strengthens and illustrates it. Mere sexual characteristics—a temporary provision for present necessities (Luke 20:35)—need not, and should not, enter into the consideration for a moment. Those who accept the true scriptural picture experience no difficulty in this respect, and no desire to presumptuously pry beyond the limits of divine revelation, or introduce unseemly aspects. It is only the contrary view that insists on raising this aspect.

ARE WE IMAGE-WORSHIPPERS?

IN support of this theory, it is constantly and repeatedly charged against the brethren and sisters and Christadelphians generally:

“If you have any knowledge of God's form, you have created an 'image in your mind.' You are worshipping that, instead of worshipping God Himself, and you are therefore an image-worshipper.”

Surely it is obvious to any reasonable person that this is an utterly illogical confusion of thought. It could just as reasonably be argued that if you have any conception of God at all “in your mind”—whether it be of form, nature or attributes—then you are worshipping something “in your own mind.”

It is essential to have some conception of God “in the mind”—

“This is life eternal—that they might know Thee, the only true God . . .”

“We know what we worship.”

This conception, to be “worshipping in truth,” must consist of what God has been pleased to reveal concerning Himself—no more, no less. God has revealed the fact that He patterned man after His own form, and it is pure nonsense to say that by believing this one becomes an image-worshipper.

We do not know what God looks like, beyond the general revelation that man's form is patterned after God's. We do not seek to know. We feel no obligation or liberty to speculate on the matter at all. We desire to learn as much as we can about the vast store of knowledge that God has revealed—not waste time in dangerous and profitless speculation about what He has not.

But even if we had been told exactly what God's appearance is, to say that this would make us image-worshippers and that we would immediately be “worshipping an image in our mind” is self-evidently absurd. We know exactly what our friends look like. When we love them, does that make us image-lovers, just because we have a picture of their form in our mind? Are we loving them, or an image in our mind? When we write to them or send them a message, are we addressing them, or an image in our mind? Surely the fallacy of the whole thing is obvious!

The disciples knew exactly what Christ looked like. They were with him for years before, and 40 days after, his glorification. They necessarily had an exact picture in their mind of his appearance. Were they praying through an image in their mind when they prayed through Jesus to the Father? It is recorded (Heb. 1:6)—

“And again, when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.”

Christ had a form which was intimately revealed to men and to angels. Is this command therefore “image-worship”? Let us learn to distinguish

things that differ and not make these groundless charges of “image-worship” just because the simple testimonies of God are accepted in their natural and obvious sense. We are not wiser than God.

True believers worship God Himself. They ascribe honor and glory to Jesus Christ whom they know on infallible testimony to be a real, tangible spirit body in human form. To call this image-worship is a meaningless confusion of words.

THE GLORIOUS BODY OF CHRIST OUR GROUND OF HOPE

The present, real, glorious spirit body of Jesus Christ is the anchor and foundation of our hope and belief. If we allow these various sure landmarks of revealed Truth to be tampered with and nullified to fit private views, we shall soon find that we have no solid body of Truth left at all.

The suggestion that Jesus merely assumed a human form when he appeared after his resurrection, and that he himself—his real spiritual identity—was something different from and independent of that body, has no support in Scripture and is a wide departure from what is revealed.

“Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.

“Handle me and see, for a spirit (such as they thought they saw—v. 37) hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39).

To say that Jesus just assumed a body for the occasion is to make a mockery of his words here. It was the real, **bodily** Jesus that died; the real **bodily** Jesus that rose from the dead, and was changed from a mortal **body** to an immortal **body**.

If we hold fast to the simple record of the Scriptures, where do we find these ideas about an immortal, immaterial essence independent of a body? That has no place in the scriptural record, and is not the Jesus we know.

“Jesus showed HIMSELF again to the disciples” (John 21:1).

If it was not the real “himself” they saw, but just a temporary body that the “himself” was using, we can see the foundations disintegrating under such passages as “Dust THOU art.” We use this passage to prove that the living body was the real Adam.

“Thou wilt not suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27).

If the body that was raised and glorified was not the real, permanent Jesus, but only a form he took for the occasion, what happens to the resurrection of the **body**? It becomes meaningless.

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).

The good, as well as the bad, receive their reward IN BODY.

*“The Lord Jesus Christ shall change our vile **BODY**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious **BODY**” (Phil. 3:21).*

This is how the faithful attain to immortality—by having their **BODY** made like Christ's, their Elder Brother. To say that he has no body, but assumes a body on certain occasions, is completely foreign to—and destructive of—the scriptural picture—

*“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a natural **body**; it is raised a spiritual **body**.*

*“There **is** a natural body, and there **is** a spiritual body; and so it is written: 'The first man Adam was made a living soul' (a natural body); the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (a **SPIRITUAL BODY**).*

*“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they that are earthy; and as **IS the heavenly** (Christ), such are they that are heavenly.*

*“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, **we shall also bear the IMAGE of the heavenly**.*

*“For this corruptible must **PUT ON incorruption**, and this mortal must **PUT ON immortality**” (1 Cor. 15:42-53).*

The foregoing is the true picture as we have always believed it. This plainly teaches:

(1) That Jesus Christ, the last Adam, was made a **SPIRITUAL BODY**—that is what he actually **IS**—his real identity—he **IS** a spiritual **body**, not a bodiless essence that just assumes a body as it desires. The Scriptures know nothing of such.

(2) That the faithful will be **made like he is** by their mortal **BODY** being changed to an immortal **BODY**. He is the firstfruits and example, the head, the firstborn, the first among many brethren.

It is a false and dangerous speculation, wholly unscriptural, to say that the real Jesus is something different from his body—

*“This **SAME JESUS**, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen **HIM** go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).*

Of Stephen we read (Acts 7:55)—

*“He being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and **JESUS STANDING** on the right hand of God.”*

And of Paul—

“Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?” (1 Cor. 9:1).

“Last of all he was seen of me also” (1 Cor. 15:8).

And it is specifically testified—

“This MAN, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, SAT DOWN on the right hand of God” (Heb. 10:12).

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ SITTETH on the right hand of God.” (Col. 3:1).

This is the way the Scriptures present the matter to us. These are God's words. Simple humility and wisdom will accept what God says, and not try to improve on it. Where do we get any license to nullify and deny these testimonies, and presume that they do not mean what they say? What floodgates of uncertainty would be opened by treating Scripture this way!

We are very much afraid of these speculations concerning Christ as a bodiless essence. These assumptions (and others, are afraid, as the future will unfold) arise from refusing to accept the clear foundation God lays in the beginning—

“In the image of God created He him.”

This is the beginning of the divine plan to create a family for Himself for His glory and pleasure, of which His only begotten Son was to be the Head and Elder Brother.

We greatly prefer the safe and solid and scriptural conclusions of bre. Thomas and Roberts—

BROTHER THOMAS' VIEW

“Having affirmed that man stands related to two kinds of BODY, the apostle gives us to understand that in the arrangements of God the spiritual system of things is elaborated out of the animal. In relation to human nature, two men are presented as its TYPES in the TWO PHASES it is to assume. These Paul styles 'the First Adam' and 'the LAST ADAM', or 'the first man' and 'the second man.'

“The former he terms 'earthy,' because he came from the ground and, goes thither again; and the latter, 'the Lord from heaven,' because being 'known no more after the flesh,' he is expected from heaven as the place of his final manifestation in 'the body of his glory.'

“Then, says John, 'we shall be like him.' If, therefore, we have been successful in depicting the Lord as he IS NOW, while SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD; namely, an incorruptible, honorable, powerful living person, SUBSTANTIAL AND TANGIBLE, shining as the sun and able to eat and drink, and to display all mental and other phenomena in perfection: if the reader be able to comprehend such an 'IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD,' he can understand what THEY ARE TO BE who are counted worthy to inherit His kingdom.

“Therefore, says Paul, 'As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY,' or 'Lord from heaven.'

This CORPOREAL change ... is an absolute necessity before they can inherit the Kingdom of God. A man ... must be 'changed into spirit,' put on incorruptibility and immortality of BODY.” (Elpis Israel, p.44).

“The Bible has to do with things, not imaginations; with BODIES, not phantasmata; with 'living souls' of every species; with CORPOREAL beings of other worlds; and with incorruptible and undying men” (Same, p.46).

AND BROTHER ROBERTS' VIEW

“The angels, in FORM AND FEATURE, resemble human beings. They eat and drink, and walk and talk, and deport themselves in general like ourselves; but, unlike us, they are incorruptible, deathless, perfect, and strong in the might with which God has invested them for the execution of His purpose.

“In the angels we behold an exemplification of WHAT THE SAINTS WILL BE after resurrection, for Jesus says:—

‘They that shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the angels and are the children of God’ (Luke 20:35-6).

“It is a state in which they will be real, SUBSTANTIAL, HUMANLIKE IN FORM, of flesh and bone, yet incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and never-dying” (Christendom Astray, p.132).

“Paul points to Christ AS HE NOW IS as a specimen of the spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44-5). Here is an unmistakable clue to the simple and glorious truth of the matter. The righteous are to be MADE LIKE TO CHRIST.

“Now, concerning Christ, we have the plainest information on this point. The BODY THAT WAS CRUCIFIED ON CALVARY was the body that was put in Joseph's tomb, and that came out alive on the morning of the third day. When Jesus appeared alive to his disciples, it was an ACTUAL BODILY MAN that so appeared ... Here was Jesus, after his resurrection, possessing flesh and bones.

“In 40 days, he visibly left the earth in the presence of his disciples; and it was said to them by two angels, 'THIS SAME JESUS, who has been taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go.’”

“Consequently, Jesus at his return will be a REAL AND BODILY person, possessing flesh and bones; for HE IS SO NOW, AND HAS BEEN EVER SINCE HE WENT AWAY. Paul saw him several years after his departure to heaven. He is a living illustration of what a spiritual body is ...

as tangible as the bodies we now possess, yea, more so” (Finger Post 31, What is a Spiritual Body?).

THE DANGEROUSNESS OF THE THEORY

ALL this is undermined by the theory that actually the angels and Christ are spiritual essences independent of bodies. The scriptural picture of salvation is eternal life manifested through **incorruptibility and perfection of body**, and Christ and the angels are presented to us as examples. Surely the dangerousness and unsoundness of a theory is self-evident when it requires such a complete revision of the scriptural picture, and such groundless assumptions that the real facts of the case are quite different from the way the Bible invariably presents them to us!

The Bible always presents angels and Jesus Christ to us as real, actual, substantial bodies in human form, Jesus the very same body that was laid in the tomb. The theory presented requires us to believe that from beginning to end this is all one big deceptive appearance—that actually they are bodiless, immaterial identities, and that the bodies that have been seen and handled and presented as evidence of reality were just assumed for the occasion.

NO DESIRE TO PRY OR SPECULATE

THE revealed fact that we are “made in the image of God” does not enable or entitle us to picture God, and none of us desire to. We realize that this is both dangerous and irreverent. God’s visible appearance is inconceivable. “Glory” is an inseparable element of His nature and substance—

“The GLORY of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another . . . so also the natural and spiritual bodies” (1 Cor. 15:40-4).

“They changed the GLORY of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man” (Rom. 1:23).

Jesus is now both *“the brightness of His GLORY, and the express image of His person.”* Israel was denied any visible manifestation, and the reason strongly impressed upon them—that they should be fenced against the ever present danger of pictorializing God—reducing the GLORY of the great Majesty of the Heavens to an image or picture.

THE VALUE OF WHAT HAS BEEN REVEALED

It has been revealed to us that we are patterned after Him. This is a great and gracious revelation. We cannot presume on it or beyond it, but we can humbly accept it. It inspires us with a sense of direct relationship to our Father in heaven. It emphasizes and ennobles the truth that our **bodies** are His temple, and that they are a vital and important part of His purpose. This revelation points FORWARD to the glorious communion of the divine family in the eternal ages of the future. It is fitting and beautiful.

It also entails upon mankind great responsibility before Him. Formed intimately as SONS, bearing the DIVINE IMPRESS, it is men's destiny and duty to comport themselves as sons.

God could have made us any shape, mere creatures for His pleasure. But how inspiring and ennobling and uplifting to learn of the destiny He has planned for us as eternal sons of His glory! How much deeper and richer and fuller has He made the possibilities of our love for and communion with Him by this evidence of kinship! Picture it otherwise, and the great excellence and fittingness of the way His wisdom has planned it will forcefully impress us.

This is the profitable avenue of thought to follow. Not prying backwards along the revelation, and speculating concerning the details of God's being, but advancing with it in the direction of what it means as regards our relationship to Him, and our ultimate destiny.

Paul says to the Athenians—

“Forasmuch then as we are the OFFSPRING OF GOD, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device” (Acts 17).

Here again is a direct relationship between God and man implied, a relationship so strong and direct that certain facts concerning God are inferred on the basis of it. Man is never represented as a mere unrelated creation of God, as the animals or the trees or the planets, but always as His CHILDREN.

THE BEAUTY AND NECESSITY OF THIS TRUTH

INASMUCH as God's own Son was to be born as one of the human race—identical with them—a very real and close relationship between God and man is necessitated. And when we realize—as we do—that the present form of man is to be eternally perpetuated in glorious spirit-nature, we see the beauty and necessity of the primary revelation concerning the relation of that form to God's.

Just so much has been revealed. Just sufficient to form the necessary foundation. At this point we must stop, for we are on holy ground. To attempt to peer further than is revealed, or to speculate concerning God or to pictorialize Him is the height of presumption.

We all well realize this and are heartily in accord with the necessity of caution in this respect. There is no subject where delicacy and discretion are more essential. We do not forget the lesson of the fifty thousand who were slain by God for having looked into the Ark, and the people said in awe and fear—

“Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?” (1 Sam. 6:19-20).

Truly an “image of God” must not be made or worshipped—in the mind or anywhere else. None of us have any desire to do so. To attempt to is to “change His celestial glory” to terrestrial standards.

We are simply concerned with learning and believing the necessary things that God desires us to believe—in the plain, simple way that God desires us to believe them.

We cannot understand God's nature and being. We realize the pitiful limitations of our intellects in this matter. But we CAN, in humble faith, believe what He tells us. He has chosen, for reasons of His own love and wisdom, to tell us in the plainest of words that He has been pleased—in the furtherance of His own glorious purpose—to fashion man after His own form.

“In heaven” said Jesus, “angels do always behold the face of my Father.”

This beautifully and simply sums up the understanding and hope that God desires us to have concerning Himself. May we have the wisdom to accept it in simple faith.

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

Brotherly Correspondence - Letter to Philemon

This letter of Paul's differs from the rest of the epistles in being a private communication on a private matter, affecting only the brother to whom principally it was sent. It is none the less, however, instructive to those who seek to be “followers of Paul as he was of Christ.” It is a model of letter-writing, as it ought to be among brethren. A right mode of intercourse is one of the many things we have to learn on being called “out of darkness to the marvellous light of God.” We are too apt to rest content, with a change of view; we are too apt to stop short in the process which, rightly worked out, ends in a “new creature.” It is a time before we take on the new man in his entirety. The ways of the old man linger with us in thought, speech, and (too often) in action. The heartless (and even slang) talk of a world living in wickedness; or the chilling propriety of polite letter writing, which deals, like “science,” with external things only, and knows nothing of the noble warmth that comes from the First Cause, who is love, and whose family is in training for His likeness — sometimes remain like scarcely-thawed ice under a winter sun, disfiguring and obstructing the development of the life which the truth is designed to create in the poor shivering servants of sin.

Now we must take our cue in this, as in all other matters, from apostolic example. We must not be led away with the idea that the apostles occupied a sphere too high for us to attain. If we hope to be with them in the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, we must strive to conform to their

thoughts and ways, in these, our days of the prophecy and the tribulation. They have commanded us to imitate them even as ye have us (the apostles) for an example” (Phil. iii. 17); and this command we must obey, if we desire to stand right in the day when popular sentiment and popular usage in such things will disappear as completely as mist before the rising of the sun. The apostles are our brethren. Their being called “apostles” simply signifies that they were specially sent (from *apostolos*, one sent). Their speciality lay in the message they had to deliver; it did not lie in the principles or practices required of them. These principles and practices (commanded by Christ) are of common obligation among all their fellow-heirs unto eternal life. They are exhibited in the apostles as patterns for our imitation.

Now in the case in question, we find Paul, in the capacity of a private letter-writer, describing Philemon as his “dearly beloved and fellow-labourer”; Apphia as his “beloved”; and Archippus as his “fellow-soldier.” Doubtless, there is in our day a great deal of hypocritical cant in the use of friendly phrases; this may have had the effect of toning down the cordiality of true men, who abhor effeminate sanctimony, but it is no reason why they should discard the genuine article. There is a great and always perceptible difference between the parroting of friendly forms of speech and the genuine use of these as the channels of a real friendship in Christ. Therefore, the existence of the one need not exclude the other. Nay, we may go further, and say that the genuine cannot be excluded. Where a friendship of the apostolic type, having its foundation in God, truly exists, it will show itself in its own way as inevitably as the love of the sexes. Let the love of the brethren have its free course. Let us not be afraid to call them “beloved,” and “dearly beloved,” and “fellow-labourers,” if they be so. By all means let us eschew a hackneyed or stereotyped phraseology, which is as lifeless as the rattle of a Papist's beads; but let us not on principle steer clear of endearments. They belong to the truth, and the truth has scarcely got hold of us if we feel them not. Let us not say “dearly beloved” if we feel not so; let us not salute another as a “fellow-labourer” if he be not so. Let all our words be built in truth; but let us not rob ourselves or our brethren of the sweetness and the edification that come from a frank and childlike declaration of the glorious love that grows from the truth.

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is Paul's opening salutation in his letter. Should such a salutation always be absent from the letters of his nineteenth century brethren? Thank God, these words of purest blessings are not unknown among the brethren; but they are not yet so common as — in the will of God — the truth may make them. Do we advocate a stereotyped form? By no means. They are not stereotyped in Paul's letters, though very nearly so. We advocate conformity to the Spirit of the thing. In some form or other, Paul

always invokes the blessing of the Father and of the Lord on those to whom he writes in love. It is not difficult to see that this is a good thing. It is an exercise in true godliness every time it is done. It unbends the mind to the attitude of suppliancy and benevolence, which we always ought to occupy. It brings with it to our own mind a recognition of God's relation to all our matters, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways. It sheds the right influence on those to whom we may address ourselves. It brings before them great facts to which a mere attention to business is apt to make us oblivious. Finally, and most consequently, does it not command the Divine approbation and blessing? Is there no such thing as "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ?" Are these empty words? If they are, let us not use them. But if they are not — if God does extend favour, and shed mercy and give peace to His children even now — comforting them in all the tribulations that they may endure; and if Christ as the mediator does take part in this actual, invisible, and gracious work — are we not robbing ourselves, and our brethren, and our Master, and our God, in missing our many opportunities of invocation?

Paul says he "thanked God, making mention of Philemon always in his prayers." In this frank allusion to the subject-matter of his private petitions, we have insight into another feature, which deserves our notice and imitation. Paul was not above thanking God for a worthy fellow-labourer, and letting him know it. In our dry, democratic days, this fruit of the Spirit is nearly extinct. A universal self esteem kills generous gratitude in the birth, and fears to lose its own exaltation by even implied appreciation of another's worth. This is an obstinate shrub of the desert, which must be cut down to make way for the lovely flowers of Eden, which delight the eye and regale the senses with their fragrance. But when will the cutting-down be? Well, in some cases it will take place now, under the exhortation to "mortify" and "crucify" all the characteristics of the old man of the flesh. It is better to apply the knife ourselves. If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Paul, however, did not thank God for Philemon merely because he was a brother. This is sometimes not a cause for thanksgiving: for there are many whom we may thank God are not brethren, because of the disgrace and hindrance that would come from their being so: and there are some concerning whose brotherhood we cannot be thankful, because, like those of whom Paul speaks in another place, though professing godliness, they are destitute of the power thereof, and are enemies of the cross of Christ, though bearing the name of friends. What made Paul thankful was this: "*Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast TOWARD THE LORD JESUS and toward all saints.*" Such a condition in any professor will certainly inspire thanksgiving in any brother to whom, like Paul, "to live is Christ." It is an

unerring law that “he that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten” (i John v, 1). A man whose sympathies are toward God and the Lord Jesus will, without fail, have his love drawn out by those symptoms in another, which show he has been begotten by the word of truth (James i. 18). So decided and unmistakable is the operation of this law that John says “By *this* we know that we love the children of God, *when we love God and keep His commandments*” (1John 5:2). A brother among the children of Sodom, whether these bear the name or not, might have the experience of Lot “whose righteous soul was vexed from day to day.” His love would not be drawn out. His soul would be stirred within him disagreeably, in accordance with the characteristic of divinely approved men who cannot bear them that are evil” (Rev. 2:2), and despise vile men, honouring them that fear the Lord (Psa. 15:4); but, by John's rule, he would be able to comfort himself in the drought and in bitterness. He knows within himself that God is his chief delight, and the commandments of God the subject of his supreme regard. He can therefore say to himself, Though my antipathies are stirred; though my soul eats in bitterness: though my love is rarely called out, I know that I love the children of God, because I love God and keep His commandments. I have only to meet them to have my soul awakened to the fulness of love, and borne aloft with exceeding joy.”

“We have great joy and consolation in thy love,” says Paul to Philemon, “because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.” Paul's satisfaction on Philemon's account arose from Philemon's spontaneous well-doing — not well-doing in the limited sense of correctness of conduct, which in many cases is but a refined kind of selfishness; but well-doing in the sense of doing good to others. There is no more consoling manifestation than this — to see a brother refreshing the saints, comforting, sustaining, helping, gladdening them in the things of the Lord. There are who discourage, pull down, hinder and distress by their hypercriticism and unwise pugnacity, and others by their evil deeds.

Others there are whose influence is simply neutral, which is better than mischievous, and some who are neutral think they are of Philemon's stamp refreshing to the saints: but the latter are the judges. No man can testify of himself. The fruit is known by its taste; and the fruit depends upon the seed and the soil it is grown in. Let every man enrich his ground with self-crucifixion, and plant carefully the seed of the Word, and water well with prayer and daily reading, watching, and plucking the weeds; the fruit will then be pleasant to the taste of all who eat. Without this training, nature's rank growth will come up in its wild profusion; and for a paradise of God, there will be a garden of weeds.

The way Paul introduces and disposes of the private business that required him to write this letter to Philemon, is eloquent in lessons of

courtesy and kindness. While he was a prisoner at Rome, a certain runaway slave named Onesimus came into contact with Paul, probably through being detained as a suspected runaway in the same prison. At all events, the result of the contact was that Onesimus received the truth; and the question may be understood to have come up between them, "What, in the altered circumstances, was the duty of Onesimus towards Philemon, his master, from whom he had fled?" We can easily imagine Paul advising him to return, and offering to give him a letter of introduction that would protect him from the consequences. The letter before us is the result. "I might be much bold," says Paul, "to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love's sake, I rather beseech thee." Why might Paul have assumed the attitude of command? Because he was an apostle, and because Philemon, equally with Onesimus, was his son in the Gospel. But Paul does not take the attitude he might have taken. Why? For love's sake. Very well, if Paul abstained from the dictatorial and resorted to the persuasive — the supplicatory — the courteous — the respectful, which of his poor copyists in this late century will justify the adoption of a different style? Few would care to justify such a thing theoretically, and yet many practise what they would be ashamed to preach. In their dealings with men and brethren they are not gentle and courteous, but imperious, abrupt, dogmatic, and disrespectful. This ought not to be so. Followers of Paul must be what Paul was if they are to follow him into the kingdom; they must be kind, gentle, courteous, easy to be entreated; and not austere, haughty, unfeeling, harsh, implacable, selfish, overbearing, and unkind. These are the features of the old man, whose children "shall not inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God."

Paul beseeches Philemon to receive Onesimus, "not now as a slave, but above a slave — as a brother beloved." "Receive him," says Paul, "as myself:" that is "if thou count me a partner." Paul does not even presume upon Philemon's recognition of his position. An egotist would have taken this for granted without qualification, and even paraded his presumption; but Paul had modesty enough to allow the possibility of Philemon thinking as little of him as he did of himself, "leaving us an example."

"If he (Onesimus) hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account. I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand. *I will repay it.*" This is a very practical illustration of what Paul means when he exhorts believers to "bear one another's burdens." It is a distinct taking by Paul on his own shoulders of the obligations which were burdensome to another. In this, some in our day might consider Paul a foolish enthusiast, that is, if their estimate of his case is to be argued from their view of such conduct in our day. Well, we, must be on our guard against the influence of such. It is very common to praise virtue in the abstract, and admire it in remote times, but to

pooh pooh it when the occasion for it comes to our own door; and on the other hand, men unite with refreshing unanimity in the condemnation of selfishness and rapacity that have become historic, but at the same time practise every day the same thing without compunction. In the name of our eternal well-being, let us, be on our guard. There were men in the days of Christ who made a great show of religion, but of whom he said they bound heavy burdens on other men's shoulders, but would not so much as lift a little finger to ease them. And there are the same sort now. We must not take our morality from them. Only the well-doing prescribed by the King will pass the King's muster in the day of account; and prominent as a feature thereof is this virtue illustrated in the words of Paul: "I, Paul, have written it with mine own hand — I will repay it."

Let us be with Paul in the great day approaching. But if we stand with him then, it will be because we stand with him now in his rules of business, taking not our cue from the world in such matters; but in all things acting on the principles on which we hope to govern and see the world governed in that glorious day when the haughtiness of men shall be brought down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted.

—*Bro. Robert Roberts*

Encouraging Words No. 20

ANOTHER year has passed, and still our Lord tarries. Concerning his coming it is written: "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." To this, as our Lord shows, there are possible exceptions. Let us be heedful so that we may be amongst these. As a help in this direction, let us rightly estimate the position of the world God-wards. During the year that has passed the world has not lessened in wickedness. This has been shown by its daily happenings. That it will not reform we may gather from the parallel drawn by the Lord Jesus between the day of his coming and the times of Noah. When he comes he will not find faith upon the earth; no, not in self-lauded, Protestant England. "Ah," say her complacent sons and daughters, "do we not rescue the drunken and reclaim the fallen—are we not righteous?" As well might ye claim to be righteous, O ye complacent ones, on the ground that ye scavenge your roads and disinfect your gullies! For to what end do ye rescue your moral outcasts? Do ye seek to bring them under the only purifying, flesh-transforming power on earth, viz., the gospel of the kingdom? Do ye not rather drag them from literal drunkenness and unchastity into the spiritual counterpart of these things—a state equally abhorred by God? Lift your eyes from the sot in the gutter to a higher plane, to Christ, and hear ye him: "Seek ye first the

kingdom of God and his righteousness”—first submit to your own reclamation from spiritual drunkenness and unchastity, and then will ye be in a position to deal effectually with these vices, whether literal or spiritual, in others.

Christ spent not his time in wiping the mud from gutter-men and gutterwomen, nor has he bidden his followers so to do. He preached the gospel—the glad tidings of the kingdom, “for,” said he, “therefore am I sent.” Those sinners who had ears to hear obeyed the gospel. Those who had not ears for the heavenly proclamation Christ left to be dealt with by the “dead.” “Follow me,” was his significant command, “and let the dead bury their dead.”

The world neither knows of nor believes in the kingdom of God, and, therefore, it cannot be other than ignorant of God’s righteousness. What is righteousness? The answer to the question is very simple. Righteousness consists in believing God, as it is written, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” Does the world believe God? Let one of its representatives, Mr. R. J. Campbell, answer. After affirming his disbelief in certain events recorded in the scriptures, he says: “Will our correspondent reflect for one moment upon the absurdity of supposing that belief in any recorded event whatever is necessary to spiritual life?” If this means anything, it means that a belief in God’s dealings with man in the past, as a basis of hope in regard to the future, is worthless. To gauge the enormity of the insult contained in this attitude, let Mr. Campbell transfer it to his friends—let him say to these: I have the greatest possible respect for you, but I do not believe to be true any event which you describe as having taken place. That Mr. Campbell expresses no exceptional view is only too painfully evidenced by the published utterances of the recent Church Congress at Manchester and kindred gatherings. Disbelieve, say the learned blasphemers from our universities, that God made promises to Abraham and confirmed them by an oath: reject, say they, the testimony that Christ was raised from the dead to make these promises sure; put aside these things, and your “spiritual life” will not be affected. Well may the righteousness of the disciples of such men consist in inducing sots to join the temperance movement! “Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils.” “Look unto ME and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.”

Though the night be dark and the sea tempestuous, God’s two great harbour lights flash unceasingly athwart the gloom: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness”: “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” Let us fix our eyes on these lights, and unswervingly steer by their aid, and, however long our Lord may tarry, we

shall yet find ourselves in the kingdom in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets. *Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1908*

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 19

THE way of life abounds with too many sign-post warnings, bidding us “take heed,” “beware,” “be sober,” “be diligent,” for the children of God to indulge in the follies of a wicked world. The true sons and daughters of Almighty God recognise and bow to the fact that the present is for them a time of trouble mourning, suffering. How could it be otherwise when the requirements of their calling necessitate continual “fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12). It is the simple—the thoughtless and ignorant—who can (without regret) rollic, frolic, joke, and be generally free and easy. The wise resemble more or less their Elder Brother, who was pre-eminently a man of sorrows—”his visage was so marred more than any man” (Is. 53:14). Let the world ridicule the saints’ sad and sober countenance, it discerns not the reason, God does. He sympathises, and will one day surely remove the cause. “Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.” Sorrow is good, or it never would have been devised as an essential part of our experience. By nature we are frivolous and heedless of wisdom’s ways. Sorrow sobers and makes the mind impressionable. “By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better” (Ecc. 7:3). Most notably is this exemplified in the case of the psalmist, who exclaimed, “Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word.”

“O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth” (Psa. 8:1.) How profoundly significant are the Psalmist’s words. What a beautiful picture they present to the enlightened mind. They are a guarantee to us (for the Scripture cannot be broken), that God is yet to become the subject of universal thought and adoration. What a refreshing contrast to the present benighted condition of things. In that day God’s name will not be kept in the background as it is now. In every calculation He will have a place and a voice. There will be a universal effort to enhance His glory. Every law enacted, every custom instituted, every work performed, every recreation and pleasure arranged, in fact, whatever is done will be done to the glory of God. “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord’s name is to be praised” (Psa. 113:3). This recognition of the excellencies of Yahweh’s name involves a kindly feeling between man and man. “Man’s inhumanity to man” will be a tale of the past. The spirit of Boaz and his reapers will be general—”The Lord be with you”—”The Lord bless thee” (Ruth 2:4). Participation in this time is the joy that God has set before His children of every generation. Let us remember, as we contemplate this time, that if we would attain to it, we must now exhibit the spirit that will then prevail.

If a man is determined on returning to the world the way is clear, God will not hinder him. God is ever willing to extend His help to the godly inclined, but not to the froward. “If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him” (Heb. 10:38). Backsliders prove themselves unworthy of divine favour. A man’s estimate of the riches in store must be low indeed for him to be willing to sacrifice them for present gratification. It is not strange that Christ should say, “No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back *is fit* for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Are any of us wavering as to whether we shall go on or fall back? If so, let us soberly ask ourselves—Supposing we do turn back, shall we escape the sorrows, vexations, and troubles of present existence—shall we avoid death? Let us dally not, but return to our first love. Life is uncertain; the judgment is sure. “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Rom. 14:10). What will our fleeting, delusive pleasures avail us then? While the opportunity offers let us weigh the advantages arising from fidelity to God—”fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.” If our way seems rough, let us recall the bitter work of Christ *for us*. If we seek God’s help and strive to be faithful, we shall never fail. “It will be better for us not to have known the way of righteousness than after having known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us” (2 Pet. 2:21).

Is our lot a heavy one? Then let us not murmur but go to God and lay the matter before Him. It may be that He will alter it. God has never complained because man has besought deliverance from trouble. The complaint of God has been that man has avoided referring the trouble to Him, or has turned rebellious when it has not been immediately removed. The faithless wilderness wanderers are a warning to us in this matter. They called not on God in their trouble, but unreasonably and instantly resented it. Let us note the lesson of the narrative—”When the people complained it displeased the Lord” (Num. 11:1). Surely not one of us is desirous of displeasing God. Then let us cultivate patience and contentment under trial. Is it strange that God should be displeased when His people murmur at the way in which He leads them to everlasting life and happiness? Does He not care for them? Is He indifferent to their present and ultimate well-being? Let us open our minds and not act childishly. Truly, grumbling saints are despisers of God. The psalmist realised that affliction was good (Psl. 119:67, 71). But whether we realise it or not let us believe it. If we indulge in Israel’s sin we shall surely fail of the promised goodness. “Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phil. 2:14). The only safe-guard in the case is to recognise God in all our affairs. All the holy men of old did this, and as a result were enabled to unflinchingly fulfil the trying mission of their lives—to endure the difficulties of their probation with contentment and unswerving patience.

Topography of Laodicea

Laodicea, the city of the seventh ecclesia addressed by the Spirit, lay south of Philadelphia, in the way to return to Ephesus, so that it will be found, upon an inspection of the map of Asia Minor, that the seven ecclesias laid in a kind of circular form, so that the natural progress was from Ephesus to Smyrna, from Smyrna to Pergamos, from Pergamos to Thyatira, from Thyatira to Sardis, from Sardis to Philadelphia, from Philadelphia to Laodicea, and from Laodicea round to Ephesus again, (from which it was distant about forty-two miles south,) which is the method and order the Spirit hath observed in addressing them.

That there was a flourishing association of believers at Laodicea in the first century, is evident from Paul's letter to the Colossians. In ch. iv. 15, he exhorts them to "salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, even Nymphas and the ecclesia which is in his house." He appears also to have written especially to the Laodiceans, for he tells the Colossians to read the epistle obtainable from them.

The ruins of the city shew it to have been very large, situate in a volcanic region upon seven hills, and encompassing a large space of ground. Some notion may be formed of its former greatness and glory from three theatres and a circus which are remaining, one of which is very fine as it was capable of containing above thirty thousand men, into whose area they descended by fifty steps. Laodicea is now called Eski Hissar or the old castle: In its apostasy, the ecclesia in this city became the metropolitan, or Mother Church, of sixteen bishopricks, yet it is now desolate, and not so much as inhabited by shepherds, but is become a habitation only for wolves, foxes, and jackals, a den of dragons, snakes, and vipers. Thus we have in the ecclesia of the Laodiceans in the fulness of its apostasy, a Mother of Harlots sitting upon seven hills; and because of its spiritual misery, poverty, blindness, and nakedness, reduced, with the city of its habitation, to utter desolation and irrecoverable ruin, and its site become the den of ferocious beasts, and the hiding place of reptile abominations.

Laodicea was long an inconsiderable place, but it increased towards the time of Augustus Caesar. The fertility of the soil, and the prosperous circumstances of some of its citizens, raised it to greatness. Hiero, who adorned it with many offerings, bequeathed to the people more than two thousand talents; and though an inland town, it grew to be more potent than the cities on the coast, and became one of the largest towns in Phrygia, as its present ruins prove.

Chandler, in his "Travels," p. 225, says, that "Laodicea was often damaged by earthquakes, and restored by its own opulence, or by the munificence of the Roman emperors. These resources failed, and the city, it is probable, became early a scene of ruin. About the year 1097 it was possessed by the Turks, and submitted to Ducas, general of the emperor Alexis. In 1120, the Turks sacked some of the cities of Phrygia by the Meander, but were defeated by the emperor John Comnenus, who took Laodicea, and repaired and built anew the walls. About 1161, it was again unfortified. Many of the inhabitants were then killed with their bishop, or carried with their cattle into captivity by the Turkish sultan. In 1190, the German emperor Frederick Barbarossa, going by Laodicea with his army toward Syria, on a crusade, was received so kindly, that he prayed on his knees for the prosperity of the people—which prayer, as the future proves, was of no avail in heaven; for about 1196, this region with Caria was dreadfully ravaged by the Turks. The sultan, on the invasion of the Tartars in 1255, gave Laodicea to the Romans, but they were unable to defend it, and it soon returned to the Turks. We saw no traces of houses, churches, or mosques.

All was silence and solitude. Several strings of camels passed eastward of the hill; but a fox which we first discovered by the ears peeping over a brow, was the only inhabitant of Laodicea." *Eureka Vol. 1 page 401*

Analecta Apocalypticae (60)

New Jerusalem

Having completed the exhibition of symbols illustrative of the glorious emancipation of the earth under the reign of Christ and the saints, one of the same group of angels — viz., "one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues" — invites John to a special view of the queen-city of that age of light and glory. He is taken, not to a wilderness, but "to a great and high mountain," and what a glorious spectacle bursts upon his view! "The holy Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal, and it had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels ... and the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." There are certain particulars given which we shall look at presently: but let us first look at the general character and purport of the vision.

In the first place, it is impossible not to be struck with the extreme contrast between the symbols chosen to represent the present benighted constitution of things in the world, and those here exhibited to illustrate the glory of the coming age of God's completed purpose. Everything that is

odious, repulsive, hideous, horrible, and frightful is suggested by the spectacle of a complex monster, mounting on its back and bearing through the dark waters an inebriated, senseless, domineering, wicked woman. This is the spirit of God's illustration of the character of the present age. It embodies the present evil world as it appears from the divine standpoint — the standpoint of true enlightenment. Its perfect appropriateness will be appreciated by all who have learnt to estimate things as they ought to be estimated. The civil government of the world, upheld by the sword, and administering law in the interests of a few, and applying it towards the many in a mechanical, indiscriminating, unfeeling manner, to their distress and impoverishment, — are well summed up in one dreadful, devouring beast of prey; while the Church they maintain among them, which coquettes with the civil authorities for the sake of temporal advantage, and deceives the multitude with forms and phrases, cheating the understanding and robbing the heart with dogmatic fables and benighted traditions, stupefying and degrading the population with corrupt and corrupting doctrines, — could not be better represented than by the heartless and degraded rider of the monster. Together they furnish the “coat of arms” of the present evil world: the heraldry of “the kingdoms of this world.”

With what relief we turn to the symbol of the age when these shall have become “the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ” — a city of glory, perfect in symmetry, dazzling in transparent brightness, and sparkling with the colours of every gem, — with streets of gold, foundations of precious stone, and its municipal names derived from the apostles of the Lamb. It is a fitting symbol of the government which will fill the earth with the glory of the Lord, and bless mankind with justice, love, peace, wealth, and wellbeing in all that pertains to God and man — a government that will concern itself with the honour of Jehovah, and the welfare of the poor, and that with omnipotent hand will vindicate the rights of God and quell all the sons of pride. Some have imagined the city literal. This would be out of harmony with the whole character of the vision, which begins by showing seven churches as seven golden candlesticks, and ends by exhibiting eternal life as a river. It would also be inconsistent with the express intimation John received as to the purport of the New Jerusalem he was about to see. The angel said to him, “I will show thee the bride THE LAMB'S WIFE”. You all know who she is. She is the aggregate of the Lord's glorified brethren. Hence the city is a symbol of the saints. It may be noticed as a peculiarity — not as a difficulty — that in this case we have a symbol duplicated somewhat in the way we found time drawn in twice, so to speak, in representing the duration of the war with the Lamb. We have first the saints represented by a bride and then the bride symbolized by a city. If it be asked, how is this, we probably find the answer in the fact that while the bride represents the saints in what we may call their domestic relation to the Lord Jesus, the city represents them (this same bride-community), in their public political relations. At all events, there can be no question that in dealing with the new Jerusalem, we are dealing with a symbol of “the bride,

the Lamb's wife," and therefore with a symbol of the saints in the corporate completeness of the day of their manifested glory. What a boundless field of grateful contemplation is here opened up to the minds of weary saints, who have here no continuing city and who groan within themselves at the many and sore evils of the present hour. They languish on the highway while they pursue their way Zion-wards. They are few, scattered, tired and faint. The road is rough, the air is cold, the night is dark. Their spirits oftentimes quail within them, and they are ready to give up. Is it not a great reviving of hope and courage to look forward and know that in a short time at the longest, they will find themselves at the end of the weary journey, within the walls of the glorious house of God, where there are myriads of rejoicing saints, clad in the garments of praise and mantled in the immortal strength of a glorified nature? Our hopes may droop, our hearts despond sometimes; "for a season if need be, we are in heaviness through manifold temptations." But it is only for a moment, though it seems long. New Jerusalem awaits: the family of God — a large family — an intelligent family — a noble family — a loving family — a family with a thrilling history, bridging all the earth's dark ages — is the coming institution of the age of gladness promised from the beginning. By the vision shown to John, though not by that alone, we look forward and see it enthroned in Zion, with all power in their hands, all wealth at their disposal, all strength and life and joy in their possession, for the glory of earth's Creator and the blessing of universal man.

The details of the city's architecture will be found to correspond with the leading features of the divine polity as subsisting in what is apostolically designated "the commonwealth of Israel." There are twelve gates (verse 12) bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and at each of the gates an angel. The gates represent entrance: the angels, the divine invitation to enter, and the names, the Israelitish character of the institution in which those who accept the invitation find themselves when they "enter in through the gates into the city" (22:14). We have found frequent illustration of this feature in the course of the apocalyptic visions, viz., that salvation is of the Jews, and that the basis of the divine operation in the earth is that laid in the first instance in the choice of the seed of Abraham as historically and racially represented in the twelve tribes of Israel. The four living creatures, the four and twenty elders, the 144,000, the twelve tribes of Israel, the temple, the holy city, the altar, etc., etc., are all symbols of Israelitish affinity. They teach a lesson much needed but much derided in our day, that "to Abraham and his seed are the promises made" (Gal. 3:16), and that Gentiles in the flesh have no hope and are without God in the world (Eph. 2:12).

"The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb" (verse 14). This is intelligible in view of the fact that the twelve apostles were the official agency for the development of the mystical body of Christ. The multitudinous body considered under the figure of a city, is built on the foundation of the apostles. Paul makes use of this very expression in his letter to the Ephesians (chap. 2:20), "Ye are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being

the chief corner stone.” This idea in a condensed and complete form is presented in the symbol of a twelve-founded city, bearing the names of the apostles. The name of Judas will not be found garnished there: by transgression, he fell from his place (Acts 1:25), and was substituted by Matthias, whose election is divinely endorsed in the narrative of the Acts, and was ratified by his inclusion in the apostolic band, on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14). His case illustrates that of many others whose names, originally inscribed in the book of life, will be found erased (Rev. 3:5).

“He that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city” — not a rhabdos, like the reed given to John in chapter 11:1, to measure off the temple of God for affliction. The time of affliction is past in chapter 21. The Holy City is measured then for glory, honour, and immortality; and the measuring reed is golden. Faith, having been tried, has come out of the fire like pure gold; and receives its compensation in the divine use to which it is put. Faith under trial is pleasing to God, and He will show His pleasure in the measureless bounty of wellbeing He will bestow upon His saints in the day of their New-Jerusalem manifestation.

“The city lieth foursquare; and the length is as large as the breadth; and he measured the city with the reed — twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal” (verse 16). Here we have an immense cube as the form of the symbolical city. This is the perfection of geometrical symmetry, and indicates the finished completeness of the body of Christ when fully developed. God is the God of order. It is not more shown in His handiwork in the universe than it will be shown in the constitution of the body of Christ. There will be so many saints in it, and to each his perfect place. The measurement of the cube again brings out the Israelitish character of the hope. The arithmetical basis of all Israelitish arrangements is twelve, as we have before seen. This cube measures TWELVE thousand furlongs on any side. Its contents give us the enormous number of 1,728,000,000 (one billion, seven hundred and twenty-eight thousand millions) of cubic furlongs. The elements of this cubical city represent the saints. Each cubic furlong represents an individual saint; and the whole in one cube is the symbol of the ultimate fulness and perfection of Israel's “everlasting salvation” (Isa. 45:17).

The wall has the same characteristic. “He measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits — the measure of a man: that is, of the angel” (verse 17). The wall is Jehovah's protection, as saith Jehovah, “I will be a wall of fire unto her round about” (Zech. 2:5). But what shape does this protection take? It takes the shape of Christ and the saints, the defenders of Israel in the age to come. Consequently, they are the wall as well as the city. The measurement shows it: 144 cubits. This is said to be “the measure of a man.” This seems confusion to call the measure of a wall the measure of a man. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the wall is only the architectural form of the symbolic man, consisting of Christ and the saints as

head and body — the one new man of Paul's discourse (Eph. 4:24). But it adds, "that is, of the angel."s This apparently increases the confusion. But this appearance vanishes when we realize that the measurement in question is the measurement of the New Man in the angel state. The New Man exists now; that is, the small part of him that is not in the grave; but he is in the flesh, and not in the state contemplated as the finality of his development. That state is the state of equality with the angels. It is in this state of angel-equality that the New Man is symbolized by the New Jerusalem.

But it might be said, the reference to the angel is to the messenger that was showing John these things. True, but it is evident that the angel himself is made to constitute a part of the significations related to the vision. Dr. Thomas has pointed out what would escape the attention of a superficial reader, that when the temple of chapter 11:1, symbolizing the saints in the days of their mortal probation, had to be measured off for affliction with the reed like to a rhabdos, John himself, as a saint in the day of the mortality, was asked to perform the measurement; whereas, in the chapter we are considering, when a structure is introduced to represent the saints in their glorified state, the angel, as an immortal, performs the measurement. The angel, therefore, stood to represent the glorified saints, and to represent all of them; and, therefore, the measure of the wall (144 cubits) was "the measure of the man, that is, of the angel."

"The building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass." Gold in a transparent state is unknown to the metallurgy of present experience. The use of a finer gold than is known to man, to represent the nature of the city, illustrates the absolute perfection appertaining to the body of Christ in its glorified state. It speaks to us of the saints delivered from the alloy of present weakness, and clothed with the power and perfection of the divine nature. They are conscious of many deficiencies — many disqualifications in their present state. When they reach the translucent gold state, none of them will have any more to say with David, "My soul cleaveth to the dust," or to groan with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" A supernal calm — a pure and continual vigour — the delicious glow of a never-dimming love to God and man — will fit them to rejoice in the Lord always, and to pour their unstinted benefactions on a rejoicing earth.

"The foundations of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones." If the foundation stones are the apostles, the precious stones with which they are set and sparkle must stand for those who have been brought to Christ through their word and work. Peter speaks of such as lively stones (that is, living, sparkling, lustrous stones, as contrasted with dull, dead, common stones) — "built up a spiritual house" (1 Peter 2:5). Paul also speaks of worthy saints as "gold, silver, and precious stones," incorporate in the building which has Christ for its chief foundation. What this means in the literal is very attractive to consider. Paul takes us a step towards the literal

understanding in speaking of the Thessalonians as “his glory and his joy” in the day of the Lord. He does the same in remarking that if any man's work in Christ be destroyed — that is, if those whom he has brought to the truth are rejected — “he shall suffer loss” (1 Cor. 3:15). This hint suggests to the mind a beautiful organization of the body of Christ in the day of recompense. It will not simply be a multitude of saved men and women, but a multitude socially organized in a way that will reflect their history and secure for all the highest gratification that order is capable of yielding. We see it from the head to the foot. Christ is the author of all the salvation and the joy: in the kingdom he is the head, to whom every knee bows and every tongue confesses. The apostles were foremost in the mission and in the labours of the truth: they are the highest in the second grade of the kingdom, for they are the heads of the tribes of the house of Jacob in the day of restoration (Matt. 19:28). The earner of ten pounds has assigned to him ten cities: the earner of five, five cities (Luke 19:17-19). All and sundry are declared amenable to the rule that “he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully”, and vice versa (2 Cor. 9:6), that “Christ will reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:27). Consequently “they that turn many to righteousness” shall specially shine in the kingdom (Dan. 12:3). What this involves as regards the actual arrangements of the kingdom is hinted at in the clustered gems that bedeck the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem. Those who bring men and women to the truth and help to keep them there, may find that these will be given to them in the kingdom in a special way, while they themselves will belong to those above them, to whose instrumentality they may owe their own standing in the One Body. All will reign: all will exercise authority, but in various positions and relations and in different degrees of glory and honour. The lowest will not envy the highest, but will find themselves exactly suited to the places assigned to them; and the highest will not exercise their power with arrogance, but will exhibit the pure and loving condescension of the highest of them all, who humbled himself even unto death. There will be no schism in the body of Christ. It will be an absolute unity, like the human body to which it is compared, yet exhibiting the diversity of organization and function which is the highest glory of that wonderful work of God.

The twelve foundations had not only each a different name, but each was of a different material. “The first foundation was jasper (BRIGHT GREEN); the second, sapphire (BLUE); the third, a chalcedony (DEEP RED); the fourth, an emerald (GREEN); the fifth, sardonyx (LIGHT PINK); the sixth, sardius (FLESH COLOUR); the seventh, chrysolite (YELLOWISH DULL GREEN); the eighth, beryl (SEA GREEN); the ninth, a topaz (YELLOW); the tenth, a chrysoprasus (GOLDEN GREEN); the eleventh, jacinth (ORANGE); the twelfth, an amethyst (VIOLET).” Whether there will prove to be any exactness of correspondence between the nature of these precious stones and the apostles they represent, we cannot know beforehand; but it must be manifest that one thing is distinctly signified by this classification, and that is that diversity of excellence will characterize the

spirit state. The saints will not be all to one pattern. They will be all of a sort in one way. They will all be precious stones: but each with a preciousness of his own which gains by comparison with the preciousness of his neighbour. We see the principle faintly at work now. Brethren, resembling each other closely in their love of God and their affection for all spiritual things, and their fruitfulness in every good word and work, may yet differ entirely in their intellectual and moral characteristics. The difference, so far from being a defect, is an excellence, giving zest to their intercourse and their love one for another. We shall see this law in perfection in the supernal state to which the truth in its obedience will finally introduce men and women who please God through Christ. One other idea is suggested by the employment of precious stones to represent the saints. Precious stones owe their beauty to the light. In the absence of light they are dark; let the light come and they glow in all the dazzling and many-coloured refractions that give them their preciousness. The counterpart will be recognized in the relation of Christ as the sun to the precious stones, his brethren. Apart from him, they can do nothing and are nothing. "The head of every man (of them) is Christ, and the head of Christ is God." This is true both now and hereafter. At the same time, there must be fitness in themselves to reflect the light. The brightest sunshine falling on brick produces no beauty; it only reveals the deformity of fire-baked stuff. There must be a nature in the stones suitable to the light. There must be good soil before the seed will germinate. There must be the honest and good heart before the fruit of the spirit will come forth. This is a matter of original bestowal to some extent, but the education of the truth, ministered by the word of God as contained in the holy oracles committed to Israel, has a wonderful power to change the old inferior man into a new man, created after the image of the firstborn — the Lord Jesus.

"I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." A temple is that which contains the worshippers who come into the building for the seclusion and abstraction necessary for the act of worship. The New Jerusalem is a mystical city of worshippers. It exists as such. It is not like present cities in which the staple pre-occupations of the people are secular, and "religion" a thing they attend to now and then, and who therefore require buildings in which to attend to the matter occasionally. The city exists for the glory of God, and reflects it to the ends of the earth. Therefore a temple in its architecture would have been an anomaly. God Himself is the temple of the people who compose it. They are all in God and Christ in being in the Spirit, that is, in being changed from flesh nature to spirit nature in that birth of the Spirit which makes them spirit. This change makes them one with the universe-filling Spirit of which the Father is the focal centre. They are, therefore, in Him, and with Him, and before Him all the time. They need not to retire from the city for seclusion and concentration of attention. Their whole existence is an act of divine communion and praise.

But we should make a mistake in supposing that because this symbolic city has no temple, therefore the temple exhibited to Ezekiel as the central

pivot of the glorious government machinery of the future age will not have a literal existence. There is a place for every truth. What is true of the symbolic New Jerusalem is no guide to the truths concerning the literal arrangements of the kingdom of God. This we must seek at other sources, which are very abundant and very clear.

“The City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” The sun and moon, as symbolical objects shown in connection with their objects, would imply that the second class of objects were indebted for light, power, and glory to sources exterior to themselves. With this in view it would have been eminently inappropriate to have shown a sun and moon over the New Jerusalem. It would have been to intimate that Jesus and the saints were dependent upon the favour of some other power in the earth for the exercise of their authority over the nations of the earth. The power and light of the New Jerusalem are inherent. They belong to the body of Christ “of right Divine.” God is their power and glory, both by the favour and by the upholding presence of His powerful Spirit in glorious manifestation in Jesus His Name-bearer, and, through him, in all his brethren. Therefore it has no need of illumination from without.

“The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it; And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of all nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.” This will be easily understood by those who have followed what has gone before, and who comprehend the gospel of the kingdom. The New Jerusalem is the governing institution of the future age. It is the official incorporation and manifestation of the power of God, following on the change which turns “the kingdoms of this world” into “the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.” Christ and the saints, enthroned in the land of promise in glory, honour, and immortality, are the New Jerusalem, in the light of which the nations will walk, in which there will be no night, but everlasting day, whose attention to mankind will not be intermittent through weakness, and at whose feet will be poured the wealth and honour of all nations. Into their glorious community none will be admitted who do not conform to the standard of well-being exhibited in the revealed will of God.

Its being called New Jerusalem is due to the fact that Jerusalem has already once been the seat of divine government, based upon the law of Moses. Jerusalem under this arrangement of things is the old Jerusalem. Jerusalem, under the new constitution of things, will as, far exceed the old as the Prophet like unto Moses exceeds Moses himself, who was but a servant, “for a testimony (or type) of those things that were to be spoken after” (Heb. 3:5). She is said to “come down from God out of heaven,”

because in Christ coming from heaven, she comes from heaven. He comes as her glorious germ, in the same way as the kingdom of David was said to come with him when he rode into Jerusalem (Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38). On his arrival on the earth, he develops from the dust, by the resurrection-power God has given, the multitude of his saints of all ages, whom, after judgment, he organizes and manifests to the world as the New Jerusalem — the new government of the kingdom of David, to whom all the world must be subject, and by whom all the world will be blessed.

There remains one point of apparent discrepancy to be considered. Rev. 21:2 represents the New Jerusalem coming down from God at the close of the thousand years, whereas the line of remark just indulged in points to her manifestation at the commencement of that period. The explanation is doubtless to be found in the fact illustrated in the case of the new heavens and new earth, which, while commencing with the thousand years, have their special and final manifestation in the state of things reached at the close of that period. The New Jerusalem is the metropolitan institution of the age to come; but its fullest glory will not be manifest till all enemies are put under her feet, death itself destroyed, and she established as the Queen of the endless ages, the permanent tabernacle of Jehovah's glory among the glorified and rejoicing" nations of them that are saved" (verse 24). We cannot but believe that the inauguration of these, the endless ages of perfection on the earth, under the headship of Jesus and his New Jerusalem bride, will be accompanied by some signal revelation of her glory to the whole of earth's ransomed population, at the close of the thousand years. This would explain the fact of John seeing a post-millennial manifestation of the city which exercises authority over men for a thousand years before. The object of the thousand years ascendancy is to abolish all curse. But this object is not realized till the close of that period. It is therefore not inappropriate that her special manifestation should be represented at the time the great work is done.

We see a new wonder in connection with government in chap. 22:1. Here we read of "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Water is the constant symbol of life in the Bible's figurative discourse (John 4:14; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 21:6; 22:17). Here we have the fact that the fountain of life will be in the throne. We look to the throne of Victoria: is there any fountain of life there? Let a dead Prince Consort and a dying aristocracy answer. Never has the world before seen a king that had power to keep in life, and that life immortal life, all who are loyal to him. This power resides in Jesus, "the resurrection and the life." Hidden at present, as an object of faith, it will become manifest as a fact of experience in due time. The world will rejoice in a governor who can control the weather (vide the storm on the sea of Galilee), and affect all the physical conditions of existence at his will. This power flowing out from him is beautifully symbolized by a flowing river from the throne. On each side of

the river are trees, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations (verse 2). Trees thus figuratively used represent persons. So we learn from Isa. 61:3: "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning ... that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified." Who are the persons that grow like trees planted by the river of life? The saints. Their leaves are for the healing of the nations. That is, their work and mission, and the effect of all they do as kings with Christ will be to cure the world of all the woes that now afflict it. It is worthy of notice as a beautiful feature that this part of the symbolism of the age to come is derived from Ezekiel's prophecy. That is to say, the objects exhibited to Ezekiel with a literal significance are here employed as symbols of the glory that will be reached through the employment of those literal objects. The ultimate result is (verses 3-5): "There shall be no more curse (on earth). But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

The rest of the chapter we need not dwell on particularly. It can present no special difficulty and can have your attention at leisure. It does not enter into the structure of the vision, which concludes with the glorious picture contained in the words just read. Suffice it to note the angelic declaration (verse 6), "These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done". All here can bear witness to the truth of this declaration. The tortuous and complicated history of Europe for the past eighteen hundred years has run in the lines exhibited beforehand in the vision shown to the exile of Patmos. The situation of affairs in Europe at the present moment is exactly that which this vision requires; and the future it exhibits is precisely what the benevolent heart desires as the solution of the otherwise impenetrable enigma of human life. It is a message of truth, and beauty, and consolation. It has come down to us from Jesus, who says (chapter 22:16): "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches". How sad so few are to be found who understand and believe it. Be it ours to do our duty, with whatever result. Be it ours to earn for ourselves, and as many others as we can influence to that end, the opening blessing of the book (chap. 1:3), "Blessed is he that readeth, and they who hear the words of the prophecy of this book". Be it ours to have in continual remembrance the fact stated in the last verse but one of the last chapter:

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly."

And be it ours to join always heartily in John's own response, which has been the response of all his brethren during the long night that has enshrouded the world in the absence of Christ —

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

Hints For Bible Markers

One of the things we must always appreciate, when we first come into and as we walk in the truth, is that our mind-set is extremely important. Our minds should be continually considering exactly how God commanded us to live our lives. God's desire is "seek ye first the kingdom of God". (Matthew 6:33) Not the last thing in our lives, nor the second but FIRST. Obedience to these commands are the "works" necessary to diligently "make your calling and election sure". To know and live them. How much time do we spend in foolish talking and jesting? What will help us gain entrance into the Kingdom of God, foolish taking and jesting or thanking Yahweh for the wonderful things He has done? Jesus said in Matthew 12:36 "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." What a sobering thought when we keep it on our minds. James tells us (3:5) "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (Psalms 34:13) "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile." We would be wise to follow this example Psalms 35:28 "And my tongue shall speak of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day long." Proverbs reminds us we are known by our speech (15:2) "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness." Our time is short. The days are evil. We will give an account for our words, wise or otherwise.

Twice a year we read the word lasciviousness. Do we know what it means? We are commanded not to do it. Those who do such a thing will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do we understand what the words used in Galatians chapter 5 mean as they describe "the works of the flesh"? One of the words which are not commonly used in this day and age is seditions. It means "Conduct or language inciting rebellion against the authority of a state." How many times do we idly complain (strife), talk against (sedition), or make fun (jesting) of our rulers, the president, congressmen, boss, etc. "as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:21)

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

V. CONCERNING YOUR OWN CHARACTER

Things not to be named, still less practiced, among saints: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, drunkenness, covetousness, wrath, strife, sedition, hatred, emulation, boasting, vain glory, envy, jesting, foolish talking.

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. (Ephesians 5:3,4)

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and

such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5: 19 - 21)

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