

# THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom.

Upholding the Truth as The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

# **Ecclesial News**

**DETROIT, Michigan,** Memorial – 10:00am; Sunday School – 11:00am

Loving greetings in Christ,

As we come to the end of another year, we continue to look forward to the return of Jesus.

We have been encouraged here by having the addition to our weekly memorial meeting, by Skype, Bro. Bob and Sis. Mary Widding. We thank Bro. Bob for his encouraging exhortations, being part of our meetings and for Sis. Mary for playing the hymns every other weekend. We also want to thank Bro. Pat Brown for his uplifting exhortation. He and Sis. Linda have been attending our meeting by Skype while she is recuperating from her hospital stay.

Further encouragement has come our way by the visits from Bro. Jim Rankin and Bro. Lynn Osborne. We thank them both for their exhortations they gave us.

We thank all of you for your help in contributing to the magazine. We appreciated the extra help we needed and the love you have shown in supporting this work.

We pray that our dear Heavenly Father will bless you all and help us hold fast to our faith until the end.

Love in the bonds of the Truth,

Bro. Fred Higham

## **HOLLADAY, Tennessee**

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

It is hard to believe it has been over a year since our last ecclesial news. The words we sing in Hymn 182 are very true; “The days are quickly flying, and Christ will come again, With all his Saints attending, Triumphant in his train, When every eye shall see him, and every tongue confess, The glory of the Father, In Christ our righteousness.”

The days are truly flying by and hopefully we are all staying focused on the goal of serving Yahweh first and foremost to the best of our ability. Nothing else matters.

We have had several visitors since our last correspondence. Sis. Brenda McChesney & Sis. Shirley Luard, Bro. Steve and Sis. Sharon Osborne, Bro. Harry and Sis. Phyllis Phillips, Bro. Lynn Osborne and Sis. Joanne Osborne. We thank Bro. Steve and Bro. Harry for providing uplifting words of Exhortation.

We are happy to welcome the following members to our ecclesia; Bro. Noah and Sis. Julie Brown and their son Ethan who joined us in August of 2010, As well as Bro Steve and Sis Sharon Osborne who joined us in July of 2011. Sis Sarah Brown moved here for a short time and has since returned back to Texas. We enjoyed her stay.

Yahweh willing, we will be hosting the upcoming 2012 gathering on Oct 6 & 7 at the Montgomery Bell State Park. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Your Brother in the One Hope we share,  
Jim Rankin, Recording Brother

### **LAMPASAS, Texas**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are pleased to announce the baptism of another into the Saving Name of Jesus. **Melissa Baldwin** gave an excellent confession of the things concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Sis. Melissa's baptism was on Sunday, November 20, 2011. She may be contacted by phone at 254-449-1010 or by mail at 2026 Purple Martin, Killeen, TX 76542.

Your Brother in Christ, Mike Neely

## **FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES**

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

**LAMPASAS STUDY WEEKEND.....Dec 30, 2011–Jan 1, 2012**  
Bro. Mike Neely, 254-290-5876, mike@HCHOB.com

**KENYA FRATERNAL GATHERING..... Feb 16 to 19, 2012**  
Bro. Epa Wekati, epawekati@yahoo.com - Facility: Mabanga College, Mabanga, Kenya. Theme: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness"

**HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....April 7–8, 2012**  
Bro. David Lauck, dblauk@myexcel.com.

**LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 9–10, 2012**  
Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX, 325-451-4075

**HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING..... July 23–29, 2012**  
Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-757-3088, markbraune@gmail.com Study, "Ecclesiastes"

**TENNESSEE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Oct 6 –7, 2012**  
Bro. Jim Rankin, 115 Sherwood Dr., Camden, TN 38320 USA, 731-584-6039, email jrankin@bentoncountycable.net

## **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.bc.audioarchives.blogspot.com](http://www.bc.audioarchives.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 Bro. Craig Kiley ([craigkiley@yahoo.com](mailto:craigkiley@yahoo.com)) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to MP3 format and post them.

## His Father Ran and Kissed Him

*“Then drew nigh unto him (Jesus) all the publicans and sinners for to hear him” (Luke 15:1).*

What attracts these outcasts, whom the Pharisees openly despised? It was not because he hid his light or condoned their sins. None was more outspoken or uncompromising in his denunciation of sinfulness. But he showed sympathy for them. He wanted to help them. He won their confidence and attention by his genuine and unmistakable concern for them. He *worried* about them, if we may use that term. It *grieved* him that they should be astray—that they should grope in darkness—that they should be in ignorance of the pleasures and glories of God’s love, the incomparable joy of a pure heart at peace with itself and God—that they should be as sheep without a shepherd, ignored and despised by those whose duty it was to teach them.

It was his main concern. It was not a hobby or a pastime with him. It was his life—his meat and drink. He had come, he said (Matt. 18:11), *“to save that which was lost.”*

For the self-righteous and hypocritical Pharisees he had little patience. Having the keys of knowledge, they neither entered in themselves, nor permitted others to enter (Lk. 11:52). But to these unfortunates, who, in the absence of guidance or instruction, were making shipwreck of their lives, Jesus came with understanding and compassion.

After reading so often of the sublime and awful holiness of God, it is very pleasant to read here of His *long-suffering mercy* and compassion. He is represented to us not only joyfully receiving the repentant sinner, but as actually going after that which was lost until He find it, and carrying it back upon His shoulders rejoicing. To the sanctimonious, letter-of-the-law Pharisees, this must have seemed blasphemous heresy. But to those whose minds are receptive it furnishes a powerful motive toward righteousness. *“Grieve not the holy Spirit of God,”* says Paul (Eph. 4:30). It is a solemn thought that God has given us the power to grieve Him, and also to give Him joy. How careful we should be!

This conception of God as grieved at waywardness and joyous over repentance reveals to us a loving Father with deep concern for His children—His own offspring, created in His Image and after His likeness. The mystery of parental love is a wonderful thing. In humans it is often misguided, perhaps, but still it is a strange and beautiful thing to contemplate. Ever ready to forgive. Ever ready to

forget the unhappy past. Believing all things . . . hoping all things . . . enduring all things. “*Come now, and let us reason together, said the Lord*” to Israel, (Isa. 1:18), “*though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*”

But we must not distort the picture by sentimentally ignoring its other aspects. God’s mercy is great and His love is longsuffering, but judgment finally descended upon Israel. Isaiah continues in the next verse (v. 20)— “*But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*” “*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God,*” says Paul (Rom. 11:22), “*on them which fell, severity: toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*”

A proper balance will give us a correct and inspiring view of God as the loving Father Who will withhold nothing from His obedient children, and Who is eager and joyful to receive them back upon repentance, but Whose authority and holiness must be respected, and Whose righteous anger is a consuming fire.

\* \* \*

The Parable of the prodigal son is written for the instruction of that class represented by the elder brother. The younger son wasted all his substance in wicked living. He forsook his father for the world’s pleasures. *He only returned when all was gone and he had nowhere else to go.*

The elder son surely had grounds to feel justified in his suspicions, and to feel that his father was being taken advantage of. But the prodigal was sincere. He was truly humble and penitent. He realized his foolishness, though to the elder brother, who gave his suspicions the benefit of the doubt, the evidence was not convincing because he preferred to think the other way. “*With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*”

The father, on the other hand, gave the benefit of the doubt to mercy and love and hope. There was no bitterness or reservations in his forgiveness. While he was yet a great way off he *ran* to meet him. He did not stand upon his dignity, or remain coldly aloof demanding proof. He did not force an apology. He loved him and he wanted him back, and he was willing to forget the past and hope for the future. He showered every display of affection and attention upon him, in his intense reconciliation.

The elder son did not share all this exuberant enthusiasm for the

returned sinner. He had his doubts. He was angry and resentful. He doubtless felt the prodigal should be made to suffer a little and be humbled instead of being royally feasted.

Most of all he lacked the balancing and softening influence of brotherly love. If, instead of thinking of only himself, he had loved his brother as he should, he too would have been truly glad to see him return, *he would have been only too eager to hope for the best and believe the best*. He would have been overjoyed to know that his brother had been reclaimed in time from his folly. Far better to be found wrong on the side of kindness and gentleness and faith in others, than to be found on the side of judgment and suspicion. "*With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*"

True, indeed, justice demanded that the younger son be punished, but should his own brother urge the claims of justice when the father extended mercy?

Let us remember that the Father here represents God. His reaction is the proper one. He went out to meet the returning sinner. All his actions were dictated by love and fatherly affection. The father was not necessarily sure the younger son would justify his love, but still he gave it without stint, knowing that *it would be the strongest incentive possible to keep his son in the proper path*, if anything could. Many times God forgave and accepted Israel back to His favor, knowing that they would lapse into sin again.

How ungracious the older brother seems in contrast with his father's love! But it did not seem so to him. He felt quite justified in his self-righteous indignation. He had no qualms at distressing his father, or marring the joy of reconciliation. He could only see one point of view and that was that he had worked hard and faithfully and here was this returned wastrel being shown favors that he had never received.

He had no doubts about the justice of his position. He KNEW he was right. All the cold, hard facts were on his side. The younger son should have been humiliated and made an example. He should have been made to pay for his sins, right to the uttermost farthing. According to the letter of the law, he was right, dead right, and he knew it. But he could not see, in his vindictive eagerness, that he was killing the spirit. It was his father who had been wronged, and the father had chosen to forgive. Love is wise enough not to go too far—

*"There is a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down and a time to build up."*

The Father's approach to the elder brother was just as tender as to the other. Gently he reminds him of the true state of affairs—of the need for love, and for joy, rather than prolonging the bitterness of selfish jealousy.

The older brother's task was hard. The Prodigal's share of the inheritance had been wickedly squandered with no thought for either his father or the brother that remained. Now the latter was called upon to share with the returned renegade what was rightfully his own. Only one thing could enable him to fight down the well-justified but destructive reactions of the flesh, and that was a strong and deep love for his father and his brother—a *love that was big enough and wise enough to take into account his brother's weaknesses and failures and still be able to love him and make sacrifices for him and unselfishly seek his welfare*. It is the unlovable, the weak, the stragglers, the lost sheep that need love and sympathy and help most—

*"They that be whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick"* (Matt. 9:12).

Jesus does not tell us what the older brother replied. The parable closes with the father's gentle entreaties. Each of us must supply the older brother's answer within ourselves, remembering that—

*"He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy"* (James 2:13), and—

*"Love will cover the multitude of sins"* (1 Pet. 4:8).

—Bro. G.V.Growcott

## The Value Of Trials

As we go along in the truth from year to year, one thing becomes more apparent with the passing of time, and that is that this present dispensation, in which we travel through the wilderness, is not a time for ease, but a time for discipline. It is not a time for temporal but eternal values, not a time for the satisfying of self, but a time of self-denial. It is a time where by trial and testing Christ-like characters are matured and sweetened until at last they are prepared for unending bliss in the Kingdom of God. The cross comes before the crown - hence the divine purpose is that through trial and suffering God prepares His sons and daughters for life everlasting in the age to come.

As a sacrifice, Christ was made perfect through suffering.

*“He learned obedience through the things that He suffered,”* and we must follow in his steps. Do we want it easy when he had it hard? Pruning produces fruit.

*“No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit, of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby”* (Heb. 12:11).

How comforting these words should be to us. If we yield ourselves to God, the trials that seem so heavy will eventually bring forth that wonderful fruit of righteousness.

Paul rejoiced in tribulation. Why? Because of the things that resulted from it. Those things were patience, experience, hope. He understood the part that suffering plays in building a God like character, therefore he desired fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. Paul exhorts us in the 12th chapter of Hebrews to,

*“My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:”*

Why? Because God is working with us. It is our part to be still and know that He is God, and His wisdom far above ours.

If we yield ourselves to the Potter, He will fashion the clay into a vessel fitted for honor; He will mold characters of beauty and strength. This is not accomplished by easy and pleasant methods. We think of Joseph, David, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and many more who were strong in faith. How did God deal with them? He brought each one through the furnace of affliction. If we are wise we will expect that God will try us too. The Bible teaches that this is a part of God's plan for His children.

*“That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereto”* (1 Thess. 3:3).

*“For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example that we should follow in his footsteps.”*

James says, *“My brethren esteem it all joy, when you fall into various trials”* (Diaglott).

This is indeed a difficult thing to do - we are prone rather to be joyful when we can get out of being tried.

We would not deliberately choose the path that leads to sorrow, but when God leads us there, let us take courage and remember there is a purpose in it. For James goes on to say that the trial of our faith produces patience. Then he exhorts us,

*“Let patience have her perfect work, so that you may be perfect and complete lacking nothing.”*

Let us remember that trials are the method by which we are brought to perfection.

*“Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 1:17, 18).*

Let us look to the future then, at those things which at present cannot be seen. Let us look with patience and hope to those things which are eternal.

*“For I reckon”, says Paul, “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).*

We know that all things work together for good to those who love God; to those who are called according to His purpose. These truths are rays of light in the darkness that sustain and strengthen us, and help us to press onto the mark of our high calling. David says,

*“Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word. It is good that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. I know, O Lord that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.”*

From these words we learn that the present circumstances which seem to press so hard against us are the tools that God uses to shape and mold our lives to fit us for heirship with Christ when he comes to choose those who will reign with him in his kingdom.

*“Though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.”*  
—Bro. E. W. Banta

## **World-Wide Trouble and The Second Advent Of Christ**

Our subject this evening has no charm for men and women in general because it is not congenial to their tastes. But is it wise to avoid a subject just because it is not pleasant? We think not. It is impossible to alter facts by closing our ears to the truth on any subject, therefore let us face the facts. We introduce our remarks with a quotation from Jesus as recorded in Matt. 24:37-39—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*“And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity;*

*the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Here, also are a few news headlines:

**Border wars around the world**

**World back to Dark Ages**

**Crisis in all U.S. cities**

**Growing Crime among the young**

**Russia-China Border Fights**

**Mideast Border Violence Grows**

**U.S. Millions Hungry and Sick**

**Ugly Mood Grips Egypt**

**School Violence Spreading**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Coming back to Jer. 25:30-31, we read— *“Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, the Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord.”*

Here is a direct pleading with all flesh, and the removal of the wicked from among men. This is supplemented by the prophet Isaiah in 30:27-28— *“Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire: And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.”*

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

*“I am come in my Father’s Name.”*

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

Isaiah speaks of him coming from far. What does this mean? We find the answer in one of the parables of Jesus, in Luke 19:12-27, from which we read vs. 12— *“He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”*

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

Very well, you may say, that is from the Old Testament; give us something from the New. We respond with the words of Paul in 2 Thess 1:7-9— *“To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”*

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

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

Just one more from Mal. 4:1-2, *“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.”*

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

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

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

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

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

These are the people comprehended in the prophecy of Isaiah 2:2-4, *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And*

*many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."*

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

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

This is revealed in the prophetic song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2:10— *"The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall He thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth; and He shall give strength unto His King, and exalt the horn of His anointed."*

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

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

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

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

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

First world war – 15 million people were killed.

Second world war – 60 million were killed.

Therefore, the words of Jeremiah cannot in any way be exaggerated when he says in 25:33— *“The slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried.”*

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

It is clear that they will not be left among the nations during this time of trouble such as never was, for we read in Rev. 17:14 — *“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”*

Who are these spoken of as *“they that are with him?”* We read of them again in Rev. 5:9-10 — *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”*

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

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

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

Ps. 149:5-9—*“Let the saints be joyful in glory: Let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with*

*chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints.*”

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

In the marriage parable in Matt. 25:10, Jesus said— *“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”*

Now in Rev. 19:7-8, we find that this marriage is the union between Christ and his people— *“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”*

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

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

From what we have considered, it must be manifest that when Jesus returns, his dead servants will be raised, and his living servants gathered with them from every part of the earth, for Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:10— *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This will be so great a change, that Paul says in 1 Cor. 2:9— *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”*

—Bro. George A. Gibson, 1940's

## Encouraging Words No. 26

MY DEAR SISTERS,—In mingling with the respectable, cultured people amongst whom your calling throws so many of you, do not forget that *“the whole world lieth in wickedness.”* Where the truth does not reign, there unrighteousness prevails. Let God's estimate of wickedness be your guide, and not that of the “ethical” man, who refuses to acknowledge that, apart from obedience to the gospel, everyone is away from righteousness. To be wicked in the sight of God is not necessarily to be a monster of iniquity in the eyes of one's fellows. Man is so apt to regard as sinful that which jars upon his own susceptibilities and to pass over flagrant rebellion towards God. To the natural man Esau is a pattern of righteousness, and Jacob one of wickedness. Unscriptural ideas regarding righteousness and wickedness have been the pitfall of many a brother and sister. These are things which must be considered from the divine standpoint. If we break away from this we are as a ship without a rudder. What is righteousness from the divine standpoint? Well, dear sisters, you know—it is that God should occupy the widest stretch upon our little horizon: *“To this man will I look, even to him that is humble and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my Word.”* This is the test by which we can judge of the company in which we find ourselves.

There is much conventional righteousness abroad. Do not be misled by it. Conventional righteousness may make the world more tolerable than it otherwise would be, but when its advocates place it in

lieu of the claims of the gospel, then we have to withstand them to the utmost. Donations to hospitals in no wise take the place of belief of the gospel. Slum work cannot be substituted for apostolic immersion. He who teaches to the contrary is engaged in an evil work. If you hold fast to the divine fiat that duty to God must be the mainspring of all our actions you will not be led into the error of putting man's estimate of wickedness in the place of God's. Fear towards God will prompt kindness of the highest kind towards one's neighbour, a very important part of which is an effort to instruct in the way of eternal life.

Persevere in your faithful contention for the Truth. If you come in contact with any who are Christ's sheep, you may depend upon it that they will listen to his voice. Never mind your seeming weakness and inability. In the Word you have a power superior to any force that can be brought against you. It is able, as the apostle says, to "thoroughly furnish unto all good works," including keeping faith alive in the face of obstacles. Your usefulness and safety lie in building up your convictions, and this cannot be done at a sitting. One or two big meals will not convert the babe into a man. If the child is to become a strong man he will require, as you know, regular and judicious feeding; he will also require exercise, and proper atmospheric conditions. In addition, time will be necessary. So is it in matters spiritual. Forget not this, dear sisters. Continue to take regularly the sincere milk of the Word. Remember to indulge in spiritual exercises, such as prayer, meditation, earnest contention for the Truth, and other good works. Seek, whenever possible, good atmospheric conditions, such as are to be found in the meetings and in the company of earnest, Truth-loving brethren and sisters. Do these things, and you will find yourselves imperceptibly growing up into the "strong man" in Christ Jesus.

Do not be discouraged if your labours meet with no apparent success. Consider Christ. There was no lack of efficiency in his case, for never man spake as he did, and he brought to bear the additional weight of miracle. Yet was he not forced to exclaim: "*Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*"? And did not the position culminate in an effort to silence him for ever upon Calvary? Herein we are given a study in human nature which we do well to heed; for human nature has not changed, and it is the material upon which we have to work. If the Master met with rebuff and worse, shall we marvel if a little scorn is meted out to us? Though your labours be lost upon others, they will be of value in the sight of God.

—*Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1910*

## Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 26

THE presence of Judas in that little company that gathered in the upper room must have been a sore trial for Jesus. Christ knew Judas—he knew his villainous mind, and the cruel work he had set himself. No wonder Christ was “troubled in spirit.” If ever there was a time for Jesus to have shown revenge or unrighteous anger, this was it. But no word of bitterness or retaliation escaped his lips. Such is the example we are bidden to follow! How numerous are the opportunities for us to show Christ’s mind. Do we embrace them? There have always been, and always will be (till the devil is bound) traitors in the Lord’s camp. Let us not allow their presence or their evil deeds to make us act in an ungodly manner. Let us heed the admonition; “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing.” Our power to be faithful lies where Christ’s did—in the recognition that situations of trial are of God’s appointment, and serve an all-wise purpose, though what the purpose is we may not always know.

The way in which God brought about the fulfilment of Paul’s mission exhibits one of the remarkable ways of the Deity—the way in which He providentially fulfils his pre-ordained programme. Paul was a “chosen vessel” to bear Christ’s name before “Kings” (Acts 9:15). It was no arrangement of Paul to appear before “Kings.” These were the last men in the world whose presence he would have courted. No, circumstances drove him, and God, though unseen, was the manipulator of the circumstances. Paul’s fidelity, the hatred and envy of the Jews, the peculiarities of the Roman law, were each laid hold of by God to bring about the end He had in view. Let us study well the matter and extract the comfort intended. God has missions for us to perform, though not specifically revealed. But there is one purpose which is stated, and that is to save us (2 Thess. 5:9). Incorruptibility in the kingdom of God is our goal, and to it we shall infallibly reach if we but trustfully commit our ways unto God. We must not expect to find a visible hand pointing out the path to us. As in Paul’s pillar to post movements, God works mysteriously—as much by apparent failure as by success. We should seek to recognise God in our affairs, though He cannot be seen, and be faithful in whatever position circumstances may place us. True are the statements that “the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord” and “in all thy ways acknowledge him and he will direct thy path.”

Trades Unions which have for their object the coercion (by the adoption of ingenious tactics) of employers into ways that are right

and just, are evil institutions, in which the brethren of Christ should take no part. Ability to scripturally comply with ninety-nine out of a hundred of an Union's rules, will not justify disobedience in regard to the remaining one. To unite with an Union, knowing that we shall have to infringe its rules, is not commendable: it is not an exhibition of that good fidelity of which Christ approves. To seek release from an oppressor is wise and scriptural, but it must be sought in a Christ-like spirit, and not in a spirit of revenge, or coercion. In which spirit are strikes organised? "By their fruits ye shall know them." The violent, inflammatory, and ungodly utterances of strike leaders, make manifest their line of action. The avowed aim of strikers is to force their masters to do what otherwise they would not do. It is illogical, if not sophistical, to argue that a brother can belong to such an Union, support it, and reap its benefits, without sharing the responsibility attached to its worldly scheming and practice. The apostolic counsel is: Yoke not yourselves with unbelievers. To plow with an ox and a horse is a cruel arrangement, and one piteous to behold. None the less is it a mistake to unite a saint with a sinner. How a brother should deport himself is exemplified in the life of Christ. When Christ suffered he threatened not—he reviled not—he was kind, gentle, patient, long-suffering, even to those that cruelly used him.

Servants are directly and very seriously addressed in the New Testament. Are we servants? If so, are we fully alive and faithful to what is said? Servants by their attitude to their employers can either "adorn the doctrine of God" or cause that doctrine and its Author to be blasphemed. If we have the exaltation of God at heart, we shall obey the divine instructions. What are they? We are to honour our employers. We are to be obedient to them in all things. We are not to answer again. We are to perform our duties, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as unto Christ, fearing God. We are to be subject not only to good and gentle employers, but also to froward employers. If in our faithfulness we should suffer wrongfully, we are to be patient, for this is thankworthy and acceptable (1 Tim. 6:1; Tit. 2:9, 10; Col. 3:22; Ephes. 6:5; 1 Pet. 2:18, 19, 20). From this testimony it follows that those who obey Christ exhibit no disrespect, no insubordination, no unwillingness, no insolence, no laziness, no negligence, no eye-service, no revenge, no sulkiness. With tendencies in one or more of these directions we all have to cope. The mental struggle that they entail, doubtless, constitutes the largest feature in our probationary trial. Let us fight valiantly. It is only for a time. The prize to the conquerors is unspeakably glorious. The apostle has also a special word for servants who have employers in the truth. It is this:

“They that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service” (1 Tim. 6:2). The equality that the truth brings is not intended to destroy natural and social relations. Parent and child are to retain their respective positions, and likewise master and servant. To each position there pertain duties, separate and distinct. Servants who would usurp the position of their employers—who would take advantage of their spiritual relationship to behave with undue familiarity—are disobedient to Christ, and most certainly incur his displeasure.

—*Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1890*

## The Word “Spirit”

QUESTION: You seem to use the word 'Spirit' just as you like: sometimes 'mind,' sometimes 'life,' sometimes 'the power of God:' sometimes one thing, sometimes another: I don't like this, you should stick to your text.

ANSWER: It is well to stick to the text, in the sense of being consistent and true. We think we are in this case, as we try to be in all cases.

We must have all the facts in view.

*"Spirit"*—**ruach** and **neshamah** in Hebrew, and **pneuma** in Greek—is one of those plastic words which depend for their significance upon the context, and which therefore lead to great mistakes when kept in the groove of a precise definition. Cruden gives no fewer than 19 meanings to the word, and Parkhurst 20.

This may appear a little confounding at first sight, but in reality it is the inevitable state of the case with regard to a word of such primitive origin and fundamentality.

It has to be remarked however that all those meanings are cognate. There is no contradictoriness in the use of the word. It does not mean black in one place and white in another; this would be perplexing. Its meanings are conventionally diverse, but in spirit, identical: all recognizing a common derivation.

All the three original words translated *"spirit"* have the same radical significance. **Ruach** is from the verb **ruach**, to breathe or blow; **neshamah**, from **nasham**, to breathe; **pneuma**, from **pneo**, to breathe or blow.

Every use of the word "*spirit*" must therefore be traceable in some way to this primitive idea of breathing or blowing. And we find this is so. It is used for breath in such passages as—

*"All flesh wherein is the breath (ruach) of life"* (Gen. 6:17).

*"In Whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath (ruach) of all mankind"* (Job 12:10).

*"Thou takest away their breath (ruacham)"* (Psa. 104).

**Neshamah** and **pneuma** are also translated "*breath*" in the following Gen. 2:7; 1 Kings 17:17; Job 33:4; James 2:26; Rev. 13:15 (in the last two cases, "*breath*" will be found in the margin).

All three words are translated "*wind*" or "*blast*" in the following: Ex. 15:10; Job 1:19; 2 Sam. 22:11; Job 4:9; John 3:8. **Pneuma** is translated "*life*" in Rev. 13:15.

But of course, the most common translation of the word is the particular form to which your inquiry is addressed, namely—"*spirit*."

In considering the meaning of this form of the word, it is well to observe that "*spirit*" itself comes from a Latin verb of precisely the same derivation as **ruach**, **nasham**, or **pneo**, namely, **spiro**, "to breathe."

"*Spirit*" is therefore etymologically the correct equivalent of **neshamah** and **pneuma**. But theology has spoiled the etymology of the word by fixing upon it a meaning not etymologically derived. This has created all the difficulty and the necessity for these remarks.

In accounting for the uses of the word, we must recognize the fact that life and all its phenomena are the results of breathing. The atmosphere inhaled by the lungs develops vitality, and vitality is the basis from which mind is evolved by nervous organization.

When breathing stops, vitality is suspended and mind vanishes. In view of these facts, which no physiologist will question, it is no great wonder that the primitive denomination of vital phenomena should be derived from the word signifying to breathe.

Breathing is at the bottom of both life and mind, and hence, on the principle of metonymy, a word relating to that act is put for both. At the same time, when put for mind or life, the word no longer means "*breath*" literally, but conventionally represents the cognate ideas for which it is chosen.

In all cases where a word is diverted from its original use, though retaining its radical import, it changes color to suit the new applications. These varying hues of significance can only be apprehended through acquaintance with usage.

The only certain way to determine the significance of "*spirit*" is to collate its applications. When we read that the Israelites (Exo. 6:9)—

*"... hearkened not to Moses for anguish of spirit."*

—we naturally understand the word differently from what we do in 1 Sam. 30:12—

*"And when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him."*

In the one case it refers to a state of mind, and in the other to the life energy of the body.

In Daniel was found an "*excellent spirit*" (Dan. 5:12). This refers to intelligence and disposition: but when we read—

*"No man hath the power over the spirit to retain the spirit . . . in the day of death"* (Eccl. 8:8).

—we naturally understood it as in Eccl. 12:7—

*"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; but the spirit (that is, the life) shall return to God Who gave it."*

In both of these cases the word has a very different meaning from what it has in Josh. 5:1—

*"And it came to pass when all the kings of the Amorites . . . heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, their hearts melted, neither was there any spirit (that is, courage of heart) in them any more."*

These citations justify the explanation in Christendom Astray that "*spirit*" in Acts 7:59, means "*life*," while in 1 Thess. 5:23, it means "*mind*."

A simple reading of the verses will confirm this view. Stephen was dying: what had he pneumatically (or breathingly) engendered to surrender to Christ? His life, which however is no more himself than his breath.

Paul invokes a blessing on the body, **psuche** (life), and **pneuma** of the Thessalonians; what could **pneuma** mean here other than "*mind*," seeing "*life*" is already specified? —*Bro. Robert Roberts*

## Who Is Wise?

*“Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them?” (Hosea 14: 9).*

Who IS wise? God said sadly through Hosea—

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).*

How much do we care about knowing these things? How much real, sincere effort have we put in this past week to learn and understand the lessons of God's Word through which we have been passing in our daily readings? To what extent have we meditated upon it and prayed for understanding?

Let us face these questions honestly. Are we truly ANXIOUS and concerned to learn more and more about God and His Word?

It is easy to just go through the motions and think we are in the Truth, without ever having the real love of and yearning toward the knowledge of God which is essential to salvation. This is what marks off the true disciple from the common run of mankind.

These divine words are life. They are essential meat and drink. In them alone is the power of love and of holiness and godliness and of overcoming the flesh.

*“WHO IS WISE: AND HE SHALL UNDERSTAND THESE THINGS?”*  
—Bro. G. V. Growcott

## As A Thief

Paul had been speaking on the subject of the coming of the Lord as the comfort of believers with regard to those who were dead. He here says it was unnecessary for him to write them on the subject of the times and seasons. For this he gives two reasons: “Yourselves know that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night.” How did they know? By Paul’s teaching: for we find him, in the next epistle (chap. 2:5) saying, “When I was with you. I told you these things.” What did they know? That the day would come unexpectedly—”as a thief.” Upon the believers? No. Upon those who should cry “Peace and safety,” when destruction should be at the door. This is not the case with believers. They know that there is no “peace and safety” for the world until the Prince of Peace is enthroned on Zion’s Hill. “In his days the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.”—(Ps. 72:7.) “In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.”—(Jer. 23:6.) There is no peace to the world under its present constitution of

wickedness. And especially at “the end” is there no peace to be looked for, but nations angry and a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation upon earth to that same time.—(Dan. 12:1). But all the time and at the last will be found such (and these very numerous) as cry, Peace and safety. The world has been sounding this cry during all its troublous and blood-stained history. After every war, there is to be everlasting peace; and every war is a “guarantee” of the general repose. Notably is this the case in our own day, when the world is armed to the teeth, as it never was before, and trembling in the uncertain balance of peace or war. Notwithstanding the most unpromising situation of things, every potentate, statesman, diplomatist, politician, and newspaper writer talks complacently of peace as a thing to be secured. ‘Peace’ has been on their lips while war is in their hearts, and the heedless throng, anxious only about business, have caught up the strain. The saints are not of those who cry, Peace and safety, except to such as fear God and keep His commandments. For all the rest of mankind war is appointed, especially the war of the great day of God Almighty, which, at the coming of the Lord, is destined to sweep away all refuges of lies, and lay the foundation for a reign of righteousness and everlasting peace.

The day of the Lord will not come upon the saints as a thief. As a snare it will come upon all them that dwell upon the whole earth (Luke 21:35), but upon the called, and chosen, and faithful, it will come as the welcome deliverance which a lifetime’s expectation and preparation will have made them ready to receive with gladness. Seeing the appointed tokens among the nations, they lift up their heads, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh.

But there was another reason why the day of the Lord could not come upon the Thessalonians as a thief, and as we are in their position, we do well to consider it. “They were not in darkness, that that day should come upon them as a thief. They were all the children of light and of the day.” Come soon or come late, it could not find them unprepared, but ready to rise in joy in response to the uprising of the sun of righteousness. Paul did not mean to say that absolutely every individual of the Thessalonian ecclesia was in this position; for you find him mentioning some who were otherwise conditioned. “I hear,” he says, “that there are some among you that walk disorderly;” and he thought it necessary to direct the ecclesia to withdraw from all who did not submit to his word.—(2 epistle 3:6.) An ecclesia by position and profession belongs to the light of the day. That is the description of the high calling which has called it into existence; but it does not follow that all its members come up to the profession. It is

possible that many of them may come short of the stature of the new man in Christ, and consequently fail in obtaining the promise. It is even possible that in a whole ecclesia, there may not be a single individual acceptable in the sight of God. We seem to discover such a case in the messages of Christ to the seven ecclesias that were in Asia. To all, with two exceptions, he speaks of the bulk of their members in doubtful terms. Of one, he speaks as if it lacked a single individual of the true type; which affords matter for serious reflection for us who, living so long after the authoritative proclamation of the word, are in much more danger of being in that position.

—Bro. Robert Roberts—*The Christadelphian*

## Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

*“It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints”:- Jude 3 -*

The purpose of the Gospel to the Gentiles was - *“to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Christ).”- Acts 26:18 -*

No one can “call upon the name of the Lord” in the scriptural sense, or come into fellowship and relationship with the Father and the Son except through a knowledge and belief of the Truth of the Gospel, as we read in Romans 10:13-16:

*“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him in whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?... So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

Eternal blessing is obtained only through a belief in God’s word:

*“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein.”*

On the other hand, in the last chapter of the Bible, God warns that if anyone shall add to His words, that God shall add unto him all the plagues written therein; and if anyone takes anything from that word, God will take away his part in the book of life - Rev.22:17-18. In writing to the church at Galatia, Paul warns them against permitting false teachers to pervert or adulterate the saving Gospel, saying:

*“As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed”* - Gal. 1:9.

A lack of knowledge and belief of the Gospel definitely bars one from salvation. We read in 2 Cor.4:3-4: *“If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.”*

Paul reminds the Ephesians that when they were ignorant of the divine plan of redemption as revealed in the covenants of promise, *“that at that time ye were without Christ...having no hope and without God in the world”* - Eph.2:11-12.

### **God Accepts Believers Only**

It is an indisputable fact that all, of whom it is testified in the Bible that they were accepted of God have been accepted on the basis of belief in His word. Cornelius, the first Gentile to be offered salvation in Christ, was accepted only after he had sent for Peter, at God's direction,

*“who shall tell thee words whereby thou and thy house shall be saved”* - Acts 11:14.

It is said of Abraham, the great example of faith and righteousness: (James 2:23; Rom. 4:3)

*“Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he was called the Friend of God.”*

Only a casual reading of the 4th chapter of Romans and the 2nd chapter of James should teach anyone something which the “liberal-minded” entirely overlook. It is that God forgives sins and bestows rewards only on the basis of belief in His word and obedience of His commands.

The notion that God will save anyone solely on the basis of sincerity and morality is foreign to the scriptures. Abraham became the friend of God because he believed the word of God and did what God told him to do. What faith and righteous works did for Abraham it will do for us, because Paul tells us that it was not written for Abraham's sake alone, but to all “who walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham” - Rom. 4:11,12,23,24.

### **God's Plan Unchanged**

Now it amounts to a certainty that the way of salvation has not changed since the days of the Apostles.

There has been no further revelation. The only change that has taken place is that Christendom has departed from the faith once

delivered to the saints. These doctrines of men have undergone many changes, but *“the word of God abideth forever.”* The Gospel is still *“the power of God unto salvation.”*

The Gospel or “good news” of salvation, which the Apostles preached is defined as *“the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ”* –Acts 8:12. It is God’s message of a coming kingdom on earth, which will bless all nations and in which the saints will receive their reward of the inheritance. The things concerning the Name of Jesus Christ are composed of the things relating to Christ – His nature, His mission, His sacrificial offering for sin, His resurrection, and everything pertaining to salvation in Him.

This Gospel has the power to save, *“for therein is the righteousness of God revealed”* – Rom. 1:16-17. In it God has revealed Himself, His purpose, His will. It is that which makes us free (John 8:32); it is the word of life (Phil. 2:16); it is *“able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”* (Acts 20:32); *“By which also ye are saved”* (1 Cor. 15:2).

To briefly summarize: Jesus Christ and His apostles taught that man is by nature a sinner, condemned to death (Rom. 5:12); That God has offered to man a plan by which he can be freed and inherit eternal life (Rom. 6:2.3); That salvation depends on a belief in God’s plan of salvation centered in Christ (John 3:16); That there is but one Faith (Eph. 4:5); That this faith comes by hearing and believing the word of God (Rom. 10:17); That no one can please God without this faith (Heb. 11:6); That all who were blind or had no knowledge of the Gospel were lost (2 Cor.4:3); That to reject God’s Word brings certain condemnation (John 12:48); That to neglect *“that great salvation”* is fatal (Heb.2:1-4).

One of, if not the greatest sin of the present age is the neglect of God’s word. The baneful effects of this general unbelief and skepticism are already apparent in the awful wave of crime and immorality which is sweeping over the world, and in the obvious weakness of popular “liberal” religions which stand helpless as they face an unbelieving world which they have taught *“it makes no difference what you believe.”*

Such *“broad-mindedness”* has been very pleasing to the world. They have taken the preachers of smooth things at their word and have rejected everything which might interfere with the pursuit of their worldly ways. Gods saving word is ignored and in its place we

have everything that is pleasing to the flesh, things that, “*seem right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*”

Let us follow the advice of the inspired apostle James, chapter 1:21, and “*receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your souls...and be doers of the word and not hearers only.*”

Uninspired man may offer us much in things that pertain to this life but he stands mute and helpless at the graveside. God’s word alone can guide us into eternity.

\* \* \*

*“Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an ANTICHRIST.”*

The word Antichrist comes from the Greek words “Anti Christos,” meaning “against Christ,” or an opposer of Christ. The common idea of Antichrist is that he is some pagan or infidel power or person who was to offer organized and direct opposition to Christianity. There is an idea prevalent now that Antichrist is soon to develop and wage devastating war against Christianity.

From the early days of Christianity there have been persistent efforts to identify the Antichrist. Pagan Rome, especially the Emperor Nero, was supposed to be this arch enemy of Christ because of the fiery persecution which the Christians endured at his hands. Catholics believed that Mohammed was this enemy of Christianity because of his persecution of the Catholics. In more modern times the leaders of the French Revolution, and Napoleon in his turn, were branded as the Antichrist for the same reason given above.

Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin, while at the peak of their power, were selected by misinformed persons as the Antichrist, but they have all been definitely eliminated. However, there is a belief that Soviet Russia, led by some ambitious anti-christian dictator, may prove to be the Antichrist.

One of the most fantastic notions concerning the Antichrist is that Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Christ, reincarnated, will return to earth and wage war against Christianity in an effort to destroy the work of Christ.

We mention such foolish suggestions only to show how widespread is the lack of understanding of the scriptural teaching concerning the Antichrist and the futility of trying to solve the scriptural question by resorting to human reasoning and speculation.

The subject of the Antichrist is a scriptural matter, and to the scriptures we must go for a solution.

### **The Antichrist Foretold**

If we carefully note the characteristics of the Antichrist as outlined in the scriptures, it is easy to see that none of the persons previously mentioned could possibly have fulfilled the requirements of the Antichrist foretold in the Bible.

The word Antichrist is used only four times in the scriptures, and that by only one writer, but the same antichristian power is often referred to in different terms. The word is used in 1 John 2:18; 2:22; 4:3, and in 2nd John 7.

Let us consider all these passages, first noting that John refers to no particular person or system at this time, but to numerous false brethren. It was many years later that this insidious apostasy was to develop into organized resistance to the Truth concerning Christ and His teaching.

1 John 2:18: *“Little children it is the last time, and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now there are many antichrists...They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they no doubt would have continued with us.”*

Obviously these were not pagans but false teachers of doctrines they sought to harmonize with the teachings of Christ. They were, therefore, against Christ.

1 John 2:22: *“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.”*

A person who denied that Jesus was the Son of God was an antichrist. But as we shall see, it was not a direct denial of Christ, but had reference to doctrines which nullified the divine teaching regarding Son and the Father. This is plainly indicated in the next reference.

1 John 4:1, 3: *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already it is in the world.”*

Plainly the antichrists here referred to were false teachers or prophets. Already a spirit of antichrist was fast developing into a

system of false teaching, with special reference to the nature of Christ - a denial of the sonship and the humanity of Christ, which later developed into the doctrine of the Trinity, and finally that of the Immaculate Conception, and likewise the numerous “clean-flesh” theories which keep cropping up even to this day.

2nd John 7: *“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”*

Not infidels, but false teachers and deceivers who pretended to be for Christ but were actually antichrists. In verses 10 and 11 of this epistle there is a warning against following the teaching of these antichrists, saying that even *“he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”*

John says that they had heard that Antichrist should come. He probably refers to the words of Paul in 2nd Thess. 2:3-8: *“Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day (the coming of Christ) shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God...And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth (hinders) will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall...devour with the brightness of His coming.”*

It is most likely that John also referred to the prophecy of Daniel (Dan. 7:8, 24-26) in which is foretold the rise of an iniquitous, hypocritical ecclesiastical power, which should arise out of the fourth universal (Roman) empire, a power which would usurp the prerogatives of God and persecute the true followers of Christ.

### **Marks of Identity**

Let us summarize the marks of identity as outlined by John and Paul:

1. There would come a gradual falling away from the Faith before the Antichrist would be developed as the “Man of Sin.”

2. The Antichrist was to be a pretended follower of Christ, who would exalt himself as divine, a usurper who would sit in the temple of God, assuming the prerogatives of God.

3. While the mystery of iniquity, or false teaching, was already at work in Paul's day, it had not fully developed, — but something was

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withholding, or preventing its full development into an organized system of apostasy.

4. That when it did develop it would continue until the coming of Christ, who would destroy him with the brightness of His coming.

Now what was preventing the full development of this Power? First, the faithfulness of the brethren of Christ, as Paul says there must “Come a falling away first.” Second, the Pagan Roman government, still powerful at this time, was preventing his ecclesiastical monstrosity from ascending to political power. But as pagan Rome was sapped by the invasions of many enemies, and the apostate church grew in numbers and political power, the stage was set for the “Man of Sin,” or Anti-Christ to assume the role foretold by the apostles.

It all came about with the overthrow of, Pagan Rome by Constantine, the first “Christian” emperor. The church now ruled by corrupt teachers, and with the faithful brethren reduced to a hopeless minority, the great apostasy was organized into a state church, from which developed popery - the “Man of Sin,” who was declared universal bishop by the decree of Emperor Phocas, A.D. 606.

### **Who Is The Antichrist?**

Who, then is the Antichrist? We have already intimated that it is Papal Rome. But let us give further marks of identification which prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt:

1. Antichrist was to be an organized system of ecclesiastical iniquity, headed up in a single man, or order of men. This description not only fits the Pope, but no other such system has ever appeared on earth.

2. He was to assume the prerogatives of God - to be a usurper, a deceiver. This is notoriously true. The Pope claims to be God on earth, the vicegerent or substitute for Christ, to forgive and absolve from sins, to grant indulgences; claims infallibility and passes laws and decrees regulating the spiritual and temporal affairs of the church and state.

3. This power was to be distinctly Roman, and ecclesiastical, -not secular. This is shown from Daniel's description of the Antichrist. By reference to the 7th chapter of Daniel, we find Daniel had a vision of four beasts rising out of the sea, which was divinely interpreted to mean that four universal empires were to arise, which all Bible expositors agree were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome.

Daniel saw the division of the Roman empire symbolically demonstrated by ten horns appearing on the head of the Roman dragon. Then he saw an eleventh horn rise up among the ten horns. This horn was “diverse” or different from any of the other horns. This lay in the fact that it was to be an ecclesiastical power, and a power unlike any other power on earth. First it plucked up three of the other horns, literally fulfilled in the Pope's being given secular dominion over three of the Roman states.

This horn had eyes, and a mouth speaking great things. He was to “speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws” (Dan. 7:3,25). In addition to being an impostor this politico-ecclesiastical power was also to be a persecuting power. Antichrist, indeed, has Rome been, as her career of bloody persecution against the true believers for many centuries will show.

### **Destruction of Antichrist**

We can be sure that no secular dictator or anti-religious government like Russia is the Antichrist. Such may have a place in that great confederacy of nations which will come against the Holy Land in the war of Armageddon (Ezek. 38). But the Antichrist meets his doom as the “false prophet” of Rev. 19:20.

After the Russian confederacy has fallen on the field of Armageddon, and Christ proclaims Himself as the true Pope or Father, and imperial and ecclesiastical head of all the world, the false Pope of Rome organizes opposition to His rule, doubtless claiming that this is the Antichrist come to overthrow the Holy Roman church as well as Protestant religions: John says,

*“I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false Prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had the mark of the beast and them that worshiped his image” - Rev. 19:19-20.*

For more than 1300 years this “mystery of iniquity” has deceived the nations of the earth, particularly the nations composing the fragments of the old Roman empire. Beginning in the days of the apostles this false system of teaching became a “strong delusion” (2nd. Thess. 2:11) to both Catholic and Protestant religions. For, while Protestants may renounce Rome, they retain most of her doctrines which came directly from that system of Antichrist teaching of which Paul and John prophesied.

Just as Christ will destroy this man of Sin with the brightness of His coming, so will He lift the veil of spiritual darkness “*spread over all nations*” (Isa. 25:7). The dark night of ignorance and superstition will vanish with the dawn of an era of Truth and righteousness, and all opposition to Christ and the pure word of God will be swept into oblivion.

—*Bro. Oscar Beauchamp*

## Keeping Our Word

Brethren—we are to observe these things; and perhaps it may be opportune to mention other things seeing that if we are called upon to work for the proclamation of the truth there are other responsibilities. We are to be people of our word; “Brother so-and-so says he will be there, he will do that, we need not trouble any more about it, he will do it”. Do not let it be said, “Brother so-and-so says he will do it, but of course you don't know until the time comes, you can't be sure of him”. We are forbidden to take an oath of any kind, but on the other hand, *our yes and no is to be as important as other people's oaths.*

—Bro. W. J. Elston—*The Berean*

## Division

Discord and division are painful. Let them not overthrow you. They are not new. They have been upon the earth ever since the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles. Jesus said it would be so—

*“HENCEFORTH, THERE SHALL BE DIVISION.”*

This is the time of probation, and purposely dark and distressing. The Lord will find his precious ones, in spite of all. Save yourself, whatever others say or do.

—Bro. Robert Roberts, 1890

## Perilous Times

Judging from the 'perilous times' at which we have now arrived, it may safely be assumed that the period for the infusion of the supernatural into the crisis cannot be far distant. The situation of affairs which has now been inaugurated is such as to cause the intelligent and believing Scripture reader to rejoice, knowing that his redemption draweth nigh. The development of the present crisis is beyond the control of the persons who have been principally concerned in bringing it about. There may be suspension of arms, and attempts at pacification, accompanied by fresh complications and renewed hostilities. These, however, are only probable incidents and episodes. The drama must still go on, to the consummation of the divine purpose. Heaven speed the day when that purpose shall be fully and happily accomplished!

—Bro. John Thomas

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## Hints For Bible Markers

Much can and has been written on these apples of gold in pictures of silver (Proverbs 25:11) as the word is to be ever on the heart and mind. Having the mind centered on the word means thinking about it all the time as if it is the most important thing in life, which it most certainly is: not just a few minutes during the readings: but making it a constant source of pleasure to have Gods glorious scripture in the mind, bringing joy during sorrow, singing psalms while merry, giving thanks unto the Lord, talking and dwelling on His wondrous works. When this is done constantly the heart will most certainly be putting off the old man of the flesh and putting on the new man.

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

### The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by Bro. Roberts

#### VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

**Walk in the spirit: walk worthily; put off the old man of the flesh: put on the new man renewed in knowledge after the divine image.**

*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. (18) But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (19) Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, (20) Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, (21) 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. (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (25) If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (26) Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:16 – 26)*

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:24)*

*For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (9) For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth; (10) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. (11) And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. (12) For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. (13) But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. (14) Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (15) See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, (16) Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (17) Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. (18) And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (19) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; (Ephesians 5:8 – 19)*

*Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; (Colossians 3:9)*

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