

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

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Please advise us of changes or corrections to the above information.

Ecclesial News

CANTON, Ohio – Sunday School, Sunday 10:00 AM; Breaking of Bread, Sunday 11:00 AM; Bible Class Tuesday 6:00 PM; at Mayfield Senior Center, bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway S. W. , Massillon, Ohio, 44646

Peace be to the brethren and love with faith,

As a new year dawns upon us the natural man looks at the accomplishments man has made, historically ever growing wiser with modern wonders that would have truly amazed those of past centuries. Science, wisdom and mechanical marvels abound. Yet with all His creations, the new year begins with trouble and distress. A time of darkness and gloominess as the world sees nation in opposition to nation, people despising people, sin ever strong in the natural man. The covetousness of man is great, causing much distress in the world today. Greed and self-abound in the world today. Man is failing in his attempts to make a better world. The politician, the statesman and the common man alike view the difficulties with alarm. By observing these events happening in the world around us we can, with the illumination of the Scriptures, discern the times we are living in. “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;” (Luke 21:25) We can be prepared for that great and glorious time of Christ’s return; if we wish to partake in the wonderful things of the age to come. We must not sleep but be watching and be sober. “Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (1 Thess. 5:6)

Last August we had our Sunday School Picnic. We would thank our visitors: sis Kay Stinchcomb, bro. Jim and sis. Kathy Sommerville, and bro. Jim Rankin for making the effort to attend. We had a very enjoyable two days of fellowship. Our thanks to bro. Jim Sommerville for ministering to us with the word of exhortation. In October Canton hosted the North East Gathering. The subject under consideration was “The Character of Abraham’s Seed.” The Bible abounds with lists of traits the seed of Abraham are to develop. David, Isaiah, Micah, Zechariah, Peter, John, Paul and Christ are a few who have left a character list on record for us to learn from. We thank all those in attendance for the time, expense and effort expended. We would especially acknowledge the speakers for the wonderful job they did in expanding the character traits in these lists.

The family of our sis. Josephine (Toots) Stocker has moved her from her home of many years to an assisted living facility. It is a source of sorrow to her, to leave behind a home that was always open to the brothers and sisters and so full of memories. I am sure she would love a card or a letter to brighten her days. The family has kindly given

permission for us to take her out on Sundays to the memorial. Her phone number is remaining the same but her address is now: Sterling House, Room 142, 1119 Perry Dr. NW, Canton, OH, 44708. As a writer in our local newspaper put it, “it goes from being your world, to your city, to your yard, to your house, to your room” showing the diminished capabilities that comes with age. *“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;”* (Ecclesiastes 12:1) But if we hold fast the day is coming when *“the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”* (Isaiah 35:10) It is one of the many blessings of the Truth that our joy is always before us, as with the constant reminders in our daily readings of that *“glad-long-looked morrow.”*

Bro. Beryl Snyder, Recorder

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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, dblauck@myexcel.com

WALES FRATERNAL GATHERING May 25–27, 2012
 Bro. Stephen Male, malesinwales@tiscali.co.uk

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.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 Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to MP3 format and post them.

Samson—in Weakness Made Strong

Samson is only mentioned once outside the book of Judges, but that one mention is vitally important to the true picture for it tells us two things: one, that Samson was a MAN OF FAITH, and second, that he OBTAINED A GOOD REPORT.

Apart from this revealing insight, the life of Samson would appear to be a tragedy of weakness. Samson, like David, was a true man of God at heart, but he had to learn wisdom by great suffering and humiliation.

We are very glad that his name is listed in the divine honor roll of the outstanding faithful—Heb. 11. We are glad to learn that his great strength was a result of his intense faith—not merely the self-pleasing and meaningless tantrums of a capricious giant. Careful examination of the record of his life will confirm this.

In Judges 15 we see Samson in the same light as David before Goliath. All Judah was in abject fear of the Philistines—so much so that they came to bind Samson, their GOD-GIVEN JUDGE, to deliver him for the sake of shameful peace! Samson permitted himself to be bound and delivered. Then, 5:14—

"And when he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him. And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands."

Obviously he permitted himself to be bound and delivered IN FAITH that the Spirit of God would come upon him when needed.

Following this, he judged and defended Israel 20 years. Then, at the end of this long and faithful service, he joined himself to a woman of the world, who could not rest until she had broken down the sacred bond of faith and obedience between him and God, and had sold him in shame to his enemies.

His punishment for this lapse of his lifelong vows was very great. The Philistines put out his eyes and used him for sport to the glory of their idol Dagon.

But, says Paul, he DIED IN FAITH—having learned by suffering. Out of weakness he was made strong, by faith. The loss of his natural vision opened the eyes of his understanding.

Paul's own experience was similar. He, too, was blinded that he might see. He, too, was reviled, despised, buffeted, and set forth as a spectacle to the world. Yet, like Samson, he in his humiliation and death pulled down the strongholds of wickedness.

But Jesus himself is the pre-eminent example of dying in a public spectacle of shame, yet in death destroying his destroyers and delivering his people.

All the great men of the Philistines were destroyed in Samson's death, and the Philistines did not bother Israel for many years.

The lesson of Samson is clear. It is the lesson of Adam. Adam was not deceived, but persuaded. Samson was worn down by continual contention until he finally gave in foolishly against his judgment, for the sake of peace. *Peace never came.*

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

Marriage With The World

“Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What part hath he that believeth with an infidel? Come out...be separate...and I will receive you.”

It is essential that the expressed mind of God on this matter be realized in full—not just that it is wrong, but how wrong, dangerous and undesirable it is. The Scriptures use every possible means to impress us and enlighten us on this matter.

Since the birth of Cain and Abel, there have always been two separate classes of people in the world—the children of God, and the children of the flesh. Between these two classes enmity exists, by God's appointment (Gen. 3:15).

Throughout the Bible there is constantly emphasized the wide and irreconcilable gulf between the things of God and the things of the world. We are repeatedly told it is utterly impossible to successfully mix them. What could be more emphatic than (2Cor.6:14)—

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. What part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever? Ye are the Temple of the living God. COME OUT—BE SEPARATE—TOUCH NOT—and I will receive you, and be your Father.”

“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is ENMITY with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the ENEMY OF GOD” (James 4:4, see context to v.10).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is NOT IN HIM” (I John 2:15).

“Pure religion and undefiled before God is .. to KEEP UNSPOTTED from the world” (James 1:27).

“Your bodies are members of Christ—the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Shall we make the members of Christ the members of an

harlot? (either literal or spiritual—see Rev. 17) *Glorify God in your body*” (1 Cor. 6:15-20).

“She is at liberty to be married to whom she will—ONLY IN THE LORD” (1 Cor. 7:39).

“Can a man take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?” (Prov. 6:27).

“Be ye holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

“God hath called us to holiness (separateness)” (1 Th. 4:7).

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of FOOLS shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20).

The same word is used for ‘companion’ here as applied to a wife, in Mal. 2:14. The Bible definition of a “fool” is clear from this—*“A fool hath no delight in understanding”* (Prov. 18:2). *“The fool walketh in darkness”* (Eccl. 2:14).

In God’s estimation, all who reject His Truth and eternal life are fools in the fullest sense of the word. *“An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he that is upright is an abomination to the wicked”* (Prov. 29:27).

Therefore, no truly “just” and godly man could desire the lifelong companionship of the “unjust” (unjustified, alien from the covenant). Such would be an “abomination” to him. To desire it proves he is not “just” in God’s sight.

“Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3).

“As in the days before the flood”—“marrying and giving in marriage” (with the ‘daughters of men’) —*“so shall it be at the coming of the Son of Man”* (Matt. 24:38)—*“Shall he find faith on the earth?”* (Luke 18:8).

“If ye live after the flesh, YE SHALL DIE” (Rom. 8:13). *“Be not conformed to this world”* (Rom 12:2).

“Ye are the Temple of God ... If any man defile the Temple of God, HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY” (1 Cor. 3:16).

“The world—dead in trespasses and sins—children of wrath—Gentiles—without Christ—aliens—strangers—no hope—without God—foreigners” (Eph. 2:1,3,11,12,19).

“Wives, submit to husbands, AS TO THE LORD.” (Apply that to alien marriage!) *“Husband is head of wife, as Christ is Head of church. Husbands, love wives, EVEN AS CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH, and gave himself for it, that it might be HOLY and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself”* (Eph. 5:22-6).

Consider the intense intimacy portrayed here! All this is destroyed and grotesquely caricatured by alien marriage—an evil corruption of a beautiful divine figure

“Be not deceived; GOD IS NOT MOCKED: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption” (Gal. 6:7-8)

Deacon’s wives MUST be faithful (1 Tim. 3:11). Alien marriage destroys a man’s qualifications for this work.

“Lay aside EVERY weight” (Heb. 12:1).

“Give DILIGENCE to make your calling and election sure.”
“Work out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Ph. 2:12).

“Always ABOUND in the work of the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

No one who truly respected these commands and had his whole heart set on pleasing God could possibly join himself (or herself) for life with one of the world. They would shudder at the thought of such a galling and hybrid existence.

* * *

From the very beginning, there has been a sharp scriptural distinction between the children of God and the children of the world. God’s whole purpose of redemption right from the Garden of Eden depends upon the former maintaining a faithful and holy separation from the latter.

Union between them, in defiance of this eternal ordinance and purpose, has brought untold misery and punishment and evil. It has—time and time again—sidetracked the called-out people of God into the dead-end of failure. A brief summary of the record shows the fatal effects of this sin:

THE BEGINNING: Woman to be a HELP meet (SUITABLE) for man—cleave together—one flesh (Gen. 2:20).

EDEN: Perpetual enmity appointed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—the children of God and people of the world—as the plan of redemption and sanctification is begun (Gen. 3:15).

FLOOD: *“Sons of God took them wives of the daughters of men.”* Result: *“Wickedness of man great”—“All flesh corrupted God’s way on the earth.”* All destroyed in the Flood (Gen. 6:2).

PATRIARCHS: The enlightened, intelligent, God-pleasing faithfulness of Abraham and Isaac, strongly opposing and condemning alien marriages for their sons (Gen. 24:3; 28:1).

ESAU: The displeasing (“grief of mind”) alien marriages of Esau, who despised God’s blessing. Rejected as a “profane

person”—“*no place of repentance*” (Gen. 26:34; 27:46).

SINAI: God’s solemn charge to Israel as He constituted them His holy nation, and they enter the covenant: no alien marriages. They promised, “*We will obey.*” God a jealous God (Exod. 34:12-16).

THE LAW: Not yoke ox (clean) and ass (unclean) together (Deut. 22:10). “*Doth God take care for oxen, or saith He it altogether for OUR sakes?*” (1Cor.9:9-10)—that is, as a LESSON and WARNING.

BAAL-PEOR: The command violated. The dreadful consequences—24,000 perish. Phinehas, by slaying an Israelite and his alien wife, turns away God’s terrible wrath from Israel, and receives an everlasting covenant of peace for his zeal (Num. 24).

MOSES: As he dies, pleads, “*Take no alien wives.*” A holy people, separated for a joyful and glorious destiny in God’s love. The inevitable evils of disobedience (Deut. 7:3-8).

JOSHUA: At his death, warns of the judicial calamities to follow alien marriages—traps, snares, scourges. “*If you violate the covenant, you will be cast out*” (Josh. 23:11-13).

JUDGES: Israel soon turned aside to evil and married with the alien. God brought on them cruel oppressions until they repented and cried to Him for forgiveness (Jdg. 3:6-8).

SOLOMON: Breaks the covenant—takes alien wives They turn away his heart. God is very angry. Because of this sin, He will rend the kingdom from him (1 Kings 11:1-11).

AHAB: His alien wife leads him to ungodliness and evil. She “*stirred him up*” to “*work wickedness in the sight of the Lord.*” His whole house destroyed (1 Kings 16:31-33).

JEHORAM: Did evil before God “*because he had the daughter of Jezebel to wife.*” He is destroyed together with the house of Jezebel by Jehu, the type of Christ (2 Chr. 21:6).

EZRA: Two chapters worthy of deep study. The evils and corruptions of alien marriage. The “*fierce wrath of God*” against Israel for this “*trespass unto the heavens*” (Ezra 9 and 10).

NEHEMIAH: Casts out one who had “*defiled the priest-hood and the covenant*” by alien marriage. “*Thus I cleansed them from strangers*” (Neh. 13:23-29). (To be continued)

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

His People Built Up A Spiritual House

Brother Roberts once remarked that “Fraternal Gatherings are beneficial when restricted to purely spiritual objects; that is, to exhort, worship and to have social communication.”

The main theme of our gathering; “*Who Shall Abide the Day of His Coming,*” chosen by the London brethren, is indeed one that prompts exhortation.

Having been stimulated by the lessons derived from the foundation and the cornerstone already laid, we now turn our attention to the building, or spiritual house to be erected; that which will be built around the Christ-Rock. In the foregoing remarks, our brother made mention of the materials of the building; that they must be complimentary to, and dependent on this foundation and cornerstone.

Paul likens the materials to refined gold, silver and precious stones, while the Apostle Peter refers to them as living stones.

Buildings that are now erected have blueprints and specifications which must be followed, so likewise, and more also, with the spiritual house now under consideration.

The great difference between the buildings of today, and the heavenly house of tomorrow is, that today there is a great deal of poor workmanship and imperfect materials used: but the future temple, when it is finally assembled must be true to the plumb-line, each stone must be exact to the dimensions specified before it arrives at the site. There will be no last minute adjustment made there, any more than were made at the great temple of Solomon, when not even the sound of the hammer was heard - all the work must be complete.

* * *

Our sub-title, “*His People Built up a Spiritual House*” requires serious attention by each of us. HIS PEOPLE, who are they? Jesus said, “they are my friends.” His people, referred to as witnesses, prophets, branches, olive trees, candlesticks as well as saints.

The saints, or household of God are those who are at present in great preparation and those all whose work is finished and now stand in the field, covered with the shroud of sleep awaiting for the great trumpet-word of God, calling them forth to the inspection.

Saints, Paul says, are the called of Jesus Christ and “*sanctified in Jesus, called to be saints* (or set apart ones).” Original manuscripts do not contain the words “*to be*” as shown in the King James Version, they were inserted by the translators; therefore, deleting them, the context reads “*to the called saints.*”

This idea is borne out again by Paul when writing to the Ecclesia at Corinth; he addressed them as “saints,” but to the Ephesian brethren his salutation was to “the saints at Ephesus, and the FAITHFUL IN CHRIST: note also his greeting to the Colossians, “*to the saints and FAITHFUL BRETHERN IN CHRIST.*” Therefore, a saint according to New Testament phraseology is one who believes the things concerning

the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and has been baptised.

But why did Paul address two groups of individuals; “*the saints*” and “*the faithful brethren*”? Because, ALL brethren and sisters are “saints,” but ALL SAINTS ARE NOT “FAITHFUL BRETHREN.” It is equivalent to saying many are called but few chosen. All brethren and sisters are saints, but how many of US are faithful? How many of us are contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints?

A contending saint is NOT a nominal saint. It is one who strives, who struggles and grapples — for what? For the faith, against all the fiery darts of evil. ARE WE CONTENDING? Are we fighting the good fight? Or have we, like erring brethren, allowed toleration to become the watchword?

It is our duty, as seeing eyes, and hearing ears and protecting hands of the Ecclesia to keep the doctrine FIRST pure then peaceable. If the Truth is challenged, then you and I must struggle or contend earnestly—not indifferently and not half-heartedly - but earnestly and zealously.

If a brother or a sister strays from the doctrine of Christ, or if his or her walk and conduct is not consistent with the Law of Christ, if after every scriptural command has been followed, and they still persist in error, then, regrettably, they must be withdrawn from, or cut off, rejected — we must note them, and have no company with them while they continue in error.

But some may say, and some do say, “We might offend them: we should demonstrate love and kindness.” We are not unmindful that love is kind, it is also long suffering and is not provoked, BUT EQUALLY as important, it REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY BUT REJOICETH IN TRUTH. Love covereth a multitude of sins, and is a bond of Perfectness, but we must be cautious that we love not in word, neither in tongue, but in DEED and in TRUTH.

Error — tolerated error — will eventually leaven the whole lump. The apostle warned against this, but the warning went unheeded, wolves did enter the flock under the pretense of lambs: toleration toward them, and the misapplication of peaceableness drove the truth eventually to the rocks and holes of the mountains, while the apostate system grew. History has repeated itself and IS still repeating itself today. While we may identify OURSELVES as “*Bereans*,” it in no way excludes us from the dangers. We are admonished to be faithful brethren and not saints only.

Faithful brethren, brethren who contend earnestly, will have no part with those who practice toleration.

Gold and silver, or living stones have a faith which lays hold of the past and the future, they are FULLY persuaded of its truth, for “faith” is a confident anticipation of things hoped for, a full persuasion of things not seen.

Is our hope such? Do our hearts burn within us when we meditate on the return of Christ, or are we among those who say “where is the promise of his coming, for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation?”

Many of us are deeply concerned as to the future of our fellowship; and more particularly of the truth itself if the Gentile dispensation continue much longer. An article brought to our attention, written by a man of the world, makes us realize more fully that our concern is well founded.

A Doctor Wilson wrote:

“Present day Christadelphians are no longer so certain of the early advent, no longer regulate their lives entirely to its coming and are prepared to undertake many long-term plans and engage in numerous activities, the value of which will be recognized only in the remote future.”

Once again we ask the question; do we, the Bereans, live in expectation of the early advent of Christ, or have WE made these long term plans for the future, spoken of by Wilson?

Dr. Wilson continues: “In many ways this change reflects a change of status of a large part of the Christadelphian following. The hope of the end of this dispensation is less keen when adherents have more pleasure in the present order of things...”

If WE are unduly concerned about “what we shall eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed,” then ours is NOT a golden faith. If we devote time and energy to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, then we too are enjoying the pleasure of sin for a season.

The building blueprint for us to follow is TOUCH NOT, TASTE NOT, and HANDLE NOT — it is a clear and concise warning, there are no IFS, BUTS and ANDS, just a plain and uncomplicated NO!!

For the third time, we ask ourselves the question “What are WE doing, and how strong is OUR faith; how eager is OUR desire to see the returned Master?”

Faith, symbolised by the gold, cometh only by familiarity with the scriptures, by reading and studying the Word: are we not told “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God?” How many of us

can say we have not missed any of our daily readings this year? Or how many of us must admit that there have not been ANY readings done at all? Self-righteously, some may answer in the affirmative — but were they only scanned over? — or were many hours spent in study, digesting the lessons to be derived? It is true that present day employment leaves little time for study, however where study is desired, study will be done: study should be done, yea, study MUST be done, that we may show ourselves approved unto God.

Living stones study at Eureka classes, they attend the lectures and week night meetings. Dead or dormant stones are elsewhere doing other things. They are the sandstone, gradually deteriorating, rather than being reinforced by the greatest reinforcing power available.

Living stones forsake not the assembling of themselves together with those our brethren, both when in town and out of town; they study the word of exhortation, activating the mind.

If our minds are encased in gold — if ours is a faith like that of Abraham, who was strong in faith — being fully persuaded, then in turn we will obey the directives given to us, as did Abraham, for to obey is better than sacrifice.

* * *

Everything we do, and everything we speak that is not according to the building plan is nonsense. By our fruits men shall know us, — shall be able to see if we are true stones in preparation. Know ye not what manner of men ye SHOULD BE? or expressed by Paul, “IF ANY MAN DEFILE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY.”

Faith must be active, our basic ingredient, it must run through, around, up and down: we must hold it as a shield, and put it on as a breastplate. The lessons from the Mosaic order are very clear — the patterns of things in the heavens were all of gold, or precious woods overlaid with gold. Mere wood, hay and stubble found no place there, any more than in the heavens themselves.

But gold alone is not sufficient — faith without works is dead — we must DO the will of the Father — there must be life, active life, otherwise we are dormant and or dead. The whole building, if growing, will be fitly framed together. Paul's words were “*In whom ALL the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.*”

The key is growth or growing — unless there is this essential growth, individually and collectively, we will be found in the same condition as Laodicea — lukewarm — to be spued from Christ's mouth.

Those of us who are still babes, still drinking the milk of the word, never progressing to the spiritual meat, are likened to those who have a name to live and are dead. We must increase, and advance, we must develop and improve, we must grow as Peter expresses it, “*grow in grace and knowledge.*” Our soul must thirst for God, for the Living God: as living stones in a living God. Our soul should long, yea even faint for his courts: our heart and our flesh should cry out for the Living God.

This is an active faith, a faith that all living stones possess, or as we mentioned earlier, living stones being built up — lively stones in Christ the corner stone referred to by Peter as THE living stone. That stone which shines forth in resplendent beauty for all receptive stones to reflect.

Our hope must be sincere and alive. It must be demonstrated in our everyday walk. It should be open to view: to our neighbors and to those we work with.

If it is, then surely they will look on us as a peculiar people. If on the other hand, our faith is lukewarm, with very little zeal and eagerness that the promises of God become realities, then we, indeed, are repulsive to the Creator.

Living stones are those who are full of golden faith and whose characters are purged silver. Living stones labour not to be rich, and they bless and curse not. Developing stones do not show the anger of the natural man, regardless of the various excuses given, endeavouring to justify its display. Living stones hate iniquity — not their brethren — dormant stones do, and are classified as murderers which shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

Living stones put away all evil speaking, theirs is one of soundness, and good wholesome words that cannot be condemned, they are not tattlers or busybodies speaking things they ought not, they are not gossips — no, living stones refuse to lend the ear to these babblers. And if there be any among us who pretend to be religious, and are unable to restrain the tongue we deceive ourselves and our piousness is worthless. We are either generating or degenerating, we are either abounding or we are nonfunctioning.

To which class do you and I belong?

Living stones are not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: in business they shun—the various associations the world has to offer, whether it be golf tournaments, bowling leagues and the such — bodily exercise profiteth little and he that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. We must be polite to all people; but also very shy of friendship with the world.

To the sisters — coffee clubs, teas, and the various other groups organized by the world to waste the housewives' time, must be avoided by all true living stones, for friendship of the world is strife, hostility and opposition to God. This blueprint applies also to those brethren and sisters who are yet unmarried. When choosing a partner it must be kept uppermost in the mind, that they marry only in the Lord — to make the excuse about bringing an unbeliever into the truth is, in many cases, downright fallacy, and is evidence of a very low type of spiritual discernment. Past lessons prove the point.

Living, growing stones make the TRUTH their life. These are saints and faithful, these are they who grow in grace and knowledge. Living stones are not conformed to this world, they fashion not themselves according to the former lusts. They put away all malice and all guile, all hypocrisies and envies.

Progressing stones have nothing to do with the passing fancies and fashions of the world, they adorn themselves in modest apparel: haughtiness and wantonness are subtle impulses of the flesh and in the day of the Lord he will take away the tinkling ornaments, the bracelets, and changeable suits of apparel and fine linen. Instead of shaded eyelids and painted lips, there shall be plainness: instead of sweet smell, rottenness: instead of well-set dyed hair, baldness: and burning instead of beauty. Bro. Thomas speaks forth with unmistakable clearness, "it argues the wearer's consciousness of the utter worthlessness of the hidden man of the heart, and of the necessity of putting the symbols of worth upon the — outside."

* * *

Living stones are given to hospitality, they, mind not high things but condescend to men of low estate: and as servants, faithful to evil masters. Living, growing stones are gentle, meek and kind; they are brave, joyful and vigilant, and zealous of good works.

Dead or dormant stones are the poor quality, which Paul refers to as wood, hay and stubble, these are stones which chip and crack when the chisel of trial and tribulation strikes. Stones of this quality when measured by the rod of affliction are found lacking. They do not endure patiently the light affliction which is but for a moment, forgetting that it worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

They are seeds that fall by the wayside, into stony areas and also among the thorns. These are saints but NOT faithful, they are unforgiving, always pointing to slivers in their brethren's eyes and unable to see the logs within their own; self-appointed judges of petty matters; adhering to the letter of the law and not allowing the spirit to dwell richly within them. They deter ecclesial growth and spread distrust among the brethren; and anything that detracts from ecclesial

growth must be plucked up, cast down and trodden under foot. Each individual member of the Ecclesia must be doing his or her part to keep the body pulsating with life.

Living stones do not sit back and let others do the work. Some of us may feel others are better qualified for the various workings of the Ecclesia, and while it is true that some appear to be given to teaching and some to public lectures and others to exhortation, nevertheless, each to his own ability, where much is given much will be required, each must utilize the talent given to him. Those works, such as visiting the sick, or a phone call now and then to the aged and widows and opening the home to the brethren, are equally necessary. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular.

When referring to the body and members in particular great care must be given at election time; the time when “serving brethren” of the body of Christ are chosen. They should not be placed in office simply to please them, or as a means of keeping them in the truth. If any prove unsuitable, or incompetent for the position they hold, then others should be appointed; and we should not be lax in these matters. Let us never forget, that wrangling, sarcastic, crotchety and weak serving brethren make a like ecclesia.

Presiding, recording, arranging and finance brethren among other scriptural qualifications must be vigilant, temperate, not self-willed, not soon angry, but patient, just and holy; brethren in these positions must remember that they are so elected that all things may be done decently and in order — they must remember that ONE is our master, even Christ, and all are brethren. That the position carries no authority; they esteem other brethren better than themselves — they are not rulers but rather render humble service. Seniority has no place in an ecclesia of God, no work is too common or too small for them, keeping in mind that Christ is the head of the body and faithful brethren are working parts of the body.

Serving brethren that are living, growing stones, will be rewarded with an ecclesia composed of many saints who also will develop and be shaped as living stones, and abide the day of his coming.

Those who DO abide this day, who ARE able to stand, are well cut and beautifully engraved stones and will receive the invitation “come ye blessed” ye are fit stones for the temple of the living God. You no longer are measured by the rod of affliction but now are measured by the reed of gold, having attained to the fullness of perfection. Ye are my saints, the faithful, my peoples having been inspected and approved

and now born of the spirit, the new Jerusalem, clothed upon with the house from heaven — these, born of the spirit are the precious stones, foreshadowed by the breastplate of Aaron, the Urim and the Thummim or lights and fullness. These are the gems that will glow in all the dazzling and many coloured splendor, reflecting the glory of God, who is the Father of Lights.

This heavenly Jerusalem has its completeness at the end of the reign of the Prince of Peace, when the House of God will be with His peoples, and the Great Architect Himself will be with them, their God — every tear shall be wiped away, there shall be NO MORE DEATH, sorrow, crying or pain for the former things will have passed away.

This is the eighth day — the day of rest, we look to it with joy, and also with fear. We are told in unmistakable language, that MANY will be rejected. A sobering thought is it not? But can we forget the lesson of Noah? That day when only eight people were saved. Can we forget the crying population, clamouring around the ark, shouting to Noah to let them in, but it was too late, the Lord shut the door. Had Noah been able to open it again it would have been his destruction, as it was Lot's wife, when she looked back. And can we forget the poignant words of Jesus himself in the parable of the Virgins and the Lamps? Those who, during their wait for the bridegroom were dormant stones, not growing in grace and knowledge and were found in their dull lusterless undeveloped state. So likewise those of us who are rejected at the judgment seat of Christ.

We shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. There shall we weep and gnash the teeth. Loud cries will echo in our ears "*LORD, LORD OPEN TO US*" — but it will be too late. He stood at the door and knocked, the eleventh hour is past. Many saints will be turned to the left, these are the goats; returned to the nations of goats. These are the rubble and trash, the wicked and slothful servants who are unprofitable for the Master's use. Rejected stones, driven from the divine presence to live awhile in sorrow and pain, seeking death and finding it not until the appointed reward is finished, then finally death, and a rotting back to dust from whence they came.

This is the unhappy future for those of us who profess to know God, but in works deny him, and who, being in Christ walk after the flesh. Those of us who, as it were, drift along on the bubbles, finding the bubble burst. Those who have used a mask of deceit, having an outward show of righteousness, finding it taken away, and standing before Christ naked, their shame shown to all. The wood, hay and stubble, the faithless and disobedient having no part of the pure gold like unto clear glass seen by John in Patmos.

No, brethren and sisters — let us never lose sight of the fact that the name Christadelphian is not a passport into the Kingdom of God.

Our doctrines ARE pure, but are we ourselves? Do we have clean hands and pure hearts? To be identified as “Bereans” does not automatically make us faithful brethren. To continually point the proverbial finger at our erring brethren will prove no advantage to us when we ourselves being weighed in the balances are found wanting. We must WORK out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Active, developing, energetic stones, full of golden faith, being shaped according to the oracles of God, press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Dead and/or dormant stones are loose, sluggish and negligent, having a form of godliness but in reality are faulty deformed boulders. Therefore, let us resolve today, not tomorrow — it may be too late — resolve to put forth a greater effort to imitate the great and mighty corner stone, that we may be part of the superstructure.

Let us examine ourselves and strengthen the things that remain. Giving not sleep to the eyes nor slumber to the eyelids, for a little sleep, a little repose, a little folding of the hands to sleep shall bring distress upon us.

Lift up the eyes round about and see — arise, shine for our light and life is about to break forth with stately grandour on the Eastern horizon.

Therefore let us AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SIN NOT.

Bro. J. J.

Jewels

Malachi 3:17

The Scriptures contain much about Precious Stones from the record of the Creation of the present Order (Gen. 2:12), where we read that the River Pison compassed the land of Havilah, where there was the bdellium and the onyx stone, to the establishment of the Kingdom (Rev. 21:12), where the Apostle John describes the New Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, her light being like unto a stone most precious.

In the ordinances of the Sanctuary in the wilderness the High Priest's breastplate was set with twelve precious stones, each engraved with the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, so we think it very fitting indeed that God's people, those who have made a Covenant with Him by sacrifice, the true Israel of God, should be spoken of as jewels.

”Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written

before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His Name.

“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”—Mal. 3:16.

Jewels as a class are the most lasting of all earthly objects; they are the most beautiful as well as the most imperishable form in which matter appears. Gold will wear away, silver will tarnish, wood will decay, the very granite stone itself will disintegrate, but jewels will continue unchanged for thousands of years; they are neither dimmed by time nor superseded by fashion.

So we can see the reason why God refers to “His jewels.” Those who accept God’s offer and render Him obedience and service are promised that they will be clothed with incorruptibility. In that day when they are made perfect they will be beautiful in both feature and character, all the unlovely things being purged out. They will be like their Elder Brother, who himself being made perfect, will confer a like benefit upon his brethren and sisters.

The Apostle John says *“We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”—1 John 3:2.*

Jewels have not always been such, imperishable and beautiful, and there is an analogy here between the natural and the spiritual. Far down in the recesses of the earth, where no human eye has ever beheld, the process of crystallisation has been going on, fashioning dull, inert matter into shapes of marvellous loveliness, subliming the black bitumen of the coalfield into sparkling diamonds and transforming the unsightly clay of the pit into brilliant rubies and sapphires. The dull, opaque matter is crystallised into the exquisite forms and colours of the sapphire, ruby and emerald by fiery convulsions and electric forces that threaten their very destruction.

So, similarly, the most unpromising materials from the most moral rubbish that men cast out and despise may be converted by the Divine alchemy into the gold of the sanctuary and jewels fit for God’s gathering.

In the natural state we are merely the raw material, the thick clay, but, thanks be to God, He does not leave any who come to Him, in the meanness and vileness of their natural state. He digs them out of the “fearful pit” and miry clay, that they may be subjected to a refining process.

We of ourselves can do nothing. The lustre of glass can be produced in a few minutes by man’s agency, but the radiance of the diamond takes unknown ages to develop in the bowels of the earth, under the

subtle action of nature's most powerful forces. So God's jewels are of slow growth; they do not spring up quickly, but are wrought out through long weary days of discipline.

Of all the images under which God symbolises His Ecclesia, a building is the most suitable and impressive. It is built up stone by stone from the level of the earth with much toil and anxiety, with sweat of brow and weariness of brain. The builders build up with a weapon in one hand and a trowel in the other and are constantly employed in counteracting Nature's forces.

The gravitation of sin is against it; the line and the plummet of righteousness have to be constantly gravitation employed to keep the walls straight of Sin and prevent the wayward tendency of each individual stone, and the malignant influences of world matters from marring the beauty of the general design.

The watchful eye of the architect has also to be ever upon it. Speaking through the Prophet Isaiah (54:11) God says He will lay the foundation of His Ecclesia with sapphires. The Tabernacle in the wilderness had no foundations; it was pitched in the bare and sterile wilderness, its floor being the shifting yellow sand, and there was no marble pavement or cedar boarding to separate the golden furniture and costly curtains from the bare ground.

But it is not so with the Spiritual Temple. God lays its foundations with sapphires. From the very beginning the Creator laid the foundation of the earth in beauty as well as in utility, in ornament as well as in strength. He embraced both in the same harmonious design and wrought them out through every geological period by the same artistic means.

The foundations of the earth are composed of onyx stones and stones to be set, glistening stones and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones and marble stones in abundance. God laid the foundations of His plan of salvation in His only begotten Son. From the dark and degraded ruins of mankind God raises a glorious Temple on the death and resurrection of His Son, its sapphire foundation is sprinkled with atoning blood, the precious blood of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

It is because this spiritual Temple is built, as it were, upon His body, because its foundations are laid in His empty grave, that it is so glorious and enduring. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone which binds together and supports the whole structure.

The sapphire is one of the brightest and most valuable of those mysterious unfading flowers of the earth that we call jewels. They are sometimes found in masses of considerable size, therefore may appropriately be spoken of in connection with foundations.

A sapphire formed the pavement like the body of Heaven in clearness under the feet of the God of Israel, as seen by the elders who accompanied Moses up the Mount, and the Throne of glory of Ezekiel's vision resembled a sapphire stone.

Its colour is blue, a very lovely colour.

This is a very important point and may be the reason why it was singled out in preference to any other stone, and, as in the temple of nature the hue of the sapphire predominates, so in the Tabernacle and Temple of old, it was pre-eminent, being always associated with gold in the enumeration of the sacred furniture. Every Israelite wore a fringe of blue riband to his garments to remind him of the commandments of the Lord, which the Pharisees afterwards enlarged so that men might praise their scrupulous adherence to the letter of the law.

Jesus himself carried this blue hem to His garment, and from it on one occasion the touch of faith drew out healing virtue. Blue in Scripture always represents healing. Did not Jesus by His one sacrifice for sins for ever heal His people's woes, and when He returns He will be the Great Healer of the World?

We, by the mercy of God, are constituents of the New Jerusalem, one foundation of which is a sapphire, and by another analogy trees, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. Paul says that Jesus Christ is the only foundation, and on this precious sapphire foundation all the promises and declarations of God rest.

Solomon's Temple was built on the rocky foundation of Mount Moriah, a place consecrated to the work of redemption from the time when Abraham offered the ram of God's providing instead of Isaac, and the Destroying Angel sheathed there, by the threshing floor of Araunah, the sword of judgment, because of David's sacrifice.

The Hebrew word *Sappir*, translated Sapphire, is derived from the same root as the words signifying a book, writing or engraving, and can we not see here a connection with the book of remembrance which God is writing?

According to the Talmud, the two tables of stone on which the law was written at Sinai, were formed of sapphires, but, thanks be to God, it is not on the sapphire foundation of the law that we build our trust.

The obedience that rests on this foundation must be perfect in every jot and tittle, and perpetual, without cessation or suspension, from the beginning to the end of life.

We cannot render such obedience. Our obedience is stained in motive and action; it is faltering, unequal, irregular.

Therefore we cannot be saved by the law, the Apostle Paul says; it is a schoolmaster leading us to Christ. He is our sapphire foundation. His perfect obedience is the ground of our justification and acceptance.

The salvation of the World is the work of Jesus, who alone is the basis upon which God will build a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

“Other foundation can no man lay than is laid which is Jesus Christ.”

“Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone; a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation.”

The sapphire is one of the most precious jewels, ranking next to the diamond in value. It is precious for its own beauty and rarity and precious on account of the labour involved in obtaining it.

Who can estimate the preciousness of the sapphire foundation of our faith—the work of redemption, which cost the humiliation, suffering and death of our Lord? There is no carat standard capable of fixing its value; all the riches of the world would be utterly inadequate to pay the ransom.

“Ye are bought not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”

On this sapphire foundation God lays stones with fair colours. The New Jerusalem will be a glorious city, because there will be gathered together in varied but harmonious splendour the brightness of the diamond, the ruddy flame of the topaz, the deep green of the emerald, the shining gold of the jasper, the milk-white filminess of the onyx, the heavenly blue of the sapphire, the lovely violet of the amethyst, the burning changes of the opal and the soft beauty of the pearl.

Now one of the properties of fair colours is harmony. When Peter exhorts us to add to our Faith virtue, knowledge, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity, he employs a word in the Greek which signifies to lead a chorus or band of musicians.

The idea, involved in the expression is that perfect harmony should exist between all these virtues, as between notes of a piece of music, each enhancing the effect of the other.

There is harmony in colours as well as in sounds. We see examples in every object of Nature, and where the proper hues are associated together, the complementary ones contrasting and harmonising with one another, the effect is exceedingly pleasing, and, as in the field of Nature, so in the characters of Brethren and Sisters, all the graces should blend in such a way that the effect of the whole may be to the eye of God what harmonious melody is to the ear, and, if such is the

case, there is no more beautiful or convincing exhibition of the work of the Spirit.

We do not find the ideal type of perfection in the individual character of any one Brother or Sister, but in all God's saints collectively, each contributing to the harmonious whole the quality that distinguishes them, and all united by love.

In His description of His Ecclesia God says, in Isaiah, *"I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles and all thy borders of pleasant stones."* Isa. 54:12.

There is a wide field opened up here for profitable study.

In the quotation already made from Malachi God speaks of the day when He makes up His jewels. By this expression, *"makes up,"* we understand *"completes the number"*—lays the last fair stone in His Temple.

This day is mentioned twice, first in chapter 3 verse 1: *"the Lord whom ye seek"*—whom ye are expecting, or looking for—*"shall suddenly come to His Temple. But who may abide the day of His coming?"* Then chapter 4 verse 1: *"Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, yea, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble."*

In his epistle to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul refers to the only foundation and indicates what men can build thereon. In the first place gold, silver, precious stones; secondly, wood, hay, stubble, and He says that every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work.

We have seen how the first three can be raised, and jewels; being born of fire can withstand the day, but wood, hay, stubble being powerless to resist the trying, testing fire, shall have left; neither root nor branch, denoting utter destruction.

The proud, haughty, contemptuous, vain, self-justifying, self-righteous, not having learned of Christ, in that day shall be gathered out of the Kingdom.

Chapter 4 verse 2. The prophet proceeds: *"But unto you that fear my Name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."*

The earthly sun in the eastern sky rises as yet upon a World that lieth in wickedness, under the power and dominion of wicked men, but the Heavenly sun shall arise to the healing of his people and shine upon a new and renovated Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The natural sun has wonderfully healing power, causing fruitfulness and imparting fresh life and power. How much, more powerfully

healing to His people at His second coming shall be the rising of the sun of righteousness?

The word translated “wings” means also fringe, hem or skirt of a garment, and we have already touched upon this.

The effect upon His people is contained in the latter part of, verse 4, *“Ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.”* They will go forth as in the morning light to renewed life, growing up with youthful vigour and joyous energy.

The Hebrew word is like the river of Paradise—Pishon, a broad, spreading stream. It occurs only four times in the Scriptures, and here is equivalent to the word employed by our Lord when He said to His disciples, *“Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven.”*— Luke 6:23.

That is the word, *“leap for joy,”* implying exuberant joy, connected with healthful vigour and youthful growth, the expansion of every limb and increase in every bodily power.

Verse 5: *“Behold, I will send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”*

John the Baptist came before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, but not in his very person. The prophecy was partly fulfilled in him, but our Lord's words to his disciples point forward to the revelation of Elijah in person, *“Elias truly shall come first and restore all things.”*

The expectation of the Jews to this day is that Elijah will come again and lead them to accept and believe in their Messiah.

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus' first coming in humiliation, although he foretold the great day also, the great day ever spoken of by all the prophets.

Elijah is far more than the prophet of zeal and fire; he is to the later generation the helper and the healer, the reconciler and peace-bringer, the herald of the Messiah.

In the end God will smite the earth and all not obedient to Him, but the prayer and zeal of Elijah will gain a reprieve for the world.

In verse 6 there is a most beautiful and gracious promise: *“He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers.”*

These words, as quoted by the Angel Gabriel to his father Zachariah, form the connecting link between the Old Testament and the New. The mission of Elijah is graciously intended to prevent God coming to smite the earth with a curse.

Here we have a merciful warning that otherwise God will strike not only the land of Israel, which took place, but the whole earth, with terrible destruction.

In the Hebrew *Haftorah* (the reading of the Prophets after the reading of the Law), verse 5 is repeated after verse 6, it being against Jewish custom to conclude a reading from the Scriptures with words of threat or doom.

Shall we do the same, and conclude with the words with which we opened: —

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His Name.”

“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

Bro. H. F. Wicks — The Berean Christadelphian

Encouraging Words No. 27

WISE indeed was the teaching which king Lemuel's mother conveyed to her son. In view of the wholesomeness of such instruction well might the inspired writer of the proverbs enjoin his readers to *“forsake not the law of thy mother.”* *“Bind them,”* says he, referring to parental admonitions, *“continually upon thy heart, and tie them about thy neck.”*

How do we stand, dear sisters, as touching the instruction which we convey to our sons? Is it worthy of the treatment above described?

The wise mother of the Book of Proverbs sought to brace up her son for the requirements of his responsible position, and to warn him against the sins which would be peculiar to it. By this example being placed before us, it is evidently one which God would have us follow. Ere long, to all appearances, the Truth's affairs will be largely in the hands of the children of the brethren and sisters. Should these coming custodians of God's work fall short in regard to their great privilege and responsibility, let it not be through failure on our part to wisely counsel them.

As a means of discharging our duty let us hold aloft those standards of manly excellence which God himself has provided. Let us teach our sons that God looks not to faultless clothing and distinguished appearance, or to education and rank, or to powers of oratory. These things are not so much as named in God's list of the necessary

qualifications of a tried man. What God requires is a man who has behind him a career of self-restraint and plodding humble work. Let us put our sons in the way of serving an apprenticeship in such necessary qualities as purity, vigilance, sobriety, modesty, hospitality, aptitude for teaching (when in contact with the alien, and in the Sunday School and Mutual Improvement Class). Let us counsel them to be temperate, not given to the love of money and covetousness, or to quarrelling and brawling, or to unseemly contention (1 Tim. 3:2, 3). Let us encourage them to be faithful and regular in the ecclesial meetings, but let us not fail to point out in connection with this, that the object in view must be the exaltation of God, and not self, and that the man who reverses the Scriptural injunction to be swift to hear and slow to speak is a curse to his brethren and sisters.

Were king Lemuel's mother in our midst we may be sure that she would not only emphasise all these matters in the ears of her son, but that she would forewarn, and so forearm him against those sins of the last days which Paul so vividly predicted. Said this faithful servant of God: "Men shall be . . . despisers of those that are good." We have only to mention a good man's name, be he prophet or apostle, to find how rampant is this sin in the world. And who has not seen it at work even in the ecclesia? Let us strive to fortify our sons against this woeful sin of these last days by teaching them to respect those, who, from their years of exemplary walk in the Truth, are undoubtedly good men from the divine standpoint.

Let us remember, however, that our sons are not likely to respect the brethren unless they are first taught to revere and listen to their parents. Disobedience to parents is another unholy trait which Paul indicated would be a feature of the present time. Let us early direct our energies towards securing from our sons dutiful behaviour towards both father and mother. He who despises father and mother, and those whom God esteems, must of necessity be a despiser of God.

The mother, who, in the quietude of home devotes herself to the wise training of her children, performs a part which, for its far reaching effect, cannot be exceeded in importance. The work will call for many an inward battle between inclination and duty, and will cause many a headache and even heartache. Let us, however, go forward undaunted by difficulties, knowing that we have the strength of God's own authority and His encouragement behind us.

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1910

Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 27

THE Truth is sacred: it is God's property: and should be handled accordingly. Those who hold it, possess a talent for which they will

have to render solemn account. The Truth has not been given by God for the gratification of any carnal lust; it has been given for God's glory. Let those who fight for the Truth remember this—both in lecturing, exhorting, and debating. Let them *“earnestly contend for the faith.”* Let them keep silent rather than contend merely for the sake of a mental combat, or for the purpose of displaying their abilities, or of injuring an opponent in the personal sense. God takes delight in an earnest contender, but a pretender, He abominates. *“What has thou to do to declare My statutes?”* is the divine rebuke to the latter. An insincere speaker (and falseness will show itself) is also a very unprofitable spectacle to man. The characteristics of such an one are: abuse, sophistry, carping, self-assertion, etc. Men who aim at promoting God's glory work upon the lines that He has laid down. In fact His glory can be advanced in no other way. They make known His word faithfully (Jer. 23:28), they fear not to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), they speak as the Oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), meekly (1 Pet. 3:15), boldly (Ephes. 6:20), and without respect of persons (James 2:1). Men who *“give attendance to (Bible) reading”* have to brave the opprobrium of being called by very unpleasant names. The world hates an open Bible. If we occupy our spare moments in reading the newspaper, nothing will be said. If we occupy but a twentieth part of the time in reading the Bible, the result is — What? This is a question that Bible-readers can feelingly answer. The trial though discouraging is designed to work good. It will strengthen character, and lead the way to great reward. It will train us to be *“strong and very courageous.”* Let us not forget that there is a book of remembrance written for them that fear the Lord and think upon His name (Mal. 3:16). The world is very wicked. This is evidenced by its shameful antagonism to the Bible and its faithful readers. As it was in Christ's day so is it now—the Word everywhere, but its contents shamefully despised. Then Moses was lauded, whilst his teaching was ignored. Now Jesus is lauded, whilst his doctrines are blasphemed. Now, as then, a fearful time of retribution is ahead. The world-wide distribution of the Bible involves a responsibility which men but little dream of. Ere long they will be brought to their senses. *“Their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel”* (Isaiah 5:24).

Oh the folly of poor puny man! Although he cannot make a fly, nor foretell the events of tomorrow — although a headache will incapacitate him, and a little poison extinguish him—yet he hesitates not to sit in judgment on the ways of God. Inability to explain the will of God in permitting evil to prevail upon the earth, is not a logical reason for affirming that God has cruelly blundered in the matter. The withholding of full light concerning it may be a part of the means by which He has afforded us scope for displaying that confidence which is

the reasonable ground of acceptance with Him. With a smaller estimation of our own demonstrably imperfect and untrustworthy judgments, we should be more inclined to adopt a wise view of the question. If God had power to foresee the evil—to foretell it—to manipulate events throughout it—to determine its length—to appoint a glorious future as the outcome of it (and the Scriptures show that He had the power in each of these respects), can we question His wisdom in permitting it? *“Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?”* Surely His power and intelligence, especially His goodness as in the Gospel seen, compel us to trust Him on points whereon He has not fully spoken. Let us follow Abraham, who halted not, but believed when brought face to face with incomprehensible items in the Divine communications. The beginning of wisdom is to believe that God in all things knows best, and to believe that His mind is infallibly revealed in His Word. Apart from this conviction there can be no mental rest, but perplexing uncertainty and miserable speculation.

“If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). The lesson here is too plain to be misunderstood. We may travesty the words, as the Man of Sin has recently done, by literally construing them; or we may, which is far more likely, give them the go-by. The lesson was needed, or it would not have been given. The humility inculcated is not natural to us. Unreformed man is proud and consequential—he loves a position of authority. Let us not confound humility with shyness—with that mental imperfection which makes the head droop, the face blush, which inclines us to take a back seat, and robs us of our courage. Christ’s humility was active and practical—it had back-bone and go about it. Let us develop it. It is not always agreeable to take the place of a servant, especially to those whom we think our inferiors. But this is what Christ requires—an industrious, loving humility—a serving of others (irrespective of their standing) as occasions offer. Our mission is to serve—to do good—and every position of life in which we may be placed, will provide us with countless opportunities. If we realise our mission—if we are obedient to the words of Christ—there will be no haughtiness, no domineering, no supposed superiority. It is not necessary that there should be any abandonment of ecclesial or social positions to carry out Christ’s precept. The thing is for everyone, be he father or child, master or servant, presiding brother or hall-keeper, to see that he fills his position, not for his own selfish ends, but as a means of blessing to others.

Bro. A. T. Jannaway— 1890

Amen

THE USE of the word “Amen,” at the conclusion of a prayer or sentiment uttered by another, is founded on ancient usage, of which there is abundant Biblical record. That it prevailed in the first ecclesias is evident from Paul's question in (1 Cor. 14:16) —

“How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say amen at thy giving of thanks, if he understand not what thou sayest?”

It is a pleasant and edifying endorsement of what is good. It has odious sectarian associations, but we must not discard a good and scriptural thing because it is abused.

Its figurative illustration in Christ as expounded in Eureka I, pgs. 187 & 402, does not displace its literal use in the assemblies of the saints.

It would be delightful if every brother and sister felt the liberty to indulge a fervent and honest “Amen” at the close of every thanksgiving.

We are too much afraid of each other.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1892

Be Ready And Watch

“Be ready! Watch!” This does not mean that we are to secrete ourselves, as in a cloister, or dismiss the practical affairs of life from a due attention. Attend to all your matters in a wise and cheerful and godly spirit; at the same time, never let God out of your sight. Read and pray always in their proper measure, and “*remember the Commandments to do them.*” In such a line of things, it matters not at what stage or moment the Lord's presence is announced.

—Bro. Robert Roberts

The Sardinian State

The state of things deplored by Cyprian was that which resulted in the Sardinian, characterized by the Spirit as a death-state. By the generation of professors contemporary with it, it was not so considered.

Peace and prosperity reigned, as they regarded it; and they flattered themselves that they were in the enjoyment of great spiritual life—*“thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.”* The Deity did not see as they saw themselves. He pronounced them dead. That is, Christianity was on the verge of extinction; or, as the Spirit explains in the next verse, *“ready to die.”* Very little of genuine apostolic Christianity

could be found among the Christians in the last half of the third century. The Platonism of the Alexandrian school had corrupted every thing, and eaten out its vitals as a cancer; so that the Christian mind was prepared for any absurdities and follies in the name of true religion, as in our day.

Valerian reigned A.D. 253, and for upwards of three years was the friend and protector of the Christians. His palace was full of them, and he appears to have had a strong predilection in their favor, which was not at all promotive of spiritual health and vitality.

During the tranquility under this reign, a council was held in Africa by sixty-six bishops with Cyprian at their head. They came together to consider certain questions in agitation. In a letter to Fidus, Cyprian informs the reader of things which will convince him how far they had now departed from the genius, spirit, and principles of the faith. Fidus had denied that infants should be immersed within the second or third day after birth; and maintained that the ancient law of circumcision should be so far adhered to that they ought not to be immersed till the eighth day. But Cyprian and the Sixty-Six were all of a very different opinion. He calls infant immersion “spiritual circumcision;” and says it ought not to be impeded by the law of carnal circumcision; for that it was essential to the salvation of the soul, which would be lost if death ensued before the second or third day. The following is his argument, upon which the “divines” of our century have made no advance.

“If even to the foulest offenders,” says he, “when they afterwards believe, remission of sins is granted, and none is prohibited from baptism and grace; how much more should an infant be admitted, who, just born, hath not sinned in any respect, except that, being carnally produced according to Adam, he hath, in first birth, contracted the contagion of the ancient deadly nature; and who obtains the remission of sins with the less difficulty, because not his own actual guilt, but that of another, is to be remitted.

“Our sentence, therefore, dearest brother, in the council was, that none, by us, should be prohibited from immersion and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind to all.”

In these few lines from Cyprian, what a striking illustration of the Sardian state of spiritual death is here! We learn from them that the leaders of the ecclesias believed, and therefore taught,

1. The immortality of the soul according to Plato;
2. That said soul, if but two or three days old, would be lost, if the infant owner were not immersed;

3. That immersion and grace, without faith, imparted remission of sins to infants;

4. That infants were damned for a sin committed by Adam over four thousand years before;

5. That immersion and grace in the case of infants was not for the remission of their own sins, but for that of another—of Adam. Hence, Adam must have been pardoned every time an infant was dipped and regenerated by “grace!”

6. That infant immersion was “spiritual circumcision.”

Such were the dogmata gravely affirmed by this African Council, A.D. 253, all its members pious professors of Christianity, who had recently emerged from the horrors of the Decian trial.

“They had a name to live.” We know what this means when we look at the clergy around us, and their dupes on every side. All these believe with Cyprian and the Sixty-Six, excepting that they think the Roman Africans used too much water. Our Cyprianites have substituted the sprinkling of the face for the immersion of the infants, in obedience to the See of Rome, on the plea that a few drops of water with “grace” is as good as an ocean; and so it is in the case before us; for water, much or little, is of no account at all, for infant or adult, where faith exists not in the subject; as it is written, “without faith it is impossible to please God; for *he that cometh* to him must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them *that diligently seek him.*”

“They had a name to live,” and are thus spoken of by a Cyprianite historian. “Here is an assembly of sixty-six pastors, men of approved fidelity and gravity, who have stood the fiery trial of some of the severest persecutions ever known, and who have testified their love to the Lord Jesus Christ, in a more striking manner than any Antipedobaptists have had an opportunity of doing in our day; and, if we may judge of their religious views by those of Cyprian—and they are all in perfect harmony with him—they are not wanting in any fundamental of godliness.” Thus Milner commends them, and pronounces them Christians of a holy and vital sort! But the Spirit gives a very different judgment in the case; and saith to the presbytery of the Sardian state, “I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and *art dead.* I have not found thy works perfect before the Deity. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.” In 253, they had let slip the gospel originally preached by the apostles. The majority of professors, as in our day, had become oblivious of the Truth; and only “*a few names*” in the Sardian state

remained “*who had not defiled their garments*” with Origenism and Cyprianism.

Another dogma started about this time was, that “those whose weak state of health did not permit them to be washed in water, were yet sufficiently baptized *by being sprinkled.*” Cyprian observes, that “the virtue of baptism ought not to be estimated, in a carnal manner, by the quantity of external apparatus.” All “Christendom,” now called “orthodox,” is essentially agreed with Cyprian; for even baptists admit the Christianity of Quakers who repudiate the use of water altogether.

Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, flourished at this time. He opposed the Truth that the Millennium is introduced after the resurrection; and finding how much use had been made of the Apocalypse in supporting the doctrine, he gave his thoughts upon it, and confessed, that though he revered its contents, he did not understand their scope.

Paul of Samosata was another Sardinian. He flourished A.D. 264, as bishop of Antioch, and instructor of Zenobia, the Queen of the East, in his own notions of Christianity. He taught, that Jesus Christ was by nature a common man like others. He was artful, eloquent, deceitful, and otherwise immoral. He was deposed A.D. 269 by a council of seventy bishops whose indictment against him argues an awful degeneracy from the Truth in this primitive arena of the labors of Saul of Tarsus and his companions in the gospel.

By this time *Monkery*, introduced by Paul the first hermit, received considerable impetus through Anthony the Egyptian. The spirit of Paul the Hermit was first incorporated by Anthony A.D. 270, whose biography was written by Athanasius, who was contemporary with monasticism in full blast. Anthony's austerities were excessive, and the most ridiculous stories are told of his contests with the Devil, which forcibly illustrate the self-righteous pride and vain-glory of his disposition. But, as we are not writing a history of monkery, but only citing examples illustrative of the “*falling away*” in the successive stages of its development to the revelation of the *Man of Sin-Power*, we shall leave this celebrated monk busily engaged in the Sardinian state of Christendom propagating the monastic disposition, and extending its influence not only into the fourth century, but for many ages after. We therefore dismiss him with the remark, that “the faith and love of the gospel received towards the close of this century a fatal blow from the encouragement of this unchristian practice.”

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka Page 443

Argument and Contention

Argument and contention for the Faith are not worth the trouble if they are to end in the mere establishment of a theory. The object of all work in the Truth is to develop real, loving, warm-hearted, intelligent and consecrated disciples of Christ, who personally feel that they are not their own, but the property of him who died that he might purchase a people with his own blood. —*Bro. Robert Roberts*

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

“...I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.”

The Word of God clearly reveals that the literal throne and kingdom of David will be restored “*as in the days of old.*” That very element of which it was composed will be restored. That it will grow into a world-wide dominion and in it the saints will receive their inheritance, and through it all nations will be blessed.

In Luke 28:45 there is a record of Christ meeting with his apostles after his resurrection, and it is said:

“Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.”

Again, in Acts 1:3 it is recorded how that Jesus, “*Through the Holy Spirit had given commandments unto his apostles whom he had chosen; to whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and SPEAKING OF THE THINGS PERTAINING TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.*”

From these testimonies we are led to the inevitable conclusion that the Lord fully instructed the apostles concerning his coming kingdom. Divine inspiration had revealed to them the exact nature of that kingdom. Previously, there had been a number of things which they had not fully understood. But now, after forty days of instruction from their Lord “*pertaining to the kingdom of God*” they most assuredly knew what they were talking about when they asked him,

“Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?...”

Jesus Christ taught that when his kingdom was established the 12 tribes of Israel would be restored to their land, as the first dominion of the kingdom (Micah 4:6-8). In Matt. 19:27-28 he told the apostles -

“Ye which have followed me in the regeneration (restoration) when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones.”

That time is at the return of Christ to the earth to sit in Judgment. . .

It is no mystery why the apostles were so anxious about the time of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel. It was their hope. In the establishment of this kingdom they knew they would reap the reward of their labor and sacrifice. They knew it would be the fulfillment of the promise to Jesus’ mother:

“He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob (natural Israel) forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end...”

In Amos 9:11 we read:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old...”

It should be obvious to all that to restore the throne and kingdom of David. “as in the days of old, “ every element of the kingdom must be restored. It is a common notion that the throne of David was transferred to heaven, and consists solely of the power and authority vested in Christ. It is further asserted that Christ is now reigning on David’s throne, his kingdom being confined to a spiritual dominion, the church.

This could not in any sense constitute a restoration of the kingdom of David. In 2 Sam. 7 it is recorded that God made a covenant with David. in which He promised David that

(1) God would appoint a place for the people of Israel, and would plant them in a place of their own to move no more, neither be afflicted any more.

(2) That God would make David's family the royal house of the kingdom.

(3) That David would have a seed to reign on his throne forever before David (or in his presence)...

David’s throne belongs exclusively to Christ. He has never been promised any other throne. He is now the only heir, both by descent from David through his mother Mary and by divine appointment. But Christ has never sat on his Father's throne; second, Christ's throne, or David’s throne, is still in ruins. Christ is to return to earth for the

express purpose of restoring the throne and kingdom of David, which is the same as saying that he is to restore the kingdom of Israel. In Acts 3:20-21 we read:

“And He shall send Jesus Christ...whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began...”

The kingdom of Christ to be established on earth will be an Israelitish kingdom in every respect. Christ, the “king of the Jews,” will be its king; spiritual Israel, the immortalized saints will rule with him. The nation of Israel, the natural descendants of Abraham and Jacob will be the subjects of the first dominion of the kingdom. The land of Israel will constitute the territory of the first dominion of the kingdom, and will be the center of divine government on earth. Jerusalem will not only be the capital of the kingdom but will be the center of universal worship as the nations go up *“from year to year to worship.”*

This is the Gospel or good news of the kingdom preached by Jesus Christ and his apostles. This is *“the hope of Israel”* preached by Paul. This is the hope of the promise made of God unto the Fathers. This is the ONE HOPE of salvation. All else is vain delusion. Let us lay hold on this hope as an anchor for the soul and thereby find refuge from the calamities soon to fall upon a godless world.

—Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

Errata

An observant brother made the following comment of correction on Bro. Gibson’s lecture last month: The TIME Magazine article that Bro. Gibson refers to on page 399 is from January 1969

Brother Gibson refers to the 9 Jews hanged in Iraq. That took place January 1969. He also talked about Premier Tshombe “still in jail, was caught in ’67 mid-air kidnapping”.

At the end of his exhortation on page 406, someone wrote that Brother Gibson delivered this in the 1940’s. They must have meant the late 1960’s or sometime in January 1969 when the events he talks about occurred.

The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News is published as a service of love to the Berean Christadelphian Brotherhood. Through generous contributions from most Ecclesias and individuals we have been able to publish each month without subscriptions. The magazine expenses amount to about \$1.25 per copy. The cost increases, however, to about \$2.50 per copy due to furnishing the magazine to brethren and sisters in areas where they cannot afford the cost. We were very encouraged by the response to our appeal for help. We appreciate the continued support of individuals and ecclesias. We are currently covered for about 5 months.

Berean 2011-35

Hints For Bible Markers

The exhortation to observe “*any virtue and any praise*” and “*whatsoever things are honest, true, lovely, or of good report.*” (Phil. 4:8.) implies the obligation to avoid everything in the opposite direction as the month’s commandment shows. The command is to deny “*ungodliness and worldly lusts*” and to “*live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*” (Titus 2:12). The flesh requires circumcision, the cutting off of the fleshly mind, done continually, by our own individual determination, throughout the changing conditions in which we live during our probationary period. As the scriptures show some of the Corinthian ecclesia had forgotten their relationship to the Creator of all things and were defiling the Temple of God making it the Temple of Idols which temple shall be destroyed. The warning for us is clear! Only a man “*with a true heart and full assurance of faith, having had his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and his body washed with pure water.*” (Hebrews 10:22-23) can draw near to God with genuine sorrow for sin, glorifying the God of Heaven with thought and deed whose temple he is. The difference between common faith and saving faith lies mainly in the “*patient continuance in well doing.*” (Romans 2:7) All the baptized “*who walk after the flesh*” shall die the Second Death. They will die and cease to exist, not even as a memory. If we believe these truths as much as we believe any other facts our focus in life will be to “*cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

Cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Your bodies are members of Christ, and God's temple; if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:” (1 Thessalonians 4:3)

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (1 Cor. 3:16 – 17)

“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.” (1 Corinthians 3:15)

“What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. (17) But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. (18) Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. (19) What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost (Spirit) which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (20) For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Cor. 6:16 – 20)

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