

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 Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.
Phone: (586) 790-2156 e-mail: fhigham@gmail.com
Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

HOUSTON, Texas — Sunday School @ 10:00 a.m. Studying the Book of James. Memorial @ 11:10 am, Sunday afternoon class “The Faith in the Last Days.” Thursday night @ 7:00p.m. we’re studying the Book of Ezekiel.

Dearly beloved in Christ Jesus,

During the last few months we have been blessed with some visitors. Sis Becky VanPelt from Lampasas and Sis. Tanya Martin from New Iberia, Louisiana have brought strength and comfort to our meeting. We also have been conducting our Thursday night class over the internet which brings visitors from other ecclesias. This has been a great blessing for we know that iron sharpeneth iron.

We are saddened to inform the brotherhood that we have withdrawn fellowship from Bro. Thomas Dylla. We pray that in the time remaining he may see the error of his ways and return to fellowship and run with us the race for eternal life.

With love on behalf of the brothers and sisters of the Houston Ecclesia,

Bro. Michael Kramer, Recorder

MILAM COUNTY, Texas

Dear Brothers and Sisters of the One Faith,
Greetings to you all in Jesus, our Lord,

To borrow the words of hymn 182, “the days are quickly flying when Christ shall come again”, and it is with great joy we report that another of our Sunday School Scholars has obeyed the commandment to “come out and be separate”. **Tabitha Faithe Hurst** (daughter of Bro. Carl and Sis. Robyn Hurst) was immersed on Saturday, January 14, 2012 after a good confession and understanding of the First Principles of The Kingdom of God and The Name of Jesus Christ. We pray our new sister will have but a short walk Zionward, always striving to walk in God's ways.

Along with the Milam County Ecclesia we had the assistance and company of our brethren Lenny and Ben Naglieri of Goldthwaite, and brethren George Jr. Hurst and John Wolfe of Lampasas. We thank our visiting brothers for their help. All total brethren, sisters, and Sunday School Scholars we were 23 in number to witness the immersion.

Since our last report, we have been blessed to have had the following visitors meet around the Lord's Table: Bro. and Sis. Harry and Cindy Cassidy, Bro. Seth Brown of Austin, Bro. Ben Naglieri of Goldthwaite, Sis. Amber Jones and Sunday School Scholar Emma Jones of Richard. We thank Bro. Seth and Bro. Ben for their words of exhortation.

Let us all be alert and watching, having our loins well girded and our lamps trimmed while we await our Lord's return that we may hear those waited for words, “*Enter in to the joy of thy Lord.*”

With love from your brethren and sisters of the Milam County, TX Ecclesia —Bro. Bob Wolfe

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.

Let Us Rise Up and Build

"From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince...shall be...seventy weeks"—Daniel 9:24-5

The story of Nehemiah is a story of great courage and devotion in the face of tremendous difficulties and disappointments.

The events of this book occur about 450 years before Christ, in the middle of the 200 year life span of the second great world empire—Medo-Persia. The first empire—Babylon—the head of gold—had been destroyed with all its glory by Cyrus, about 100 years before. The small beginnings of the 3rd and 4th empires, Greece and Rome, were just starting to stir.

Nehemiah's labors occur just about 100 years after the return from the captivity of a remnant under Zerubbabel, to rebuild the Temple. As the book opens, we find Nehemiah as the cupbearer to the King of Persia, supreme ruler of the known world from India in the east to Ethiopia in the west. Nehemiah's position was a very important one, of great honor, influence and advantage. He would be in close and daily

contact with the world ruler. The empire's choicest comforts and luxuries would be available to him.

We are reminded of Moses in the court of Pharaoh, and his decision to “*choose rather affliction with the people of God.*” Through the love of God and the discernment of the Spirit, he chose the glories of eternity rather than the vain baubles of present prosperity.

We are told nothing of Nehemiah's background or tribal lineage or family affairs. In this respect he stands before us like Melchizedek. All we know of him is that he was an *Israelite indeed*, in the fullest sense of the term.

The king was Artaxerxes I, son and successor of the great Xerxes I of whom Daniel says that—

“By his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia” (Dan. 11:2).

Xerxes was the Ahasuerus of Esther. Esther, if still living at the time of Nehemiah, would be about 55 years old when the book opens. The story begins (1:1)—

“And it came to pass in the month Chisleu (Dec.) in the 20th year (of Artaxerxes) as I was in Shushan the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came, and certain of Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews that were left of the Captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.”

How old Nehemiah was, or how long he had been cupbearer to Artaxerxes, we do not know, but it is apparent that his heart was with the remnant of his people in Jerusalem.

The report he received was very saddening. 100 years had passed since a faithful remnant had returned with Zerubbabel when Cyrus destroyed Babylon and proclaimed freedom to go home. After much effort and delay, the Temple had been rebuilt after a fashion at the urging and encouragement of Haggai and Zechariah, but things had not prospered. These men reported to Nehemiah that Judah was in great affliction and reproach.

Fourteen years earlier than Nehemiah, Ezra the priest had gathered together another little company of exiles and had gone back with the purpose of teaching and reestablishing the law and the Temple services. But clearly more help was needed. So much was required that Ezra had not the power or authority to accomplish.

When Nehemiah heard of the conditions in Judah, where Ezra was striving against great odds to bring the people back to the way of God, he wept, and mourned, and fasted and prayed for the blessing of his people.

So 4 months pass—4 months in which Nehemiah continues to pray and plan and form the great determination to leave behind all the meaningless luxury of the Persian court and devote himself to the service and welfare of the afflicted people of God.

He must have known from the beginning that it would be largely a thankless and a hopeless task. But in the deepest sense it was not hopeless, for he was playing a worthy part in the eternal purpose, and though most of the results of his effort were soon dissipated when he was taken away, some of his accomplishments remained and were part of the chain of events that prepared the way for the eventual manifestation of the Messiah.

He built the wall and restored the city. Daniel had prophesied that from this event, the coming of the Messiah should be measured—70 weeks of years—490 years. By Nehemiah's efforts the desolated city was reborn to a reasonably secure existence as a center for the development again of Jewish life.

This lasted. But his greater task of establishing righteousness and justice among the people *did not last.* As soon as his back was turned, the dog returned to its vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

That is the sad background that overshadows all the story of the intense, self-sacrificing efforts of this simple, humble, zealous man of God.

His prayer, as he prepares himself to seek the king's favor, is worthy of study (Neh. 1:5)—

“O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments.”

“The great and terrible God”—do we realize *how* great and terrible He is? A strong and living realization of this is fundamental to a humble and contrite walk. *“Keeping covenant and mercy to”*—whom? What two characteristics are necessary?—

*“To them that love **Him** and keep **His** commandments.”*

Then Nehemiah said he prayed *“night and day.”* If we truly desire anything, we will be continuous and persevering in our efforts and prayers. Then he says—

“We have sinned; we have dealt very corruptly; we have not kept Thy commandments” (vs. 6-7).

We find this is characteristic of men of God. They make themselves one with those whom they seek to help. They stoop down to them and seek the mercy of God together with them.

In v. 9 he speaks of the “*place God has chosen to set His Name there.*” All the faithful through the ages have been united in this desire and prayer—

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee.”

But Nehemiah did not stop at prayer and desire. He gave his life to the service of this divine purpose.

* * *

AS CHAPTER 2 begins, he is in the presence of the King, four months after hearing the news about Judah. The time has come to present his petition, after long preparation by prayer and fasting. It was the time of year of the great deliverance from Egypt under Moses—*Passover-time*—the beginning of the Jewish year. His heart would be especially stirred for the lost glories of his people.

His resolve to petition the King filled his mind, and the king noticed and remarked on his disturbed condition. See how intimate was his relation with this ruler of the world! But his heart was with the people of God—

“*Send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it*” (Neh. 2:5).

Doubtless Nehemiah would be thinking of the words of Daniel, recorded 100 years before (Dan. 9:24-25)—

“From the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince...shall be 70 weeks.”

Verse 6 says the queen was sitting by the king when the request was made. Why should the queen be mentioned? It may have been Esther, the queen of the previous king.

V. 8—“*The king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.*”

It will be observed of Nehemiah that, on the one hand, he takes every precaution and exerts every effort for the success of his endeavors, just as if everything depended on him alone, while at the same time he simply and unaffectedly attributes all that he accomplishes to the hand of God.

It is a very strong human tendency to fall short in one or the other of these things.

Nehemiah's troubles begin immediately upon arrival at Jerusalem (v. 10)—

“When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah, the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.”

These are his enemies right to the end, the saddest part being that they had powerful allies within the camp of Israel, who worked secretly against Nehemiah. When, in the last chapter, he returns to the land after being away for a while, he finds that the High Priest had provided a chamber for his archenemy Tobiah in the very court of the Temple. And he found that the High Priest's grandson had become son-in-law to Sanballat, the other principal adversary of God's people.

This is the sad note on which the book closes. We are reminded of the closing days of the life of Paul—

“At my last answer, no man stood with me.”

“All they which are in Asia be turned away from me.”

But they were in good company. Jesus himself ended his days an apparent failure, with his enemies triumphant.

* * *

BUT WE ARE now at the beginning of Nehemiah's work. Sanballat was the leader of the Samaritans, the Gentiles who had been brought to Israel by the Assyrians to replace the removed Israelites; and Tobiah was the leader of the Ammonites, descendants of Lot, who had always been antagonistic to Israel.

Nehemiah's first action was to secretly survey the ruins of the walls by night. He went out by the valley gate at the southwest corner of the city, eastward along the Valley of Hinnom, the south border of the city, then up the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the eastern border of the city.

Part way up he had to dismount and walk because of the condition of the ruins. *There was no pathway to the city of God.* This latter part would take him by the location of Gethsemane. His whole trip would be similar to that taken by Jesus and the disciples the night he was betrayed. He then retraced his steps and reentered the city.

What was his purpose in the secret night-time tour halfway around the city walls, through the Valley of Gehenna and the Valley of Judgment? As far as any *practical* purpose, surely he would have been able to see the condition of the city from within by clear daylight in the three days he had already been there.

It would seem rather that this trip was to view the sad ruins of the holy city in the quietness of communion with God, meditating on her position in the eternal purpose, and preparing his heart for the tasks and problems ahead.

He had left the capital city of the Kingdom of Men in proud and glittering prosperity and activity. He now stood in the quiet of the night, viewing the desolate ruins of the capital city of the Kingdom of God, which it was his task to rebuild and revitalize. Daniel had said—

*“The wall **shall** be built again, even in troublous times.”*

So far he had said nothing of his mission. But now he has prepared himself, he announces the purpose for which he has come—

“Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem!”

He tells them how God has prospered his plans, and now the king had given him authority for the necessary work and materials.

“And they said, LET US RISE UP AND BUILD!”

Let us each be deeply impressed with *the difference that one courageous, cheerful, devoted man can make*—between success and failure, despair and hope.

But Sanballat and Tobiah, with Gesham the Arabian, laughed them to scorn. (To be continued Lord willing next month) *Bro. G.V. Growcott*

Matthew 5

Please turn with me to Matthew the 5th Chapter. If you will hold this Chapter, we will be using verses from it throughout our exhortation. One reason we ask you to open and read through with us is that we know that we learn by hearing, seeing verses and reading along and that helps us to learn and to remember.

This exhortation being the last formal words of the meeting, we would like to leave with a review of some very special words. They are the words of our Lord Jesus and they were spoken from a mountain and the event is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

Within Chapters 5, 6 and 7 of Matthew, there are 40 commands and we will try to cover only Chapter 5 and a portion of those commands. Those 40 commands are the very heart and the very core of the Christian faith, Christian faith in the truest sense. If we could only take these several verses by the very strings of our heart and hold them close we would do so much better. And then take them and use them as a guide for life. If we cannot do that, we will have no place in God’s Kingdom.

The last few verses of Matthew Chapter 4 set the stage. Multitudes are following Jesus and he has been healing the sick, he has been preaching the Gospel. He had been curing all sorts of diseases throughout the land. People have come from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem and beyond Jordan to listen to him. And we are told that in seeing such a multitude he goes up on the side of the mountain and when he sat, his disciples come by his feet where they are sat, and the ones that are more sceptical are scattered farther out, but they are set to listen to the Lord speak. His first words are recorded in

Matthew 5:3, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit*”. The word poor in the Greek is *ptochos* and it means destitute, in poverty or a beggar. Spirit is *pneuma* in the Greek and means disposition in this particular case. It is those of lowest disposition. And Jesus means this, that those who are convinced of their own sinfulness in God’s sight. So, they are humble and see themselves as man really is, as dust, as vapor, as grass, as perishing and in need of God. They are not those who are wise in their own eyes and holy in their own sight. They are those that are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. Conditions of that day were truly poor. There were those slaves that were there. You can imagine what the conditions of slaves’ lives would be like; there was poverty everywhere, as we all live as kings today as compared to them. They were ruled by Rome. They understood what the poor in spirit really were.

Verse 4, “*Blessed are they that mourn.*” Jesus did not have reference to anyone that mourned, nor for just anything or any cause, but for those that have empathy, that have sadness, that have compassion for the right cause. It was a blessing for those that have deep feelings for this sad world. It is for those that grieve for their own short comings. In Ecclesiastes, the 7th Chapter in the 2nd verse, it says it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting for that is the end of all man and the living will lay it to their heart. We see Jesus, our supreme example, the one that we are to pattern our life after, expressing his true and sincere emotional feelings in John the 11th Chapter. It concerns Lazarus and his sisters and his loved ones and we are told that when Mary sees Jesus that she comes to him and falls at his feet and says, Lord, if thou had been here my brother would not have died. And when Jesus sees her weeping and all those about her weeping, we are told, he groans in the spirit and he was troubled and he began to well up inside, and each one of us know what that is like, just before you begin to cry. Well, he groaned in the spirit and asked to see Lazarus. And then we are told that Jesus wept—openly wept. His Lord was compassionate and he mourned that his heart was broken for others because of their sadness.

Verse 5: “*Blessed are the meek.* The meek are strong. They are self controlled ones. They are content to wait for the good things to come. They can bear injuries without resentment and they have a great power to influence good on all. And with the great strength they are yielding, they are gentle, they are kind and they are calmly patient. They are not bossy or pushy or aggressive. The meek have learned to control the flesh and we know what the flesh is. The meek are strong and they have learned to control the flesh.

Verse 6: “*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness*”. Jesus speaks of the very basics of life here, food and water. He is saying, blessed is he whose whole heart’s desire is not for personal gain or advantage or pleasure, but for righteousness, for holiness and for Godliness in themselves and throughout the earth. It is the desire to conform to the mind of God. This is in Psalm 17:14-15 where it says “From men which are thy hand O Lord, from men of the world which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children and leave the rest of their substance to their babes. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.” Our cravings, our desires are for the things of God.

Verse 7: “*Blessed are the merciful.*” That is those who are full of compassion toward others. They pity all who are suffering from sin and sorrow. They desire to lessen the burdens and the sufferings. They are full of good works and always try to do good. There is an article in the Berean, February 1982 Berean, which I have taken very much of my information from for this exhortation, and I would like to read a paragraph from that that fits this very well.

It says, “An adamant forceful stand for righteousness is essential, but equally so, is mercy and compassion and patience and understanding. We are fighting sin the common enemy. We are not fighting people. People, we are trying to win. Let me say that again, we are fighting sin, the common enemy, we are not fighting people. People, we are trying to win and to save. Because we tend to naturally be very critical of the errors of others and be compassionate to our own. So let us reverse the process. It is much more healthy and productive and scriptural.”

Verse 8: “*Blessed are the pure in heart.*” We are not only to aim at the things that are visible that we do and say, but the inward man, inward holiness. There is certainly more than the external show of our religion, knowledge, etc. We can pull the wool over the eyes of our brothers and sisters, but we cannot pull the wool over God’s eyes. We must, we have absolutely no choice but to strive to keep our hearts and our conscience void of offences. It emphasizes purity, cleanliness of heart in deed, word and thought. The natural man is full of filth and corruption and offences, and if we are not careful that same attitude and thought and animal desire can slowly and successfully fill our hearts without us realizing what is happening. And we can say and do such hurtful things and never realize what we have said. It is so easy to hurt others. Sometimes far more damage is done than we ever realize.

I’ve always been interested in chickens. If you ever have any desire to raise any, there is one thing to remember. There is a driving instinct

in them and it is this: If one, whether it is one day old or 3 years old, gets sick or has a little bloody scratch or he is hurt, all the rest begin to pick at him and it's not long until it is dead. They have no feeling, no compassion whatsoever of each other. We, of all creatures must have a heart, the heart is the man and man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh upon the heart. He that is spiritually minded will be closest to God. We better examine our heart.

Verse 9: *"Blessed are the peace makers."* Here Jesus speaks of those who use all their influence to promote peace and charity in private, in public, at home, in the ecclesia, the brotherhood and if necessary abroad. They promote harmony and reconciliation by the removal of barriers and misunderstandings. They are always trying to keep problems from happening. These attributes are developed through the use of God's word, through prayer, just as all the rest of our works are. The peace makers strive to persuade men to love one another, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

At this point in our exhortation, we have covered 7 attributes or 7 commands that can be a blessing. If we should ask ourselves this morning, how would we rate ourselves realistically and honestly in relation to those 7 blessings, how would you rate yourself? Are one or two of them left out? I want you to think about that for a moment because I'm going to read through these 7 real fast and you think about yourself as we do.

Number 1, was poor in spirit. That particular disposition, to have a low disposition, do you have that?

Number 2: Do you mourn for those that are in sorrow?

Three: Are we meek? The meek are strong, but they are self controlled and they are patient.

Number 4: Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness?

Number 5: Are we merciful? They desire to lessen the burdens of others.

Number 6: Do you have a pure heart? These are void of offenses.

Number 7: Peacemakers: They promote peace.

How many us of reflect that image, that we have all seven. The image is one that is kind and loving and thoughtful. Are you kind and loving and thoughtful and do all these things?

We here are family and I personally feel that if I had a problem, if I had a very difficult situation, if I were in some trouble, I could call upon any one of you, whether you be brother or sister. I could call upon you for help. We know each other very well and there is that love that is between each one of us, there is a bond and with that relationship I

can say some things. There has been numerous occasions in the past that I personally observed and I observed in the past harshness directed at other brothers and sisters. I have seen resentment. I personally have seen criticism, impatience, short temperedness, misunderstandings because they should have, or they could have been avoided. I have seen anger in the past. I have been at some business meetings in the past before we got the rules and things settled and they weren't being settled here at that 8 O'clock meeting in the morning. We don't have the problems that we used to, but I have seen on these grounds anger. I have been ashamed at some of those business meetings. There was a display of real anger. In keeping with that thought, we would like to skip a few verses in this Chapter 5 and skip down to verse 24. Then we will come back to that verse 10 where we left off in the same Chapter. Verse 24 deals with that same thing that we are talking about.

“Ye have heard that it was said of old time Thou shalt not kill and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement, but I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgement.” Let's stop there for a moment. Without a cause, is not in the Revised Version, it is not in the Diaglott, it is not in the NIV. It is not in any of the older manuscripts. We could read that verse: “I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement. Whosoever shall say unto his brother Raca shall be in danger of the council, but whosoever shall say, Thou Fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. Therefore if I bring my gift to the altar and there remember that my brother has anything against me, than I should leave my gift before the altar and go my way. First I must be reconciled to my brother, and then come and offer my gift.” If you are aware that your brethren have anything against you, if there is some problem or he has been upset, or that you are upset with each other, Jesus' command is that you must be reconciled. Go immediately, he said, go immediately and be reconciled with thy brother. It does not matter whose fault it is, that is not important. Seek reconciliation and we are not to do it half-heartedly, but continue and continue with a positive attitude, never giving up, to be reconciled with thy brother. Anger is a very dangerous thing. And emotions are contagious. In school if somebody comes in angry, everybody seems to get mad, if somebody comes in laughing everybody starts laughing. It is the strangest thing, but emotions are contagious.

I John 3:14-16: *“We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.”* So you hate your brother: Is there anyone here that hates his brother? Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life

abiding in him. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

We mentioned disposition a little while ago, poor disposition, Jesus speaks of disposition in Matthew the 18th Chapter. He also goes into the same verses about hurting our brethren. Verse 1: *“At the same time came the Disciples to Jesus saying, Who will be the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him and setting him in the midst of them, said to them, except you be converted and become as a little child ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.”*

Verse 6, *“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he would drown in the depth of the sea.”*

I think we had better think before we speak, as brothers and sisters. Offending and hurting and discouraging a brother is a dangerous thing. It is time that brothers and sisters say, within each ecclesia enough is enough. No more offending in this ecclesia, no more hurting, no more trying to discourage. Let's regroup, let's support and strengthen and encourage and if you have a problem go to them and strengthen them as we are supposed to. If there is a need to correct somebody, do so with love, and because you love them.

Now back to verses 10-12 where it says rejoice and be glad when we suffer for righteousness sake, for great is your reward in heaven. If an individual keeps those 7 blessings that we have discussed, there will be persecutions, we will be laughed at, mocked at, despised and treated unfairly, because being a follower of Christ is not popular. Persecutions will come from all directions and it will come from the brotherhood also. These principles are entirely contrary to the principles of the world and of the flesh. What Jesus praises, the world and the flesh despises. Pride, thoughtlessness, selfishness and unlovingness are characteristics of the world. Suffering is not to be rejoiced in for its own sake or from self pity, but it is to be looked on intelligently and helpfully as a necessary means for our spiritual growth. We can look at things and see that this is happening for our spiritual growth. Through trouble and tribulations we grow closer to God.

Verse 18: *“Ye are the salt of the earth.”* I don't suppose anything tastes like salt. It has a peculiar taste all of its own. When mixed with other substances it preserves them from corruption. It gives a little of its taste to everything that it touches. Whatever it is mixed with it leaves a little of itself. It is useful as long as it is still salty, and so it is with the

brethren of Christ. Our responsibilities and all that we say and all that we do is to be pure and sound and full of dedication. The world is just the opposite, we are what keeps God from destroying all. We are striving and praying and trying to live a life of purity and godliness.

Verse 14 – 16: *“Ye are the light of the world”*—much like the salt, but a different aspect. Light in contrast to darkness is utterly distinct. Imagine a spark in a totally, totally dark room—a spark all can see. Of all things created, light is the most useful and it was the first thing called into being. God said, let there be light. Light creates it, light fertilizes it, guides and it cheers you up. Without light, what can exist? And what is the world without your light? Without our light? What a tremendous responsibility we have, brothers and sisters, Let your light shine.

Brothers and Sisters, we have received a few of these rules for our conduct towards each other. Rules of conduct toward each other. We should review them often and we do. It is our sincere hope that we are leaving these grounds spiritually uplifted and with definite plans to live closer to the body—with definite plans to live closer to our brethren, even though we don’t usually live that close to you. Plans to live closer with God. Plans to live closer to our brethren. —*Bro. Gary Smith*

Resurrectional Responsibility in the Old Testament

Since the inception of the Christadelphian community, the vast majority of brethren and sisters have both believed and promulgated the doctrine of knowledge of the revealed will of Deity as being the basis for resurrectional responsibility. In an effort to sustain this claim, most of our expositors have typically drawn from New Testament teaching inasmuch as appropriate references seem to be in abundance. Accordingly, since the best Biblical support appears to reside mostly in the New, seldom do we find our writers citing the Old Testament. Such being the case, our purpose will be to determine if any information concerning responsibility to a resurrection at the last day may be found therein.

Resurrection: Means to an end

The hope set forth through the Abrahamic covenant is life eternal in Yahweh's restored kingdom on earth. Before any may inherit this great and precious reward, all of the responsible, both living and dead, must face the Lord's tribunal at his appearing and kingdom. For the latter, the resurrection provides a means to this end. [1] Together with the living, they await the Lord's judgment. Pronouncements are issued. Some

stand approved. Others do not. This is truly a time of great joy for the accepted. But it is not so for the rejected.

Upon what particular basis is responsibility to resurrection reckoned? And what of judgment? Upon what ground does an individual stand before the great tribunal? Before we see how Old Testament instruction addresses these intriguing questions, a brief overview of how the doctrine of the resurrection is presented would be beneficial.

Resurrection inferred

A careful study of the Law and the Prophets reveals that the principle of resurrection is not so clearly and fully treated in the Old Testament as it is in the New. Moreover, where the concept is taught, we find no specific mention of “resurrection.” Instead, we learn that the doctrine itself is shown mostly in an indirect manner through varying degrees of inference or implication. [2] In order for the Bible student to draw these various and sundry inferences, differing measures of deductive reasoning must be employed.

One such case where the reader encounters Biblical inference is in Exodus 3:6. Here the allusion to resurrection is so slight that a rather large measure of deduction is required in order to grasp the concept. Moses writes: *“Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father. The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.”*

To what extent Moses and his contemporaries understood resurrection from this declaration may be conjectural. However, centuries later one of their number comes upon the scene who experiences no difficulty whatsoever in comprehending its overall import. Speaking through inspiration, our Lord Jesus Christ uncovers a connotation from the verse which on the surface seems virtually indiscernible. He states: *“Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him”* (Luke 20:37-38).

Through this amazing discourse we learn how a proper understanding may be reached by way of some rather complex thinking. How exactly does Moses show resurrection at the bush? At the time he receives the revelation, the patriarchs are deceased. Yet God refers to His lordship over them in the present tense: *“I am the God of thy father...”* One may, therefore, reason that if the heavenly Father is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then they are not really dead. At least not eternally. They still live unto Him, so one day they must rise from the dead. This is weighty deduction indeed. Few

Biblical scholars could arrive at such a conclusion by reasoning solely from the evidence in the Mosaic account. In the absence of either Spirit guidance or without the Master's teaching to point the way, most would probably miss it altogether.

Not all cases of inference to the resurrection are as slight as the one set forth in the book of Exodus. In a major end-time prophecy Daniel proclaims: *“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever”* (12:2-3).

This is, perhaps, the premier resurrection prophecy of the Old Testament. Yet, the term itself appears nowhere in the passage. Taking a cursory view, some could understand the verses to mean that those who sleep shall awake to receive either blessing or cursing all the days of their lives.

Impossible? Think again.

Apparently many Jews of Jesus' day did not see resurrection in the passage at all. Mark writes: *“Then come unto him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection...”* (12:18; cf. Acts 23:1-8). And what of modern Jewry? The same erroneous belief is extant among them as well. Then there are the legions of modern-day church people who, for many and diverse reasons, sidestep belief in the resurrection altogether. What they might say about the passage is anyone's guess.

Achieving a correct understanding of Daniel's prophecy is thus left to the honest Bible student. Such an one will probe deeper and reach a sound determination through logical deduction. If “sleep” relates metaphorically to the death-state, and if “in the dust of the earth” has a representational correspondence to the grave, and if “everlasting” truly means eternal, then by mention of “awake” the prophet must be referring to a rising of dead ones from the grave to live again.

Right? Well, perhaps.

It must be recognized that “sleep” can refer to either death or slumber (Psa. 13:3; cf. Gen 2:21). The “dust of the earth” could have reference to the death-state (Gen 3:19). But, then, it may not (vs.14). Moreover, at times, there are limits to “everlasting” (Ex. 21:6; Deut. 15:17). How, therefore, is the disciple to really know if his conclusion is accurate? By consulting the whole counsel of Deity. The prophecy will be conclusively shown to teach resurrection when all of the evidence — both implied and expressed — is brought to bear. Among this evidence is an illuminating account from the book of Job. During a particularly trying moment, Job gives profound expression to his

confidence. He exclaims: “*Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me*” (19:23-27).

Here, Job gives utterance to a belief that life exists for him beyond the grave, yet the means whereby this is to be attained is not directly stated. It is only inferred. Consequently, to reach a proper understanding, the disciple must use deduction. If Job is, in his flesh, to “*see God*” after “*skin worms destroy this body,*” and if the locale of this event is to be “*upon the earth,*” then he must be restored to life through a resurrection from the grave in “*the latter day.*”

There are similar cases of implied resurrection throughout the Old Testament, too numerous to cover at this writing. We commend the study of these to our brethren and sisters. [3]

Basis of responsibility to resurrection

The doctrine of resurrection being thus revealed, it should come as no surprise that secondary detail of the subject is dealt with after a similar fashion. This becomes evident when at least two Old Testament passages are examined.

Early Christadelphian authors make only occasional reference to the Old Testament doctrine of responsibility. One such writer is brother Thomas who, in presenting an outline of Christadelphian beliefs, cites Psalms 49, in support of knowledge as being the basis for responsibility. He states: “Having, then, had perfect understanding of all things from the very first most surely believed and taught by their recognized scribes and literature, I will, with your permission, proceed as briefly as possible to relieve your correspondent of his anxiety...14. - They teach that it is knowledge that makes responsible; so the 'man that is in honour and understandeth not, is as the beasts that perish' “ (vss. 12, 20). [4]

Having so written, brother Thomas leaves the reader to draw the inference. In the pamphlet, *The Resurrection to Condemnation*, brother Roberts takes a try at it. Citing both Psalms 49 and Proverbs 21:16, he writes: “...the lack of understanding reduces a man to the level of a beast, and therefore makes him non-responsible.” [5]

Brother Roberts may have captured the essence of brother Thomas' remarks. For if it is true that “*man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish,*” then it must also be true that man that is in honour and *does* understand, *is not* like the beasts that perish.

There is no mention of covenant-making by the Psalmist. He does not say that man who is in honour and is not in the covenant, is like the beasts that perish. Instead, the inference shown in the verse relates strictly to how understanding makes man unlike the beasts.

In order to realize the implication let us first contemplate what men who “*understandeth not,*” and the “*beasts that perish*” have in common. Both go through their lives never comprehending the light of God's commands and the serious responsibility which these carry. In the case of men, helpless ignorance begotten by unfortunate circumstances of life precludes enlightenment. Concerning animals, the ability to fathom Divine precepts, or to reason at all, is not in their makeup. As a result, both ignorant men and beasts come to the same end. They all “*sleep a perpetual sleep*” from which they never awake. (cf. Jer. 51:37-57; Isa. 26:13-14).

This is not the situation with men who understand. The Psalmist implies that knowledge itself makes them unlike the beasts. Covenant relationship never enters into the discourse. Hearing and comprehending God's commands they become responsible, and thus may gain access to the hope of salvation. The decision is theirs as to whether or not to render obedience by putting on the saving covenant name. Nevertheless, they all rise on the great day of reckoning; for, as Paul writes: “*...it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment*” (Heb. 9:27).

We may, therefore, conclude that Psalm 49:20 contains the inference that a correct knowledge of God's commands creates responsibility on the part of men. Conversely, verse 19 teaches that all who remain ignorant of such shall never again see the light. What manner of light? Gesenius renders the primary meaning of the Hebrew as “*the light of day.*” Thus, all of the unenlightened go to their graves never to rise at the last day. [6]

Turning our attention to Proverbs 21:16, we find that the writings of Solomon set forth an even stronger case for knowledge being the basis for responsibility to resurrection. He writes: “*The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead.*”

Those of whom the king writes are destined for the grave. There they are to remain forever due to a total lack of understanding. But there is more to the verse than would at first appear. For if it is true that the man who “wandereth out of the way of understanding” remains “in the congregation of the dead,” then it is also true that the man who *does not* wander out of the way of understanding *shall not* remain in the congregation of the dead. There is no reference to covenant-making

here either. The strong inference is that a knowledge of God's Word will interrupt a person's sleep in the dust of the earth.

Under what conditions, therefore, are men not subject to a resurrection? According to the aforementioned Biblical texts, only helpless ignorance of the revealed will of God can preclude their responsibility to resurrection at the last day.

Ground for judgment

When considering all of the information provided in both the Old Testament and the New, we must conclude that knowledge of God's Truth, or enlightenment, creates resurrectional responsibility. [7] The extent of light revealed to men then becomes a law to them and forms the ground for judgment that follows. This is the plain implication of Psalms 50:4-5, *“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.”*

Whereas the subjects of this Psalm are the saints and not others of the enlightened class, a conclusion can be drawn which applies to each. Namely, that it is the relationship of an individual to the laws of Deity that form the basis for future judgment. In the passage, the Psalmist is referring to the covenant within the specific context of judgment. Therefore, the primary implication is that a gathering of saints is required for the express purpose of a judgment in accordance with the covenant laws under which they have been placed. Later in the Record, the Apostle Paul makes precisely this determination as a principle of doctrine. He writes: *“And as many as have sinned under law, will be judged by law...in a day when according to my glad tidings, God will judge the hidden things of men, through Christ Jesus.”* [8]

Because the Psalmist does not mention those of the enlightened class who are *not* saints, we should not assume that they are excluded from any law whatsoever and, consequently, a judgment. Such an opinion would be very shortsighted indeed. For example: On this method of interpretation, 1 Corinthians 15 could be used to disprove the judgment seat itself, as well as the resurrection and judgment of the rejected, because the chapter does not specify either. As with all Biblical topics, a comprehensive understanding cannot be achieved unless the elliptical style of the Scriptures is taken into account and the entire picture comes into view.

If knowledge of the revealed will of God is the basis for responsibility to resurrection, and His law the ground for judgment, then all who are so enlightened shall be raised from the dead and then judged by law — either covenant law or non-covenant law. Whichever law is applicable.

Examples of covenant law abound throughout the Testimony. The Patriarchal, Mosaic and Christian eras reveal very specific instances. [9] But what of *non-covenant law*? The answer to this important question may be supplied by considering a series of passages commencing with Deuteronomy 18:18-19. Moses writes: *“I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”*

The prophet like unto Moses is our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22-24). The message which he proclaims is delivered to the Jews. Although God's people are already under law, Jesus' words create further enlightenment, thus placing all who hear under a particular law which makes them doubly accountable at the judgment. Speaking of his first advent mission, he states: *“And this is the condemnation (judgment), that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil...I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.”*

Jesus' role at his first appearing is to bring enlightenment, not judgment. This is a time for saving men. But verily the day for judgment would come. Prophesying of his second advent, Jesus continues: *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”* (John 3:19; 12:46-48; cf. 15:22-24). Here Jesus' warning is clear. If during the time of his earthly ministry any of the Jews reject the light of his instruction, God shall *“require it”* through a judgment *“in the last day.”*

Even though Jesus' discourse is delivered to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, there is further application (Matt. 10:6). The Scriptures go on to reveal how these principles of light and judgment eventually become binding on non-covenanted Gentiles who hear his words, both through those who carry on the work of Gospel promulgation and the written Word itself. Luke writes: *“Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth”* (Acts 13:46-47). [10]

Here we discover a significant change in direction. Formerly, the light of truth and the special responsibility which it carries is aimed toward the Jews. But with their rejection of the *true light* which came down from heaven, Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles. Now the light has come unto them, and along with it, accountability to judgment. Paul declares: “*And the times of this (Gentile) ignorance God winked at; but now **commandeth** all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*” (Acts 17:30-31).

A command from the Creator places man under a law; not the full extent of covenant law, but a law nonetheless (e.g., Gen. 2:16-17). When Gentiles comprehend the true ramifications of such a command, they are placed under a law which then becomes the basis for their future judgment. The decision is theirs as to whether or not they wish to repent and put on the saving covenant name. Only by entry into the everlasting covenant is there hope of eternal life. But the Lord is not mocked, and refusal to obey His directive does not go unpunished. If any reject the light of God's command, He surely “requires it” of them also, by a judgment at the last day.

These constitute a portion of the “many” who sleep in the dust of the earth as spoken of by the Prophet Daniel. Together with *the enlightened covenanted*, they are raised from the dead as a means to judgment at the time of the end (Dan. 7:9-10; 12:1-3). At that point, the covenanted righteous are judged worthy of eternal life. All others — both unrighteous saints and enlightened rejecters of the Word — perish in shame and everlasting contempt because of their disobedience to God's commands.

A First Principle of the Doctrine of the Christ

As is the case from the earliest years of the Christadelphian community, so it is today. Practically all of our publications proclaim that knowledge is the basis of resurrectional responsibility. [11] Most refer to this doctrine as a first principle of the Gospel. Among these are a few pioneer works.

During 1866, the Christadelphian Association of Detroit issued such a treatise by brother John Thomas. It is entitled, *How to Search the Scriptures for Eternal Life*. [12] This effort also features an addenda by brother David Brown which enumerates *first principles of doctrine*. Although the work is not published by Dr. Thomas, he neither demurs from it nor disapproves of its distribution on both sides of the Atlantic

— ample evidence that its teachings are considered acceptable to him as well as the brotherhood at large.

The addenda to the book first examines the importance of comprehending *first principles*. Under the heading, “The Principles of Doctrine,” the writer states: “...the following *definitions of the faith that has come*, as the FIRST PRINCIPLES *of the doctrine of the Christ...*the exact knowledge of them, according to the Scriptures, with the heart and the understanding also, is a *prerequisite for the obedience of a saving faith* — ‘the washing of water by the word,’ to obtain the *one baptism*, without which no one can stand in God’s salvation, or become a partaker with all them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promise.”

In the list of first principles which follows, the fifth deals with responsibility. It reads: “That the RESURRECTION has effect only in regard to those individuals of the human race who have been brought into such connection with revealed truth, that they incur *the responsibility of its rejection or its unworthy profession*, and that the judgment upon them has been committed to the Son, as the Father’s representative in the work of Adamic regeneration, and the *residue of the dead* remain in the dust to rise up no more.”

Here the basis of resurrectional responsibility is plainly stated. Those who lay themselves open to the responsibility of rejecting the Truth can only be of the enlightened non-covenanted group. And those who run the chance of an unworthy profession are without a doubt of the enlightened covenanted group.

The sixth first principle reveals the destiny of the resurrected. It declares: “That the resurrected spring to light, flesh and blood, or mortal men and women, to report their former selves to the Judge, the Lord Jesus Christ, at his appearing and kingdom; and such of them as shall be counted the righteous Seed, will be raised to a spiritual nature by a spirit-birth in the fullness of the Christhead, that they may inherit the kingdom; and the others, unworthy of eternal life, will be thrust out of the kingdom to suffer their many or few stripes, and then to utterly perish in their own corruption.”

When thoughtful minds ponder the foregoing testimony, it should become evident that knowledge as the basis for responsibility to resurrection is indeed considered to be a first principle doctrine by our founding brethren. [13] This is no wonder. Their view is apostolically supported. In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul lists the doctrine of the resurrection among the first principles of the Hebrew believers (5:12-6:2). Since he does not isolate any particular aspect of the subject for

commentary, we must understand him to mean the doctrine as Biblically defined and in its entirety.

Summation

We now see why our early Christadelphian brethren are resolved in their belief in the principle of man's responsibility to God. There is an abundance of Scriptural evidence to support it. Although there are during those times some who hold doubts, as a practice these brethren are retained in fellowship so long as they “recognize that knowledge is the ground of responsibility, though they may not be clear as to how the principle will work out in an age of darkness like our own.” [14] Great tolerance is also allowed for the measure of punishment to be effected. Brother Thomas, while holding to the responsibility doctrine, feels that the degree of punishment meted out to enlightened rebels should not be made a ground of disfellowship. [15] This is generally considered to be the position of the worldwide community until a prominent English brother changes his belief and thrusts it upon an already controversy-weary brotherhood. [16] The result is an ecclesial division which endures even unto the present.

Today it is thought that some brethren and sisters may still hold doubts. This is understandable. The subject is more complex than many of us care to admit. It is, therefore, our earnest prayer that these remarks go forth to assist any who may wish to gain a greater appreciation of this Biblical doctrine which, along with many others, help found the Christadelphian ecclesias in these latter days.

—Bro. Bob Widding

1. Although the term “resurrection” is sometimes used to denote the entire process of being raised from the dead through immortalization (*exanastasis*; e.g., Phil. 3:10-12; cf. Matt. 22:30; Rom. 6:5; cf. Acts 26:23), its basic usage is to rise up (*anastasis*) preparatory to judgment (Acts 24:15; John 5:28-29; 11:23-26; cf. 2 Tim. 4:1). In Acts 23:6, Paul indicates a distinction between “the hope” and “the resurrection” (see Diaglott; KJV; NKJV; RV; RSV; ASV; NASV; Young's; Webster's).

2. Inference is present when a text requires the reader to form a conclusion based upon reasoning from one statement or judgment considered or proved as true, to another whose truth is believed to follow from that of the former. Interestingly, the original Advocate position is similar. Thomas Williams writes: “...resurrection is not so clearly and fully set forth in plain language in the Old Testament as it is in the New...With a few clear exceptions, resurrection in the Old Testament is shown by types and implication” (*The World's Redemption*, p. 299). Strangely, though, he never applies this same principle of revelation to achieve an understanding of Old Testament verses concerning the basis for responsibility (e.g., Psa. 49:12, 19, 20; Prov. 21:16).

3. Among other examples of implied resurrection are: Gen. 13:15; 21:12; 2 Sam. 7:16; Psa. 17:15; and Hos. 13:14. Isa. 26:19 (LXX) may be the rare exception. The language is both concise and virtually devoid of metaphor.

4. *The Christadelphian* (Jan. 1870) p. 3. In the Scripture, understanding equates to knowledge (Prov. 9:10). Brother Thomas does not in this instance address the level of knowledge required in order to make one responsible. Based upon the general principle in Luke 12:48, this would be determined by Deity and should vary according to an individual's capability.

5. *The Resurrection to Condemnation* (1894). Section 17.

6. *Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Baker, 1984) p. 23, no. 216. See also usage in Job 31:26; 37:21. The only exception to the general principle stated in

the paragraph is the rare instance of restoration to life in order to demonstrate the power of God (e.g., 1 Ki. 17:21-24).

7. Since our subject concerns Old Testament exposition, the New is only lightly touched upon. For further study we recommend, *Knowledge is the Basis of Resurrectional Responsibility*, by brother G.V. Growcott. This work establishes the principle of amenability to give account in Genesis and carries it forward with added emphasis on New Testament teaching. Available from the author.

8. Both definite articles in Rom. 2:12 should appear as italicized interpolation in the KJV. According to Dr. Griesbach's recension of MS no. 1209, these form no part of inspiration (see Diaglott). Paul's teaching of law as a basis for future judgment does not conflict with Jesus' discourse in John 3:19, when it is realized that the extent to which the light has been revealed to an individual is what forms the basis for the law by which he is judged. Whereas the enlightened covenanted are judged in accordance with the body of covenant law, the enlightened non-covenanted are judged by a more limited standard (Luke 12:48; cf. Acts 17:30-31).

9. Examples of covenant law: Ex. 24; cf. 2 Cor. 3:7; Gen. 26:5; Rom. 8:1-2.

10. We would suggest that Deut. 18:18-19 foresees limited Gentile inclusion at the judgment in much the same way as Gen. 12 foresees their incorporation into the hope of the blessings contained under the terms of the Abrahamic covenant (cf. Acts 17:30-31; Gal. 3:8). In neither instance are the Gentiles specifically mentioned, yet New Testament instruction clearly teaches their participation in both is foreknown of Deity. Although there is rare exception, Gentile responsibility to the light of God's Truth appears to be operational primarily in the New Testament era (e.g., Jonah 3).

11. In *The Ambassador* for 1868, p 27, under the heading, "The Following Principles of the Patience and Faith of the Saints," brother Thomas writes: "That the just and the unjust, or all that have been enlightened, must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, when everyone shall give account of himself; and receive through the body according to what he hath done, whether good or bad (Rom. 14:10, 12; 2 Cor. 5:10)." In an unpublished letter dated April 24, 1869, he also writes: "In answer to yours, it is not necessary to come under the bond of the covenant in order to a resurrection..." Therefore, according to brother Thomas' understanding of Scripture, it is enlightenment that brings one forth in order to give account at the judgment. The few instances in the Doctor's writings where he seems to link covenant-making with the *anastasis* of the dead, he is actually teaching the *exanastasis* which is inextricably connected to the covenant. This becomes clear when these are carefully studied both within the immediate context of the passage and against the backdrop of his complete writings on the subject. One example is his explanation of Zech. 9:11 where he teaches that Christ is the "covenant of the people...our life...the covenant...the blood of thy covenant," not that the covenant itself brings the anastasis of the dead. It is Christ, who, as the perfect covenant sacrifice, has the power to raise the dead and grant the covenant blessing: Eternal life. This is the true deliverance out of "the pit wherein is no water," not the anastasis, which is only a means to that end. The author will gladly correspond with readers who wish further clarification on similar instances in the Doctor's writings.

12. With regard to this work, bro. Roberts publishes the following in *The Ambassador* of August 1866, "The cooperation of the brethren is earnestly requested in the circulation of this excellent pamphlet, which is well got up in every respect." In its original form of some 60 pages, this work of brother Thomas has been out of print for over 130 years and is quite scarce. Bro. Brown, writer of the addenda and footnotes, is also the author of a few Christadelphian hymns still in use.

13. In the original Birmingham Statement of Faith issued in 1873 and reprinted in 1877, clause 15D refers to the gathering of saints for judgment as a matter of fellowship and lists the following Scriptures in support: 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rom. 2:5-6, 16; 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:5; Rev. 11:18. However, it is clause 31 that refers to the basis for resurrection: "...the resurrection being restricted to those who are responsible to the divine law." The upholding verses listed are: Job 3:13-32; 10:18, 19; 14:10-12; Isa. 26:13-14; Jer. 51:39, 57; Prov. 21:16; Rom. 2:12; Psa. 49:6-30; John 3:19; 12:48; 15:22-24. Virtually all of these passages either imply or directly teach that knowledge of the revealed will of God is the basis for responsibility. Neither covenant-making nor baptism is specifically mentioned.

14. *The Christadelphian* (1898) p 357.

15. *The Christadelphian* (1896) p 475. As suggested through the recollections of bro. Roberts.

16. This brother is J.J. Andrew who draws up the North London Statement of Faith in 1887 that states as a First Principle: "That Resurrection affects those only who are responsible to God by a knowledge of His revealed will..." In subsequent years he changes his belief and aggressively works to undermine this long-standing, Biblically based, Christadelphian doctrine.

Signs of the Times

“The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.” Joel 2:31-32

“A top Iranian Guards commander has begged Israel to stage and attack, so Iran will be justified to throw the “enemy” into the “trash can of history.” Iran has continually mocked Israel for allegedly bluffing with threats to attack Iran in order to delay or stop the Islamic Republic from manufacturing a nuclear weapon. President Shimon Peres, who almost always appeals to dialog and not weapons, said earlier this month that an attack on Iran was becoming “increasing more likely.” While France has warned Israel not to exercise the “military option,” an increasing number of American officials are reaching the conclusions that it is too late for tougher economic sanctions to stop Iran’s nuclear program.” (*Arutz Sheva 21/11*)

Not surprisingly Russia is becoming increasingly vocal about support of Iran. “Vladimir Putin condemned the “arrogant” West yesterday as Russia hardened its opposition to an attack on Iran to stop it building a nuclear bomb. Iran has observed status at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation in St Petersburg, but is seeking membership of this organisation which joins Russia, China and four Soviet states in Central Asia. Lavrov, the Russian Foreign minister, warned that a military strike would be “a very serious mistake fraught with unpredictable consequences.” (*Times 8/11*) We can see the alliance of the Gogian host starting to form and flex its muscle. We anxiously wait for the rest of the Beast nations of Europe to join the alliance.

Israeli National News has also reported on how the up rise of China has triggered the formation of an alliance system against her. “Indian defense minister A. K. Antony has visited Tokyo to discuss maritime security issues with Japanese Defence Minister Y. Ichikawa. Also involved in the talks was R. K. Dhowan from the Indian Navy. Ichikawa will make a return visit to India next year for a bilateral defence dialog.

The coalition also includes the United States, and by the end of the year Japan, the United States and India will hold trilateral talks. According to State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland, the three countries share common interests and in the trilateral forum they could “discuss a number of issues that we can work on together.” Another potential partner in the coalition is Australia. Three think tanks, the Australian Lowy Institute, India’s Observer Research Foundation and the US Heritage Foundation issued a joint paper calling

for a US-Australia-India dialogue and increased coordination in economic, political and security issues. The paper advocated closer strategic collaboration that could advance to surveillance, maritime expeditionary operations, anti-submarine warfare and perhaps even integration of theatre missile defence.” How exciting to witness the ties being strengthened between the Tarshish nations. Surely we are living at the very end of Gentile times! *“Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat (means judgement of Yah): for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.”* (Joel 3)

—*The Contact Magazine*

Encouraging Words No. 28

I AM glad, dear sister, you find the books so helpful. Although cut off from the meetings you are evidently determined not to let slip the precious things of the kingdom. So your tiny ecclesia is about to dissolve. You will be sorry, I am sure, although you were so rarely able to attend. Some of the members will certainly benefit (ecclesially) by their removal, may it be so with all. They have set a faithful example in their weekly remembrance of Christ, under difficulties, and in their earnest endeavour to cry aloud to the stranger, albeit the stranger would not hear. Well, the world wants not the truth.

Our new hall is growing apace. I expect we shall have a lively time with the local clergy when it opens. Several of these gentlemen have been to see me lately. For nineteen years none of them came near. I think their present attentions are due to a marked change which has come over the congregations. There is now a lament concerning poor attendance and lack of interest. My first clerical visitor called to solicit my (!) co-operation in enkindling more spiritual life and enthusiasm among the people. I commenced straight away to enkindle a belief of the Abrahamic promises in *him*, an effort, however, which failed to evoke either his enthusiasm or appreciation. He departed with *Christendom Astray*.

The Rector came next—a man of refined, scholarly appearance. His attention was also invited to the promises. Questioned as to whether Abraham had ever inherited the land of Canaan, after replying first with a “No,” and then with a “Yes,” he was quite sure that Abraham did inherit it because “he and Lot grazed there, you know.” Our long conversation ended by the Rector saying that all his life he had deeply desired to go into the meaning of the expressions life and death, but so far he had not found time!

My last visitor, a pleasant-mannered, candid man, came prepared to level down all difficulties. In reply to a question concerning the promises he warned me not to place too much reliance upon the statements of the Old Testament. “As I told my class of boys

yesterday,” said he, “the Bible contains the Word of God, but it is conveyed in the words of man, and these contain historical errors, geological errors, and scientific errors.” A little close questioning elicited that “Moses had frightfully erroneous ideas of God. In fact, he had not half the knowledge of the subject that you and I have.” My visitor proceeded to say: “The New Testament is much better than the Old, but even here the statements of the Apostles cannot be received as of equal value with those of Christ. ‘Saint’ Paul’s views of marriage, for instance, cannot for one moment be held to-day. ‘Saint’ Paul had not the Holy Spirit—he only thought he had; and this applies to his writings throughout.” This is a mere fragment of what passed—it was unbelief, unbelief, unbelief, all the way through. And this from a representative clergyman, one famed for his success with boys!

Where will it end? We know where it began. The Scriptures were first made void by false doctrine. Then when it became apparent that clerical tenets were absent from the inspired page, it was a case of so much the worse for the Scriptures, and away they had to go.

“God shall send them strong delusion, that they shall believe a lie”—“Deceiving and being deceived.” Terrible words, but the reason is assigned, and let us not forget it: “Because they received not the truth in the love of it.”

We need to nurse our love for the truth, for it is possible for a heart of unbelief to enter into any one of us. When we scan the page of history and note that defection from the truth has been the rule, and steadfastness the exception, we are forced to the conclusion that unless we take strong measures to safeguard ourselves from so great a calamity, we must inevitably be borne along with the tide which is rolling so heavily on to destruction. *Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1911*

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 28

BAD doctrine and bad practice are great friends. They may each start upon their ungodly course alone, but they must before long be found in close companionship. The explanation for this is simple. Unscriptural ideas must produce unscriptural conduct. Unscriptural conduct must for sympathy and excuse lay hold of unscriptural ideas. Hence the invariable uniting in the Scriptures of the two things in the same class of individuals. Let the honest hearted watch the beginning of things: let them fear the slightest deviation from what the Word lays down: let them give error no quarter. The Bible term for error is blasphemy, and those who are guilty of it are addressed thus—“Awake to righteousness and sin not” (1 Cor. 15:34) Error grows apace—it will “eat as doth a canker.” Heed not the men who talk of harmless error. Such talk is the beguiling plausibility of the devil. There is one faith, and the Scriptures infallibly define it. Our duty is to keep it. This faith (by arrangement) is the power of God to prepare and build us up for the

Kingdom. To cut and trim the faith to meet the crotchets and perverse disputings of men, is to weaken and destroy this power. We live in a day when the tendency to do this is great. In this respect we live in “perilous times.” Evil men and seducers abound. If we would not be overcome by them, we must consent to wholesome words—the infallible words of the inspired messengers of God.

The unchecked indulgence in pleasure on the part of the world is exceedingly beguiling to the children of God. The former not only rank pleasure before God, but seek it in a thousand unlawful ways. Let us be careful lest we be led away by the error of the wicked. The popularity of a pastime will not excuse us for adopting it if God has forbidden it. Before we take part in an amusement or recreation of the world, let us assure ourselves that it receives God’s sanction. The love of God must rule. Paul refers to some, who, having the form of godliness, are “lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4). Let us be careful that the description applies not to us. God does not entirely withhold pleasure from us. He gives us much to fill our hearts with joy and gladness. But let us not trespass by putting pleasure first or by indulging in the forbidden. Let us never forget that this is not for us a day of pleasure, but of self-denial, hardship, tribulation. Our day of joy is ahead. Let us not attempt to get now what God has reserved for the future. If we do, one of two things must ensue—either Divine chastisement until we amend, or (if we are obstinate) free scope to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, and afterwards to witness in unavailing tears the sequel of our folly. “Woe unto you that laugh now! for you shall mourn and weep” (Luke 6:25).

There is no Scripture which gives man the option of rejecting the truth and its claims. Some of us are apt at times to speak apologetically of the world’s disobedient ways, as if it were permissible for the world (in view of its hopeless state) to make the most of this life by adopting courses contrary to Christ’s plainly revealed will. This idea is very baneful. The command to all who are brought within the sound of the truth is—“Repent” (Acts 17:30)—a command which can only be ignored at the peril of more or less punishment. The world, though not within the bonds of the covenant, is not without responsibility. The moral corruption that prevails is not by God’s arrangement (He would have every man to be saved), but is the result of man’s obstinate perversity. The world is very disobedient—its “wickedness is great” (Joel 3:13.) God’s goodness and man’s iniquity are manifest in the widespread dissemination of the Bible and the trifling attention that it receives. A day of reckoning is at hand. Christ will not punish unjustly, but terribly punish he will. The dreadfulness of the retributive and corrective measures to be employed are forcibly expressed in such terms as “in flaming fire taking vengeance”—“shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel”—“by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh.” Let us bear these truths in mind and they will help

us to withstand the world's lawless ways, and also to be more earnest in our efforts to reform the ungodly.

To blindly follow man is a sin. To do so may be agreeable; it may save trouble; but Christ objects to it. Partisanship is of the flesh. It was this that led to the disorganised meeting at Corinth—"While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed (i Cor. 3:4, 5.) It is Christ alone who can give us eternal life. Other men can help us to secure it, but only in so far as they are faithful to what Christ has said. The Bible has been appointed as our unerring guide. By it we are expected to test the ways and opinions of men. Christ truly wishes us to follow good men, but we need the Bible to point them out. Ability to distinguish good men implies a knowledge of the Word. A perfect man is one who can discern good, and follow it independently of personal likes and dislikes. Let us not put our trust in men. The wisest and the best slip and fall. This the Bible and experience show. What was said to the Galatians may, so far as we know, be applicable in the near future to many whom we now think immovable—"Ye did run well, who did hinder you that you should not obey the Truth?" In the day of judgment it will not be received as a legitimate excuse for errors of belief or errors of conduct that someone else has led us into the belief or conduct. God proved Israel by permitting influential but false teachers to rise up, and we may expect that He will likewise prove us. "To the law and the testimony," etc. *Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1890*

Dealing With Offences

QUESTION: "Do you not think it necessary to comply with Matt. 18:15-18 in reference to doctrinal sin privately manifested by a brother before two or three others—previous to acquainting the ecclesia with the fact; and is it right to ignore this scriptural course and announce the brother's sin at the breaking of bread, during the interval for brief fraternal announcements? Does not Matt. 18:15-18 apply to sin in general—doctrinal and personal?"

ANSWER: Certainly; Matt. 18 ought in all cases to be complied with before any public or collective action is taken in a case of error or misconduct. The simple command—

"As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."
—would settle this.

The rule laid down by Christ for the treatment of personal offences (Matt. 18: 15-18) is doubtless applicable to sin in general. Sin of any kind on the part of a brother, becoming known to another brother, is a sin against that brother—more heinous, indeed, when scripturally estimated, than a mere offence against himself. He is, therefore bound

to take the course Jesus prescribes, as John plainly indicates in the words (1 John 5:16)—

“If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, etc.”

It is usual with some not to act upon this rule at all. The usual way is to speak of the fault, whatever it is, to a third party. **THIS ITSELF IS A SIN.**

A brother's part (if the case be serious enough to speak of at all) is to be silent to all but the brother himself. First, go himself and discuss the matter between the two alone. If this is successful, a brother is gained and saved, and the matter is not to be mentioned to anyone else.

If not successful, Christ commands the interview to be repeated with the assistance of one or two others; and only in the event of these failing, is the matter to be mentioned to the ecclesia, or those representing it. It is then the ecclesia's part to bring their whole influence to bear upon the offender to forsake his evil ways.

Only when this has failed are we at liberty to withdraw. Nothing is so effectual as this rule for stopping evil speaking and insuring merciful help to those who stumble, or the proper and timely treatment of incorrigible sin.

Each brother then becomes a seeing eye and protecting hand of the ecclesia. There should be a stringent refusal to hear an evil report concerning any one until the reporter has taken the Scriptural course.

Withdrawal, too when it comes (it must be noted), is not expulsion. It is the apostolic form of separation, which, though practically equivalent to expulsion in its effects on the separated, is more in harmony with the spirit enjoined by Christ upon his house, than the form in vogue among professing bodies of all sorts.

Withdrawal means that those withdrawing do modestly and sorrowfully step aside from the offender for fear of implication in his offence. Expulsion means kicking out, which is a different thing, and implies and generates the arrogant attitude of ecclesiastical excommunication. The careful preservation of right forms in these things is a help to the preservation of the right spirit.

* * *

There ought to be no murmurings and disputings among the brethren of Christ. It is forbidden. Nevertheless, in the mixed state allowed to prevail in all ecclesias during probation, they are sure to arise. Wisdom, therefore, requires that we be prepared to deal with them in a proper manner when they arise.

There is a way of dealing with them that heals them, and a way that has just the opposite effect. There is no more dangerous and prolific cause of distress and ruin in an ecclesia than the wrong treatment of causes of dispute.

Christ has laid down the law very plainly for the curing of them; and it is the duty of the brethren everywhere to see it obeyed. They ought to refuse to countenance those who disobey it. If a brother takes offence at what another has said or done, he is bound to meet that other brother in private interview for the discussion of the grievance between the two alone.

In most cases, this course stops alienation at its first stage; it either removes misconception, if that has been the cause of the trouble: or it leads to the admission of wrong on the part of the offender, followed by forgiveness on the part of the offended.

Of course, there are many matters too trifling to be made the subject of such a process.

The man who recognizes the infirmity of human nature all round, and the evil nature of the few days we have to live, is able to exercise that magnanimous charity that covers a multitude of sins, heeding not all words that are spoken, and ever practicing the habit of returning good for evil—blessing always—cursing never, either directly or by implication—as the commandments of the House of Christ require.

* * *

But supposing an offence arise which a brother cannot thus overlook, but which he feels to be a barrier between himself and the offender, then he is bound to take the course indicated. He is not at liberty to mention the matter to a third party, and he is not at liberty to stand aside in a state of alienation.

If he do either the one or the other, he makes himself as much an offender as he may imagine the cause of his injured feelings to be.

A man who disobeys the commandment of Christ on one point, is as much a transgressor as the man who disobeys it on another. Consequently, any ecclesia knowing of such a case, is bound to persuade the offended brother to see the offender in private, or to withdraw from him in case of refusal.

There is everything to be said in favor of Christ's commandment in this matter. It is humbling to the offended to have to go and see the man who has offended him (and if he is too proud to submit to this, he is self-condemned: for the proud are an abomination to God); and it gives to the offender the best chance he could possibly have of making any amends the case may call for. The act of the offended brother in coming and seeing him has a conciliatory effect on him: and his personal presence gives him the opportunity of thoroughly discussing every point on the spot.

A communication through a third party (or still worse, a letter), is no fulfillment of the law of Christ; offers none of its opportunities of reconciliation; is rather calculated to prolong and aggravate the irritations of the case: and cannot be received as a compliance with the law of the case. The brethren, refusing to listen to the merits of the case

one way or other, ought to insist upon the offended seeing the offender, or dissociate themselves from his company.

The plea that it is “no use” ought not to be entertained for one moment. Such an impression ought not to be made a reason for disobeying a plain commandment. Whether of use or of no use, an offended brother is bound either to drop the quarrel, or to see the offending brother. It is not as if the failure of the interview left him without remedy.

His next step is (in case of failure) to take two or three other brethren with him. Where the interview between the two parties fails, this may succeed, because fresh influence is brought to bear with fresh and conciliatory minds.

The offended brother is bound to take this step, as well as the other; otherwise he is disobedient.

It may be of no use, but it must be done. If it succeed, he has his reward. If it fail, he has his remedy: he is to bring the matter before the whole ecclesia. The ecclesia is then to admonish the offender if he be found in the fault. If the offender refuse to hear them, it is their duty to separate him from their fellowship by withdrawal.

Unless individual offences are strictly treated in this way, the community will constantly be in danger of disturbance and even disruption. An offended man, allowed to ventilate his grievance among others, is liable to enlist the feelings of others on his behalf, and the brother against whom the grievance is entertained, is liable, in self-defense, to urge his side of the case; and thus bad feeling is diffused, and a state of mind generated that easily leads to division. Let Christ's wise rule be insisted on and the mischief is stopped at its start.

Even in the interests of self-defense, Christ's wise rule ought to be insisted on. Who is safe from slander if a brother may pour his evil thoughts into the ear of a third person? What righteous man would suffer if every complainer were first compelled to make known his complaints to the person against whom they were directed? Nothing will more effectually secure peace in a community than the maintenance of Christ's rule for dealing with offences, personal or otherwise.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1890

The Supreme Beauty of Sacrifice

“DEAR BROTHER ROBERTS,—I have read the debate between you and brother Andrew, and have been struck with the extraordinary ramifications of this responsibility question into other departments of spiritual truth. Among the many points elucidated the one of supreme beauty is, I think, that of Christ's shed blood being a declaration of the righteousness of God. We are too liable to think that the main aspect of it is its advantage to us, and this gives a circumscribed idea of its

purport. It seems to me that it is here where brother Andrew's mistake comes in. Half a truth, when wrested from its other half, is error, and I never saw this more exemplified than in the present agitation. It is well that you have pressed the both halves of the meaning of Christ's shed blood into the service of the question of sacrifice. While of untold advantage to the race, the essence of sacrifice is the exhibition of the supremacy and righteousness of God. The declaration of the righteousness of God is a phrase profoundly philosophical, and yet unique in simplicity. It follows then that a correct understanding of the sacrifice of Christ hinges on the correct understanding as to how the event was a declaration of the righteousness of God. In what way does Christ's death inform us of God's righteousness? We must first find in what God's righteousness consists, and then see how it is expressed in the sacrifice of Christ. The only two moral attributes of God exhibited in the Lord are justice and mercy.

"In His dealings with man His character in all its complex unfolding is but an amplification of these two principles, which we find to be indelibly stamped on the institution of sacrifice as the embodiment of the righteousness of God. How does this apply to sin and to sacrifice in relation to Adam and his race?

"When Adam sinned and was sentenced to the penalty previously threatened, it was right on the part of God to give practical effect to the sentence.

"The human sinful nature evolved by disobedience with its inherent rebelliousness to divine law ought to be destroyed, and God alone could do it. The nature belonged to God as His property, and it defied Him. Its existence was no advantage to itself nor to its owner, and therefore should not be perpetuated. To destroy it was strict justice, but to leave the matter there would have been justice without mercy. To revoke or compromise the sentence would not have been just, but to have left Adam without a chance of rescue out of death would not have been mercy. In the provision of sacrifice, we see the blending of justice with mercy. The death warrant on Adam was allowed to take its course as the result of a broken law, but meanwhile sacrifice was offered, which, while embodying the consequences of the broken law, became the exponent of a higher law, even the law of faith, by which he might recover from death.

"The death of the animal was a portrayal of the destruction of sin by death. It was not the means of revoking any of the consequences of sin: it was a continual reminder of them rather. It never even pointed to the mere restoration of life from the grave: it contemplated the destruction of mortal life. In this we see justice. Sacrifice, while representatively condemning the carnal mind, was an arrangement for showing that the carnal mind must really be condemned by being

diverted to a new centre of knowledge, which would require the strictest vigilance on the part of man to keep in mind and obey its principles and commands. It symbolised the ‘way’ of eternal life and foreshadowed the ‘name’ or expressed formula of Deity’s wisdom in relation to man. It was these parabolically expressed principles which would grip the carnal mind and strangle it during a life-long struggle. In this we see the mercy of God.

“Animal sacrifice was an allegorical exhibition of justice and mercy. Christ’s sacrifice was the real and open manifestation of it, and thus became ‘the declaration of the righteousness of God.’

“If brother Andrew’s theory is right that the meaning of sacrifice is the violent death of an animal, in which Adam representatively died a violent death, whereby his sinful nature suffered its punishment, and was exonerated from real death, I do not see where either justice or mercy comes in. This view makes sacrifice an empty ritual, a mere form which has entertained the minds of the uninstructed for all ages.

“Understanding that Adamic sin means the inherent tendency of our moral nature to oppose God’s laws, how can this tendency to evil be destroyed by either sacrifice or baptism? Sacrifice or baptism, instead of destroying the tendency to evil, only excites it by subjecting it to the higher law of faith or knowledge.

“Brother Andrew says that coming under law by sacrifice and baptism justifies from Adamic sin, whereas its real effect is to make Adamic sin more sinful.

“The judgment seat of Christ will be a scrutiny of the operations of Adamic nature under the law of light and truth. There is nothing else for the judgment seat to deal with, and it will then be rewarded according to its works. If at baptism Adamic nature is condemned, the position is simply this: a living, thinking constitution in which dwells no good thing, but whose propensity it is to do evil continually, whose name is the devil, receives its complete punishment and destruction in the act of our receiving all the innumerable advantages which Christ acquired by the sacrifice of himself. If this is the condemnation of the old Adam, why do we proceed to crucify ‘the old man’? Why should we go on to make him ‘die daily’? Why should we further proceed to mortify him? Surely such a course is a work of supererogation, and it is—to borrow a phrase from *The Blood of the Covenant*—like ‘slaying the slain.’

“Is Christ’s justification handed over to us as one man pays another man’s debt? It is, if we rise from the waters of baptism justified from death. But Christ does not stand as a substitute: he is the prototype of the race. With him justification was, as brother Hughes aptly describes, a process, a ministration of the spirit of life. It is our identity with that process that secures us justification. Christ’s destruction of Adamic

nature can only be applied to us by our assimilation to that work, and consequently, we must wait till the work is done for justification to be complete. We must, like Christ, endure to the end; like him, we must die daily. There is no difference in the method of justification between Christ and his brethren. Christ was not 'justified in spirit,' Paul's phrase (1 Tim. 3:16), till he rose from the dead and presented himself as the wave sheaf of the harvest for the Father's acceptance. Christ's brethren are similarly perfected when they rise from the dead and are presented the first fruits of the harvest for the Father's acceptance. So it all seems to me.—Faithfully yours in Christ, MARY G. BRABYN."

The Christadelphian—1894

The Excellency of the Scriptures

"MORE to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter, also, than honey and the honeycomb."—Psalm 19:10.

The Bible is the only book which teaches every thing that our Creator requires of us, either to know, or believe, or do, that we may escape his deserved displeasure, obtain his sovereign favour, and dwell for ever in the bliss of his immediate presence.

In the Scriptures we are taught the purest morality, perfectly accordant with the dictates of sound reason, and confirmed by the witness of enlightened conscience.

In the Scriptures we see described all the secret workings of the human mind, in a manner which demonstrates the inspiration of Him who is the searcher of hearts. They give us a particular account of all the spiritual maladies of man, with their various symptoms and the methods of their cure. From this source flow all the pure streams of spiritual and healing knowledge, to bless mankind with recovery from their fallen state—with salvation from sin and immortality.

Although many hundreds of thousands of books have been written in different ages by wise and learned men, even the best of them will bear no comparison with the Scriptures, in respect either of religion, morality, history, or purity and sublimity of composition.

The fairest productions of human art, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands and lose their fragrantcy; but these unfading plants of paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odours are emitted, and new sweets are extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellencies, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest, will relish them best.

Bro. John Thomas, (1835-1836). Vol. 4: The apostolic advocate (403-404). Richmond, Va.

Hints For Bible Markers

Follow peace, a difficult thing to do when the mind of flesh always wants to prove itself to be right. We are to put self on the back burner, putting the welfare of others ahead of ourselves. These verses comprehend the “New Man” whose position and attitude “follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.” We are commanded to walk in peace and holiness. These are to be instinctive character traits, at the forefront of our personalities. For Paul informs us that without such “no man shall see the Lord.” To manifest peace and holiness requires continual effort. We are surrounded by evil, evil without and within. We therefore need to be watchful and prayerful so we do not entangle ourselves with snares of the world or yield to the suggestions of the flesh. We do not expect to be perfect as in the sense of flawless but perfect in the sense of proficient or skillful. Paul applies the term to us, poor, weak, erring, sinful, man, how then can we be perfect. God has given us commands to comply with, to be proficient in knowledge and understand, so that our understanding of God will be perfected. We are expected to comply with these obligations as one who is committed to the care and welfare of his neighbor “for his good to edification.”

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: (Hebrews 12:14)

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

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. (Romans 14:19)

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. (2 Corinthians 13:11)

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, even as I (Paul) please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many that they might be saved.

Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. (Romans 15:2)

Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. (1 Corinthians 10:33)

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