

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.

Vol. XV (C) No. 3

March, 2012

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ECCLESIAL NEWS	Lampasas, Richard, Hengoed	
EXHORTATION	Let Us Rise Up And Build (2)	76
EXHORTATION	Scribes, Pharisees & Sadducees	81
STUDY	The Scriptural Significance of Hymns – 178A	92
THOUGHTS:	Encouraging Words No. 29	100
.....	Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 29	101
.....	Answers – Worldly Books	103
.....	Answers – Bible Reading	104
.....	Disfellowship	105
.....	Ascend Hither	106
BIBLE MARKING	The Commandments of Christ	108

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

LAMPASAS, Texas

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the hope of Israel,

It has indeed been sometime since we have reported from the Lampasas ecclesia. In December 2011, Bro. Matthew Neely and Sis. Melissa Baldwin were united in marriage at the home of Bro. and Sis. Mike Neely. We wish them God's blessing as they walk together toward the soon coming Kingdom.

The Lampasas Ecclesia hosted another youth oriented study, over the New Year's weekend. It was very well attended and spiritually uplifting for all ages. We would like to thank all who traveled from long distances to be in attendance, with a special thanks to those brethren who conducted classes for us. Our next scheduled gathering for Lampasas is our June gathering and once again we invite all our brothers and sister to join us. As the Gentile times draw to a close and the Lord's return is nigh at hand all the many gatherings strengthen our hold on the truth.

We are sad to report that our Sis. Linnie Hennig's health has forced her to move away from our meeting in order to be closer to her daughter, she will be missed by all of us. We are sure she would enjoy hearing from her brothers and sisters. Her new mailing address is: Linnie Hennig care of Autumn Hill Manor 202 West Rentz St. Weatherford, TX 76086 cell phone 817-694-1406.

Brother Lee Freeburg, recorder for Lampasas.

RICHARD, Sask.

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Great news! Friday night, January 27, **Matt Walsh** gave a good confession of his faith, and as a result, Saturday evening, the Richard ecclesia was pleased to assist him as he went into the waters of baptism, to emerge as a new runner in the race for eternal life. This morning, Sun. 28th, we extended to Bro. Matt the right hand of fellowship. May we all encourage and be encouraged by Bro. Matt as we work out our salvation in these last days.

On behalf of the Richard ecclesia,

Bro. Sid Jones

HENGOED, Wales

This is just a reminder to the Berean Brotherhood that Hengoed's Ecclesial Gathering for 2012 will be held, God Willing, on the 25th to 28th of May. The Venue is the Ceridwen Centre in West Wales.

The Theme for the gathering is "Eight Lectures on the Apocalypse".

Subjects are:

- (1) An Introduction to the Apocalypse
- (2) Time Periods of the Apocalypse
- (3) The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse
- (4) The Seven Trumpets of the Apocalypse

- (5) Blessed is he that Keepeth the Sayings of this Book (Exhortation)
- (6) The Beasts of the Apocalypse Explained
- (7) The Seven Vials of the Apocalypse
- (8) The Seven Ecclesias of the Apocalypse

The gathering will formally commence on the Friday evening and will finish on the Monday evening after the Daily Readings. Prior to the daily readings on Monday, we will be visiting the town of Newcastle Emlyn followed by a visit to the National Wool Museum of Wales.

Airports:

The nearest airports are Cardiff (approx. 45 mins. from where we live), Bristol (approx. 1hr. and 30 mins), Birmingham (approx. 2hrs. and 30 mins), Heathrow (approx. 3 hrs), Gatwick (approx. 3hrs and 30 mins) and Manchester (approx. 3 hrs and 30 mins).

Ports

For those planning on flying into Dublin (Ireland) and catching a Ferry across to West Wales, please be aware that the Irish Sea is notorious for being rough (not a trip for those who are prone to sea sickness!). There are two options, the first is the fast Ferry (Fast Cats) which takes approx. 2.5 hrs to complete the crossing into either Pembroke Dock or Fishguard, but the ride is bumpier than the larger ferry which takes approx. 3.5 hrs to cross.

If you would like to be collected from a Port or Airport then please let us know and we'll happily arrange for you.

As the gathering is now only a few months away, we would be grateful to all those who plan on making the trip to contact us at malesinwales@btinternet.com as soon as possible so that we can make the necessary arrangements for catering and accommodation etc.

A warm welcome is extended to all. We very much look forward to meeting with our brethren and sisters around a study of God's Word on the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. All plans are subject to our Heavenly Father's Will.

Love in Christ,
Bro. Steve and Sis Liz Male

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

- HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING**.....**April 7–8, 2012**
Bro. David Lauck, dblauch@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, emailjrankin@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 Part 2

*"What do these feeble Jews?... Will they fortify themselves?
Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of
rubbish which are burned?"—Neh. 4:2*

CHAPTER 3 describes the rebuilding of the wall—

"Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren and the priests and they builded the sheep gate, and they sanctified it."

The sheep gate entered into the Temple area, on the north-east corner of the city, so named because it was through here that the animals were brought for sacrifice—the sheep gate—the *way of sacrifice*. The whole undertaking was begun by *sanctifying the work unto God*, seeking His help and blessing. And when the wall was completed, the whole was dedicated to God with praise and thanksgiving.

This high priest Eliashib was the grandson of the high priest Joshua, who had come back earlier with Zerubbabel. Though he entered into the wall-building, he appears to have been no friend of Nehemiah's, but rather of Tobiah and Sanballat.

Though he was high priest, he is not mentioned as taking any part in the reforms and activities by which Nehemiah endeavored to stir up the people and bring them back to God.

* * *

THIS BUILDING again of the old ruins of the wall which had been broken down for 150 years was a tremendous undertaking. There are several interesting points about it.

In this work Nehemiah was typical of Christ, the great wall-builder, and also of every faithful laborer in every age who endeavors to build up and strengthen the Holy City's wall of defense and separation from the world.

When the wall is broken down, nothing can prosper. Things just go from bad to worse.

The first point we notice is that each man built the part *nearest his own house*. This is an important principle.

* * *

It is recorded in Neh. 3:5 that the nobles of Tekoa—

"... put not their necks to the work of their Lord."

Paul tells us that all these things were written for examples for us, and they are examples in more ways than one. Among other things they are examples of the fact that *all is recorded* for good or for ill. If we are related to the purpose of God (and we believe we are), then all our activities are being recorded. *Let it not be recorded of any of us that we "put not our necks to the work of the Lord."*

That applies to us all, for listening is just as important as speaking. *All* is the work of the Lord, whether it be the meetings, or just our private contacts together. Let us all put all the effort and enthusiasm we can into everything we do, as unto the Lord!

The nobles of Tekoa put not their necks to the work, and it is forever recorded against them, but we find later in the chapter that the common people of Tekoa finished their own part early and then went somewhere else and built up an extra portion.

* * *

WE READ in v. 20 that Baruch the son of Zabbai *earnestly* repaired his portion. As some are singled out for their lack of zeal, so here is one mentioned for special zeal. There was a lot of earnest work, or they never could have gotten the wall up in 52 days in the face of such obstacles, but here was a *real extremist*—a man who gave himself to the uttermost. As Paul says of some in his day—

*"To their power—yea, and **beyond** their power—they were willing of themselves."*

But all did not go as smoothly as we may imagine from the brief outline in chapter 3. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 give us more detail of the difficulties they encountered (4:1)—

"But it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews."

The enemy first tried ridicule to dishearten and divide the laborers—

"What do these feeble Jews?" (v. 2).

How strikingly this is paralleled in Israel today—

"Will they fortify themselves?"

"Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?"

Ridicule has always been the cheap weapon of the ignorant majority. It is a powerful weapon in these days of weakness, if faith and vision are not strong.

* * *

"Hear, O our God, for we are despised, turn their reproach upon their own head, give them for a prey in the land of captivity."

Are these words in the spirit of Christ? They are prophetic and symbolic utterances of the Spirit. We would get the sense better if we read them as prophetic—*"Thou shalt give them for a prey."*

The children of God do not desire the death of the wicked any more than God does, but they do fervently desire the triumph of righteousness, the vindication of faith and patience, and the *complete crushing and destruction of the evil power of sin and death.* Those who presumptuously choose the way of sin must be destroyed together with sin.

The ridicule failed. Nehemiah records (v. 6)—

"So we built the wall—for the people had a mind to work."

What a comforting expression! What wonders can be accomplished for the Truth when this is the case!—

"The people had a mind to work."

But the enemy pressed harder, and went from ridicule to conspiracy. And the circle of adversaries broadens as the work advances (v. 7)—

"Sanballat (the Samaritans), and Tobiah (the Ammonites), and the Arabians, and the Ashdodites...conspired all of them together to fight against Jerusalem."

"Nevertheless," records Nehemiah—

"We made our prayer, and set a watch."

Here again is combined, in a God-pleasing way—faith and works—dependence on God coupled with intense personal effort.

Verse 10 introduces a disturbing aspect—the most discouraging obstacle Nehemiah had to face—

"Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall."

Nothing more quickly undermines a group than the presence of faithless cowardice and fear. We can do our cause no greater harm than to spread this fatal infection—

"Our strength is decayed—the task is too great."

But Nehemiah exhorts them to courage with the stirring watchword (v. 14)—

"Remember the Lord"

—in your weakness and disappointments, keep the POWER OF THE LORD before your mind!

Thereafter they worked with a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other. In v. 19, Nehemiah says to them—

"The work is great and large, and we are separated on the wall, one far from another."

How true that is of our position today! And how important that we do as they did and *keep in close contact for mutual encouragement and defense!*

And Nehemiah commanded that all the workers should remain inside the city during the night, for their own protection and for the mutual defense of the city. We are reminded of the instruction at the time of the passing over of the avenging angel in Egypt—

"None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning."

Any wandering outside of the separating and protecting walls is dangerous and disobedience.

"So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing" (v. 23).

Complete dedication and devotion, day and night watchfulness and readiness—but still they did not neglect their own cleanliness and purification. It is so easy, in the midst of intense and energetic labor for the Truth, to forget that *our principal responsibility is our own personal character and conduct and self control*—our principal battle is always against our own uncleanness, our own enemy within.

* * *

CHAPTER 4 introduced us to serious problems the work encountered, but ch. 5 reveals a problem far worse. There is a great lesson in Nehemiah's patient perseverance in the face of ingrained human

fleshliness and evil. What a degraded thing the natural man is! What glorious and beautiful possibilities are held out before him, but how few have *any desire* to rise out of natural groveling earthiness!

"There was a great cry of the people against their brethren."

Why? Because the more fortunate and more powerful among them were cruelly oppressing the poorer ones, grinding them down into hopeless bondage and debt. This is, and has always been, the way of natural man—greed, selfishness and cruelty, yet with such protestations of piety and self-righteousness and showy charity!

"We have mortgaged our lands, and vineyards, and houses: we bring into bondage our sons and daughters."

Naturally, *we* too are of the same evil, selfish stuff. We *must* learn—from these manifestations of evil—the ugliness and viciousness of the inner enemy we all have to contend with. We must, by the light of the Spirit, learn to discern the same basic motives and reactions and self-justifications.

Nehemiah says, *"I was very angry."* Did the fear and goodness of God mean nothing to them at all? Doubtless they justified their conduct as "prudence" and "industry" and "wisdom" and "good business" and dismissed the plight of their brethren as the result of foolishness or laziness or carelessness (as doubtless it may have been in some cases).

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked,"

—and we can justify and glorify *anything*, if we want to do so. See how the nations of the earth, both East and West, present every selfish, greedy action as a pious labor for human good! *"Let a man examine himself."* It is a very humiliating study, if done by the light of God's Word.

Nehemiah was "very angry." Then he says—

"I consulted with myself."

Here is wisdom. Paul says—

*"Be ye angry—and **sin not.**"*

"I consulted with myself." He did not speak or act impetuously in anger—this is the almost irresistible temptation.

Nehemiah had been given supreme authority in Judea. His word was law. But he *pleaded* with them (v. 11)—

"Restore, I pray you, to them this day."

He sought to *persuade* them, to teach them a more excellent way, to
80—Berean 2012

make them ashamed of their wickedness, in the presence of all the congregation. Instead of commanding them, he asked them to enter into a solemn and public oath that they would do what he asked.

In this way he made it as *easy* as he could for them to do what was right, and as *difficult* as he could for them to go back to doing what was wrong.

"And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord."

—praised the Lord for the great relief, and for the provision of such a wise and righteous and patient leader who could be firm and inflexible without being unnecessarily harsh and dictatorial.

The remainder of ch. 5—vs. 14-19—is a statement by Nehemiah of the course he personally followed all through his administration, because of the fear of the Lord.

He accepted no payment or contribution for his support. His servants, instead of ruling over the people as those of former governors had done, all labored in the common work, and furthermore he personally supported a continuous assembly of 150 people attached to his administration.

Like Paul, he desired to "spend and be spent" for them. His reward and pleasure was in helping and serving his people and putting on record an example for the guidance and inspiration of others.

"Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all I have done for this people."

He desired nothing from man. He wanted to *give* all he could, of himself and of his substance. All his desire was the remembrance and mercy of God. He is not boasting. It was necessary, in the wisdom of the Spirit, that this be recorded for our edification. Here the secret thoughts of his heart are laid bare for our comfort and guidance.

(To be continued Lord willing next month)

—*Bro. G.V. Growcott*

Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees in contrast to Christ

The scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees and their contrast to Christ is our subject matter for exhortation this morning. A lot of it will be informative, looking at just who these parties of people were, where they came from and what they believed. We're all familiar with what Christ taught and stood for, but those of you who are like me have had little knowledge of what these other classes led their lives by. At first it

doesn't seem right to present a lot of information in an exhortation, because it starts to feel more like a lecture, but taking a look at the recorded "exhortations" of John the Baptist in Luke 3, Paul in Acts 13, and the book of Hebrews itself, which Paul calls an exhortation, I'm not too bashful about it. What these apostles called exhortation were facts and information that they were presenting that would allow those who were willing to be edified. In a similar way, a look at the history and development of the Pharisees and Sadducees in particular is a huge exhortation for each of us, because we come from the same place they did, and are very likely to end up as one or the other at some point.

Before we get too involved, I'd like to draw a parallel. Under the Law of Moses, and this was the scenario that the two classes developed in, the Israelites were a chosen people of all the nations of the world. They alone were given the word of God and a full understanding of Him and His purpose. Christadelphians are today in a very similar situation. A great many in the world know about God, just as the nations around Israel knew a little of God in their day, but the body of the Christadelphians has a fundamental understanding of the word of God and His purpose with the earth. Now, within Israel, there was a class that had a fuller understanding of God's word, and separated themselves from the rest of the children of Israel who quickly lost sight of God's laws. This class was different people at different times, originally it was the Levites who were separated and sanctified as a holy people to God's service, within the nation. Their high priest class became the Sadducees. Later they became very lax with the laws of God, and in response, a group came about that was very courageous and carefully kept the law with painstaking stringency. They called themselves the separatists, and kept themselves apart from anyone or anything that was out of line with the commands of God. They became known as the Pharisees. Our fellowship has stood apart from error and laxity in the past, separating ourselves from proclaimed error or unscriptural toleration thereof. Each of us is, or has a strong tendency to be, either a modern day Sadducee or Pharisee. The fact that we have kept ourselves from the decline of mankind, doesn't mean we aren't in either of the classes Christ preached against when he was here.

The first thing we'll take a look at, though, is the scribes. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia introduces them this way:

The existence of law leads necessarily to a profession whose business is the study and knowledge of the law; at any rate, if the law is extensive and complicated. At the time of Ezra and probably for some time after, this was chiefly the business of the priests. Ezra was both priest and scholar. It was chiefly in the interest of the priestly cult that

the most important part of the Pentateuch was written. The priests were therefore also in the first instance the scholars and the guardians of the Law; but in the course of time this was changed. The more highly esteemed the Law became in the eyes of the people, the more its study and interpretation became a lifework by itself, and thus there developed a class of scholars who, though not priests, devoted themselves assiduously to the Law. These became known as the scribes, that is, the professional students of the Law.

So begins the class of the scribes. Keep in mind that illiteracy was quite common in that day. Not everyone could read and write. It was a mark of high education for an individual to be able to read and write well. After the captivity of Israel and Judah, the priests became very much tainted by the Hellenism and Paganism of the nations ruling over them, namely the Babylonians, Medes, Persians, and especially the Greeks. The scribes, therefore, replaced them as authorities on the law. They were referred to as scholars of the law, because they studied the Law of Moses, and also they were called doctors of the law, because they taught it to the people. The people gave them very high honors, calling them rabbi (teacher or master) or even rabboni (my great master). They not only welcomed these honors, but demanded the position of first rank among society, and the highest human honors of their students, demanding even that they be respected above a student's parents. In keeping with this attitude, the dress of the scribes equaled that of nobility, wearing tunics or long robes, for which Christ condemned them as prideful and self-absorbed.

No doubt, they felt their pride was justified, though, because they were taking pride in God's word, and demanding respect for their understanding of His word, rather than on merit of any exceptional personal qualities. Christ understood it correctly, though, as another clever way of justifying self-glory and self-worth. And he condemned it as just such. It was simply a masquerading of the pride of life, which the flesh loves to relish, behind a cry of holy and separate.

Though they truly thought highly of themselves and placed great value on their knowledge of the law, they did judge for free. They were, by their own tradition based on the law, forbidden to receive any gift for judgment – any paid ruling being immediately declared null and void. It is doubtful, however, that they taught for free. Christ accuses them of greed, of “devouring widows' houses”, and calls those of them belonging to the class of the Pharisees, covetous. Speaking of that, the scribes were not necessarily affiliated with either the Sadducees or the Pharisees; they were simply people who made the study of literature their life's devotion (the law pretty well constituted the literature of that

time). That being said, the Pharisees were a class of individuals that were tremendously concerned with the letter of the law, and the Sadducees were, by the time of Christ, frankly irreligious. It naturally follows, then, that the Pharisees were the party that the scribes typically lined up with most closely, and therefore, many of the scribes, likely most of them, were Pharisees, which we'll get to later. Additionally, it was generally the Pharisees that regarded the "traditions" which came about from the scribes' interpretations of the law.

As students and teachers of the law, the scribes were found anywhere there was a zeal for the law. They were in Jerusalem and Judea, but could also be found in other places, just as there were Jewish synagogues in many towns in regions well outside Judah. They were very effective in leading the people to a reverence for the law. History tells us that even common people were willing to endure torture rather than disregard the law. The teaching of the scribes had brought the Jews to a higher respect for it than even for life or family. Unfortunately, though, along with their problem with pride, they were, as a group, very strongly tied to the idea of direct retribution, teaching that the people were bound to the law literally and conscientiously, and that God himself was bound to render reward to the people in proportion to their service to Him, here and now. It is easy to see why Paul struggled so to make his Jewish followers understand the idea that we have our reward through grace, not by debt, that God's promises to us are a gift, not a contractual fulfillment. One of the problems with the idea of this direct retribution teaching is that it removes free choice from religion, and makes it merely a set of cause and effect, in which people act righteously for their own present benefit. They need develop no real love for God or faith of a later reward. In effect, the reverence and respect of the scribes for the letter of the law (which was in itself good and right), brought them to a complete loss of its spirit and reduced a law designed to develop a deep character to mere legal formalism.

While it would seem the majority of these scribes belonged to the Pharisaical party, there is some evidence that there were scribes of the Sadducees as well. As I said before, the Sadducees were mainly of the priestly class. We'll take a look at them now. They were priestly and aristocratic. The high priest family in the Christ's day lived in a palace, as we read in Matthew 26, Mark 14, and John 18, and had their own class of servants. The Sadducees were less popular with the people than the Pharisees, which we'll consider next, but they were just as influential because of their great wealth and their descent from the priestly tribe. Their name comes (it is supposed) from Zadok, the high

priest under David, from which all high priests of Israel claimed to descend. Zadok is connected with the verb “to be righteous”.

In contrast to the righteous spirit of Zadok, the Sadducees were very much a political party. Because of their undeniable position as the priest class, they had strong political influence over the nation, and close connections to the rulers of the dominant nation of the time. This was a position they were very concerned with preserving. After the return from Babylonian exile, the high priest drew all powers to himself, both civil and religious powers. To the Persians, and probably the Greeks after them, the high priest was effectively the king of the Jews. Because of this close contact with the heathen powers, the Sadducees lost their love for the law, and learned to compromise it when necessary to avoid the harsh punishment of their Gentile rulers. The Greeks actually increased the high priests’ powers over the Jews, although they became more subservient to the Greeks than before. This combination meant a movement among the priestly Sadducean class to Greek ideas and laws, and the Sadducees ended up actually leading the Hellenizing movement among Jews of that time. Because of their long standing ties with the Persian government and then the Grecian government, they were content with their position in servitude to foreign governments and were apparently happy to have no part in the Maccabean struggle to cast off the Gentile governments. This bond between the Sadducees and Gentile governments must have been to the advantage of the Sadducees and a source of wealth for them, because they defended their nation’s allegiance to these heathen powers anywhere they could. As a matter of fact, they had no involvement in the persecution against Jesus himself until they heard of his claim as Messiah, which threatened their position before the Romans. They feared that if Christ set himself up as king, the Romans would come against Judah, and their place of power and prestige and favor with the Romans would be in jeopardy. This alliance between the Sadducees and Gentile governments ruling over Judah evoked a strong rivalry between them and the hasidhim, who hated the idea of alliance with a heathen power, feeling it contradicted the commands of the law that they were sworn to. The hasidhim were strong supporters of the Jewish fight for independence behind the Maccabees during much of the struggle. This hasidhim would become the class of the Pharisees, and continue their rivalry with the Sadducees, but we’ll save that for a bit. The Sadducees wanted Christ dead to maintain their quasi-independence under the Romans, but even continued their persecution of the Christians after his death. It was a Sadducee, the high priest, who Saul (Paul) received letters of authority from to persecute the Christians.

As far as the beliefs and practices of the Sadducees, they naturally laid great stress on the ceremony of sacrifice, being the priestly class, but outside of sacrificial ordinances, they had grown very irreligious. They were the owners of the booths Christ overthrew in the Temple for buying sacrifices and changing money. Sacrifices were therefore a very profitable ritual for this class, providing their food and wealth in both legitimate and corrupt ways. They believe in neither the resurrection nor angel or spirit. Josephus asserts that they believed the soul to die with the body, and therefore could only have believed that our rewards or punishments come to us in this life alone, and there is nothing to be had afterwards (quite a true view for people who had no hope of a Messiah!). It seems strange that a people of God's law could not believe in angels or resurrection, but apparently this was the result of the fact that they regarded the law itself much more highly than the other Old Testament writings. Because of this view of blessings or punishments in this life, they were unashamed of their extravagant wealth. They believed wealth to be a sign of God's blessing for righteousness, and therefore equated it to holiness. The common idea of direct retribution would have served to strengthen their influence on the common people. Their pride in their wealth and heritage probably led to their rude and rough personality. The harsh treatment of Christ by the soldiers and high priest before his crucifixion seems to have been commonplace at a Sadducean trial. They wasted no time in ordering Christ's unlawful arrest and crucifixion after coming into conflict with him. They were wealthy, snobbish, cruel, irreligious and corrupt, and as such stood in great contrast to the generally friendly, poorer, and highly religious Pharisees. It may be just that contrast that explains why Christ denounces them so much less often than the Pharisees. The Sadducees were so far from what Christ was preaching that there was no need for him to directly denounce their beliefs and actions. On the other hand, the people could easily have mistaken Christ's teaching for that of the Pharisees, had he not openly pointed out their hypocrisy and shallow understanding of the principles of the law.

So if the Sadducees were the wealthy, non-spiritual and present-minded class, who were the Pharisees? And how did they live? Like we stated earlier, the Pharisees seem to have formed out of the hasidhim, who were a party that originally strongly supported the Maccabean movement. It seems to be in direct response to the Sadducees Hellenism and growing looseness with the law that the Pharisees came into existence. They were fiercely tied to the law and its preservation and stringent obedience. They were more of a sect than a political party, and their name means "separatist", because they

carefully kept themselves from any legal contamination, a theme that can easily be seen in their conflicts with Christ about how and where he ate. By the time of Christ, the Pharisees had become energetically political and held seats in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish judicial counsel, although the Sadducees had the majority. As I said, they hated the idea of alliance with a Gentile power, and therefore were strong supporters of the Maccabean struggle for independence until Judas Maccabeus made a treaty with Rome. Because of their hatred of foreign alliances, which was based on the law's command to make no covenants with the people of the land, they were in conflict with the Herodians, as well, a Jewish party supporting Roman rulership.

They were certainly the religious class that should have had, and perhaps did have, the most sympathy for Christ's teaching. They followed him constantly, because it was their own disciples that Jesus directed most of his preaching too: the poor class that maintained hope for and belief in a Messiah. They were willing to debate with him where he came into conflict with their beliefs, whereas the Sadducees quickly turn to a plot to kill. The Pharisees even seem to have come to support the apostles after Christ's death, although passively, in contrast to the Sadducees who continued to condemn them and support their persecution. In Acts 5, Gamaliel, a Pharisee, stands up in the Sanhedrin and counsels them all to release the apostles, stating that otherwise they might find themselves even to fight against God. In Acts 23, Paul brings the Pharisees into sharp dispute with the Sadducees to his defence by mentioning the hope of resurrection. Paul, before his conversion, seems to have been an exception to this general attitude of sympathy towards the apostles by the Pharisees. Perhaps it was because of his disputes with Stephen and his fellow workers that Paul was willing to rekindle the enmity against the apostles.

Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God." (Act 6:9-11)

The accusation that the Christians spoke blasphemy against Moses and God would have been enough to infuriate a young, devout and energetic Pharisee. At any rate, Paul commissioned himself to the service of the Sadducees in persecuting the Christians.

While the Sadducees pretty well disappeared after the destruction of the temple, the center of their influence and work, the Pharisees, according to history, made peace with the Romans in considerable

numbers and continued after the destruction in 70 AD. They later wrote the rest of the Mishna and renewed their opposition to Christianity (undoubtedly apostate by this time).

As far as the beliefs of the Pharisees, the scriptures tell us that they believed in angels and spirits as well as the resurrection (Acts 23:8-9). They also held the “traditions” of the law in high esteem. They believed that these traditions were the oral part of the law that was handed down from Moses to Joshua and the elders and passed down to their time orally. The Mishna, which was a collection of these oral traditions, states, “Moses received the (oral) law from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets and the prophets to the men of the great synagogue.” They also accepted additions to the tradition made by prophetic inspiration or interpretation of the written law. In this, they parallel the history of the Roman Catholic church, holding creeds and traditions as highly as the written word if made by esteemed men. Part of this oral tradition included resurrection of the body to final judgement and consequent rewards or punishment thereafter, although this belief may have also included the immortality of the soul. It was their misunderstanding of the spirit behind the law, and its object in developing a deep Godly character, that made their traditions vain.

Here are a few examples of their traditions:

- You may go further than a Sabbath day’s journey if at some point you’ve deposited bread and water within a Sabbath day’s journey of the place you wish to visit. If you’ve deposited bread and water there, your house was legally extended to that place and you could travel a Sabbath day’s journey from there.
- You could ride an animal on the Sabbath, but you couldn’t use a whip, because carrying it would be classified as a burden on the animal.
- There was a difference on the Sabbath day in whether something was considered bestowing alms based on whether the beggar’s hand entered the giver’s door, or the giver’s hand crossed the threshold of his own house.

These traditions made what was right or wrong dependent on external situations, and thereby taught that acts or thoughts are not right or wrong unless performed in the wrong way or the wrong place.

Despite this loss of the spirit of the law, they did maintain their hopes for a Messiah, and were so strongly tied to their beliefs that they would die under torture rather than transgress the law. These Pharisees

were zealous in almsgiving which they considered the equivalent for righteousness, and were eager to make followers.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. (Mat 23:15)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. (Mat 23:23)

Much of their hypocrisy arose out of times when they had been persecuted. In these times, the Pharisees dutifully and carefully showed their religion despite its persecution. The succeeding generations carried this on, feeling the need to show their religion, which caused them to participate in hypocrisies like praying in the streetcorners. They were consciously acting a part.

The Pharisees' ambition to act righteously was very good, except that it developed in them a careful show of *outward* righteousness, which was very much opposed to Christ's preaching to cleanse the heart, not just the outward appearance. The power and influence of the Pharisees lay in their reputation with the people as a righteous group. Christ's exposure of their hypocrisy hurt that reputation.

The Sadducees manifested the self-pleasing, indulgent, irreligious, lax tendency of our nature, one extreme of the flesh's character. The Pharisees present the other extreme, self-righteous, prideful about their holiness and separateness, and demanding and burdensome to others. Truly, though, both extremes are prideful, self-pleasing. They are two separate guises for the same ugly thing: the dead body puffed up, the leaven, the leprosy. They are both simply sinful flesh, following its own ways, the end of which is the ways of death. There was a leaven of the Pharisees, and a leaven of the Sadducees.

So very often, even within our ecclesias, we have the same conflicts that the Sadducees and Pharisees had, albeit on a smaller, more subtle scale. Some are growing lax and allowing the world to creep in, and seem to be accepting all sorts of compromises to the truth, and others, usually in response become stringent, demanding, condemning and self-righteous, and we have the same two attitudes that Christ rebukes all through his ministry right within his own body! We have, in response to the Sadducean spirit, the development of the Pharisical one! And in response to that, there are cries of extreme, and a fierce defense and justification for the original laxity (which should have never occurred in the first place!). The problem is that when we act in

response to something, it is almost inevitable that we overcompensate, we go too far. We end up giving the flesh reign in the opposite avenue to counteract its action in first. What Christ did, though, was hold fast the truth of God's ways. He never aligned himself with the Pharisees' ideas to combat the Sadducean outlook; He never succumbed to the ideas of the Sadducees to fight the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He simply acted by direct guidance of God's word and ways. He maintained the truth in an unbiased way despite any external circumstances. Any other way is respect of persons – giving one bias to the truth in one situation and a different bias and emphasis in another. Let us, like Christ, *rightly divide the word of truth*, giving no expression to the flesh in any of its forms.

In Luke 12, we have Christ's warning *to his disciples*. He's warning *us* about their problem.

In the meantime, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. (Luke 12:1-3)

"He began to say unto his disciples first of all..."

If "First of all" is made the beginning of his statement, as some translations have it, it would be clearer— "He began to say unto his disciples, First of all..."

But either way still gives strong emphasis to his warning:

"Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

He does not mean beware of hypocrisy in others: he means beware of it in YOURSELF. This is clear from what he says further, in vs. 2-3.

First of all, ABOVE all, "Beware of hypocrisy." Because of the deceptiveness of the mind of the flesh, this is our greatest danger and stumbling block. This is the biggest hazard to our attainment of the Kingdom. The original word for "hypocrisy" literally means "acting a part on the stage." It means creating an appearance of being different from what we really are, or—and this is even more subtle and dangerous—thinking ourselves, our conduct, our motives, our characters, to be different from what they are.

Acting instead of really BEING is the great problem with us all. And we get so adept at acting a transformation, we think we've really transformed.

Naturally, by birth of sinful flesh, we are all hypocrites. The natural mind of the flesh is wholly hypocritical and false:

“In me—that is, in my flesh—dwelleth NO GOOD THING” (Rom. 7:18).

Only the light of the Spirit-Word, diligently studied and sincerely applied, can enable us to discern this natural, inbred hypocrisy of the flesh.

The diabolos is the great deceiver. The Spirit-Word is the great enlightener.

One of the 6 occurrences of this word "hypocrisy" is applied to Peter when he would not eat with the Gentiles (Gal. 2:13), there rendered "dissimulation." Peter was sincere, but he was deceived by the flesh. He did not see himself clearly. Let us constantly, searchingly, examine ourselves, our actions, our motives: WHY do we really do, say and think what we do?

God hates anything false and artificial—all hollow show and appearance and pretense. All such is out of harmony with truth, reality and eternity.

SO much attention is paid to external appearance! SO much pitiful effort to deck and camouflage and glorify and glamorize a poor, corrupt, perishing body. And so little concern or effort is shown for INNER reality and purification and transformation. "Beware of hypocrisy"—playacting, putting on a show, making clean and beautiful the outside, neglecting the inside that God alone can see. Any form of religion that does not go right down to the deepest roots of the heart and completely change and transform the whole life is HYPOCRISY—Pharisaism, counterfeit—powerless to save from death.

"For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; And that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops"—vs. 2-3.

The ACTING will be ruthlessly sifted from the true BEING. This is not a threat. It is a plain, simple statement of fact. And wisdom will be thankful, and guided by it.

We read of Achan's childish attempt to hide something from God by burying it in his tent, and how the whole affair was openly exposed

before the whole congregation, and he was destroyed. We see the same pitiful pantomime being acted out again at the beginning of another dispensation, in the scheming folly of Ananias and Sapphira. We wonder, in the superiority of our enlightenment, how people can be so stupid as to try to deceive God in such obvious, clumsy ways. But—"Beware of hypocrisy": if we will examine ourselves, we will find Achan and Ananias right within our own hearts.

We shall find the same stupidity of the flesh that thinks it can please itself and gratify itself and cut corners in God's service and still out-manuever God into giving us eternal life.

Ananias and Sapphira "kept back part of the price." They doubtless gave most of it, and felt noble in so doing, but the lesson is that "most" is not enough. Are we, to the best of our ability, and to the full extent of our opportunity, ALL that implied in God's commands and our solemn covenant that—"ALL that the Lord hath spoken we will do"?

To the extent that we are not, to that extent we are hypocrites—play-actors—holding back part of the price.

"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known."

—Bro. Glendon Rhoades

The Scriptural Significance of our Hymns – 178A

"Praise the LORD; for the LORD is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasant."

In Deuteronomy 28, the people of Israel were told that they would suffer plagues if they didn't obey him and one of those things required was to have joy in their feasts for all that was done for them. This morning, we had some of this reflected in the Psalms:

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the LORD's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

They forgot what their calling was, but in the future where singing joyfully is concerned, we read that: *"All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O LORD, when they hear the words of thy mouth. Yea,*

they shall sing in the ways of the LORD: for great is the glory of the LORD.”

They, as well as we, were not allowed the luxury of committing ourselves to deceit, but were instructed to do the following: *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

This morning we will reflect on the phrases, scriptures and ideas relevant to Hymn 178A.

“Lord, thy death and resurrection, We show this day.”

Why are we showing his death and resurrection this day? The one who said: *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by me.”* There is no other Name given under heaven among men by whom we can be saved but by Jesus Christ. Mankind only looks at those who succeed in this life without being killed. To them, Jesus was a failure. We are instructed to show the Lord’s death until he comes. Why? Because he showed us that the way to him is by the sacrifice that he effected in himself and told us that a servant is not above his Master.

‘Tis a tribute of affection We all should pay.

“Set your affections on things above, not on earth, for ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Wine outpoured

“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” Jesus shared this with his disciples at the recorded last supper. It was a special Passover before his suffering.

His followers could have thought about being brought out of Egypt. He was to bring them out of a greater bondage in the future.

Bread now broken

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” Jesus, as a lamb dumb before his shearers, opened not his mouth. His flesh represented in the bread that is broken and shared each time we assemble on the first day of the week. In eating of it, we identify with the nature that he

bore, that was killed on the cross. Of thy sacrifice the token *“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.”* All of the offerings in the law and the prophets were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, which they all represented.

Even so, as thou hast spoken

“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” This memorial was introduced as an ordinance to be kept.

We will obey

“Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? And who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

“Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers.”

“And when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh’s bondsmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our

God for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded."

Obedience to the commands of his Father are just as applicable to us today.

Til thou come we will remember thine agony

"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives: and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine be done."

"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."

"When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified."

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."

"And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots."

"And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" — "why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and

were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him. But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.”—These things that the Master suffered were meant to show us what privilege we have been given, especially since we have been born about 2000 years from the event.

Of thy body, every member suffers with thee

“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.”—Jesus represented us, being of our sinful nature.

But the glory that shall follow

“But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my LORD,

and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the LORD. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again, his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My LORD and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” —By believing what has been written concerning him, we are blessed along with the Apostles who were eye witnesses.

On the glad long-looked for morrow

“When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” — The Apostles were looking for the kingdom to immediately appear. Jesus made it known to them that it would be in due time.

Merging from the night of sorrow

“And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of war: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” —The sufferings that happen to us are not to be compared with the glory that will be following.

Revealed shall be

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

Till the morning break, oh may we, be wholly thine

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” —To abound is to be over and above all else.

Sun of righteousness, we pray thee, now rise and shine

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall

be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of host.” —The term, healing in his wings, is translated, healing in his beams, like rays of a sun.

Come Lord come from heaven descending

“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Thus, Peter and John testified to the fact that Jesus was to return, fulfilling everything as promised in the Law and the Prophets.

All the angelic host attending

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels received a place of honor above them.

To bestow the life unending

“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”. — Immortality to be bestowed at the return of Christ.

Nature divine

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall

have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." —Bro. Pat Brown

Encouraging Words No. 29

THE Coronation is over. It has not passed without leaving impressions and lessons. How could it, seeing that Britain's great metropolis has been turned upside down in preparing for it, and swept for two whole days of its everyday traffic and business?... Although the affair ranks with those things which Paul styles temporal, we should make a mistake if we looked upon it as a piece of mere theatrical scenery. No, the Coronation is a real event, and one which goes to make up history. Very real was the King, and also the splendour of his appointments. Very real were the Queen, and the beauty of her apparel. Very real were the evidences of power, wealth, and empire, contained in the train of dusky-skinned subjects—rulers and princes, in the colonial premiers, and soldiers of many countries. Very real were the packed masses of people, and the enthusiasm which voiced itself in roar upon roar of cheering. It was all very real, very soul-stirring, and yet there was much pathos in it—pathos because it was so transient. A few brief years, and ruler and people, the cheered and cheerer, will be where neither kingly glory nor loyal enthusiasm will serve to deliver them. One of old, who himself bore the glories of an imperial crown, and whose ears were familiar with acclamations which made his capital "ring again," expressed the outcome of it all: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

But what impressions did the Coronation convey to one who knows the truth? The mind necessarily reasons from the smaller to the greater, and the event served as a kind of Pisgah from which to view, so to say, the promised land. From this figurative Pisgah could be seen (with the eye of faith) a scene no less real but divested of the transient, mortal element. There was the King (King of kings and Lord of lords) "in his beauty," a beauty not simply of raiment and appointments, though these

were not lacking, but beautiful in his righteous character no less than in his divine appearance. In this picture there was nothing of pathos; it was one of strength, durability, invincibility, for this King “shall live” (Psalm 72:15). Accompanying this King, of which the world has never seen the like, was a retinue of rulers, princes, and warriors, whose rank came not from fleshly descent, but from a character won and maintained in the face of grinding affliction; a character gained, moreover, by crucifixion of those affections and lusts which, unbridled, have been the fall of many an illustrious empire. The attendant ministers and guests, too, on this intensely thrilling occasion, were no mere earth-borns, but God’s own representatives in the persons of His mighty, shining angels. Theirs it was to witness the investiture of the Son of God with the divine right and glory pertaining to David’s covenanted throne; theirs it was to make the earth sound again and again with glad acclaim.

Dear Sisters, this is the Coronation, and again we say it will be a real one, in which, thanks to God, we are invited to take part, not as mere far-off spectators, but as participators in all its joys and splendour. It seems almost too good to be true. And yet both the event, and the possibility of our having a part in it, have been assured to us by the oath of the Lord of Hosts, an oath confirmed by the resurrection and immortalisation of this coming Great One. Yes, dear sisters, the honour and glory are within our reach, but there is a pass required. It consists of the word “overcome”—“*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*”

Christ, impressed with the reality of the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. Paul, similarly moved, counted all things but refuse that he might win the recognition of this King. Let us see to it that this mind is ours, for without it we shall have neither the wish nor the strength to “overcome.”

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1911

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 29

THRICE did the unseen angel obstruct the path of Balaam (Num. 22:23–26). Thus did God give the erring prophet opportunities for reflection and repentance. But Balaam was not open to correction. He grew angry, and endeavoured to madly pursue his evil course. The incident contains a lesson for us. We are all prone at times to stray into forbidden paths, sometimes through ignorance, sometimes through positive wickedness. The Word may plainly speak, but through the

perversity of our hearts we wrest and evade it. Angels, too, are still at work. Though not visible, they minister to our well-being—"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:7). The incident referred to teaches this, and the testimony in many other places corroborates it. If at any time our course should be obstructed—if the "ass" refuse to go—let us think of Balaam. Let us not get desperate and unreasonable, but let us observe circumspection, and calmly examine our position by the light of the Word, and if need be penitently retrace our steps. How frequently does the opportunity for this occur?

There were many Balaams in the first century (Jude 11; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14), men who for unlawful reward, for money, patronage, or power, were ready to cover the truth, speak evil of faithful contenders, and lie in wait to seduce unstable souls. The Spirit in no uncertain voice foretold the increase and prosperity of these wicked men, and the terrible effect which their influence would have on the world at large. History has verified the accuracy of the prediction. Through the doctrine of the first century Balaamites, all nations are deceived and corrupt. But what took place in the first century—viz., the uprising in the brotherhood of Balaamites—has been repeated in the nineteenth, and may be again and again. Let us not conceal the fact. In this matter there is need for us to be as vigilant and outspoken as Paul. "Watch" was the apostle's counsel. Let us for our own sakes, as well as for others, re-echo the counsel—Watch! Let us beware of men who talk of broad-souledness, narrow-mindedness, uncharitableness, bigotry, &c., &c. Such is the language, not of the Bible, but of Balaams or their dupes. Faithful men will not coquet with evil, either in its doctrinal or practical bearings. Better an ecclesia of three where purity exists, than an ecclesia of three hundred where God and Mammon are jointly served.

How useful was Moses, yet God removed him, and removed him moreover in the midst of his work—"His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." We are certainly not in the land of the living because we are wanted. Our services—useful as they may be—could easily be dispensed with. Therefore there is not a tittle of ground on which to glory. Those who are disposed so to do, should remember that God is no more dependent upon their services than He was dependant upon the Jews to furnish an Abrahamic seed.—"Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." It is entirely of God's goodness that we poor, erring mortals live. It is of His goodness that He utilises our services whilst we live. And it is of His

goodness that we stand related to an existence as enduring and as happy as His own. To perceive the goodness of God is the mainspring of virtue in us: “How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.”—“The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” Our present life is but a stepping-stone to the next. By this is the value of our present life to be estimated. But the transition from the one to the other will rest solely upon the way in which we have allowed the knowledge of the truth to operate. It will form a part of Christ’s mission to destroy all trees which bear no fruit.

“Be ye free from the love of money” (Heb. 13:5. R. V.) This precept was not enjoined without a reason. “The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil”—lying, cheating, gambling, insane speculation, oppression, etc., etc. As obedient children let us ponder well the Spirit’s teaching upon the subject. Thus it runs: “Labor not for riches” (Prov. 23:4.)—lay them not up (Mat. 6:19.)—trust not in them (1 Tim. 6:17.). Riches are “uncertain” and “deceitful.” “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts.” Money-loving is one of Christendom’s great crimes. Mammon is allowed to usurp the place of God. The poor cry and rebel by the reason of the situation, and God is not indifferent to their cry (Jas. 5:4). Soon will come a time similar to that referred to by James, “Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.” The rich man, though now respected and applauded, will then be everywhere contemned. Poor wage and killing hours on the one hand, and unreasonable dividends on the other, are but features of the moment. Let those who are oppressed be patient. Likewise let those who are disposed to imbibe the prevailing money-grubbing spirit take especial care. God may try us in the matter. Moneymaking is very fascinating, and bad practices are not easily broken off. It is written—“A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mat. 19:23.) It is further said—No covetous man will find a place therein (Ephes. 5:5). Paul emphatically brings out the greatness of the sin of covetousness in the one sentence—“Let it not be once named among you.”

Bro. A. T. Jannaway—1890

Worldly Books

There are books that secularize the mind. They tend to interweave our affections and interests with the present order of things in which God is ignored, and which is destined to pass away.

In this the tendency is to inflict harm; for if we "*set our affections on things on the earth, not on things above*"—we cannot be well-pleasing to God; and to be not well-pleasing to Him is to be in a harmed state, certainly.

There are books and papers that tend to trivialize the mind, by engaging it in the petty aspects of life, and disposing it to find entertainment in the froth of fun and frolic.

This is not a healthy frame of mind from the point of view of wisdom. Wisdom is distasteful to those who live in an atmosphere of this kind. Wisdom is a sober thing. What can be more sober than the fear of God, which is its very beginning?

Books that take the heart away from God are not wholesome books for saints. The literature of the day is entirely of this character. And as for the heavier "classics" so-called, it is astonishing how altered is the aspect in which they appear when the taste is fully and finally formed on the basis of God's work with Israel as enshrined in the Holy Oracles of His truth.

Everything can be kept in its right place when God is on the throne of a man's heart. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, and let that growth have full sway which Paul enjoins when he says—

"Grow in the knowledge and love of God."

You will then attach the right value to all things—great or small as the case may be: and will know what books are useful, and what books are on the whole best left alone as hindrances on the difficult road of faith and obedience and holiness, which leads to the Kingdom of God.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1890

Bible Reading and Justification

Why should the reading of the preface to the Bible Companion "astound you?" It is not because it sets aside "the apostle Paul's doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith." It is not intended to, and does not, in any way conflict with this.

On the contrary, it upholds and magnifies it. For why should the daily reading of the Bible be pressed upon the reader's attention as in the Bible Companion, but because of what Paul says (2 Tim. 3:15), that the Scriptures—

"... are able to make a man WISE UNTO SALVATION."

How do they do this but by imparting the faith that justifies?
The faith that justifies is defined by Paul as—

"The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"
(Heb. 11:1).

We cannot get these invisible and hoped-for things into our minds but by **reading about them where God has caused them to be "written FOR OUR LEARNING" (Rom. 15:4).**

Hence, to direct a man to "a process of Bible reading" in order to get peace, is just in accordance with the "instructions given in the New Testament," instead of being "far from" them, as you say.

True it is that the work of Christ is the ground of our justification; but **this work has no justifying power for a man who is ignorant and unbelieving of it**; and how can a man become enlightened with regard to it except through the Scriptures?—where, we quite agree with you, are to be found "God's thoughts of how a lost sinner is to be saved."

The reading of the Bible is not to be set forth as "the ground on which God justifies the believer," but as **the means by which he becomes enlightened with reference to that ground.**

"The value of Christ's work" could not be placed higher than in Christadelphian teaching. The question is, **HOW WE COME INTO CONTACT WITH THAT WORK?**

It is here where we have to differ from modern theology. We recognize saving faith as the result of **belief**, and belief as the result of **knowledge**, and knowledge as the result of the **information God has given us** in the Bible. Our whole ground is governed by what Christ says concerning the Gospel—

"He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved."

Bro. Robert Roberts—1890

Disfellowship

Now, by what means shall a community, based on the truth, preserve the truth in purity in its midst? Obviously by the means indicated by Paul and John, that is, by exacting of all who are in it an implicit adherence to the things, facts, principles, points, tenets, or whatever else they may be called, which go to make up the truth in its entirety, and by refusing to associate with those who oppose or refuse

to endorse any of those elements. Some recommend, in opposition to this, the employment of argument with those who may be in error. As a preliminary process, common wisdom and humanity would dictate this course; but if an ecclesia is to go no further than argument, how could its existence continue? An effort would, doubtless, be put forth to reclaim those who are in error; but, where those efforts fail, dissociation by withdrawal is natural and inevitable.

The ecclesia is not a place for argument; it is for fellowship in agreement. When a man requires to be argued with, his natural place is outside, and if he will not go outside, separation must be enforced by withdrawal on the part of the rest. The adoption of this policy may be oftentimes hurtful to amicable feeling, but this must not deter from faithfulness; Christ distinctly foretold that the result of his operations in the world would be to sow division, causing father to separate from son, mother from daughter, and the closest of friends to divide. Therefore, the occurrence of painful violations of friendship need not surprise, or cause uneasiness to, devout minds, as if something were happening contrary to the mind of Christ. Division is the inevitable concomitant of an uncompromising adherence to the truth. Peace purchased at the cost of compromise is doubly dangerous. The truth is the standard, and must alone be allowed to rule. All doubts ought to be solved in its favour. This is the principle of action to which study will ultimately lead. The act of separation is not an act of judgment against those from whom we may separate. It is an act of self-vindication; an act by which we discharge a duty and wash our hands of evil.” —RR

The Christadelphian—1867

Ascend Hither

“Ascend hither, and I will exhibit to thee things which must come to pass after these.” — Ch. 4:1.

After resurrection is ascension; but not necessarily instantaneously after. This is evident from the example given in the case of the Lord Jesus. He first came out of the sepulchre; and then, after a certain interval, “ascended to the Father;” an ascent which is not to be confounded with his *assumption* from the Mount of Olives, forty-three days after his crucifixion — John 20:17; Acts 1:11. He ascended to the Father before he was “taken up.” The ascent was a necessary preparation for the taking up of the resurrected body; for a body such as he had, when he forbad Mary to touch him, was unfit for translation

through the higher regions of our atmosphere, and the airless ethereal beyond. It was necessary that he should be “in spirit” and so become spirit, that he might be with the Father. So John “looked” and “heard,” which are vital actions; but though living and looking he saw nothing until after the invitation to ascend, with the promise, that subsequently to the ascent he should see an exhibition of things which should come to pass when “the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom” (Dan. 7:22); which implies their resurrection and ascent after the similitude of the dramatic resurrection and ascension of John.

The invitation to John to ascend into the heaven was equivalent to inviting him to “meet the Lord in the air;” and by implication, an invitation to all whom he represented to do so likewise at the appointed time. This is the only place in the apocalypse where it is said to John *anaba hode, ascend hither!* In ch. 17:1, and 21:9, it is said *deuro, come here,* or “come hither;” and in doing so, he is “in spirit borne away into a wilderness;” and “upon a great and high mountain.” In the wilderness he sees the Mother of Harlots, and the ensanguined Sin-Powers by which she is sustained; and from upon the mountain that overtops all other mountains, he beholds “the House of the Elohim of Jacob” (Isa. 2:3), or, the New Jerusalem Community, in the light of which the nations of the Millennial Aion walk in peace and goodwill. But when “a door in the heaven is opened,” John is not borne, or carried away; he is called up. He is invited to “ascend” — to ascend to the kingdom and throne to be established in the heaven. There is a testimony analogous to this in ch. 11:12, where a class of persons not represented by John are addressed in the words, *anabete hode, ascend ye hither!* And it says “they ascended into the heaven in the cloud which ascended.” This cloud of witnesses was the political element of the “*Two Witnesses,*” which had been politically dead, but unburied, for 105 years, at the end of which, that is, in 1789-'90, they rose again, and ascending to the heaven in the sight of their terrified enemies, became the ruling power in the state. Hence for John to ascend into the heaven dramatically was indicative of those he represents, who have been prevailed against by the Sin-Powers of the Habitable, trodden under foot for the previous forty-two months of years, and sleeping in the dust, ascending from these depths of humiliation and degradation, to the high and exalted position of kings and priests for the Deity, through whom the world shall be ruled for a thousand years.

Hints For Bible Markers

“Follow peace with all men” gives us the proper attitude concerning war and the bearing of arms. Indeed, we are to live in peace, which when one considers that anger is a loss of control, it becomes clear that when we become angry with neighbors or one another we violate this command. All who belong to Christ are to walk in love, peace, and holiness. Obedience: This command requires continual effort and vigilance. We are surrounded by evil, we are born in sin and need to be watchful that we do not become entangled with the cares of this world, succumbing to the mind of the flesh. Our minds are so constituted, so prone to sin, we do not often realize the many ways in which we do sin. We murmur constantly. Most of the time we are not even aware we are doing it. How many times have we grumbled about going to work, something our boss told us to do, or something somebody said or did to us. That is murmuring. This habit is particularly harmful when directed towards ecclesial affairs. Ecclesial work is difficult and taxing without brethren and sisters complaining about the work that someone else is doing. It must not be forgotten that Christ is the head of ecclesial affairs, the unseen guest at every meeting, and the silent listener in every conversation. It may be a shock to realize it is possible to keep from sinning. (1 John 2:1) “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not.” We would be wise to consider our ways; to focus our mind that we might follow holiness; that we might be found worthy of the vocation to which we have been called. *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)

Do all things without murmuring and disputing.

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: (Philippians 2:14)

Berean 2011-108