

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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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

KENYA,

Hello brothers and sisters,

Loving greetings in the hope of Israel. As I'm writing this email the brethren and sisters have laid Sis. Jennifer's remains in the dust, resting and awaiting the return of our Lord Jesus. We all pray that the Ikutha/Kwebsi Ecclesia finds strength in knowing she will not sleep long as Lord's return is nigh at hand. May we all continue to pray for the members of this Ecclesia as suffer from loss. Also, please do not forget our Bro. Moses Kassim, her husband, your thoughts and prayers. The following is a letter from Bro. Epa about the plans, it was sent to me at 6:30am Friday the 4th..

Right now we are going to Athi/Kibwezi for the funeral. We shall stop at Makindu where the body of sister Jennifer is lying.

Bro Kassim has arranged to collect the body at 10 a.m. We shall join him and move to Athi for burial from Makindu. Makindu is near Emali.

We are using John's car. With us are sisters Caro and Mary Walukana. Bro Moses Wafula of Nakalira also is with us.

We shall have an opportunity to talk on the Nature of Man, What Happens in Death and Resurrectional Responsibility.

We miss you brother. Remember we saw Jennifer with you on our last visit there February 26th.

Bro. Epa Wekati

Love in the One Hope of Israel, Bro. Bob Bent

FRATERNAL GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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

GOLDTHWAITE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**Nov 23–25, 2012**

Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864. 325-985-3868.

Information available at: www.christadelphian.com/gw/gathering/

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 5

“And the people blessed all the men that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem”—Neh. 11:2.

CHAPTER 8 ends on a note of exultant joy—a foretaste of the final great anti-typical Feast of Tabernacles. In ch. 9 the whole picture changes—the tone of ch. 9 is realization, repentance, resolve and reform.

We might have said, *mourn* first, put things right, and *then* rejoice. But Nehemiah said, *“Rejoice* first! Joy in the strength of *Yahweh*—then let us assemble with fasting and sack cloth to make a covenant with our God.”

The joy had to come first. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was like treasure hidden in a field; which, when a man findeth—

“For joy thereof he goeth and selleth all that he hath.”

The joy had to come first. It was the joy that made him sell everything else. The joy is the strength that makes the sacrifice possible—

“For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame.”

We must not limit this joy to the future, *for it is the strength of the present.* The fruits of the Spirit are “Love, Joy and Peace”. *Then* follow the others, built upon these—meekness, self-control, etc. Until the joy comes—takes hold of us, fills us—we haven’t *begun* to understand the Truth.

The joy of ch. 8 is tempered in ch. 9 with the realization that the nation’s record before God was a dismal one, that their present distressed condition was a result of long abuse of God’s patience, and that they themselves had been content to lay so long in ignorance and disobedience.

First (v. 2) they separated themselves from all strangers. Does this conflict with the command we looked at a little while ago that *all the strangers must attend and hear* the Law read at the Feast of Tabernacles?

No. *There*, it was the public proclamation of the Word—the preaching and the teaching of the will of God and the way of righteousness. *Here*, it is fellowship and covenant—God’s relation to His separated people.

Here again (v. 3) the Law is read to them, but the process is different, and the application more personal. For a period the Law is read. Then for a period they confess where they have failed. They

examine themselves by what has been read. They pray, and confess, and seek forgiveness.

Their purpose is reconciliation with God, as a separate, purified, faithful people. Most of this chapter is a prayer in the form of a *long historical confession of the sins of the nation* from the days of Moses forward. It lists the continual manifestations of God’s love and goodness toward them, and their continual disobedience and rebellion.

This prayer illustrates one very important principle—when things are wrong *they cannot be put right by just ignoring the past.*

There can be no sound foundation for the future if the facts of the past are not recognized.

The past was on record—the continual struggles of the faithful prophets against the unfaithful majority. They could have said, “All that is passed. We refuse to have it considered. Just take us as we are on our present profession.”

But that would not have been acceptable. It would not have provided a clean and sound foundation. *It would have left the picture confused, and their real allegiance in doubt.*

And so they concluded the prayer by (v. 7) referring to their miserable and oppressed condition—all their possessions and their own bodies and lives subject to the whim of a heathen king.

But they did not ask for relief. They recognized its justice and purpose. What they *did* do was to enter into a written, signed covenant, and a solemn curse, and an oath, to separate from all others and to faithfully observe all the Law that God had given them through Moses.

CHAPTER 10 begins by listing all the leaders who subscribed to this covenant. Eliashib the high priest is not among them. Apart from the actual building of the wall, he is not mentioned as taking part in any of these activities or reforms.

The latter part of ch. 10 is a list of items that were considered to require special mention in the covenant, because of their seriousness, and because of the time’s special abuses.

The *very first one*, at the top of the list, is that old stone of stumbling that had caused so much evil and corruption all down through their history right up to their own time—ALIEN MARRIAGE—a *wilful, presumptuous, premeditated* breaking down the scriptural wall of separation and safety.

* * *

THEY ALSO covenanted (v. 31) that they would—

“...leave the 7th year and the exaction of every debt.”

The release of the 7th year was one of the most beautiful and wholesome and unworldly provisions of the Law—

“At the end of every 7 years thou shalt make a release...Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it...”

“He shall not exact it of his neighbor, or of his brother, because it is called the Lord’s release” (Deut. 15:1-2).

And they could not circumvent this by refusing to lend, the same chapter commands them to lend to any in need.

Consider the implications of this command! Every 7th year all debts were cancelled. It was designed for a purpose. It was designed to break the habit of obeying the selfish impulses of the flesh, and to develop large, wholesome, godly qualities of mind.

The basic evils of the flesh are the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life—that is, greed, lust, and pride. This comprehends all natural human motives.

The command was to give them practice in developing faith and overcoming greed—to *break them out of the natural worldly way of thinking and acting.*

The commands of Christ carry even greater revolutionary and flesh-nullifying implications, if we will face them in their fulness.

The final item of the covenant is significant, especially in view of what happens later (end of v. 39)—

“And we will not forsake the house of our God.”

We won’t give up and get tired, or be drawn away by other interests. We will stick with it to the end.

* * *

WE REMEMBER that at the beginning of ch. 7, when the wall was finished—

“The city was large, but the people were few therein,”

—and Nehemiah decided to record all the people of the land by genealogy.

As we begin in ch. 11, the census has been made and all the people cast lots to see who would dwell in Jerusalem.

It was necessary for their national existence that this capital city, the center of all their worship and religious activity, be maintained. But living there was a disadvantage. It was dangerous, because it was against here that all the enemies’ schemes were directed, and it would

be common knowledge that *many rulers of Judah were allied with the enemy and had plotted against Nehemiah and those that supported him.*

Furthermore, it was greatly disadvantageous to live in Jerusalem because their livelihood and prosperity depended upon working upon their lands.

Therefore they cast lots and picked one out of every 10 to live in Jerusalem.

*“And the people blessed all the men that **willingly** offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.”*

Some chose it willingly, as a personal sacrifice on behalf of the nation. These put *spiritual* consideration before *temporal* considerations—the service and glory of God before their own advantage. They are types of the faithful who choose to live in the Holy City with all its present dangers and worldly disadvantages.

It was by all these measures that Nehemiah took that Jerusalem was put on the way of becoming once again populous and active. It took much faith and effort to get the process started.

The rest of ch. 11 to v. 19 gives the names and *numbers* of those groups that dwelt at Jerusalem. The balance of the chapter gives a general listing of the places where the *rest* of the people lived, but they are *not numbered*.

Here again the type is followed, for the inhabitants of the Holy City are listed and numbered, but those without are not. We are reminded of the reference to the careful measuring of the Holy City in Rev. 11, illustrative of the fact that the lives, trying and disciplining of the people of God are all divinely measured and directed, while that of the outside world is left to time and chance.

This chapter in Nehemiah is one of the nine places where Jerusalem is spoken of as the “Holy City,” the others being in Isaiah, Matthew, and Revelation.

* * *

THE FIRST 26 verses of ch. 12 deal with the priesthood. Vs. 1-7 gives the heads of the priestly courses at the time of Zerubbabel; vs. 12-21 the leaders of these courses in the next generation.

Vs. 10 and 11, in between, give the line of descent of the High Priests. Jeshua was the High Priest who returned with Zerubbabel. His grandson Eliashib, the friend of Tobiah and Sanballat, was High Priest at the time of Nehemiah. Three generations are listed beyond Eliashib, which would be the line from him to the youngest of the High Priestly line then born.

Paul's remarks in Hebrews concerning the infinite superiority of the High Priesthood of Christ over that of the fleshly line of Aaron is vividly emphasized by the unfaithful Eliashib at this critical and typical period in Israel's history. Truly there is great significance in the statement that the Law was "weak through the flesh."

"Weak through the flesh." The flesh is a weak thing, for all its pomp and pride and pretensions. Apart from the strengthening of the Spirit, it is utterly helpless and undependable. If man could only see himself as he really is, and seek the divine strength that is so freely and graciously offered! If we ourselves could only perceive and achieve this in its fulness!

* * *

THE LISTING and ordering of the priestly courses seem to complete the organization of the city and the worship.

All is now ready for the great event that climaxes Nehemiah's labors—the joyful and triumphant dedication of the completed walls and organized city of God.

The Holy City is finished and complete, as far as was within the possibilities of the time.

The event, therefore, is typical and symbolic of the final dedication of the Holy City to God, as portrayed in the final chapters of the Revelation.

V. 27—*"And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places."*

The Levites—the priests—typical of the seeking out and gathering of the great company, the chosen nation, the kingdom of priests, the redeemed, the Lamb's Wife—

". . . to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, with thanksgiving and with singing."

How clearly the final antitypical fulfillment is brought before our mind—

"The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: and they shall obtain gladness and joy: and sorrow and mourning shall flee away" (Isa. 51:11).

* * *

V. 30—*"And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall."*

As it is recorded in the Revelation (21:27)—

“There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Now Nehemiah brings the princes of Judah, the priests and the singers, up upon the top of the wall, apparently at the southeast corner of the city.

There he divides them into *two companies*. Here we have a clear representation of the *2-fold aspect of the Household of God*—Jew and Gentile—which is portrayed in so many ways.

These two companies set out in opposite directions upon the wall, finally meeting together again at the northwest corner of the city at the sheep gate, where building of wall first started, *by the Temple*—illustrating the separating of Jew and Gentile and their finally converging and uniting again *in Christ*, who is the beginning and ending of the purpose of God.

We note at the end of v. 39 that, when they had completed their course, they—

“. . . *STOOD STILL in the prison gate.*”

The prison is the grave, and only Jesus can open that gate. Today all his people of past ages, having completed their course on the wall, are “*standing still in the prison gate,*” awaiting the trumpet-call to come forth and to enter into the joyful ceremonies of praise.

So the dedication was completed, and (v. 43)—

“That day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy—the wives also and the children rejoiced...”

Note again the *specific inclusion of the children*. We remember a similar occasion when the children rejoiced as a triumphant procession entered Jerusalem, and the pompous, self-important, hypocritical Pharisees thought Jesus should make them stop.

All our efforts should be to get our children to rejoice in the Lord; to get them to realize—

“*How great is His goodness, how great is His beauty!*”

If we can only accomplish this, we have given them the Pearl of Great Price.

“*...and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.*”

—even as it will when the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, is made manifest.

The rest of the chapter records how joyfully the worship and the

services and the providing of the tithes and of the portions for the priests and Levites continued to function in a thankful atmosphere of zeal and harmony.

* * *

IT WOULD be very pleasant if the book ended here. Nehemiah's labors had reached a glorious and triumphant accomplishment. The wall is built, the gates set up, the genealogies established, the priestly courses arranged, the services set in order, the Law being studied, the people rededicated to God by a solemn covenant of obedience—joy and holiness and zeal reign triumphant.

But there is another chapter.

(To be continued Lord willing next month)

—*Bro. G.V. Growcott*

Paul The Apostle to the Gentiles

Every year in the beginning of May our daily readings take us to the book of Acts, where beginning in chapter 7 to the end of the book we read about the life of the Apostle Paul. So, I thought it would be beneficial to delve into his life and works to find out just who was this man whose activities take up a great deal of the New Testament? We thought we would begin by giving you a little background overview of Paul's life.

Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin – and he was born in Tarsus, which was a free city in Rome, which gave Paul the honor and advantage of being a free Roman citizen, even though both his parents were Jews. He was born with the name Saul before his conversion by Christ and he was sent to Jerusalem for his education and was a student of Gamaliel, who was a prominent Pharisee and respected member of the Sanhedrin. Also, Acts chapter 23 tells us that Paul had at least one sister who lived in Jerusalem.

Now in his early manhood he was a malicious persecutor of the followers of Christ – delivering them into bondage and imprisonment and even death as recorded when he watched and consented to the stoning and death of Stephen. But, following his conversion by Christ, Paul did a 360 degree turn around by ceasing the persecution of Christ's followers to preaching and teaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. From then on, Paul was on his way to becoming the greatest worker of all of Christ's Apostles.

Some of the places he preached were Cyprus – Perga – Antioch – Pisidia – Iconium – Lystra – Derbre – Syria – Cilicia – Phrygia – Galatia – Europe – Spain – Rome and Jerusalem. Paul's occupation was a tentmaker (he supported himself by manual labor just as we do

today). Paul suffered from a particular physical infirmity which some believe may have been poor vision. He endured many hardships and trials and three times he was beaten with rods – he suffered bonds and imprisonment and was shipwrecked 3 times.

Some of the miracles he performed – he cured a lame man – healed a damsel – restored a dead man to life – healed a viper’s bite and many other unnamed cures.

When he was in Rome, he rented a house for two years *“Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”*

According to profane history, Paul’s life ended when he was beheaded by Nero near Rome about AD 66.

So, you may be thinking – why is he telling me this? Well, because I believe that nothing is any more obvious in the New Testament scriptures than the fact that Paul is a Christ-appointed model for us to copy. First of all, we have Christ’s own words when he told Ananias *“he is a chosen vessel unto me.”* Now would you not think that a man chosen by Christ would be a safe example for us to follow?

So, let’s follow his life – his probationary walk – his characteristics, attitude, faith and passion for the truth. Paul himself commands us in 1st Corinthians to *“Be ye FOLLOWERS OF ME, as I am also of Christ.”* Well, what does he mean by that? Actually, he makes it clear in several places like 1st Timothy 1:16 where he tells us that although he was a persecutor of Christ’s followers, he received mercy because *“in him first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, FOR A PATTERN to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.”* And then Paul tells us in Philippians *“Those things which ye both LEARNED and RECEIVED and HEARD and SEEN in me DO.”*

Paul was very emphatic to the Corinthians when he told them *“though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet ye have not many fathers...wherefore I beseech you, BE YE FOLLOWERS OF ME. For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall BRING YOU UNTO REMEMBRANCE OF MY WAYS WHICH BE IN CHRIST, as I teach everywhere in every ecclesia.”* And then in 2nd Timothy 3 Paul tells us what those ways were when he tells Timothy *“Thou hast fully known my doctrine, MANNER OF LIFE, PURPOSE, FAITH, LONGSUFFERING, CHARITY, and PATIENCE.”*

So what were some of the attributes of Paul that we are asked to imitate? Probably his most outstanding point (which also is the greatest commandment) was his constant, supreme, and dedicated recognition of God in all he did, said, or thought. Paul did not merely preach the

Gospel of the Kingdom, but as he tells us in Thessalonians, “*We preach unto you the GOSPEL OF GOD.*” You see, Paul really thought of himself as a personal agent of God as he told the Corinthians “*We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.*”

The love of God is the first and greatest aspect of the household of faith which Paul worked so hard to establish; without it, Paul’s writings are of little value. It was the first of the great commandments that men should love God with all their strength and soul and mind. Paul is a living example for us to follow concerning this commandment. As a matter of fact he is a great example of what James says when he refers to those who say “*Today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.*” But the apostle James says “*Ye ought to say, IF THE LORD WILL, we shall live and do this or that.*” This was the habit of Paul, our example from Christ.

When he was parting from the brethren at Ephesus, Paul said “*I will return again unto you, IF GOD WILL.*” – In writing to the Corinthians as to the possibility of his visit, he said “*I will come to you shortly, IF THE LORD WILL.*” – And to the Romans, he says that he had “*made request in prayer, that he might have a prosperous journey to them, BY THE WILL OF GOD.*” And let’s not forget Paul’s brethren, following his example, when they saw that they could not discourage him from encountering danger at Jerusalem, they said, “*THE WILL OF THE LORD BE DONE.*” If a door was opened to Paul, we are told in Corinthians that it was opened to him “*OF THE LORD*” – If Paul lived in all good conscience, we are told in Acts that it was “*BEFORE GOD*” – If he wanted a witness as to the truth of his labors, we are told in Romans that witness was “*GOD WHOM HE SERVED*” – if Paul found it necessary to comfort his brethren, his preaching was to the fact that **GOD IS FAITHFUL** “*who would not suffer them to be tempted above that which they were able to bear.*”

Paul – like Christ, always had God before his mind and he is our example. The majority of the world today knows not God. So let’s take heed to the command of Paul who tells us “*Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable, and PERFECT WILL OF GOD.*”

So when we think about Paul’s constant recognition of God, then it is not unusual to find out that he was also a man of prayer – which is another feature of our Christ- appointed model for us to consider. Almost his first appearance in the New Testament finds him in this role. When Christ was telling Ananias where to find Saul of Tarsus, he said “*BEHOLD HE PRAYETH*” – When they were imprisoned at Philippi at midnight “*PAUL AND SILAS PRAYED AND SANG*

PRAISES” – when he said farewell to the Ephesians *“HE KNELT DOWN AND PRAYED WITH THEM ALL”*.

Paul also prayed for his brethren in Philippi when he said *“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in EVERY PRAYER OF MINE for you all making request with Joy.”* – And in preaching to the Colossians he says *“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, PRAYING FOR YOU ALWAYS.”* Paul sometimes asked his brethren to pray for him, as he requested in Romans 15 when he says *“strive with me in your PRAYERS TO GOD FOR ME.”* Then in Philemon he tells them *“I trust THROUGH YOUR PRAYERS I shall shortly be given to you.”*

But above everything else, Paul makes it a matter of urgent request that the brethren should give themselves to prayer. For in the 4th chapter of Philippians he exhorts *“In everything in PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION let your requests be made known unto God.”* – In 1st Timothy he says *“I will that men PRAY everywhere.”* – and in 1st Thessalonians he commands *“Pray without ceasing; in EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS, for this is the will of God concerning you.”*

You see, brothers and sisters, Paul exemplified in himself the exhortation that he gave to the brethren in Ephesians chapter 5 when he said *“let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt...sound speech that cannot be condemned...neither jesting nor foolish talking, which are not convenient, but rather GIVING OF THANKS.”*

There are some other features of our Christ-appointed model that I think would be beneficial for us to consider. The one I think that is extremely important is the fact that Paul had a great deal of consideration and affection for his brethren. Listen to what Paul says to the ecclesia at Thessalonica *“Being AFFECTIONATELY DESIROUS OF YOU, we were willing to have imparted to you not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls because YE WERE DEAR TO US.”*

This attitude of Paul’s is far different from the position taken by the majority of the world today. Nowadays it is considered weak to be affectionate...and small to be loving and sympathetic toward our fellow man. Mankind today seems to harden each other with their fleshly lusts and worldly pride. But when we look at Paul’s example, he represents a totally different school as compared to the school of the world. Paul’s education is represented by the school of Christ, who himself was lowly, meek and humble – who was not ashamed to be moved to tears. After all, it was Christ who wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and as Hebrews tells us he prayed to God with *“Strong crying and tears.”*

Paul was also a tender-hearted man who was often moved with tears. We are told in Acts 20 that he *“Served the Lord with many tears.”* And later on he declared that he *“Ceased not to warn every one*

of the brethren, night and day with tears.” – Paul was deeply touched at heart because of the loving concern of his brethren who tried very hard to discourage him from going on a dangerous journey to Jerusalem. And his emotional reply was “What mean ye to weep and break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

Just look at what courage and un-dying devotion in his service to Christ that Paul was willing to do, as well as being susceptible to tender emotion and love for the brotherhood. When you compare his virtues and Christ-like attitude to the world today, you can easily see that they do not at all conform to Paul’s example. They are content, without being FAITHFUL – They are intelligent, without being LOVING – They are courageous, without being HUMBLE – They are bold, without showing REVERENCE – They show leadership, without any REGARD TO OTHERS – And they are boastful and proud, without showing SYMPATHY and CONSIDERATION.

Brothers and sisters we cannot afford to be lulled or conditioned into taking on any of these worldly characteristics. We would do well if we would try to resist the influence that these people have upon us, and try to counteract it by attempting to follow the example that Christ has given us in the Apostle Paul.

We have only touched the surface of the character of the man who has been set before us as a model to follow. However, I would encourage you to look for the many other traits, attitudes and examples Paul admonishes us to follow as we continue to go through the books that concern him as we do our daily readings. If we do, we will find that we may be better equipped to *“walk that straight and narrow path that leads to life everlasting.”*

Now of his attributes that we have discovered so far, this is the summary:

We find that Paul was a man of good conscience, and modest concerning himself; yet he was bold when it was necessary; — He was an earnest, eager, devoted friend and servant of Christ; — We have found him a kind man who was mindful of the needs of others; — He was interested in his brethren and showed concern for their welfare and had compassion for the poor. We have found him a man of sympathy – of affection – and of tenderness of heart. We have found him above all a lover of God – A man of prayer – With constant recognition and regard for the will of God in all matters. He was also a continuous example of soberness and godliness.

Now, we may think that these characteristics and virtues are a lot to live up to, which indeed may be the case. But we must remember we have this model of Paul set before us by Christ himself for us to

emulate. And, we cannot afford to think that the effort is much more than we can handle just because we may think the bar is set too high and the job is too great. – Sure, our attempt to copy Paul may be weak and blundering and kind of patchy at first. But with a lot of patience and a great deal of reading and study and practice, we will find the attempt will grow easier with every effort that we make – until finally we will have reached to a certain degree of Paul’s model. And who knows, we may have added to our faith one or more of the qualities that he admonishes us to add which are – *“Virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, Godliness, brotherly kindness and charity.”*

Brothers and sisters we should always remember that in the Great Teacher of our school, which is Christ (whom we memorialize in this bread and wine) we have a faithful High Priest, who knows our infirmities, and will make allowances for our shortcomings – but ONLY if we are faithful and diligent students making the effort to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. He is at the right hand of the throne of God to make intercession for us; — and with all our struggles with the old man within us, and the wicked world without – He is able to help them who are tempted.

So, as we go through Paul’s writings in the New Testament during our Daily Readings and see his life and works unfold, let us try to identify those Christ-like virtues that he displays to us and strive to attain unto them that we may improve ourselves during this our probationary walk. For Christ does not picture an ecclesial household at the time of His coming in a state of high spiritual strength and vigor, but rather in a state of weakness, laxness and self-satisfaction. Over and over our Savior envisions a household, the majority of which have become more worldly and more deeply concerned with temporal things than they are preserving the unity of the one faith and keeping the commandments of Christ. We pray that the Berean household will be able to “earnestly contend for the FAITH which was once delivered unto the saints.” And we could do this by adhering to our Christ appointed model, the Apostle Paul in faith, walk, character and conduct. Because in 2nd Timothy chapter four he was able to say toward the end of his life, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; but not for me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” Let us brothers and sisters strive to attain that same goal. But if we slip in the effort, we have Paul’s assurance to us in the 2nd chapter of Hebrews when he says:

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in TIME OF NEED.”

Bro. Jerry Connolly

Berean 2012—195

The Prophecy of Malachi

With Malachi we reach the last of the Old Testament prophets. The prophecy of Malachi is not only the last book of the Old Testament but is last in chronological arrangement. After his days the sun went down over the prophets and their voice was no more heard until John the Baptist appeared to announce the coming of the greatest of all prophets.

Nothing is known concerning Malachi, either personally or historically. Some think that the word is merely a title and not a name. But in view of the fact that the other prophets, whose writings we have been considering, have given their actual names, we see no reason why we should not accept Malachi as the prophet's name.

The name means messenger of Jehovah. The term is used by the prophet three times. In chapter 2, verse 7, he rebukes the priests, styling them the messenger of the Lord of hosts. In chapter 3, verse 1, he foretells the coming of the messenger who should prepare the way for the messenger of the covenant, who would sit as a refiner and would purify the sons of Levi.

The date of this prophecy has been variously determined. The general opinion, however, is that Malachi was contemporary with, or immediately followed Nehemiah. The protests and rebukes well apply to the condition of things described by Nehemiah.

You will doubtless recall that when we considered the prophecy of Haggai, we noticed the result of his warnings and promises. We saw the temple rebuilt, and although it did not reveal the glory of Solomon's, yet it became the House of God and the center of worship.

Sometime after this (about 80 years) another company, under the leadership of Ezra, came up from Babylon. They found affairs in a very sad state. However, Ezra put his heart into the work and after praying earnestly to the God of Israel for help, brought about a reformation of the people.

Some years after this, Nehemiah came into the land of Judah. He had received bad reports and upon arrival found the people in great affliction and reproach. In Nehemiah 2: 17 we read—

“Then said I unto them, ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem that we be no more a reproach.”

Then he directed his attention to the moral condition of the people. The oppression of the poor was ended, the law of Moses was read to the people and expounded. The people entered into a covenant to walk in God's Law and to observe and do all the commandments of the

Lord. Under the guidance of Nehemiah, much good was accomplished, but the time came when he had to return to Babylon.

After some time he came again to Jerusalem and found that his good work had all been undone. It is at this point we observe the rebuke of Malachi and conclude that at this particular time his voice was heard as the messenger of the Lord. In Neh. 13:10, he says—

“And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field.”

Now compare this with Malachi 3:8-10—

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”

And then read Neh. 13:11-12—

“Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.”

Our next comparison is that concerning mixed marriages. Nehemiah 13:23-27—

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?”

Now read Malachi 2:11-14—

“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.

The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.”

Verse 13 has an important bearing on the date of the prophecy—*”and this ye have done again.”* This word “again” shows that it could not have been in the days of Ezra.

One more comparison: Neh. 13:9—

“Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.”

—and Mal. 2:8—

“But ye are departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the law, ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts.”

After making these comparisons we feel quite safe in believing that Nehemiah and Malachi were contemporary.

We turn now to the prophet’s message. His opening call should have caused Israel to stop and consider. Mal. 1:2-3—

“I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob’s brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”

Israel should have responded to this love but they failed to do so. Therefore, the prophet proceeds to rebuke them.

The balance of the chapter and the first ten verses of chapter two take up the rebuke of the priests. They had despised God’s name. They had offered polluted bread upon the altar by offering the blind, the lame, the torn, and the sick. This was a direct violation of law, which required that the offerings should be without blemish. *“Is it not evil,”* said the prophet.

The saying that follows is not only ironic but goes right to the root of the matter. *“Offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the Lord of hosts.”*

It is also in keeping with the time of the prophet, if we have correctly determined the date, for Nehemiah was governor at the time.

In addition to polluting the altar, they added to their transgression by doing everything for gain and even then accounting it a weariness. Mal. 1:10,12-14—

“Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand...But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hosts; and ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick; thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand? saith the Lord. But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

On account of Israel’s unfaithfulness, salvation is extended to the Gentiles. In harmony with other prophets, Malachi says in verse 11—

“For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles: and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.”

Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Zechariah had made similar declarations concerning the time when the glory of the Lord should cover the earth and his blessing come upon all nations.

The prophet then turns his attention to the people who had married strange wives and takes up his rebuke. Mal. 2:11-13—

“Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. The Lord will cut off the man that doeth this, the master and the scholar, out of the tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the Lord of hosts. And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand.”

This shows the great danger of such marriages and reminds us of the words of Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers”* (2 Cor. 6:14).

The experience of the children of Israel in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah should cause us to think seriously and should be sufficient to

prevent any brother or sister from taking such a step. Just think of some of the children in the days of Nehemiah. Neh. 13:23-27—

“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations was no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?”

Let us not forget these things, Brothers and Sisters, but shun the danger at all times. Daughters or sons of strange gods are dangerous companions under all circumstances. Therefore, in choosing a life-companion let us see to it that we choose those *“only in the Lord.”*

Chapter three opens with a beautiful reference to the Messiah and his work. Mal. 3:1-4—

“Behold, I will send my messenger and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for his is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years.”

Like many other prophecies, both the past and future come before us. Malachi tells us of two messengers. The first has already been identified as John the Baptist. Even Jesus speaks of him and in so doing identifies the second messenger. Matt. 11:10—

“For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.”

The Messenger of the covenant is an excellent title for Jesus. It identifies him of whom Isaiah speaks, *“who was to be given for a covenant of the people, and for a light of the Gentiles.”*

But the fullness of the work of Jesus will not be accomplished until he comes again. Then will he *“purify the sons of Levi”* (3:3). The motive of the purification is manifest in verse 5—

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.”

This prediction is quite similar to the one found in the beginning of the prophets. Isaiah 1:5-8—

“Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.”

Thus the prophets open and close with the same theme, speaking of the days to come when all evil will be purged from Israel and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

But here is another important step in Malachi’s message. Chapter 3:6—

“For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.”

Thus Israel’s future is certain. This connects with Chapter 1:2, *“I have loved you, saith the Lord.”*

Ezekiel also prophesies of the day of purifying in Ezek. 20:44—

“And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have wrought with you for my name’s sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

—and again in chapter 36:21-28—

“But I had pity for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God: I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, saith the Lord God, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water

upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

It is because of His holy name’s sake that God’s purpose is so certain, for by Himself He has sworn the promises to Abraham, as Paul expresses it in the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 6:13-18—

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.”

—and the promise to David is just as binding. Psalm 89:34-37—

“My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.”

Therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed, for the hope of Israel is built upon the immutable promises of Israel’s God.

But the work does not stop with Israel as a nation, the land is also comprehended in the promise. It is quite time that this land has been trodden down of the Gentiles for almost 1900 years, but this has ceased.

So Malachi directs our attention to the land. Chapter 3:11-12—

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.”

The desolators’ day is almost over and the time almost arrived when they shall say, *“This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden.”*

Yes, Brothers and Sisters, the night is far spent and we are drawing near to the dawn of that morning without clouds, when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise and the theme of the prophets of Israel will be realized.

But Malachi's prophecy is not all future for we live in the day he speaks of in chapter 3:16-17—

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”

The world is full of everything that would draw us away from the Truth. Only one thing will hold us—that constant daily application of God's Word, speaking often one to another of the divine purpose. That is the tonic that will offset the sin which surrounds it. Let us not forget this prophecy, but let us hold fast that we may overcome. Such as do are to become God's jewels—His peculiar treasure. Who would not desire to be one of those spoken of in chapter 4:2-3—

“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 hosts.”

If we would, then let us remember the book of remembrance written for those who think upon the Lord, and speak often one to another of Him and His glorious purpose.

How strangely abrupt, yet how deeply interesting the prophet closes his book. Mal.4:5-6—

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

We are all familiar with the application of these words to John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and power of Elijah. The scribes taught that Elijah must precede Jesus. Matt. 17:10-13—

“And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of

them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”

True. This applied to John, but let us remember that when Jesus spoke the words in verse eleven, John had come and was then dead. Therefore, he did not restore all things.

What does it mean that Elijah must come and restore all things before the Messiah is made known to Israel?

Just exactly what he will do we do not know, but come he will and the curse will be averted. What a striking close for the Old Testament! It opens with the introduction of the curse in Gen. 3:17—*“cursed is the ground for thy sake,”* but the promise to the woman gave hope of deliverance.

Malachi closes with hope of deliverance. The New Testament goes further and tells us of a time when pain, sorrow and even death will be no more and God will wipe away all tears from the eyes and *“there shall be no more curse.”*
—Bro. George Gibson

Brethren of Christ

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; THAT YE SHOULD SHEW FORTH THE PRAISES OF HIM WHO HATH CALLED YOU OUT OF DARKNESS INTO HIS MARVELLOUS LIGHT.”

We call ourselves sons and daughters of God: brethren of Christ. Do we conduct ourselves as such?

It is so easy in our association with those about us in the world, to begin to think and to act as they do. We must overcome this natural tendency to conform. A brother of Christ should be very different from those who work around him, and those who work around him should be able to note that he is different. Christ said,

“No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.”

Is our light hidden because our conduct cannot be distinguished from that of the world around us? Can others detect the difference in us?

Can the light of the glorious Gospel really be seen us? Jesus said,
“A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.”

He said that our light should “give light unto all that are in the house.”

He therefore exhorts us, “Let your light so shine before men, see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Can we, after an honest examination of ourselves in the light of these scriptures, say that because of our works others will want to glorify the Father? Do we really radiate that light, or shall we, like the foolish virgins, be found with insufficient oil when the Master returns?

WE MUST MANIFEST the mind of Christ in both word and deed. Just to speak the Truth is not enough. We must show forth those fruits of its spirit in our daily walk. If we do not we are deceiving ourselves in our claim of friendship with him.

“Ye are my friends if ye DO whatsoever I command...”

The scriptures tell us plainly, “Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

And again, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

We can only say we are Sons of God and brethren of Christ when we manifest the mind of Christ—when we manifest the fruits of the Spirit, which Paul says are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. How much have we done, how hard have we tried to develop these characteristics? If all of us had these desirable qualities there would be no disharmony in the ecclesias, no disquieting disturbances in the body.

How much time do we spend in preparing our minds and hearts so that they will be filled with the fruits of the spirit?

Just to sit and do nothing to build up or strengthen one another is not conducive to the peace and harmony of an ecclesia. Each one must accept his part in the work and do the very best he can to serve God to the fullest extent of his ability. One of the things we are commanded to do is to “strengthen ye the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees.”

And again, “Feed the flock of God which is among you.”

These are responsibilities that belong to each of us; not just a few—not just the arranging brothers or the teachers. Each of us must strengthen and comfort the little flock. We may ask, “how?”

Each can add strength to the ecclesia by attending the meetings, being cheerful and helpful, showing our love, our concern for each other, our desire to share in the work. We each have a responsibility to do all in our power to preserve the harmony and peace of the body.

In order to do this we must necessarily be all of one mind, and that is only possible through study and communication in the word, and through prayer. If the love of God and of Christ is not the motivating

force for all that we do in the work of the Truth, our labor is in vain, and sooner or later something will interfere with the harmonious working of the ecclesia. It is “the love of Christ that constraineth” us from all fleshly motivations.

We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood in training. We are called out to be a holy nation, a peculiar people that we should show forth the praises of Him Who has called us out of the darkness of this world into His marvelous light.

May we, brothers and sisters, reflect that light in deed and in Truth that others may seek to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

Bro. E. W. Banta

Encouraging Words No. 32

WE do well to admonish one another from time to time, in the beautiful words of our hymn:

“Heed we the Steward’s call,
Work, brethren, work.
There’s room enough for all,
Work, brethren, work.

The service of the Lord,
Constant labour will afford,
He will your work reward,
Work, brethren, work.”

Similar thoughts to the ones contained in these lines are to be found in Paul’s telling figure of a body, full of life and vigour by the healthy action of all its parts. Paul’s figure, as we know, represents the assembly of Christ’s called-out ones, on each of whom rests the responsibility of doing something towards the well-being of the whole. All cannot perform the same task, nor is it expected of them—the apostle’s figure precludes the thought. We may not be able to exhort, arrange, or take charge of the table or the door. Some of us may not even be able to encourage the meetings by our presence, or cast a widow’s mite into the treasury. The most feeble among us, however, can pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and supplicate God’s blessing on the brethren who toil in various ways.

Let us be careful not to discourage the efforts of others because they do not accord with our ideas. Let us be doubly careful not to unworthily throw cold water on the activities of others because we are not inclined or not able to co-operate. For instance, in the distribution of the lecture announcements and the truth’s literature, let us not say, because we do not or cannot participate in it, that the work is wasteful and unprofitable and ought to be given up. On the other hand, if we can perform this

good work, and another can do no more than get through her employer's duties in an exemplary way, let us not say of such an one that she is slothful and lukewarm. Those who perform their oft-time dreary tasks in the shop or house, with goodwill, as unto the Lord, are as acceptable in God's sight as those whose opportunities enable them to engage in duties which apparently have a more pronounced bearing on the truth.

When Christ walked and taught amongst men he never brooked interference on the part of one servant with the work of another. When a certain one lodged a complaint with Christ because his brother did not divide his inheritance with him, instead of taking up the cause of the aggrieved, as was expected, Christ turned and bade him not to be covetous. When, on another occasion, a certain disciple approached Christ with the grievance that her sister's conception of duty did not harmonise with her own, Christ rebuked the fault-finder, and protected the supposed offender: "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

To cite another example. A well-known first-century sister conceived the idea of rendering a little personal attention to Christ. Her service moved some of the disciples to "great indignation," and an endeavour was made to enkindle similar indignation in Christ. He, however, as was his wont, turned a deaf ear to the fault-finders. "Let her alone," was his rejoinder, "why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me . . . She hath done what she could." Sisters of the Mary type, be of good cheer—"There's room enough for all," even for you, and those who follow your example.

Christ's searching eyes penetrate the motives that underlie the actions of his followers. Service rendered to him in love and singleness of heart he regards, and mercifully overlooks the imperfections which it may contain.

Yes, "there's room enough for all"—all who have a single eye to Christ's service. Let us remember this when tempted, as we so often are, to find fault with the methods of our fellow-labourers.

Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1914

Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 32

PETER was an ordinary man, "unlearned and ignorant," but what extraordinary superhuman things he did. "Rise up and walk" said he to the man who was a helpless cripple from his birth, and the man did so. This was but one of the many wonderful works of Peter. The people who witnessed his achievements were amazed and marvelled. But said

Peter to them, “Why marvel?” It was God at work, with whom all things are possible. There is a lesson here. When men possess God’s spirit there is no limiting their operations. It is then simply a question of what God wishes to be accomplished. It is of importance that we remember this when doubts arise as to the infallibility of the Word. It is not the men who wrote it that we have to look at, but the spirit behind them. As it is written, “Thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thes. 2:13). Let us beware lest an evil heart of unbelief overtake us. There are stages of perverseness in this heart. In full fruition, we see it in the denial of the miracles of Christ and the apostles—the exhibition of a mind which would refuse to believe though one rose from the dead. But we also see it in the doctrine of partial or erring inspiration. Let us take heed. Surely it was no greater task for Peter, when filled with the spirit, to discriminate between truth and error when writing for our learning than when dealing with truth and error in the case of Ananias and Sapphira!

“Bear ye one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2). When Paul gave this command, he had burdens of a particular character in view. The kind is indicated in verse 1, “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” The burdens, therefore, which we are here called upon to bear, are the weaknesses, short-comings, and sins which weight and beset our brethren. Paul does not say that we are to endorse them, nor to wink at them, but in the spirit of meekness, love and solicitude, to bear with them. Paul enjoins the same counsel elsewhere—“With all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love” (Ephes. 4:2). Men who are heedless of this admonition, pounce, in the spirit of the self-righteous Pharisee, upon their erring brethren, publicly revealing and magnifying their imperfections. They make no effort to conceal minor faults, and no effort to correct major ones. This is a cruel mistake. Paul appointed the spiritual to correct, and to correct in a modest and kind manner. But it might be asked, does it not say that we are to withdraw from the disorderly? Yes, it does. But the two precepts are far from being mutually destructive. There is a time for each. The first thing to aim at is the reformation of the erring, in the spirit of “mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, long-suffering” (Col. 3:12–14). And only when all effort in this direction has proved futile are we to talk about other measures.

Why should any think it incredible that Peter should write and speak infallibly? Is it not written that he was filled with the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:4; 4:8). Of what advantage was it to his readers and hearers if that gift did not prevent a mixture of truth and error? Some tell us that although there was an admixture of error, it was of a mild form—not sufficient

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to negative the truth. What assumption! What unbelief! Let us reason intelligently. When God gives His spirit, it is that man may perfectly do His work. A part of the Spirit's work with Peter was to "testify and exhort" (Acts 2:40; 1 Pet. 5:12); therefore Peter's testimony and exhortation were perfect or infallible. But why should men haggle about that which Christ has decisively settled? Speaking about the operation of the spirit upon the apostles, he said—"Howbeit when the Spirit of Truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." "All truth" must necessarily exclude error. Some again tell us that this does not refer to personal matters. Pure assumption also. Did not the apostles when before rulers and kings refer to personal matters? Why should not the Spirit have guided them in these? Mark 13:11 tells us it did do so—"It is not ye that speak but the Holy Spirit." But the suggestion concerning personal matters is mere dust-throwing, for these objectors know that it is the heart of the testimony that they object to—dates, names, numbers, and acts. Oh! that men had more faith in God, and a less exalted idea of their own imperfect intelligence.

"Owe no man anything" (Rom. 13:8). This refers to other debts than monetary ones. Some of these are enumerated in the context:—"Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." And to this list might be scripturally added—rebuke to whom rebuke; commendation to whom commendation; respect to whom respect; assistance to whom assistance. Paul's precept does not forbid either borrowing or lending. If it did, we should be precluded from even borrowing or lending a book, umbrella, or a threepenny-piece. Paul is not out of harmony with Christ who plainly said "Lend" (Luke 6:35), and with the Scripture which saith:—"A good man sheweth favour and lendeth" (Ps. 112:5). Paul's meaning is obvious. It is that we meet our obligations. So far as money matters are concerned, a brother is under no obligation to his landlord till the rent becomes due; nor to the man from whom he may have bought goods on credit till the understood time of credit has expired; nor to the brother from whom he may have borrowed ten shillings till the appointed time for repayment has come. That we avoid and discourage borrowing as far as possible is safe and good counsel, but to make Paul mean that borrowing under all conditions is unscriptural is an unskilful handling of the Word. The only bearing that Paul's precept has on borrowing and lending is that in view of it being a divine requirement that we meet our obligations or debts, we should diligently arrange to meet them, and before incurring them we should be quite certain that there is every reasonable prospect of our being able to fulfil them. To thoughtlessly incur monetary liabilities, or to be very benevolent when we have not a fair chance of meeting liabilities which are ahead, is contrary to the spirit of Paul's precept, which is a commandment of the Lord.

Brother Gilbert (Rene) Growcott

“He giveth his beloved sleep” — Psalm 127:2

Death is not sad if the life has been wholly lived in and unto God. It is but a brief rest from faithful labor, sweet sleep oblivious to all sorrow and care, awaiting joyful and eternal reunion with the choicest, loveliest, most beautiful characters of all ages: the very pick of the human race. How pleasant is good company!

Let us endeavor to live each moment wholly within God and His Truth and His purpose and His love, that we may — with humble, trusting confidence — at last close our eyes to this life in perfect peace: total, thankful joy — without fear, without regret — *Berean, July 1979.*

These beautiful scriptural thoughts indicate the serenity which pervaded brother Growcott’s mind as he contemplated the fulfillment of the glorious promise of eternal redemption. As the divine purpose moved forward unerringly day by day, as the world panoramic signs spake the accuracy of the voice of the prophets, while storms wrought the sea of nations to the ends of the earth, brother Growcott was able through calm vision to discern the guiding hand of the Almighty. The glories of the age to come were always in view. Visible to his mind’s eye were always the overshadowing cloud and the brilliant pillar of fire, leading and directing the true children of God to the promised land. The Captain of Salvation had gone ahead to search out a resting place for the saints. To this brother Growcott set his compass, never deviating his purpose of maintaining the course of travel.

The perfect example set by Christ, through sinless obedience, was always in brother Growcott’s thoughts. He realized the magnitude of the work which lay before him, and before all the called of God. The Master knew when his mortal ministry was completed, knew when the prophetic utterances of Moses, Psalmist and Prophets were fulfilled in relation to himself. His final words closed the chapter of perfect service to His Father — *“It is finished.”*

To Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was committed the knowledge that his labors were complete —

“I am now ready to be offered: the day of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me at that day”.

Brother Growcott was not given such an indication. Faith in the sureness of God’s promise must be his guiding light right to the end; as it must be in our lives. He did know that cessation of labor would come

either in death or the summons — *“The Master is come and calleth for thee”*. Only 2 months had lapsed since he had this forcibly impressed on his thoughts as his co-laborer, brother George Gibson, was laid to rest; an event which severed a beautiful association of labor together in the production of the *Berean Christadelphian Magazine*, a period of 31 years. Of this wonderful companionship he wrote in the March, 1981 issue —

I have worked with him on the magazine since 1950 and it has been a very pleasant relationship throughout. I do not believe a more harmonious relationship could be possible.

The moment of rest for brother Growcott came on April 17, 1981, in quiet, peaceful sleep; his eyes were closed, his busy mind ceased its wonderful working; his keen memory and analytical perceptions came to an abrupt end. He knew not that — *“It is finished.”*

Thankfully the Creator spared him the suffering and anguish of physical pain. His trials came in a much more acute manner as he surveyed day by day the weakness and failing of the flesh, as he contemplated the working out of the divine sentence upon the human race of sin, the force of the declaration — *“The wages of sin is death”*.

He suffered as he observed man’s disregard of the precepts, ordinances and commands of God. He strained every muscle of his heart to proclaim to all at home and abroad — *“This is the way, walk ye in it”*.

He suffered as he viewed the sacrifice of the Truth in many quarters. He agonized to hold aloft the standard of the Word as a banner unto which the faithful and godly could rally in the thick of the conflict.

He sacrificed of himself daily for all who came to his attention. He was the open ear to the needs of all alike. That which came to his hand he disbursed liberally and wisely. The voice of the needy was never shut off with a cold selfish — *“Depart in peace, be warmed and filled”* (James 2:16). Somehow he found a way to provide for the naked and destitute. Such examples became a daily living example to others, yet his service of such kindness in Christ’s name, was done in secret, with no trumpet sounding.

He walked in the steps of the Master. This vision was ever before him. He had supreme faith that God would provide as needed — *“The manna would not cease”*.

Bro. Growcott was immersed into the Saving name of the Anointed Saviour on October 30, 1928. He completed his running of the race for the prize of the high calling, after a span of over 52 years. All through

those years he labored to spread the knowledge of the Word of Truth. Quietly and incessantly he meditated on the deep things of the Spirit of God — *“It is the wisdom of God to conceal a thing: but the honor of kings to search out a matter”* (Prov. 25:2).

When the mechanical function of magazine production became necessary each month, ‘the waiting on tables’ (as it were), brother Growcott caused the Word of the Lord to sound in his ears, causing portions of Scripture to penetrate the inner reaches of his mind. He lived in an atmosphere of the Law and the Prophets. To him the whole school of the prophets was around him. He walked in their midst.

He agonized toward the examples left on record in the written Word. He fought daily against the law of sin which was in his members, and confessed with Paul — *“O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death.”* (Rom. 7).

But with such a declaration he could confidently add with Paul — *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord”*.

Brother Growcott was completely knowledgeable of the writings of Dr. Thomas and Bro. Roberts, our pioneer brethren.

Unhesitatingly he declared his confidence in their exposition of the Truth; that indeed they together were the truest aspect of the ‘Resurrection of the Witnesses’, in the Divine development of His purpose. He counseled that these writings did not need modifying or updating.

Whenever some aspect appeared difficult to accept without their personal explanation, he demurred to their exposition and confidently assured that time would vindicate their reasoning.

To him the Truth was an established ‘whole’ in the writings of these men; that it is not a progressive development since their days. He exhorted all to stand on the foundation rock which they uncovered from the rubbish and rubble of centuries.

With God’s help the policy of the Berean Christadelphian Magazine will be to present the writings of Brethren Thomas and Roberts, coupled with the meditations of brother Growcott. We feel sure that he spake as they spake, that their hopes and interpretations were his guiding force, and that they all wrote in harmony.

The return of the Master is at hand. Brother Growcott’s living service is finished. We seek God’s help that his service may continue in us as he awaits the Divine summons — ‘Brother Growcott, come forth’. To this purpose we now set our hearts that our brother, ‘though dead, may yet speak’.

Bro. E. Fred Higham

A Man After God's Own Heart

QUESTION: "How could David be called '*a man after God's Own heart,*' when he was a murderer and adulterer, and died with vindictive words in his mouth toward Shimei, Joab, and others?"

ANSWER: A "*man after God's Own heart*" is a man who answers to the definition given by God Himself — "*To this man will I look, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.*" (Isa. 66:2).

David answered exactly to this description. God's Word in anything commanded his profoundest reverence and regard; and when convinced of wrong-doing, he was penitent to the utmost abasement. He would not sanction the killing of Saul by Abishai, because Saul was the Lord's anointed (1 Sam. 26:9-11). He made instant confession and reparation in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Towards God he was "*as a little child,*" while, towards man, he was "*a mighty man of valour.*" When he sinned, he confessed and forsook his sins. Thus he was a man after God's own heart.

In considering his directions to Solomon concerning Shimei, Joab, etc., it must be remembered that David sat in the seat of judgment for God, and that the men in question had sinned against God in the several matters of their offense.

If David had been personally vindictive, he would not have spared them as he did. As absolute monarch of Israel, under God, he had the power to take away their lives, which he would have done if characterized by the disposition suggested in the question. Instead of that, he allowed them to live so long as he himself was alive, but left the judicial punishment of their crimes to the wisdom of Solomon.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1873

Approved Before the Judgment

You have a difficulty about approved men—divinely approved men: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Noah, Daniel and Job, whose approval has been proclaimed in advance—appearing before the judgment seat of Christ.

You need not. Why should you? Is it not merely a feeling on your part—a feeling that it would be incongruous? We must not let our feelings and impressions have any weight against a declared purpose of God. The declared purpose is:

"Unto Me EVERY knee shall bow and EVERY tongue confess." Paul applies this to the judgment, and adds—

“So then EVERY ONE OF US must give an account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10-12).

You know that he says (2 Cor. 5:10)—*“We must ALL stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”*

We must bow to the testimony, whatever our feelings may be, for human feeling is a blind guide in divine Truth. But rightly interpreted, you might find that feeling is more for than against the testimony in this case.

If approved men were to appear at the judgment seat to be condemned, there might be ground for the difficulty you experience; but standing there to be manifested *“unto praise and honor and glory”* in the presence of a countless multitude of men and angels, is it not rather fitting than otherwise that they should so appear?

What if the result is known beforehand to everyone in the mighty assembly? It will only make the decision the more telling and triumphant. Whatever we may think about it, we must submit to the testimony. There is no other safe rule in the absence of living inspiration.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1890

The Second Resurrection

QUESTION: “I am aware that Rev. 20:11-15 is used to prove the second resurrection; but if so it proves too much, as we can easily demonstrate. John saw a great white throne and Him that sat upon it, before whose face the earth and heaven fled away. It is claimed that the Father is the One sitting on that throne. If that be so, the heaven and earth flees away before it. Does ‘the heaven’ (Christ and his brethren) ‘flee away?’ Does ‘earth’ (the City of the Saints) then existing ‘flee away?’ Does the Father really take away Christ’s power and become judge Himself in his place?”

“And I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them, and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God . . .” (Rev. 20:11-15).

ANSWER: This pictures a universal resurrection which could only apply to times of universal responsibility; and under the figure of death and hades cast into the lake of fire, it represents the abolition of death by the destruction of all who are not made immortal, which cannot be understood of the Kingdom.

Our correspondent thinks it can be understood only of the beginning of the 1000 years because of the statement that “the earth and the heaven” fled from the face of the occupant of the throne. He

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rightly deprecates the idea that the constitution of things thus to be abolished is Jesus and the Saints and the Holy City.

But is there no recent event of which this can be understood?
“*When the 1000 years are EXPIRED*” (Rev. 20:7)—

“*Satan goes out to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth.*”

They enter into league and constitution, and go up on the—

“*Breadth of the earth and encompass the camp of the Saints.*”

Here is a system of things—temporary certainly—but still taking time to organize, and swelling out into all the proportions of an organized “*heaven and earth*” political.

With the “*four quarters of the earth*” thus insurrectionally organized, the Kingdom of God is reduced to very small proportions, geographically speaking. A Satanic system of things has carried all before it. With one voice, the populations unite to overthrow the government of Christ.

But, in a moment, the threatening confederacy dissolves before his face, and he is then revealed as the judicial arbiter of universal human destiny in the great wind-up that clears the way for a final and perfect state of things on earth.

The responsible millions of the thousand years are raised. The unworthy are destroyed; the accepted are immortalized; the great harvest is gathered in amid a universal feast of trumpets and everlasting joy.

Bro. Robert Roberts— 1890

Christ Our Citizenship

Now, the citizenship of the Old Israelites commenced on earth; while the *politeuma*, or citizenship of the New Israelites begins in heavens, *en ouranois huparchei*. The citizenship of mere common, or outward Jews, begins with circumcision — with the flesh. If they omit this, the accident of birth from Jewish parents goes for nothing, they are regarded by the law as cut off from their people, having broken the covenant of Yahweh in the omission of the rite on the eighth day (Gen. 17:14). They are neither “Israel” nor “of Israel.”

But the citizenship of the New Israelites, or Israelites of the New Covenant, begins in heavens, and also with circumcision — it begins with faith, with the truth believed and obeyed, with the Spirit. A Jew, or Greek, comes to “believe the things concerning the kingdom of the Deity, and of the name of Jesus Anointed;” and to fall in love with them above all other things; he acquires a “faith,” in other words, that

“purifies his heart,” and “works by love” — he receives the doctrine of the kingdom of the Deity as a little child — with all humility and teachableness; and demands only to know what the Lord would have him to do, that he may do it. He is required, then to be *circumcised in Christ*, to “purify his soul in the obedience of the truth” — to “put off the body of the sins of the flesh *in the circumcision of Christ.*” The churchman, or mere pious natural man, discerns not these “deep things of the Deity;” but such a Jew or Gentile as we are considering, being “filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” knows that, by being buried with Christ in the one immersion, he puts on Christ; and that when thus invested with him as with a white robe, all his sins are *covered over*, remitted, or washed away; and that he stands “complete in him.” Jesus was circumcised the eighth day, according to the law; he was a Jew; the son of Abraham, David, and the Deity; the Heir of all things; he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; he is king, priest, and so forth. Now, it is only those Jews and Gentiles, the eyes of whose understandings have been enlightened by the word of the truth of the gospel of the kingdom, who can by immersion get into Christ; for men are saved “through the faith,” *dia tes pisteos*; and “without faith,” which Paul defines as, “the confidence of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen,” — “it is impossible to please the Deity.” This, then, is the indispensable prerequisite for introduction into Christ, and completeness in him. Those who are thus qualified in the act of passing through the bath of water, pass into Christ. Before entering the bath, the truth believed has changed their minds, made them “dead to sin,” and “quickenened them with Christ” (Rom. 6:2,11; Eph. 2:5): when they are in the bath, and buried under the water, they are “buried with Christ by the immersion into his death,” which was for sin. Hence, this water burial is their investiture with Christ as with a white robe. The burial is, therefore, a clothing, or covering over by which their sin-nakedness is metaphorically concealed; and they are in that situation in which it may be said of them, in the words of the Spirit, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered over” — *epekalphthesan* (Rom. 4:7). This is the point of time in which they are “circumcised with the circumcision made without hands;” and, as in the circumcision performed with hands, there was a cutting, or putting, off, of flesh, so in the circumcision made without hands, there is a metaphorical putting off of flesh, “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh in the circumcision (*en te peritome*) of the Christ, being buried with him in the immersion” (Col. 2:11,12).

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka Vol 2 Page 315 Logos edition

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Hints For Bible Markers

The Ephesians were given a similar command as was given to the Colossians (Ephesians 5:18-19) “be filled with the Spirit; (19) Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;” The purpose was to exercise the mind in spiritual things. When the mind has been so exercised, the Psalms and hymns create a melody which will excite and cheer the heart. Keeping the Psalms in our minds cannot but help the word of Christ to dwell richly in our hearts and minds. Jesus himself tells us the things written in the Psalms were concerning him (Luke 24:44). Keeping the word of Christ as the primary occupant of our minds, the only true source of satisfaction in life, will help to overcome the weariness and dreariness of this current age. The apostle Paul tells us “But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.” (2 Thessalonians 3:13) “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life:” (Romans 2:7)

There is only one place that we can get God’s thoughts and God’s words. We must seek the words of the wisdom from the Bible as newborn babes. Looking to find words of true wisdom from TV, movies, radio, popular magazines or books, is laying up treasure “where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.” If any man expects to get true wisdom from the world’s popular culture or prophets he will be grievously disappointed and fatally deceived. These worldly devices will fill the mind with the world’s thoughts, while seemingly sweet to the taste, but in reality a poison which will bring him to a state of laziness and indifference to the things that be of God. Having filled himself with the wisdom of the world, which is foolishness with God, his light will grow dim or go out, his garment soiled, he will find himself standing in the presence of divine glory and being cast out. “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” (1 Corinthians 3:18)

A man must desire the word of God more than the pleasures of this current age. The word of God does not come built into our hearts and minds as the world believes. It is only deposited there through daily study, daily meditation, and appreciative reading of the Bible. Without the word of God dwelling richly within us, we will stand naked in that great day of judgment, unfit for God’s use and fellowship. We must give ourselves wholly over to the Word that we may be found worthy for entrance into the city having foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VI. CONCERNING YOUR ACTIONS

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, desire it with the ardour of a new-born babe for its mother’s milk; meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Colossians 3:16)

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (1 Peter 2:2)

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. (1 Timothy 4:15)

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