

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

GOLDTHWAITE, Texas

Berean Christadelphian Hall, 1109 Reilly St., Goldthwaite, TX 76844,
Sunday mornings: 8:50 1st Portion Reading, 9:00 Eureka Class, 10:00 Sunday
School, 11:00 Memorial Meeting, Lectures most 2nd Sunday evenings 6:00
Wednesday night Bible readings 7:00pm

Loving greetings to all our brethren and sisters,

On August 2, 2011, our sister in Christ, Amy Hurst, was married to Bro. Matthew Hughes of the Hengoed ecclesia. They make their home in Wales.

On May 26, 2012, we had the pleasure of the baptism of **Michael Taylor**. Sis. Jessica Rhoades and Bro. Michael plan to be wed on August 3, 2012.

In November, 2011, we had our annual study weekend, centered on the study of the 7000 Year Plan of God. We had visitors from Lampasas, Austin, Robert Lee, Houston, Richard, and Hengoed.

We've had numerous visitors throughout the year, including many from Lampasas who attend our monthly lectures. Sis. Amy Hughes was able to visit for a couple months, and Bro. Aaron Myers and Sis. Aldi came to visit and he delivered words of exhortation.

We want to thank all that came and also the brethren who have given exhortations and lectures. It is very uplifting to have visitors.

We look forward to the soon return of Christ. Each day draws us closer to the fulfillment of the promises and the 7000 year plan.

In the hope of Israel,

Bro. Curtis Hurst, recording brother, Goldthwaite ecclesia

LAMPASAS, Texas

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Greeting in the Hope of Israel,

It has been some time since we have reported from the Lampasas Ecclesia. Our ecclesia hosted our annual June gathering last month, we had a great turnout. The subject of the gathering was "The Beauty Of Holiness;" all of the talks were spiritually uplifting and we enjoyed the fellowship of brothers and sisters from far and wide. Such activities as these strengthen us and encourage us as we work out our salvation and wait with patience the coming of the Lord.

We have had several baptisms recently which we are very excited about. Sister **Brittany Smalley** was baptized on June 22nd. Brother

Nathan Phillips was baptized on July 4th and Brother **Zach Neely** was baptized on July 7th. We wish these young brothers and sister God's blessing as they wait the return of Christ. They will all three be a great addition to the Lampasas light stand.

Brother Zach Neely and Sister Brittany Smalley will be united in marriage on July for 14th at the home of Brother Mike and Sister Karen Neely. We know that their love for the Truth will form a strong bond that will help make the marriage a happy one.

It is always encouraging to all of us to see that Yahweh is at work in the earth and still calling out a people for His name and His glory.

Brother Lee Freeburg

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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.

Berean 2012-256

Sorrow Is Better Than Laughter

"The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth"—Ecclesiastes 7:4

Paul gives us much to think about when he speaks of foolish talking and jesting as incompatible with holiness. Not because such things are purposely sinful, but they are fleshly and animal, outside the narrow

and exalted scope of the sanctification of holiness, and therefore corrupt and unclean. He couples them in equal condemnation with what natural man considers much graver sins (Eph. 5:3-4)—

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting.”

It is prostitution of the mind to the pandering of the flesh, and the mind is more important than the body. It has been pointed out that the one great and remarkable omission from the Bible as the portrayal of humanity is the complete absence of humor. It has no place there. There is joy, and laughter, and happiness, and rejoicing, and merriness (in its true sense), and lightheartedness (in its true sense), and good fellowship. But no humor—

“As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool” (Eccl. 7:3). — black ashes.

This fact (the absence of humor), with Paul's and other inspired writers' remarks upon the same subject, is matter for deep thought for those who aspire to the holy reverence of sainthood.

In the first place, humor, however gentle, is rarely without a sting. The basis of every joke is the discomfiture of someone. Minor troubles and difficulties of others always appear humorous, and even major troubles have elements of humor to those who are not affected, often when the seriousness of the trouble makes them ashamed of the impulse. Humor is basically malicious; it's the natural, undisciplined mind of the flesh.

Then again, humor is false. It is evanescent, counterfeit happiness. It creates briefly and shallowly the same sensations; it calls into play the same expressions of the face, although usually contorted and exaggerated. But it creates no bond of friendship. It has no depth or permanence. It is not conducive to intimacy or confidence. In fact, it speaks sadly of a lack of depth, a shallow emptiness, an absence of consideration, a stunted immaturity, a deficiency of experience and understanding. It is sounding brass, and clanging cymbal. It has no warmth. It leaves the heart cold and cheated and un-cheered.

Life isn't funny. We realize this when we face its realities—when we consider its hospitals and asylums; it's lonely, cheerless homes for the castoff aged, sitting around waiting to die; its unnumbered hosts of blind and crippled and suffering and bereaved; its multitude of pitiful, frightened, malformed unwanted children, twisted in mind and body; its

endless, hopeless, plodding, stumbling parade toward the inevitable last common receptacle of all mortal flesh.

Who can joke and jest if they keep a full and sober realization of these things before their minds? Life is no joke: it is grimly tragic. But still even amid its tragedy it can be happy and joyful with the quiet happiness of the assurance of the goodness of God, and the knowledge that all this will pass away and be forgotten when it has at last served its divine purpose, and the tried and perfected family of God is complete.

And then again, humor is often so cruelly out of place. Who has not bitten their tongue in shame and confusion after having stirred up a hidden sorrow by a thoughtless word of folly? Solomon says (Prov. 25:20)—

“As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart.”

And Prov. 14:13—

“Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful; and the end of that mirth is heaviness.”

And again (Eccl. 2:1-2)—

“I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure. And, behold, this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad. And of mirth, What doeth it?”

Wisdom's verdict is (Eccl. 7:2-4) —

“It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.

“Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better... but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth.”

There was no humor in the life of our Great Example, and his life was perfect in the sight of God. He was a man of sorrows and deep, intimate acquaintance with grief. With the knowledge and discernment and spiritual depth of sympathy and fellowfeeling that he possessed, it would be impossible to be otherwise than sorrowful in a world like this.

Nothing would have been more jarringly out of place, or more destructive of the power of his influence for good, than shallow, jangling humor. His mission was to those who had bitterly experienced

the sorrow and tragedy of life. With them he had a fellowfeeling born of the same experiences. And to them he said—

“Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. “Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.”

A mutual sorrow is a far stronger bond of affection than a mutual pleasure, and the consolation of the mutual communion that is born of sorrow is often adequate compensation for it—

“By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.”

“Weeping may endure for the night, but joy cometh in the morning.”
—Bro. G.V. Growcott

Matthew 27

My dearly beloved Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus, Once more, but yet one less time before our Master’s triumphant return we meet again with our minds centered on the emblems before us. Perhaps one in many more to come; perhaps in this memorial service, we shall see our brethren and sisters, the group we meet with here today, no more under this set of circumstances.

Perhaps our Master’s return will take place tomorrow, and our walk in this life will have been rewarded with those words of *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”* These are the words, which we all most certainly want to hear! But yet the contrary is most capable for us all with our sinful nature, *“Depart from me; I never knew you.”*

Which do we as individuals toil to hear? Which paraphrase do we keep in the back of our minds at all times in our day-to-day lives? We must set before our eyes the course, as athletes in the olympic race for a crown. So do we run a race for a different type of crown—a spiritual crown to be handed out by that righteous judge, Jesus the Anointed in that day of judgment, in the form of eternal life. We must never let our view get interfered with at any time for any cause. The consequences are just too high a penalty to pay. Nothing in this life can be of equal importance to the gift we hope to be graciously bestowed by our Master at the end of this 6000-year plan of our heavenly Father.

Whether this be our final gathering together as an ecclesia, or one of many of which remain, we must continuously remember never to get caught up with the dealings of this life, to forget the vital reasons and commands of why we are here to partake of the emblems which are

situate before us here and now, to keep in memory the death, burial, and resurrection of our Master and Captain of salvation. And to recall to our minds what this man did for each and every one of us, how through his generous actions, though we live in a world that possesses no hope at all, yet we live with the most magnificent hope known to mankind!

In this 27th chapter of the gospel account according to Matthew, we have one of the most sorrow laden chapters in which our Master appears. It is full of gloomy feelings in more than just one way. First, one must take into consideration Christ's feelings, though we as believers and followers of Christ most certainly feel for him in the position he was placed. We must feel for the nation of Israel as well. Christ actually begged their forgiveness, "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" How could a nation given as much as they had been given at certain times fall to such great depths of unawareness?

We also perceive in this chapter a couple of different types of characters or attitudes, which can certainly be most advantageous to us to take note of as servants of Christ. We must undoubtedly shun the attitude of one like Judas, who betrayed his master for a meager price of silver, which was certainly not of equivalent value to what he could have obtained through faithful actions and dedicated service, like that of the apostle Paul or Stephen. We also have the attitude of Pilate, though not with the others who were quickly committed to put him to death. Pilate did what in today's language might be called succumbing to the political pressures that encircled him in this dark moment of recorded history. Even though we know now in retrospect that whatever Pilate's actions were, God's arrangement would have been fulfilled irrespective. They were simply vessels used to carry out the plan and purpose of God. But yet, nonetheless, they are there for a particular purpose, possibly solely for us, as examples of what and what not to do in certain and peculiar situations.

We have individuals, and we have as well groups placed before us, which are used for examples. The nation of Israel were the children of God, and so are we. As we struggle to be successful individuals, let us also struggle to be a sound spiritual ecclesia, never letting our alertness slip to the depths that the nation of Israel had arrived at, near this particular point in history.

These individuals, as well as the nation, should have realized well enough even with their limited knowledge of God's Word, which He gave to them through their forefathers the prophets. They should have recognized the signs prophesied many years before of their Messiah.

But once again, we in retrospect realize that this had to take place. A people, as obdurate as the nation of Israel, had to be necessary in order for us to be able to arrive in the position we currently reside today, partakers of the body and blood of Christ to strengthen us spiritually, hopefully to that desired and common goal.

We see before us in this chapter the results of these individuals, and nation as well, that did not conform their lives to the Word of the great God of Heaven and Earth. Judas was selected just as we are selected, but yet unsuccessful in his endeavor to secure a place in our Master's Kingdom, condemned to death, and sentenced with a title that holds absolutely no hope. We see the nation of Israel punished time and time again throughout history, but yet not willing to conform to God's laws, which were given to them for their own benefit.

How much are we, Brethren and Sisters, like them? Do we look upon our chastening as beneficial? Or do we view it with anger and a more dreary outlook for what's to come? Or do we gain, and move on from that point a better soldier in Christ Jesus? Are we in our walk trying to follow that ultimate example left before us by Christ, the only begotten Son of our heavenly Father, as Brother Roberts so fittingly spoke in a recorded exhortation—

“There is not an event which can transpire in our lives, which cannot be solved and solved properly by researching what Christ would have done in a similar situation. For this purpose is one of the many that his life is recorded with such detail in the gospel books.”

He is our pattern, our template, or guide by which to regulate our conduct. And no matter how hard we strive or how successful we think we have become, let us remember that when we have arisen to the point where we imagine we have performed to a reasonable amount of our God-given talents, that at this summit, which is undoubtedly our best, we are styled as unprofitable servants.

Could we, as human beings, hold the attitude of Jesus Christ? Could we, if situations were reversed, be as patient and forgiving as he was while hanging on a cross—a most degrading death, as well as very painful? Could we like him pray for the forgiveness of a mob of individuals who were our accusers and in a sense also our executioners? How much self-control and compassion for others can one man have in his heart and mind? Certainly none other than Christ can rise to this point of forgiveness. But we, as individuals and as an ecclesia, should never stop trying to obtain this status and level. It will

by no means be achieved, but nonetheless this is what our sights should be set on at all times.

If we quickly review a few verses from this chapter, Matthew 27, we should have a better idea of our Master's attitude and actions. Verses 26 through 32—

“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 plaited 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 as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.”

Here we have painted before us a very disheartening picture. We have the Son of God—a man who lived up to every qualification that was expected from him. We find a man of such superior caliber to us all being treated like, or better yet possibly less than, a common thief. They spit upon him; they mocked him and smote him and cheered his demise as the acclaimed King of the Jews—their long-awaited deliverer. Yet from Christ came no antagonistic remarks, no threats of punishment for their ill-fated actions. But yet these people, who did not realize what they were saying at the time it was stated, brought their own punishment on themselves. Their remarks of *“his blood be on us and our children,”* was a statement I am sure they all wish they had not spoken some 40 years later, and even after that numerous times.

And if we look further on in this same chapter, verses 39 through 43—

“And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.”

Here we see the ultimate test for any individual, remembering that Christ was human, tempted and tried in all points like as we are, but yet without sin.

“He saved others; himself he cannot save. He trusted God; let him deliver him now.” How Christ withheld from asking his Father for 12 legions of angels, which he said in another account were at his request, but he simply yielded to his Father’s will. And how our Heavenly Father stayed His hand from such a heartless mob with such obstinate actions is simply past our reasoning.

Our Master’s walk while on this earth was always one of obedience to his Father. It was filled with a zeal and joy that can be matched by none, as far as perseverance and desire to please our Maker. But yet his first advent was drawing very near to its close.

How these wretched individuals got to the point of where they were seems almost incomprehensible, but yet something we should not scoff at and declare could never happen to us. How they must have felt in their hearts, after this horrible atrocity had been completed with the events that transpired, was adequate for a Roman soldier to make the proclamation that *“Truly this was the Son of God.”* If a Roman soldier could come to this conclusion, how much more the children of Israel who were conscious of his actions and miracles for the past 3 1/2 years.

The nation of Israel collectively are most certainly set before us for a particular reason. Chosen, harbored, provided for in every sense of the imagination by our Heavenly Father, they went so very deeply astray. We, as they did, wait the arrival of our Saviour. Their knowledge and awareness had slipped to the point where they did not recognize him as the one promised, but much the opposite. They put him to death for claiming to be him for whom they had waited so long.

Could we possibly be the same, or yet could ours just come in different forms? We do not have to physically reject him such as the nation of Israel did. If we do not fulfill his commands in our dealings with those of like precious faith, if we do not adopt his concepts in dealing with individuals despite their beliefs, if we do not follow his footsteps in devout service to our Heavenly Father, this is just as good as rejecting him. It may not have the impact that Israel’s rejection did, but they are still much the same. Rejection by us of what he has commanded us to do, will mean rejection by him of us when we hope to obtain life everlasting. **Nothing in this life is worth risking that opportunity.**

We make attempts to follow in his footsteps. We patiently endure, but can we ever in our wildest thoughts fully imagine the immenseness

of his triumphant return! What a complete turnaround from his first advent upon earth! But in this first advent, he left us with a detailed description as to how to obtain a position by his side in this so long-looked-for triumphant return—one which will put all scoffers to rest and thoroughly reconfirm the testimony of Yahweh. By leaving examples set by himself, the true pattern, and also examples set by other men in circumstances that we may soon encounter, to see how they arose to combat and overcome troublesome situations, how they fell and stumbled at other obstacles—all for our benefit and learning.

But failure is not to be looked on as this individual is less than any other, or possibly has not exercised his talents to the point of understanding the error of his ways, but much the opposite. It is an indication to us, as brethren and sisters, to offer loving assistance in certain areas. It is also there to keep us in remembrance of how great our Master really was. That we will always be a sinful creature—a nature, which we inherit due to our ancestors' transgression—is not a hindrance that only one out of 100 possess. It is in us all—some able to subdue it slightly better than others. But nonetheless present every day of our lives in each and every one of us. Failure is unavoidable, but to be able to limit its appearance to a sparse few is what we should desperately try to achieve. We all will fall to its presence occasionally. Even one such as Peter had to be humbled by his failure, to be made a better servant. Chastening comes in many forms and for many reasons as well. We must learn from them all and go on from that point to hopefully and prayerfully be one of our Saviour's selected saints in this glorious age to come, for which we so patiently await.

Let us remember, by partaking of the bread and wine in this memorial service, what this man accomplished for us—that through these actions of love for his friends, is the only reason we live in this sin polluted world with a hope of eternal joy fastened in our hearts and minds.

Brethren and Sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master will soon once again appear to all those who await his return in faith. He will return not this time as last, for now is the advent of his triumphant appearance. No more will such a statement be made as, "*The son of man hath not where to lay his head.*" No more will the scoffers mock him, spit upon him, and smite him on the cheek.

As expressed in the words of Hymn 95—

Our Lord will come, but not the same

As once in lowly form he came—

A silent lamb to slaughter led,
The bruised, the suffering, and the dead.
Our Lord will come, a dreadful form,
With wreath of flame, and robe of storm,
On cherub wings, and wings of wind,
Appointed judge of human kind.
Yes, tyrants! To the rocks complain;
Go seek the mountain-clefts in vain:
But faith, victorious o'er the tomb,
Shall sing for joy, "The Lord is come."

Brethren and Sisters, let us each and every one of us at this present time, make valiant our attempt to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. So that when this appointed judge of human kind appears on earth, we may stand before him and hear his directive issued forth to all those, with whom we pray to be a part, who have made it their life's desire to spend eternity under the shadow of his wings, fulfilling his Father's will throughout this glorious earth, "*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"

These words will not be issued forth in our direction for an effort that is not in accordance with our God-given talents. Thus the words of that ancient preacher loom large even today, "*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.*"

—Bro. Paul Garvey

Idle Words

"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account of in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

This teaching of Christ, in Matt. 12:36-37, focuses our attention on that little but powerful member, the tongue. The thought of v. 37 is put to us in different words in Prov. 18:21—

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

Can there be any doubt about the importance of giving diligent attention to the way the tongue is used? It is not a question of good

manners or social grace but a question of obedience to God, and therefore a question of life or death.

Christ made special mention of “idle” words. Just what did he mean? The following is offered as one attempt to answer this question.

The word “idle” is an accurate translation of the original Greek, which means “inactive” or “unemployed.” The same word is used in the parable of Matt. 20:1-16 where we read of “laborers . . . standing idle”; their energies were being wasted rather than being employed in the vineyard.

Idle words are like idle people; they are unemployed—that is, unemployed in the things of the Spirit; words with no place in the work of the Lord's Vineyard; words which are not spoken for the purpose of serving God.

HOW do we stand on the matter of idle words? Honest answers to questions such as those following should help us to know. Do we find it easier or more pleasant to serve the creature rather than the Creator and talk about the things of the flesh rather than the things of the Spirit?—

“They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Rom. 8:5).

Do we ever find ourselves wandering into idle talk simply because we talk too much?

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few.

“A fool's voice is known by multitude of words” (Eccl. 5:2-3).

Are we ever guilty of trying to justify some form of “foolish talking” on the plea that we need moments of “fun” in order to be well-balanced? Paul wrote concerning “foolish talking”—

“Let it not be ONCE named among you” (Eph. 5:3-4).

Do we ever engage in idle talk just because everyone else is so engaged? Do we fear that others may take exception to our words if we speak according to the Spirit?

Are we afraid of being “different” or of being called “extreme” if we refuse to join the group in its fleshly conversation?

Let us remember that fitting in with the group will not save us in the day of judgment, for:

“Many be called, but few chosen” (Matt. 20:16.)

* * *

WORDS which will have a place in the Lord's vineyard require continual, diligent, prayerful thought and preparation. Without this we will go on in our natural, careless ways to destruction.

But let us not deceive ourselves—the thought and preparation must be based upon the things of the Spirit, not the things of the flesh.

We may do some very thoughtful conversing, but if it is the mind of the flesh which is doing the thinking, the spiritual mind is idle. The fleshly mind may be active and careful to see that all that is said is very nice and proper and pleasing, but the words which are uttered will nevertheless be idle and evil in the sight of God, having no place in the vineyard.

Words of the flesh may sound very good on the surface, but underneath they are full of corruption (such as “flattery” or “smooth things”). Therefore, fleshly thought is not what is required, but rather spiritual thought.

Each individual must honestly search his own heart and mind—without rationalizing. In examining what we say, let us honestly answer some more questions:

Is this talk a product of the thinking of the spiritual mind? Does it have some legitimate purpose in God's work? Is it giving honor and glory to God? Can we conscientiously ask God's blessing upon our activity as we speak these words? Would we want Christ to walk in behind us and stand listening?

Or is this instead just idle talk—a product of the mind of the flesh?

None of us would claim that he or she does not at times give utterance to idle words—but we should, we must, be striving diligently to overcome.

We might be inclined to say that there are so many things to talk about that our words surely cannot always be expected to have a spiritual purpose. But that is the reasoning of the flesh.

We have made a covenant with God to give Him our ALL—to love and serve Him with our whole hearts and minds and lives. And this includes every thought and every word. Paul wrote of—

“Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

And surely there is no valid exception to this rule in any aspect of our lives. There are things which are not directly concerned with spiritual subjects which nevertheless require that words be spoken (for example: fulfilling the daily obligations of employment under an earthly master), but even in such cases our motive, purpose, and manner of speaking should be spiritual—to serve God. If such is not the case, then our words are idle. And how much time do we spend talking about non-spiritual subject matter when it is not necessary?

* * *

HERE is another problem which arises. Sometimes we are confronted with difficult, unexpected situations which call upon us to speak quickly, and if some of the words we utter under such circumstances turn out to be improper or spiritually useless, we may excuse ourselves by saying that we just “didn’t have time to think.” The teaching of Christ leaves no room for excuses—

“A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matt. 12:34-35).

If our hearts are truly full of the things of the Spirit we will speak according to the Spirit with a motive, purpose, and manner of speaking dedicated always to serving God. We ought to take very seriously the responsibility which is ours to endeavor to speak *“as the oracles of God”* as Peter admonishes (I Pet. 4:11).

There may be times when because of unpreparedness the wise course will be to remain silent rather than take the chance of speaking words of harm or untruth. (Remaining silent, however, will be a meaningless crutch unless we take our unpreparedness as a lesson and make every effort to do what is necessary to have ourselves prepared for the future.)

This is not an attempt to discourage speaking, but it is rather an attempt to encourage continual preparation of the heart and mind so that what is spoken will not be idle. If the water which issues from our tongues is bitter and lacking in the things of the Spirit, then the fountain—the heart—must also be bitter and lacking in spiritual preparation.

Knowing what to say and when to say it is a very critical matter, for “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” It is a matter which

requires continual, diligent, prayerful preparation, for "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh".

And when in this process of preparation we consider Christ's teaching concerning "idle" words it may be very helpful to keep in mind a mental picture of laborers standing idle in the marketplace, their energies being wasted rather than being employed in the Lord's vineyard.
—*Bro. David Burnett*

Comments On Idle Words

"His will and glorious purpose, as disclosed in the covenants of promise, leaves the chief department of human character undeveloped, and produces the shallow, sharp, veneered chatterers and joke-crackers with which we are abundantly familiar."
Bro. Robert Roberts

Encouraging Words No. 34

MY DEAR H—,—You wish me to tell you what took place at the Mansion House on Feb. 20th, at the meeting on behalf of the Fund for relief in Syria and Palestine. The Fund's object is to store food and clothing in Egypt until the way into Palestine is open...

I entered London's civic hall agog with interest and hope—unreasonably, no doubt. If ever there was an opportunity for speakers to touch truths respecting God and His people, with their privileged past and glorious future, their present punishment for disobedience and partial return to their land, that opportunity had arrived. But concerning these matters the speakers were dumb.

In addition to other notables the gathering included the Lord Mayor, the Bishop of London, Viscount Bryce (author of *The Holy Roman Empire*) and Sir Edwin Pears (the well-known writer and lawyer, who for many years practised in the consular courts at Constantinople). The proceedings were opened not by any recognition of Israel's God, but by a request for all the speakers to rise and be photographed...

Lord Bryce said he was travelling in Lebanon less than four years ago. He contrasted the prosperous condition of the region at that time with its present unhappy state—the population murdered, villages destroyed, and trees cut down. "Of Palestine," he said, "we know little, because at the beginning of the war a dark curtain dropped upon that country. We only hear of the people's sobs from a few exiles who have managed to escape. We know, however, that the government has seized

all crops and fruit, cut down the fruit and olive trees, and that two-thirds of the population around Jerusalem have perished.”

He said it was impossible to say how long it would be before relief could be sent into Palestine, but as Egypt was only a day’s sail he urged the immediate collection there of large stores so that these could be dispatched at a moment’s notice. He expressed the opinion that the Turk ought not to be tolerated as a ruling power—certainly not over men of another faith. “If,” he added, “he is still permitted to rule over Moslems, I pity the Moslems.” All the speakers fixed their hopes on getting rid of the Turk.

A Syrian in the audience rose to express his gratitude. After two or three words he broke down and the sound of his weeping filled the room. The sympathies of most of the speakers leaned towards the Christian portion of the distressed population—“the poor saints at Jerusalem” as the Bishop of London was pleased to term them. If he only knew that it was the attitude of “saints” of this (and his own) description towards the truth that caused God to give the Turk a free hand in Eastern Christendom! In appealing for the Fund the Bishop cited the example of Paul. It is possible that the prelate may have imagined that he was a second Paul pleading for Christ’s faithful followers in Jerusalem (2 Thess. 2:11)...

Soon after this a lady in the audience rose and remained on her feet until the Lord Mayor inquired: “Do you wish to ask a question, madam?” The reply came: “I wish to give £100 to the poor saints in Jerusalem, and £100 to the others.” Yes, verily, she had her reward in the applause that followed. Christendom is so apt to proclaim her good deeds in our ears to our disparagement and discouragement, that it is not amiss to have a peep at the spirit in which her good deeds are performed. A Syrian lady made the only reference to Christ—as the “Carpenter of Nazareth” who introduced justice and mercy to mankind. This drew from Sir Edwin Pears the remarks that justice and mercy were known to Israel’s prophets before the advent of the “Carpenter of Nazareth.”

A mumbled “benediction” and the singing of the National Anthem brought the meeting to a close. *Sis. C.H. Jannaway—1917*

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 34

WE have left Egypt (Gentile darkness); have passed through the Red Sea (baptism); and are journeying through the wilderness

(probationary state) to the promised inheritance (Kingdom of God). As of yore, there are murmurers among the wanderers. The food of Egypt is remembered, and contrasted with the manna, and the cry goes forth: "How disagreeable! How monotonous!" Some grumble at the manna unwittingly. What is manna? The manna is Christ—not his literal body, but the spirit and life-giving counsel which proceeded from him— "*I am the bread of life;*" "*He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever;*" "*The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life*" (John 6:32, 58, 63). Has Christ said that we are to love him above others? This, then, is manna. That we are to do good to the unworthy and unthankful? This also is manna. That we are to search the Scriptures, to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together, to speak evil of no man, to avenge not ourselves, to crucify the flesh? All this is manna. Let us eat our spiritual food with contentment. Let us not join the grumbler in despising it. Let us be Joshuas and Calebs. Let us not look backwards at the fish, cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic, but forwards to the grapes, and pomegranates, and figs of the glorious land.

A Sunday School is dependent upon its teachers for its profitableness and stability. The qualities of a good teacher are to a large extent acquirable. Good teachers manifest a kindly interest in their children. They are quick to note and reward good conduct, and equally quick to note and punish bad conduct. They never award the same number of marks to the deserving and undeserving alike. They do not wink at unruly or naughty behaviour. They keep their eyes about them, and instantly suppress and firmly forbid all giggling, play, and mischievous pranks. They do not taunt, aggravate, or display temper. They are consistent; they do not say one thing and practice another. They are exemplary. Above all, they are always masters of their subject; they are able to answer relevant questions, and do not wander, for want of matter, into the following Sunday's lesson. These are the traits of successful teachers, commanding the respect and obedience of the children. Let those who aspire to the good and necessary work of teaching, endeavour to possess these traits.

God's present work on earth has many phases—the Sunday School is one. To speak disparagingly of the Sunday School is to manifest a lack of discernment concerning God's ways. God has never been unmindful of the spiritual requirements of children. To the Jew He said — teach the children diligently (Deut. 6:7). And again, at all times teach them (Deut. 11:18, 19). To the enlightened Gentile, He has spoken in like manner. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephes. 6:4). True, these commands apply specifically to parents, but they are not confined to them. If the training of children is

a good work for parents, is it not also for any who are able to cooperate with the parents? Certainly, and we have Bible precedents for supplementing home training by public effort. “Gather the people together,” said Moses, “men, women, and *children* . . . that they may learn and fear the Lord your God” (Deut. 31:12). Both love to God, and love to our brethren, constrain us to look with favour upon the work of the Sunday School. God has said, teach the children; and our brethren’s wish is that their children should attain to a knowledge of the truth. Let those who have put their hands to the plough in this matter, not look back. Let them remember that the eyes of God are upon their unostentatious work, and that He will not be unrighteous in “that day” to forget it.

Retaliation is a sin which the Bible rigidly condemns. Although a most agreeable exercise to the natural man, God will not have it. To the Israelites He said: “Say not, I will do so to him as he hath done to me.” (Prov. 24:29). “If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat.” (Prov. 25:21, 22). To us God says the same thing: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:14, 17, 19, 21; 1 Peter 3:9; 1 Thes. 5:15). Our duty is, therefore, clear. We are not only to forgive, but to go out of our way to do good to our offenders. We fall very short if we simply show kindness when in the humour, or to those only who show kindness to us. All avenging is to be left to God. Upon this principle the Jews had to act. They were only to avenge in obedience to the requirements of the law; or by special command, as the infliction of judgment on their enemies. The spiritually-minded recognised this principle. David, when planning unauthorised revenge, freely acknowledged his error, in response to the wise counsel of Abigail (1 Sam. 25:30–33). Let us be careful. Our duty is not easy, but perform it we must, if we would be God’s children, and the inheritors of His kingdom.

Tribulations and trials may come from a variety of causes, from bodily ailments, bereavements, pecuniary losses, moral slips and shortcomings, severed friendships for the truth’s sake, tyrannical or unprincipled employers, the ungodly ways of those with whom we are compelled to mix, etc., etc. Paul teaches us to “glory in tribulations” (Rom. 5:3). James similarly says, “Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations” (Jas. 1:2). This teaching is plain. Tribulations and trials are not to be received in a complaining, whining spirit, but in the spirit of contentment and joy. To take this stand is not natural to us—faith is needed. Faith springs from an understanding and appreciation of the word of God. This word says that tribulations and trials come from Him—that they are to be looked upon as a sign of divine favour (Heb.

12:6); that whilst the trials last, He will not leave us (Heb. 13:6); that He knows how to deliver us (2 Pet. 2:9); that no trials will be carried beyond the point of endurance (1 Cor. 10:13); that trials are for our good, and will cultivate those virtues which qualify for an endless life (Rom. 8:28; 5:3–5; James 1:3; Heb. 12:11; John 15:2). Let us try to remember these truths when we fall into tribulations and trials, and rejoice accordingly. *Bro. A. T. Jannaway— 1891*

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

A Design Foreordained

In the scriptures the Father is presented to us as the Builder and Architect of a divine order of things to be established on earth at a future day, as we are told that “the Builder of all things is God.” Like any other builder, He does not build without design.

His purpose and design were foreknown and predestinated from the beginning. There was nothing left to chance. Everything to be done or come to pass was to be “according to the good pleasure of His will.” It was, and is, His purpose that Christ, the “body prepared” of the Father, should be the pattern of all the sons of glory. That all the redeemed should be united in one body of which Christ was to be the head. They are to form a spiritual temple in which God is to dwell for eternity (Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:3-7),

“Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone.”

Everything entering into the construction of this building will conform to the foreordained purpose and design of the Master Builder. This is the scriptural doctrine of predestination and election. All are elected according to a foreordained plan. But God did not say to this man, “You are elected from all eternity to salvation, no matter what you wish to do or be;” neither does He say to another, “You are predestinated to condemnation and eternal torture, no matter how hard you try to serve Me.”

Such nonsense is a defamation of the name of God, of whom the inspired apostle Peter said,

“I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him” - Acts 10:34-35.

How Saints Are Elected

In 1st Peter 1-2 the apostle addresses the saints as those who are *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ.”*

This is the means foreordained of God for selecting the heirs of salvation.

This conforms to 1st Peter 1:19-22, where we are told that the saints are,

“redeemed by the precious blood of Christ...who was foreordained before the foundation, of the world.” As to how one becomes a partaker of that redemption, Peter continues,

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.”

To say that God only permits the predestinated to know and believe His word, while withholding the word from those foreordained to condemnation, is to make of the redeemed mere puppets without any choice for good or evil.

Freedom of Choice

That God has given to all who hear His word freedom to choose life or death, is one of the most outstanding tenets of Scripture. That sinners are saved by faith and obedience, not by foreordination, is equally prominent in scripture, teaching.

While it may be conceded that the finite mind of man cannot understand how that God knows all things from the beginning, and yet permits man to exercise free will, nevertheless we know that it is so. God's salvation is free to all who hear and heed His word. The following testimonies to that effect could be multiplied:

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” —Rev. 22:17.

“God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth...Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.” —1 Tim. 1:6.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” —John 3:16.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.” —Mark 16:16.

“The Gospel of Christ...is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” —Rom. 1:16.

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” —Gal. 6:7, 8.

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life...He that overcometh...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” —Rev. 2:7, 10, 26: 3:5.

“But he that lacketh these things (faith and works) is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure. For if ye do these things ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” —2 Peter 1:4-11.

To sum up the obvious teaching of these quotations from the word of God: In Isa. 55:11 God says:

“My word...shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please.”

It was not the purpose of the Father to reveal His word to every human being who ever lived; but to all who hear and understand that word, salvation is a possibility, and rejection of that word brings accountability to divine judgment.

God did not send forth His word to save persons who were already saved by foreordained election. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Faith, based upon a belief in God's word, baptism for remission of sins, and the building of a character well-pleasing to God, are the only guarantee of salvation.

It was for this purpose that God gave His only begotten Son, *“that believing ye might have life through His Name.”* It was for this reason that God sent men to preach that word; that men died in defense of the word, that sinful men and women might believe it and be saved. If the redeemed had already been selected through predestination, then the death of Christ was unnecessary reaching of the cross but empty sound, without any meaning or purpose.

But let us note that, in speaking of freedom of choice in divine election, we should not overlook the fact that God has elected certain individuals for special work. He has left nothing to the will of man in anything which He has done. God foreknew the work He wanted done, and He chose the one fitted for that work. But let us also remember that

these “chosen vessels” were subject to the same conditions of salvation as were all the heirs of salvation.

So let us not rest our case as the notion that we have been “predestinated,” but rather “make our calling and election sure,” in the way that God has provided for us. —*Bro. Oscar Beauchamp*

Christadelphian Works

There is a growing trend to try to replace the sound expositions of our pioneer brethren (to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of the Truth) with strange new speculations—usually not really new but borrowed from orthodoxy, as the old Catholic theory that the Revelation is all either past or future, and its “Babylon” is Jerusalem.

These “new” theories, saddening as they are, do have a negative value—they do make us more thankful for, and deeply appreciative of, the sound foundation of exposition laid by bre. Thomas and Roberts, to which we turn with great satisfaction and relief. To any with a sound and balanced understanding of the Truth, bro. Roberts proves conclusively that apocalyptic Babylon is Rome, soon to be utterly destroyed in the wrath of God. To apply the final and awful condemnations and judgments pronounced on the Roman Babylon to God's Holy City verges on blasphemy, and is sickening to read. Truly Jerusalem has deeply sinned, and has been terribly punished, but in her condemnations there is divine love and mercy and sorrow, and a promise of eventual reconciliation and glory, when she has suffered and been purged enough.

We are familiar with these sentiments from orthodoxy, but God's tone and spirit toward Jerusalem, even in her deepest sins, is so different from that to Romish Babylon that we marvel that anyone claiming to know the Truth could confuse them. What will not be done for something new and ear-tickling! Let us study more and more, and constantly deepen our foundations. These are sad and dangerous times.

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.”

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! How oft would I have gathered thy children! Ye shall not see me till ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.”

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee.”
Bro. G. V. Growcott

Seventy Times Seven

“Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he shall not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the ecclesia; but if he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican”—Matt. 18:15-18.

Nothing tends more to the keeping or the restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to third persons.

From them it spreads, with the results of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and told the fault “between thee and him alone.”

If good men, or those who consider themselves such, **would adopt the rule of refusing to listen to an evil report** privately conveyed, until it had been dealt with to the last stage according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented.

Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now in the generation of hatred **instead of love. Much more serious will be the result to offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule. Jesus indicates** that any decision arrived at by an ecclesia in the proper application of this rule will be respected and confirmed by God Himself —

“Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

This is much encouragement to the brethren to be faithful in the matter. The application of the rule will often make it unnecessary to advance beyond the first stage. A brother approached privately, with every opportunity of explanation, will often make concessions that must remain impossible if he is made the subject of public opprobrium, however deserved.

The healing of a matter will often be the result if you go and tell a man his fault “between him and thee alone.” If there is no fault, there will be explanation and understanding.

If there be, there will be concession and forgiveness. And we are not to weary in the recurrence of the process. Peter asked how often this forgiveness was to be granted.

Christ's answer practically was, "No limit." Peter suggested "seven times" as going a long way. Christ said—

"I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22).

He then backed his remark with the parable of the unmerciful fellow-servant, which concluded with the command that we *must* every one forgive trespassers, on pain of not being ourselves forgiven.

The mind cannot exhaust the beauty of this commandment. How noble is the placable mind! How cordially *it* commends itself to all classes of men! How hideous and detestable the harsh and unforgiving!

By so much we may estimate the superiority of the doctrine of Christ over all other teachers. No *system of teaching places man so low and God so high, the duty of* mercy in such an imperative position. The reason self-evidently is, that other systems are of man: Christ's alone is of God. —*Bro. Robert Roberts*

As We Forgive

It may be said that the doctrine of forgiveness neutralizes the doctrine of moral excellence being necessary to inclusion among the "elect." It may be asked, Where is the need of righteousness if forgiveness rehabilitates the sinner?

The question overlooks the fact that FORGIVENESS ITSELF IS CONDITIONAL. For example, Jesus teaches that a man who is not forgiving will not be forgiven. And there are other qualities that the Scriptures tell us are requisite for forgiveness. —*Bro. Robert Roberts*

Prayer

I was called on to conclude with prayer—a sweet luxury to the weary spirit—the first condition of which is the active consciousness of God's existence: the second, the knowledge of Him as communicated in the Scriptures: the third, the love of Him generated thereby: the fourth, the knowledge of our needs produced by experience and reflection. "Saying prayer" is not praying. Prayer is the sincere and fervent address to the Father that would be natural in solitude, and at all events that does not depend upon the presence of fellow-worshippers. The prayer that is humanly-inspired is acceptable to neither God nor man. There are prayers that mortify and crush, because they are not

prayers, but performances, and odious at that. Sincerity is the virtue that gives grace to all action.

—*Bro. Robert Roberts*

Who Baptized the Apostles?

“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit”—John 13:10.

The answer to this question is emphatically, John the baptizer. The apostle Andrew is styled by the apostle John, one of John's disciples (John 1:35, 37, 40). This testimony is decisive as to him; but how are we to get at the certainty that the twelve were all baptized of John?

We reply, that John's baptism divided the Jews into two classes—the first class comprised “all the people that heard, and the publicans;” the other, “the Pharisees and lawyers” (Luke 7:29-30). The former class were very numerous; for—

“Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:5-6).

Referring to the completion of this work, Luke says, (3:21) “Now when all the people were baptized, and it came to pass that; Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened.” The other class being composed of the “upper ten thousand,” were “respectable” and few. They were the “righteous,” who, in their own estimation, needed no physician, having no occasion for repentance. As a class, they despised the people as cursed, knowing not the law. They regarded a baptism of repentance for remission of sins as quite unsuited to them; so that “they rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John;” (Luke 7:30) while the people, on the contrary, who thought more humbly of themselves, (Luke 7:29) “justified God, being baptized with John's baptism.”

The testimony saith that “the publicans,” or tax-gatherers, were baptized of John as well as all the people. Now the apostle Matthew was one of the publicans of Judea, and styled in the list of the twelve, “Matthew the publican;” we may therefore safely infer that he, as well as Andrew, was baptized of John.

The apostles were all attendants upon John's preaching. One of them says, (1 John 1:1-3) “That which was from the beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have

looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life * * that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.” John affirms this of himself and the rest of the apostles. Matthew and he have written accounts of some of the things they saw and heard “from the beginning” — a beginning indicated by Mark as characterized by the commencement of John’s baptismal proclamation, which he styles (1:1) “the beginning of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ.”

All the apostles were “witnesses unto him,” therefore what John and Matthew and Andrew saw and heard they were all able to testify to from personal observation. John and Matthew heard John preach, saw him immerse Jesus, saw the Spirit descend upon him, heard the Father’s voice, etc.; and because they saw and heard these things they were able to declare them. Peter also intimates that he and the ten were well acquainted with the things that pertained to “the beginning;” and declares that it was necessary that the candidates for the twelfth place in the apostleship should be as familiar with them as themselves. “Of these men,” said he, “who have companied with us all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness of his resurrection.” (Acts 1:21-22) He must be able to testify the things concerning Jesus in connection with John’s baptism as well as with his resurrection. If he were unable to do this, how could he testify that God had anointed him, or made a Christ of him?

The conclusion, then, is certain that all the apostles heard John’s proclamation that the King of Israel was about to appear, and that they should prepare to receive him; that he came baptizing in water to the end that God might set His seal or mark upon that one of the baptized whom He had chosen for king; and that having witnessed the promised sign descending upon Jesus, he testified that Jesus was the Son and Lamb of God, whom He had chosen to take away the sins of the world. The apostles all heard this, and having heard it have declared it unto us.

This being admitted, then, it is equivalent to admitting also that the apostles were baptized at John’s baptism; for the testimony we have already quoted says, “all the people that heard justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.” The apostles were of the people, not of the ruling class, they heard, and believed what they heard, and were therefore baptized in the hope of the King’s making his appearance soon. Nor were they long held in suspense. When John pointed to Jesus as the King, Andrew and another introduced themselves to him and had the honor of an invitation to spend the day

with him at his abode. On leaving he sought his brother Simon Peter, and told him they found the Messiah, that is the Anointed. Peter then went to see him, and having entered his service received a change of name. After this Philip, a fellow townsman of Andrew, and Peter were enlisted. Philip then told his friend Nathanael—"we have found him, of whom Moses and the prophets did write;" and when Nathanael had conversed with Jesus, he recognized him as Son of God and King of Israel.

But it is further certain that the apostles were all disciples of John, (and they only were his disciples who were baptized of him,) before they were disciples of Jesus, from the consideration evinced in the answer to the following question.—From which of the two classes before-mentioned is it certain Jesus would select his apostles? Would it be from that class which rejected the counsel of God against themselves in not being baptized? From the Pharisees and Lawyers? No; these were they upon whom he pronounced his woes. It follows then that he selected his apostles from those who "justified God in being baptized with John's baptism." There is no other conclusion open to us. It is this or none at all.

But one may say, were the apostles not afterwards rebaptized in the Name of Jesus, and if so, who immersed them? No, they were clean without it. Their case was peculiar, and cannot occur again. Jesus did not baptize in his own name. Indeed there was no baptizing into any name before Pentecost. There could be none; for although Jesus had power on earth to forgive sins, his name had not acquired a sin-remitting efficacy, because he had then as yet neither died nor risen again. John's baptism was the immersion of believers into repentance for remission of sins; so was the baptism Jesus preached. The difference existing between them was in that believed by the disciples of John and of Jesus.

Both classes believed in the Hope of Israel; John's, however, expected the coming of Messiah to put the nation in possession of its hope; while the disciples of Jesus believed that he was already come, and that Jesus was he. Many of John's disciples, it is likely, though expecting the King whom Jehovah had provided, did not receive Jesus as that personage; but to "as many as did receive him, to them he gave the power to become the sons of God." Among these were the apostles, and those who on Pentecost and afterwards "who believe on his Name." The faith that served for baptism before Pentecost would not suffice on that day. It must expand, for it had to comprise the King's

death for sin and his resurrection for justification unto life, in addition to what was believed before. The baptism of believers into repentance for remission of sins, was the nature of the three baptisms, administered first by John, then by Jesus, and afterwards by the apostles on Pentecost; while the faith of John's disciples was positive; that of Christ's comparative; and of the apostolic converts, superlative.

The case of the apostles, we have said, was peculiar. John the baptist was not immersed at all; not even by Jesus: but Jesus was immersed by him, how much more necessary therefore the apostles. They had all bathed religiously in Jordan's bath. After this Jesus took them under his especial care. He instructed them in "the mysteries of the Kingdom of God," and indoctrinated them with the divine testimony. This had a cleansing effect upon eleven of them, but not upon Judas.

As the three years and a half of his ministry drew to a close, he proceeded to perfect the work he had commenced upon them. Two days before the Passover being at Bethany, he supped at Simon the leper's. After supper he began to wash the apostles' feet, for a double purpose; first, to complete their cleansing; and secondly, to teach them a lesson of humility. Peter, however, objected, judging that Jesus was humbling himself too much. He did not perceive what was intended by the act. But his Lord told him he should know afterwards. He still declined, saying, "thou shalt not wash my feet unto the age;" to which Jesus replied, (John 13:8) "if I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me;" that is, in that age. It is evident from this remark that there was more in this particular feet-washing than a mere lesson of humility. Peter's salvation depended on his compliance; for to tell him he should have no part with Jesus, was the same as telling him he should be lost if his feet were not washed by Jesus. When Peter heard this all objection not only vanished, but he rushed into an extreme of willingness, offering not only his feet, but his hands and head. But Jesus reminded him that this was unnecessary, on the ground that he and the rest had already bathed, and bathers when they had left the bath needed only to wash their feet, and were then clean every whit. His words are, "He that is bathed (ho leloumenos) hath no need but to wash (nipsasthai) the feet." This being the case with the apostles, Jesus refused to do more than wash their feet. John had bathed them in Jordan, and Jesus completed their investiture by the Word he had spoken to them, and the washing of their feet. Their feet were now "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace."

Before, they were girded with truth, and had on the breastplate of Righteousness; but they were not shod. The word spoken to them by Jesus let them into the mysteries of the Gospel of the Kingdom, which are “the preparation of the gospel,” for no man can have part with Jesus in that Kingdom, which is his joy, unless he is prepared by indoctrination into the Mystery. Thus indoctrinated, bathed and washed, Jesus addressed them, saying, “Ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.” But Judas had heard the same things, been bathed by John, and washed by Jesus, why was he not clean even as the rest? Because, not being a man of honest and good heart, the Word sown there could not germinate and grow. What he understood had no genial influence upon him. It found him a thief and left him a thief and a traitor, therefore his bathing and washing proved of no account. But it was not so with the eleven. After this washing Jesus said: “Ye are now clean through the word I have spoken to you.” Their cleansing was complete and permanent by the water through the word.

Thus by reasoning on the testimony we come to the full assurance that the apostles were baptized of John, and cleansed by Jesus with water and the word. He exhorted them to wash one another's feet, as a memorial, doubtless, of their being shod, and of the humility he exemplified for their imitation. Such a feet-washing was never before or since, nor will ever be again. The lesson inculcated remains in all its force. Jehovah's future king of the world washing the feet of the thief, whom he knew, within two days, would sell him to his enemies that they might put him to death! No meekness and humility ever exceeded this. But here we must pause till a more convenient season.

Bro. John Thomas—Herald 1852 (Christadelphian 1880)

6. His Name

A name is representative of a person. It is a word or term by which an individual is designated. That which is inherited or bestowed at birth, indicates the relationship and attributes of flesh and blood to certain specialties. John Smith, by proving that he is the heir at law of the deceased William Smith, may inherit his estate; but in relation to “the life of the Lamb slain,” there is nothing in the name “John Smith” that gives him any claim upon it.

The scriptures, which treat of all things pertaining to life and godliness, have delineated the character to which all must be conformed who would be inscribed in the book of the Lamb's life. John Smith may have the name, or reputation, of being conformed to that character, while he is only so in pretence, or not really. He is, then, like the members of the Star-Angel in Sardis, who were "dead;" he has "a name that he lives;" but it is good for nothing.

The name to be confessed before the Father is one that is "holy, unblameable, and unreprouchable in his sight." It is representative of one who has "continued in the faith, grounded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel." This suggests a time when the subject received the name. It was not when he was born, or sprinkled according to the formula of the catechism children are taught by rote.

It has no relation to human "godfathers and godmothers," who have been introduced by ignorance and superstition, as substitutes for the divine. The name is called upon the subject when faith is manifested in the obedience it prescribes. James styles it to *kalon onomay* the honorable, excellent, or distinguished name, which had been called upon those to whom he wrote—ch. 2:7; and Peter, in answer to the inquiry of the believing multitude on the day of Pentecost, told them to be "every one of them immersed upon the name of JESUS Anointed into remission of sins." Thus they were grafted, as it were, "upon the name," which became their designation before the Father.

The subject having been called by this name in baptism, it "his name"—the name to be confessed if preserved undefiled, and were duly illustrated by him who had been ennobled by it. Many inherit the name of a distinguished ancestry, which is brought into contempt by their misdeeds; so there have been many who have disgraced the name, more exalted than any other name, to the privileges of which they have been introduced. Their character has not been conformed to the divine example incarnated in Jesus; "who, though he were a son, learned obedience by the things which he suffered;" having been obedient even unto death, his name became illustrious; but in their keeping after being named upon them, it became a by-word and reproach.

But the undefiled in Sardis were not such. They preserved it unsullied; and in the name confessed, and kept it as their own to be

celebrated by the Spirit in the presence of his Father and in the presence of his angels, the messengers of his power.

“He that hath an ear let him hearken to what the Spirit saith to the ecclesias.”

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Bro. John Thomas—Eureka Vol. 1 Page 371 Logos edition

Hints For Bible Markers

We were given a higher standard on how we are to live and act when Jesus Christ appeared on the earth. We have an example of the of the change from the Law of Moses, the “school master” to bring Israel to Christ, to educate them from a lower to a better position, to the Law of Christ, an even higher pattern, where “grace and truth” abound. The position of bond-servant is exchanged for the freedom and privileges of sonship. The change is apparent with the 7th commandment, among others, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14)

It was extended, declaring that entertaining “unlawful desire is divinely reckoned as guilty action,” showing the importance of desiring the things that be of God over the things that be of the flesh. “Christ’s aim evidently was to make a complete revolution in the principles of human conduct. Retaliation, retribution, restitution, compensation, and revenge were to be superseded by remission, conciliation, peacefulness, magnanimity, generosity, pardon, and self-sacrifice. The Jews had been allowed to indulge in the former principle, and they had no doubt abused their privilege by carrying it to an extreme which was not originally intended. To wean them from their accustomed ways, Jesus Christ presents the new principle in a form which leaves no mistake as to the radical change they were required to effect.” (*The Christadelphian*, Volume 20, 1883, Page 367) “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Mat 5:20)

bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VII. CONCERNING YOUR THOUGHTS AND SPEECH

The harbouring of unlawful desire is divinely reckoned as guilty action. It is forbidden.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: (28) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:27 - 28)

Mortify, therefore, or hold in subjection, your members which are upon earth.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: (Colossians 3:5)

And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (Galatians 5:24)

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. (1 Corinthians 9:27)

Remove all causes of spiritual stumbling, or hindrance from your path, even at the risk of pain and loss.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (Matthew 5:29)

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:1)

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