

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

RICHARD, Sask. Canada Sunday School 10:00 AM. Memorial Meeting 11:20AM. Weeknight Bible class Wed. Evenings at 8:00PM in July and August, 7:30PM all other times. Bro Sid Jones RR#1 Richard, Sk. Canada S0M 2P0. Email: sc.jones@sasktel.net. Phone: 306-246-4468.

Dear Brethren and Sisters of the one Faith,
Our love and greetings in the Master's Name,

A full year has passed since our last submission of ecclesial news to the magazine. Time passes quickly, and as we look at the developments taking place on this little globe, we can be assured that the last days will be used up just as quickly, as we await our Master's return.

During the past year, we have had the pleasure of welcoming the following fellow-servants as visitors to the ecclesia at Richard: Sis. Gwen Armstrong, Bro. Norm and Sis. Tina Blacker, Sis. Sarah Blacker, Bro. Ben and Sis. Jennifer Darter, Bro. Brent and Sis. Rachel Dul, Sis. Tamar Hopper, Sis. June Jones, Sis. Shirley Luard, Sis. Brenda McChesney, Sis. Grace Punter, Bro. Glenn Rhoades and Sis. Julie Rhoades. We wish to thank Brethren Ben Darter, Glenn Rhoades, Norm Blacker and Brent Dul for ministering the word to us, in exhortation or other capacity. We also have had Sis. Amber Jones home for the summer months and on several occasions. During the rest of the year, she meets with the Edmonton ecclesia, where she stays for part of the year.

On January 28th we had the pleasure of witnessing and assisting **Bro. Matthew Walsh** as he took the first step in obedience to Christ by entering the waters of baptism, and emerged in newness of life to run the race set before us all. May we run together and encourage one another in that race for life eternal. Bro. Matt received the right hand of fellowship on January 29th.

Many of the visitors we had, came and attended our February study weekend February 18 and 19th.

On August 8th the ranks of our Sunday School swelled by one, at the birth of Charis Bea Humphreys, daughter of Bro. David and Sis. Dawn Humphreys. May she grow in years to come in the nurture and admonition of the Lord to become a faithful servant to Him.

On August 25th our Bro. Matt Walsh and Sis. Kim Jackson were united in marriage. It is our hope and prayer that they be guided to walk together and be a help to one another through the wilderness journey that is our life and probation.

The love and grace of God and our Lord Jesus Christ be with each and all. We extend to each of you, an invitation to attend our Richard 2013 Gathering to be held here, God Willing June 28th to July1, 2013.
Bro. Sid Jones

ODIADO, Kenya

Dear brothers and sisters,
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is to inform the entire brotherhood that the Odiado Ecclesia hosted a Bible School which began on 22nd to 27th of August 2012. We are pleased to let you know that Yahweh made it a success.

We had representatives from various Ecclesias attending the Bible school. Representatives from four Ecclesias in Uganda, one Ecclesia in U.S.A. and seven Ecclesias in Kenya attended. The number of those who attended both brethren and friends was ninety five. This attendance was much higher compared to the past years. This is a sure sign that the love of the word of God is increasing.

Among the topics that were discussed included the purpose of Christ's second coming by Bro. Shadrack Nakholi, Names of the Deity by Bro. John Simiyu, Solution to tomorrow's problems and sufferings by Bro. Epa Wekati, fellowship by Bro. Robert Bent, life after Baptism by Bro. Rodgers Musebe, the Biblical meaning of Demons/Devil/Satan/Lucifer by Bro. Stephen Juma, just to mention but a few. This spiritual enrichment created a strong impact in the minds of the Adam's race who were willing to ask many questions during the questions sessions to seek clarifications.

During the Bible School a larger number of Adam's race, about thirteen, did a written baptismal interview directed by Bro. John Simiyu and three who could not read and write had to go for an oral interview conducted by Bro. Epa Wekati. However, due to time limit, brethren Epa and John could not conduct oral interviews for all the sixteen. Nevertheless, Bro. John was able to perform oral interview for four and the four we are happy to report that they gave a good confession of the true faith. These were Bro. David Mkoro of Kimikungi Ecclesia, who had been out of fellowship for quite some time. He was given a right hand of fellowship on Sunday, the 27th of August. The second one was Bro. Abraham Wandera also of Kimikungi Ecclesia, who was also out of fellowship for quite some time. He was to be given a right hand of fellowship later at Kimikungi Ecclesia. The third and fourth were **Bro. David H. Wandera** of Madowa Ecclesia, Uganda and **Sis. Moureen Awino Ambuga** of Odiado Ecclesia. The two were later baptized on Monday, the 27th of August in Wakhungu Dam. Bro. David H. Wandera was to be given a right hand of fellowship later at Madowa Ecclesia while Sis. Moureen Awino Ambuga was given a right hand of fellowship on Sunday, the 2nd of September. Sis. Moureen A. Ambuga is a sister to Bro. Shadrack Nakholi. Prior to her Baptism, she was an active member of our Sunday School Scholars. We wish our new brethren well in their journey Zionwards. May the Almighty Yahweh, who has called them, be with them always. It is also worth noting that Bro. John and Bro. Epa promised to perform oral interview for the remaining of the Adam's race of whom they were not through with. We shall update the entire brotherhood once that is done.

With much Love in the hope we share in Christ Jesus,
Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu.

OWERRI, Nigeria

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

I have to let you know that Owerri Ecclesia is still on course despite long gap in communication. Owerri Ecclesia receives many visitors that come around to fellowship. Though many have not shown interest in becoming integral part of us by joining the Sunday school class. The baptized brethren and sisters are highly committed to studies. This is as the result of the encouragement gotten from brothers and sisters around the world through *Facebook*.

As at now another Ecclesia is coming up in the neighboring state, Abia which is 45 kilometers away from Owerri.

Four days ago, things changed for us. Our brothers in Oguta, gave us distress calls on the situation on ground. We went there and saw the situation, it was very pathetic. The two brothers lost their entire household property to the flood. When it happened, we never knew that our brethren were affected. Though, we made several calls to reach them, owing to poor or weak signals, there was no breakthrough in communication. Since then, members of the Ecclesia have gone there to visit the brothers and other affected persons. Many religious groups have gone there too to rescue their brothers and sisters that were affected and have given them relief materials. We have raised some funds for our brothers and their families and also sent food items. As at yesterday, a sister and I went with more food items. Many members now were able to contribute generously.

There are many areas we need to improve upon. We know we can't do it alone. Our society is becoming volatile and there should be new approach to what we do here. Thanks.

Yours in the Lord's Vineyard,
Brother Sylvester Ebere

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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/

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....June 28 – July 1, 2013

Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada,
sc.jones@sasktel.net

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link often as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to MP3 format and post them.

Thou Puttest Thy Nest in the Rock

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever” (Jer. 35:19).

There is a strange and interesting people associated with Israel all through its Old Testament history. They first appear in Genesis 15:19, as the leading name in a list of ten nations whose land Abraham is promised he will later receive. They are the Kenites.

This reference shows they were already a nation at the time of Abraham. We know nothing of them at this time, but we do know Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, was there. There must have been some faithful people to whom Melchizedek ministered. Several of the nations in this list were descended from Ham through Canaan, but there is no way of determining which branch of Noah’s family the Kenites came from. This silence concerning them is perhaps significant.

Their next appearance is in Exodus 2:16. When Moses fled from Egypt, he came into contact with Reuel the priest of Midian, and his seven daughters. They are not identified as Kenites in this passage, but they are several times later. Once they are called Midianites, apparently from their dwelling at this time in the land of Midian among that people. Usually they are called Kenites.

The Midianites (descended from Abraham) always appear as bitter *enemies* of Israel: the Kenites always as faithful *friends*.

One unusual aspect of the Kenites is their habit and ability of peaceful association with, and living in the area of, other peoples, as we shall see in many cases. They usually appear as simple and harmless strangers and nomads—on good terms with neighbors but not entering into their conflicts: a strange people set apart.

Reuel was a “priest of Midian,” but he certainly does not seem to have been in a position of power or authority, for it was obviously customary for the local shepherds to harass his daughters with impunity. He was surprised on this occasion when his daughters came home early as a result of Moses’ intervention for them against the bullying shepherds. Reuel may have been a “preacher of righteousness” among the Midianites for any who would hear.

In verses 21-22 (Ex. 2) he gives his daughter Zipporah to Moses to wife. She bares him two sons. Moses lived with Reuel forty years. There is no indication *when* during that period he married Zipporah, or when his sons were born. The natural impression the record gives is that his sons were quite young at the end of the forty years when he returned to Egypt, but there is no certainty of this.

In verse 18 we read that *Reuel* was Moses' father-in-law. Beginning chapter 3 we read of *Jethro* his father-in-law, and later on in Judges of *Hobab* Moses' father-in-law. There is some uncertainty about whom these three names apply to. The term translated "father-in-law" simply means "in-law," and can be also "brother-in-law" or "son-in-law."

The most likely solution (though not positive) is that Reuel and Jethro were the same person—Moses' *father-in-law-REUEL* (Friend of God) being his name, and JETHRO (Excellency, or his Excellency) being his title. Hobab was most probably the son of Jethro, and thus Moses' *brother-in-law*.

In Exodus 4:24-26, we find Moses on his way back to Egypt with his wife and two sons. At a certain stopping place for the night, God "sought to kill him" —probably not Moses but possibly his son. Zipporah quickly circumcised the son, and said, "*Thou art a bloody husband*" or "a husband or bridegroom of blood."

"So He (God) *let him go*." And she said again, "A husband of blood, because of the circumcision."

A strange incident, though not quite so strange if Jethro was a Kenite among Midianites, and not actually a Midianite. For he was a faithful man and acceptable to God. Therefore if he had been a Midianite (of the seed of Abraham), circumcision would have been natural and inevitable in his family. There was no law at the time that any not Abraham's seed must be circumcised to approach God.

It appears from Zipporah's action and statements that she had been the deterrent to the circumcision of the son, though we cannot be positive. The fault may have been entirely with Moses. Certainly the *responsibility* was his. Clearly Moses was at fault—and to a degree that God considered very serious. Moses was on his way to lead a whole nation to God, and he had neglected his own basic obedience *in his own family*-his own personal affairs. How human! If Jethro was a priest of God *without* circumcision, then Zipporah's reluctance and apparent objection is understandable.

The fact that Zipporah immediately knew what was wrong and what must be done would indicate it had been an issue between them. Moses' position may have been very difficult, especially for a "meek" man, but he had a clear duty.

Zipporah's double exclamation seems to indicate recognition and acceptance of the Abrahamic Covenant as a result of the open manifestation of God's anger: "*a Bridegroom of blood*"-the Blood of the Covenant.

Apparently because of this incident, it appears Moses sent Zipporah and his sons back to Jethro, and went on toward Egypt by himself, for

in Exodus 18 Jethro comes out with Zipporah and the sons to meet Moses and Israel. This was very soon after Israel had left Egypt-as they approach Sinai. There are several interesting points—

Verse 7: Moses did obeisance to Jethro. This is fitting if Jethro was Moses' *father-in-law*, and the same person as Reuel. It does not appear so fitting if Jethro was the *son* of Reuel, and therefore Moses' *brother-in-law*, as some suggest.

Verse 9: Jethro rejoiced at God's goodness to Israel. This is typical of the Kenites throughout their whole history.

Verse 12: Jethro took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron and the elders of Israel came to eat bread with him "*before God.*" This fellowshiping together and God accepting his sacrifice is conclusive evidence that Jethro was a true priest of God, and accepted by God as such. He was host to Israel's leaders, and offered sacrifices in which they joined. They ate with him "*before God.*" It would seem from this incident that Jethro stood in a special relation to God. He is similar to Job and Melchizedek, though not of course in the same exalted category as the latter.

Verses 13-26: Jethro gives advice concerning the appointing of subordinate judges to take the burden off Moses. Here again there is a very strong recognition of God: almost an indication of inspiration-

"Hearken to me . . . and God shall be with thee" (v. 19); *"If thou do this, and God command thee so . . ."* (v. 23);

"So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did ALL that he had said" (v. 24).

Moses did all that Jethro said, and clearly God approved. Recognizing the exalted position of Moses before God, and his direct contact with God, and that he was the leading figure in the primary work of God in the earth at that time, even the eternal divine purpose-this incident gives unique stature to Jethro. We cannot draw the parallel too closely, but we are reminded of Abraham before Melchizedek. Jethro departs (v.27), and this is the last we hear of him.

* * *

Numbers 10 describes the setting forth of Israel from Sinai at the beginning of the second year-

Verse 29: Moses invites his brother-in-law Hobab to go with them, promising him good. Jethro had returned to his home a year earlier, but Hobab had either stayed on with them at Sinai, or had come in the meantime. Jethro must have now been quite aged.

Verse 30: Hobab declines the invitation. Perhaps this was just a polite preliminary formality, as in the case of Abraham paying for his burying place.

Verse 31: Moses presses the appeal, showing it is not just a courteous form but an actual desire for the benefitting of Hobab's help.

We are not here told Hobab's decision, but from later circumstances it seems clear that a considerable body of Kenites did go with Israel—probably the whole group, for we have no reason to think they split their community. This would be natural and fitting, (and providentially beneficial to Israel in later years), for they were worshipers of the true God, and God had now especially chosen Israel to place His Name and Presence among. Israel hereafter was to be the center of the worship and knowledge of God.

There was reason to expect, too, that Israel would be a righteous and highly blessed nation in the earth—but perhaps the Kenites had already seen enough of them to be too confident on this score. Perhaps Hobab recognized that it was God's will that the Kenites be helpers of God's people, for that is the part they play hereafter.

* * *

In Numbers 12, very soon after this, comes the incident of Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses because of his "Ethiopian" wife. This comes into our present consideration if the wife in question is Zipporah, and this seems to be the case. This is the simplest explanation. "Ethiopian" (R. V.: *Cushite*) could well apply to the Midian area. Cush and Midian are associated in Habakkuk 3:7 in relation to this very area (when Christ, like Moses, advances *from Sinai* with his newly constituted nation). Cush, a son of Ham, begat Nimrod, the first great conqueror (Gen. 10:8-10), whose kingdom began in the Euphrates valley. Cush (or Ethiopia-same word) is applied in Scripture to Asiatic areas and peoples before it is applied to Africa. Many of the nine other nations mentioned with the Kenites in Genesis 15 were Hamitic. Cush was the ancestor of Sheba, Seba, Dedan and Havilah—all in the Arabian area. So there is no difficulty in applying "Cushite" to Zipporah the Kenite who lived in Midian.

Furthermore, it is hardly probable Moses would take another wife. It is even less probable that, as the faithful and God-appointed leader of a people to whom he repeatedly conveyed warnings from God about foreign marriages, he would at this point himself take an alien wife. It would seem the poorest and most inconsistent example he could give. Yet God, in this very incident, commends and justifies him. We conclude, therefore, that the strongest possibilities are that the wife at issue was Zipporah.

Miriam, as Moses' sister, was very prominent at the Exodus. But at Sinai Jethro met them bringing Zipporah. Moses was extremely respectful to Jethro, and adopted without change all his suggestions for judging Israel. *Now* he pleads with his brother-in-law Hobab to help him lead the way. It is quite natural that Miriam and Aaron would feel that Moses' non-Israelite in-laws were becoming much too influential and prominent in the affairs of God's people.

The objections of Aaron and Miriam to the Gentile bride of Israel's leader and savior is a type of Israel's reaction to the taking in of the Gentiles. In fact, the Kenites as a whole—a faithful Gentile group taken into Israel through a marriage with Israel's leader—are a type of the Bride of Christ. Miriam's deathlike leprosy, and her being excluded from the camp for a period of punishment and purification, and also Moses' unique meekness and loving appeal to God on her behalf, all add beauty to the type.

The next reference to the Kenites is in Numbers 24—the prophecies of Balaam as he looked down from a neighboring height upon the vast, orderly encampment of the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, nearly forty years after the above incident (vs. 21-22) —

“And he looked on the Kenites and took up his parable and said, Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock: nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.”

This immediately follows the prediction of the extermination of Amalek for their enmity toward Israel. Amalek was the typical arch-enemy, while the Kenites are always friendly and helpful associates. According to a good authority, this can be translated—

“The Kenite shall not be destroyed, until . . .”

Either way, there is a contrast: Amalek to be exterminated; Kenites to continue all through Israel's history, and to be taken captive with them. There is no point in Balaam's being caused to mention the Kenites at all, except as they are related to Israel. Their relations with Israel are always good, so this can hardly be a pronouncement of doom or punishment, as for Amalek.

Another question: Is Balaam looking at the encampment of the Kenites who are accompanying Israel, or the Kenites already in the land? It would seem most likely and most fittingly the former. Though they are among the nations of Canaan in Abraham's time, there is no mention of them being there in the history of *this* time. They are hardly likely to be, as the nations of Canaan are to be utterly destroyed. If Balaam is looking at the Kenites *with* Israel, this adds deeper meaning to his statement—

“Strong is thy dwellingplace, and thou puttest thy nest in a (R. V.: the) Rock.”

This would be in harmony with the imagery of his other prophecies. In Hebrew, “nest” is *ken*, and there is a play here on the name.

We wonder, too, whether from his lofty viewpoint, Balaam sees Amalekites lurking on the outskirts of the camp, ready to harass those who wander outside its protection. It would be very fitting.

* * *

The Kenites appear next just after the conquest of the land—

“And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees (that is, Jericho) with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad: and they went and dwelt among the people” (Jdgs. 1:16).

This is the beginning of the indications throughout the record that Hobab and a group of Kenites—probably the whole community—did accompany, or finally join, Israel. It would appear therefore that some of them, led by Hobab, stayed with Israel all through the terrible forty years in the wilderness—a remarkable token of faithfulness and friendship.

We learn here that after the subduing of the Canaanite nations by Israel, the Kenites went from the vicinity of Jericho to the southern wilderness of Judah, near the Dead Sea. Apparently they stayed in the Jericho area during the period of Joshua’s conquests. This would be natural and logical, and in keeping with their later history. It was not their war, nor their land. They were close and friendly associates, but not actually *of* Israel.

Throughout the record they appear in a rather unique position of dwelling among and at peace with various nations, though those nations were natural enemies.

We met them first with the nations of Canaan. Then with the Midianites. Now they are with Israel. Later we find them with both Amalek in the south and with the northern Canaanites—not allies, but apparently at peace and unmolested. There is much food for thought here. They seem to have been a different kind of people, living on a different plane, with different interests, seeking little in this life, bothering no one, envying no one, at peace among warring elements—like God’s people today.

Should they not have joined in more completely with Israel? Was not this expected of faithful aliens seeking God? Would they not then be expected to help in the war? In some ways they were unique. They

appear to have been true servants of God *before* their contact with Israel.

From the very beginning of their association with Israel, Israel was rebellious and disobedient to God—all through the wilderness and as soon as they got into the land. The Kenites witnessed the whole sad picture, from the golden calf on.

We do not know to what degree they qualified themselves to enter into the national worship. Perhaps they went all the way. Perhaps the strange incident of the circumcision of Moses' son gives us a clue here (though in that case it was one actually married into Israel, so we cannot draw too close a parallel).

But as for their way of life, they doubtless felt that because of Israel's national proneness to rebellion and idolatry, it was best to maintain their separateness and distinction.

Jericho was the first point of entrance into the land. The people and city of Jericho were wiped out by divine decree in the first strike of Israel against the Canaanites. With the inhabitants gone, and the area well suited for flocks, this was the natural place for the Kenites to stay while Israel was subduing the land. The main Israelite camp was very close by, at Gilgal.

None of this story is actually explained. We have to piece it together. But this is almost inevitably the place the Kenites would temporarily wait, as we are told they *did*, until they could go into the open desert area of the land more suited to their way of life. Consequently, when the tribes were settled in their inheritances, the Kenites moved to the very southern extremity of Judah, south of Arad (which was about twenty miles south of Hebron).

They may have particularly chosen to be with Judah, but it is more likely they chose this area because it abutted the open desert and suited their way of life. It was the only place in the land of this nature. Their actual *affinity* may have been (through Moses' family and their own inclinations) more with Levi than Judah. In one later reference some Kenites are spoken of as scribes—a Levitical occupation. There were Levitical cities nearby, and not only Levitical cities in general, but of the family of Aaron and Moses (Jdgs. 21:10-16). This is the area in which the priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth lived in New Testament times.

* * *

In Judges 4 (about 150 years later) we find one family of Kenites separated from the rest (v. 11)—

“Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father-in-law (R. V.: brother-in-law) of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, by Kadesh.”

This is on the furthest north border of the land, above the Waters of Merom, near the Dan settlement at Laish. Heber had moved from the extreme south to the extreme north, still on the open border. Again we see the characteristics of this people, choosing the less frequented border areas. And we note his dwelling is a tent, though Israel were now long settled in cities and houses.

The occasion is that of Deborah and Barak against Sisera and Jabin king of Hazor. In verse 17 we learn—

“There was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite.”

It may seem strange that there should be peace between this cruel Canaanite oppressor of Israel and a member of the Kenites who had always been on such close and sympathetic terms with Israel. But it was just peace: not a league or alliance. It is in complete harmony with the general history of the Kenites who appear at peace with many discordant elements.

Certainly there is no doubt where Jael’s sympathies lay in the conflict, and it would be unnatural to assume she was acting contrary to the sentiments of her husband Heber. She was not betraying an alliance: she was merely bringing to justice a vicious criminal. Generally the Kenites seemed to dwell apart from the conflicts and rivalries of their more powerful and settled neighbors, but on two significant occasions in Israel’s history, of which this was one, they struck a decisive blow for the people of God. Many times it would have been inappropriate for them to intervene, for God was frequently deservedly punishing Israel. On the two occasions they are recorded as intervening, it was in support of a man God had demonstrably raised up and was working with against current evils.

The Kenites next appear in 1 Samuel 15, when Saul was commanded to destroy the Amalekites, in fulfilment of Moses’ curse and Balaam’s prophecy. With our familiarity with the coarse surliness of most of Saul’s actions as king, he seems rather out of character as we find him taking the trouble (v. 6), apparently on his own initiative, to gently warn the Kenites to get out of the way of danger, lest some harm befall them. Here we find them, again, dwelling in unmolested peace among the fierce and warlike Amalekites.

* * *

In 1 Samuel 27, David, while under the service of Achish the Philistine king of Gath, raided (v. 8) the alien tribes on the south

borders of Judah, but in reporting this to Achish (v. 10) he says it was—

“Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites.”

This was true, but Achish understood him to mean he had attacked this part of Judah—not the nations south of it. We see the Kenites are still living on the south borders of Judah, and in sufficient numbers to give their designation to an area.

A little later, in 1 Samuel 30, when David is distributing the spoils of the Amalekites to the cities and areas that had befriended him when he was a fugitive from Saul in the wilderness of Judea, we find (v. 29) the “cities of the Kenites” among the recipients. The mention of “*cities of Kenites*” may be an indication that by this time they had begun to adopt a more settled form of life. This fits in with later events. We are now about five hundred years after the Exodus.

This incident is a clear indication that the sympathies of the Kenites were with David, though we have seen that—true to their pattern—they were on good terms with Saul. There must have been something about their simple and separate way of life that largely insulated them from the conflicts of the times. They apparently had little themselves, and coveted nothing others had, and were therefore left in peace.

We now come to the two most interesting and instructive episodes of their long and unique history. About one hundred and fifty years after the time of David, we find Jehu anointed by Elisha to destroy the wicked, idolatrous house of Ahab, and to reign in his stead in the northern kingdom of Israel.

In 2 Kings 10, Jehoram, Ahaziah and Jezebel have been slain, and Jehu is in process of wiping out the remnants of the family. In the course of this slaughter, on his way from Jezreel to Samaria (v. 15)-

“He lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him.”

Elisha had earlier prophesied that Ahab’s house should be destroyed. This was public knowledge, as Jehu made clear in verse 10. Elisha had recently anointed Jehu, and said he was the one to do the work. This would not yet be public knowledge, but it seems clear that Jehonadab knew it. From their known characters and interests, it seems certain that Elisha and Jehonadab were acquainted. From some cause, whether direct instruction or not, Jehonadab was coming to meet and help Jehu—apparently from Judah, for all we ever hear of the Kenites they are in Judah, both before and after this, except for the single case of Heber who it specially says had “severed” himself from the main body. The Kenites, as worshipers of God, would certainly not move to

the wicked, idolatrous kingdom of Israel, especially in the times of Ahab and Jezebel.

Verse 15 indicates that Jehu knew Jehonadab, but that they had had no previous intercourse about *this* matter. Jehonadab was a leader of the Kenites, and it is very probable he was widely known and respected as a righteous man. It is apparent from the subsequent history that he was a very outstanding character, and a strong and dominant personality. He left such a deep impression on his people that regulations he made were faithfully kept for at least two hundred and fifty years.

On meeting, Jehu blessed Jehonadab, and said—

“Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?”

Jehonadab said, “It is, it is!”—as the original has it. Jehu was saying—

“Are you with me in the destruction of Ahab’s house and the Baal worship, as I am with you in the worship of the Lord?”

We know that Jehu was not a righteous man, but it was not apparent at this time. In the divinely appointed work of destruction he appeared very zealous for God, as many do. For the flesh, criticism and destruction are very pleasant and gratifying, but God requires faithful builders.

Jehu said, *“Give me thine hand.”* Jehonadab did so. This was a joining together in the work. Jehonadab got up into Jehu’s chariot and went with him (v. 17) as he killed the remnants of Ahab’s house.

Then came the incident of the slaughter of all the worshipers of Baal by calling them to a supposed sacrifice to Baal. In this, Jehonadab was not only an approving supporter of Jehu, but an active partner, as we see in verse 23. It was a basic and necessary law of God that worshipers of false gods must be put to death. This was the second time when the normally peaceful and separate Kenites took a dramatic part in the history of Israel.

We hear no more of Jehonadab at this time. Immediately after the slaughter of the Baal worshipers we read (v. 29) that Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam who had at the beginning of the northern kingdom set up the calf worship. The revelation of Jehu’s unfaithfulness would be a great disappointment to Jehonadab, and would immediately end any association between them.

With the divinely decreed destruction at the hands of the seemingly so zealous Jehu of the two wicked kings of both Israel and Judah, and Jezebel, and all the Baal worshipers—Jehonadab doubtless looked forward happily to a reform throughout the whole land. Instead, wicked

Jehu ruled in Israel, promoting the calf-worship; and even more wicked Athaliah ruled in Judah, promoting Baal worship, and the people were always ready to follow wicked rulers into the pleasant and fleshly corruptions of idolatry.

It may well have been at *this* time that Jehonadab renewed and reinforced the separated position of his people the Kenites, binding them to it in perpetuity. He doubtless could sadly see that national reformation was a hopeless dream that could not possibly endure, even if it should briefly happen.

In 1 Chronicles 2:55 we have the identification of Jehonadab, as father of the Rechabites, with the Kenites. This is in the midst of the genealogy of Judah, just before going into detail about David—

“And the families of the scribes which dwelt at Jabez: the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, and Suchathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hemath, the father of the house of Rechab.”

It is very interesting that they are spoken of as “scribes.” Throughout their history we find them a pastoral people, choosing the open country and tent life, but this is no indication that they were rustic and ignorant. The shepherd David was the world’s greatest poet. Scribes were usually associated with study and teaching of God’s law.

In Jeremiah 35 we learn more of this house of Rechab of the Kenites, and of Jehonadab’s relation to it. He is there called Jonadab, so we will use that form hereafter. This is the most detailed and intimate picture we get of this unusual people, and the most significant.

It is now two hundred and fifty years after the time of Jonadab, in the reign of wicked Jehoiakim, near the end of the kingdom of Judah. The armies of Nebuchadnezzar are, or already have been, in the land. A group of Kenites of the family of Rechab has taken temporary refuge in Jerusalem, because of the Babylonian invasion. Whether or not this was a wise move we do not know, but it fitted in with God’s purpose at the time. They would be encamped in tents in some open place in the city, and would be an object of public interest because of the strangeness of their ways. Thus they were an ideal subject for God to use as a lesson to Israel.

God told Jeremiah to bring them to the Temple, and set wine before them, and invite them to drink. They refused the wine, saying—

“We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab our father commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye nor your sons for ever. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any.”

“But all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers” (Jer. 35:6-7).

For two hundred and fifty years this family of the Kenites had been faithful and obedient to the instructions of their father Jonadab. For two hundred and fifty years they had been a sign and a warning to Israel, for any who had eyes and ears to perceive. Clearly Jonadab's purpose was to keep their lives simple and separate from the settled inhabitants of the land, who were so easily given to idolatry and corruption.

No vineyards, no agriculture, a movable tent life such as faithful Abraham followed. No self-indulgence, few worldly possessions, no comfortable house or fixed abode: strangers and pilgrims in the earth. We live in very different times, but very similar in so many ways. It behoves us in these last corrupt and luxurious days of the Gentiles to examine ourselves in the light of these things, and take account of our stewardship. How much of God's goods, entrusted to us for *His* service, do we unfaithfully squander on ourselves and our families?

No vineyards: no wine. The Nazarite condition was the ideal in Israel of complete separation and self-abnegation from the things of the world, and devotion to God. In all probability, this was the foundation of Jonadab's regulations concerning wine. The end of verse 7—"*that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers*" (repeated from the fifth Commandment)—shows Jonadab's recognition of the relation between righteousness and possessing the land.

He could see Israel itself, the chosen people, both north and south, sinking deeper and deeper into those conditions of wickedness that God from the beginning—through Moses and later through the prophets—had warned would bring their expulsion and dispersion. Jonadab wanted to preserve his own Kenite people from corruption and punishment, and also to make them a wholesome element of preservation for the nation, and an example that might prolong God's mercy and forbearance toward them all.

It seems certain, too, in the light of Kenite history, that these were not on the whole new regulations, but were rather a calling back to, and making more firm and secure, a general way of life to which this people had always held, but which—with the passage of time and dangerous associations—was in danger of being lost, especially in the evil period in which Jonadab lived.

The addition of the Nazarite wine vow may have been Jonadab's way of reinforcing and adding spiritual depth to the testimony of the Kenites' separated way of life. There is much more power and dignity in the whole story if we can discern more in the Rechabite way of life than just blind, servile submission to arbitrary, man-made regulations. Certainly Jonadab had a *purpose*, and certainly his faithful descendants *recognized* that purpose. The closing words of the chapter—God's words—surely testify to this (vs. 18-19)—

“Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab . . . Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me FOR EVER.”

Usually, to “stand before God” means more than just to be under His care. It usually means to hold a position of responsibility before Him in His work. It was used frequently of the tribe of Levi as the especial ministers of God.

In the final reference to the Kenites, Nehemiah 3:14, we find a “Malchiah the son of Rechab” helping Nehemiah rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. This reference is taken to indicate that, according to Balaam’s prophecy nearly a thousand years earlier, the Kenites were taken away in the captivity, and some returned after the proclamation of Cyrus. It is to be expected that the faithful Rechabites would be among those anxious to return and rebuild the city of God.

Some apply the genealogical reference in 1 Chronicles 2:55 to the period of return from the captivity. This is quite possible, as the next chapter takes the line of David down to the return from Babylon. In the reference in 1 Chronicles 2:55 to the Rechabites as “scribes”—a Levitical occupation—some see the fulfilment of God’s promise to the Rechabites of “standing before the Lord” as associated with the tribe of Levi in the Temple service.

It was through Moses, of the tribe of Levi, that the Kenites first became related to Israel. Jethro their father was priest of Midian and offered sacrifices of which Moses and the elders of Israel partook.

Certainly they were a very unusual people, and this final scriptural statement concerning them is a unique and high commendation in the direct words of God Himself.

Throughout their history they kept a separate path—a Gentile people drawn to Israel by the worship of Israel’s God, living a simple life at peace with all, as far as they were able, though at certain times of crisis they play a decisive role in the affairs of Israel, always—as far as we have any record—on the side of helpfulness and faithfulness and wisdom and truth.

—*Bro. G.V. Growcott*

Smile At The Storm

We are now into Paul’s 1st and 2nd epistles to the ecclesia at Corinth with our reading of chapters 8 and 9 of 1st Corinthians that was read in our hearing today. And Bro. Growcott gives us a brief history and insight as to the condition of the ecclesia at the time Paul wrote these two epistles.

He says, “At the time the apostle Paul labored, Corinth was a thriving metropolis of wealth, luxury, commerce and corruption. This is

the background of the Corinthian ecclesia, and it is to some extent reflected in the epistle.

Paul gives indications that the ecclesia was well-to-do, and in good standing with the world. “Ye are full,” he says, contrasting them with himself, “ye are rich, ye are honorable.”

And as is almost inevitable in such circumstances, they gave too much thought to worldly wisdom, to imposing appearance, to polished eloquence, to the meaningless husks of worldly convention. Because of this they did not grow in the Truth, they remained vacant-minded babes when they should have been growing into men. They lost their hold on spiritual values, with sad results to their conduct and course of life.

Envy and contention sprang up; immorality was being tolerated; greediness and reveling disgraced their solemn assemblies; spiritual gifts were being prostituted to a confused babble of vain glory and pride; elements of the truth were in danger, and the Apostle who had begotten them in the faith was openly despised for his poverty, his rude speech and his unpretentious simplicity.

So it was with a heavy heart that Paul took up his pen to address them. “Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears,” he reveals to them later in 2nd Corinthians 2:4. His thoughts would revert back to a happier time when for eighteen months he fervently labored among them, gathering believers and establishing a Light stand in holy zeal and purity.

Now, for fear of mutual sorrow and embarrassment, he hesitates to visit them. But still he writes with a nobility and grandeur that befits his position and relation to them. They may have forgotten the height of their calling, but he has not.

His salutation to them is remarkable. Many grievous rebukes and corrections are to follow, but of these he gives no hint. They are still the ecclesia of God that is at Corinth, called to be saints, separated and sanctified in Christ Jesus, the temple of God, and custodians of the Holy Spirit—so far as the light stand is still there. And so he addresses them, in an effort to appeal to all that is good in them, and to impress them with the need of prompt corrective action.”

So it is very clear that Paul had a number of major issues to deal with concerning this ecclesia, as he did with most ecclesias which he established. But then again he was promised that he would encounter many problems, because he was formerly a persecutor of Christ’s followers. In Acts 9:16 we read “For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.” So, did Christ do as he promised Paul? Let us read “Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered

shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.” Which included this “Church” at Corinth.

Now brothers and sisters, that is a pretty long laundry list of trials, suffering, pain, persecution, and all kinds of difficulties for just trying to proclaim the truth. But Paul is not alone in this position. For he goes on to make you and me a promise in 2Tim 3:12 “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Also in Phi 1:29 “For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;”

All of us here have had issues, problems, trials, tribulations, painful suffering, and health problems and the list goes on and on. And I can tell you from experience, that the older we get, the longer the list becomes. And not a one of us (me included) enjoy going through these ordeals because it usually means a lot of pain and suffering and unpleasant experiences. Now I personally would much rather prefer joy, gladness, peace, and happiness. But when we were baptized into Christ, these ordeals became a part of our probation, because the apostle Paul tells us “That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”

There is a little prayer that hangs in our bedroom called the serenity prayer that goes like this “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, and the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” It’s kind of like saying please help me rightly divide the word of truth. Now, the Apostle Paul was an excellent example of this. God had given him a thorn in the flesh. Three times Paul had asked God to remove it, but God made it clear to Paul that was not going to happen, for He told him— “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

Therefore, Paul accepted what he knew he could not change, for later he said “I have learned that in whatsoever state I am to therewith be content.” And “most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities” he said.

Paul’s attitude should be our attitude, he had a problem and tried to get it removed, but when God showed that His grace was sufficient, Paul gladly accepted it and moved on.

So, when we have a problem, an affliction or an obstacle, let us do our best through prayer and supplication to our Heavenly father to solve, cure, or remove it, but when we find it unsolvable, let us learn to accept it serenely and learn to live with it. Like Paul, we have to learn that whatsoever state we are in to be therewith content. Just as I have learned that lesson with being struck blind in one eye – and oddly enough had three operations to restore my sight all of which were unsuccessful. This taught me to be content and thankful for the one good eye which I can still use in God’s service and I have attempted to serenely move on.

It is so important for us to accept life as God has given it to us and make the best of what we have. We have the comfort and consolation of Paul that “God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.”

The problem we often have is that we do not always look for God’s way of escape — but instead devise our own way and rely on our own strength. But, brothers and sisters, God is the potter and we are the clay. God can shape, form, change, and re-shape, re-form and re-change us and our lives however and whenever he wants, to suit His will and purpose. You see, we are here according to His will and we are certainly not at liberty to question His motives. Brother Roberts in his book *“The Ways of Providence”* Says “Providence consists of the divine regulation of natural circumstances; and the principles upon which this regulation takes place, can only be learnt from the scriptures of truth. We need to realize that all who commit their way to God in a scriptural manner **are** included in the operations of the only providence that exists in the universe—that is, the control of natural circumstances by **angelic agency**; it is in an unseen manner, however, and without any apparent interference with natural ways.”

We are told in Psalms 34 verse 7 “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” This is the angelic agency bro. Roberts was referring to. We are surrounded by the Elohim who performs God’s bidding concerning you and me during our probation.

Now, it would seem reasonable for one to ask, why does God bring us troubles, problems, and trials in the first place? Why can’t we just glide along free as a breeze and not endure all these hardships? But, Job tells us “Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.”

Now, what I am about to tell you, may seem like a strange thing to say, but trouble is a very important part of our life, and without it the scriptures say something is lacking in our character. As a matter of fact,

we are told “for whom the Lord **loveth** he **chasteneth**, and **scourgeth** every son whom he **receiveth**.” We also can be sure that our reaction to our problems and our solution to our troubles is being observed by the judge of the whole earth. We need to remember that it isn’t the trouble that makes us strong, it is the way we react to it and the lesson we learn from it that determines the depth of our character. Remember we are admonished to **ENDURE** chastening, we are not told to fold or wilt, but we are to observe life’s challenges and try to learn the lesson God is trying to teach us.

You see, brothers and sisters, sometimes we are not going in the direction that God wants us to, and then He provides a situation or circumstance to redirect us,— and when this happens, sometimes we simply get up again and keep on going down that same wrong path. Do you remember when Balaam was told by God that he shouldn’t go to Balak—and then we think I wouldn’t openly defy God like he did! — but so often we, like Balaam, are determined to do what we want to do and try to arrange things to suit our own fleshly desires. I am one of the main offenders on this point! If I could only remember that trials, troubles, and challenges are intended to be a **teacher**, an **educator** and a **corrector**, and if I take the course,—and then wind up failing the test,—then I miss the lesson God wants me to learn. So I need to ask myself why am I in this situation,—how did I get here,—and what do I do to solve it. Actually the answer to all these questions is found in our last hymn 56:

If thou but suffer God to guide thee,
And hope in Him through all thy ways’
He’ll give thee strength whate’er betide thee,
And bear thee through the evil days;

Another obstacle that I personally have had a great deal of consternation about concerning my own trials and problems is my attitude. No matter what happens during my probation I must maintain a positive and Christ-like attitude about God’s chastening of me through trials. I have to keep telling myself this. As most of you know at my work, my dept. was phased out at the end of last year and I lost my job. And as my wife can tell you I have been upset, discouraged and in a bad mood for the last eight months.

Then, fortunately for me, I came across this Scripture in Habakkuk 3:17-18 and I want you to pay close attention to all the disasters in the following quote— “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: **Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.**”

Brothers and sisters, how much worse could it get than what this verse describes? Maybe it will impress you more if I put it in modern terms. A modern day Habakkuk might say “Although all our crops are failing for lack of rain, inflation has made feed so expensive we can’t feed the flock, gas prices are so high I can’t operate my tractor, union wages are so high I can’t afford to hire reapers, interest rates are so high I can’t afford to borrow money, and even if I could harvest my crops, I couldn’t get enough for them to even cover my expenses, **yet I will Rejoice in the Lord.**” Well, we might not find many modern day Habakkuk’s saying that last part, but I think you get the idea. No matter what happens in our life,—are we still able to rejoice in the Lord? We don’t find very many people rejoicing in the Lord these days do we? But we do find people complaining about the stock market, the high cost of food, the sluggish economy, the high price of gasoline, and high unemployment. And sometimes, I find myself being one of these complainers!

So, I ask myself, how about me? Am I so full of the love of God that it shines through even when I am sick,—down and out—or out of work? Do I, Jerry Connolly recognize that the Lord gives and takes away—blessed is the name of the Lord? Shall I receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil? Or what I perceive to be evil. How do I measure up to the trials and problems that come my way?

The one thing I do know is—that whatever trouble comes my way is allowed by God or I wouldn’t be having it. By studying the lives of the faithful of other ages I can get an insight into how I should act when I am faced with trials because I **know** that I am going to be tried as I am told in—

1 Peter 1:7 “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:” And after all, isn’t that what we want to hear at the Judgment—that our **faith** has been found unto **praise, honor and glory of God.**

Take the case of Nehemiah for instance, he had enemies within and without, yet the work he was doing was blessed by God. Now God could have struck down all of his enemies so that Nehemiah could build the wall without being hindered at all, but this is not the way God prepares us for that future temple of which we all hope to have a part. Jesus promises us “He that **overcometh**, and **keepeth** my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.” One thing is for sure, brothers and sisters,—it is impossible to **overcome** unless there is something to **overcome**. After all, iron sharpeneth iron. We gain **strength** by overcoming our weaknesses.

And the one thing that is certain about this life is its uncertainty. We just sang hymn 151 which instructs us:

Begone unbelief!
Our Saviour is near,
And for our relief
Will surely appear
The rough winds may wrestle,
Our God will perform:
With Christ in the vessel
We smile at the storm.

It's like the Apostle Paul tells us, "If God be for us, **WHO** can be against us." Then the last verse tells us in about 31 words what I have been trying to say in this exhortation when it says;

Why should we complain
Of want or distress
Temptation or pain?
He told us no less:
The heirs of salvation,
We know from his word,
Through much tribulation
Must follow their Lord

Now, brothers and sisters, we sing this hymn with fervor, but do we really live it? When we are in the midst of life's storms and our little boat is being tossed to and fro do we really **Smile at the storm?** We do, if we have enough faith. Faith is one of the main ingredients of weathering the storms of life. Remember the incident on the Sea of Galilee when there arose a great storm in the sea so violent that the ship was covered with waves. But, Jesus was asleep. And his disciples came to him and woke him up saying, Lord, save us we perish; And what did Christ say to them?"—"Why are ye so fearful, O ye of **little faith?** Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm." Now, here they were in the boat with God's only son and they had seen the many miracles he performed, yet when things got rough, fear and self-preservation was a greater factor than the amount of faith they displayed for God and his son. Which is another reason the apostles in Luke asked Jesus to "increase our faith". We would do well to make the same request, but it will not happen if we just sit back and do nothing. Because "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." The way to stay close to God and his son is by daily reading of the word and prayer. For "if we will draw nigh to God he will draw nigh to us." Then hopefully our faith will be increased and we can confidently sing. "**With Christ in the vessel, we smile at the storm.**"

So if we can follow the words of hymn 56 and allow **Our creator** and his **Elohim** to guide us and have total faith and hope in Him, and do not let these anxious cares and worries of this life influence us because we can only live one day at a time. Trying to carry tomorrow's load with today's burdens is more than we can bear. And, to worry about yesterday only wastes today because it is in the books, we cannot change it. The only day we are sure that we have to use towards God's service is this one right now!

Which reminds me of a poem I would like to share with you, that appeared in "Encouraging Word"—

Deal only with the present,
Never step into tomorrow,
For God asks us just to trust Him
And never borrow sorrow.

For the future is not ours to know
And it may never be,
So let us live and give our best
And give it lavishly.

For to meet tomorrow's troubles
Before they are even ours
Is to anticipate the Saviour
And to doubt His all-wise powers

So let us be content to solve
Our problems one by one
Asking nothing of tomorrow
Except "THY WILL BE DONE"

Matthew 6:34 tells us "Take no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. **Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.**" We have enough challenges and issues to overcome today without worrying about tomorrows' obstacles.

I started this exhortation giving you a brief history of the ecclesia at Corinth, and how the influence of the world and the flesh had caused contention, envy, immorality, pride, vain glory and several other issues which Paul had to deal with as we can see from the two letters he had written to them.

But when you think about it, things have not really changed that much over the last two thousand years. The times have changed but the problems are still with us, only they are just clothed in modern apparel. Because in my mind this is how I view society now – we have taller buildings, but shorter tempers: wider freeways but narrower minds; we spend more, but have less; we buy more, but enjoy it less. We have bigger houses, but smaller families; more conveniences, but less time;

more educational degrees, but less sense; more knowledge, but less judgment and discernment; more experts, but less solutions; more medicine, but less true health.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom and hate too often. We have learned how to make a living, but not a life: we have added years to our life, but not life to our years. We have been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet our neighbor.

From my observances in the last 8 months that I have been out of work, we are living in the times when the world is short on character; steep on profits; shallow on relationships; they have more leisure, but less fun; more kinds of food, but less nutrition. These are the days of two incomes, but more divorce; of fancier houses, but broken homes. We are living in a time when nothing seems genuine and real—there is a lot in the show window, but there is nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology and virtual reality has emerged, and actual reality and common sense have somehow become old-fashioned and out of date with the times. Which is why we are told in Philippians 4:8 “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of a good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Bro. Roberts tells us this concerning the world “As for the world, we are to be in it, but not of it; we are to bear our testimony in it, but not fellowship it; we are to serve God in it, but not league ourselves with it; we are to glorify Him by refusing the evil in it, and choosing the good, by bearing witness for Christ’s name before men; that the light of our testimony may perchance entice good and honest hearts into the right way, and thus multiply the jewels which God will make up in the day of Christ’s glory.”

So, as I said at the beginning of this exhortation, we are assured that we will have trials, tribulations, hardships and problems. But we are also assured that if we are striving to obey God’s commands and live the truth to the best of our ability, that we will receive correction and chastening during this probation, “For whom the Lord **loveth He chasteneth.**” Am I mortal? YES. Do I mess up? YES. Do I depend too much on myself? SOMETIMES. Do I make stupid mistakes? YES.

But let me tell you what bro. Growcott tells me about my stupid mistakes in Search me O God: “Be thankful for your stupid mistake—for they are useful in reminding you of your natural incompetence and need for help. And that reminds you of your total dependence on GOD’S GUIDANCE and direction, in order to do anything useful or worthwhile. And that brings your mind back to where it should have

been in the first place, from which it had wandered through the weakness and deceptiveness of the flesh. A ‘successful’, self-satisfied, self-dependent man is a man totally out of touch with the eternal realities which we must ever keep in mind if we are to please God and be His. Be thankful for your stupid mistakes: they’re wonderful eye-openers.”

I would like to close by quoting my wife’s favorite verses found in Proverbs 3:5-7

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”

So, as we pause to remember in these emblems the one who was the supreme example of enduring trials, tribulations, suffering, anguish, sorrows, pain and travail—and who reacted to these afflictions in a manner that was perfectly pleasing to his Father, let us give unto him due reverence and honor as we remember His death, burial and resurrection in this memorial bread and wine which are set before us. For it was Christ who made the true supreme sacrifice that we through obedience to his commands and ENDURANCE unto the end might hear him say *“Come ye blessed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”*

—Bro. Jerry Connolly

Thoughts for Today – Communication – Part 2

“But to do good and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” — Heb. 13:16

There are several ways by which we may obey the above instruction and if, as Paul says, it pleases the Father then we must do our utmost to follow his advice. Jesus stated that he did ALWAYS those things that pleased his Father, and as Christ is our example then we also must endeavor to follow him and please “our” Father.

“COMMUNICATE”—just how can we communicate, and with what communication is God well pleased? In our last magazine we endeavored to point out the necessity of communication with God, and this month we turn our attention to other communication—true, wholesome, pure, spiritual communications one with the other.

SPEAKING FACE to FACE:

Under this heading our communication on Sunday morning is reviewed. We should never lose sight of Paul’s warning to the Ecclesia

at Corinth. They, we remember, were making the memorial service into nothing more than a mere social affair. This did not happen overnight—it was a gradual decline; and lest we fall into the same type of condition we should guard against speaking about the trivialities of everyday life when we assemble.

Let us rather keep our comments on the things of the Spirit, let us open our hearts and minds and discuss with our fellow members the readings of the past week, signs that may have developed in the world during the past week, or the exhortation which the brother has just delivered. These and such like will help keep the assembly at the high level in which it should be found.

We mention the Exhortation as a basis for discussion. It is impossible for a brother to bring out in minute detail everything he would like to mention, and therefore the field is left open for further comments after the actual service is finished.

Very often, so very often, we may miss a point that was mentioned because we were concentrating on a statement earlier in the address. If we share with others our thoughts, then we stand a better opportunity of comprehending the exhortation in its entirety.

Communication with each other at the lecture is equally important. How unusual it must appear to a stranger to walk into an assembly and hear those gathered chattering about everything under the sun, with the exception of the things of the Spirit: and then witness a sudden lull for the meeting, and again the chatter resumes after the meeting is finished.

How much more impressive it would be if we were all discussing His Word—yea, even more important, how much more “pleasing to God” it would be for Him to look down and see two or three, here and there, with Bibles open earnestly speaking about the things of His Word.

Before we leave this section we would like to turn for a moment to the members that are sick and also the elderly. As a closely-knit Body, we should be ever willing to communicate with those less fortunate—visiting those who are ill, or those that are unable to attend the assemblies. This is a duty that youth could do which would draw the Body closer together. However, youth is not alone in this respect for youth also falls under the stroke of illness. It is not a one-way street, Youth and Age must visit each other.

How much good can be done by an older member visiting a younger one, discussing the signs of the times, doing the readings with them. Did not Jesus say, “I was sick and ye came unto me”? If we fail to

communicate with the sick (old or young) then we forget, as it were, to communicate with Christ, for he also said—

“Forasmuch as ye have NOT done it unto them, ye do it NOT unto ME.”

TELEPHONE:

Very closely associated with the foregoing is our communication by telephone. It may not be convenient to make a personal visit, or two members may not be able to travel to the other one’s home, but surely this is no excuse for non-communication.

There is an old adage, “Two heads are better than one,” and this applies to the readings. How much we would miss if we constantly read alone! Could not the readings be done by a predetermined time, and then comments exchanged by means of the telephone? Three, four or even five heads are better than one in this respect, and in an ecclesia where there are members unable to attend the weeknight class due to illness or age, then a visit or phone call to convey to them the ideas and thoughts put forth by the speaker would strengthen the things that remain, and tightly bind the cord which unites us in Christ.

WRITING:

Where contact is not convenient, there always remains that old method of communication— a note or a card. Letter writing seems to be a dying art in the case in which we live when things tend to be instantaneous, but nevertheless not to be ignored by members of the ecclesia.

To the young ones we ask you, if you live in isolation or even in an ecclesia, make an attempt to find (if we may use the expression) a “pen-pal.” This can be done by two methods, a small notice in the Berean or a letter to the recording brother of an Ecclesia. This will definitely bring forth someone willing to correspond with you in order that your knowledge in the things of the Spirit may be increased.

Once again the ill and aged must be brought to our attention— perhaps a visit or a telephone call is not convenient due to distance or condition, then we should sit down for a few moments and write a note—it is surprising how much good can be done by signing our name to a well-chosen card.

These are all methods of communication, and if Paul, Peter, James and the others had not felt it necessary to communicate with the Ecclesias and individuals in their day, where would we be today?

—1969 Berean

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 37

PAUL’S writings are placed by Peter on a level with the “other Scriptures” (2 Pet. 3:16). Like the other Scriptures, they are the outcome of inspiration—of the Spirit’s moving and controlling action. It is unpopular to assent to this, but unless we do so, we shall certainly miss their great power and worth. Not only does the adversary deny the inspiration of Paul’s writings, but he also endeavours to evade their force by maintaining that they were written solely for those to whom they were first sent, and that they have not a more extended application. This theory is disproved by Peter, who says that “no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation.” Are Paul’s writings prophecy? Undoubtedly. A prophet is a man inspired by God to speak or write His words, and the words so conveyed are prophecy (Jer. 25:3–5; Ezek. 37:9). Therefore Paul was a prophet, and his writings are prophecy. “No prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation.” That is to say, the utterances of the Spirit have not an exclusive limitation to the individual or body to whom they were primarily sent. They are the common property, so to speak, of all believers. The apostle proceeds, in verse 21, to give the reason. The prophecy of the Scriptures came from God by the Spirit. All that God has spoken is for general instruction. Hence Peter points to the Scriptures, and says, “Take heed,” “Be mindful.” To the man of God “All Scripture is profitable.”

If we have undertaken to teach in the Sunday School, let us teach, and not fritter away the time in retailing silly, profitless twaddle. The object of the school is not the mere amusement of the children, but their enlightenment in the precious truth of God. School time is brief, and should be put to the best possible account. Success in school teaching is dependent upon preparatory thought and research. Let us not run away with the idea that this is unnecessary as the hearers are only children. Teachers require both to fill their minds, and, to an extent, to arrange their remarks beforehand. They should strive to come down in their observations to the level of the children’s understanding. A teacher’s remarks should be prepared so that right ideas—strong and lasting—will be the result. History should always be kept well to the front. History is easily grasped, can invariably be made interesting, and forms a solid basis on which to impart moral instruction and higher knowledge. Efficiency in teaching is, of course, not attainable in a day; but it will come to the industrious and persevering. As an encouragement, let Christ’s words be remembered—“I know thy works.” If we faithfully toil, Christ knows it. If we are careless and apathetic, he likewise knows it. According to our labour, so will he repay.

As in Paul's day, so now, there are many in the household who are slumbering—some so soundly that all effort to awake them is futile. These sleeping ones constitute one of the sorrows of the faithful. Let us recall to mind those who once laboured with us—say ten years ago—and note how many are with us no longer through having gone to sleep! You do not go to sleep all at once; it is a gradual affair. There is, first, a general carelessness; then a positive indifference; and, lastly, a complete insensibility. Let us guard against the first stage. When we feel sleep coming over us let us at once shake it off. Many things produce sleep: worldly associates, pleasure-seeking, hasting to be rich, unchecked ambition and vanity. Some, failing to recognise the chastening hand of God, have even fallen asleep through infirmity and trouble. If we would escape sleep we must not encourage it. The Israelites loved sleep, and as a result their longing soon gave birth to the condition (Is. 56:10). God sends sleep upon those who desire it. The Israelites wanted sleep, and God (after repeatedly pointing out the fallacy of their wish) sent deep sleep—so deep that their eyes and ears were as though they had been sealed and stopped (Is. 29.; Rom. 14.). Yea, it is only God who can keep us awake. But He asks for our co-operation. He has placed at our disposal His means for keeping us awake—The Word. If we go to sleep through the neglect of it, we shall certainly realise our folly by and bye.

Few only will be saved. This Christ has said in no mistakable manner, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:13). There is, by the way, a reason why there are so few—a reason which reflects not on the character of God, but on the ugly character of man. Let us not cavil at the fewness of those who will be saved. Let us rather face the truth, and by it fortify ourselves against the deadly doctrine of "the larger hope," which is becoming more popular every day. Where would Noah have been had he encouraged the doctrine of the larger hope? Broad was the way that led to destruction in his days; broad was it in the days of Moses; in the days of the Judges and Kings; in the days of Christ and the Apostles; and broad is it to-day! Some brethren seem to have forgotten the testimony which tells us that as darkness reigned at Christ's first appearing (Jno. 1:5) so is it to reign at his second appearing (Isaiah 60:2); that men were to turn from the truth to fables (2 Tim. 4:3-4; to wax worse and worse (2 Tim. 3:13); that all nations were to be deceived and become corrupt (Rev. 18:3, 23; 19:2); and that things would so continue until Christ should come (Isaiah 25:7; 2 Thes. 2:1-8). Like Noah, let us discard "the larger hope," and believe the Spirit who says, "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26). "Little flock" was Christ's

description of his followers in the first century, and it is applicable to his followers in the nineteenth.”

About 4,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, in part or whole, were circulated last year by the British and Foreign Bible Society. This is a matter for reflection. How are we to account for such a circulation? Not on the ground that the circulators are desirous of disseminating the good news of the Kingdom, for of this they are ignorant. Nor that by means of it they promulgate orthodox dogmas, for these the Bible plainly falsifies. Money-making is also an insufficient reason, for the Society's work is largely carried on by voluntary contributions. There is only one adequate explanation. It is the work of providence, for an object yet future. Three hundred years before Christ, God laid the basis for apostolic labours among the Gentiles by causing a translation of the Scriptures through alien agency. Has not God similarly a future worth in view in the present translation and multiplication of the Scriptures? We say “future,” because the world is to remain in darkness till Christ comes. God is evidently logging the book everywhere as a testimony to be referred to later on. There is yet a grand use for the inspired testimonies of God. “Thou hast founded them for ever.” Men everywhere will yet honour and revere the Bible. It is helpful to let the mind run in this channel in this day of unbelief, when higher criticism and infidelity in all its stages are seeking to discredit the Word. What will unbelievers and higher critics say when they see Christ with the Bible in his hands? And he will be so seen, for at the Judgment this book will form the foundation of man's justification or condemnation. “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.” Let us further imagine the Bible in the hands of the glorified saints, they personally delighting in and opening up to the mortal inhabitants of the earth its deep and inexhaustible riches.

There is a possibility of our wandering out of Christ. “Abide in him,” said John, “that when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming.” We do well to think of this. Salvation will be secured, not merely as the result of entering Christ, but with the addition of continuing in him. What is it to enter Christ? Paul tells us—“As many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ.” What is it to continue in Christ? The retention of that faithful mind which characterised us at our baptism—a mind which rejoiced in the truth, and was ready to make any sacrifice for it. Are we abiding in Christ? Are we as zealous, grateful, joyful, and obedient as in the day when we passed through the baptismal waters? To lose that mind is fatal. “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” The Scriptures warrant us in saying that the judgment seat will disclose many out of Christ who will have occupied a different position. In that day Christ

will denounce many as liars who say they are Christadelphians, and are not. “He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself so to walk even as he walked” (1 Jno. 2:6). Is it so with us? “As ye have received Christ Jesus, so walk ye in him” (Col. 2:6). Do we? Eternal life is contingent on the answer. Christ is to save only those who are his—only those found in him at his coming. “In Christ shall all be made alive”—alive to die no more. Out of Christ (and such will be the position of the unfaithful, though they may have been immersed,) all men will perish.

How wondrously does the Word of God test the obedience of all who are brought face to face with it! Its doctrinal comprehensiveness touches everyone in some place or another. Its searchingness is self-evidently divine. No flesh can glory in its presence. The Truth calls upon a man to abase himself—to divest himself of all notions and ways, however long or deeply cherished, that are opposed to the mind of God. How few can do this! Plenty say they are prepared to do it, but they obviously lie. But few want the Truth. Many embrace it up to a certain point, and then comes a sudden halt. The Truth calls for the abandonment of a prized notion or habit, and the sacrifice is too great to be encountered. The deceitful heart soon soothes the conscience, and the person settles down. Christendom, with its legion of parties, is the outcome of this sort of thing. To affirm that obscurity in the Word is the cause is a slander on God. The Babel that prevails comes not from God, but from the proud, unreformed, assertive heart of man. The religious world abounds with men unfaithful to the Word—men, who, notwithstanding all their vauntings, accept not the Bible, but who merely employ it to cull from it just what suits them. This is not faith, and is no more acceptable to God than the adoption by the atheist of Bible principles when they accord with his reasonings. Faith is the unqualified acceptance of God’s utterances, whether they square with our judgment or not. Our acceptance is dependent upon our entire surrender to the Word of God. He allows of no elimination or addition. He is very jealous of His Truth towards corruptors of it His anger is great. But equally great is His love towards those who take a humble and trembling attitude before it.

Orthodox religion is a sham—a man-devised and flesh-gratifying system. In God’s estimation it is intensely abhorrent. The apocalyptic allusions to it show this, and God does not unjustly delineate. The truth, or God’s system, is arranged to exalt God, and to bring sinful man to his senses. Man’s religion thwarts this purpose. Let us take Christendom’s fundamental doctrines, and examine them, and their flesh-pandering character will soon be seen. How agreeable to the lusts of the flesh, what self-complacency and ease does it afford, to think that man is immortal, and very precious to God; that there is no judgment; that Christ died instead of us; that man at will can possess

the Holy Spirit; that a hard and fast line in regard to belief and practice is not essential; that all Scripture is not inspired and true. How discerning was Dr. Thomas respecting the iniquity of modern religion. His views will grow upon us the more grounded as we get in the truth. Let us take care that we are not beguiled into Christendom's deadly paths by being misled by the learning, earnestness, or apparent goodness of its influential leaders. "But he is so sincere, he advocates total-abstinence, he never goes to a theatre, and he preaches the kingdom." These things are not sufficient to commend a man to God; they may all be done from a fleshy motive. God takes an all-round view of man, and so must we. The man who is acceptable to God conforms in all his ideas and ways to the Scriptures of truth. Let us not suppose that a man is worthy of our confidence or fellowship who thunders forth the doctrine of the non-immortality of man, and rejects the judgment; or denounces swearing, whilst winking at some other forbidden way. Men who mingle error with truth are dangerous men, and should be eschewed accordingly—they are satans to God, albeit they pose as angels of light. —Bro. A. T. Jannaway— 1892

5. "My Faith."

The Name and the Faith are terms comprehensive of the whole subject. "There is One Faith," says Paul, "and one Hope of the Calling." The name is that part of the faith just expounded; but when, "faith" is used in connexion with "name" it embraces the things associated with it by Paul in his definition of it in Heb. 11:1. In this place, he says, "Faith is a *hypostasis* of things *being hoped for*, an *elenchos* of transactions not seen." Here *faith*, or belief, is said to be *hypostasis* and *elenchos*; that is, *faith is reality and proof*. The person who has it, embraces certain things promised as realities, and certain transactions as things proved. Hence, faith is the assured hope of things promised, the conviction of the truth of transactions not witnessed by the believer.

The English Version renders Paul's words, thus; "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This, however, does not give us the full import of his definition. The word *elpizomenon* rendered "*of things hoped for*," is the present participle passive, the sign of which is "*being*;" the word should therefore be translated "*of things being hoped for*." Faith is not the "hypostasis of things hoped for" *once*, and afterwards forgotten: nor "of things hoped for" by other people of old time, but never heard of by professors now: but they are things "by which ye are saved *if ye keep in memory* a certain word I preached unto you," says Paul; "unless ye have believed in vain;" that is, by forgetting it—1 Cor. 15:1, 2:—it is the hypostasis of things hoped for, *being kept in memory*, by the believer; who, understanding the things promised, is fully persuaded of them, and

lives in hope even against hope, or present appearances, that what God has promised to Abraham and David, he is able and will perform—Rom. 4:21,18.

Another defect in the English Version is, that it does not fully translate the word *pragmaton*. The word *pragma* signifies “a thing done, a fact, deed, work, or transaction,” and is, therefore, a matter of history. In the phrase “of *things* being hoped for” there is no separate word in the original for “things;” but it is supplied, and correctly so, because *elpizomenon* is of the neuter gender. But in the latter part of this definition Paul has inserted the word *pragmaton*, that all the things of faith may be embraced in the definition—“the things of the kingdom,” which are “*being hoped for*;” and “the things of the Name,” which *have been transacted* and expounded in the mystery revealed.

It is evident, then, that what is termed “historical faith,” or the mere belief of history, and which some “theologians,” say is the best sort of faith, is a defective faith; and therefore, not what the Spirit styles “My Faith.” On the other hand, also, the mere belief of things hoped for, omitting faith in the *pragmata*, or transactions, is a defective faith. A faith perfect in kind and in degree must heartily embrace the things of hope, and the things transacted; in other words, “the things concerning the Kingdom of the Deity, and of the Name of the Anointed Jesus.”

This is what the Spirit styles “*my faith*” which the teachers in Pergamos “*had not denied*” The divines of “the synagogue of the Satan” in that city did however deny it. Their Nikolaitan speculations about “immortal souls” led them to deny it. Justin Martyr, who was fourteen years contemporary with the apostle John, though he did not embrace Christianity till about thirty years after his death, in his dialogue with Trypho, a Jew, says, “I am not such a wretch, Trypho, as to say one thing and mean another. I have before confessed to thee that I, and many others, are of their opinion, (that of the prophets concerning the Millennial Reign,) so that we hold it to be thoroughly proved that it will come to pass. But I have also signified unto thee on the other hand that many, *even those of that race of Christians who follow not godly and pure doctrine* (those of the apocalyptic synagogue of the Satan) do not acknowledge it. For I have demonstrated to thee that these (Nikolaitans) are indeed called Christians, but are atheists and impious heretics, because that in all things they teach what is blasphemous, ungodly, and unsound.” These self-styled Christians are the professors denounced in the letters to the seven ecclesias under the epithets of “those who say they are apostles, and are not, but are liars;” “blasphemers who say they are Jews, and are not, but the synagogue of the Satan;” “the Satan;” “those who hold the doctrine of Balaam;” “the Nikolaitans;” “that woman Jezebel, calling herself a prophetess, teaching and seducing the servants of God;” and “those who said they were rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing.” These

all called themselves Christians, but, as Justin truly says, they were atheists, or without God, and impious heretics; blasphemous, ungodly, and unsound teachers. He goes on, therefore, to say concerning these “Fathers” of Modern Christendom, “If therefore, you fall in with certain who are called Christians, who confess not this truth, (of the thousand years’ reign of Jesus and his brethren on earth over all nations) but dare to blaspheme the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in that they say *there is no resurrection of the dead*, but that IMMEDIATELY WHEN THEY DIE, THEIR SOULS ARE RECEIVED UP INTO HEAVEN—avoid them, and esteem them not Christians, etc.” In affirming this, which is now called orthodoxy, because “the synagogue of the Satan” is now in the ascendancy under the current style, or title of “the Names and Denominations of Christendom”—they denied the faith termed by the Spirit “My Faith.” Justin protests that it is blaspheming the God of Abraham to say, that there is no resurrection of the flesh; and that they do say this who say, that souls are received up into heaven immediately they die. I believe Justin’s position is apostolic and scriptural; and that what was blasphemy, atheism, heresy, ungodly, and unsound, in the year 140, is the same in 1861. Justin, therefore, who is highly commended by the commentators, denounces them as not Christians, and the sentiments of all Christendom in our day as blasphemy. Where is the name, sect, or denomination, from the papacy to Mormonism included, but what teaches the dogma of immortal-soulism, and translation to heaven at death? Our contemporaries all deny the Spirit’s Faith; if any are to be found that hold fast the Name and have not denied the faith, which the Spirit styles his, they are not of the names and denominations of “the religious world.” They are outsiders, having no fellowship with “the Satan” in any of “the depths as they teach.”

No, the Spirit’s Faith is not the faith of Christendom. The “faith” of the religious world taught by all orders of its clergy, is mere heathenism, interlarded with some scriptural phraseology uttered in a tone called “holy.” The Spirit’s faith teaches what is promised “to them that overcome”—the resurrection of the mortal body; absolute dominion over the nations of the earth; Deification; a share in the throne of Omnipotence; and endless existence in glory. The dogma of an immortal soul in sinful flesh is not to be found in the Spirit’s faith; it knows nothing about the translation of such a vain conceit to heaven, but to condemn it in its logical consequents. The dogma of the transfer of such a fiction to heaven at death is subversive of the resurrection of the flesh; and of the kingdom covenanted to Abraham and David; and promised to the saints with eternal life and glory. The Spirit’s faith repudiates such trash; and threatens vengeance upon those who hold it.

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka Vol. 1 Page 284 Logos edition

Hints For Bible Markers

We start a very emotional subject this month, and because of the emotion involved, a difficult one for people to deal with. It is very important nonetheless. Marriage affects man and woman more than any other act of or relation in our life. It is the closest union between two human beings that can exist. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." (Ephesians 5:31) It is difficult to conceive that a man or woman who has given their hearts to Christ could surrender themselves to one whose thoughts, tastes, and affections are so very different. Could it be the will of God that it should be such? No other relationship between humans could possibly provide a more magnificent opportunity for influencing, strengthening, supporting and assisting our life long partner. It is of primary importance that a mate be chosen who has the same goals and ideals. This is especially true with respect to spiritual goals and service to our Heavenly Father. Marriage can either help or hinder us during our walk toward that great day when we shall give an account of ourselves before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jack London a famous American author, after making his money, wrote a little known book, in 1902, entitled "*The People Of The Abyss*." It is a nonfiction book about his experiences living with the poor in London England at the turn-of-the-century. Quoting from his book,

"The Carter was hard put to keep the pace at which we walked (he told me that he had eaten nothing that day), but the Carpenter, lean and hungry, his gray and ragged overcoat flapping mournfully in the breeze, swung on in a long and tireless stride which reminded me strongly of the plains coyote. Both kept their eyes upon the pavement as they walked and talked, and every now and then one or the other would stoop and pick something up, never missing the stride the while. I thought it was cigar and cigarette stumps they were collecting, and for some time took no notice. Then I did notice.

From the slimy sidewalk, they were picking up bits of orange peel, apple skin, and grape stems, and they were eating them. The pips of green gage plums they cracked between their teeth for the kernels inside. They picked up stray crumbs of bread the size of peas, apple cores so black and dirty one would not take them to be apple cores, and these things these two men took into their mouths, and chewed them, and swallowed them;"

The previous quote is a lead-in to the following which comes from The Christadelphian so that one may understand the depths of destitution at that time. "Sister Susan."—We have not been able to use your lines this month, as the *Christadelphian* was mostly made up before they came. But the brethren will know by this note that you wish them to pray for you in the prospect of destitution at Midsummer, while having an offer of marriage by an alien of ample means, which you dare not accept." (The Christadelphian, Volume 24, 1887, Page 572) Here is a sister who is going to be so poor as to be life threatening by the end of June. She has a chance to marry a rich man, but one who is alien from the truth. So she must turn him down in obedience to Christ. Therefore she is asking for prayers.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another," (Romans 12:10) bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VIII. CONCERNING MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS

At liberty to marry who you will, only in the Lord

"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39)