

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

HOUSTON, Texas Sunday School @ 10:am. We are studying the Gospel of Matthew vs. by vs. Memorial meeting @11:10. Sunday afternoon class at 1:15. We are studying "The Faith in the Last Days." Thursday night @ 7:00pm we are studying "The Mystery of the Covenant of the Holy Land Explained" on Skype.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are pleased to announce that our Bro. Gary Stephen has moved to Houston to take a contract job at a nearby hospital till February. He meets with us whenever his schedule allows. The Lord willing we have planned our 2013 Houston Gathering at Lake Houston State Park on March 29-31. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. We are saddened to report that our Sis. Donna Mays fell asleep in Christ on June 11, 2012. She is now asleep waiting her Master's return. We are happy to announce that our Bro. Thomas Dylla has been received back into fellowship. May we all strengthen and encourage each other as we strive to develop the Spirit of Christ.

It saddens us to report that Bro. Ted Maier as well as Bro. David and Sis. Brenda Lauck have withdrawn fellowship and returned back to another group. We also had to withdraw fellowship from Sis. Carolyn Dylla due to absence from the table of the Lord. We pray they may see the error of their ways and return to fellowship and run the race with us for eternal life.

On behalf of the Houston Ecclesia,

Bro. Michael Kramer

RICHARD, Sask.

Dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Love and Greetings from the ecclesia at Richard,

It is with joy that we announce to you that last evening, our Sunday School Scholar, **Amanda Jones** gave a good confession of her faith in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, and afterward was baptised into the saving name at the home of Bro. Dan and Sis. Sandra Jackson. This morning we all witnessed as she was administered the right hand of fellowship.

May Yahweh be with her and all of us as we walk together in this race for eternal life and service in our Lord's vineyard.

Love in Christ Jesus, Bro Sid Jones, Recording Brother

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **March 29–31, 2013**

Bro. Bob Lorquet, blorquet@consolidated.net

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 8–9, 2013**

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX, 325-451-4075

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

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

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July–22, 28 2013**

Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-757-3088,
markbraune@gmail.com Study, “Ecclesiastes”

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.

Cast the Unprofitable Servant into Outer Darkness

Who are these virgins who have lived at ease? Is it possible we could be singing about ourselves? Jesus said in connection particularly with this occasion, of an application to all our lives, *“Let a man examine himself.”* He spoke this through the words of Paul, and continued, *“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.”*

The title of the exhortation this morning is taken from the 25th chapter of Matthew, Matthew 25:30—the termination of the parable of the unprofitable servant—the man who hid his lord’s talents in the earth—*“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* These are very serious words, and many will come into this class. We are told many are called, but only few are chosen. In all probability some here will hear these words. None of us wish that it should be so, but we must face the facts.

What is it to be unprofitable? How do we tell? There is only one way—by examining ourselves in the light of the Word and honestly facing what we find. Unprofitable means unproductive—not doing the work of the Master, not doing it to the extent required, pleasing

ourselves, engaged in our own business, our own welfare, our own advantage. How do we use our vacation? How do we use all our spare time? Do we go fishing, or seeking pleasure? Or, do we visit the sick, and the needy, and the lonely, or proclaim the Truth, or help in the work of the Truth in other ways? How do we spend our leisure—watching television? It's a tragedy that that word need even be mentioned among the sanctified people of God.

There are many instructions by which we can examine ourselves. Jesus said, "*When ye shall have done all that is commanded, say, We are unprofitable servants.*" Even, at best, there is no margin—the fullest effort is not too much. Anything less is not enough. There is no place to stop and relax. God demands the best, the fullest, the extremist, the very limit. The regulations of the Law of Moses speak of this. The sacrifices had to be the best they had—the choicest, the first, the unblemished. Only this kind of service manifests the true realization and appreciation of God's greatness and goodness. And that is why only this kind of service pleases Him. Anything less dishonors Him—cheapens the way of salvation. There is infinitely more involved in living the Truth and serving God acceptably than most who bear the name of Christadelphian realize. To aspire too little realization of what the Truth really calls for in devotion, labor, and effort, there will be much unnecessary weeping and gnashing of teeth. All could so easily be avoided, for the way is open to all, but we must follow that way.

It is not a question of how much we do for the Truth, or how much time we spend for the Truth. If the whole life is not dedicated to one purpose, then nothing we do is of any avail—no matter how much it is, for God demands all—a living sacrifice, a total offering, all thy heart, all thy strength, all thy mind. Part—no matter how large a part, no matter how satisfying to us—is not acceptable to God. For even the whole, we are still unprofitable servants. When we have done all, when we have done the very most, we are taught to say, "*We are unprofitable servants.*" We should still have a sense of not doing enough—of fervent desire to do more, even after we have done our best.

As we study the scriptural testimonies on this subject, certain basic principles emerge clearly and strikingly. First, the one to which we have called attention—unless we give all, nothing is acceptable.

Secondly, the words that are used to describe the condition in which we stand before God—our relationship to Him. This is somewhat obscured in our version, but if we look into it, we shall find that the word *servant*, which Paul uses so often of himself and Christ of

his followers, means *slave*—bondservant, a complete purchase and possession and ownership. It is a word used in a bad sense, an undesirable sense, but the Spirit uses it of our responsibility before God.

And third, a kindred thought—stewardship. We are spoken of as stewards—all that we possess, we are told, we merely hold for the use of God, and every item of it will have to be accounted for—just how we use it—when the stewards are called to account.

Fourth, the aspect of willingness. It must be with the heart, in love and in gratitude, eager freewill and desire. If there is any reluctance, any sense of burden, any holding back, we destroy the value of our service to God. It is not what we should do; it is what we should desire to do.

Fifth, our whole life must be a consistent unity—always in harmony, always in contact with God, everything radiating from one center. Even the world, in its ignorance, realizes the importance of this principle—of the destructiveness of conflict of a divided mind—the source of most of the world’s mental ills. James tells us clearly the double-minded man can expect nothing from God—the man of two interests is unstable. This is possibly the deepest and most powerful aspect of the subject—the essential frame of mind that is required.

Sixth, that no man lives unto himself. We do not tread the way to the Kingdom alone. We have a mutual responsibility, far more searching than we are apt to realize. We are part of a large family; we are not single individuals. That condition ceases entirely at baptism. None are ever free from this responsibility. Whenever there is any need, the obligation falls upon all to fill it. To be part of the family of God brings great blessings, great privileges, and great responsibilities. When we join that family, we assume responsibility for every member of that family, to the fullest limits of our opportunity and ability. And we shall be held responsible for every member of the family, to the extent that we are able to help or influence them. *“No man liveth to himself.”*

The seventh principle: That Christ and Paul are given as examples for us to follow—examples of what God requires, not something far off that we should sit back and relax, thanking God that He has done it all and provided a way of salvation that does not interfere with our comfortable pleasures. We must follow them. *“If any man is worthy of me, let him take up his cross, and follow me.”* We must pattern

ourselves after the example given; otherwise, we miss the whole point of their teachings.

We teach so much that Christ is a representative and not a substitute. We make much of this in presenting the Truth to the alien. Do we realize what it means to ourselves? If we will give full weight to the many solemn passages which describe what God expects—what He expects as a reasonable service of true love and gratitude, we should be helped to realize the magnitude of the change of life that is necessary to gain God’s infinite blessing of eternal life.

Let us not make the fatal mistake of cutting these passages down to fit our own petty preconceived conceptions, measuring our little selves by someone else’s little self. Let us open our minds to accept their full teaching and try to adjust our limited intellect to their magnitude. *“Many are called, but few are chosen,”* because few ever realize the magnitude of the call. The truth of God is not for those who desire only to go part way.

Matthew 25:30 – *“And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”* The verses that immediately follow begin to illustrate what he means, speaking of the time when the Son of Man comes to divide the sheep from the goats, separating them on the right hand and on the left. *“Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?”* Now the significance lies in the next verse. Doubtless, they had done much of this kind of thing, but did they go far enough? *“Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”* Do we get the point? It was not that they hadn’t done it, but that they hadn’t done it to the fullest extent. *“Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.”* They had doubtless done enough to satisfy themselves, but they hadn’t realized the point.

In the previous chapter, Matt 24:45 – *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season.”* This appears to refer to one individual, whom he has made ruler over his household. But we clearly see that it is not just referring to one individual. The lesson applies to all—all

have this same responsibility, as we shall see from his further words. The significance here is in the word *wise*. Who is the wise servant? None of us like to think of ourselves as foolish, as stupid. But what else are we, if we neglect anything that will gain us life?

In the 13th chapter of Mark, we see the point illustrated that these words apply to all—the early emphasis is on the universality of the command. Mark 13:34 – *“The Son of Man...gave to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.”* The significant word here is *“every.”* Everyone is expected to work in the Master’s absence. There are no exceptions—no idle servants. Do we think perhaps that the work of the Truth is someone else’s responsibility? Do we speak about lack of ability, lack of opportunity, lack of time, lack of anything? The unprofitable servant in the parable with which we began was the one that was only given one talent. Comparing himself with those who were given ten, perhaps he thought that his little bit would not be missed. Did he know his end? There is plenty that anyone can do. And the hands will find the work, if the heart truly desires it.

In the 16th chapter of Luke there is a very important parable, perhaps the most pressing of all Christ’s parables. It appears that the Pharisees at least found it so. Luke 16:9-13 – *“And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”* What does he mean? What is the mammon of unrighteousness? How do we make friends that will serve us in the great day of account? The mammon of unrighteousness is this world’s goods, and they must be put to God’s use to serve this purpose.

Verse 10, searching a little deeper, *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”* No matter how little it is, the principle applies. We remember the widow’s mite and the abundance of the rich man, which meant nothing. But do we get the point that he is inferring—faithful about what?

Verses 11-13 – *“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?”* Certainly a reasonable question. If what God has given us, we do not use as we are told, why should He give us anymore? Why should we squander what He gives us now, and expect Him to give us eternal life? *“And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”* That is the point. If you have not been faithful in that which is another’s—it is not ours at all. We

have no right to say how it should be used. *“No servant can serve two masters.”*

John 4:34 – *“Jesus saith unto them, (We remember the occasion.) My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.”* Sometimes a vivid symbol will give us much more grounds for meditation than many words of exhortation. *“My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.”* What is your meat? Pleasure? Satisfying yourself? Relaxation? Or many of the other things that flesh desires? Or do you have the desire to serve God? Is the desire to serve God, as a hunger craving to be filled? *“My meat, says Jesus, is to do the will of him that sent me.”*

We find the example of the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:34-35. *“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.”* Paul was chosen to almost single-handedly present the gospel to the Gentiles, and yet he worked with his own hands, not only to support himself, but to support others also. It would appear he overdid it, that he could have used his time better in teaching the Truth, exclusively. But that was not the principle. *“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye are to support the weak.”*

Paul felt that his teaching was not just in words, but indeed, in example. This sense of responsibility for one another should permeate all our lives. *“No man can live to himself”*—not even Paul, the great teacher to the Gentiles.

If we fail in the least of our responsibilities to the least of Christ’s brethren, we fail in our responsibility to Christ. There can be no selfish, self-centered considering of our own profit and welfare. Here is the essential spirit of that wonderful condition in the early church, when no one said that the things that he possessed were his own. There can be no selfish individuality. We are all part of an essential unity—part of a much larger whole. If one suffers, all must suffer with him.

Who is weak? Who is the weak? Any, who are in need of help of any kind. As Paul said, *“Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?”* Here was the example. There is no end—no measure, no limits to our responsibilities in the Truth. No relaxation. Jesus said, *“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.”* The sabbath—the rest—is for the future. There is no limit, except the fullest extent of our opportunities.

The 12th chapter of Romans, verse 1 – *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”* Your reasonable service—here is a strange and beautiful figure—a living sacrifice. What does it mean to us? Do we feel that our lives are in harmony with these words of the Apostle? These things which he says are just what is reasonably expected of us. He does not consider he is asking too much—he is being extreme in laying down this requirement of love. He knows that any, who truly value the gift of God, will consider this the very least that they can do to show their affection for Him. Any who do not feel this way simply do not understand the Truth at all.

I Corinthians 15:58 – *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”* Therefore, tying it in with the glorious picture he has presented of when the mortal shall put on immortality, when death shall be swallowed up in victory. *“Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* *“Therefore, my beloved brethren...always abounding.”* All through scripture, these key thoughts are prominent—always and abounding.

Always—continually, exclusively, consistently, dependably. No ups and downs. No hit and miss. No alternations of enthusiasm and forgetfulness. But always—day in and day out, in season and out of season, abounding, over-abundance, pressed down and running over, as we hope to receive. Always anxious to do more, no measuring, no restricting, no self-satisfaction, sending and being sent to limits that nature permits. This and this alone is the hearty robust service that the Lord says that He loves. If we correspond with it as we examine ourselves, let us rejoice. If we do not, let us ponder well just how deeply we’ve reached God’s eternal salvation.

Galatians 6:9-10 – *“As we have therefore opportunity—as we have opportunity, that is the measure—let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”* And verse 2, *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* To bear one another’s burdens is the law of Christ. We must each examine ourselves to see to what extent we are fulfilling that law. In verse 5 he says, *“For every man shall bear his own burden”*—warning us of our own position and not to take advantage of the help of others unnecessarily. Incidentally, this is a different word for burden. The one here is for a normal load. The burden in verse 2 means that

which is difficult to bear. These are two entirely different words in the original, where we lose the distinction in our translation.

The law of Christ makes it very easy to be imposed upon, very easy to be made a fool of, but we cannot lose in the ultimate sense. The ultimate, says Paul, who are the real Jews. Far better to be imposed upon, to be taken advantage of a thousand times than to run the risk of hearing Christ say, *“Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of one of these.”*

The 3rd chapter of Colossians, verse 23 – *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.”* If we had any conception of what makes life really enjoyable, it shouldn’t be necessary for us to be told this. *“Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily.”* What point is there in anything else? Here is the secret of bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Every thought—here is the secret of that unity of mind, and of life, and of purpose. Whatever we are doing, be it the commonest task, it must be done to the conscious view to the service of God. If it is any part at all of our life’s pattern, then it must be done as unto God. To maintain that basic single-mindedness, that basic harmony which is necessary, then it must be done the very best we can with a view to pleasing God.

I Thessalonians 2:9 – *“For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you.”* Was it pride? *“Because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.”* Preaching by day and laboring by night. Why? What was his motive? The previous verse tells us, verse 8, *“Because ye were dear unto us.”* The example of Paul is always beautiful in its tenderness. He desired to show the fullness of his affection. Preaching the gospel was not enough. He desired to do everything possible. It never seemed enough to fully demonstrate his love. And this is the only acceptable spirit. They that sow sparingly shall reap sparingly. And reaping sparingly is not a description of receiving eternal life.

The 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 3, verse 8 – *“Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you, not because we have not power (or authority), but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.”* Whenever we read of what Christ told to Paul, we must remember it is as an example; otherwise we completely miss the power of their teaching.

Paul's 1st letter to Timothy, chapter 5, verse 6 – *“But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.”* He happens to be speaking of women, or widows, but we know, of course, that the principle applies just as much to men. She, or he, that lives in pleasure is dead while they live. Pleasing self—seeking pleasure—is spiritual death—a foolish, meaningless living death, a stupid empty animal existence. Pleasing God, serving God, and working in God's eternal purpose—that is life, a glorious, satisfying, purposeful relation to divinity.

The words of John in his 1st epistle, chapter 3, verse 16 – *“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* What does he mean? *“We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”* Here is one passage to really test ourselves by—to examine ourselves, to judge ourselves that we be not judged. He does not say that we should be ready to lay down our lives. He is not speaking of some rare emergency, some spectacular heroic sacrifice, but a simple basic way of life. *“We ought to lay down our life for the brethren.”* The next verse makes it clear what he is driving at. *“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwellest the love of God in him?”* That is the laying down of the life for the brethren—devoting it to their service and welfare. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life—his whole life, not just his death—his whole life for many.

Let us get the full meaning of his words recorded in Luke 9:23-24. *“And he said to them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”* Shall we be among the few, who through realizing the full power and significance of these words—to deny themselves, to lose their life, to take up their cross. Shall we be among the few who find the narrow, yet glorious, way of life? Or, shall we be among the many who hear those terrible words, *“Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.”* —Bro. G.V. Growcott

Spread Thy Skirt over Thy Handmaid-1

“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.”

THE STORY OF RUTH

MATTHEW 1 gives us a genealogy, leading to Joseph, the husband of Mary. In this long list of names we find mention of 5 women: Tamar (v. 3), Rahab and Ruth (v. 5), Bathsheba—*“her that had been the wife of Urias”* (v. 6), and finally (v. 16)—

“Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary.”

If it had been our choice, perhaps we would not have selected this line of descent, with these names, from which to look for a Messiah and Savior for mankind, even the only-begotten Son of God. There were certain peculiarities in that group of names, and the circumstances connected with them that, humanly speaking, we would doubtless have avoided.

Thankfully, the decision was not in the hands of man: but it rested with the Creator. All was purposed for the glorification of God, and not for man’s honor.

There are 2 genealogies in the New Testament: the first (as noted) in Matt. 1 leading to Joseph; the other in Luke 3 to Mary. These 2 genealogies appear to converge at the time of the Babylonian captivity in the names of Shealtiel (Salathiel) and Zerubbabel. The line leading to Joseph (Matt. 1) came through Solomon. The line in Luke comes through another son of David by Bathsheba—Nathan, a younger son. Very little is recorded of this last line except in this genealogy which brings us to Jesus’ mother.

Our attention at the moment is to be centered on Ruth, whose name appears as the 3rd woman in the line shown in Matt. 1: a Gentile ancestor in the line of Jesus. The circumstances of Ruth are recorded in the 4 short chapters of the book bearing her name. This record stands out as a shining light, on which our eyes have been set many times: a beautiful adornment to the historical record of God.

Outside of that book, Ruth is mentioned only in this one place in Matthew. But what a wonderful record has been kept of this woman of virtue! Thus we read of her (Ruth 3:11)—

“All the city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.”

“All the city doth know”—the world, if they will consider, will recognize in her a woman of virtue.

The book of Ruth is placed in a remarkable connection. It follows the book of Judges. When we read through the book of Judges, as we

do in God's mercy year by year, we are saddened by the record we find there. We realize, if we are moved by the record to understand what God is telling us, that this recording is no mistake: that it is a message to tell us of the weakness and frailty of human nature, and of the depravity unto which the natural, unguided mind will lead men.

How refreshing, then, to find the book of Ruth at the end of the record in Judges. It comes as an illustration, greatly comforting, that though wickedness may prevail on every hand, there is in any generation a small, faithful preservation of the Truth of God.

“Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, (only) a remnant shall be saved” (Romans 9:27).

The writing of the lives of the righteous on the “inside” of the Scroll of divinely-controlled history will continuously appear as we read the Word of God; while the record of those who are without the camp (outside the scope of salvation) is written on the outside of the Scroll. The story of Ruth is a comforting example of Rev. 5:1— *“A Scroll written within, and on the outside.”*

God is completely aware of everything that is happening: nothing misses His observation. We therefore find a godly family in the midst of wickedness and unrighteousness, among a nation that had rejected the love of their God.

* * *

Ruth 1:1 — *“Now it came to pass in the days when the Judges ruled that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.”*

“A famine in the land.” This is not a chance happening. The lives of God's people are directed by His constant supervision in all things, even to the control of the elements of nature. There was a famine in Israel for 3 years in the time of David. The wickedness of Saul and his house, which God could not overlook, was thereby manifested. God was using the seasons, the coming of the early and the latter rain, to impress His people with the lessons of righteousness. And thus when there was a famine, David enquired of the Lord for the reason, and was told—and the evil was brought out in the open and corrected.

There was a famine when Abraham first entered the land of Canaan, and he went down to sojourn in Egypt—to his sorrow. He thus came back into the land which God had promised to give him. Shortly

afterwards, when Lot departed from him, came the restatement of the Everlasting Covenant.

It was a famine that forced Jacob down into Egypt, with the Divine assurance that He would be with them and, though persecuted and sorely tried, they would be brought away from thence as a mighty nation.

This was to be a type of the trial of all the faithful, and the final deliverance of the 144,000, given everlasting life. The 144,000 are hidden in the earth of nations, as this faithful family were. Israel was at last delivered with a mighty hand. This faithful family of Bethlehem would know of the circumstances of the past, would know of the writings of Moses, and would be impressed of the fact that God was still in control.

We, too, must learn from these illustrations to await the Divine deliverance, rather than turning to another land. There is no other land of salvation. We are instructed to endure the tribulations which come upon us, in meekness and humility. God has not forsaken us. He will *never* forsake His true servants.

Out of all these trying events, there must be glory to God Himself, with the subjection of the flesh. That is the lesson. By these 2 principles—God exalted, flesh subjected there will come salvation for His people. The key to unlock the door of salvation is set before us in the story of Ruth.

* * *

Ruth 1:2— *“And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.”*

Elimelech and Naomi—a name combination providing a beautiful picture. Elimelech (*God is King*); Naomi (*Pleasantness, Grace, Beauty*). With their 2 sons they went down into the land of Moab. The names of the sons are in striking contrast to the parents—Mahlon (*weak, sickly*); Chilion (*consumption, failing*). The lesson is to teach us that salvation would not come through the flesh. This is what we are to learn from this record.

This family of 4 crossed the Jordan river to the land of Moab, to the land of their relatives after the flesh. Paul said—

“Henceforth know we no man after the flesh” (2 Cor. 5:16)

That must be our position. The Moabites were the descendants of Lot, those who chose the well-watered plain of the Jordan—that which descended into death, into the Dead Sea; those that fell to idolatry. Israel already had been impressed with the principle of salvation from these people, in the incidents of Baal-Peor, where Moab enticed the people to sin, and many perished. Had they forgotten the tragedy of that failure? Do we remember to apply the same lesson in our daily activities—to keep completely separate from the world, to stay in the land, west of Jordan?

The loving mercy of God is shown, however, in this picture that He can bring good out of evil. Do we not read—

“In EVERY nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:35).

But let us be careful not to presume upon this thought of God bringing good out of evil more than is said, nor to misplace the application. Paul is emphatic when he states (Romans 3:8)—

“(As we be slanderously reported, and some affirm that we say,) ‘Let us do evil that good may come’—whose damnation is just.”

* * *

Ruth 1:3— *“Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died: & she was left & her two sons.”*

This was the first move in these events by the hand of God, in their exile. The two sons in this 10 year tribulation married the daughters of Moab—another mistake. Mahlon married Ruth, and Chilion married Orpah. God, we know, was to bring good out of evil; but let us again emphasize with Paul—let us *not* do evil that good may come, thus tempting God.

To Naomi, these events may have appeared as the establishment of a new hope, based on the flesh. But this sojourn in Moab was to teach Naomi (and us) that the flesh profits nothing. But it also teaches that there is an overruling Hand in our salvation.

Ruth 1:5— *“Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them, and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”*

Naomi’s hopes in a strange land were to be frustrated. Yet her presence there, her manifest trust in ultimate Divine salvation, implanted the truth of Israel’s God. And this seed would grow—she knew not how—to God’s glory. But there was to be no hope in the

flesh (for her 2 sons died childless); no hope in the “failing” and “sickly” condition of Mahlon and Chilion which epitomized the flesh in all its helplessness—not necessarily waywardness, but—

“In the flesh dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18)

Salvation can come by God alone. The two sons died, and Naomi is left with her 2 daughters-in-law. Her humble recognition of the failure of the flesh is illustrated in her words to Ruth and Orpah—

Ruth 1:11-13— *“Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? Are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?”*

“I am too old to have an husband, if I should say, I have hope; if I should have an husband also tonight, and should also bear sons, would ye tarry for them till they were grown?”

“It grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.”

There is an interesting contrast between the names of these 2 daughters-in-law. Orpah means *stiff-necked, turned down, or turned away*. It illustrates the position of all who, having heard the Word of God, are not influenced by it, but—

“Turn again to the weak and beggarly elements (of the flesh and the world) whereunto they desire again to be in bondage” (Gal. 4:9)

When Orpah turned back, Naomi said to Ruth—

Ruth 1:15— *“Behold thy sister-in-law hath gone back to her people and her gods.”*

—unto the gods of the Moabites. She had rejected the God of Israel.

Ruth was different, in name and in nature. Ruth means *Friend, Companion*—

“A friend loveth at all times,” (Proverbs 17:17)

This lays the foundation for the character of this woman of virtue.

* * *

After the duration of the famine (brought by God), the Lord visits His people—

Ruth 1:6— *“She (Naomi) heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread.”*

It was one of those times of chastening for Israel under the Judges, when Israel cried unto the Lord, and in His mercy He heard their cry. Now again, as we have seen in the incidents in Judges, a limited salvation was brought for the nation: a type of God's merciful kindness is brought about when Israel repents. The land would now flourish and blossom, an indication of the unlimited blessings of the people when they turn to Him.

The Covenant made to Israel on the banks of the Jordan (Deut. 28), and upon a previous occasion (Lev. 26), was that when Israel would turn unto the Lord, He would bless them. Thus we read—

“When the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, He raised up a deliverer to them, which delivered them” (Judges 3:9).

David turned to the Lord after the 3-year famine, and he found something was necessary: something had to be done. God has turned unto mankind, in that—

“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

—if we look to Him and cry to Him for salvation. He has raised up a Deliverer for all mankind, of which these things are but types.

This deliverance we memorialize each week, as we partake of the emblems of the sacrifice of Christ.

Naomi turns back to the Promised Land, with hope that God now would look upon her affliction, and work out a salvation where Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion had failed. These events are pictures of something far deeper, far more profound, working out in our own lives, and—indeed—in the lives of all the faithful. When we try to establish our hopes and our purposes through the works of the flesh, they are certain to be frustrated in due course. They may appear to prosper for a short time, but they will prove to be groundless. Only by confidence and assurance in God can there be any real hope of eternal salvation.

First we notice that the two younger women were impressed with the sincerity of Naomi in her faith, and they turn with her to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi presents her age as a detriment, that any prospects of a further generation from her are dead:

Ruth 1:12-13— *“Turn again, my daughters, I am too old...the hand of the Lord hath gone out against me.”*

But *had* the hand of the Lord gone out against her? Actually, a far greater deliverance than in Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion was to be

brought about. Looking ahead to the final outcome, we find rich blessing, as in the case of Job—

Ruth 4:15-16— *“Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman...*

—a Redeemer: for the word for kinsman in this record carries the meaning of redeemer—

“...that his name may be famous in Israel. He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.”

Here is a Kinsman, a Redeemer, provided by God. God in His great love and mercy had not forsaken Naomi.

Orpah turned back to the gods which had been a snare to Israel in the past. Ruth, with far more perception—perhaps even more than Naomi of the working of the hand of God (the same perception manifest in the mind of Rahab the harlot who said “I know that the Lord is with you”), thus could declare those famous and beautiful words that still move the heart—

Ruth 1:16-17— *“Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.*

“The Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”

Wonderful words! Words which indicate the confident assurance of a deep and abiding faith in the God of Israel—

“He that cometh unto God must believe that He IS, and that He is a Rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

That is the key to life; that is the faith that every one of us must have. Ruth certainly had it. Ruth and Naomi were to be completely inseparable except in death—but forever united in the hope of Israel.

But Naomi still had to learn in fullness that God was the prime mover in every aspect of her life—

Ruth 1:20-21— *“Call me not Naomi (Pleasant), call me Mara (Bitter), for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty:*

“Why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?”

All must learn the principles of what is written for our instruction in Heb. 12. Following after the long list of faithful servants in Heb. 11—all enduring in faith the trials of affliction, the tribulation necessary for the development of character—the record continues in chap. 12, teaching that unless we have this chastisement we are strangers, and not sons and daughters of God—

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? If ye be without chastisement (whereof all are partakers), then are ye bastards and not sons...

“No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous.

Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby.

“Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down...

—certainly Naomi needed this exhortation and comfort—

“...and strengthen the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which be lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed” (Heb. 12:6-13).

In all our dark trials and sorrows, God is not afflicting us: He in love is developing and chastening and correcting and purifying us, that we may be fit to be His sons and daughters. Unchastened flesh is not fit for the companionship of God. (To be Continued Lord Willing)

—Bro. E.F. Higham

The Pride of Life

“A man's pride shall bring him low”—Proverbs 29:23

AMONG the evil things which *“come from within...out of the heart”* and which *“defile the man”* is human pride. (Mark 7:21-23). God has left no room for us to question whether pride is something good or something evil—pride is plainly and undeniably condemned as evil in numerous places in the Bible.

Some may say that pride is good in at least a limited way, as when pride moves us to do a good job in our ecclesial work. But even in this case honest examination in the light of God's Word shows that pride is evil, for pride is glorying in ourselves and in the things we do, as though we did them without help from God.

We must remember that even the very minds and bodies with which we serve God were formed by God—

“What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7)

We are called upon not to exalt ourselves but to humble ourselves; not to work to glorify ourselves or to feed our human pride, but rather to deny ourselves and—

“Do ALL to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31).

Pride is something we can and must fight to destroy. But before we will be willing or able to fight against pride, we must first recognize its dangerous nature; we must recognize that if we allow human pride to go unchecked we are walking the path to destruction. Consider the following:

“These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: a proud look...” (Prov. 6:16-17).

“Wisdom” tells us— *“The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate”* (Prov. 8:13).

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame” (Prov. 11:2).

“In the mouth of the foolish is a rod of pride” (Prov. 14:3).

“Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. Though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished” (Prov. 16:5).

“Pride goeth before destruction” (Prov. 16:18).

* * *

NOT only must we recognize the evil nature of pride, but we must also learn to recognize pride itself. We cannot fight against it if we do not know what it is and how it manifests itself.

One of the chief manifestations of pride is contention—

“Only by pride cometh contention” (Prov. 13:10).

“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife” (Prov. 28:25).

There is much contention strife, quarreling, accusing, fighting, etc., going on in the world around us, and the reason is found in the fact that pride (and related characteristics such as jealousy and greed) is very much a part of human nature. People will fight about the smallest things and refuse to be reconciled to one another because of their pride, even though it makes them bitter and miserable.

And it all seems so silly to us when we look out upon the world from our position as servants of God.

But how often we find ourselves entering into their contention, or even striving with our own brethren and sisters—just because of that silly, but so natural, quality of pride?

Just because we call ourselves the brethren and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean that we are immune to the sinful ways of the flesh. We are human; pride is part of our nature; and pride must be overcome if we would please God and receive His gift of life as the true brethren and sisters of Christ.

Pride is deadly, and yet nothing seems to lend itself more readily to disguise. The deceitful heart of mortal man has devised many coverings for pride which tend to conceal both pride itself and its deadly nature. Pride can be disguised as duty, as piety, as zeal, and even as humility. Pride can take the form of exaggerated self-confidence, of foolish vanity, or self-righteous complacency.

Pride is found practically everywhere—even the so-called “inferiority complex” has its roots in pride. Pride is so insidious that it becomes doubly dangerous—dangerous because it is an evil condemned by God, and because without prayerful watching we will not even recognize it when it exists in some of its various forms.

* * *

WHEN we consider the fourth chapter of Genesis we cannot help but see pride at work in the mind of Cain. Pride led Cain to murder his brother and caused him to be cursed by God. Cain no doubt felt that he had done a good job raising his “fruit of the ground,” and when this was not accepted by God as an offering—

“Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”

When Cain discovered that Abel's offering was accepted by God, he apparently blamed his own lack of success on his brother. In reality, of

course, it was not Abel's fault that Cain's offerings was unacceptable. As God said to Cain—

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?”

The fact that Cain's offering was not accepted was his own fault—God has laid down His requirements for a suitable offering, and Cain did not submit to those requirements. Too proud to admit his own error and change his ways, he sought to solve his problem by killing his brother.

When we are confronted with the fact that we are wrong and someone else is right, the natural reaction is to try to turn things around, to make it appear that we are right and the other is wrong. Like Cain we may try to console ourselves by blaming the other persons, when what we really need to do is to consider our own ways.

What makes us afraid to admit and change our own wicked ways?—PRIDE, wicked pride.

We may not resort to murder to try to ease the pain, as Cain did, but by allowing ourselves to be blinded by pride we commit sin without murdering anyone. Refusal to admit and correct error is a sign of spiritual sickness deep within ourselves. As Christ taught, pride comes “out of the heart” and defiles us.

* * *

WE are exhorted, “*Confess your faults one to another*” (Jam. 5:16). The more we force ourselves to outwardly admit to others when we are wrong, even on matters which may seem relatively unimportant to us, the more we will be crushing pride by refusing to let it take over our hearts and minds.

As we come closer to home to our relationship with members of our own ecclesia and members of our own family—this admission of wrong seems to come with greater difficulty. It is very often most painful to have to acknowledge error to those we know most intimately.

This is all the more reason for us to practice swallowing our pride, in our own ecclesia and our own home where powerful habits for good or evil can be formed.

* * *

OF primary importance is the fact that we must thirst for, seek out, and learn to accept the correction of God's Word, whether it comes to

us from a member of our own ecclesia or family, from anyone in the Household of God, or from our own private study and meditation.

We are not in competition with one another, but rather we are struggling against our own flesh. Why should it hurt us (and if it does hurt, pride is the reason) to accept correction from someone else who has a better understanding of a particular situation?

If we pray for guidance to see the right way and humble ourselves to accept the instruction when it comes, then we can be thankful that God is guiding us and has given us brethren and sisters who can help us along the road to life. But if we are proud and cannot bear to admit error and accept instruction then we are condemning ourselves.

“Pride goeth before destruction” (Prov. 16:18).

“He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting”

— Bro. David Burnett

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 38

NEVER be in a hurry to commit yourself to an opinion in important matters. *“Be slow to speak.”* When you speak, let it be after due reflection. There are few things more derogatory to a brother’s usefulness and influence than rash, random, thoughtless utterance. This thought suggests another. If it be right for you to be slow and deliberate in expressing yourself on important questions, do not unduly press others to be otherwise. To retire from a position taken up is always an unpleasant task, and with some almost an impossibility. Study to be prudent and kind in this matter. If you suspect that your brethren are in error, take measures to educate them before calling upon them to declare themselves. How much pain and mischief has been caused by forcing men to take a stand when they have been in a semi-instructed and hesitating condition? Such conduct is very unscriptural and very reprehensible. What object can be served, either by hastily or trickily obtaining a brother’s opinion?

“They do not know that they are dead, and will not know that they have been dead, till they are raised to meet Christ for judgment.” This statement accompanied a recent ecclesial announcement of the death of two sisters. What consolation for the faithful children of God is involved in this thought. Death a blank—an experience which is neither known nor felt. The grave not a finality. The cemetery but a rapid route

to the kingdom of God! Oh, how near these truths bring the coming of our Lord to each and all of us. Eternal Father, *“teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”* No, it is not death that we should dread, but an angry look from Christ when the day of our unconsciousness shall end. Christ would not have us shudder at death. *“Fear not,”* said he, and added a reason which gives solid ground for confidence in the matter. *“I am alive for evermore, amen! and have the keys of hell and of death.”* Let us (especially those of us who are “loth to die,”) consider deeply these gracious words of Christ. They seem to say, “Don’t be afraid to die. I shall be alive, and you will be in my safekeeping. I will not forget you. At the time appointed I will raise you up, and endow you with eternal life. Rest in peace.”

Some exult when their brethren slip. Shame upon them! Others do what is nearly as bad, advertise the slips to the four quarters of the ecclesial world. There is always room among us for improvement in this matter. There is in many directions too little grief and too much glee—too little covering over and too much publishing and exaggerating of the brethren’s failings. We need to cultivate Christ’s mind. We want more thought, reason and consideration. What condemning critic can say in the all-round sense that he is better than the one he condemns? Let us remember that it is no pleasure to faithful brethren to trip and stumble. They would not do it if they could help it. Let us realise that the knowledge of their shortcomings is in itself punishment enough without our adding to it. If God overlooks (and He does overlook the confessed sins of His children), how dare we be perpetually harping upon our brethren’s shortcomings? Let the sharp-eyed exercise their moral as well as their perceptive faculties. Let such learn what this meaneth: *“I will have mercy and not sacrifice.”* And let them remember that a large percentage of Christ’s scathing denunciations were directed against the captious, fastidious, hypercritical criticisms of his contemporaries. Righteous men need sympathy and comfort in their slips and failings, and not unfeeling, pharisaical censure.

Imagine Jacob and Joseph being brought to life again from within the mummy boxes that have held them for the last 3,500 years! There is no reason why such should not be the case. On the contrary, there is much to suggest the probability of such a thing. It is recorded that they were both embalmed in Egypt (although laid to rest in Canaan). Now, we have much that is wonderful to tell us what Egyptian embalming means. At the Boulak Museum at Cairo there are to be seen at the present moment some of the kings, queens and priests, with whom

Jacob, Joseph and Moses had to do. When found some of them were divested of their linen bandages, and photographed, and their countenances can now be examined on the walls of our own British Museum. In our museum there is something still more remarkable (as bearing upon the suggestion thrown out at the commencement); the actual coffin of an Egyptian king who lived some 1,500 years before Jacob! May not these days of startling archæological discovery bring to light the cave of Machpelah and the tomb in Shechem? Great, indeed, is the confirmation of Holy Writ in the discovery of the Egyptian kings, but how infinitely more heart-rejoicing would it be to find the very bones of dear old Jacob and his noble son!

“*Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor*” (Mar. 10:21). What a hard command we may think; the disciples evidently thought so too. But the occasion called for the command. It was addressed to a young man who was perfect in his own estimation, but not in Christ’s. “*If thou wilt be perfect,*” said Christ, “obey.” The command was just what was needed. This young man’s mind required disabusing: his moral deficiencies in regard to that law in which he posed as blameless, needed exposing. Christ’s requirement was effected. In a moment it made manifest the lack of both love to God and neighbour. To give all to the poor, even when Christ directly commanded it, was too much; it entailed too mighty a sacrifice for one whose heart was unduly set on his great possessions. What is the lesson? Although we may not receive the same demand, let us cultivate the spirit of being prepared to obey it if it should come. A greater regard for the word of God than for anyone or anything else, is the basis of acceptance. If the young man had had this mind, Christ might have interfered, and have said “Enough,” when he set to work to part with all. Such happened in Abraham’s case. “Offer thine only son,” was soon followed by “*Lay not thine hand upon the lad.*” A humble attitude before God, coupled with a determination on our part to obey, may oftentimes shield us from many a painful trial.

Our yea is to be yea, and our nay, nay. This is the teaching of Christ. This command not only forbids oath-taking, but elevates simple promises, elevates them, in fact, to the level of Old Testament vows. Promises measured by Christ’s standard are solemn obligations. Let us not forget this. It is so easy to promise and to forget, The world thinks nothing of breaking its word—it is the rule, and not the exception, to be not particular about keeping word. It is easy to find and invent excuses for disobedience. Before we make a promise let us think well of our capabilities of fulfilling it, and when we have made one, let us be

scrupulous to carry it out. Christ's precept should prevent us from unduly pressing others to bind themselves, and should also lead us to check rashness on the part of those who would be rash. It should also cause us to allow others (as well as ourselves) the wholesome option of qualifying promises. There would be far less promise-breaking if men would only look more to cause and effect at the time of promise making. More than half the broken promises result from thoughtlessness. Broken promises create suspicion, irritation, and needless worry. Fulfilled promises, on the other hand, create confidence, pleasure, respect. Every Christadelphian has much scope in his daily life to exhibit the virtue of promise keeping. Therefore obedience will form an excellent way of light-shining — of exhibiting good works which will lead to the glorifying of God.

If your ambition is to bring trouble upon your ecclesia and perdition upon yourself, then there is a sure and effectual way to go work. Commence by severely discussing all the imperfections of the most influential and esteemed brethren, and argue that they take too much on themselves. Then whisper into the ears of a few position-aspiring unsuitables that they are being kept back. Endeavour next to introduce an assortment of unhinging questions. Try to keep the meeting in a state of ferment, either over some irritating profitless doctrine, or some trifling personal affair. With the cuteness of the serpent sow on every possible occasion the seeds of discord and discontent. Be continually grumbling; always make yourself unpleasant; and never allow an evil act or word against yourself to go unnoticed or unavenged. Aim at getting yourself appointed to some necessary work, and then show negligence in carrying it out. At all times stand right in the way when something requires to be done, and you yourself have not the ability or mind to do it. Never fail to speak lightly of the unprofitableness of the meetings, and of the recognised systematic daily reading of the scriptures. But do not forget that for all these things God will bring you into judgment. Forget not also that to be drowned in the sea, with a mill-stone about the neck, would be a comparatively easy and agreeable death to the dreadful doom which Christ will inflict on those whom he adjudges guilty.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway*— 1892

Our Foundation

In the Christadelphian movement as brought to life in the middle 1800s, there have been three wonderful teachers. Bro. Thomas brought the Truth to light. Bro. Roberts labored to make our ecclesias functional

and constructive places. And bro. Growcott exhibited to us how glorious and righteous - and yet how demanding - the principles of righteousness really are. These men all taught the Truth clearly and boldly, while also steering us away from crotchets and extremes which have proved so divisive in the history of the Truth, both now and in apostolic times.

The Berean Christadelphians, over our history, have been the one Christadelphian fellowship which has steadfastly refused to alter our fellowship position from that established by these men. We have steadfastly resisted efforts to remove the old landmarks or principles of Truth, nor add new ones in the varying efforts to add principles that would result in our disfellowshipping of these three men.

—*Bro. Jim Phillips*

Why late at Meetings

THE brother or sister who sincerely loves God will endeavour always to be punctual in the observance of His requirements and appointments. (Unavoidable lateness is exceptional, and need not here be considered.) To be late at the meetings when we could have been early is indicative of indifference and carelessness in regard to the things of God.

The meetings are of God's appointment for the benefit of His children. The late-comer not only himself loses much of this benefit, but hinders those who are punctual in receiving the good. Usually the meetings commence with collective thanksgiving to God; is it not manifestly irreverent, and consequently displeasing to Him, that the privilege should be disturbed by latecomers, who with a little thought and care could have been present to unite in prayer and thanksgiving ?

Christ is our example in all things, and there is more than a suggestion of punctuality in the record that “*when the hour was come he sat down, and the Twelve Apostles with him*” (to eat the Passover) (Luke 22:14). “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (1 Cor. 14:40) is contrary to “avoidable lateness”. Unpunctuality at the meetings is a symptom of spiritual ill-health. God is not the Author of “Confusion”—neither should His children be.

—*Bro. W.J. White, Berean Editor*

Covering the Emblems with White Cloth

THAT the “Holy Communion Service” of the Church of England specifies that the Bread and Wine shall be covered with a white cloth is no reason why such should not be covered at Christadelphian meetings. The proposition is ridiculous. For the same reason we should have to leave undone many other things which we do.

We have to do things decently and in order, and certainly with microbes and dust flying about common sense suggests keeping the Bread and Wine covered until the required time for dispensing them. And what more “decent” than a clean white cloth! Of course, a newspaper, or a piece of brown paper would answer the same purpose—but we have not so learned Christ.

Let us see to it we strive to discern the Lord's Body and Blood, and examine ourselves so as not to eat and drink to our condemnation.

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

Picture Theatres

EVERY thought, and desire, of the true Christadelphian must be brought into subjection to the commandments of Christ. That is clearly taught by the “Sermon on the Mount” (Matt. v.). And in any doubt what a brother of Christ should or should not do, the question is—Is it in harmony with the spirit of the teaching of Christ?

Of Picture Theatres, the Reporter of a Social Agency says (“Daily News”, 1st May, 1917): “Three films were shown, and I summarised the incidents thus:—

Seven attempted murders, two actual murders, one suicide, one forgery, one attempted robbery, two cases of blackmail, three of 'holding up' with revolvers; drinking, gambling and brawling made up a sort of running chorus all through”. These are the “works of the flesh”, the doers of which “shall not inherit the Kingdom of God” (Gal. v. 19-21). Can the seeker after righteousness see anything to laugh at in such things?

Are the imbecilities of the drunkard and the adventures of thieves and murderers fit subjects for the amusement of saints?

Brethren, these things are sin. “Fools make a mock of sin” (Prov. 14:9). Be not deceived. God is not mocked. There will be no fools in the Kingdom of God.

—*Bro. C.F. Ford—Berean Editor*

Ecclesial Strife

TURMOIL in an Ecclesia is inexcusable. Let no one attempt to condone or minimise its wrongness. Turmoil is a sign that the wishes of God are being disregarded. God loves peacemakers, not sowers of discord (Matt. 5:9; Prov. 6:19).

Turmoil, however, does exist in certain ecclesias, and it behoves every right-minded brother to do his utmost to prevent its increase. How can this be done? Largely by good example and faithful exhortation. In this let brethren of age and experience be to the fore. Whether we be old or young, influential or non-influential, let each one of us, with a view to checking this seemingly growing evil, subject ourselves to a rigid self-examination. Let each ask himself (and let him demand an honest answer) such questions as: Am I a peace-maker, or a sower of discord? Is it my wont to pour oil on troubled waters, or do I help forward strife? Do I ever stand by Scripture counsel, and seek to enforce it, be it friend or foe who is opposing it? Am I prepared to suffer hard speeches against myself rather than allow the meeting to be thrown into a state of turmoil?

—*Bro. A.T.J.*

Answer on Fellowship

You ask: — “What is our true relation to those who use the name 'Christadelphian' and believe its general principles but do not recognize the need for standing aside from certain errors.”

I believe there is only one place that we can draw the line of distinction, and that is the point of fellowship. There is no other logical stopping point or dividing line. We are either in holy communion and fellowship with another, or we are not. All distinctions outside that are secondary.

If the difference between us is such that fellowship is not possible, then the difference between us is very important, for fellowship is the most important thing in life.

We must each decide where the commands of God lead us to draw the line of fellowship. Having prayerfully and to the best of our ability determined that point, then all mankind fall into 2 classes and only 2. — those with whom we fellowship on the one hand, and all the rest of the world on the other.

This is not, of course, to say there are no distinctions in all the rest of the world, for there are secondary distinctions, but they in no way compare with this primary dividing line.

Of that large general class in the world with whom we do not fellowship, there is one particular section that has a bearing on the question. In 2 Thess. 3- 14-15, Paul says,— *“If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”*

Part of the *“word by this epistle”* was to *“withdraw from those who did not walk according to the tradition”* (teaching) of Paul — see verse 6 of the same chapter. If any refuse to withdraw when they should withdraw, they are *“not obeying our word by this epistle.”*

In these vs. 14-15, Paul introduces a class with whom we are to have no company, yet we are not to count them as enemies, but to admonish them as (erring) brethren. This is not out of harmony with Jesus' command (Matt. 18:17).

“If he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto them as a heathen man and a publican.” To be *“as a heathen or a publican”* is the same as to have no company. (We are not to treat heathens and publicans as enemies — Jesus does not contradict Paul here — I believe he uses the terms heathen and publican to emphasize the separation, the not keeping company.)

It seems to me that these words of Jesus and Paul define our relationship to those groups that go under the general classification of Christadelphians, just about as well as possible. (I do not like to use the term *“other fellowships.”* because it is a self-contradiction — there can truly be only ONE Fellowship).

These other groups are *“separated brethren”* brethren to be kept separate from and admonished, but not to be regarded with enmity or bitterness. Our only practical problem is how to act in relation to them. Paul defines this clearly. As to how we are to abstractly consider them, or try to determine their position before God (present or ultimate), I do not regard this as a profitable consideration.

The *“body of Christ”* is, in the ultimate sense, the approved—the redeemed—the glorified. Who will ultimately constitute this Body obviously we cannot say. That is the great purpose of the judgment-seat of Christ. *“Judge nothing before the time.”*

As to the present application of this expression (Body of Christ), that at best can be but a tentative consideration. Paul says (Heb. 3:6, 14)—“*Whose House (Body) are we IF we hold fast . . . we are made partakers of Christ (his Body) IF we hold steadfast.*”

At any particular time, therefore, the present constitution of the Body is but tentative and potential. So we cannot apply the term to any at present in an absolute sense. I certainly believe it would be unwise and questionable to apply this term “Body of Christ” to any with whom we cannot in faithfulness break bread, for the Scriptures obviously restrict the term in its true sense to the faithful, and if we consider a man to be faithful in the scriptural sense, we have no right to stand aside from him in fellowship.

Jesus said, “*Judge not, that ye be not judged*” (Matt. 7:1). He also said, “*Judge righteous judgment*” (John 7:24). The mind of the flesh will play those 2 statements against each other; the mind of the Spirit will perceive their harmony.

We have judged to the extent of standing aside from those who do not fully accept and apply what we believe to be the first principles of fellowship. To this extent we have judged and must judge. We believe these “brethren” are in error in the position of fellowship they take, and we believe faithfulness calls for a standing aside and a testifying against their error (admonition), and an endeavor to persuade them to forsake the error. James says—

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the Truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins” (5:19, 20).

Beyond this, I would rather hope, and not judge. Jesus said, “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48). From this it would appear that responsibility varies according to capability and opportunity and circumstance. Paul says,—“*What have I to do to judge those that are without. Those that are without God judgeth*” (1 Cor. 5:12, 13). Once we have faithfully testified by separating in fellowship, I believe we should leave all further judging to God (though not neglecting to try to persuade them, and warn others, of the unsoundness of their position).

But our main concern and duty is with the “things that remain.” These we are exhorted to build up and “strengthen,” and to carry the good news of the Kingdom to the world.

Sincerely your brother, G.V.Growcott

Perfect and Complete in All the Will of God

NO one can attentively read the apostolic writings without being struck with the frequency and the prominence of the “WILL OF GOD.” Jesus refers to it often in his discourses, and says plainly that the doing of this will is the rule by which his friends will finally be selected.

So distinctly was it before his mind that those only who did the will of his Father would finally be chosen for companionship with him in glory—that when one, upon a certain occasion, exclaimed concerning the blessedness of the mother of Jesus, he said—

“Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and DO it.”

What is meant by the will of God no one need be at a loss to know. There is no simpler idea in the whole range of Scripture. A child may grasp it. The will of God is that which He wishes us to be and to do.

The smallest capacity can take this in. In fact, the terms of salvation are altogether such as any ordinary mind can understand. The difficulty is not in knowing: it lies in another direction.

The difficulty doubtless lies here—in remembering constantly all that God would have us to do and to be, and so remembering as to conform.

—*Bro. Robert Roberts*

Commanding to Abstain From Meats

QUESTION: “Did God command Israel to abstain from eating swine's flesh merely as a test of obedience, or for their own interest? If it was not good for natural Israel to eat it, is it good now for spiritual Israel?”

The following article appeared in part from The Herald 1860, page 138, under the title,

Porkism.

In relation to eating of meats, or not eating of them, it is easier to ask questions than to answer them. Why Jehovah thought proper to do this, and not to do that, is easier asked than answered. In Paul's day there was a class of professors who were very much addicted to the work of perplexing themselves about recondite matters to the neglect of what was obvious and plain. He says, “they intruded into things which they had not seen, being puffed up in vain by the mind of their flesh.” (Col. 2:18). We must be careful that we fall not into this error; and to avoid it, it is necessary that we keep a strict watch over “the flesh,”

which is much more gratified in intruding into the motives of others, even of the Creator Himself, than in accepting His testimony and simply keeping His commands.

“The flesh” is not satisfied with “the simplicity which is in Christ.” The case of Naaman is very instructive upon this point. Naaman was a “natural man,” and gave utterance to “the mind of the flesh.” Elisha told him to “go and wash seven times in Jordan, and be clean.” Though Elisha was a man of God, he enunciated a simple order, or command, unaccompanied by any pious or godly drapery, rite, or ceremony, so pleasing to the flesh. The flesh, called Naaman, rebelled at this simplicity. It required a show of godliness, a demonstration of respect to a great man, and some holy action. It was willing, and would have delighted, in being commanded to do “some great thing.” It would then have felt like making itself famous for something; but simply to do what it was commanded, conferred upon it no glory or renown. Poor human nature, alas for thee!

The flesh is always devising for itself yokes of bondage which God hath not imposed. This propensity to be doing what it is not asked to do, and of neglecting to do what it is told, is the foundation of all “the will worship and humility and austerity of body,” which constitutes the godliness of the Old Adam. The world is full of it. We see it in the superstitions of Rome, [Wittenberg], Geneva, etc. And we would be glad if we could say that we did not see it among those who have believed and obeyed the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Out of respect for our correspondent, as a brother of Christ, we entertain his question for which, and for all similar, we have none. He asks us, why Jehovah commanded Israel to abstain from swine's flesh? We answer, for the reason Jehovah Himself gives, which is because “he cheweth not the cud” [Lev. 11:3-6] “Whatsoever parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.” Swine are cloven-footed and if they had chewed the cud, they would have been as clean to Israel for food as any other animal. But as they chewed not the cud, they were constituted legally unclean to Israel. To abstain from eating swine's flesh, or horseflesh, was therefore “an element of the world”— a part of “the righteousness of the Law which is fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh (or hand-writing of ordinances pertaining to the flesh) but after the Spirit.” Eels are as unclean by the same law, because they have no scales.

But some may inquire, why was the distinction of clean and unclean imposed at all? The answer is, that all the enactments of the Mosaic

Law partook of the nature and character of the Law, upon the principle that the parts or elements of a whole share in the constitution thereof. Now the Mosaic Law in its entirety was [Rom. 2:20] “the representation of the knowledge and the truth;” hence its parts, elements, or rudiments, were also individually representative of things pertaining to the Truth, or substance, or “body which is of Christ.” The New Testament sets forth “the revelation of the mystery”; or the exposition of the secret meaning of the Law. The Law was “the wisdom of God in a mystery”; which it was the business of the apostles and writers of the New Testament to expound. From them we learn what was signified by the unclean animals of the Law, who chewed not the cud. The mystery is revealed in Peter's vision upon the housetop. A sheet was lowered from heaven full of unclean animals, which he was ordered to kill and eat. But he refused, saying that he had never eaten “anything common or unclean.” He was told, however, that he was not to call that common or unclean which God had cleansed.

Now when Peter came to narrate the vision he had seen, he told his hearers that it had taught him the lesson that he was to call “no man common or unclean;” for that “God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.” All those non-Israelitish nations were dogs and swine, lions, tigers, eels, eagles, vultures, etc.—animals that chewed not the cud, without scales, etc., according to the law. The bread of God, or the divine pasturage, had not been fed to them; so they could not chew, or ruminate upon it; but they lived upon the garbage of the flesh, served out to them by pagan philosophers and priests, as men do now, who are ignorant of the word. But the time had come when Peter stood before Cornelius to afford men of all nations an opportunity of putting off the swine and putting on the sheep, which “parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud,” in the green pastures and beside the still waters of God. The grass of these pastures is good and nourishing. They graze in the reading and hearing of the Word; and in meditating upon what they have received, they bring up the cud, and chew it in detail, and so appropriate it to the growth of the inner man—Acts 10:11; Lev. 11: 8:4; Col. 2:14-23.

When a Gentile obeys the Truth, as we have said, he puts off the dog and the swine, and puts on the sheep; but “if he turn again to the weak and beggarly elements of the Law,” and “turn from the holy commandment delivered to him; it has happened to him,” says Peter, “according to the proverb, The dog has turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” 2 Pet. 2:21-

22. This is as much as to say, that before the vomiting and the washing, they were separated by the Law as dogs and swine.

As, in our answer, we have not placed ourselves upon the "supposition" prepared for us by our worthy correspondent, we need not follow him into the argumentation that grows out of it. There is no evidence that swine's flesh was interdicted to the natural Israel because it was not good for them. We care nothing at all about the physiologists, who have as many crotchets when it suits them as the theologians. If we square our diet by their fashions, which are as outrés and unstable as a French milliner's, we shall be reduced to bran bread and water. We shall not quarrel with any one who chooses this sort of prison fare, provided he does not incorporate it with the gospel as a condition of salvation. Swine's flesh, horses, hares, eels, all legally unclean, are wholesome enough where the digestion is good; but where this is not the case it is difficult to find any thing that agrees. There are some that cannot eat it; and there are some that cannot eat beef or mutton; the peculiarity is in the eater more than in the eaten. According to a man's experience, so let him eat, and be thankful; for both clean and unclean are sanctified by the word of God and prayer...

...The bread of God, or the divine pasturage, had not been fed to them. So they could not chew, or ruminate, upon it; but they lived upon the garbage of the flesh, served out to them by pagan philosophers and priests, as men do now who are ignorant of the Word. But the time had come when Peter stood before Cornelius to afford men of all nations an opportunity of putting off the swine and putting on the sheep, which "parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud," in the green pastures and beside the still waters of God. The grass of these pastures is good and nourishing. They graze in the reading and hearing of the word; and in meditating upon what they have received, they bring up the cud, and chew it in detail, and so appropriate it to the growth of the inner man.

—*Bro. John Thomas—Herald, 1860*

Essential Elements

The death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus are essential and indispensable elements of the faith that seals the intellects of men. Believe every thing else, but reject these facts and their doctrinal signification and no such professor can be saved — he is unsealed with the seal from a sun's rising.

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Bro. John Thomas—Eureka vol. 2 page 289 303 Logos edition

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Hints For Bible Markers

The Pharisees were extremely loose in their interpretation of the Mosaic laws concerning marriage. This was popular with the people, although not in accordance with the will of God. They corrupted the Mosaic laws concerning marriage by bending it with their own traditions and ideas. If we turn our Bibles to Deuteronomy 24:1 we find the marriage law, “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.” Christ said this law was given for the hardness of man's heart. From the beginning it was not intended. What was intended was a very beautiful type. The marriage of the King to his bride. The love between a man and a woman, type of the love between Christ and his bride. Marriage being the type of the perfect union between the two. Jesus Christ is the ultimate declaration of the love of God. His life and His sacrifice were the expression of Christ's love for His brethren. And the commandment He left with us was “that we love one another.” (James 2:8) “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well.” Many problems much sufferings would be abated if man could just heed this command. Placing our spouses happiness and welfare above our own, both desiring to please each other in the Lord. Therein lies true happiness in marriage.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery,” (Exodus 20:14), was the seventh commandment. Jesus broadened that law to encompass our very thoughts. “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: (28) But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28) The spirit of the law remained for believers although the letter of it had been nailed to the cross. Paul plainly said (Rom. 8:4) “that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.”

Revelation 19:9, “And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Song of Solomon 8:14 “Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.”
Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by Bro. Roberts

VII. CONCERNING MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS

Husbands and wives not to separate except for adultery

Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? (8) He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (9) And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (Matthew 19:6 – 9) 429-Berean 2012