

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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Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.

Phone: (586) 790-2156 e-mail: fhigham@gmail.com

Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

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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

The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News is published as a service of love to the Berean Christadelphian Brotherhood. Through contributions from most Ecclesias and individuals we have been able to publish each month without the added cost of tracking subscriptions. The magazine expenses for this year will now amount to about \$1.75 per copy. Postage has increased twice this past year. This latest change increased international packages from \$16.95 to \$23.95. We appreciate the continued support of individuals and from most ecclesias. We are currently covered for about 9 months.

Ecclesial News

DETROIT, Michigan, Memorial – 10:00am; Sunday School – 11:00am

Loving greetings in Christ,

As we start another year, we continue to look forward to the return of Jesus.

We have been encouraged here by having to our weekly memorial meeting, by Skype, Bro. Bob and Sis. Mary Widding. We thank Bro. Bob for his encouraging exhortations, being part of our meetings and for Sis. Mary for playing the hymns every other weekend. We also want to thank Bro. Pat Brown for his uplifting exhortations. He and Sis. Linda have been attending our meeting by Skype while she is recuperating.

Further encouragement has come our way by the visits from Bro. Jim Rankin, Bro. Lynn Osborne and Bro. Harry Phillip. We thank our Bro. Jim and Bro. Lynn for the exhortations they gave.

We thank all for your for your help in contributing to the magazine. We appreciated the extra help we needed and the love you have shown in supporting this work.

We pray that our dear Heavenly Father will bless you all and help us hold fast to our faith until the end.

Love in the bonds of the Truth,
Bro. Fred Higham

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"

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Oct-26-27 2013

Bro. Jim Sommerville, jsommer393@msn.com

KENYA FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Dec-5-8 2013

Bro. Bob Bent, eyeglassman39@yahoo.com. Epa Wekati, epawekati@yahoo.com

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.

Character—Be Ye Transformed: Our Most Urgent Duty

I believe that the most pressing and urgent lifelong consideration of any who aspire to the Kingdom of God must be complete transformation of character. I believe that the realization of this urgent necessity is far too dim among us. I believe that any attempt to judge, criticize, or regulate the lives and conduct of others, until we have brought ourselves into line with the commands of God in this respect, is hypocrisy.

We tend to feel, or at least act as though we feel, that if we can legislate righteousness upon others and surround ourselves with the external appearance of a sound ecclesial framework, that our own personal shortcomings will somehow be absorbed and overlooked and compensated for in the general ecclesial strength. We hide behind the mask.

I believe that we tend very much to get our priorities reversed in this respect. For Jesus said, *"Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye."* (Matt 7:5)

I believe we shall find that the more attention and concern we give to our own very numerous shortcomings, the less will be the vehemence of our zeal to condemn our brethren. And the more cautiously and gently and Christ-like we shall approach that task when it is necessary.

Let us then frankly examine our own conduct and characters in the light of the plain and simple command of the Scripture. They are plain, and they are simple. They are necessary. They can be done, and they must be done.

Let us see if we are in any position to operate upon the lives of others. Let us judge and suspect and expose our own selves at least as critically as we try to judge and suspect and expose others. Rather indeed, as Paul said in the readings this morning: Rather judge this, let us judge ourselves far more searchingly than we judge others, for this is the prescribed course of Scripture, of wisdom and of love.

Of judging others, Paul said, *“rather judge this, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother’s way.”* (Rom. 14:13) Examine yourselves for none of us live to ourselves. We are all to some degree, responsible for the conduct of all with whom we have contact or have any connection.

The Divine Command is *“let a man examine himself,”* not just for the very solemn and dramatic half-minute or so before the partaking of the emblems on Sunday morning. But, all the time—all day and every day. Before doing or saying anything, let us ask, *“Is this the scriptural, Christ-like, God-pleasing thing to do or to say in this circumstance?”* This, of course, will very severely slow us up naturally, as far as getting anything done. But, it will greatly speed us up spiritually, and that is where the speed is needed.

We are all very familiar with the 13th chapter of 1st Corinthians—universally admitted to be a beautiful, emotion-stirring chapter, like beautiful music. But, let us put emotion to one side. Let us see just what it says, and let us see how we measure up to it. Paul here describes all the beautiful, unselfish characteristics of spiritual love: longsuffering, patience, kindness, self-abasement, selflessness, deep concern for others, freedom from any envy or selfish desire, freedom from anger, freedom from suspicion of others, consistent joyfulness, constant cheerful endurance, and consistent hope, both for self and for others.

Now all of this, of course, we are quite familiar with, but note what Paul says about it. He does not say that all this is a very beautiful ideal, and perhaps it will be nice if we make some kind of a stab at trying it sometime when we are not too busy criticizing others. He says this simply IS love—the most vital and important thing in the world. And he says, IF we haven’t got this, IF we don’t have this in abundance, we are nothing. Now nothing isn’t very much.

The motive of all that we do must be love. God loved us, and IF we will let that love work its work within us, it will transform us. There are

just two kinds of people in the world—just two groups: the living and the dead. The living are those who have this power of divine love that Paul describes and manifested. And the dead are all the rest who do not. There is no halfway.

John says that we have passed from death to life, IF we love the brethren. There is no halfway between death and life. It is a clear-cut division—a clear cut transfer.

The characteristics of this love, which the Scriptures say we must have in abundance, are variously described throughout the New Testament particularly, and you can also, of course, find them in the Old. They are, and this is not necessarily a complete list: joy, peace, patience (let us check them off as against ourselves), gentleness, thankfulness, goodness, meekness, reconciliation, self-control, virtue, holiness, faith, knowledge, godliness, zeal for God's house—that is, the body of Christ, thirst for God's Word—absolute truth, the dedication of the whole heart, entireness, completeness, single-mindedness, grace—that is, graciousness—courtesy, forgiveness, humility, rejoicing in tribulation, and rigid control of the tongue at all times.

And the opposites that are ruled out—the things that belong to death: anger, wrath, envy, tale bearing, backbiting, evil speaking, covetousness, suspecting evil motives, and the many corruptions of the flesh, that should not even be named among us. Not only our inner motives, but our outer attitude, must be a manifestation of love. We cannot justify a harsh attitude by what we assume is a loving motive. We must speak truly; we must speak clearly and frankly, but always gently and kindly and affectionately, to win and to persuade, not to condemn.

“The servant of the Lord must not strive; but must be gentle unto all men...patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.” (2 Tim.2: 24) *“Speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men.”* (Titus 3:2)

Spiritual transformation must be the biggest, most pressing matter in the forefront of our attention all our lives. That is, IF we hope for eternal life. We can choose the other course if we prefer. Eternal life is well within the reach of all who are willing to put forth the life-long effort to make it their principle and constant concern. We find no indication in Scripture that any others will receive it.

We MUST completely change our basic nature from conflict and antagonism to love and gentleness. Making rules and regulations for others is all very well, and to some extent it is necessary. But unless we bring our own lives and characters completely under the rules and regulations of God, then every rule that we impose on others is just one

more nail in the lid of our own coffin. As ye judge, so shall ye be judged.

Therefore, let us have the wisdom to first make ourselves that something very special and unique and unearthly that the law of God requires—that the law of God demands. And then, if necessary, let us concern ourselves with the sins of others.

Naturally, we are evil, quarrelsome, harsh, selfish, impatient, cruel, vengeful, spiteful, belligerent. This is the character of all human flesh, as Paul very clearly points out in the early chapters of Romans—all human flesh, without exception, from fear or from self-interest, or even possibly from indolence or from some other motive. We suppress a lot of this natural characteristic of the flesh, and, therefore, we often look quite good on the surface. This may be good enough for getting along in the world—for getting along with others. But, for pleasing God, we must go far deeper than that. We must introduce spiritual power; we must put something real and powerful and holy and beautiful in the place of the lust of the flesh—the new man, created in holiness and true godliness.

All this must be the work of God within us. We cannot do it of ourselves. *“It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”* (Phil.2: 13)

The main thing—the all-important thing—is to be able to examine ourselves, to stand back and look at ourselves coldly and unemotionally by the searching light of the Spirit Word. And to do that, we have to know that Word—to learn it more and more. Because, in the wisdom of God, the instruction—the light, the guidance—is scattered all the way through the Word. This is summarized easily—we have to search. If a man cannot be persuaded to examine himself—to critically and searchingly analyze his own thoughts and actions in the light of the divine Word, then any examination of him by anyone else is not going to accomplish very much. The key to any breakthrough, out of the self-perpetuating darkness of the natural fleshly mind, is self-examination with God’s help by the light of the all-exposing Spirit Word.

Our daily readings of the Word of God should mainly be for the purpose of examining ourselves and of learning God’s will concerning our own life and character. Self-examination without checking against the basic divine standard is hopeless. Nebuchadnezzar was very well satisfied with himself, when he examined himself, and so were the Laodiceans. It must be by the standard of God’s Word.

In preparing this talk, I have been again very deeply impressed with the power of the beauty of the Scriptures. We can only feel, as we read over and over again, the commands concerning character and godliness

and love and patience, self-sacrifice, kindness, gentleness, and joy and peace—we can only feel that this is it. This is the answer to everything—the only possible answer. This is the only possible satisfying, helpful, eternal reality. All else is passing, meaningless chaff. To attain to life, we must make the Word of God our principle interest—our principle study, our constant meditation. We must resolutely weed out all the passing, worldly rubbish that tends to attract our attention and clutter our mind. Solomon says of the Word, *“When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light.”*(Prov. 6:22-23)

This is the only possible way we are going to be transformed into something God can use. David said, *“Oh, how love I thy law.”* *“The Lord’s statutes rejoice the heart.”* *“His delight is in the law of the Lord.”* Love, rejoice, delight—this is the spirit and attitude we must have toward God’s commands, especially to those that apply most directly to us, and that bear most heavily upon the natural fleshly mind.

We must have this attitude, not only because of our deep love for God, who is their author, but for the law’s own very beauty and wisdom and power to transform the ugly, animal nature that we all have to a character that patterns after Christ. The very laws that our flesh rebel most at are the most necessary for our cleansing and training and development. Over and over in Scripture, we find the expression, **“WITH ALL YOUR HEART.”** This is the effectual qualification of anything that has to do with God. God not only has to be first—He has to be everything. Justifiers are not enough. Thought of God, love for God, thanksgiving to God, has to dominate all that we do or say.

Meditate day and night, cry after knowledge, seek her as silver, search as for hidden treasure—such is the very plain command. But **DO WE DO IT?** When we have to sit down and wait somewhere, do we thank God for the moment and take out a pocket Bible to read, or sit quietly and meditate what we have read. Or, do we automatically and thoughtlessly—like the world—reach out for a rubbishy newspaper or a magazine and scan mindlessly through its meaningless prompts—prostituting to corruption the wonderful mind that God has given us.

Most of us do not know enough about the Word of God for it to be able to guide us in all that we do, even if we wanted it to. We just don’t study it enough; we do not meditate upon it enough; we just constantly have too much else on our minds, taking our attention. Christ, in Matthew chapters 5 through 7, gives a very searching and great detailed outline of the way of life that He requires. In every one of its many aspects, it is diametrically opposed to the natural way of death—the natural way of thinking of the human mind.

Summing it up, he says very plainly, “He that does these things shall stand, and he that does not shall fall.” —Very clear and simple.

How many of us could sit down and write out a list of even half of the commands in these chapters? Let us try it some time.

Now, if we do not know them, how can we possibly guide our daily life and every action by them? Peter says, in 2 Peter 1, to add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. This is one of the various lists of required qualities that we find in the Scriptures. And he says further—we always have this warning—he says further, that IF these abound in us, they will give us an entrance to the Kingdom. If they do not abound, no entrance.

It's quite simple—*add to your faith virtue*. Virtue here is goodness, excellence, moral worth, integrity—a repudiation, a separation from all that is unworthy of God or of our high calling.

Faith must first completely purify our hearts and motives and emotions, swinging us over completely to the side of God from the side of the flesh, to the side of purity and holiness. The natural heart is lewd; the spiritual heart is pure.

“*Add to virtue knowledge...*” More and more knowledge of the Word of God—advancing from the milk to meat—increasingly filling the mind with Divine information and ideas and principles.

“*Add to knowledge temperance...*” That is self-control. The instructed thought and enlightened, spiritual mind takes firm control of all actions. This is self-control in the scriptural sense—never acting by impulse or desire or emotion or thoughtlessly, but by calm prayerful well thought out spiritual enlightenment and motives, with the help and by the power of God. “*It is God that worketh in you.*”

“*Add to self-control, patience...*” Patience in the Scripture is calm, cheerful, unmoved endurance under trial or provocation. It is not mere passive submission, like the sect of the Stoics of which we read in the New Testament (one of those sects that opposed Paul). But, it is an active carrying on, faithful and undisturbed, without doubt or despair, a cheerful carrying on. Patience is not scriptural if it is not cheerful and loving and constructive and understanding. There is nothing more repulsive to the Spirit, or gratifying to the flesh, than sullen resentful self-pitying patience.

“*Add to patience godliness...*” Godliness—*eusebia*, meaning God-centeredness—a constant yearning for God—drawing toward God—seeking to please God and be as He wishes. It is the state of mind that John describes when he says, “*He that is born of God cannot sin.*” The

thought is abhorrent to him. Truly, he will fail, but he could never conscientiously deliberately sin.

“Add to godliness, brotherly kindness...”—love of the brethren. And add to love of the brethren, “charity”—love. There are two words for love here—“*phileo*”—love of the brethren—tender, personal, affection. “*Agape*” is the higher, broader, more spiritual word. “*God is love*”—agape—universal benevolence.

This final crowning addition in Peter's list charity—love, agape, is goodness to all for a spiritual motive. An intense desire, because of the love of God, to serve the well-being of all mankind. Now all this again is very beautiful and inspiring and doubtless very familiar to us, but the practical thing to remember and the point we desire to emphasize is that all this is something that we have got to have and in abundant measure “*If these things be in you and abound...*” says Peter, but if not, what then?

In the sixth chapter of Galatians, we find another list of the things that are commanded for us to obey, IF we are to be accepted by God into His Kingdom. It is spoken of as “*the fruit of the spirit.*” The first three in this list are love, joy, and peace. There is something peculiar about all three of them. They are not the kind of characteristics that we normally consider as coming by effort from within, but rather by cause from without. We do not normally will or decide to love, but rather love is a result of external cause. Even more so with joy. We do not will it; we experience it, as the result of something, and yet even more so with peace.

This of course is true, and it is important to perceive it. All good must come to us from without—from above. Within us is no good thing, as Paul points out—you'll never develop good from within. We cannot will these things of ourselves. They must be caused from without.

Why then are we commanded to bring forth these fruits? The answer lies in the fact that the abundant cause of all these things and of all the other fruits is eternally available and existent. It is just up to us—it is our duty to perceive that cause, to make effective contact with it, and to let it have its operation upon us. IF we truly learn and perceive the real facts of life, the eternal facts, the divine spiritual facts, which are revealed in God's Word, and IF we put ourselves within the constant influence and consciousness of those facts, the love, joy, and peace will inevitably flow in upon us, and they will be the only possible way we can feel and act. There will be no more room in our minds for anything except love and joy and peace.

By nature we are critical of others. This is how we build and sustain our own ego—and manage to live with ourselves. Surely there is plenty in all to be critical about, if that is what gives us our satisfaction—if that is what we need. We can very righteously and rightly be critical of every one and of everything. The whole creation is stumbling along in vanity and corruption, but being critical just makes us another little part of the corruption. Jesus said—*“Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.”*

Now, unfortunately, most of us seem to have trouble even loving our brethren—those companions that God has given us—let alone our enemies. It seems to take so little to create coldness and ill feeling—to set in motion criticism and tale-bearing and fault-finding and bitterness and rumor-mongering. This is the measure of the shallowness of our faith in God and our love for one another.

Joy and peace also are clear commands—essential ingredients of the character that is acceptable to God. IF we do not have them in deep spiritual measure, we are in no position to criticize, correct, or legislate for others, for we are in deep spiritual poverty ourselves—in great need of help. These are the fruits of the spirit—the spirit of Christ, and IF we do not have the fruits, we do not have the spirit. This is quite clear from the following—

“The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart:” (Psa. 19:8)

“Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy.” (Psa. 5:11)

True trust makes fullness of joy inevitable. Let us measure our faith by our degree of constant spiritual joy.

“The righteous doth sing and rejoice.” (Prov. 29:6)

This is one of their clear identifications. If they don't sing and rejoice, they are not righteous.

“These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy might be full.” (John 15:11)

This was Christ the night of his crucifixion—

“Ask and you shall receive, that your joy might be full”—ask and ye shall receive.

Religion has been made that our joy may be always full. So if it is not, let us forget others' faults for a while, and diligently find out and correct what is wrong with ourselves. Because that is the thing that we are going to have to answer for at the judgment seat of Christ.

Paul says several times—*“In everything give thanks.”* This is the measure of our faith in the divine assurance that *“all things work together for good to those that love God.”* In some things truly the good is hard, or even impossible, for us to see in our present limited understanding, but faith will believe that it is there. Wisdom will seek the lesson to be learned and the development of character that is intended. We are not upon this earth for present pleasure or satisfaction. We are here solely for a life-long course of training and development for the most glorious destiny imaginable.

It is a life-long course of schooling and education. Everything is working toward that end for the sons of God, and therefore, everything without exception calls for thanksgiving to God—demands thanksgiving, even as Paul said—*“Rejoice in tribulation.”*

This requires a complete transformation of the natural outlook. This is one of the things that is foolishness to the natural man whose realities are limited to the actual present.

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” “Rejoice evermore.” Believing—and this is the key—*“believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable.” “Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous.”* We dare not ignore these commands. These commands upon ourselves—and they are commands—they are the only way to spiritual help. If we do not continually rejoice in the Lord, we are sick—sick in our minds. These commands are the only cure for the disease of the fleshly mind. Who would desire to be diseased?

Peace is just as clearly commanded and required as joy. It is commanded in the sense that we must—we must—with God's instruction and help, get ourselves into the spiritual and mental condition that creates peace. *“Great peace have they that love Thy Law: and nothing—nothing—shall offend them.”*

Peace does not depend on something anyone else can do for us. No one else can give it to us or take it from us. This peace is for those that love the Law and nothing will offend them. Here is a clear declaration: that IF we love the Law—love it in the Bible sense of giving it all our heart and attention—then we shall have great peace. We shall never take offense at anything.

Let us check up on ourselves. The contrary is also very clearly implied. If we haven't great peace, if we do take offense, then we do not love the Law.

“To be spiritually minded is peace.” We read that recently from Paul to the Romans. Again, it is entirely up to us. We are commanded to be spiritually minded. We are told how to become spiritually minded. If therefore, we do not have peace, perfect peace, peace that

passes understanding, then we have not been obedient. We have neglected—we have neglected so great salvation. We have perhaps been worrying too much about what someone else is doing wrong.

“Let the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Again, putting the responsibility for peace squarely upon ourselves.

IF we follow the commands, and they are many, and they take all life's activities and energy, and there are no shortcuts—IF we do that, then we are guaranteed peace. It is very clear from the principle that Christ lays down, that if we do not have and manifest the fruits of the spirit in abundance, then surely that must be our first concern. And we have no time, we are in no fit position to legislate for others—*“shall the blind lead the blind?”*

Concerning anger – There are three very interesting statements concerning anger, virtually interesting because of their translation in the Authorized Version. We cannot help but wonder at the state of mind of the translators. Apparently, they couldn't quite grasp the fullness.

Matthew 5:22—*“Angry without a cause.”* He is speaking about being angry at our brother—*“Angry without a cause.”*

1 Cor. 13:5—*“Love is not easily provoked.”*

And Titus 1:7—*“Not soon angry”*—a requirement of anyone serving the Ecclesia.

Now these weakening qualifications—without a cause, easily, and soon—none of them are in the original. The commands condemn anger without qualification. The Revised Version omits the first two qualifications, and the Diaglott omits all three of them.

To justify anger in man, it is customary to refer to Christ exhibiting anger, which we are told, on one occasion, that being angry, he looked around upon them. We might just as well justify violence, because he drove the money-changers from the Temple. Or, because, with the power of the Spirit, he caused men to fall down flat before him. Certainly that was violence. He was acting for God, directly, by inspiration—by the power of the Spirit. But his commands for us are clear. And his own personal example is clear. *“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”* Put away all wrath and anger. Cease from anger, forsake wrath. *“Anger resteth in the bosom of fools.”*

Why? Because human anger is not of self-control. When we are angry, we are weak. *“Put off all these, anger, wrath...”* Galatians 5 lists anger as one of the works of the flesh.

Paul, in Romans 15, gives a vital command widely ignored. He is actually summing up what he has said in the previous chapter. *“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”* Whatever we do must be with the concern for the well-being of others and not our own pleasure. *“Let everyone please his neighbor for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself.”*

We, then, that are strong—as Paul said in the chapter that was read—*“We all have knowledge.”* Of course, we all have knowledge—we know what it is all about. We all think that we are among the strong, although we may not admit it even to ourselves. But we very clearly demonstrate it in our lives. For if we did not think that we were strong, we would be spending much more time and effort trying to get strong. How much then of this spirit of pleasing our neighbor or brother for his good is there among us? What do we actually do and what do we actually forebear doing for the sake of others, even petty little things that we think they should forget, to satisfy the scruples of others, unreasonable or unjustified though they may be.

Here is the measure, the honorary measure, of our brotherly love—the love which indicates whether we have passed from death to life. IF we love our brethren, we shall joyfully seek such opportunities to manifest that love by sacrifice on their behalf. Paul says in this connection—*“When ye so sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.”* We cannot brush them off as foolish—they should know better—ye sin against Christ. Wherefore—*“If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”*

Some far off ideal, which we think it was very nice for Paul to say. Only those who have the same view as Paul are Christ's brethren. It's not, as Paul said, something far off up in heaven to go and get down, or beneath to go and fetch; it's right here. The command is right upon us and we've got to do it. This is one of the greatest ways that God tests our love for others to see if we have passed from death to life.

Grace—graciousness, basic inward, gentle Christ-like graciousness to all. *“We beheld his glory...full of grace and truth.”* Sometimes we emphasize the Truth and forget the Grace. Now *“this fullness we have received and grace for grace.”*

Grace is a far more powerful word than the *favor* that most seem to prefer to translate it into. It brings it down to our level by calling it favor, but grace is something we have got to get up to—rise up to. Have we received grace for grace? Have we received from Christ and do we manifest this vital spiritual ingredient of true holiness—grace, graciousness, and kindness, and gentleness to all, or do we, thinking we

are serving God, manifest the fleshly self-righteous “off with his head” attitude of Jehu, when he went out to destroy the house of Ahab? Truly Ahab's house was wicked and had to be destroyed, he said—*“And see my zeal for the Lord.”* Truly Jehu had great zeal and he applied the sword of destruction enthusiastically and very efficiently.

“To have things in common.” Things have changed tremendously since Bible times. By scriptural standards most of us are rich—indecently rich. That is, we have and we handle far more than is required for the basic necessities of life. Most of it goes for luxuries and for lust—what we regard as our necessary standard of living. Something undreamed of 50 years ago, but now it is necessary—we need it—we have to have it—an opulent convenience—a gadget-loaded establishment. What we regard as necessities are things that would turn the rich of Bible times green with envy.

The Scriptural standard is—*“Having food and raiment, therewith be content.”* Paul says this in the same context to Timothy. What does he really mean? Does it have any kind of a meaning for us? And where does it all end?

“Give us this day, our daily bread.” Bread, not meat. He couldn't have said meat, because in Bible times meat was far from a daily thing. Americans eat meat many more times than, for instance, the Japanese, and they have many more times the heart trouble. Maybe there is no connection, but it's very interesting. We live in the midst of a bloated, artificial, lifestyle and we unconsciously absorb it.

“Give us this day, our daily bread.”

“Sell what thou hast and give alms.”

“Provide yourselves treasure in the heavens.”

This isn't just said for the one little rich young man. This was said to all his disciples.

“Labor not for the meat that perisheth.”

“He that soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly.”

“God loveth a cheerful giver.”

Faith – The key thought on faith is *“Faith without works is dead.”* Faith is an assurance—a conviction that controls and motivates action. Our faith is what we do, not what we say, even to ourselves. Our faith can be judged by our actions and faith doesn't just happen. *“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”*

And the faith that God requires—the faith that moves mountains, the faith of Hebrews of chapter 11 does not come by superficial

hearing, but by constant lifelong attentive study. What we do reveals where our faith is, reveals who we really believe in—our own heart, our own possessions—the guarantees that we can buy from the world, or God. Where we put our life's efforts and interests exposes what our faith is really in. We can each very easily add it up for ourselves—the time we spend on present things, the time we spent on God's things. Set them beside each other and draw your own conclusion.

Faith in God will lead to a way of life and a course of action that is absolute folly to the mind of the flesh. Certainly if Hebrews chapter 11 teaches us anything, it teaches us that. The worthies of old all had their faith severely tested. And by a living active faith under these circumstances, they earned a good report. It is the only way to earn a good report, though often it cost them all their worldly possessions, even life itself. From a natural point of view, their course was utter folly, suicide, and stupidity.

Humility – Meekness, lowliness, humility—these things are very hard to pin down. They are probably the most counterfeited characteristics of godliness that there are. Everyone takes for granted that he is humble, even the Pope of Rome. Many are very proud of their humility and boast about it, even in their prayers to God. If we say we are humble, we very probably are not, for the truly humble could never advertise their humility. Humility is something we manifest and not talk about. Jesus said, *“Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest for your soul.”*

IF we are never offended or upset about what others do or say to us, IF we truly do have peace and rest in our souls, IF we do not need to buttress our self-confidence with possession of material things, IF we can take correction and criticism with thanksgiving even if it is unfair, IF we would never dream about talking about our humility or calling ourselves humble, then perhaps, just perhaps, we have made some little headway in achieving this essential quality.

Quite often slothfulness and disobedience masquerade as humility. We know we are not doing what we should, and so to cover up we effusively and humbly parade our lack of zeal and effort, as if it were some virtue, and as if confession of it absolved us from doing anything about it.

There are many other characteristics that we could consider if we had time. One we have not covered, perhaps the most vital from some points of view, is longsuffering—that which we today more usually describe as patience. That is, kindness and gentleness under provocation—certainly one of the most difficult and most important, most fundamental.

Paul said to the Romans on this subject, *“Present your bodies a living sacrifice.”* He is unmistakably speaking of giving the whole life without reserve, and he says, *“This is our reasonable service.”* That is, this requirement is nothing special or unusual for a few—a few we can look up to, marvel at, be happy we have them around. But it is the reasonable thing expected of all, and after we have done it to the very fullest, we are to say, *“We are unprofitable servants.”*

There is such a poor general comprehension of what God demands of man as a reasonable service that even a very partial, limited fulfillment of it is looked upon with wonder, as something especially praiseworthy.

Paul continues, *“Be not conformed to this world.”* Why not? Because the world’s whole structure is based upon the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life, and that is the way of death. They can’t help it because they know nothing else. Now in many things we must of necessity be conformed to some extent to the world—our houses, our clothes, our food, our occupation, we drive cars and so on, but none of this should be done thoughtlessly and automatically by custom, just because everyone else does it, or just because it is nice and desirable. All should be individually thought out. Does this particular thing fit into the way of life? Is it a practical necessity in doing God’s work, or is it a part of the world’s false and fleshly fabric of life? Is it, and we shall so often find that it is, another aspect of the universal wine of the Roman harlot, which has permeated everything, by which all the nations are drunk though they know it not.

It is so easy just to do something without thought or study, drift along in it just because it’s pleasant or because the world does it. But most importantly we should not be conformed to the world in their motives and purposes and reason that they do things—ambition and pride and greed and fear and pleasure seeking, retaliation, the desire to kill things (that is a very deep desire in human nature we should be very conscious of—the desire to destroy), bigotry and racism and animosity and selfishness.

“Be not conformed but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Here is our principal, lifelong task clearly expressed—that upon which our eternal destiny depends. This divine character to which we must be transformed is clearly set out in many commands of Scripture, and it is of surpassing beauty. It is of such great beauty that the danger is that because of its unearthly beauty and its great difference from the natural way of the flesh we can be deceived within ourselves into a false sense of security.

“For if we would JUDGE OURSELVES, we should not be judged.”

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

The Bride of Christ

We must take every opportunity to draw strength, energy, enthusiasm and understanding from God's Word and from each other. We are nearing the end and we must be ready. Each day we need to devote more time for the spiritual and less time for the carnal and temporal. We must become professional at rerouting and rechanneling our lives.

Our subject this morning is the Bride of Christ. It is a beautiful analogy when we think of beauty and love; bride and bridegroom; and marriage and devotion. All these words together are the culmination of all things with the purpose of God.

At the age of 30, Jesus began his ministry and of all places at a marriage. He was with his mother, brothers and sisters, his disciples and friends at Cana of Galilee. Two thousand years later, he will attend his symbolic marriage with his multitudinous bride – those individuals that throughout history have looked and longed for his coming.

One of the most beautiful writings in scriptures is the book, Song of Solomon. The Songs are about the Bride and Bridegroom. They are sharing love exchanges through songs for one another. They are not rhythmical poems, but are allegorical and very poetical. They are poetical in that they express facts and ideas and emotions in a style more concentrated and imaginative and powerful than that of ordinary speech. We are using such words as rhythmical and allegorical and poetical because of such examples as these:

The bridegroom describes the bride this way:

“Thou hast doves eyes within thy locks,

Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mt. Gilead,

Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn,

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet and thy speech is comely,

Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks,

Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armory,

Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins that feed among the lilies.”

Why did God choose through Solomon, to use these words and phrases?

You see, many humans relate their love through poems and especially through song. The Song of Songs reveals a beautiful story about a bride and bridegroom that love each other. He sees her as his

betrothed and his bride. To this bride, the groom is unique. He is the most important thing in her life. To the groom, she too is the most important thing in his life.

In certain instances in the story, the two companions are apart. The bridegroom became absent. This period of separation becomes a time of trial and testing for the bride-elect. As a result the Bride longs for and yearns the more for the return of her companion and loved one. Subsequently, her appreciation for him becomes heightened and enriched.

It effectually becomes a period of preparation for her future and permanent union with him. And the highest form of joy and happiness is the experience when the bridegroom returns and the two are together.

The identity of these two allegorical characters are very clear.

The Bride is the faithful saints of all ages and they show the fervent love and devotion they have for Christ – their Savior.

The Bridegroom is Christ, and he shows his fervent love for his true followers, even a love so great that he gave his life for them.

The analogy of Christ and the faithful saints – to a husband and wife -- bride and groom – is well documented in the scriptures. This poetic message is strengthened throughout the scriptures.

Matt. 9:15 “And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.”

II Cor. 11:2 “For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”

Rev. 19:7 “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

Throughout the scriptures the Father is impressing on us not only the degree of love that Christ has for his followers, but he is impressing on us that those who will finally comprise the body of Christ will have an all-encompassing love, adoration, admiration and infatuation for Christ.

This in the appropriate sense will be a romance, and it will be life-altering and heart-changing. We must ask – How much does Christ play in the emotions of our lives? Who and where is our love? As always, there is that important aspect of knowledge; and, we must have that intimate relationship with him.

Truly there is a deep feeling involved with love and that love transforms us and evolves us intimately into a relationship that compares with this Song. This love will prepare us to meet his every desire and favor.

The bride's heart and mind – her mental state – her emotions are totally wrapped up with how and what he thinks of her.

So our object today is to fall in love and become infatuated with the things of God and our Lord and Savior.

There are 12 songs and they are NOT divided according to the chapters in the Bible. The first song starts in Chap. 1:2 and goes through verse 8.

In this song a conversation takes place between the Bride and her virgin companions. These virgins, in verse 3, are the 3rd major participants in the Song of Solomon.

They are called the Daughters of Jerusalem, whereas the Bride is symbolic of the saints in the accepted totality. The virgins are the saints in individuality. So the Bride is the total-multitudinous Christ. The virgins are the individual saints.

The virgins admire the Bride. The virgins know the Bride is that which has been accepted by the bridegroom. They know that her traits, character, wisdom and beauty are factors by which the bridegroom desires this woman.

As the conversation continues in Song One, the Bride expresses her desire for her Lord. She longs for his affection. She says, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth." Verse 2.

In verses 5 and 6, the Bride is aware of her imperfections, which may be seen through his eyes. But the virgins reassure her. In the Amplified Version it says. Vs. 5 "I am black; but you are lovely and pleasant (the ladies assured her)."

Vs. 9 begins the Second Song and goes through chapter 2:7. The Song is a discourse of love and affection between the Bride and the Bridegroom as they exchange expressions to one another.

They could be physically together with one another, but it is more likely that the Bride is in the palace during the groom's absence. Being away, his exchanges come by message.

Vs. 9-10: The groom is speaking "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

Horse here is intended to be a mare and is translated so in some versions. Through most of history, the horse was a symbol of stateliness.

And those well-bred, especially the mare, was considered a creation of strength, beauty and gracefulness. Egyptian horses may have been known as the greatest in the world during this period. And those of Pharaoh's chariots would be the most outstanding of the outstanding.

Those individuals accepted by the Groom in the day of accountability will not be the hum drum of the masses. They will be the best of the best in the history of the world. Brothers and Sisters, let us examine ourselves and see where we stand.

Vs. 10, "Comely Cheeks" – the cheek is important for the structure of the face. Full cheek, healthy colored, highlight the facial countenance as one of health and maturity.

People in poverty and deprivation do not have full comely cheeks. They are drawn and bare. The saints will be those of maturity and spiritual health and not those who are dead while they live.

"Thy neck with chains of gold." This jewel would enhance the beauty of the Bride even more. For this bride, it is appropriate. The gold indicates the Bride possesses faith which has been tried for the Groom. The chain symbolized authority. Authority is not just passed on, but is given. Thus, the given authority denotes acceptance.

Vs. 11, "We will make thee borders of gold with streets of silver." We, meaning several and must be the attendant virgins. "We will make" – The virgin's admiration for the Bride is again revealed. The virgins desire to participate – to be part of the beauty – making. And so they shall be – if they – individually do their part.

The borders of gold not only reiterate the importance of faith, but the borders here are probably ornaments that hang down from the head.

The Revised Version renders it plaits. This array of gold hanging from the head reveals that it will be an intelligent faith and clearly visible and obvious.

Vs. 12-13, Here the bride speaks about the Groom, "While the King sitteth at his table my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof."

It was spikenard with which Mary anointed Christ before his death (John 12:3). It was very costly. Thus it was a sacrifice and expense for Mary to obtain it. Spikenard was derived from a fragrant plant and was used in ancient times for healing and perfumes. The spikenard's aroma is on the Bride and is noticed at the Lord's table. As Mary sacrificed,

there must also be sacrifice on the part of the saints. Sacrifice can lead to transformation of character. This gets Christ's attention.

It is those who take up their cross and follow him. Christ does not pay attention to just anyone. In fact, he is very selective and particular. We must obtain those qualities that please and attract him.

Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you. Many virgins have been called. Some have the possession of spikenard – and some do not.

To some, he will say “I never knew you.”

Vs. 13, “A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breast.”

The word “he” here is of neuter gender, and should be rendered “it”. This is supported by the Revised Version, Amplified Bible, Rotherham and Berkley Revised.

It is the myrrh that shall lie between her breast during the night. It was an ancient Eastern custom for ladies to sleep with a bundle of perfume between and upon the breast. The body warmth would exude the aroma of the fragrance onto this body area.

Myrrh was also a very costly herb and was used as a gift. Jacob included it in the present he sent to Joseph as governor of Egypt. It was part of the gift given at Christ's birth by the wise men and wine mingled with myrrh was given to Christ at his Crucifixion.

This all may indicate a variety of lessons; richness, healing, future glory, acceptance and honor.

The bride securely places the myrrh between her breasts during the night of the Groom's absence. It is a constant reminder of him.

The saints long for his presence during their probationary night of trial. Until then they rest upon the richness of his word, the hope and promise placed before them and the healing measure which they shall ultimately experience.

When he comes, then hope is no longer hope. He will then take the place of the bundle of myrrh. She will no longer be alone, for the night of probation will have ended and his absence will no longer be a reality.

Vs. 15, The groom speaks of the bride “Thou hast doves eyes.”

The dove exhibits the countenance of harmlessness, pure, lovely and mildness of character. The true saints will have these character traits.

In the study of human character, their disposition can often, but not always, be revealed in the countenance of the eyes. The look of

meanness, the look of love, the look of patience, the look of mourning or sadness, the look of exhaustion, can be seen in the eyes of the individual. The eyes are the window of the mind.

How do we look to others? Warm, friendly, caring or loving, or do we look cold, distant, aloof, or angry? Certainly it is not an exact science, but it is interesting.

Vs. 16-17, The bride speaks again “Thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.”

His appearance to her is attractive, fair and beautiful. His character is pleasant and delightful. She loves and appreciates every aspect of him. And so it must now be our perception of Christ.

We must perceive and appreciate every aspect of him, not only what he has done for us, but what he is yet to do for us.

Vs. 16, “Our bed is green.” This is not the nuptial or wedding bed, but a lounging couch, a resting place, the place of home.

Green – That is, it is fruitful and flourishing, prosperous. These are views of the condition of the kingdom age.

“In my Father’s house are many abiding places.”

Vs. 17, The beams of our house are cedar and our rafters of fir. Cedar is very durable, strong and fragrant. Cedars of Lebanon indicated power, strength, and might. This tree has few natural enemies of diseases, such as worms and insects. Its smell is actually a repellent. It is symbolic of incorruptibility. The true ecclesia and ultimately the body which is the house of God shall never corrupt or fall.

Chapter 2:1, The bride continues, but here she speaks of herself. “I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the Valley.”

This might first appear that the Bride is describing her upstandingness. But this is not the case. She is rather confessing her unworthiness and deficiencies. The Amplified translates this: “I am only a little rose or autumn crocus of the plain of Sharon or a humble lily of the Valleys.”

These two flowers have admirable beauty, which separates them from the weed or tare class. She sees from her own eyes that she is not a specifically cultivated flower of the garden, but only a wild rose of the plain, or a common flower like the lily of the meadow where many other flowers grow.

So those who will compose the Bride in the end, will have recognized their deficiencies. For special reasons, they have been called out of the masses of the world from which they were. We are no

different from our fellow men, except for the qualities or potential qualities of which God – through Christ – has and does see in us. True saints will confess that they are in themselves unworthy – even when they have done all that “they are unprofitable servants.” They are as the rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valleys.

The Groom replies in response in verse 2. “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” She is far from being indistinguishable among all the other wild flowers. She stands out in his view as a Lily among thorns.

The thorns and briars are used to describe the sins of the flesh in Heb. 2:8. But the sins are all covered by the groom. She is his female companion and friend and shares his thoughts, hopes, plans, ideas and purpose.

In the eyes of Christ, we are distinguishable. The Bride stands out among the other women. “He knows his sheep and he knows them by name.” John 10.

The Bride resumes speaking in vs. 3-6.

Song 2:3: “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Song 2:4: “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

Song 2:5: “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.”

Song 2:6: “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.”

The statements describe what the groom means to her. He is unlike other men’s sons, we know that for truly he was the Son of God. For those who have labored and transformed their character are likened unto a tree that bears fruit. We must bear fruit. She sees him as a luscious, bountiful fruit tree among those that are barren. She says, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

Because of him, we Brothers and Sisters, have spiritual rest, shade and refuge under the shadow of his wings and branches. He is our sustenance, because of the fruit that he bore.

Verse 5, The Bride longs for the Groom. She wishes for his presence and says, “I am sick through love.” The Bride in the absence of her companion experiences love sickness, a painful anxiety cured only by the union of the two.

Are we lovesick for Christ? The saints that will compose the true Bride will long for his coming. They will desire his presence and plea for his return as prophesied by the prophets. “How long O Lord.”

In the meantime – during his absence – the Bride treats the love sickness with flagons and apples, but a better translation is raisin cakes and fruit.

So the Bride sustains and occupies herself with the fruit of the luscious tree of verse 3 during the Groom’s absence. Hence, Christ says to his followers, “Occupy till I come.” They occupy and are preserved by partaking of the fruit of the Word. We are to eat it and digest it for here we find comfort and consolation, refreshment and rejuvenation.

Vs. 6, “His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me.”

Vs. 6 is not yet a reality. The Bride is so lovesick for him during his absence that she mentally rehearses the future.

This lesson may be one of the most important, but one of the least performed or executed. The Bride is envisioning the future and is envisioning being with Him.

This is one means by which we endure the present. We spend too much time wallowing in our present miseries and not enough time envisioning the ages to come. We need to rehearse the wonderful future. This may be why so many leave the Truth. They are mentally locked into the present problems and present turmoils, until we lose sight of our purpose and intent.

The Bride, in verse 6, is going mentally through the joys of her lover’s future presence.

He holds her head. She envisions it. She anticipates it. She can nearly feel as if he is there. This head – hold is a position of future comfort. With his right hand, he embraces her. She is secure. Peace at last, the trials and problems dissolve.

With her Lord’s support, there is security and she is in the loving arms of the groom.

Already we too can rest confidently in assurance that we can reach forth to the love of Christ. We can experience the comfort of his word and the confidence that comes from resting in him. Romans 8 – “Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Nothing, that is, except our own folly.

Verse 7: The Bride has been speaking concerning her Beloved: now she directs her attention to the virgins of saints in their individuality. She says, “I adjure you.” The message is that the Bride’s love and

adoration for Christ is not to be neglected, abused, damaged, or weakened at any cost. The saints will protect their love for and their strength in the Truth. We are to do everything we can to stay strong and the first is to attend to reading God's Word.

—*Bro. Gary Smith*

Meditations – Deity's Ways No. 41

THE road to the kingdom is narrow, it is rough, it is long, but its worst feature is the crowd of cruel, envious, scornful idlers who line it on either side. Through this wicked rabble, we have to run the gauntlet. What a mighty stream of faithful, exemplary pilgrims have passed along the road! What an interesting panorama they make! We see Noah jeered at; we see righteous Lot vexed; Jeremiah and Ezekiel taunted and cruelly mocked; Stephen hooted and stoned; Paul railed at. But they did not give in, they endured, and "through faith and patience," successfully reached the end. Let us emulate their braveness, and "walk" and "run with patience." How many have shown the "white feather" in this race for life, and have joined the ranks of the idle, wicked rabble. Wherein lies our power to endure the hardships of the road? Prayer and meditation—these are the appointed means. Let us heed these means, and then will be fulfilled in us what is said of Christ:—"Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation" (Ps. 91:14, 16).

Let us enter into the business and legitimate pleasures of life enthusiastically, with appreciation and thanksgiving. This is not wrong. We are told to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do. The beautiful sun shines, and the fruitful seasons take their turn, to fill our hearts with gladness. This is God's arrangement, and to rejoice over it must be pleasing to Him. We are too much disposed to look only at the dark side of life—to get into the habit of supposing that cheerfulness and enthusiasm over our affairs, and over the good things which God is unceasingly sprinkling in our path, are forbidden. No such thing. Let us weep when there is something to weep about, but at other times let us brighten up. Let us show by our looks that contentment and happiness have a place in our hearts. If we do this, we shall be far more useful in our little sphere. A persistent gloomy, mopish, melancholy face is not the result of Divine education—it is the outcome of a false theology—it is monkish, nunnish. Some of us want a waking up. We are not only cold, statue-like, but miserable looking in the bargain. Let us not excuse ourselves on the ground of it being our

nature, unless we are fighting against our nature. Let us not be afraid to play with children, to give a hearty warm shake of the hand, to be sociable and friendly, to be hot and all alive in the work (secular and religious) in which we may be engaged.

“Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” This exhortation is for men and women, married and unmarried, old and young. We live in times when this exhortation needs emphasising. The age is exceedingly immoral, and increasingly so. This is visible from its customs, talk, amusements, literature, advertisements — God’s requirements being our standpoint of observation. Let us sternly set our faces against the corrupting tendencies of the age. “Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” With these solemn words before us, shall we foster thoughts which insidiously and powerfully lead in these directions? For our own gratification, or that of others, shall we be the retailers of rude, impure, lust-exciting trash, with which the air is full? Nay, rather let us follow Paul’s counsel: “Whatsoever things are pure . . . think on these things.” Are we young and single? Then let us fall in with the apostolic injunctions to Timothy to be “pure,” to “flee youthful lusts,” to be an example in “purity.” Let us not deceive ourselves with the argument of the world that our single state is a justification for loose and questionable conduct. God is not mocked. Are we courting? Then let us walk circumspectly. Courtship is not marriage, and those who act as if it were, are arranging for exposure and shame in the day of judgment. Are we married? Then our state gives no licence for impure ways or converse. Whatever our condition may be the principles of our life must be purity, chastity, a perpetual cleansing of the mind from all filthiness with which our inherent sin defiles us.

“As Christ was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of the disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray.” What an interesting petition. How much more interesting is the answer. Do not pray, says Christ, “that ye may be seen of men.” This suggests that prayer has a special object. What is the object? Christ indicates it in his words: “Enter into thy closet,” “thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Thus the object of prayer is the securing the ear and favour of God. Christ did not intend to decry public prayer (for his example inculcates this), but to emphasise that the only legitimate aim in prayer is the supplication of the Deity. Let us bear this well in mind. Let us not prostitute the exercise by making it a means of parading our piety, of displaying our eloquence, of giving an air of respectability to our meetings, or of imparting first principle instruction to the alien. Christ proceeds to say, do not indulge in “vain repetitions.” That is to

say, we are not to repeat the same idea a dozen times. We should not think of addressing man in this way, we should know full well that it would incur displeasure. If ever there is a time for brief, unstrained, simple language, it is when speaking with God. Then Christ follows with the model prayer, and says, "After this manner pray ye." How much this prayer presents for intelligent consideration. How it evinces the earnest, holy, God-loving mind we should have. "Our Father"—how near to God this brings us. "Hallowed be thy name"—what desire for increase of holiness to affirm this. "Thy Kingdom come"—the promises the uppermost thought in mind, and a longing for their fulfilment. And so we might continue. What hypocrites men must be to pray this prayer, and continue in fellowship with the ways and aspirations of the world.

Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1893

A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel

SIXTH VISIT — IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

This morning a notice was affixed to the programme board of the Second Class Saloon, announcing that a lecture was to be delivered by Rabbi Max Arst, at 4.30 p.m. on the subject of "Zionism and its Aspirations". All who were interested in the subject, and possibly others—mere time killers—hurried over the "four o'clock tea" to be present; but, on arriving at the Saloon at the appointed time, we were disappointed to see the announcement overprinted, in red letters, "Cancelled;" and a few minutes later the notice was torn down. No reason was given officially; but, word goes round, that the "Sphinx" being a French boat on which the French Government has a prior call, anything in the nature of political propaganda could not for a moment be countenanced or allowed, therefore, the Captain had no option but to exercise his prerogative where he had reason to suspect politics. We remembered the hostility a few months since against Lord Balfour when he crossed the boundary between the territories of the English and French, and visited Damascus, where the Arabs are up and the Zionists down. In view of the fact that copies of our book Palestine and the World are being freely circulated on board, and much talked about, we are wondering whether our advertised lecture on "The Holy Land" will meet with the same fate as that of Rabbi Max Arst. Beyond question, it will if the clerical element is allowed a voice, although the Biblical basis of Palestine and the World has created a few friends, even among the clerical element; in fact, one "Rev." will persist in addressing me as "Brother Jannaway", and another always addresses me as "Doctor Jannaway"! It makes me squirm. Possibly both titles will be dropped after my lecture, if it comes off!

STRAITS OF MESSINA

On previous occasions we have gone through these both by day and night, and whether by the light of the sun, or the reflected light of the moon, the sight is fascinating in the extreme. As we sail south, on the left of the Straits is Reggio, the Rhegium of Acts 28: 13, the port of Italy, at which Paul and his party stayed one day during his enforced journey from Caesarea to Rome (see Acts 27; 28.).

Reggio is situated at the extreme south-west of Italy. Think of Italy as a foot coming to you from your right, and there, on the nail of the big toe, is Reggio.

On the western side of the Straits is Sicily, the largest island in the Mediterranean, only separated from Italy by two miles of water. By day or by night the outstanding and overshadowing feature of Sicily is Mount Etna, nearly 11,000 feet high—often, literally, “a fire by night and a cloud by day”. From the fact that Etna and Stromboli are seldom, if ever, in eruption at one and the same time, it is reasonably conjectured that there is some underground (or under sea) connection between these two volcanic mountains. We cannot leave Sicily without casting our eyes towards the site of Syracuse—its once chief city, where Paul stayed for three days. It was from here that the custodians of Paul obtained the all-important compass (Acts 28: 12).

Between Sicily and Egypt, for which we are now bound, the only land anywhere within sight (and that only faintly), is the Island of Crete. It is about 150 miles long and varying in width from six to thirty-five miles. The only interest it has for a Bible student, is, that our great forerunner Paul, like ourselves, “sailed under Crete” (Acts 27: 7). From what the Apostle wrote to Titus about the Cretians, we doubt much whether Paul would worry about not calling there any more than we do (Titus 1: 12).

We are now passing it on our left hand. Sir Henry Lunn's manager of the Cruise, has just interrupted our Diary-writing, by asking the exact title of our forthcoming address. We replied, “The Holy Land”. Evidently they consider it too vague, and want a syllabus: have said it must go at that. Am wondering! Professor Hoff's lecture last night, on “Egypt and its Monuments”, was well attended and contained some good matter; but it was badly delivered, the speaker (an elderly Egyptologist) being too self-conscious and hesitant, speaking to the floor and ceiling. Moreover, his facts were not marshalled chronologically, with the result that what he presented could only be appreciated by those who were au fait with the subject.

A notice had just been placed upon the announcement boards of the various Saloons, that, “A Lecture will be delivered in the First Saloon

at 9 o'clock, by F. G. Jannaway Esq., entitled 'The Holy Land' ", so it looks like becoming an accomplished fact. A "Rev." H.B. Dobbs, has approached sis. Jannaway with a view to borrowing Palestine and the World, which, he says, he had heard being discussed.

The Lecture on " The Holy Land " is now a thing of the past. It was a full meeting, attended by, the elite of the passengers; and others! There was a large clerical element present. The environment was not at all Christadelphian-like. Imagine a Christadelphian audience mostly in evening and clerical attire! The setting too was unique. The floor covered with rich velvet carpeting; the ceiling and walls white enamelling; the carving thereof richly picked out with gold; the highest part of the ceiling being a beautiful dome, adorned with hundreds of fairy lights. The lower ceilings, at the sides of the Saloon, were supported by stately pillars and mirrors everywhere. Then, too, the seating; a dainty antique arm chair, beautifully upholstered, for each of the audience, and tables, here and there, for those who desired to make notes. In response to a "Come on, Mr. Jannaway"! the speaker followed the chairman ("The Rev. Dr. W. C. Poole, D.D." and a host of other letters). There was nothing whatever in the form or nature of a service, preliminary or otherwise. The Chairman knew better. His introductory remarks about the lecturer's acquaintance with his subject were too adulatory to reproduce in a Christadelphian magazine, but I was glad to discover that anything in the shape of worship was entirely absent from the meeting. Evidently Dr. Poole knew us! (He is the colleague and successor of Dr. F. B. Meyer, at Christ Church, Westminster, and beyond doubt the greater portion of his congregation come within the range of the labours of the "Clapham Christadelphian Light Bearers' League").

As our text, we took the blue label used by nearly 150 of the passengers, and which was so conspicuous at the London Terminus on starting. The top line read "Pilgrimage to The Holy Land". We remarked, what an interesting book could be made up of individual answers to the question "Why am I making this pilgrimage to the Holy Land"? We then outlined the reason for our making the pilgrimage, and took our audience back fifty years to the 11th day of July, 1875, when, having embraced the "Hope of Israel" preached by Paul, and so clearly expounded in a work entitled Elpis Israel, we were baptized into that Hope. Having in view the fact our audience was largely made up of Americans, we devoted some time to the early days of the author of Elpis Israel—his migration to America in the "thirties" — his shipwreck—his vow to read and understand the Bible — the result: Elpis Israel and other Bible expositions. We then recapitulated Scripture teaching concerning God's promises to the Fathers and the glorious future in store for the Land we were visiting. Readers of the

Berean Christadelphian will not need us to specify the quotations we made from Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Luke, Acts, and Revelation. We emphasized the fact that, no man was a real follower of Jesus who was ignorant of, or indifferent to, the Apocalyptic message of the Lord Jesus (Yes; the uneasiness of the hearers was palpable enough to be felt—one or two “Revs.” apparently had a tickling in the throat and made for the exits). Having then shown how the Author of Elpis Israel concluded from Scripture teaching that there would be a pre-adventual colonization of the Holy Land by Jews, we traced the colonization from the days of Sir Moses Montefiore to the present day; and dilated upon the network of Jewish Colonies new in the Land under the British Protectorate. We dwelt upon the fact that seventy or eighty years ago, the Doctor had clearly foretold, from his knowledge of the Bible, that such Protectorate would obtain. In view of the advertisement given to Elpis Israel, we wish there had been a supply of the Maranatha (2/6) Edition at hand: they would surely have been on demand. Upon resuming our seat after about forty-five minutes' talk, Dr. Poole patted me on the back, exclaiming, “We thank you, Mr. Jannaway” Whether the applause of the audience, at the close, was sincere or not, we cannot say; but, we do know that, before we reached the exit of the Saloon, my companion's seat was vacant. I found her in our state-room (or cabin) red like crimson, and bathed in perspiration. Her first words to me were, “You've done for yourself to-night”!

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

The Master's Work

Jesus warned his followers to be ready for His return which could come at an hour when they (or we) wouldn't think it would. In the meantime, he said, be the wise and faithful servant who provided for his household and blessed is that person found so doing when he (Christ) returns.

What did he mean when he said 'provided for his household'? And who is the 'ruler in the household' he is talking about? A true ruler is, in fact, a servant. We are all servants to one another. How do we provide for one another? There are so many ways, particular to our own abilities.

There are speakers who inform, inspire and warn.

There are those who pray in our assemblies and in private, supplicating and praising, enfolding all those of God's people in those heart-felt prayers.

There are those who teach at a level the listener can understand and emotionally connect with.

There are the caregivers who listen, communicate, help, build, cook, organize, fix, financially support, emotionally support those with need.

There are those who quietly and, unknown to others, (as per Christ's instructions) give of themselves in service.

BLESSED is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing!!!

You know who you are and what you do. God knows. Take encouragement and carry on. *An anonymous sister*

Egypt—Past and Future

Isaiah 19 relates to the land of Egypt in two phases of its history—one past, the other future. The observance of this distinction will simplify the understanding of the chapter. The existence of the distinction will be self-evident to any intelligent reader on a careful perusal.

There is first “the burden of Egypt” (v. 1)—setting forth the downfall of the kingdom. This was written at a time when Egypt was great and prosperous. It sets forth “what the Lord of Hosts had purposed upon (or against) Egypt” (v. 12), which was to be brought about by sowing division among them (v. 2), and giving them over to the dominion of a cruel invader (v. 4), under whom Egypt should degenerate into a condition of political non-entity (v. 15): all of which came to pass in due course as common history attests.

The process of downfall began with the successful invasion of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 46:13-26), and was made finally effectual in the conflicts of the Antiochean and Seleucidian sections of the Greek monarchy, detailed in Dan. 11; and in the usurpations of Rome and the ravages of the Saracenic hordes centuries later. Egypt became “the basest among the kingdoms,” as predicted in Eze. 29:14-15, and has continued in that position to the present

But there is a future of blessedness in store for Egypt. This is spoken of in the second part of the chapter—

“The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord and perform it. They shall return even to the Lord and He shall be entreated of them and shall heal them.”

This subjection of Egypt to the God of Israel does not, however, take place till Israel itself is established as “a blessing in the midst of the land” (v. 24). Consequently, we need not look for it till the appearance of Christ, who is to “build again the tabernacle of David

that is fallen.” Egypt will be one of the “many nations which will be joined unto the Lord in that day” (Zech. 2:11).

Assyria, also, the historic oppressor of Israel, will be in fraternal confederacy with Egypt, interchanging visits through the Holy Land, not as in ancient times for purposes of mutual hostility and mutual invasion, but for purposes of concord and worship. Instead of being sworn antagonists to each other and the two great representative enemies of Israel, they will be enrolled with Israel in the enlightened brotherhood and service of Messiah's reign—

“In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt and the Egyptians into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, My people, and Assyria the work of My hands and Israel Mine inheritance.”
Bro. Robert Roberts—Christadelphian, 1878

Being Married by a Clergyman

IT is better in the matter of marriage to dispense with the services of clerical imposture in every shape and form. Not very long ago it would not have been possible to have done this in England. The law of the land required an ecclesiastical cognizance of the ceremony. If such were still the case it would be a duty to comply, on the principle of “submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake” (1 Pet. 2:13). But now there is liberty. The civil registrar may take the place of the priest, which is a mighty improvement.

A clear-seeing and courageous man would avail himself of the escape thus provided from clerical pretension. The law provides a choice of agents in the administration of matrimony, and it is a matter of taste as to which is selected. Taste in such matters is a question of enlightenment. The enlightened man will always withhold his countenance from the pretensions of darkness when it is in his power.

—Bro. Roberts, 1877

Before Abraham Was, I Am

THERE were two I's involved in the person of Christ. They are thus defined by himself—

“The FATHER (1) is in ME (2). The words I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works.”

They are thus defined by Paul (2 Cor. 5:19)—

“God was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.”

Now, as to the “man Christ Jesus” who was born of Mary, he says—

“Of mine own self I can do nothing” (John 5:60).

“I am not come of myself” (John 7:28).

“My Father is greater than I” (John 14:28).

“The Father hath put the times and seasons in His Own power” (Acts 1:7).

“No man knoweth the hour ... neither the Son, but the Father” (Mk.13:32).

The simple question which will end your difficulty is, Which of the two I's involved in these statements was before Abraham? To this there can be but one answer. The Father was before all. The manifestation of the Father revealed to the world as Jesus Christ dates from the days of Tiberius.

There was no Jesus Christ, the Son of God, till Jesus was born in Bethlehem. You are shocked at this. You need not be. It is simple truth. You never read of Jesus Christ till after that event.

It was the Eternal Father Who, BY Jesus, did miracles and signs and wonders in the midst of Israel (Acts 2:22), and by whom He spoke to them (Heb.1:2). But He was before all things. Hence, when Jesus said, 'Before Abraham was, I am,' he was the Father's voice—the medium of the Father's thoughts and words.

The unity subsisting between Jesus and the Father makes it difficult in brief definitions to separate between what is true respectively of the Father and the Son. When we remember that it was “through the Eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14) that Jesus did all he did, we are the better able to recognize what is true of him as the implement of the Power in whose shadow his person was hid (Isa, 49: 2), as distinct from his individuality and powerlessness as the Son of David.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1897*

Let His Saints Not Turn Again to Folly

QUESTION: Can brethren consistently take part in the game of ‘Old Soldier’ or other games, in which there are forfeits, and the redemption of forfeits, etc?

ANSWER: Paul prohibited “foolish talking” as not convenient for saints (Eph. 5:4). Foolish acting is surely worse.

None who recognize what is meant by “living soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope,” could be induced to take part in such child’s play.

Our time is short: the days are evil; it is the part of the saints to “pass the time of their sojourning here in fear,” (1Pet.1:17), remembering the words of Christ, that (Matt. 12:36)—

“Every idle word that men should speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment.”

—*Bro. Roberts, 1889*

Only a Thousand Years

If the kingdom were to last only a thousand years, it might be open to your remark about its comparing poorly with the “endless bliss” of sectarian theology. But the matter stands not so. Though there will be a thousand years’ reign, the kingdom will last for ever in the absolute sense—

“Of his kingdom, there shall be no end” (Luke 1:33).

The “thousand years” only measures the period by which the world will be raised from its present state of evil to a state in which there will be no death. This transition requires and is effected by the machinery of the thousand years.

Jesus, as the supreme pontiff, reigning in the joint capacity of king and priest on the throne of David, assisted by the hierarchy of his glorified people, who shall be his representatives and the channels of his power in all the earth, will effectually develop for universal man those conditions of temporal well-being and social harmony, that will admit the full play of the spiritual forces that will then be set in motion.

Enlightenment and obedience will quickly become the order of the day, and by the close of the thousand years, millions will have become the prepared and accepted candidates for eternal life.

This is the great work of the Kingdom of the thousand years; and it is to this that men and women are now invited by the Gospel—to become the reformers of the world, under Christ, in the age to come.

When the work is finished, and the earth populated with a glorified race, the Kingdom will enter upon a higher and eternal phase (1 Cor. 15:18)—

“Then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all under him, that God may be all in all.”

There then lies before the blessed of the Lord an “everlasting felicity,” quite equal to anything that was ever imagined by the most Berean 2013—108

fervid orthodox heaven-painter, even an “ocean illimitable” of life, love, power, faculty, knowledge, peace and joy; but subject to law and organization, doubtless, for God is a God of order in all He does.

The first fruits of the human race, who reign with Christ during the thousand years, will probably have a rank and a function above the millions that will be gathered in at the great harvest, at the close of the thousand years. It is not given to us to know the details beyond the first stage of the Kingdom. All we know is—and it is sufficient for all purposes in this dispensation to know this much—that beyond that, there is endless life and perfection:

God does all things well, and we may depend upon it that the state of things after the labor of the thousand years will be the very best that can be.
—*Bro. Roberts—1892*

The Mount of Transfiguration

Mark 9:1 “And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”

But though changed, ascended, quickened, or transformed, I have reason to believe, that the incorruptible and immortal saints do not appear to the eyes of ordinary men different from men in the flesh until after their work is done—until after Micah’s 40 years: that is, that they will appear to mere men as the two angels did to the Sodomites, in the days of Lot, or Jesus did to the disciples after his ascension and before his assumption. My reason is founded upon the testimony of God in Zech. 14:6, 7; Dan. 12:3; Mat. 13:43. The first text I translate from the Hebrew thus: “Yahweh my Elohim (or He who shall be my Mighty Ones—the Spirit in multitudinous manifestation) shall come in; all the saints with thee. And it shall be in that day there shall be no brightness, the Splendid Ones drawing in: and it shall be one day that shall become known by Yahweh, neither day nor night, but brightness shall be at eventide.” Zechariah was at Jerusalem when this oracle was delivered. He predicted therefore that Christ and the Saints shall “come in” thither, but not clothed in the brightness of the Mount of Transfiguration, though physically or corporeally, capable of such a display. They restrain their brilliancy until they shine as the sun in the Father’s Kingdom, which manifestly must be postponed until the war of the great day of God Almighty” conquers the peace of the world “at eventime”—the day of Christ begins with evening, like all the rest of the days of God. This exposition, I presume, will reconcile the supposed contradiction in Eureka in relation to the hour of Judgment: at all events, I hope so, that the end may be.

Bro. John Thomas—1865 The Christadelphian

Hints For Bible Markers

Parents to bring up their children in the admonition of the Truth. This appears to be simple and logical. But few realize children learn more by example than any other way. Therefore if we are to bring up our children in the enlightenment of the Truth we must walk in the embodiment of the Scriptures to bring forth the example necessary for their education. It is our duty to testify of the truth to our children and people in general that they may be influenced and take on the saving name. It would be a serious oversight to neglect the education of our children in such knowledge. Children are "by nature children of wrath" (Ephesians 2:3) even as we are. This can be observed as they grow. Therefore the command to bring up our children, "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

It is not just the parents who are to work with children. If it is good work for parents, could we not conclude that it would be a good work for us all? There certainly are enough samples in Scripture showing support of complementing parental teaching with public effort. (Deuteronomy 31:12) "Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law:" It is the duty of the brothers and sisters to help educate young.

As we see children are to obey their parents. This goes against the natural fleshly tendency to rebel against authority. No one, but especially children, likes to be told what to do. But it is well pleasing to God if obedience is accepted and acted upon. If obedient children are well pleasing to God it stands to reason that obnoxious children are odious to our Heavenly Father. Under Mosaic law they were to be put to death. Esther, when she was placed in one of the highest positions in the Persian kingdom still was obedient to Mordecai. (Esther 2:20) Paul declares being disobedient to parents is one of the signs of the apostasy. (2 Timothy 3:2; Romans 1:30)

(Deuteronomy 11:19) "And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deuteronomy) 32:46 "And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law."
—bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

IX. CONCERNING PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Parents to bring up their children in the enlightenment of the truth, and to have them in subjection with all gravity.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4)

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. (Colossians 3:21)

Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (1 Timothy 3:3 – 4)

Children to obey their parents in all things.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. (Ephesians 6:1)

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. (Colossians 3:20)