

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

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

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, "Nehemiah"

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.

Our Old Man Is Crucified With Him

"We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

The predominant characteristic of this occasion is joyfulness. We are told that the awakening of a son of Adam to the love of God and the decision to become united to Christ is a cause of great joy in heaven. One more is added to the family of the sons of God, all knit together in the beauty of holiness.

While an occasion of great joy, it is also an occasion of great seriousness and solemnity. We are here to witness both a death and a birth. The whole background of baptism is death. The act of baptism is

a recognition that the end of natural man is death — that all are subject to the power and lordship of the great enemy — that death casts an ever-present shadow over all life's hopes and joys — that the highest and noblest and sweetest of this life's activities all end in the darkness of the tomb.

But this is only part of the picture. This is the natural side. While baptism is a recognition of this state, and all the vanity and sorrow surrounding it, its principal purpose is to manifest the great deliverance from it that the love of God has, through Christ, provided. Baptism is a death whose purpose is to make way for a glorious new birth.

The chapter just read (Rom. 6) is a strong, intense exhortation to holiness, based on this death-and-new-birth symbolism.

Symbols are but shadows — it is the reality they symbolize that counts. The act of baptism itself is only a symbol — it is upon the fulfillment of the reality of the newness of life it portrays that life and death depend.

Paul shows that the reality symbolized is death to the old natural way of the flesh and rebirth to the new way of the Spirit of holiness. His conclusion in chapter 5 is this, that —

“As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 5:21).

But how does grace “reign through righteousness unto eternal life?” Paul has said that —

“Where sin abounded, grace — that is, the gentle unmerited goodness and kindness of the glorious love of God — did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20).

And also he has said that God had included all under sin, that He might have opportunity to extend His grace, mercy and kindness to all.

“What shall we say then? — (he asks) — Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?” (Rom. 6: 1).

Put in this blunt way, the thought seems self-evidently absurd, but actually it is the unconscious presumption that lies behind any carelessness or complacency about any form or evidence of sin.

Sin is a terrible, destroying disease — highly infectious — infinitely more deadly than any physical disease. When we are not straining every effort in the war against this evil thing, we are in practice saying, “Let us continue in sin so grace may abound.”

“God forbid! — Let it not be! — How shall we, that are DEAD TO SIN, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2).

What does he mean: “Dead to sin?” How does a man become dead to sin?

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (v. 3).

That is, do you not know that the act of baptism is an act of recognition of the necessity of a DEATH — a death in order to end a certain state of affairs — to create a complete severance and separation and termination (v. 4) —

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

We note the words, “by the glory of the Father” — “like as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, even so we also . . .”

Ours, too, must be “by the glory of the Father” — there is no other way — no other possible way of walking “in newness of life.” We cannot do it of our own weak, mortal, sinful selves. “Newness of life by the glory of the Father” is the great thought that gives baptism its beauty and significance. A new life, a completely new beginning. What a wonderful occasion it is!

A natural son of Adam, an earthy creature born under the shadow of death and bound by the dominion of sin, reaches a stage of development and enlightenment wherein he is drawn by the power of God to voluntarily choose that which is good, and holy, and divine, and reject all that is related to the kingdom of sin and the wilfulness of the flesh — not from fear of consequences — not even just from desire for reward — but rather from pure, transforming love for a glorious divine Benefactor and Father — from an overwhelming sense of His infinite goodness and the transcendent joy of His friendship and love —

“Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”

“He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love.”

“He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

“There is no fear in love: perfect love casteth out fear.”

When we look at the beautiful picture John draws of divine love — of its holiness, and purity, and fearlessness, and perfection — we are apt, like Peter, to draw back into the thought —

“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”

But the beloved apostle allays our fears, and gently draws us onward, teaching us that this beautiful picture is a matter of development and growth, though at first only dimly perceived —

“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven”;

“I write unto you, young men, because ye are strong”;

“I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him from the beginning” (1 Jn. 2:12-13).

And he shows us the way —

“Whoso KEEPETH HIS WORD, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him” (1 Jn. 2:5)

Paul tells us (Rom. 10:17) —

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD.”

That is the beginning. When hearing has brought faith, and faith — belief — has moved to thankful and humble obedience in the waters of baptism, then the joyful course of life and love reaches higher and higher toward the perfection of the divine ideal. This is expressed in many ways. Paul speaks of it as —

“Coming in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13).

He speaks of it as being —

“Rooted and built up in him ... unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:7, 2).

He speaks of it perhaps most beautifully and deeply in this way —

“We all, with open face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18).

This is the glorious and exciting spiritual experience that leads upwards in ever-increasing joyfulness from the waters of baptism to the eternal radiance of the day of the Lord.

Baptism, while only the beginning, is the great turning-point in life. The act of baptism is unquestionably the greatest and most important single act and moment of one's entire lifetime.

“IF we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

It is clear that Paul is speaking, not just of the literal act of baptism which all professed believers pass through, but rather he is thinking of the full significance of being “planted in the likeness of his death,” for the parallel thought — “likeness of his resurrection” — does not just mean coming out of the grave, but the resurrection of life in its fullest and most glorious sense.

Resurrection as such — just the coming out of the grave does not, we know, depend on baptism, but on responsible knowledge of God. Therefore the “likeness of Christ's resurrection” to which Paul refers cannot just mean emergence from the grave, for he makes it contingent upon a being “planted together in death.”

And likewise this “planting together” cannot just be the external form of baptism for that is no assurance of sharing Christ's glorious resurrection — it must be the reality to which the act of baptism testifies and bears witness — the death of the “old man” and the “walking in newness of life.” He continues —

“Knowing this, that our old man is (in baptism) crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed” (Rom. 6:6).

“Our old man is crucified with him.” We are all double personalities — the old man of the flesh and the new man of the Spirit. Paul tells the Ephesians (4:22) that the old man is “corrupt — decaying — going to ruin — through deceitful lusts.”

He calls them deceitful because they never give the pleasure and happiness they seem to promise — because they appear good and desirable to the blindness of the natural mind but actually only end in sorrow and regret and emptiness.

The “old man” is the natural man — pleasing ourselves — doing what we think we want to do — following the ordinary way of the world — everything that is contrary to the enlightened mind of the Spirit. We can most clearly see the distinction in contemplating the characteristics of the new man — the fruits of the Spirit, as Paul gives them in GaL 5:22 —

Love — that is, thinking, desiring and doing good to all, regardless of what they do to us.

Joy — a consistent spiritual cheerfulness flowing from close and satisfying fellowship with God.

Peace — calm, inward tranquility — “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee.” — the mind resting at all times upon God.

Longsuffering — inexhaustible patience and kindness toward all human weakness and waywardness, recognizing the frailty and sadness of natural man.

Gentleness — no roughness, or hardness, or bitterness, or pride, or self-assertion — all of which are manifestations of ungodly ignorance.

Now Paul says that in baptism the old man is crucified — everything in the flesh contrary to these Spirit-fruits is crucified in the act of baptism.

Crucifixion has two aspects: a putting to death, and a public holding up to condemnation and repudiation.

The natural Serpent nature must be put to death, and in its putting to death it must be publicly held up to condemnation on the Rod of the Spirit-Word.

Baptism is a public repudiation of all these things as a way of life — a renouncing of allegiance to the old Master, Sin, whom we all serve from birth, and a pledging of allegiance to a new Master and a new way of life. It is a solemn covenant —

“All that the Lord hath said will we do.”

Paul says (Rom. 6:18) that in baptism we are “made free from sin.” What does it mean to be “made free from sin”? What does it mean in the actual realities of life?

It involves much. In the ultimate, if faithfully pursued until the end, it involves complete freedom from the sin-principle and its inseparable companion, death. This is the gracious, unreserved title of freedom and release that we are freely given in baptism — freedom from sin, from sorrow, from pain, disease and death — freedom from all the burdensome limitations of human frailty and corruption.

But primarily, at the present time, it means a great lifting of the burden of the consciousness of sin — of natural ugliness and deformity of character.

Paul exclaims, as he describes the awakening consciousness of the vicious evil that runs through every fiber of human nature —

“O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from, this body of death?” (Rom. 7:24).

Baptism is the loving and merciful provision for cleansing from this condition —

“Ye are washed,”

“Ye are sanctified” (made holy),

“Ye are justified (made righteous and upright) — in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and BY THE SPIRIT OF OUR GOD” (1 Cor. 6:11).

The baptized believer is one with Christ — a part of Christ — an accepted part of the triumphant perfection of holiness which in Christ trod sin under foot and held it powerless.

The baptized believer is a Brother in Christ — he has a guaranteed part in the final and eternal victory of sin and death — as long as he truly abides in Christ. Jesus said to his disciples, on the night before his death —

“Abide in me, and I in you. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.”

— the glorious Spirit-fruits of holiness of character —

“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”

“This is my COMMANDMENT — that ye LOVE ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS I HAVE LOVED YOU” (Jn. 15:11).

It is an essential requirement of discipleship that we, as brethren, love one another in the same way he loved us. Of that love which he has given us as a pattern, he says, as he continues —

“Greater love hath no man than this — that a man lay down his life for his friends” (v. 13).

This is the love and fellowship to which baptism opens the door. And the new brother, as he rises from the cleansing waters, says with Paul (Gal. 2:20) —

“I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

—*Bro. G.V.Growcott*

Spreading the Truth

A few months back Bro Mike – me (and Kitty) – Bible study – Marble Falls – Assisted Living, Spanish Trails – manager Charla called – purely based on the Bible. A gentleman named Charley age 93, sharp

as a tack, brought his Bible to every session - in process of connecting Old and New Testaments – family took him away – no one else interested – no opportunity to finish with Charley – IF we could have – this is how our conversation would have went.

While talking to Charley about the Bible – during the conversation I explained we read Old Testament once and New Testament twice in a year. Charley only read New Testament, Old Testament too hard to read, long names, genealogies, besides the Old Testament is passed away, the New Testament and maybe Psalms is my standard.

I said: Would you read half a book?"

Charley: Of course not.

I said: Why not?

Charley: Not understand the whole story, plot and subplots.

I said: Then how do you expect to understand God's word, if only half is read?

Charley: My pastor says Old Testament not necessary for salvation.

I said: Let me give you some statistics:

Old Testament has 39 books – New Testament has only 27

Old Testament has 22,485 verses – New Testament has only 7,957

Old Testament has 647,000 words – New Testament has only 198,000

Three times as many verses and more than three times as many words! So if you only read the New Testament you only have one-third of God's plan of salvation.

Charley: But the Old Testament is a dead letter, no longer valuable for our use.

I said: Turn to II Timothy 4:15-16 and tell me what it says.

Charley: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make the wise unto salvation – through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the Man of God may be perfect – thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

I said: This can only apply to the Old Testament, the New Testament was not in existence at the time Apostle Paul made this statement.

Charley: Really, I didn't think about that!

I said: Do you realize the importance of this verse – that the Scriptures of the Old Testament are able to make us wise unto salvation! If this be true, how can the Old Testament be unimportant?

Charley: (In his stubbornness) That is an isolated statement, it doesn't mean anything.

I said: Read Acts 26, verse 22 for me

Charley: “Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day witnessing to both small and great, saying, none other things that those which the prophets and Moses did say should come.”

I said: We know Paul was preaching the Christian faith so its obvious from this verse that Moses and the prophets must contain the subject – matter of that faith!

Charley: Well, maybe, but ..

I said: Look, Paul preached to some brothers at Berea and in Acts 17 we are told, “They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.” If the Bereans were satisfied with searching the Old Testament (which were the only Scriptures in existence at the time of their search) – that what Paul said was true. Does it not follow that the Old Testament was the basis of the things spoken by Paul?

Charley: That sounds logical, but I never really thought about it.

I said: How about this – to demonstrate that Paul's faith as a Christian was embedded in the Old Testament, he told the Roman governor Felix in Acts 24:14 – “After the way they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, **BELEIVING ALL THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN IN THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.**”

Charley: I didn't know the Apostle Paul referred to the Old Testament.

I said: Peter also taught from it, I'll show you. Turn to the 17th chapter of Acts verses 2 and 3 and tell me what it says.

Charley: “And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening

and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen from the dead.”

I said: My friend, reason from the Scriptures means out of the Old Testament, for there were no other scriptures for him to reason from. Okay?

I continued: When Paul called together the Jews at Rome, it is testified that “he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus BOTH OUT OF THE LAW OF MOSES and OUT OF THE PROPHETS, from morning till evening.”

If Apostle Paul taught from the Old Testament, how can we value it less, saying its is a dead letter? That it is passé?

Remember, Charley, Paul is writing over 400 years after the last chapter of the Old Testament was written – Christ had already come and gone, yet Paul did not consider it a dead letter.

Charley: Okay, but what’s that got to do with my salvation? My pastor says all I have to do is accept Christ as my personal Savior and believe the gospel and I will be saved.

I said: Okay, then let’s talk about salvation!!

Let me read to you the 2nd chapter of Ephesians verses 11 and 12. “Wherefore remember that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh – that at that time ye were without Christ (how?) being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, (and as a result) had no hope and without God in the world.”

I don’t know about you, Charley, but sounds to me like people in this condition are a little short of salvation. Charley, do you know anything about the commonwealth of Israel?

Charley: Well, ah, no.

I said: It’s having a knowledge of the history of the children of Israel and God’s dealings with them. Do you know where the majority of this knowledge can be obtained from?

Charley: No!

I said: Guess what it is in – the Old Testament! Do you know what the covenants of promise are?

Charley: Noooo!

I said: They’re promises made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Christ and the heirs of salvation who understand them. My friend, do

you know where these promises that the Apostle Peter called “exceeding great and precious” are found?

Charley: I bet you are going to say – the Old Testament?

I said: Now you’re getting the picture, you see there are some common threads and links between the Old and New Testaments. We can’t possibly understand God’s plan of salvation, if some of that plan is missing.

Charley: But I though we had to do was read the gospel – you know, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?

I said: My friend the gospel was preached long before these books were written!

Charley: What do you mean by that?

I said: Let me reads to you the third chapter of Galatians verse 8 – “And the scripture (referring to Old Testament scripture) foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the GOSPEL unto Abraham saying in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

You see, Charley, this is one of those PROMISES that Paul says we are not to be strangers of! And this is just as much gospel as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John!

But if we don’t understand this – we can see what Paul meant when he said, “If our gospel be hid – it is hid to them that are LOST.”

Charley: Hey!!! This Old Testament stuff is beginning to make sense!!

I said: Sure it makes sense – Why do you think the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 11 (the faith chapter) listed all those Old Testament characters – you know – Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, David, Samuel and all the prophets AND then said “these all died in faith, not having received the promises.” You know what promises Paul is referring to?

Charley: Yes – the ones I need to get familiar with!

I said: Right!! You are beginning to connect the dots.

Now in chapter 7 of Acts, Stephen begins with Abraham and these promises and he goes all through Israel’s history and God’s dealing with them – tight on down to his present time in his defense of the truth. We can see from his defense before the council that he relied

heavily on the Old Testament and that he had intimate knowledge of the commonwealth of Israel and of the promises. Now think about it! Why would Stephen spend so much time before a trial that could possibly end in his death on this history of these events, if they were of no value? I will tell you why --- Because the things he spoke of concerned his SALVATION!!

Charley: I see, but did any other apostles refer to the Old Testament besides Paul?

I said: Sure, Peter, John, James all used the Old Testament to teach from. There is also the incident with Phillip and the Ethiopian eunuch. The Ethiopian was reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah where it prophesies of Christ's suffering and crucifixion. He had a hard time

understanding to whom Isaiah was referring, so we are told that "Phillip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Remember, that same scripture Isaiah 53. I ask you, Charley, are you convinced yet of the necessity of reading the Old Testament?

Charley: Maybe, but did Christ use the Old Testament?

I said: Certainly, I said, during His ministry He referred specifically to:

Psalms – 5 times

Isaiah – 21 times

Hosea – once

Jeremiah – 3 times

Daniel – 2 times

And Jonah – 9 times

besides making countless references to the Old Testament scriptures in general. It was Christ Himself who declared in the book of John that "the (Old Testament) scriptures cannot be broken."

Charley: I did not realize there was so much in the Scriptures.

I said: There is IF you read all of it!! You see, my friend, it was the Law that abolished in the Old Testament – not the rest of it!!

Like we read in the third chapter of Galatians – The Law – which came along 430 years after the promises were made 0 had no impact upon them – good or bad. It (the Law) was only a school master to bring the children of Israel to Christ's time. When He came on the

scene, He fulfilled the Law and took it (only) out of the way at His death, not the promises – they are still in force. In fact Hebrews tells that Christ died to “confirm the promises”.

You see, my friend, reading only the New Testament gives us only part of the picture. If we want to understand the plots, sub-plots, themes, characters, lessons, examples, metaphors, allegories, types, anti-types, shadows and symbols and historical significance of the children of Israel – we must have a knowledge of both the Old and New Testaments. No one is able to understand the symbolical who is not acquainted with the literal! Or vice versa!

We know in the New Testament who Christ is – but would we know the Messiah to be a “stone”, “rock”, “branch” or “shepherd”? If we did not read the Old Testament then how would we understand in Revelation that a beast represents an empire, horns for kings, waters for people, rivers for nations, a woman for a governing city?

Charley, there are several common threads intertwined and interlocked throughout the Old and New Testaments. One cannot stand alone without the other. One is the foreshadowing and one is the substance.

Listen, my friend, if you are still having doubts as to the value of the inspiration of the Old Testament, I believe that the witness of Jesus Christ himself should be conclusive. You will recall that in the days of Jesus the Old Testament had been completed for several centuries and was known as “The Scriptures” or “The Law and the Prophets”. Jesus invariably weighed these books as a whole, not always depending on a particular writer or weighing the authority of one against the other. Frequently he would omit all reference to the writer; to Him it was sufficient that he quoted from a part of God’s inspired word.

“Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?” He said in Matthew – OR “It is written” OR “It is said” was how He introduced quotations from the Scriptures.

The importance of this point is this – That Jesus referred to the **WHOLE** body of the writings as carrying equal authority – regardless of the spokesman through which they came. Today Bible critics seek to evaluate each book separately and for them the authorship is a vital factor. But it is clear that Jesus took the **WHOLE** cannon of Scripture as authoritative and not depending upon the human agency through which it came. He refers to the whole range of Old Testament writings – Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah AND Elisha were for Him not only historical figures – but men who were used by God to reveal himself.

His reference to these Scriptures is used as a final argument that they constitute an overriding authority. “Have ye never read” was to refer His hearers to criteria that was conclusive! Those who disregarded the authority of the Old Testament – He would not even attempt to convince – for He said – “If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they be persuaded if one rise from the dead.”

So, my friend, we can conclude that Jesus not only accepted but endorsed the cannon of the Old Testament which was received by the children of Israel. For rational Christians – this should place above question the authenticity and authority of the Old Testament. This is a reasonable attitude enjoined by Christ himself when He said, “The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master; and the servant as his Lord.” So if we be as our Lord and Master, we will give the Old Testament the same importance and authority as He did!!!

Charley: I don’t understand why my pastor does not impress the Old Testament more?

I said: I don’t know, but it is obvious that people fall into a great mistake who think the Old Testament is something distinct from the New Testament. You will find that Christianity is rooted in the Old Testament. The Old Testament lays the foundation of all that is involved in the New. The New Testament is simply an appendage or extension of the Old. Valuable beyond all price and indispensable in the most absolute sense, but in itself, apart from the Old Testament – The New Testament is far from being sufficient to give us that perfection of Christian knowledge which makes a person “wise unto salvation.” The two combined form the complete revelation of God to man – containing His spiritual renovation in the present and His constitutional perfection in the future. If we attempt to divide them or look at them as two distinct entities – then they become ineffective to “thoroughly furnish the man of God unto all good works.”

Charley, I would like to conclude our conversation by saying that the Scriptures – both Old and New Testaments – being wholly inspired by God, come before us as a revelation from deity. If He had not given us such a revelation, we would know nothing of His great power and what He requires of us.

By reading the whole Bible daily, and meditating upon what we read, our minds are kept occupied on God’s plan of salvation. Then as our knowledge and understanding increase, we find ourselves knowing more and more about God’s work in the earth. We come to understand and observe the present and joyfully anticipate the future. The things

of the kingdom and the name of Jesus Christ are kept constantly before the daily reader of both the Old and New Testaments.

You see, we soon discover that the purpose of God began to unfold with the covenant made in Eden, where a seed of the woman is promised that He ultimately would overcome the power of sin and finally conquer death. This great purpose again comes to light in the promises made to Abraham – who is informed that his seed should overcome the world and bring blessings to all families of the earth.

Again, the golden thread of the gospel appears as God informs Moses of a Prophet and Deliverer who would appear in Israel. At Sinai the people had just been formed into a nation and given a code of laws that have never been equaled. Incorporated in this Law was an elaborate system of worship, which included the tabernacle, priesthood, sacrifices and offerings.

All these typified and foreshadowed that which was to be revealed in substance. The New Testament shows, beyond all doubt, that substance was CHRIST! It shows that His life was a wonderful fulfillment of the types of the Law in every detail. And these types reveal doctrinal truth and lessons which form the foundation of TRUE RELIGION.

As we look back upon the Mosaic constitution, we realize that these things are not apparent on the surface – they have to be searched for like hidden treasure. That is the purpose of reading both the Old and New Testaments in our daily readings – to search for the hidden treasures of the mind of God. When we do this, we come to understand God’s plan of redemption. The wisdom that comes from reading ALL of God’s word takes away the veil of darkness and misunderstanding that we get by reading only half of His word. The wisdom of God is daily upon our minds from both the Old and New Testaments and we are now able to look beneath the surface and see the “unsearchable riches of Christ.” A faithful student of God’s word – who reads it daily, systematically and completely – will know more about the Bible – God’s purpose with the earth and man upon it – than anyone could possibly know by reading the New Testament only.

Charley: Whoa! Stop! I have enjoyed our conversation, It’s been very informative, but I have got to be going, it is almost lunch time here at Spanish Trails Assisted Living.

I said: Okay, but before you go, there are two verses I want to leave with you:

One is by the Psalmist, David – chapter 19 – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” The other one is found in Romans verse 4 – “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”

Have a nice day, my friend.

—*Bro. Jerry Connolly*

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 45

ANY suggestion which would lessen the binding character of Christ’s law in Matt. 18. should be peremptorily dismissed. Not a syllable is to be found anywhere which would justify us in rescinding or modifying it in the least. Christ spoke for generations unborn—for believers in the whole time of his absence. The importance and permanency of Christ’s utterances is shown in his promise to his apostles, “He (the Spirit) shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (Jno. 14:26), and in his farewell command, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19, 20). As to the knowledge of Paul (the apostle born out of due time), he was not behind the other apostles: “I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5). Truths set forth by Christ, which were revived in the minds of the apostles, Paul received by direct revelation, as he indicates in the matter of the Memorial Feast (1 Cor. 11:23–25). We may positively say that the whole of the apostles knew and enforced Christ’s holy law, and that they intended any allusion made by them to the subject of withdrawal to be understood as being governed by the three-fold arrangement in that law. Incidental statements confirm this view. For instance, Paul enjoins Timothy to receive no accusation against an elder, except before two or three witnesses (1 Tim. 5:19). Also the apostle adapts himself (though gifted with authority to judge and punish) to the provisions of Christ’s law. Referring to persistent sinners, he says, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established” (2 Cor. 13:1).

Christ’s words, “Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican,” must be blended with the words of Paul, “Yet count him not as any enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” There is exquisite harmony in these two utterances. Our concern and solicitude for an obstinate offender is not to end by our withdrawing from him. An obstinate offender must be noted and stood aside from, for reasons already seen; but at the same time we are, as occasion offers, to modestly step forward, and in the Spirit of Matt. 5:44 try to reclaim.

Let us not forget that God works by human agency; as He employs us to lead men into the truth, so He employs us to restore the feet that wander from its path. Too often is an expelled member looked upon as a legitimate object for opprobrious censure. A brother's unworthiness is never a sufficient or legitimate reason for us to make his doings a topic of idle talk and discussion. If we have to talk about him, let us see that our motive for so doing is commendable. Paul sometimes alluded by name to evil-doers, but with a defensible object, expressed in such terms as "Be thou ware also," "Their word will eat as doth a canker."

Coming now to the apostolic amplification of the subject. Paul says, "We command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thes. 3:6). What is meant by walking disorderly and going contrary to Paul's tradition? If we find the answer to this question, we have something tangible to guide us as to what extent to apply Christ's solemn law. As a help in this enquiry, let us take another of the apostle's statements: "I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (1 Cor. 5:11). Now here are sins which Paul elsewhere says will exclude from the kingdom of God, leading to the conclusion before arrived at, that withdrawal is confined to sins, which, if unconfessed and unforsaken, are fatal. To proceed a step farther. Paul, in the course of his writings, enlarges the list (which list we hope to consider on a future occasion) of these fatal sins, and refers to the additional ones in the same serious way, showing that our attitude towards them is to be the same, viz., that we are not to wink at them.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway*— 1895

A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel Sixth Visit to the Holy Land

IN AND AROUND JERUSALEM.

"The Grand New Hotel", or "The New Grand Hotel", sounds very pretentious, and doubtless its title would warrant any travellers visiting Jerusalem, for the first time, selecting it as their headquarters; but, it is no better, as regards fare, than it was when we first visited it in 1901 for a prolonged stay. Give me such a "home from home" as Olivet House. Among the many improvements not yet apparent in Jerusalem is that of lighting. The "streets" after sunset are not much better than they were a

quarter of a century ago. The first night of our coming here on this visit, before retiring to rest, I wandered outside the Hotel hopeful of finding something drinkable. All was practically dark—merely a little oil lamp here and there—even the headquarters of the Gendarmerie, near the Jaffa Gate, can only boast of what we should be ashamed to illuminate a scullery or outhouse with; and, which in the distance, gave no more light than that emitted by a glow-worm. True there is electricity in the hotel, but it is home-made, and subject to fits.

A TRIP TO BETHLEHEM.

The trip to Bethlehem is ever welcome, no matter how many times it has been made; the writer has visited the vicinity upon several occasions. This time we did it by motor, which, we confess is the least enjoyable way of doing it; that is, for one who wants to visit the place with a Biblical mind. By preference, time and other circumstances permitting, we would make the journey on foot, or with the help of an ass; for, in a motor travelling fifteen to thirty miles an hour, it requires a very big stretch of the imagination to picture the scene and recall the divine story unfolded in Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 1, and 2. The undue rush is about as incongruous as motoring the mortal remains of a dear one to the cemetery at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and having them cremated!

En route to Bethlehem, the first halt we made was at a spot, which from time immemorial, has been pointed out as the place where the Magi—the wise men of the east—beheld the Star which directed them to where they would find the birthplace of him who would be the King of the Jews (Matthew 2: 1-2). This spot, which is on the side of the highway, is not possible of being lost sight of, as the landmark is practically unmovable, being a well, scores of feet in depth.

According to Herodotus, these Magi or wise men, hailed from Media, and at the time of the birth of Jesus, had developed into a class of philosophers, especially concerned with astronomy and astrology; but, for us to attempt to know more than what is revealed by Matthew, is to go beyond what is written, which we shall not do if we are wise.

After taking the proverbial snapshot, we again mounted our conveyance until we reached the burying place of Rachel, Jacob's wife. The genuineness of the site has never been called in question by either Jew, Christian or Mahomedan. Nearly 3,000 years ago, the prophet Samuel knew of it, and referred to it as, "Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin" (1 Samuel 10: 2). There can be no doubt that what Samuel wrote about had reference to the site of the "pillar" which Jacob set up "upon her grave". What a pathetic incident—it was worth

pondering. The record (Genesis 35: 16-20), reads, "There was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day". Upon this occasion we found the "Tomb" closed, and entrance thereto is only to be obtained by special permit, and, even that is only accorded to Moslems who since the British Mandate have come into sole possession—at least, so we were informed. Thus are these "Holy Places", referred to in the "Balfour Letter" of November 2, 1917, being carved up between the Sects.

Another short ride and we find ourselves in Bethlehem. Perhaps the reader will exclaim, How can that be, seeing you have just told us that Bethlehem and Ephrath are one and the same place, and that Rachel was buried there? How often have we not been pulled up on this detail—this apparent discrepancy, to which, however, we do not plead guilty. We did not say Rachel was buried at Ephrath which is Bethlehem, but "in the way to Ephrath which is Bethlehem". Rachel's Tomb is a mile or more nearer Jerusalem.

Of course, we had to do the whole of the stereotyped programme of the traditional sites in Bethlehem, and listen to all the countless lies told in the name of the Lord. When we say we "had to", we mean that in order not to miss anything of interest to us as a follower of him who was born here, we had to leave ourselves in the hands of the official in possession. He even showed us the actual manger in which he said "God the Son was born and laid in swaddling clothes"!

We were also shown the cave in which Jerome translated the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures into Latin. This translation of Jerome, is known as the Latin Vulgate; the chief difference between such and our English Bible, being mainly as to the order in which the books appear, the division of the chapters, and the inclusion of the Apocrypha.

As to this being Bethlehem, there can be no question; all available evidence places the identity beyond reasonable doubt. It is one of the oldest cities in the Holy Land, and ranks second only to Jerusalem in respect of connection with events of historic interest recorded in the Bible. For instance, take the Book of Ruth, and read the fascinating story of Naomi, Orpah and Ruth, and their kinsman Boaz: well, here we are within a stone's sling of the place where all those events of which they were the prime movers happened. Even to-day, there is the "Field Berean 2013—164

of Boaz” (read Ruth 1-3.); there is the “Shepherds' Field” (read Matthew 1: 18 to 2: 18, and Luke 2: 4-15). Yes, these Holy Fields, are far more attractive to us than the huge “Church of the Nativity”, with all its priest-blessed naves, arches, grottos and chapels. The people of Bethlehem are entirely what the world term Christian, and as far as we know, no Moslem is allowed to live in the place. The Women of Bethlehem wear dresses of black or dark blue cotton, ornamented with embroidery and raised at the waist by a partly-coloured sash. “It seemed to me that these Bethlehem women possessed a certain distinctive dignity, as if they were impelled to be worthy of their good fortune in living in the village where the fairest of all mothers gave birth to the greatest of all sons”. Imagine a Jew writing these last few lines; but such is so, they were penned by a Zionist Editor.

To reach the “Grotto” in the “Church of the Nativity”, one has to descend a circular staircase—no easy matter. The “Grotto” is forty feet long, twelve feet wide, and about ten feet high. The place would be absolutely dark, were it not for the thirty-two lamps which hang from the ceiling. The floor and walls are marble; and apparently the ceiling is also marble. In the floor at the east end, under an altar in a recess, or apse, as it is called, is a silver star, with the inscription in Latin, “Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est” (Here of the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ was born). Hanging over this spot are fifteen lamps, of which the Greeks claim six, the Armenians five and the Latins four.

Opposite this spot are three steps which lead to what is called the “Chapel of the Manger”, in which we were assured Christ was born; although strange to say, when we were in Rome, we were shown a similar marble manger which the priests declared to be the original manger. We believe it was at the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. What the explanation is, we leave the reader to guess. Doubtless a Jesuit would explain matters (to his own satisfaction, and perhaps to that of his dupes). Mark Twain was shewn what purported to be the head of John the Baptist, at two churches far apart in Italy, and when Mark Twain protested at the second church that he had seen the head of John the Baptist at so-and-so church his “divine” guide at once exclaimed, “Ah, but the head at the other church was his head when he was a boy”! This manger at Bethlehem contains a wax figure of an infant, and is lit up with—I forget how many lamps. One hardly dares to ask these Latin Transubstantiationists what they think this doll actually is.

The silver star referred to, and which is a cause of intense jealousy among the Greeks, Armenians and Latins has been stolen more than once. In fact there seems good reason for thinking that this silver star

was the origin of the Crimean War. The present star was given by Austria in 1852, and was sent to Bethlehem with great pomp. Upon that occasion the keys of the great dome of the Church as well as the keys of the Sacred Manger were handed over to the Latins. The latter claimed the right to adorn the Star with the arms of France, which incensed the Russians, who were and always had been deeply concerned about the Holy Places, and took the earliest opportunity of venting their spleen on the Sultan for favouring France. This is a different version of the cause of the Crimean War, which is “historically” reported to have been Russia’s design to obtain Constantinople. We are inclined to see the hands of the Greek and Latin monks in the conflict.

Some twenty years since, there was a quarrel as to which sect should replace some missing nails, and which were needed to keep the altar in its place. Each church claimed the honour. The difficulty was solved by the Turkish authorities, who called in an itinerant blacksmith—a Moslem—to do the job as a neutral! Soldiers are always on guard to keep the peace, as at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Turning from the religious to the profane, we made our way to the Bethlehem “bazaars”, to enable sis. Jannaway to purchase once again, another supply of little mementoes made of mother-of pearl, for which Bethlehem has a world-wide reputation. In my patience, I try to possess my soul, until I am called to the rescue—and then, what a scene! Pearl necklaces, several on each arm, one round her neck, both hands full of brooches, to say nothing of two or three little heaps of olive-wood treasures!

And in her eyes, wireless telegraphy, which one cannot fail to interpret as, “Now I have done my part in selecting, please do yours in bargaining”. Well, I did my best, but not until after other additions had been made. With mixed feelings, we mounted our conveyance, and rode back to Jerusalem, over the fields in which the shepherds “watched their flocks by night”.

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

Thoughts Gleaned By The Way

“...Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

Those who scoff at the idea that there are definite signs that Christ’s coming is near are helping to create those signs foretold in the Scriptures.

Those that do those things which stir up strife and war; (Rev. 11:18); they embark upon great programs of military preparation (Joel 3:9). They expend their time, their talents and energy in expanding scientific knowledge (Dan.12:4); and walking after their own lusts,” they have created a state of godlessness only comparable to the days of Noah, all the while “Willingly ignorant” of impending judgement which hangs like a storm cloud over their heads (Matt. 24:37-39).

In like manner the so-called Christian world is fulfilling the Word of God, having departed from the one true faith and are attempting to convert the world to a man-made system of religion by which they hope to avert the very things which the Scriptures have foretold will come; that is the total destruction of all human systems, including all false religious systems (2Thess. 2:12; Isaiah 25:7).

JESUS CHRIST DID NOT PICTURE A BELIEVING WORLD AT HIS COMING, but a world in rebellion against him. And we see today even the Christian elements giving only lip-service to Him while denying His teachings and making little or no pretence of obeying His commands. We see church system inseparably connected with the world and its ways. An integral part of that godless order of things which must be removed to give place to that new and righteous order in which no place will be found for them.

And what of the household of Faith? Is it not also true that those who have been given the blessed privilege of being called out of darkness may also contribute to the signs of the times? Christ does not picture a household at his coming in a state of high spiritual vigor, but a household in a state of weakness, laxity and self-satisfaction; saying, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing. And knowest not that thou art wretched, and poor and blind and naked.”

Spiritually, this is its condition willingly deceived; and self, deluded..

The oft-repeated warnings of the Savior envisions a household, the majority of which will have grown worldly, deeply concerned with temporal things, but unconcerned about preserving the unity of the faith or keeping the commandments of Christ.

It is a picture of a people in grave danger of being overcome with “*surfeiting, drunkenness (spiritual), and the cares of this life.*”

So absorbed in temporal things; so weak in the Faith as to say, “*My Lord. delayeth his coming.*”

It is not a picture of a household growing in spiritual strength and vigor, but a household weak in faith, with FEW ready to meet him when he comes.

Yes, we too, should beware lest we contribute to the fulfilling of this fearful sign of the time.

* * *

The wounds caused by the follies of youth may be healed, but ugly scars often remain. How wise it is then, to - *“Remember now thy Creator in the clays of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them”* (EccI. 12:1).

“If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people” (Micah 2:11).

When Israel began to drift into apostasy, they shunned the true prophets and others who tried to show them the right way, and chose for their leaders those who spoke “smooth things” and prophesied deceits. They sought out leaders or teachers who indulged them in their wishful thinking that all was well was them, though they had departed from the way of the Lord.

Such has always been the way of those who wish to depart from a strict adherence to divine principles and seek an easy way of life that is more flesh-pleasing. It is then that true preachers of righteousness become odious in their estimation, and those who speak “*good*” words and fair speeches” become highly honored” and admired.

* * *

The apostle Paul had many enemies, both within and without, but the one he feared most was himself, in whose flesh, said he, *“dwells no good thing”*-

Therefore, in seeking out and subduing his greatest enemy, he said:

“Not as uncertainly so fight I; not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection” (1 Cor. 26:27).

This reminds us of the saying that -

“If one wishes to see his greatest enemy, all he needs to do is to look in a mirror.”

* * *

The course of true wisdom is to give one's service to God. For, *to "fear God, and keep His commandments is duty of man."*

Bro. Oscar Beauchamp

"Be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:7).

—Bro. Robert Roberts—1889

A ess

The Apostle Paul uses this phrase in 1 Thess. 2:5. In the original it

Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come—1861, p. 22

Hints For Bible Markers

Last month we spoke a little bit about judging and that continues on this month as well. We are commanded to judge what is right and to act in obedience to Christ commands. This makes the way of life very narrow, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:14) The way of the world is constantly trying to impose itself upon us. "Be tolerant" and "you shouldn't judge others" are often said by the worldly wise. But mankind is full of his own imagination which are opposed to the thinking of God. They are too proud, especially in this the 21st century, to submit to the commands and will of our Heavenly Father. When a brother or sister falls into a sin which is known by all, an ecclesia is bound, in an open manner, to signify it's disapproval of the offence. The "appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22) must be avoided. An evil account obstructs the truth, rendering it as noxious as a fleshly contrivance. But what should be done? If the offending brother or sister is uncaring or indifferent, there is only one course, and that is, the public denial of their company. If they are sincerely repentant, the duty of the ecclesia is to receive them and help them, but at the same time to vindicate the ecclesia's affection for righteousness. This can be done by asking them to abstain from the breaking of bread, while not being absent from the meetings. We then have a demonstration of submission on the part of the offender showing the genuineness of sorrow while the ecclesia effectively shows their washing of their hands in complicity with the transgression. It has nothing to do with judicial action but is purely a demonstrable action of the ecclesia and the offender.

Since the time Adam was first formed on the Earth it has been the duty of man to work. The corruption of this principle by man is at work today the concepts of unemployment and retirement. The Scriptures show. Be diligent in working both for the things of the natural man for the things of the truth. bro. Beryl Snyder

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;" (Romans 12:11)

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

XI. CONCERNING DISOBEDIENT BRETHREN

To reject or receive not into fellowship those who consent not to the doctrine or the commandments of the Lord Jesus.

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. (9) Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. (10) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: (2 John 1:8 – 10)

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; (4) He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, (5) Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. (1 Timothy 6:3 – 5)

A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; (Titus 3:10)

If any will not work, he is not to be relieved.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. (2 Thessalonians 3:10)

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. (1 Timothy 5:8)

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