

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

HENGOED,

Dear Brethren and Sisters,

Loving Greetings,

The Signs of the Times around us point to the advent of our Lord prior to the Spring of next year. In the event that our Lord's return is subsequent to that time, the Hengoed Ecclesia plans to hold their 2014 Study Weekend at the Stackpole Centre, Pembrokeshire, commencing at 5pm on Friday the 30th of May and will formally come to an end at lunchtime on Monday 2nd of June, God Willing. There will be an outing on the Monday afternoon, followed in the evening by supper and the Daily Readings (normally held in a hall local to the Hengoed members).

The theme for the gathering is "The Prophet Daniel" and the planned subjects are as follows:

- 1) "The Babylonian Tree bound with iron and brass"
- 2) "The Dreadful and Terrible 4th Beast"
- 3) "The Ram and He Goat"
- 4) "The 70 Weeks Prophecy"
- 5) "Faith in God" Sunday School Address
- 6) "Daniel – "O Man Greatly Beloved" Exhortation
- 7) "Future Events outlined by the Prophet Daniel" Lecture
- 8) "And at that time shall Michael stand up"

We extend an invite to all throughout the brotherhood to join us on that occasion. A very warm welcome will be given to all who can make it and we invite brethren and sisters to stay for as long as they can either before or after the weekend.

Further details will be made available on the gathering on my website <http://www.bereanchristadelphians.co.uk/> in the weeks ahead; click on the "read more" link under the Gathering section.

If you plan on coming, we would be grateful if you could let us know. Email info@bereanchristadelphians.co.uk

With love in Christ,

Bro Steve and Sis Liz Male

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

BOSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Oct 26-27 2013
Bro. Jim Sommerville, jsommer393@msn.com
KENYA FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Dec 5-7 2013
Bro. Bob Bent, eyeglassman39@yahoo.com. Epa Wekati, epawekati@yahoo.com
UGANDA FRATERNAL GATHERING.....Apr 3-6 2014
Bro. Bob Bent, eyeglassman39@yahoo.com. Epa Wekati, epawekati@yahoo.com
HENGOED FRATERNAL GATHERING.....May 26-27 2014
Bro. Steve Male, malesinwales@btinternet.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.

Made Perfect Through Suffering - 2

JESUS' CENTRAL PLACE AND WORK IN THE ETERNAL
PURPOSE OF GOD

"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"—Heb. 5

It is an essential first principle of saving truth, says John, that Christ came in *the flesh* (1 Jn. 4:2; 2 Jn. 1:7). Not in *a* flesh, but in *the* flesh: the *same* flesh as the rest of the race from which he was developed, as Paul very specifically emphasizes (Heb. 2:14)—

"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

—the same flesh and blood. And the reason, the necessity, is given—

"...that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil."

And vs. 17-18: "*Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren ... He hath suffered, being tempted.*"

And Heb. 4:15— "*He was in all points tempted like as we are.*"

James (1:13-15) gives us 2 facts very much to the point here—

1. "*God cannot be tempted.*" (Christ, we are told, was tempted, so he cannot be God).

2. "*Every man is tempted when he is drawn of his own lust.*" (Christ, we are told, was tempted in ALL points like his brethren).

The Scriptures always speak of human flesh as unclean and defiled in that—from the time of Adam's sin and divine sentence—it has been contaminated by the results of sin, and its natural tendencies are sinful and opposed to the holiness of God.

We are told of one occasion of Christ being tempted, and in that temptation he very significantly applied to *himself*, as a tempted *man*, these Old Testament commands (Mt.4:4,10)—

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God...Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

It has been the doctrine of the Antichrist from John's day to this that Jesus did not have *the* flesh with its motions and temptations of sin, in common with all his struggling brethren: mortal, dying flesh wherein was the law of sin against which all must strive.

Christ *had* to be *a man*, a real fellow-member of the weak and sin-defiled human race that he might fight and win the battle against Sin's flesh that the race had always lost.

The Trinity makes him an alien *Substitute*—an immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, untemptable god, pretending to suffer, struggle, and by mighty effort overcome temptation and trial.

The Truth of God makes him a glorious *Representative*—an Elder Brother, a Firstborn Captain of many brethren, *a true Victor in a real battle*: strengthened of course by God—for no man could achieve perfection and bring salvation unaided—but tested to the utmost limit of human determination and endurance.

The Trinity has him dying as a Substitute, *instead of* man. The Truth of God has him dying as a Representative, *as* a man, the typical man, *on behalf of man*, himself embodying the whole race. The whole human race was crucified in Christ.

There could be no substitution—no god dying instead of man—for the same reason that the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin (Heb. 10:4). *Their* death could only typify: it could not *destroy* sin, for they did not have sin's flesh. No completely-conquered sin's flesh died in their death. Therefore Jesus could not be substitute, as orthodoxy teaches, or he would be just another shadow, and not the reality and substance that was required to *fulfill* that which was shadowed. He must truly be one of those for whom the sacrifice was required, and whom it redeemed.

He must be the one representative man who comprehended in himself the whole multitude of the Redeemed. None can be saved except by being merged into him, and partaking of the redemption he personally achieved for himself.

The orthodox theory of substitution—that which they call, unscripturally, 'vicarious sacrifice'—is that the innocent was punished so the guilty may go free.

There would be no manifestation of justice and righteousness in that, but the very reverse. There would be no deep meaning and lesson and teaching and beauty—but just a distressing tragedy of meaningless suffering, reflecting no glory on God Who required it.

There would be no mercy or forgiveness manifested: for with punishment inflicted, vengeance would be satisfied, and our 'debt' paid, and we could claim life as a right.

Worst of all, it would directly violate God's Own frequently declared principle that the righteous shall not be punished for the guilty.

According to Webster's Dictionary, the substitution theory current in the churches began with the Church Father Anselm in the 12th Century. Before that, the generally accepted theory was that Christ paid a ransom to the Devil.

But God is not in wrath demanding vengeance or payment. He Himself is the Redeemer and Reconciler, freely and lovingly forgiving sin. The whole plan of salvation is His, and it is based on love, not substitutionary vengeance, as the churches teach, to go along with their everlasting tortures in a burning hell.

Christ's death was in no sense to appease God's wrath and bear man's punishment instead of him, as orthodoxy teaches. Christ is God's Own chosen, specially-created instrument of salvation.

The central, focal point of the entire Mosaic system was the Mercy-Seat, meaning exactly that: *Place of Mercy*—upon which God's glory

dwelt. Here Israel found mercy and forgiveness and covering of sins. *Christ is that Mercy-Seat*—that pure and holy divinely-ordained Place of Mercy where God dwells and man can approach Him.

Christ's death, says Paul (Rm.3:25-26), was to declare (that is, manifest and openly establish) God's righteousness, so that God might extend mercy and forgiveness to sinners without compromising His holiness.

Christ's work, as defined by Scripture, was not to take someone else's punishment, but to DESTROY SIN; to take it out of the way, not just sins as separate acts, but *sin in the aggregate*, sin at the root, the whole dominion and constitution of sin under which mankind groans.

Sin is little understood, and little cared about at present among men. But it is at the root of all evil, sorrow, disease and death. And sin is simply disobedience to God, disharmony with God, self-destructive disharmony with eternal reality and eternal goodness—both the actual act, and the flesh-ingrained tendency behind the act.

"He PUT AWAY SIN by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26).

This is the most succinct statement of the divine purpose centered in Christ anywhere in Scripture. What a glorious, powerful, comforting, stupendous statement! He conquered it, killed it, repudiated it, condemned it, freed himself eternally from its destroying dominion. And not only himself: but *all* who have the wisdom to make themselves *part of him*, and to stay within the safety of his covering.

There is a similar statement of colossal import in three plain, brief words in 2 Tm. 1:10—

"He abolished death."

Paul says that Christ, like the Mosaic High Priest, offered—

"First for his own sins, and then for the people's" (Heb. 7:27).

If we look back to the original ordinance (Lv. 16:16), we shall find this expression 'sins' included two things: 'uncleanness' and 'transgression'—

*"He (the High Priest) shall make an atonement [literally: a covering]...because of the **uncleannesses** of the children of Israel, AND because of their **transgressions**."*

—actually the root and branches of the same sin-tree. The sacrifice of which Paul speaks—the supreme, culminating sacrifice of the Mosaic year—was for both 'uncleanness' and 'transgression.' Paul in

Heb. 7:27 combines both under the general term 'sin,' for they are inseparable parts of the whole sin-constitution of mankind.

Paul says (Rm.7:17-23), and it is universal experience—

"Sin dwelleth in me...I see a law in my members warring against the law of my mind...the law of sin which is in my members."

Sin is an ingrained thing in all human flesh, a natural and universal urge to assert the flesh's will, and rebel against the wise but flesh-restricting commands of God's holy law of life.

The 'law of sin' was in Christ's flesh, as in all his fellow-members of the human race. It had to be, for his life's work was to overcome and destroy it. It was conquered and made powerless by his perfect obedience in all things; and it was condemned and repudiated and put to death by his voluntary submission to the Father's will in the crucifixion of that flesh: openly, publicly, for all generations to see.

The overcoming and putting to death of this flesh of sin was the offering that God's wisdom and holiness required as a foundation of perfect righteousness. This was the race-cleansing sacrifice foreshadowed from the beginning in Eden's slain lamb: a perfect life, even unto a voluntary, sacrificial death.

Until that was offered to God by one of the sin-defiled human race, no one of that race—Christ included—could enter the immortal state.

The whole beauty and righteousness and effectualness of the plan lies in the fact that the one who opened the way and brought the victory was himself an integral part of the condemned and defiled race, in need—like all the rest of the race—of the great, perfect, purifying offering foreshadowed and ordained by God's wisdom from the first entrance of sin and death into the world. Paul says—

"By **his own blood** he entered into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).

The italicized 'for us' of the AV is spurious, and the RV omits it. The reflexive form of the verb requires that it apply to Christ himself. Again—

*"God brought Jesus from the dead **through** (NRV: by) **the blood of the Everlasting Covenant**" (Heb.13:20).*

Human flesh, with its ingrained 'law of sin,' was the serpent

biter that must be lifted up in condemnation on the cross, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness (Nm. 21:9). Jesus directly applies this incident as a type of his crucifixion of the serpent-sin-body (Jn.3:14).

Paul says (2 Cr. 5:21), “*God made him sin:*” not, of course, made him to *commit* sin (which he never did), but made him to *be* sin—sinful flesh, human nature—so that he could defeat and destroy it.

The attempted paraphrase ‘Made him a sin-offering’ cannot be supported. ‘Sin’ and ‘sin-offering’ are distinct in the Greek, though they are the same word in the Hebrew. Septuagint use cannot be made to support ‘sin-offering’ here. The Septuagint clearly distinguishes ‘sin’ and ‘sin-offering,’ though (the Hebrew being the same) it is sometimes a matter of judgment.

Similarly—“*God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of **sinful flesh**, and for a sin-offering (correct here), condemned sin in the flesh*” (Rm.8:3).

‘Condemning,’ or ‘sentencing to death,’ sin in the flesh is the same as ‘destroying the devil’ (Heb.2:14), and ‘crucifying the Old Man’ (Rm. 6:6), and ‘destroying the body of sin’ of the same verse.

Jesus perfectly resisted and subdued every temptation of the sin-body, and then condemned—sentenced to death—sin in the flesh, by nailing it to the cross in death to declare God’s righteous condemnation of that body and all its natural rebellious tendencies.

It was for no personal sin of his own that he died. And yet his death declared God’s justice. So the issue is made perfectly clear: the condemnation is on the body of sin, sin in the flesh, the Old Man, the Diabolos, the ‘sinner from the beginning.’

Christ could not righteously die if death had no dominion over him. That would not manifest the justice of God, but the very reverse. And if he did not have sin in the flesh, in common with all the race of which he was a part, then he could not by death *destroy in himself* that which has the power of death. And if he could not destroy this, then his sacrifice was of no more effect than that of bulls and goats. Like them, it would be just one more symbol or type or shadow, and not the *reality* and *real victory over sin* that all the shadows pointed to.

Our sins are not something separate from our nature—they are a development *of* and *from* it. In us, sin is too strong for us, and develops into action. In Christ, sin was perfectly and completely controlled, Berean 2013—260

subdued and overcome, and never became manifest in action.

But in both cases there is the *same* basic problem and condition, the *same* battle with the *same* adversary.

It is of remarkable significance that when Jesus was born, his mother was unclean seven days because of childbirth, and a sin-offering had to be made. And on the eighth day he was circumcised, symbolizing the cutting off of sin's flesh (Lk. 2:21-24). Thus the very first events concerning him demonstrate his inseparable oneness with Adam's sin-cursed race.

What God's eternal wisdom and goodness required was a plan that would redeem man from sin and death while manifesting and emphasizing and upholding God's glory, holiness, justice, mercy and love—and man's sinfulness, helplessness and complete dependence on God's mercy for his salvation: a plan that would require a complete surrender and devotion of man's life to God, while at the same time assuring his humility in demonstrating his utter inability to save himself—no matter how great his efforts and complete his service.

All this is beautifully accomplished in the plan God's wisdom devised. Christ, with God's strengthening, achieved salvation. Men receive it through him as a conditional gift. Men devote their lives to God not to earn salvation—which they are taught is impossible—but to manifest their thanksgiving and love for the free gift of salvation given them through Christ, and to *retain* that gift by their utmost devotion.

Christ is the ONE PERFECT MAN—focalizing the whole human race within himself, completely embracing and absorbing them into his sacrifice and victory and all that flows therefrom in joy and glory.

As separate individuals, we cease to exist. *We deny ourselves*. We are dead to our old selfish personal selves. We live exclusively to and for Christ. In the thankful, comprehending obedience of baptism, voluntarily, eagerly die to ourselves and into Christ—rising from the water a completely new Christ-man; the old Self-man being dead, submerged, buried, left behind for ever.

When Christ died, he died for us all: he carried us all down to sacrificial death. When he arose, he brought us all up again to beautiful, purified righteous newness of life (2 Cr. 5:14-15)—

"If one died for all, then were all dead (RV: therefore all died).

"And he died for (huper—Diag: on behalf of) all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again (more correctly: which died and rose for them)."

And Rm.4:25—"*He was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification.*"

Let us consider *what 'sacrifice' is*: we must understand this to comprehend the necessity and meaning and purpose and value of Christ's sacrifice. Sacrifice is not just an arbitrary form and ritual that God invented meaninglessly. Truly, *animal sacrifice was just a typical ritual*; but the eternal *reality* that it typified was a real, meaningful divine *necessity*. Life HAD to come by OBEDIENCE, just as death had come by disobedience. And this required obedience—a typical, representative, once-for-all obedience—had to be tested and tried and perfected to the uttermost, all throughout life, and to the point of yielding up life itself under the most extreme conditions of testing and trial.

There was nothing unnecessary, nothing arbitrary, nothing meaningless, in the death of Christ. It was ETERNAL NECESSITY—the *essential process of his being 'made perfect.'*

Without it, he would not have been made perfect: and therefore he would not have been Christ. Even in the tragedy, we must see the beauty, we must see the necessity, we must see the Divine wisdom.

There had to be ONE PERFECT MAN: a *perfected* man, a pure, holy foundation and nucleus. Upon that infinitely precious base, the entire New Creation is to be built.

What Christ wrought in himself—his perfecting—was the REALITY behind all the typical sacrifices from the foundation of the world. What we call *sacrifice* under the Mosaic Law and throughout the Scriptures is simply the type and shadow of that *perfecting of Christ* by trial and sorrow and suffering and death. That is what God's wisdom required and symbolized from the beginning: not vengeance and punishment, but a holy, beautiful, obedient, *perfected man*, through whom He could extend mercy and life to all other men.

We are so used to the conception of 'offering a sacrifice' that we tend to view it as an end in itself, and to thoughtlessly consider that Christ just offered one more 'sacrifice,' whose only real value lay in the fact that God arbitrarily required it.

But he did not give his life just to fulfill a mere required form: he gave his entire life and devotion and dedication to accomplish the perfect beauty of the ages: the eternal, necessary reality of *perfected manhood*.

He found man, including himself, a prisoner of the sin-constitution. Sin reigned supreme over the human race, with its dark train of endless sorrow, evil and death. He achieved a freedom from it for himself, which he by God's merciful arrangement extends to all who properly
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and thankfully accept it in him.

And every aspect of his terrible, victorious battle with sin, *right to the moment of his death*, was an essential part of that perfect achievement.

A very striking statement occurs in Gal. 5:24 which throws great light on Christ's crucifixion—

"They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts."

This reveals to us the meaning and significance of Christ's own crucifixion: the putting to death of sin's flesh, with all its sin-tending propensities. He is the typical man: he portrays and contains all men. Crucifixion was as necessary to his salvation as it is to ours, though in *his* case—befitting his far greater and primary place in the Divine Purpose—the required crucifixion was right to the utmost limits of dreadful, literal reality. This was his supreme, culminating act of submission, obedience, denial of self-will, love of God, and final perfecting—

"Our Old Man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6).

The 'sacrifice' of Christ may seem like an arbitrary ritual required by God simply as some kind of a token—

Something terrible, just to show how terrible sin is;

Something we just marvel at without seeing the practical purpose of;

An exaction by God to establish a point;

A noble gesture of extreme love;

An ultimate example of self-abnegation for man's incentive and encouragement and emulation and inspiration.

Truly it partakes somewhat of all of these. We must bear them all in mind to comprehend its fullness. But it is far more. It was in no sense merely arbitrary or meaningless or ritualistic. It was the actual accomplishment of a vital necessity.

The English word 'sacrifice' literally means 'holy act' or 'work of holiness' (from Latin *sacra*, holy; and *facio*, to make or do). In the Bible (which is a much better guide to meaning), in both Old and New Testaments, the original word for sacrifice (Heb: *zebach*; Gr: *thusia*) means 'a slaying, a putting to death': very fittingly, for the whole process involved is a putting to death

of that which is the cause of death.

The modern, common meaning—the giving up of something for the sake of a higher purpose—is a *secondary* and derived meaning, and must be kept secondary (though it is a correct description, as far as it goes, of the ‘holy work’ that *was* Christ in his entirety).

What God’s eternal wisdom required to open the way of life was not shed blood *as such*—it was the reality that the blood represented: *the perfect life poured out wholly unto God.*

The essence is in the perfection, rather than in the slaying. The slaying is simply the termination and culmination of the perfection, bringing the perfecting process to a head, and completing it.

The sacrificial death of Christ was the most important event in history: it was the most necessary event: it was the most beautiful event: it was the most meaningful event.

It was not just the arbitrary exaction of purposeless tragedy and suffering. It was not the orthodox Church idea of punishing and torturing the innocent so that the guilty might escape. That idea is a travesty on the justice, righteousness, and love of God.

It was the supreme manifestation of the love of God and the love of Christ: for each other, and for mankind.

It was the glorious culmination and apex of eternal perfection being worked out on a plane and a level far above our normal conceptions. In it we observe with awe the workings of eternity and divinity.

It was the loving, all-wise Father accomplishing the dreadful but necessary and beneficial disciplining and perfecting and glorifying of the loving, submissive, obedient Son.

It was the climax and conclusion of the supreme battle of the ages between the Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness, between good and evil, between Christ and the Devil, the diabolos, the motions of sin, the destroyer of mankind. And the victory was Christ’s, strengthened by God.

The conflict *had* to be right unto death. If the lovingly offered life were just allowed to run its course to natural death, then the element of choosing *God’s* will over the ‘*my*’ will is not carried to its ultimate point. Nor would it involve the ultimate, supreme, beautiful act of perfect self-emptying and self-surrender.

Furthermore, a natural death would not have been a condemnation—a judgment, a sentencing to death—of the sin-body. This too was part of the necessary total picture of the perfection.

Let us not look upon the question of Christ needing or benefiting from his own offering, as of some ritual or act *external* to, and *separable* from, himself. The sacrificial death was simply the inseparable completion and perfecting of the total sacrifice that Christ himself *was in his entirety*. We cannot separate Christ from his sacrifice. Christ *as* a sacrifice, a whole burnt offering, a sin offering, a joyful, freewill peace offering—from birth to lovingly-yielded-up life—is the essential nucleus of the whole Divine purpose. If we try to take this beautiful picture apart into its component pieces, we completely destroy it.

We cannot separate Christ from mankind: he IS mankind—focalized and summarized and idealized.

We cannot separate Christ from his offering: he IS his offering—without his offering he would not be Christ at all.

We cannot separate Christ's sacrificial LIFE from his sacrificial DEATH, which was but the apex and culmination of that life. They are inseparable parts of one wonderful, perfect whole: a complete, indivisible unity.

We cannot separate sin in the flesh from sin manifested in action. They are but subdivisions of the basic sin constitution that must be swept away.

We cannot separate Christ from the benefits of his offering: because what he wrought, he wrought for ALL MANKIND, of and with whom he was inseparably one.

Paul's inspired remarks on his perfecting go to the heart of the subject, and reveal its beauty and its wisdom (Heb. 5:7-9)—

"He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.

*"Though he were a Son, yet **learned he obedience by the things that he suffered.***

*"And being MADE PERFECT, he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey him.**"*

Paul says further (Heb. 2:10)—

"It became Him [that is, it was fitting and appropriate for God], in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERING."

Perfection through suffering is the way to Divine glory: and Jesus was the Head and Forerunner, in this as in everything. He had first to be made perfect himself: to be cleansed and purified and perfected by his own perfect offering of obedience even unto suffering and death.

Then, having himself obtained redemption and release from the sin-constitution and its condemnation, God in mercy offers salvation to all who repudiate themselves and their *own* will and desires (as he did), and become and remain part of him in the appointed way—by baptism and lifelong obedience unto death—

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16).

"He that shall endure unto the end shall be saved" (Mt. 24:13).

*"He is the Author of eternal salvation unto all that **obey him**"* (Heb. 5:9).

When Christ and the Saints are united at last for ever into one glorious Body—the Multitudinous Christ manifesting the glory of God—*all* will have attained that position in the *same way* and on the *same basis*: voluntary, loving obedience and self-surrender, and overcoming the motions of sin in the flesh.

The shallow, popular, surface-religion cry is, "Christ did it all! . . . Only believe!" The *scriptural* picture is *very, very* different—

"He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Tit. 2:14).

"Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 Jn. 3:16).

*"You hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you **holy and unblamable and unreprouable** in his sight"* (Col. 1:22-23).

*"And he died for all, that they which live should **not henceforth live unto themselves**, but unto him which died for them"* (2 Con 5:15).

*"They that are Christ's have **crucified the flesh** with the affections and lusts"* (Gal.5:24).

Let us meditate deeply on these passages, and those like them, which clearly show us how holily and diligently we *must* build on the foundation he has laid by great struggle and suffering—if we desire life.

Paul said, and he bids us follow him (Ph. 3:8-11)—

"I have suffered the loss of all things, that I might know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death...If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." —Bro. G.V.Growcott

Enmity of Classes

IN the Psalm read this morning, we have David again among his enemies and praying to be delivered from their wiles. It is remarkable how constantly this feature presents itself, not only in the Psalms, but in the personal writings of the other prophets. It is true the ultimate application is to Christ (both in head and body), the "testimony" for whom, both as to his sufferings and the glory that shall be realised, is the very "spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10), but in the first instance, the constant picture of conflict with malicious enemies was realised in the experience of the prophets themselves. This picture is not comprehended by merely literary readers of the writings of the spirit. It is in fact made a ground of their rejection by some. They argue that the product of inspiration would not have been marred (as they regard it) by this constant exhibition of strife on the part of the writers. Their ideal of such matters would lead them to expect tranquil discourse of the sublime order of Gentile poets and philosophers. They are not aware that the very peculiarity which they interpret as against the writings in question, is one of the strongest evidences of their genuineness in all senses. Two things require it: first, the plan of God as disclosed in the Scriptures, and secondly, the character of mankind as we actually find it. The plan as revealed is to "take out from among" the bulk, a certain "few" who are chosen, on the principle of faith and obedience under difficulty. These are to be "delivered from the present evil world," as Paul expresses it, after they have faithfully endured for an appointed time, the tribulation incident to being in it, while not of it. This being the plan (and no man believing the Scriptures can say this is not the plan revealed therein), a state of incompatibility and consequent enmity between the "few" and the many is the inevitable result. The character of mankind in their bulk, is of course the inciting cause of this enmity. This character is defined in the Scriptures by the phrase "desperately wicked." Genteel people don't agree with this definition,

but it is true, nevertheless, as any one may perceive who judges the character of the world by the scriptural rule of action. Wickedness according to this rule, is the forgetting of God, the omission to constantly do the highest honour to Him, the ignoring of His will in expression of our thoughts and the formation of our purposes; and the doing contrary to his commandments in the many matters that go to constitute “life.” Judge the world by this rule and you see at once that John’s testimony is true that “the world lieth in wickedness.” God is absolutely ignored and His law cast aside with contempt. The sole rule of action is self-interest in one form or the other. In some cases it takes a very refined form; but in its essence it is the same—the rejection of God, the service of natural inclination. The love of money—the love of honour, the love of ease, or the love of appetite will be found to comprehend the motives that rule the world: for the obedience of the powers that be spring from these. There would be no respect for authority if it were not for the power in the hands of authority to interfere with the things that are dear to the world’s heart. But for the restraints imposed by this power, society would soon be a chaos.

Where the world is at liberty to do as it likes, such as the society it shall choose, the causes it shall support, the way it shall spend its spare money and spare time, you see the cloven hoof at once. It honours those who flatter it; it gives itself to those things that pander to its inclinations or fill its pocket, and all this with the utmost “respectability.” Those things that are pleasing to its carnal-mind are in high esteem with it. The things of the spirit are not only unintelligible to it, they are distasteful to it when even faintly understood; yea, they are most odious to it, and all who preach them are an abomination. It hates those who preach the truth, because the truth is something it detests, and by “the truth” is meant something higher than that phrase means in the mouths of some people. It means, not merely that man is mortal, that Christ will come, that the Jews will be restored, the dead will be raised, &c.; these are but branches of the tree. The vitality of the tree lies in the root, and the root in this case is the relation of God to man. Tell the world the truth on this point, and the world will hate you. It does not like to be told that God is its possessor; that His honour should be its highest virtue; His obedience its highest pleasure; that it is not at liberty to do as it likes; that Christ is the heir of all things; that he will bring vengeance and destruction because of its wickedness. It burns with anger against those who say that it is not righteous; that it is astray from the right way; that even its goodness is besmeared with the mire of carnal motive. It is so sensitive on this point that even if this testimony is confined to example, it resents it, and brands with evil-speaking the objects of its hatred.

In view of these things it is not difficult to understand that peculiarity of the Psalms of David which shews us the writer in continual conflict with surrounding enemies, and exercised greatly towards them, as in the Psalm this morning, wherein he says, "Hear my voice, O God, in my prayer; preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the secret workers of iniquity, who whet their tongues like a sword and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words, that they may shoot in secret at the perfect"—(Psalm 64:1, 4.) This experience is no accident, nor was it exceptional in David's case. It was the experience of the Lord himself, as of course, the words of David, (referring ultimately to Christ) required. It is the experience of all who follow in their steps. Jesus declared this would be the case. "In the world ye shall have tribulation. Marvel not if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Plainly also did he say, "Ye cannot serve two masters," and this principle he has applied to all who obey him, in declaring through James, Paul, and John, that "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. All that is in the world is not of the Father." "Love not the world."

There are two ways of looking at this. The first is, that the truth calls us to submit to something that is very disagreeable to bear. As nothing is sweeter to the majority of men than honour, so nothing is more bitter than to be treated as the offscouring of all things. There are a thousand little ways in which honour can be given or withheld, and it may be that the little ways are more telling than the big ones. The bow of hearty recognition is sweeter than a testimonial: the turning away of the countenance may be more galling than public execration. To the loss of the former and the inheritance of the latter, a faithful course in the truth will bring any man. What shall we say to it? Why, that if we are the genuine brethren of the apostolic band of the first century, we shall rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. This leads to the other reflection. There is a natural desire in every earnest mind to have the opportunity of suffering thus for Christ's sake. Some such may bewail their lack. Such discontentment ought to be banished at once. It is next door to running into persecution, which is sinful. We ought to wait God's testing opportunities. They will come in due time if we are worthy of them, and if they are not His, they are worthless. No reasonable mind will seek discomfort or persecution. The belief, profession, and practice of the principles of the truth ought to be our aim. If these are steadfastly and consistently maintained, the dishonour

and the enmity which these always provoke in the present evil world, will not be long in manifesting themselves.

And the words of Christ in the portion read from Luke, reminds us that these will be found “within” as well as “without.” He says, “It must needs be that offences come.” The context shows he is speaking of the brethren. All who are the called are not the chosen. Many are called but few are chosen. The reason of this is that the choice is limited to those who are led by the Spirit of God. “As many as are led of the Spirit of God, they are the children of God.” A man who is guided by the ideas communicated by the Spirit through the apostles is guided by the Spirit; for these ideas, in their communicated form, are the power of the Spirit in the world for the effectuation of its work. Now, all who profess the truth do not walk in it, but walk after the desires and inclinations of the natural man. There always are in the truth those who are of the flesh and those who are of the Spirit. For this reason, offences will come, and “it must needs be.” It is part of the appointed discipline by which the affections of the spiritual are shaken loose from all human ties and associations, and made to rest on the eternal foundation. It is, therefore, a mistake to look for a perfect community, or to expect that at any time we may reckon on freedom from trouble henceforward. There will be trouble as long as the present state of things last. Man is born to it. The fact helps us to take it without dismay or discouragement. Forgetfulness of the fact has worked disastrously, in some cases, when the trouble came.

But there is the other side: “*Woe unto that man by whom they come*: it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.” Here is a great caution to our ways. Let none of us suffer as an evildoer. —(1 Peter 4:15.) Let none of us be in trouble through misdeeds; let none of us be on the wrong side of the “offences” when they come. It is well to realise what “offences” mean here. Does it mean hurting people’s feelings? If so, how shall we obey the command to reprove the “unfruitful works of darkness?” —(Eph. 5:11.) Christ hurt the feelings of the Pharisees: for it is written that on one occasion, the Pharisees were “offended” when they heard what Jesus said. —(Matt. 15:12.) It is impossible to avoid hurting the feelings of those who are in the wrong in testifying against the wrong. This is not what Jesus meant by “offence.” The word “offence” had a stronger meaning in English in the days of James I. than it has now. It fails now to convey the full meaning of the original word, which is to hurt substantially; to cause to stumble; to bring into mischief. The idea is expressed by Paul where he says, “Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother PERISH, for whom Christ died”—(2 Cor. 8:11). Woe to Berean 2013—270

the man who turns believers out of the way. Here is a lesson of a sobering character which wise men will apply in many ways. It is a check against reckless independence of action. We have to consider consequences as affecting others. We may feel ourselves at liberty to do many things as between ourselves and God, which we shall be deterred from doing if we consider its probable effects upon those who may not discern so clearly. It is in this respect that Paul says, "We that are strong ought to bear with them that are weak, and not to please ourselves." He advised the strong-minded brother of the first century not to eat meat in the idol's temple, though to good sense, the idol was nothing, and the meat good, and the temple a beautiful shelter from the weather; because a weaker-minded brother might construe his act into a participation with the idolatry, and might be emboldened to do things which would defile his conscience. In our day, the duty of consideration for others has shifted from idolatry to the ways of the world. There are many things we might do if we had only ourselves to consider. But when we reflect that our liberty may help to drive back into bondage those who are struggling to be free, it will help us to deny ourselves. If we abandon circumspection in such matters, we shall find at last we have made a mistake. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the question of Cain, and all who go through life with this sentiment in their mouths will find themselves in Cain's company on the day of straightening. Christ's commandment is "Love one another," and the only thing that will yield satisfaction in that great day, will be the knowledge of having obeyed the commandments of Christ.

This brings us to a saying of Christ's which is written in the chapter read from Luke: "When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." Several things suggest themselves as we reflect on this. The first is an apparent contradiction between this and that part of Christ's teachings, wherein he says the unprofitable servant will be cast out and the profitable servant only accepted. The apparent contradiction arises from the use of the same word in two connections. There is no real contradiction. The unprofitable servant to be cast out was one who yielded no fruit, who lived in disobedience of his Lord's commands; the "unprofitable servants" of the saying under consideration are those who have "done all those things which were commanded them." The question is, in what sense are those unprofitable servants who have "done those things which are commanded?" The answer is not far for right reason to seek. In the utmost we do in "working out our own salvation," we cannot profit God. The benefit is all to ourselves. God condescends to count our faith and obedience for righteousness; but it is not for any advantage it is to

Him. He is pleased with our submission, but not advantaged by it. We cannot advantage Him, for of Him and to him, and through him are all things. Consequently, when we come to stand before the judgment seat of Christ with ever so good an account of our stewardship, we can claim nothing on the score of services rendered. It is of the goodness of God we are permitted to serve, and it is of His goodness that service will be rewarded. The highest reason enjoins the attitude prescribed by Jesus. After we have done all that is commanded, we have only done our duty and have not profited God. In this sense, the accepted will acknowledge themselves unprofitable servants.

But in this there is no ground of consolation for those who are truly unprofitable. On the contrary, it forbids hope for such; for if those who have “done all those things which are commanded them,” are instructed to regard themselves as “unprofitable servants,” what is the position of those who have neglected “all those things which are commanded them,” and who have made self-interest their rule? If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” The answer is plain; “Every man shall receive *according to his work*.” If a man live to the flesh with the flesh which is a perishing thing, he shall die. Only those who live to God, in the full affection of the gospel and submission to all its requirements, may hope for favour in the day of eternal life. This is revealed, and however unpleasant some may find the reiteration of these things to be, it would be no true kindness to speak otherwise. He only speaks the word faithfully who declares the truth without regard to the likes or dislikes of men. The day will come—yea, is at the door, when the importance of these principles will be seen by every eye. It will be seen too late for the majority who “with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,” will curse the folly which led them to give a secondary place to the true sayings of God. Our wisdom is to lay hold of them and exalt them and obey them now, while the long-suffering of God waits as in the days of Noah. Soon our opportunity will be past. Soon will ring in the startled ear of the heedless, the solemn words which have been written a long time for our warning; “When I called ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes and did choose that wherein I delighted not. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice but ye shall be ashamed. Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart and shall howl for vexation of spirit. And ye shall leave your name for a curse to my chosen.”—(Isaiah 65:13–15)

—*Bro. Robert Roberts*

SIGNS OF THE TIMES (commentary)

Isaiah 19 – the Burden of Egypt

The below article should be of great interest to the student of Bible prophecy as it demonstrates the Elohim at work in the affairs of Egypt. The United States has once again misplayed its cards in the geopolitical game of the Middle East as the Egyptians want Putin and the Russians as their support and not the U.S. as the below article from DEBKA details. We find this ironic and think of the old phrase — "*watch what you wish for*", as Egypt is eventually going to get much more of Russia than what they ever bargained for.

What are the scriptural particulars of Egypt's destiny? Is Egypt to be destroyed? No. Is Egypt to be severely chastised and made to suffer for their iniquities? Plenty, yes. Yahweh will deliver Egypt into the hand of a cruel lord (Isaiah 19:4). Who is this cruel lord? Yahweh has sent many a lord to reign over Egypt: Esarhaddon of Assyria (the son of Sennacherib), Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, Cyrus the Persian, Ahasuerus, Alexander, the Ptolemaic Empire, Caesar and the Ottomans. But in the end there is one lord who causes them to cry out as never before. Remember, *trouble such as never before was*.

Then "*they* [the Egyptians] *shall cry unto Yahweh because of the oppressors*" (Isaiah 19:20). Such has never been the case in all of history. This "cruel lord," therefore, we believe to be the Gogian desolator, the King of the North who will have all of Egypt for himself and then some. He plants himself there, sweeping through to take Constantinople, and then goes forth to Egypt, and Israel will be at the center of it all. But Egypt is sent a Savior, the Multitudinous Christ (one of Zechariah's four chariots, described as a "swift cloud" in Isaiah 19:1). They enter Egypt with great power and glory (may all of us be there for that moment), and they wipe out the invader and convert the populous from their present superstition.

Isaiah 19:22 tells us, "**And Yahweh shall smite Egypt; He shall smite and heal it; and they shall return unto Yahweh.**" The end result (vs. 24) is that both Egypt and Assyria become a third with Israel in the Kingdom of God. Certainly, this is a far cry from what some would have us believe concerning events of the latter days. Brethren, we need to stick with the inspired prophets of Israel as faithfully expounded by Bro. Thomas.

Now what does Isaiah say would precipitate all of these events styled "the Burden of Egypt"? Isaiah 19:2 says, "**And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one**

against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.”

It is far too early to say how today's events will work into this prophecy, but we should watch very intently and very patiently. The word “kingdom” here in the KJV can be rendered “estate” or “rule”. This reminds us of the separation of classes that sparked the French revolution, essentially pitting one estate or class against another; and there is presently a very wide division of classes throughout the Islamic world from North Africa to the Arabian Peninsula.

We are living in the latter days of the Sixth vial in which Christ, our Lord, will return from heaven to the earth, and the frog spirits are all about us to lead the nations to that great war of Armageddon. The events unfolding in the Middle East today are a sure witness to the fact that the Elohim are busily at work in preparation for our Lord's return. This should stir us up to make our spiritual houses sure and impregnable to all forms of foolishness, excess of riot, and false teaching — *Bro. Michael Jasionowski*

Pro-military masses in Cairo wave banners saying “Obama Out! Putin in!”

DEBKAFfile Special Report July 26, 2013, 10:48 PM (IDT)

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators filled Cairo's streets and squares Friday, July 26 in rival rallies shortly after deposed president Mohamed Morsi was formally charged and detained for 15 days. Tahrir Square was packed with crowds responding to Defense Minister Gen. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi's call for a mandate to support the military fight on “terrorists.” Another huge crowd of Morsi supporters packed the streets around the Rabaa al-Adawiya mosque in Nasser City.

Instead of directing their ire at the overthrown Muslim Brotherhood, the pro-military demonstrators shouted “Bye Bye America!” as huge placards waved over their heads depicting as a threesome Gen. El-Sisi, Vladimir Putin and Gemal Abdel Nasser, who ruled Egypt in the 60s in close alliance with the Soviet Union.

Their rivals in a separate part of Cairo chanted "Sisi out! Morsi is president! Down with the army!" In Alexandria, five people were killed in clashes between Muslim Brotherhood supporters and opponents.

The anti-American banners represented a message: No matter if President Barack Obama denies the Egyptian people US support because of the military's steps against the Muslim Brotherhood, Cairo has an option in Moscow.

Reports began appearing Friday morning on the social networks including Facebook from sources close to Putin that Moscow is considering supplying Egypt with advanced fighter bombers to replace the F-16 planes, whose delivery Obama suspended Wednesday, July 24. This was a gesture to show the US President's displeasure over Gen El-Sisi's rejection of the demand to release the ousted president and integrate the Muslim Brotherhood in the interim government.

The military gave the Muslim Brotherhood an ultimatum to endorse the new situation by Friday. The Brotherhood, whose supporters have maintained a sit-in in Nasser City for 20 days, did not respond.

The military accordingly gave the screw another turn.

A Cairo investigating judge Friday ordered deposed president Morsi detained for 15 days pending investigation into charges of plotting with the Palestinian Hamas to orchestrate a jailbreak during the 2011 revolution and conniving with Hamas in killing police officers and soldiers.

He has been held at an unknown location since the coup.

These charges carry potential death sentences.

They relate to the attack by armed men who on Aug. 5, 2012 killed 16 Egyptian border policemen in their camp in northern Sinai near Rafah. The prosecution claims to have evidence that the raid was plotted by Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood to depict the Egyptian military as a spent force. That attack kicked off the current armed Salafist mutiny against Egyptian military and police targets in Sinai.

The other charge relates to the raid on Wadi Natroun prison at the tail end of the 2011 uprising against Hosni Mubarak, which broke out of jail thousands of inmates including Morsi and other Muslim Brotherhood leaders.

According to **DEBKAFfile's** intelligence sources, the jailbreak was executed by special networks of Hizballah and Hamas which had been planted in Cairo and Suez Canal cities for subversion and terrorism. The radical Hamas, offspring and ally of the Egyptian Brotherhood, is now solidly in the military regime's sights as a hostile entity.

The military takeover of power in July 3 is gaining the aspect of a neo-Nasserist revolution. Many Egyptians are beginning to turn to Moscow in search of their country's primary world ally rather than Washington. They have taken note that Putin has shown himself to be the foe of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria as well as Egypt.

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 48

AN influence for good and a source of strength has left us! Brother Roberts is with us no more! In him we have lost a sterling friend, an able leader, and an exemplary lover of God. Before most of us were born, our brother was toiling for the truth, and he so continued till the moment of his death. From his labours we have all, incidentally, derived more or less benefit. Wherein shall come a compensation for our bereavement? The compensation will come in allowing his beautiful character, his great work, his weighty exhortations and expositions, to live in our memories. Our brother, in this sense, will always live to faithful brethren. The writings of brother Roberts to such will shine with increasing lustre the farther they are removed from the clouds of dust raised by his narrow-minded critics. In remembering brother Roberts, we would not forget his noble wife—his forty years’ shoulder-to-shoulder companion in the ups and downs of his laborious work. As we think of our sister, we feel that brother Roberts is not wholly gone (for truly he and she were one). May God bless and sustain her, and give to both a rich place in the Kingdom of God.

Let us not ask for evidence of the truth if we have made up our minds not to receive it. “I can’t see it” is, alas, too often the outcome of “I don’t want to see it.” It was this perversity that moved Christ to sometimes exclaim “O ye hypocrites.” True, some cannot see, though the evidence be ever so glaring. This is the effect of the long, insidious, and powerful working of sin. There is a consolation in the matter—God is just, and He will not subject helpless brute beasts to the terrors of the resurrection condemnation. But let all doubters and deniers question themselves. Let them take themselves into some quiet nook and examine and cross-examine their hearts and minds. Again, let us not pose as truth seekers—as searchers after evidence—if we are wilfully shutting our eyes to all directions from which evidence can come, except the one which is congenial to our taste. To trifle with truth, and the Author of it, in this way is a serious thing. Truth seekers must not go to Timbuctoo for evidence, when they know that the counsel of God lies elsewhere. Neither must they stipulate for smooth things, if they wish to hear the voice of God. Pet ideas must be slaughtered if God require it! Bible truth has been given, not to confirm us in our natural ways and thoughts, but contrariwise, to correct and reform them. Willingness to submit to this operation is the principal secret in reaching the truth.

“Is there a thing beneath the sun that strives with thee my heart to share?”

Ah? tear it thence, and reign alone, the Lord of every motion there.”

These are wholesome words, but some have hesitated to sing them, not from a rebellious spirit, but from a mistaken idea that they mean more than they do. The hesitation is unnecessary. The words simply express the longing which should characterise every son and daughter of God, that God should have the sole and exclusive control of our heart. To love God in this way—with all our heart and soul and strength—does not preclude us from also loving our husbands or wives, our children, or legitimate pursuits and pleasures which God has placed within our reach. It is simply a question of God standing first in our affection, and our regard for people and things being regulated by this love. How often are we moved to hug and caress secondary objects to the exclusion of those which should be first, and apart from divine help, how utterly unable are we to let go! That we should in our reflective and sober moments pray, “Ah? tear it thence, and reign alone,” is both wise and good.

By nature our descent is not noble. Our father, according to the flesh, is the devil! The fact is humiliating, but wholesome to remember. Our position, therefore, by nature is hopeless. The devil and his seed are doomed to extinction. If we would be saved from this destruction we must be born again—we must be born of God. How emphatic was Christ upon this point! “Ye must be born again.” “Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God” (Jno. 3.). It is important to hold right views concerning this new birth. First, its completion involves a process of time. It is not simply a mental change, nor is it confined to the momentary change of nature referred to in 1 Cor. 15:52. It comprises both—mind and body—the life that now is and that which is to come. Brother Roberts’ remarks on this head are worth repeating: “The flesh changed by Spirit is the process at both stages; but the completeness of the process is not realised till we stand before Christ in the joy and glory of the final transformation.” How do we stand in this matter? Have we been mentally born again? If we have (and we can soon ascertain this by applying to our ways the test contained in Gal. 5:22–23), then let us never forget that unless we continue to keep in touch with the Word (which begat us, Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23), our new self will speedily emaciate and die. Let us take care.

The poor are a standing institution. “The poor shall never cease out of the land.” They are a means of testing our faithfulness to the will of God. They are also a means of exercising the heavenly organs of sympathy and benevolence. Read Deut. 15., and you have God’s mind respecting the poor. “Open thine hand wide unto him,” “Lend him sufficient for his need,” “Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy

flock," etc. Israel were warned to beware lest they invented plausible excuses for disobedience. How much need is there for such a warning! How we like to selfishly hold what we have! At the same time the Scriptures call upon us to exercise prudence and commonsense in dealing with the poor. Every application for help is not to be blindly yielded to. It would be an evil to encourage the spendthrift in his extravagance, or the idle man in his laziness, or the professional beggar in his profession, or the reckless fool in his gambling commercial enterprises. There are poor and poor. It is a matter for discernment as to when to help and when to refrain from helping. If we honestly endeavour to do our duty we shall not go far wrong. Let us remember that to err in this matter on the giving side is better than to err on the not-giving side. Let us exhort one another in our duty towards the poor, but let us not judge and condemn one another. We live in an evil world—our duty can only be done with many short-comings. If we have a good and honest heart, all will end well.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1899*

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

CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

Yes; we'll pay another visit to the "Church of the Holy Sepulchre", as it is called. A more Scriptural name would be a "Cage of hateful and unclean birds"! Birds of prey—not birds of Paradise, however. It is simply a museum of frauds—termed by the deceivers and the deceived, "Holy Places".

We can only explain the fascination we have in visiting this "den of thieves" is the resultant thankfulness with which we make for the exit—thankfulness for having been delivered from such a system of religion, built upon lying and cunningly devised fables, whose votaries love to have it so. So far as the "rev." merchants are concerned, their chief interest is "filthy lucre's sake". Their very countenance betrays these traffickers in religion. They make one feel sick. Well does the Lord use the word "spue" in relation to such—these "bloated, white-livered, shaven-Crowned, bleary-eyed, human vultures"—No; the description is not a wee bit too strong for the progeny of the "Mother of Harlots".

The Lord's description can be sampled from Matthew 23 and Revelation 17 and 18. This "Church of the Holy Sepulchre" has been rightly described as "a cluster of churches, chapels, and shrines, built separately at different periods, but now all covered by one roof". The only foundation for the legend, that this is the actual site of the Crucifixion, is a

dream of Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, in the beginning of the fourth century.

In this "Church"—if you allow yourself to be led by one of its "guides"—you will have pointed out to you not only where the centre of the earth is, but where Christ was imprisoned; where his feet were put in the stocks; a rock with the impressions made by the feet of Jesus; the place where Christ was scourged; where he was Crowned with thorns; where the Cross was erected; the places where the two thieves were Crucified; where the women anointed the body of Christ; where Christ was buried; where the stone was rolled away; where Mary Magdalene met Jesus; where Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were buried; and so on, *ad lib.* and *ad nauseum*.

Apparently there is not a foot of space but what the "rev." Blind Guides have, in some way or other, appropriated to a Bible incident, person, or place. What a money-making game the clerical beggars carry on in this house of merchandise! We use the term "clerical beggars" advisably, for is not the whole show enwrapped in money-making? These long-robed mendicants are not a wee bit better than the wretched-looking hucksters in the courtyard outside with their rosaries, Crucifixes and whatnots—Nay, they are worse—a thousand times more despicable, for they do give you something for your money that you can see. The Lord vividly depicted how such traders in religion would transform the most sacred building into a den of thieves.

They even point out the spot where they allege that Christ's blood trickled down when he was being Crucified, and they proceed to solemnly assure you that some of the blood dropped on the skull of Adam, which was conveniently near, causing the latter to come to life! Oh, dear; no wonder my beloved companion, after another short survey, exclaimed, "Do let us get outside".

The Moslem armed guard is still necessary to keep the quarrelsome "Christians" in order; for one of the last things these professed followers ever dream of doing is to practice the Christian precept laid down in Philippians 2:3; Romans 12:10. They are as ready as ever to show fight should a fellow "Christian" trespass an inch beyond his own "holy place".

As no verbal description can possibly afford any adequate idea of what the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is like, let me re-produce a ground plan thereof. At the Festival of Easter, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and adjoining thoroughfares, are literally Crowded with pilgrims of all nationalities, and are always the scenes of disorder which baffles description. It is the feast at which the lying priests pretend to receive fire from heaven. One of the best descriptions we have read is by H. Maundrell, in his *Travels*: here it is: "The ceremony begins on Good Friday night, which is called by them the *nox trenebosa*, and it is observed

with an extraordinary solemnity that I cannot omit to give a particular description of it. As soon as it grew dusk, all the friars and pilgrims were convened in the Chapel of the Apparition (which is a small oratory on the north side of the holy grave, adjoining to the apartment of the Latins) in order to go in a procession round the Church. But, before they set out, one of the friars preached a sermon in Italian in that Chapel. He began his discourse thus: *In questa notte tenebrosa*, etc. (in this dark night, etc.), at which words all the candles were instantly put out, to yield a livelier image of the occasion. And so we were held by the preacher for near half-an-hour, very much in the dark. Sermon being ended, every person present had a large lighted taper put into his hand, as if it were to make amends for the former darkness; and the Crucifixes and other utensils were disposed in order for beginning the procession. Amongst the other Crucifixes, there was one of a very large size, which bore upon the image of our Lord, as big as life. The image was fastened to it with great nails, Crowned with thorns, besmeared with blood; and so exquisitely was it formed, that it represented in a very lively manner the lamentable spectacle of our Lord's body as it hung upon the Cross. This figure was carried all along in the head of the procession; after which, the company followed to all the sanctuaries in the Church, saying their appointed hymns at every one.

"The first place they visited was that of the Pillar of Flagellation, a large piece of which is kept in a little cell at the door of the Chapel of the Apparition. There they sung their proper hymn, and another friar entertained the company with a sermon in Spanish, touching the scourging of our Lord.

"From hence they proceeded in solemn order to the Prison of Christ, where they pretend he was secured while the soldiers made things ready for his Crucifixion; here, likewise, they sung their hymn, and a third friar preached in French.

"From the Prison they went to the Altar of the Division of Christ's Garments; where they only sung their hymn, without adding any sermon. Having done here, they advanced to the Chapel of the Derision; at which, after their hymn, they had a fourth sermon (as I remember) in French.

"From this place they went up to Calvary, leaving their shoes at the bottom of the stairs. Here are two altars to be visited, one where our Lord is supposed to be nailed to the Cross; another where his Cross was erected. At the former of these they laid down the great Crucifix (which I just now described) upon the floor, and acted a kind of resemblance of Christ being nailed to the Cross; and, after a hymn, one of the friars preached another sermon, in Spanish, upon the Crucifixion.

"From hence they removed to the adjoining altar, where the Cross is supposed to have been erected, bearing the image of our Lord's body. At this altar is a hole in the natural rock, said to be the very same individual

one, in which the foot of our Lord's Cross stood. Here they set up their Cross, with the bloody Crucified image upon it; and leaving it in that posture, they first sung their hymn, and then the father-guardian, sitting in a chair before it, preached a Passion Sermon in Italian.

"At about one yard and a half distance from the hole in which the foot of the Cross was fixed, is seen that memorable cleft in the rock, said to have been made by the earthquake which happened at the suffering of the God of Nature, when the rocks rent, and the very graves were opened (Matthew 27: 51). This cleft, as to what now appears of it about a span wide at its upper part, and two deep; after which it closes; but it opens again below (as you may see in another chapel, contiguous to the side of Calvary); and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. That this rent was made by the earthquake that happened at our Lord's Passion, there is only tradition to prove; but that it is a natural and genuine breach, and not counterfeited by any art, the sense and reason of every one that sees it may convince him; for the sides of it fit like two tallies to each other; and yet it runs in such intricate windings as could not well be imitated by art, nor arrived at by any instrument.

"The ceremony of the Passion being over, and the Guardians' ceremony ended, two friars, personating, one, Joseph of Arimathea, the other, Nicodemus, approached the Cross, and with a most solemn-concerned air, both of aspect and behaviour, drew out the great nails, and took down the feigned body from the Cross. It was an effigy so contrived, that its limbs were soft and flexible, as if they had been real flesh: and nothing could be more surprising, than to see the two pretended mourners bend down the arms, which were before extended, and dispose them upon the trunk, in such a manner as is usual in corpses.

"The body, being taken down from the Cross, was received in a fair large winding-sheet, and carried down from Calvary; the whole company attending as before, to the Stone of Unction. This was taken for the very place where the precious body of our Lord was anointed and prepared for burial (John 19: 39). Here they laid down their imaginary corpse; and casting over it several sweet powders and spices, wrapt it up in the winding-sheet: whilst this was doing, they sung their proper hymn, and afterwards one of the friars preach in Arabic, a funeral sermon.

"These obsequies being finished, they carried off their fancied corpse, and laid it in the Sepulchre, shutting up the door till Easter morning. And now after so many sermons, and so long, not to say tedious a ceremony, it may well be imagined, that the weariness of the congregation, as well as the hour of the night, made it needful to go to rest."

(To be continued).

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

Utterly Unimportant

"Our state and circumstances in this life are utterly unimportant because of its brevity and because of the transcending importance of other greater things. Whatever God wills is best, for it is designed to forward His purpose and prepare us for a place in that purpose."

—Bro. Growcott, *Be Ye Transformed*

Sacrifice

"Present your bodies a LIVING SACRIFICE... which is your reasonable service" Rom. 12:13

Let us view sacrifice in its true and attractive light - a continually repeated process of giving up one thing for the sake of a better one - a gradual advancement toward the most glorious of all blessings and most intense of all pleasures. A full living sacrifice to the perfect will of God.

When a man, according to the Law, took the best of his possessions and laid it on God's altar, what did it signify? It was an intelligent, worshipful recognition that what God had yet to give was vastly greater and more glorious than that He had already given. That everything a man had, including his own life, he would gladly and eagerly lay upon the altar of his faith in God's plans for his future eternal blessing."

—Bro. Growcott, *Be Ye Transformed*

The Deep Places Of The Earth

"In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land." Why should "the deep places of the earth" be mentioned more than the flat places or the wide places? There seems to me to be a reason. If there is one time more than another when we are enabled to feel our own absolute insignificance, or tempted to doubt the power of God, it is when we have to do with the deep places of the earth. On the iron-bound coast, you peep over the mighty Crags into the dizzy depths below, where ships are specks, and great rocks like very small stones on the strand; or from a mountain side, you gaze down into a yawning gorge into which a single false step would precipitate you to destruction; or in the mammoth underground caves of the American Continent, you wander with lantern light in miles of mazy darkness til

at the end you come to a fathomless deep into which you throw stones that never reach the bottom, so far as you can make out from the sound—in such places and at such times there is a world of meaning in the words: "In his hand are the deep places of the earth." If in his hands are the deep places of the earth, we powerfully feel how great is He and how entirely and implicitly we are in His hand. So also with the strength of the hills. The great mountains overwhelm us with the idea of stupendous power; if this strength is "His," how strong is He as well as wise and kind. It is not without a meaning that the Scriptures speak of Him as "the great and dreadful God." His greatness is unsearchable.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1879

A Name to Live

Christ's message to Sardis is, *'Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.'* This is a verdict which only a Divine discernment could pronounce, but the fact that such a verdict should be applicable to any ecclesia (especially one existing at the end of the first century) is suggestive of grave reflections for all—as is intended.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1890

Those who advocate loose fellowship always quote, among their seeming scraps of support, the case of Sardis, where the 'few' living remained with the many dead. But, as bro. Roberts points out, they appeared to live: the deadness was apparent only to 'Divine discernment.' We may sadly suspect death in many cases, but it is not for us to pronounce it if there's a show of life. GVG

Adam

ADAM (before he sinned) was neither mortal nor immortal. He was in a neutral state between. 'Adjudged unworthy of immortality' is a true description of the result of his probation.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1894

Baptized for the Dead (1 Cor. 15:29)

THE idea is, baptized *with reference* to the dead. Baptism is a death-meaning institution: *'Baptized into his death'* (Rom. 6:3). And Paul's argument is: Why should believers be baptized for unto death, if there is no resurrection? —for such an institution could never have been appointed to *establish* death, but to *destroy* it.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1894

Caught 'Up' into Paradise

"How is Paul's statement (2 Cor. 12:2-4) that he was '*caught up to the third heaven ... to Paradise*' to be harmonized with the fact that Paradise is to be in the Holy Land?"

BY the fact that Paradise in the Holy Land will be the '*Third Heaven.*' Paul was speaking of visions and revelations (vs. 1, 7). Visions and revelations are exhibitions of coming realities, and not of contemporary facts. This may be discerned in the contemplation of Rv.1:1; Acts12:9; and Eze.40:2.

As for '*up,*' there is no preposition in the original. What Paul wrote was *harpagenta* (v.2), and *heerpagee* (v.4)—the passive participle and the third person singular aorist, respectively, of the verb *harpazo*: 'to seize or snatch away'—fairly rendered in the Diaglott, 'conveyed away.' It is the idea expressed by John—

"He carried me away in the Spirit" (Rev. 17:3; 21:10).

Paul was conveyed forward in vision to Paradise, which is the third Heaven-political: 1) Antediluvian; 2) Mosaic; 3) Millennial.

This is one of the things in Paul's letters to which Peter refers as being "*hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest*" (2 Pt. 3:16). It is possible to understand them, however, by a right division of the Word of Truth.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1892

Choosing to Break Bread Alone

Breaking bread alone is disobedience when a meeting of brethren is within reach. Christ's command is that we '*forsake not the assembling of ourselves together*' (Heb. 10:25). And the assembling was to be '*in one place*' (I Cr. 11:18; 14:23; Ac. 20:7). A breaking of bread in private that ignores these injunctions is as great an act of disobedience as if we did not break bread at all. We cannot hope that such a breaking of bread could be accepted.

Bro. Robert Roberts—1889

Creation: '*Bara*'

IT is true that *bara* is the Hebrew word translated '*create.*' But it is not true that the word 'create' means to make out of nothing. It has nothing to do with either the metaphysical or the chemical aspect of the

process. It has merely to do with the fact of the process, leading to a result not before apparent.

God 'creates' in the sense of making things that previously had no existence, but the word *bara* does not tell us how He does it. In itself, as a term, it merely means 'to arrange, to put in order.' The 'how' it does not touch. We have to learn this from express information.

It is not out of nothing He creates. He 'created' man (Dt. 4:32; Is. 14:12). But so far from creating him out of nothing, we are informed that He made him of the '*dust of the ground*' (Gn.2:17). So when He makes the creatures—

"Thou sendest forth Thy spirit: they are created" (Ps.104:30).

Heaven and earth are created by His power (Jr. 32:17), which is a reality; by His Spirit, which is substance; by His word and will, which are far from being nothing:

"By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens" (Job 26:13).

"Out of Him (ex ou) are all things" (1 Cor.8:6).

"In Him all things exist" (Acts 17:28).

Bro. Robert Roberts—1892

A Cloke of Covetousness

The Apostle Paul uses this phrase in 1 Thess. ii. 5. In the original it is *prophasis pleonexias*. He employs this form of speech in reminding the saints of the circumstances attendant upon his first appearance among them "in speaking unto them the Gospel of God." He tells them that in that speaking there was no deceit, uncleanness, guile, man-pleasing use of flattering words, nor *prophasis* of *pleonexia*. The first of these is rendered *cloke* in the Common Version, and signifies strictly *that which appears*; and so *that which is alleged to cover the real state of the case, an apparent cause*. Thus, if Paul had gone to Philippi pretending that, from pure affection for their "precious immortal souls," he had visited them to invite them to God's Kingdom and glory"; when his real object was to "establish a Church" which should pay him a stipend of two thousand dollars per annum, with donation perquisites and marriage and funeral fees—such pretence would have been a *prophasis* or "cloke" of *pleonexia*. But, on the contrary, for him to go to Philippi in obedience to the command of the Spirit, or in consequence of a cry from thence, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"—and to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom there in the face of much contention and opposition; and for him to succeed in gathering together a company of obedient believers rejoicing in the Truth; if, on

effecting this, they, in the richness of their liberality, presented him, with two thousand dollars, bidding him good speed, and go elsewhere and labour there as he had with them, Paul might lawfully have accepted it; and have left them still more deeply indebted to him than they could pay. Although Paul might reasonably have expected before he went, that if the glorious truth he was able to impart to them were received in the love of it, such distinguished liberality would result; nevertheless, his going being consequent on being sent, or on being invited to help them, and without any previous stipulation, his speaking the Gospel would not have been "a cloke of covetousness." Some envious, or narrow-minded souls, would seem to have insinuated this against him; for he calls God to witness, which is a solemn appeal, implying that he did not appear among them for what he could make of them through false pretences, whatever evil speakers might affirm: "We speak," says he, "not as pleasing men, but God who trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness; nor of man sought we glory; neither of you nor of others, *when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ.*" Excepting these words in *italics*, we can also appeal to God's testimony that from the day circumstances forced us uninvitingly into public speaking even to this present, we have spoken the truth as we came to know it, upon the principles set forth in 1 Thess. ii. 3-6, and always intend so to do, stipulating and asking for nothing; but leaving it to the spontaneous liberality of believers and their appreciation of our endeavours to determine what recompense, if any, it would be their privilege to communicate. This method our friends well know, is the rule of our proceeding. We glory in it as a free and independent proclamation "of the perfect law of liberty"; and so affording scope for a generous and *unconstrained* contribution according to the ability of those whom the Truth has freed. This is the divine method of supporting those who preached the Gospel, whether they were Apostles or "faithful men who were able to teach others," it ensured "cheerful givers," though it could not exclude envy and evil-speaking.

As to *pleonexia*, the word used by Paul in the text before us, and rendered *covetous* in the Common Version, the primary import of it is, "*some good which one possesses more than another.*" There is nothing criminal in one man *having more* of some good than another. The law, however, forbids a man *desiring to have* anything belonging to his neighbour; yet this did not interdict *buying*, which is based on a desiring to have; for men only buy what they want. *Desiring to have what was forbidden* was the original sin in its conception. Moses says that the fruit of the tree of knowledge was a *desire* to the eyes; and the

tree itself "a tree to be *desired*." But these desirable things were interdicted; and, therefore, the sin of desiring to have them. Had they not been forbidden, there would have been no sin in desiring to have them. Had they not been forbidden, there would have been no sin in longing for them, and taking of them; for Paul says: "I had not known sin if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet."

The radical import of *covet*, in the Scriptural use of the term, is *to desire to have unlawfully*; hence, to lust after anything. Hence, also, "all uncleanness" is styled by Paul "covetousness" in Eph. v. 3, as "fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you, as becometh saints." If a man, therefore, lust after another man's wife, and have criminal conversation with her, he is both an adulterer and a covetous man, though he might scatter his gold and silver like chaff in the interests of flesh and blood. Hence, covetousness is not confined to finance, but embraces the whole range of human lusts—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; which are all fatal to our future life when gratified contrary to the divine law.

But Paul also says that "*covetousness is idolatry*." Idolatry is the worship of idols, whether they be idols of the affections or the idols of the mind. Any lust by which a man is enslaved is the idol of the man. He worships it, and whatever the lust prompts him to, that he desires to obtain at all risks, hazards, or consequences. Hence, an inordinate desire of gain, inordinate lust, are also significations of the word; and hence, also, by implication, he is styled *pleonektes*, or a covetous man, "who *defrauds* for the sake of gain; and is *inordinately devoted* to carnal lusts. A desire of gain, in accordance with what is lawful and right is not covetousness; and is nowhere forbidden in the Word. If it were covetousness, then there is not a trader, mechanic, or labourer extant, but is a covetous man, and therefore an idolater; for they all desire gain by the practice of their crafts. The supposition is absurd, and none but a simpleton, or worse, would affirm it. To those, then, who have ignorantly, and necessarily therefore presumptuously, charged us with covetousness in making gain by publishing works which unfold to mankind "the knowledge of God," to such we say that what we make we gain by the dissemination of Heaven's Truth, for the eternal well-being of our contemporaries who may believe, while what ye make ye gain by exhausting your energies the live-long day, in ministering to the whims, luxuries, wants, and necessities of the Old Man of the Flesh, which all perish in the using. Ye live by the evil, we by the good that is in the world. Amen!

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

Hints For Bible Markers

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man that walketh not
In the paths of the unjust,
Nor in the way of sinners stands,
Nor sits in the scoffers' seat;
But whose delight is in the law
Of God, the Lord, Most High,
And on his precepts meditates
By day and night alike.
He's like a tree by rivers set,
Which timely fruit doth yield,
With leaves of evergreen;—all things
Shall thrive which he attempts.
The unrighteous are not so; they are
Like chaff which blows away.
The wicked therefore shall not stand
In judgment on that day;
Nor shall transgressors stand their ground
In the concourse of the just:
For God the just man's way doth know,
But theirs to woe conducts.

C. M.

Some Thoughts On The Psalms

When we think about the Psalms we often think of David. No doubt much of what he wrote came from the experiences he had in life. But the Spirit was always guiding what he wrote. Influencing how the thoughts were put down, that they might serve the purpose of the Almighty. Brother Roberts once said, "that it takes a mind well enlightened in the purpose and principles of the spirit speaking in David to discern the import of that spirits utterances through David." Careful thoughtful reading will show though some of the Psalms can apply to David, there are very many which cannot. The enlightened thoughtful mind, will find the mind of Christ rooted in all the Psalms. Certainly Jesus studied the Scriptures night and day and meditated on the law of the Lord. We find the book of Psalms opening with Christ thoughts on the righteous, unrighteous, and judgment. Not the present order of things but of that which is to come. Surely Jesus would use these thoughts to sustain him during his sojourn in Israel.

—Bro. Beryl Snyder

Psalm 1:1

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

The world around us is filled up with the ungodly, people who do not understand or care about God, His words, and His commands. The mind of the flesh rules their thoughts and actions. As opposed to those who have the word of God in their hearts and minds allowing his principles to be their rule. The theme of this verse is that those who eschew the world, its ideas, pleasures, its entertainments, and its reasoning are blessed.

Continued next month should the Lord will. *[The Apostolic Advocate](#), Volume 4, 1837, Page 180