

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 uplifting 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

BRISBANE, Australia

Dear brethren & sisters,

Loving Greetings in our Master's Name and Service,

On behalf of the Brisbane Berean Christadelphian Ecclesia, I have pleasure in reporting the baptism of two more members in Papua New Guinea during a recent visit by Bro. and Sis. Peter & Sharon Small. Therefore, we are grateful to Bro. Peter for his following report:

Report from PNG

“We had the very great pleasure of flying to Papua New Guinea for a three-day visit on August 16th, the main purpose being the interview and baptism of **Kumo Sekom** and **Keen Yawali**. Our brother Kumo had recently completed a series of nine 2-hour Skype sessions during which we went through the Baptismal Review Book, which he then re-read in preparation for our visit. Bro. Keen, however, cannot read, and is elderly, but few more earnest men we have ever had the honour of meeting. Bro. Macx had spoken to Keen on various occasions for a number of years and we met him on our first visit to PNG a couple of years ago. On that occasion, visiting Mt. Hagen and other places in PNG, we gave a series of addresses on “Understanding the story of the Atonement.” For each of the sessions over the two days we spent in Mt. Hagen, it was noticeable that Keen sat on the edge of his chair, listening to every word with a concentration unmatched by anyone else. At the end of that first visit, he came to me and said “your work with me would not be in vain”. We asked our friends in Mt. Hagen who were going through the Key Lessons, to spend time with Keen reading them to him.

Keen was the first in the room last year when we spoke over two days on “What prophecy reveals will occur after the return of Christ”. When he heard we were planning a brief visit to Lae to baptize Kumo, he asked bro. Macx if it would be possible to travel with him down to Lae to get baptized. Since we had recorded the Skype sessions going through the Baptismal Review Book with Kumo, we asked bro. Macx to play these recordings and discuss them with Keen prior to our visit. This he did over a period of two weeks in Mt. Hagen, and then again in Lae before we arrived. These same recordings are now being used in other areas on MP3 players that we have distributed to interested friends who want to be baptized, but are not able to directly connect with us via Skype.

Sis. Sharon and I arrived in Lae on the evening of Friday 16th August, and could not pass up the opportunity of proclaiming God's Berean 2013—290

Truth on the Saturday with as many interested friends that bro. Macx could contact. We hired a hall and did a three-part study on “Jeremiah the prophet of doom and the Hope of Israel.” During this day of study we took the opportunity to introduce the way we are now presenting the Key Lessons and Baptismal Review Book. With the help of sis. Denise Wilson, this is now being presented as a four-stage format. The first book containing Lessons 1-8, also includes in the binding, a clear plastic envelope with the bible reading companion. The second stage book contains lessons 9-18 and likewise contains an envelope with a Christadelphian Instructor. The third stage booklet contains Lessons 19-25 and in it’s clear envelope a copy of “The Blood of Christ” after lesson 20, as well as a supplement from Elpis Israel - “The Constitution of Sin and Righteousness.” The Key Lessons are being supplemented with additional topics where further explanations have been requested. The Baptismal Review Book is the fourth stage given to those who express an interest in getting baptized.

We take this opportunity to thank those who have been so kind in reviewing the Baptismal Review Book. We have incorporated the helpful suggestions in its latest edition that we are currently using in PNG. A number of new interested friends have started this program as a result of our talks on Jeremiah.

All present during Saturday’s Bible talks, and others who have also been studying the Key Lessons, as well as bro. Macx and bro. Hensley, joined us at the Morobe Park overlooking the Lae harbor at 10 AM. Despite the rain of the previous days, God blessed us with a beautiful sunny Sunday morning. Over a period of three hours we witnessed Keen & Kumo give good confessions of their faith. We also took the opportunity during this time to pause and expound on some of those things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Many of our interested friends who attended took notes, and many passers-by stopped and listened intently to what was being said.

At approximately 1:30 PM Sunday 18th August 2013, Keen and Kumo were baptized into the all sin-covering name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Later that afternoon, sis. Sharon, myself, bre. Macx, Hensley, Kumo and Keen met together at our hotel where we had a memorial meeting. In extending the right hand of fellowship on behalf of all Berean Christadelphian ecclesias to our new brethren, we spoke briefly of the Rechabites (Jeremiah 35) which had formed a part of our previous day’s study and of their faithful ancestor “Jonadab the son of Rechab” (the willing of Yahweh shall ride) who met Jehu (Yah is he) on his Divinely appointed mission as a great type of the Lord Jesus Christ with his immortal saints to destroy the household of Ahab and

Jezebel's apostate religion. We expressed the sincere hope that when Yahweh is manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ "at his coming," our two new brethren will be among "the willing of Yahweh" who with "confidence, not shrinking from him in shame" (1 John 2:28) will eagerly come forth to meet our Lord, and that when the greater than Jehu asks "is your heart with me as mine is with you" they will be able to say, "It is" (2 Kings 10:15). May the Lord then extend his right hand to our brethren to be taken up into the cherubim, which bro. Thomas says (Phanerosis "Yahweh manifested in Cherubim pg 87) all must become as a condition to be in God's kingdom, and will "ride" with "the Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (Revelations 19).

May Yahweh be with our two new brothers in their walk towards God's coming Kingdom. May "the God of the harvest" (Luke 10:2) continue to help those who earnestly seek to worship Him in spirit and in truth, that at our Lord's appearing there may be many in PNG lifting up and exalting God's righteousness in their lives by "the obedience of faith".

Your brother in Christ,
Peter Small

Would brethren and sisters kindly note that Bro. Kumo's address for correspondence is P.O. Box 2648 Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. Any mail for Bro. Keen should be sent to him in care of Macx Kota, P.O. Box 2583, Lae, Morobe Province, Papua New Guinea. Please note one qualification with mailing to either of these brethren or to our other two members in PNG; it is preferable and safer for books or similar to be sent to us at P.O. Box 66 Capalaba Queensland 4157 Australia. We in turn can send on by special delivery as we are now regularly doing with books and other materials as needed.

On behalf of the Brisbane brethren and sisters, yours Zionwards,
Ted Mingham

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.

In Labours More Abundant

“Through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel to you . . . and my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected” (Gal. 4: 13-14).

SECOND CORINTHIANS CHAPTER TWELVE

To what extent do we enter into the spirit of Paul—the spirit of constant, intimate concern for, and identification with, the problems and burdens of the least and the remotest of Christ's brethren and sisters?

“If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities” (11:30).

This is what he goes into in chapter 12, where he reveals two of the most striking and marvellous aspects of his personal experiences in the Truth: his visions, and his “thorn in the flesh”—which are intimately related together as —

“The things which concern mine infirmities.”

The “thorn in the flesh,” which was an object of scorn and ridicule and disgust to Paul's enemies, really was the very opposite of what they took it to be, for it was actually the result and evidence of Christ's special favour toward him. It was given him because of his special and unique exaltation in God's use and purpose, to protect him from the temptations of pride —

“I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago” (v. 2).

He is, of course, speaking of himself. His form of words indicate that he is not speaking as an independent person, or of personal accomplishments, but as a chosen instrument of Christ. When he wrote this, it was fourteen years since the beginning of his ministry in the

ecclesias, when Barnabas brought him from Tarsus to Antioch. The vision to which he refers was before that.

“Whether in the body, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell.”

Paul did not know what form the vision took, or how it was presented to him—whether he saw with his eyes or just with his understanding. It was not important. God's ways of operation are beyond our capacity of comprehending.

“Caught up to the third heaven.”

Peter clearly tells us what the third heaven is. Speaking of the great world dispensations, separated by the universal judgments of God, he refers to the —

“Heavens and earth of old” (2 Pet. 3:5)

— before the Flood—perishing in an overflowing of water: the first heavens. Then (2 Pet. 3:7) —

“The heaven and earth which are now, reserved unto fire of the day of judgment”

— the second heavens. And finally the —

“New Heaven and New Earth wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Pet. 3:13),

—for which we look: the third heaven—the Millennium and Beyond.

Especially the Beyond, as far as the visions of Paul are concerned. The Millennium itself is but the brief stepping-stone to the eternal order of things wherein God will be *“all in all.”*

These visions Paul was not permitted to discuss with anyone—not even his closest and most intimate associates in the work. They were for him alone, of all mankind. What a burden of glory and responsibility for a mortal man to bear!

“How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter” (v. 4).

Paul clearly here speaks of Paradise interchangeably with the third heaven, and we find this confirmed both in Jesus' words to the thief on the cross, and also in the reference to “Paradise” in Revelation 2, compared to the “New Heaven” of chapters 21 and 22.

“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the

messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (v. 7).

What was Paul's “thorn in the flesh”? It is impossible to say. There are many theories. We can, however, determine certain things about it, from this passage and others. The two most widely held theories as to what it was are epilepsy and ophthalmia—a painful, handicapping, offensive-appearing eye disease.

It is to the Galatians and Corinthians, the two places where his authority is challenged and his person derided, that he speaks of this affliction. What we do know about it is that it was first of all humiliating and humbling—this present passage says that was its divine purpose.

It was a burden and a handicap in the work of the Truth. He speaks of it as a “thorn”—or more properly a “stake in the flesh.” He speaks of it as a “temptation” and an “infirmity” that is a trial and a weakness.

The big lesson is that Paul had to be handicapped, humbled, mortified, humiliated, for his own safety and good. Pride is the great danger. We can all see it so clearly in all its silliness in everyone else.

All are constantly on guard to justify themselves, to wriggle out of embarrassing mistakes, to cover up humiliating evidence of ignorance or wrong judgment, to relate little self glorifying experiences illustrating how clever they are and how foolish others are in comparison. Most arguments are just two prides making a foolish spectacle of themselves.

It is hard to see all this in ourselves, though strangely everyone else seems to have it.

Perhaps Paul's most enlightening reference to his affliction is what he says to the Galatians who, like the Corinthians, had once shown him great affection as the bearer of the Gospel of life to them, and then had despised him at the instigation of his enemies. In Galatians 4:13-15 he says —

“Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the Gospel unto you at the first: and my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected.”

The word for “rejected” literally means to “spit out,” and is used about things that are repulsive and disgusting.

This gives us more light on the nature of Paul's humiliating affliction. In their earlier thankful affection for him they had not

despised him nor been repelled by the offensive-appearing nature of his infirmity. He continues (v. 15) —

“Where is then the blessedness ye spoke of?”

“For I bear you record that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me.”

It is principally this statement that has convinced many that Paul's “thorn” was an affliction of his sight by a disease which gave him repulsive appearance. This, as a counter-balance to his visions, is considered all the more fitting as a reminder, for it was his eyes that were affected by his first vision of Christ on the road to Damascus.

But it is not conclusive and it is better not to speculate. What he says concerning the Galatians giving him their very eyes, if possible, is not an unusual way of expressing extreme affection, and may have no direct reference to the nature of his affliction.

We do know it was a great burden, humiliation, and handicap. Beyond this we cannot go.

“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me” (v. 8).

He apparently knew its purpose, but still he found it such a grievous burden that three times he implored that it be removed. The first two times he appears to have been refused, without being given an explanation, but on the third occasion he was given an answer by Christ that was all-sufficient for him.

The affliction was given, he says at first, “lest he be exalted” by his special privileges, and position in God's purpose. This is negative—to prevent something undesirable happening, and Paul would feel it had served its purpose and he was doubtless confident—perhaps rightly so—that the danger of that had passed.

But Jesus' final answer gives the positive, constructive side; and Paul understood, and was content —

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (v. 9).

One of the greatest dangers the Truth of God faces in every age is when it attracts clever, capable, self-confident people who take it over and drive it forward to a self-destructive success, like Laodicea—outwardly rich, and successful, and increased with goods, and in need of nothing.

“MY strength is made perfect in WEAKNESS.”

Paul strongly emphasizes this vital truth at the beginning of the first epistle —

“Ye see your calling, brethren—not the wise, the mighty, the noble; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world, the base things, and things which are despised, and things which are not—which are nothing—to bring to nought things that are” (1 Cor. 1:26-28).

As soon as the Truth starts to get socially respectable in the world, as soon as it begins to attract the “intellectuals,” it is on its way out, and a complete new beginning has to be made if anything is to endure.

The painful, distressing, humiliating thorn in the flesh was not just a negative leash to keep Paul from going wrong. Rather, in the love and wisdom of God, it was a positive force to make him a more fitting, suitable, and useful vessel for the grace poured upon him and the work set before him.

God's ways are not man's ways. They are usually the very OPPOSITE of man's ways. To the eyes of man's wisdom they are incomprehensible foolishness. The mind of the flesh cannot understand them.

Do we have the mind of the flesh, or the mind of the Spirit?

Do we think naturally and animally according to “common sense,” as all the world does, or do we perceive the utter falseness of all natural thoughts? Paul says (1 Cor. 2:15-16) —

“He that is spiritual discerneth all things ... we have the mind of Christ.”

After the third entreaty for relief from the thorn, Paul understood and was content.

It was not just a matter of resigning himself to the inevitable, and patiently accepting something he could not help. That is not enough. That will never do. That won't accomplish anything.

That again is just negative. That's no glory to God. If it is glory to anyone, it is glory to the one who suffers meaninglessly in patience. Paul goes much further (v. 10) —

“Therefore I TAKE PLEASURE—I rejoice—in infirmities, in contempt, in hardship, in persecution, in distress for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then am I strong.”

When I am most helpless physically, socially, financially—most helpless from every natural, worldly point of view—then am I closest to the infinite strength and power and might and care of Christ who strengtheneth me.

We can see—and Paul could see—that his thorn in the flesh was not just an external added burden to counteract the effect of his visions and revelations.

Rather it was an integral, essential part of the whole pattern of Christ's infinite grace upon him. It was part of the special, unique revelation that was personally given to him of the marvellous working of the wisdom of God.

What is the lesson for us? We are not Paul. The more we learn and realize and meditate upon concerning this man, the more we realize our utter comparative uselessness and insignificance and unprofitableness.

Here was a man who, second only to Christ himself, was completely enrapt and enveloped in the purpose of God—who stood at its very heart and vortex.

But the lesson IS for us. In our little, secondary, inconsequential way, the lesson is for us.

It means a complete reversal of all mental values, so as to be able to truly, sincerely find peace and rejoicing in tribulation and deprivation: a complete change of life-interest, of life treasure, of life-meaning.

Everything that seems important to the natural mind must become completely unimportant. Everything that seems unimportant to the natural mind must become infinitely important. All the meaningful little round of daily care—what shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed, where shall we live—must become utterly unimportant to us, if we are to learn the lesson of life.

These things truly must be taken care of in an orderly way, as quickly and simply as possible, but they CANNOT become objects of interest or absorption or continual conversation. The mind must be filled with better things.

“I will glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me—for when I am weak then am I strong!” (vs. 9-10)

Paul's whole life and joy and interest and treasure was CHRIST IN HIM, the hope of glory. Whatever was related to that was important to Paul; and nothing else was. To him this was the great reality and pleasure and satisfaction of life, and the more everything else was taken away from him, the greater this enjoyment became. He said, simply and all-inclusively —

“To me, to live is Christ.”

And so it must come to be with us, if we are to live at all, in any true, and spiritual, and joyful sense.

The love of Christ was Paul's greatest possession—the fellowship of Christ his greatest pleasure. We need not pity Paul for the burden of his suffering, nor commiserate him for the loss of all the rubbish the stupid world holds dear.

Rather we should envy him for the unassailable joy of his single-minded devotion, and emulate him in his casting aside of all things that he might win Christ.

He told the Corinthians earlier in this second letter that he was sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; that he had nothing, yet possessed all things. Paul is so intensely absorbed in the infinite grace and glory of his divine calling that to him all the troubles and cares and losses and sufferings and burdens of the present are but a light and passing thing of little moment.

He sums up his glorious philosophy of life beautifully and movingly in the latter part of chapter 4 of this epistle —

“God has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

“But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

“We are troubled on every side, but not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair. . .” (2 Cor. 4:6-8).

How often are we too “perplexed!” But, like Paul, we must never despair.

“Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not destroyed.”

“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.”

“For our light affliction which is but for a moment. . .”

This is how Paul sums up the intense, lifelong burden of suffering and sorrow that he endured for Christ —

“... our LIGHT affliction which is BUT FOR A MOMENT worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

“We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen,”

“For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:9, 16-18).

—Bro. G.V.Growcott

Lessons from Suffering

By way of exhortation, I would like to talk about a few health issues I had several years ago and from that I would like to bring out 7 lessons altogether, spiritual lessons that might help us to cope in our lives whenever we have severe long term trials and things like that and so a little bit about what happened to me specifically then going back to 2007. Life seemed to be going along quite happily, then I woke up one morning with a bit of a sore neck. At that time I didn't think much more about it, just thought I slept in a strange position and assumed that it would go away during the day and it didn't and was pretty sore by the end of the day. The next day it wasn't getting better, in fact, it was a whole lot worse, so I stopped on the way home to get some pain pills. The next day it was a whole lot worse, so I asked Elizabeth to try to get something to take that would help. It was the weekend, so I couldn't go to the doctor but I did go the following week. He kind of dismissed it and said I probably slept in a strange position. Unbeknown to me I got a bacteria in my neck and it got a foothold and got into the vertebrae in my neck and started eating it, so that the bones in my neck were being dissolved. That was what was causing the pain. The weight of my head was crunching and causing serious pain like having a broken neck. The pressure against my backbone was causing me to be paralyzed. The crunch was pinching a nerve that caused me to not be able to lift my arms up. It kept getting worse and in about 7 weeks I was taken to the hospital when I couldn't walk and I had become weaker and weaker. I became paralyzed from the neck down. I couldn't move my arms at all. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't lie down. I had an emergency operation to take out those 2 vertebrae. They took a chunk of the bone from my hip and stuck it in there with a 4" metal plate and sewed it all together and put me in a head brace, so I could move. That was about 4 months or so, after the operation. I was paralyzed 99 per cent from the neck down. I couldn't walk, I couldn't feed myself or shave, I was helpless. The doctors said they didn't know what was going to happen. They didn't know if I would be like that the rest of my life. Gradually, day by day, tiny things started to get better. Things did get better, but I was off work for 9 months. I went through a very serious time and Elizabeth was expecting and I wasn't able to help her.

There were a number of lessons I learned and I hope they will be beneficial to you, and God willing, none of you will ever have to suffer that way. However, everyone has to suffer at times with long term problems. It could be health problems that won't go away easily, something else that might have happened, or old age, maybe money

problems that make life really hard, or 100 other things that make our lives hard and won't go away soon. When life is really difficult and we are being tried and tested, each of us in a different way, I learned a lot from my experience during that 2 years and want to share ways we can cope.

The seven lessons:

1. We all need to be tried and tested

1 Peter 1:3-9 *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:”*

That is saying, we must be tried and tested. By being tried and tested and having a difficult life at times is how we mould our characters. It is a bit like a pebble in a stream, the waves moving it around smooths off the rough edges.

Trials show that we are being tested by God, that we are sons and daughters. Are we worthy to be in the Kingdom? Do we give up when hard things come our way? If we truly believe what we believe, we can endure all things and develop that faith that is pleasing to our Father – they are all temporary. It brings out in ourselves what kind of a character we have.

“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

These things should bring us closer to God, to realize he is molding and shaping us for the kingdom. It is very humbling and it gets rid of all those rough edges. It gets rid of all the fleshly thinking that we have and should bring us closer to God. He is molding and shaping us for a place in the Kingdom.

1 Peter 4:12 *“Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you...”*

Don't ask 'why me?', etc. We all have to suffer. Some are suffering, and no one knows. We all will have to suffer.

4:19 *“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”*

Hebrews 12:6-8 *“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.”*

We must experience trials if we are truly son and daughters of God. He is preparing us to be fit to be in His Kingdom. It is humbling to know that.

Deuteronomy 8:5-6 *“Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee. Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.”*

Chastening should fill us with joy and love for God. It is like an athlete running a race – after training, you look forward to competing, to demonstrating what you can do. We can see how we get through our trials positively and to show our love for God and not collapse when having difficulties.

2. All are tested differently

We are all tested in very different ways, sometimes opposites – some poor health, some no money, some too much money, some a lack of a partner, some because of their partner, some family not in the Truth, some tested because of their family, some a terrible job, some a job they love and spend too much time with. All trials are different, specific to us.

We all have strengths and weaknesses based on what experiences life has given us. We need to work together, to get to know our brethren & sisters, to understand what trials they have. They will have gone through problems not experienced by us. We will go through things they haven't.

Despite this, we can all help each other. Brethren and sisters may have gone through major trials in their life. We are all being shaped in different ways for the kingdom. I expect nobody will go through the experience I have had.

Malachi 3:16-17 *“Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.”*

3. The daily manna

When faced with insurmountable problems, we can only deal with the problems day by day. Survey – 49% of worry is about past events, 49% about future events. Only 2% is worry about the current situation.

We can't look too far back at what life was like before the problem.

We can't look too far into the future, how long it will take to be back to normal again.

Matthew 6:33-34 *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”*

The Power of Now – just focus our minds on what is happening now, not stuck going over problems in the past, and not stuck wondering what the future holds. That is what got Nebuchadnezzar into trouble – wondering about events that would come to pass after him.

In the hospital, I would try to improve a little every day, so each day I would feel happy despite the enormity of the overall problems.

This is the lesson of the daily manna – had to go out every day. Couldn't collect too much.

4. Thank God for all our blessings

Often when we don't have problems in a certain area of our life, we forget about it, and take it for granted e.g. a son or daughter born into a rich family, never appreciates money in the same way as someone who has worked for it. They take it for granted.

Instead, we need to think about the ways that God has blessed us, and give thanks for everything.

Psalms 34:1 *“I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.”*

Psalms 103:1-5 *“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy*

diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Ephesians 5:19-20 *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;"*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *"Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

Hebrews 13:15-16 *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."*

Often there is a silver lining in every cloud, a way to think of it positively, e.g. I had more time to study the Scriptures and I learned Aramaic over the 9 months I was off work.

5. No problems are insurmountable – all are temporary

We all need to be seen to be happy and cheerful, despite adversity. If we truly believe what we believe, no problem becomes insurmountable, because everything is for a season:

1 Peter 4:12-13 *"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."*

1 Peter 1:6-9 *"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."*

There is always someone worse off than ourselves. Others will learn from your example.

Smiling and being cheerful can strengthen us, and others around us. It is a health tonic, both spiritual and physical. Being down and depressed just makes things worse.

All trials are for a season only. Nothing lasts forever in this life, whether good or bad.

Over time, problems will go away. Our lives will improve. People will be totally unaware of the problems we have had. They might assume life has always been easy, and that we don't have trials.

6. We can comfort others

I had never been in hospital before. I can now understand and empathise with:

- serious, debilitating pain
- long term pain that lasts months
- being ill and weak, and remembering a time when you were strong
- being unable to look after yourself and having to rely on others
- what it must be like to be old, and have sore knees, hips, muscles, to be stiff, etc.

Similarly, all problems we go through mean that we can empathise with a whole new section of brethren and sisters. We can look outwards, rather than inwards.

Whatever our problems are, other saints in the Scripture will have gone through a similar trial:

Health – Job suffered through ill health.

Losing a loved one – Adam and Eve lost their son; David lost his son through Bathsheba, and other sons were killed; Christ lost John the baptist who was beheaded cruelly.

Suffering through close family members – Adam and Eve suffered through Cain; daughters of Canaan were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Loneliness and wanting a child – Hannah and Rachel spring to mind.

Any problem we have, someone in Scripture has had that problem already.

7. Our high priest knows our suffering

Whatever problems we think we have, Christ knows our suffering, and has gone through a similar experience himself.

Hebrews 4:14-16 *“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”*

Hebrews 10:19-24 *“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”*
—Bro. Ewan MacLeod

SIGNS OF THE TIMES (commentary)

Ezekiel 38 - Gog of Magog

Those who have the “hope of Israel” as their guiding star, and who look to the sure word of prophecy, know that the world is approaching a cross roads in history. The “times of the Gentiles”, spoken of by Christ and the prophets of Israel, have run their course through centuries of history – and are now seen to be culminating in the final scene during which the Kingdom will be restored to Israel. Events in Israel, in Europe, in Britain and in Russia are closely corresponding to the long-expected situation that must exist at the time when Christ returns to judge his household and redeem his people Israel.

One of the expectations concerning Europe is that of a united European commonwealth, or confederacy, which becomes subject to Germany and Russia. In 1854 Bro. Thomas published an exposition of Daniel’s prophecy which he entitled *Russia Triumphant and Europe Chained*. He explains therein how the image of Daniel chapter 2 will become confederated into one giant empire, corresponding to that group of nations which we read about in Ezekiel 38 and 39 under the leadership of Gog of Magog.

Today we see this in development. We see a united Europe that is economically very unstable with member nations on the brink of bankruptcy. Nations such as Greece, Spain, Portugal and Italy are becoming ever more dependent on the good will of Germany and

Russia. The below article is of interest as it details the current economic and financial advantage of Germany in the midst of the current European financial crisis. In the end the unstable nations of Europe will have nowhere else to turn but to Germany (for its financial stability) and to Russia (for its resources). Yet another sign for the watchman on the walls of Jerusalem... as we see the day approaching.

—*Bro. Michael Jasionowski*

(19-AUG-13): Profiteering: Crisis Has Saved Germany 40 Billion Euros

Spiegel 19-Aug-13

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble has every reason to smile.

Germany has profited from the euro crisis to the tune of 41 billion euros in reduced interest payments. Strong demand for its debt has cut yields and made it cheaper for Germany to borrow. Meanwhile, the crisis has only cost Germany a mere 599 million euros thus far.

Germany is profiting from the debt crisis by saving billions of euros in interest on its government debt, which has enjoyed a steep drop in yields due to strong demand from investors seeking a safe haven.

According to figures made available by the Finance Ministry, Germany will save a total of €40.9 billion (\$55 billion) in interest payments in the years 2010 to 2014. The number results from the difference between actual and budgeted interest payments.

The information was released in response to a parliamentary inquiry from Social Democrat lawmaker Joachim Poss.

On average, the interest rate on all new federal government bond issues fell by almost a full percentage point in the 2010 to 2014 period. Financial investors regard Germany as a particularly safe creditor because of its solid state finances.

The interest rate savings combined with unexpectedly high tax revenues generated by the strong economy have also led to a decline in new borrowing. Between 2010 and 2012, the German government issued €73 billion less in new debt than planned.

The Finance Ministry is trying to maximize the benefits of the low interest rates by placing more longer-term bonds at favorable rates. Between 2009 and 2012, the proportion of short-term debt issues with maturities of less than three years fell to 51 percent from 71 percent.

According to the Finance Ministry, the costs of the euro crisis for Germany have so far added up to €599 million.

Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 49

THE Bible is a fact, and as such compels our recognition. What form does our recognition take? The question is not a trivial one. Do we receive the Bible as the unerring voice of God to poor, sinful, perplexed man? That this is the correct view is our contention. Let us deal with the question from the standpoint of common sense. It is to ordinary common sense that the Author of the Book appeals. God’s method in this respect is wise; it is excellent. Had God made extraordinary ability, or a course of learning, essential to the attainment of saving truth, how few of us could have survived the grave! God’s way provides for both the cultured and uncultured. It removes from us the risky obligation of having to lean on man; and it also strikes a fatal blow at the pride of learning. Let us, then, exercise our ordinary intelligence, and proceed to consider (month by month) the Bible in relation to its origin, its claims, its evidences, and its difficulties.

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.” Therefore, dear brother, be earnest; avoid affectation and mere showing off, and, above all, talk sense. Remember that your theme is momentous and sacred, and calls for honest, humble, and painstaking effort. Aim at arresting with edifying matter. Forget not that a good, sound thought, however roughly expressed, is worth a score of high-sounding phrases with nothing in them. In view of this, seek to enrich your mind with ideas. Ideas are the product of study and thought. If they exist, words will quickly be found to convey them. Be fair; be logical. Neither strain meanings, misrepresent, nor indulge in clap-trap. Preach for the enlightenment of your hearers, not for self-glorification. Hide self, and let God be seen and heard.

Forgetfulness in relation to Bible truth paves the way for doubt, doubt for denial, and denial for shame and death at the judgment. If we would safe-guard ourselves against unbelief and apostacy, we must not grow weary in reading. This is no guess, but information vouchsafed in divine revelation. Where brethren “give attendance to reading,” there will be no forgetfulness. God, in regard to His law, has put the matter very plainly—“Meditate therein day and night” (Jos. 1:8; Prov. 6:21; Ps. 68:5–8). Forgetfulness is not the only cause of infidelity; but it is a cause, and a very potent one. It matters not how intelligent a man may be in the truth, how moral-minded from a phrenological point of view, he is bound to grow unfriendly with the truth, and ultimately to renounce it, if he cease to read, prayerfully and carefully, the word of his God. Let all men, whether their brain-power be great or small, note this fact, and act wisely.

To talk of Christ dying for himself, without a very careful qualification, is misleading. Let us take heed lest we cloud our own and others' eyes to the plain and precious revelation regarding the object of Christ's death—"My blood is shed for you," Christ said. "shed for the remission of sins." Paul emphasised the same truth: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us"—"he died for us"—"he died for the ungodly"—"for our sins"—"for our offences." Peter, touching upon the subject, said: "Christ also hath suffered for our sins, the just for the unjust." John similarly declared, "Christ was manifested to take away our sins"—"he is the propitiation for our sins"—"he laid down his life for us." Isaiah, centuries before, had foretold the same thing: "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities"—"for the transgression of my people was he smitten." Brother Roberts has very truly said that some brethren have made the mistake of confining attention too exclusively to Christ's own part in the death of the cross. Although Christ was made mortal, a sharer of sin's flesh, and needed redemption, yet it is a paramount truth that God sent Christ, not to save himself, but us (Matt. 1:21); not to purge his sins, but ours (Heb. 1:3).

"We glory in tribulations" (Rom. 5:3). "That is all very well for Paul," a brother may say, "but I am not Paul, and his preaching is not applicable to my case; my lot is too hard." Let us try and look at trouble from Paul's standpoint, and we shall quickly change our complaining tone. The apostle says that trouble is the path of immortal life, and that the amount that each man has is arranged by God, and is never allowed to reach the unbearable point (Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 10:13). He says, moreover, that if we patiently endure it, it will work for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). If all this sounds untrue to us, it is the result of unbelief, and a spiritual tonic to revive our confidence in the Scriptures is needful. Let us get into the company of a truth-loving brother or sister for half-an-hour; or, better still, drink into the spirit of the Psalms. If we would only realise that God is at work in our trouble, that it is only for a "moment," and when rightly estimated, is "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us," we should soon cease to complain and murmur.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1899*

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

VIA DOLOROSA AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS.

The Via Dolorosa (or Street of Pain) shares with the Temple Area the honour of being somewhere within the walls of Jerusalem where

one can breathe freely and walk about in comfort. The former is supposed to be the route along which Jesus carried his cross from the Praetorium en route to Golgotha. In the walls along the Via are embedded marble tablets, with inscriptions denoting the various “Stations of the Cross”; they are as follows: First Station, at the Barracks, on the site of the Castle of Antonia, believed to have occupied the site of the Praetorium, Pilate's Judgment Seat. Second Station, where the Cross was laid upon Christ. Third Station, where Christ sank under the weight of the Cross. Fourth Station, where Christ was met by his mother. Fifth Station, where Simon took the Cross from Christ. Sixth Station, where one of the women (said to be “Saint Veronica”), is alleged to have wiped the sweat from off the face of Christ. Seventh Station, where Christ collapsed and fell to the ground. Eighth Station, where Christ addressed the mourning women, exhorting them not to weep for him, but for themselves. Ninth Station, where Christ is said to have again collapsed. Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Stations, are denoted in the Golgotha Chapels inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; while the Fourteenth Station is within the Holy Sepulchre itself.

There was much to interest us as we journeyed from “Station” to “Station”; for instance, close by the Second Station there is what is called the “Ecce Homo” Arch—an ancient Roman Triumphal Arch, and which is reputed to be where Pilate exclaimed, “Behold the man”. Here, too, have been unearthed the remains of the old Roman pavement, in all probability the “Gabbatha” (or Pavement) where Pontius Pilate sat in the “Judgment Seat”, called the “Praetorium”, or Pilate's Judgment Hall (John 19: 13). Also pointed out were the supposed remains of the Castle of Antonio referred to by Josephus (Book VI). Likewise a column (in the Chapel of Scourging) to which column Christ is said to have been roped when he was scourged. Many of these things may have been so; we know not why they may not be; but we begin to doubt when these shaven-crowned clerical guides showed us a stone with an impression which they asserted was made by the hand of Christ, which he put forth when stumbling under the weight of the Cross! And we became more doubtful, if possible, when, at the “house of Veronica”, they showed us “the very handkerchief” used by Saint Veronica “to wipe the sweat from the brow of the Lord”! The nun in charge, even wanted us to believe the imprint of the Lord's face was to be seen on the handkerchief.

THE TEMPLE AREA

The Temple Area occupies about one-sixth of the entire city of “Jerusalem within the walls”. Its boundary, on the east, is the wall

overlooking the Valley of Jehoshaphat; on the south, by the wall overlooking the juncture of the Valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom (Gehenna); the first affording a fine view of the Mount of Olives, and the latter an equally fine view of the Mount of Offence and the Village of Siloam. On the west, the Temple Area is bounded by the Jewish and Moslem Quarters, and on the north, by the Moslem Quarters. There are ten gates or entrances to the Temple Area, seven being on the west, and three on the north. There does not appear to be any reason for doubting the tradition that in this Area we have the Mount Moriah (referred to in Genesis 22: 1-4) to which Abraham was commanded to go and offer up his son Isaac, as a trial of his faith in God. Neither does there seem any reason for doubting that here was the threshing-floor of Araunah, where the destroying angel stood after the numbering of the Children of Israel by David (2 Samuel 24:16-25). And it seems equally certain that here was erected the Temple of Solomon.

This Temple Area—also known as the Harem esh Sherif (The Noble Sanctuary)—is surrounded by a wall about 1,600 feet long on the east, about 1,550 feet on the west, about 1,050 feet on the north, and about 930 feet on the south. The most notable and attractive erection in this enclosure is of course the “Dome of the Rock”, popularly known as the Mosque of Omar (but which competent authorities declare to be the El-Aksa Mosque, a short distance away, adjoining the southern wall). The Dome of the Rock is octagonal in shape and stands on a ten-foot elevation. Each of its eight sides is 68 feet long. It has four entrances, each facing a point of the compass, north, south, east, and west. The exterior is richly ornamented with porcelain tiles, upon which are inscribed passages from the Koran, in Arabic. There are more than fifty beautiful stained glass windows. The Dome is about 100 feet high, and has a diameter of 66 feet. The floor is made of marble mosaics. An aisle runs around the inside of the wall of the building and is formed by eight immense piers, between each of which there are two columns, all composed of rare material brought from other edifices. Between this outer aisle and the “Rock” is another aisle, cut off from the “Rock” by a similar series of piers and columns of expensive marble and other rare material.

Connected with these piers and columns is an elaborate wrought iron screen, which affords a protection for the sacred “Rock” within. The actual “Rock” measures 58 feet long, by 44 feet wide, and rises about 4 feet 6 inches above the surrounding mosaic pavement. In about the centre of the “Rock” is a circular hole, through which the blood of

the Mosaic sacrifices is alleged to have flowed. There is also to be seen an indented imprint which is claimed to have been made by the hand of the angel Gabriel in preventing the “Rock” following Mahomet when he ascended to heaven on his favourite horse, El Burak! The latter is but a sample of the legendary tales retailed to the tourists and pilgrims on being conducted around this “Dome of the Rock”. The Truth makes such as the writer hereof impervious to such nonsense, and similar old wives' fables.

Now a word or two concerning the adjoining Mosque that of El Aksa, which beyond all question is older than the “Dome of the Rock”. It is more than probable that this is the “Mosque of Omar” treated of by Chronologists in relation to “the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet”, and particularly dealt with in *How Long?* (p. 70, Question 305). It is a huge building, or series of buildings; the Mosque itself being 270 feet long and 180 feet wide, to say nothing about the spacious 86 feet long Arcade and other additions.

Another “place” that particularly interested us in the Temple Area was what is known as “Solomon's Stables”, a huge substructure reached by steps. It is on record that large numbers of Jews sought refuge therein at the Capture of Jerusalem by the Romans in the First Century. On the angles of the piers one can see the holes to which horses were tethered in the days when the Crusaders took possession of the city. There are in all thirteen compartments, the vaulting of which is borne by eighty eight piers, arranged in twelve rows. The length of this subterranean place is over 270 feet, with a width of 200 feet.

By the way, I forgot to mention that the Moslems cling closely to their rights as regards the Holy Places, as they have a right so to do in view of the “Balfour Declaration” and “British Mandate”. Under those edicts, or whatever we may term them the religious and other existing rights, it was expressly declared would not be interfered with, and so when one Friday I set forth to “do” the Temple Area, I was at a loss to understand why I was so pestered with Moslem officials, who shouted at me and gesticulated as only Easterns can. I thought they were tendering their services as guides or were bent on back-sheesh, and upon no less than three times in avoiding or trying to get clear of their unappreciated attention, found myself outside one of the gates to which I have referred; and it was not until the third retreat, that I remembered it was Friday, the day of the week when the Moslems are in possession, and “Gentile dogs” are excluded. (To be continued).

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway*

The Law of Moses

QUESTION: "How is the following difficulty to be met? Paul writes to the Romans—

"Ye are become dead to the Law (of Moses) by the body of Christ (7:4) ... "that being dead (the Law) wherein we were held" (v. 6).

And to the Galatians—*"As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh constrain you to be circumcised" (6:12). And—"If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (5:2).*

Yet, having thus written, he practices what he condemns, for in the Acts (21:21), James says—

"The brethren are informed of thee (Paul) that thou teachest all the Jews which are amongst the Gentiles to forsake Moses.

"Do this therefore that we say to thee, take these four men and purify thyself with them ... that all may know that, those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing, but that thou thyself walkest orderly and keepest the Law."

To which Paul assented, and *"purified himself with them"* according to Moses (v. 26). Paul did more, for (Acts 16:3)—

"He took Timothy and circumcised him, because of the Jews"

He instructs us to *"follow him"* (1 Cor. 17:1; Phil. 3:17). But how? In what he taught, or in what he did?

ANSWER: We are to be followers of Paul, without doubt, in what he taught and also in what he did, so far as that may be applicable to our case, which, in many points, it is not. The conflict between his disparagements of the Law of Moses and his actions in relation to it, is in appearance only.

The first (his disparagements) had reference to the Law as a means of justification of forgiveness unto life eternal. On this point his declarations are uniform—that, although the Law was ordained to life (Rom. 7:10) and capable of being profitable to those who kept it WHOLLY (Rom. 2:25; James 2:10), it was powerless to justify those who broke it, and therefore powerless to justify any, as ALL were transgressors (Rom. 3:23).

Consequently, he strongly maintains in several places, that those who sought justification by the Law, were seeking an impossible thing, and were turned away from the only justification accessible to man, grace (or favor) in Christ (Gal. 5:4).

But this was not inconsistent with the divine authority and excellence of the Law in its civil relations. He says—

"We know that the Law is good if a man use it lawfully, knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient," etc. (1 Tim. 1:8).

Paul's denial of the Law, **as a means of justification** was misrepresented as applying to the Law in its totality, as a system given to Israel. As James and the elders informed Paul on his arrival in Jerusalem, it was reported that he—

"Taught all the Jews which were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses."

Whereas the fact was, as the brethren add, that Paul himself *"walked orderly and kept the Law."*

To silence the slander, which was working hurtfully in Jerusalem, they recommend Paul to publicly conform with a certain requirement, which had a then-present bearing. Paul did so, and for the same reason, on another occasion, he *"took Timothy and circumcised him."*

We must realize that the Law of Moses, given by God, was still nationally in force, so long as Israel occupied the land. So long as God allowed it to continue in national operation, it had a claim on the respect and obedience of every obedient son of Abraham in his civil capacity: and it received this respect and obedience without compromising the truth—which on appropriate occasion they declared—that whosoever sought justification by the Law was fallen from grace.

The interval from the crucifixion to the destruction of the Temple was an interval of transition, having duties that cannot affect either Jew or Gentile in our age.

In this particular matter we have to do with what Paul taught and not with what he did—discerning at the same time that in what he did, he did not condemn what he taught, but only adapted himself to a situation having a separate bearing from the things which he taught.

* * *

QUESTION: "If the Law of Moses was '*ordained to LIFE*' (Rom. 7:10), how can Paul elsewhere say it was a '*ministration of condemnation*' and a '*ministration of DEATH*' (2 Cor. 3:7-9), and how can he say that '*By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified*' (Rom. 3:20)? Could eternal life be obtained by keeping the Law of Moses?"

ANSWER: Your question is answered by the words of Paul—

"The commandment was ordained to life" (Rom. 7:10).

Also of Christ (Mt. 19:17)—*"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."*

Paul further says (Rom. 2:25)—*"Circumcision verily profiteth, IF thou keep the Law."*

From these statements, it follows that life "could be obtained by keeping the Law of Moses." But then, observe what is involved in the "if." It must be a **perfect** keeping. There must not be a failure in a single iota (James 2:10)—

"He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all."

That is, disobedience in one point (Adam's disobedience was only one act) will as assuredly miss life as disobedience of the whole.

Such perfection of obedience was not possible to mere man; because from the multitude and minuteness of its prescriptions, the Law involved a constant memory and constant vigilance of which ordinary human nature is incapable. It was therefore,

"A yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear" (Acts 15:10).

For this reason the Law which was ordained to life, Paul found to be unto death (Rom. 7:10). The Law was weak in its life-giving power, only through the weakness of the flesh (Rom. 8:3). In itself, it was *"holy, just, and good"* (Rom. 7:12).

Its object was to bring man into a helpless position in which salvation should be due to God's kindness. So Paul explains in Rom. 5:20-21.

* * *

QUESTION: "Could life be obtained by keeping the Law of Moses, without faith in the promises made to Abraham (and, consequently, faith in the sacrifice for sin foreshadowed in Eden and through Isaac on Mt. Moriah, and all the sacrifices of the Law—and fulfilled in Christ)?"

ANSWER: The keeping of the Law could not have secured eternal life to anyone refusing or lacking faith in the promises made to Abraham; for, while *"faith without works is dead,"* works without faith is an impossible state of life.

I could not conceive of one obedient to the Law in all things being destitute of faith in the promises made to Abraham, which are so

inwoven in the structure of the Law and so involved in its frequent allusions.

Paul's statement that—"*By the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified*"—is not inconsistent with Christ's words—"*If thou wouldst enter into life, keep the commandments.*"—when the terms are understood.

There is a distinction between "justification" and "obtaining eternal life." Justification is the forgiveness of disobedience (I Cor. 6:11; Rom. 3:23-26). "Obtaining eternal life," in the sense of the question, I understand to be the result of perfect obedience, which none rendered but one.

The Law could confer the right to eternal life on the perfectly obedient, but could not justify the transgressor any more than the law of Eden. As all were transgressors—Jew and Gentile—the Law, as a matter of fact, could not confer eternal life; because **it contained no provision for justification of sinners unto eternal life.**

Nevertheless, it was "*ordained unto life,*" though found by Paul and all others "*unto death.*" But even then it would only have been "*unto life*" in the case of those having that faith without which it is impossible to please God.

And even then, a preliminary death was necessary to wipe away the Adamic sentence. —*Bro. Roberts, 1883*

Christ's Example

It is a remarkable feature of the temptation of Christ that he employed the Scriptures in repelling the suggestions of the tempter. This is a feature worth noting in a day like ours, when the universal tendency is to give the Scriptures a less and less commanding place. With Christ, the fact of a thing being "written" was a sufficient reason for making it a rule of conduct, which is becoming less and less the case in a day when more and more the theory finds favour that the Scriptures are partly or wholly the product of human thought, and subject to human judgment and conscience as to the obligation of its precepts. The implication is obvious that we only stand with Christ fully when we recognise that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and therefore as he said, "cannot be broken" in its truth or authority. —*Bro. Roberts, 1886*

The Brazen Serpent

The brass placed at the top of the pole was first worked into the shape of one of the serpents that bit the children of Israel, to intimate (though that generation did not understand the intimation) that the deliverance of man from the death-bite of sin was to be effected by impaling on a cross the nature that had inflicted this bite—or to use the words of Paul, "*condemning sin in the flesh*": "*destroying through death that having the power of death.*"

It would not have been suitable to have placed a living serpent on the pole; for this would have intimated that the deliverer was to be an actual transgressor. This was an impossibility.

His sinlessness was the great necessity: his **participation of the condemned nature** was the next necessity. The first signified by the lifelessness of the brass: the second by the serpent-shape of the metal.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1874*

Studying Error

Dr. Thomas used to say that when we know the Truth, it is not necessary to go the round of error for purposes of study. It is of no advantage to know its many-hued and always-changing forms and fantasies. The children of light walk in light.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1894*

Theatres

In our judgment, no one has learned the way of godliness to any saving purpose who can see 'no harm' in frequenting theatres, balls, and other similar contrivances of the children of the flesh.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1893*

At Bedtime

At Bedtime sup lightly, dismiss anger, offer thanks, welcome sleep. When morning comes, awake with blessing on your lips, get up in good time, go through the water, present your supplications, and go forth to works of righteousness and mercy.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1889*

Bear With One Another

We are all moving on a great march: a vaster assembly than ever moved through the wilderness of old. And when we stand revealed to Him, and He to us, and we to each other, we shall look back with unspeakable sorrow at the jars, and the discords, and the uncharities of

this mortal life. And for every sweet kindness, for every loving helpfulness, for every patience, for every self-denial or self-sacrifice, we shall lift up thanks to Almighty God.

—Bro. Roberts, 1888

Bible Reading and Justification

WHY should the preface to the Bible Companion 'astound' you? It is not because it sets aside 'the apostle Paul's doctrine of a sinner's justification by faith.' It is not intended to, and does not, in any way conflict with this. On the contrary, it upholds and magnifies it.

For why should the daily reading of the Bible be pressed upon the reader's attention as in the Bible Companion, but because of what Paul says, that the—

"Holy Scriptures are able to make a man wise UNTO SALVATION" (2 Tm. 3:15).

How do they do this but by imparting the faith that justifies? The faith that justifies is defined by Paul as: *"The substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen"* (Heb. 11:1).

We cannot get these invisible and hoped-for things into our minds but by reading about them where God has caused them to be *'written for our learning'* (Rm. 15:4). Hence, to direct a man to a 'process of Bible reading in order to get peace' is just in accordance with the 'instructions given in the New Testament,' instead of being 'far from' them, as you say.

True it is that the work of Christ is the ground of our justification. But this work has no justifying power for a man who is ignorant and unbelieving of it. And how can a man become enlightened with regard to it except through the Scriptures?—where, we quite agree with you, are to be found 'God's thoughts of how a lost sinner is to be saved.'

The reading of the Bible is not set forth as 'the ground on which God justifies the believer,' but as the means by which he becomes enlightened with reference to that ground. 'The value of Christ's work' could not be placed higher than it is in Christadelphian teaching. The question is: How do we come into contact with that work? It is here where we have to differ from modern theology.

We recognize saving faith as the result of belief; and belief as the result of knowledge; and knowledge as the result of the information

God has given us in the Bible. Our whole ground is covered by what Christ says concerning the Gospel—

"He that BELIEVETH and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). —June, 1890

Temptation

THERE is no conflict between the Lord's prayer (*"Lead us not into temptation"*) and the statement of James (1:13) *"Neither tempteth He any man."* There's a difference between the idea of God tempting man, and a man being left or led into circumstances where temptation would operate powerfully.

God influences no man for evil by acting on him in the way suggested by the idle man of James' supposition. A man's being drawn into evil is an affair of his own response, as James says (1:14).

But God might leave a man in circumstances where temptation would be strong, or He might guide him out of such circumstances. Here is where the petition of the Lord's Prayer comes in, without interfering with James' absolute statement. The case is illustrated by the prayer of Agur (Prov.30:8-9)—

"Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor and steal and take the Name of my God in vain."

—Bro. Roberts, 1893

The 'Immortal Emergence' Error

The cause of rupture (in Toronto) was the readiness of one side to fellowship those who believe that the dead at the resurrection are immortal in nature when they come forth; and who therefore practically (and in many cases avowedly) deny that Christ will judge the living and the dead with reference to the question of whether they will enter into life or no. I submitted the following series of propositions for acceptance or rejection—

1. That Jesus is the appointed judge of the living and the dead.
2. That as such, he is the dispenser of life and death at his second appearing.

3. That in order to the exercise of this office, the dead and the living will be assembled before him to give account at his second appearing.

4. That therefore they—ALL of them, living and dead—are, when they come before him, in an unjudged state.

5. That therefore at the moment of resuscitation to renewed life, the dead are not immortal, and that the contention that they are so is inconsistent with the appointed function and honor which God has conferred on Christ as the supreme arbiter of life and death.

6. That a recognition of this truth is one of the essential conditions of fellowship among the brethren of Christ.

7. That fellowship with those who deny this truth is an offense against the Truth, even on the part of a brother holding the Truth.

The issue is not so much a question of the physical condition of the body at any stage of the solemn transition from death to immortality, as to the question of whether or not Christ has been appointed the Distributor of life and death at his coming, and whether or not God has appointed that the living and the dead shall all appear before his judgment seat, in order for the administration of that judgment.

Those who teach that the dead come forth in an immortal state practically deny that Christ will judge them, and render to them life or death, according to his estimate of their deserts. A little allowance is doubtless to be made for honest men who cannot open their minds to the whole scope of the question, and who feel themselves barred and confounded by the expressed words of Paul: "*The dead shall be raised incorruptible*" (1 Cor. 15:52).

But no allowance of good feeling can lead to a compromise of the Truth. If we compromise here, we must be prepared on the same ground to compromise with the honest believer in baby salvation who cannot get past: "*For of such is the Kingdom of heaven*" (Mt. 19:14). Or the honest believer in heaven-going who quotes: "*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:2), and "*I go to prepare a place for you*" (Jn. 14:2). Or the honest believer in hell torments who cannot get past: "*The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever arid ever*" (Rev. 14:11).

In these, and all such like cases, the believer in immortal emergence is able to contend that all statements of truth which appear

to exclude their known corollaries must be elliptical; and that room must be found in them for those corollaries.

That he is not able to do this in the case of Paul's statement about the dead in relation to incorruptibility, is to be regretted. But it ought not to affect the attitude of those who believe the most important truth: that Christ is not only the Judge of the nations, but first of all Judge of his own House, as to whether they are to be permitted to enter into life at all or not.

Can a man be saved who holds immortal emergence? We are not called upon to express—or even form an opinion—upon that point. We are not called upon to judge others at all. Our judgment in the case is a judgment of ourselves merely, to this effect: that faithfulness to the Truth would not allow us to compromise in fellowship the question of whether Christ was to judge the living and the dead at his appearing. The question of how Christ will deal with those who cannot see the Truth on this point, while holding the Truth otherwise, we must reserve.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1888*

THIS last point is vitally important. If it were clearly understood, there would be far less woolliness of thinking on the subject of fellowship, and far less reluctance to faithfully obey the commands concerning it. We judge only ourselves. We separate from error in obedience, for the preservation of the Truth on the earth. We leave the ultimate judgment to Christ. GVG

To American Subscribers Intending To Continue The Ambassador

The backwardness of some part of the subscribers in America to keep pace with their pecuniary obligations towards the *Ambassador*, compels the Editor, much against his will, to adopt the principle of prepayment as the only mode of keeping the machinery in easy motion. Those desiring the *Ambassador* for 1869, will please recognise the necessity for paying up arrears (where any exist) to J. Donaldson, 242, Jefferson Avenue, Detroit, Mich., and remitting to him, at the same time, the price of the next vol., which, at the present rate of exchange, will be TWO DOLLARS-AND-A-HALF. *Only to such will the AMBASSADOR be continued after December next.* Brother Donaldson will forward a list of those who have prepaid, and to these the *Ambassador* will be mailed in January next, and so forward.

To all and sundry, the Editor offers apology for this measure. It is a little more strict than he likes, but it is rendered necessary by the financial exigencies of the situation. The printer cannot be paid, and the enormous demands of the Post Office monthly cannot be met, unless subscribers do their part. Pre-payment will not embarrass or offend honourable subscribers; if it cut off any of an opposite character, there will be no loss.

With these explanations, which the Editor feels confident will commend themselves to the good sense of all reasonable men, the Editor leaves the matter in their hands, to do as seemeth good unto them.

EDITOR. BIRMINGHAM, *September 28th*, 1868.

Futurist or Preterist?

Thus, the end, first in purpose, is the last developed, but first revealed in the prophecy. Not attending to, or ignorant of, this structural peculiarity, some have committed grievous errors in their efforts at interpretation and exposition. It has led them to affirm, that the apocalypse is all to be fulfilled after the advent of Christ; while others declare that its revelation has been fulfilled long ago. Both these extremes meet in absurdity, where they embrace and kiss each other. They are mere assumptions, and too ridiculous for a serious refutation. The former theory is very convenient for the ignorant and the indolent; for if the apocalypse as yet is none of it fulfilled, nor even to begin to be fulfilled till after the advent of Christ, all are upon one low, common level respecting it. He that knows much of doctrine and history is at equal disadvantage with him who knows nothing of either, and thus ignorance is strengthened and consoled.

There are others again who think that much of the apocalypse is fulfilled but have not discernment enough in things past and present to draw the line between the future and the past. Some of these have taken up a notion that all the vials are poured out after the advent of Christ! This imagination has been conceived in a misunderstanding of the fifteenth chapter. They have not perceived that the whole chapter is declarative of the end purposed to result from the outpouring of the vials. It is declarative of the victory of the saints over the constituted authorities of the nations; and the subjection of these to the King of Kings because of manifested national judgment. They err also in supposing, that “the seven *last* plagues” are identical with “the seven

vials.” The seven vials contain “the seven last plagues;” but the plagues and the vials are not severally synchronical. On the contrary, the seven last plagues are synchronical only with the seventh vial; and so much of the sixth as obtains between the advent of Christ and the opening of the judgments of the seventh, is the epoch when One of the Four Living Ones gives the plagues to the angels. The seven last plagues are identical with the Seven Thunders; and as they are comprehended in the seventh vial, the giving of the plagues is represented in the presentation of the “seven golden vials.” These vials contain much more than the “seven *last* plagues.” They contain *first* plagues, styled “*these plagues*” in ch. 16:9, as well as *last* plagues. The plagues of the vials exhibited in this chapter are separated by the thief-like advent of Christ. “*Last plagues*” imply others that are not the last. The former plagues precede the advent; and all developed *after it* are “the seven *last plagues*.” What extraordinary blindness to affirm that none of the vials are poured out till after Christ comes, while his coming is predicted under the sixth! This sixth-vial prophecy is subversive of the notion. The position it occupies as a speaking hieroglyphic shows, that five of the vials, and a considerable part of the sixth, were to be poured out before the advent. It is impossible therefore for the outpouring of all the vials to be delayed till that event. When it takes place, then in giving judgment to the saints recently raised, judged, and chosen, as signified by the “golden girdles” and “pure and white linen,” the golden vials are given to them; and they *consummate* in their seventh vial mission the work of the whole seven vials, which without their intervention would never ultimate in victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name.

This structural feature appears in the prophecy of the seventh vial itself. This is given in the last five verses of the sixteenth chapter; while the result of the whole is briefly stated in three words of the first of them “*it is done!*” It is done consequent upon the pouring out of the vial into the air. The mystery is finished. But this finishing results only when there is no more wrath to pour out upon the air. Before the end thus primordially stated is developed, the voices, thunders, lightnings, earthquake, and hail, must do their work upon the Great City, the cities of the nations, and their political islands and mountains. When these are all disposed of judicially, then, and not till then, will the consummation, primarily announced in the words “it is done” be established.

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka Vol. 4 pg. 30 Logos edition

Hints For Bible Markers

The Psalms - Psalm 1

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.”

It is a foolish thing to run after the way of ungodly influences; unwisely going into the house of mirth to hear those things that draw us away from the understanding and love of God. From Proverbs 19:27 come these words of wisdom, *“Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”* The opening words of this Psalm are exhorting us not to stand with those who know not God in word and deed; those who exult natural fleshly morality; wresting God's word to fit man's social ideas, agenda, and wisdom.

We should avoid those whose conversation is not about the word of God but on current events such as, what “famous person” is doing this or that, how the government is ruining the world by doing this or that, or running down another person for doing this or that. This is the way of the people of the world, the pride of the human mind, using words of scorn to magnify self at the expense of others. *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Psalm 1:2

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.”

The blessed man is desirous to meditate on the law of the Lord day and night. We live in an age like that of Samuel, when he was young, a time of no open vision. There are no plagues in Egypt for the world to hear about or walls falling down as happened to Jericho. To the man of God this makes the word of the Lord even more precious. *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”* (Colossians 3:16). *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:”* (Philippians 2:5). We can only acquire this mind by constant study and meditation. The 11th chapter of Hebrews, the chapter on faith, shows just how important acquiring this mind is. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”* (Hebrews 11:6). What is faith? *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”* (Hebrews 11:1). The evidence, the conviction, comes from the Scriptures of truth, from the prophetic word, and the signs of things to come. If we are ignorant of these Biblical precepts we shall be lacking in faith. For faith comes from only one source and that is the Bible. True faith changes our mental outlook to be more in accordance with the mind of Jesus.

A short look at the childhood of Christ gives an indication of what he considered important. At a very early age he showed a thirst for knowledge. On the return trip from Jerusalem after the Passover his parents found him missing. As parents are aware, children will dawdle for things they enjoy. Why then, was young Jesus missing? He wanted to gratify his thirst for knowledge. He was probably so interested in the word of God that he didn't consider the effect of being missing would have on his parents. When Mary and Joseph finally found him he was among the doctors of the law; among those in Israel most learned in the law and the prophets. What was he doing? *“sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”* (Luke 2:46). Christ was knowledgeable enough that he could sit in the midst of the most knowledgeable men in Israel, hearing them, and being allowed to ask questions! And those that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers.

Continued next month should the Lord will.

—Bro. Beryl Snyder