

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.

Vol. XVII (CII) No. 7

July, 2014

Please send Ecclesial communications to:

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

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

Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

ECCLESIAL NEWS	Goldthwaite
EXHORTATION.....	Thou Also Shalt Be Cut Off 219
.....	The Epistle of James 229
SIGNS OF THE TIMES – IRAQ 233
THOUGHTS	Meditations—Deity’s Ways No. 58..... 234
.....	A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel..... 235
.....	The Truth In Conway Arkansas 1896..... 240
ANSWERS	A Chaste Virgin 241
.....	The Baptismal Formula 242
.....	Pity And Vengeance 244
.....	Jewish Restoration..... 245
.....	Job’s Satan 245
.....	The Gospel Preached In All The World 246
.....	The Irish Problem 247
.....	The Spirits In Prison..... 248
.....	Tribulation 249
.....	Dr. Thomas Gems 250
BIBLE MARKING.....	The Psalms - Psalm 3 252

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

Goldthwaite, Ecclesia

I have the pleasure to announce that we have two new brothers in Christ. Both **Aaron Hurst** and **Peter Gustavsson** were baptized into the one and only hope this weekend after a good confession of their faith.

Aaron was baptized right after supper and Peter was baptized after the evening lecture during Lampasas's annual June gathering. Bro. Glendon gave a short address for both immersions. The next day they were extended the right hand of fellowship by the huge crowd of brothers and sisters attending the gathering.

On the evening of Friday, June 20, the Goldthwaite ecclesia and guests had the pleasure of witnessing the baptisms of our new Brother **Donald Heath** and Sister **Linda Heath** into the one and only saving name. They live in Priddy, and Donald is the brother of Bro. Glenn Rhoades and Sis. Marie Hurst. Their email addresses are donlynn6660@gmail.com and lindaheath47@hotmail.com. and their mailing address is P.O. Box 62, Priddy, TX 76870. Please help us welcome them.

It was very uplifting and joyful to see these make the decision to dedicate their lives to following our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the bonds of the Truth,
Brother Curtis Hurst

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July-21-27 2014**
Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-577-1119,
markbraune@gmail.com Study, "Minor Prophets"
ODIADO KENYA FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**Aug 20-24 2014**
Bro. Shadrack, jackshadrack@gmail.com or Bro. Epa, epawekati@yahoo.com
TENNESSEE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**Oct 4 -5, 2014**
Bro. Jim Rankin, 115 Sherwood Dr., Camden, TN 38320 USA, 731-584-6039,
email jrankin@bentoncountycable.net

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.

Thou Also Shalt Be Cut Off

“Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away ... it is cast forth ...withered ...cast into the fire and burned”—John15:2-6

SALVATION CONDITIONAL ON WORKS OF OBEDIENCE TO THE END OF LIFE

IT is a common conception of the religious world—specifically and dogmatically asserted by some, and taken thoughtlessly for granted by practically all—that once one has adopted and professed some religious affiliation, eternal salvation is assured. Even among those bearing the name Christadelphian, the attitude and way of life of the majority would indicate they labor under the same delusion.

The purpose of this consideration is to demonstrate that—

1. “Faith alone” is NOT sufficient for salvation.
2. Salvation is NOT unalterably determined at “conversion.”
3. Final acceptance by God depends on a sincere, intelligent, practical, consistent obedience to His specific commands to the end of life.

There is much loose, hazy thinking on this subject. The Bible is a large book, and very few are prepared to take the time and trouble to study it thoroughly. Therefore it is widely misunderstood and misinterpreted.

The Catholic Church has developed the doctrine of salvation by works to the absurd extent of instituting a ‘Treasury of the Church,’ built up by those who do more good works than are necessary for their own salvation. The saving benefit of these surplus works can be bought by others whose own performance falls short.

A reaction to this extreme corruption and perversion of the beautiful truth that works are necessary came at the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, resulting in the opposite extreme as typified by Martin Luther who challenged the genuineness of the epistle of James because James insists on the absolute necessity of works, and exposes the meaninglessness of ‘faith’ without works.

Should we be discouraged at finding such conflicting ideas, each claiming the support of the Word of God? We do not think so. We believe that the patient, personal, prayerful investigation of sincerity and humility will reveal beautiful harmony—on this subject as on all Bible subjects—wholly convincing and wholly satisfying.

And when the mind has acquired this, the picture of confusion presented by the churches of the world, while very saddening, will in no wise disturb our faith, but rather prophetically confirm it.

Errors of scriptural interpretation have two common causes—

1. Attempting to find support for preconceived ideas.
2. Basing conclusions on part of the testimony only.

Both are very natural tendencies. No one is entirely free from their influence. We must constantly examine ourselves in this respect. God has caused much scripture to be recorded. He could have made it much briefer if He had wished, and more categorically simple, but for good reasons divine wisdom has chosen this way. And the inspired Paul says (2 Tm. 3:16-17) it is *ALL*—

“Profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Only intimate, loving familiarity with it all as a whole will protect us against the countless errors of incomplete perception **There are no short cuts.** We are cruelly deceiving ourselves if we are hoping for life while neglecting the daily, continual study of the Word.

* * *

We shall consider the subject under these four headings—

1. The necessity of works: obedience, righteousness, dedication, labor.
2. Salvation itself (not just degree of reward) conditional on works.
3. The true, scriptural meaning of “justification by faith.”
4. The necessary good works are actually of God, not of man himself: man himself alone cannot do them.

1. THE NECESSITY OF WORKS

The beliefs of those who put exclusive emphasis on faith without works are drawn principally from the writings of the apostle Paul. Therefore anything Paul has to say regarding the necessity of works will be particularly significant. It is in his epistle to the Romans where Paul appears to make the strongest argument for faith alone against works. He says (Rom.4:2-6)—

“If Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory: but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.”

And perhaps even more strongly in Rom.11:6—

“If by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work.”

Taking these passages alone and going no farther, as many unfortunately do, surely we would seem fully justified in concluding, as Luther did, that faith is everything—that works are not only unnecessary but actually contrary to faith.

But—would we be getting the whole truth of the matter? Or would we be just running off with only a twisted half-picture? In chap. 2 of this same epistle, vs.6-7, we find this—

“God will render to every man according TO HIS DEEDS (RV: works). To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality (God will render) eternal life.”

We must make this also fit into our picture. Again, Rom. 8:13—

“If ye (speaking to baptized, ‘saved’ believers) live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, ye shall live.”

Here again we have the clear issues of life and death depending on our works and conduct. And we note the once ‘saved’ can be lost. Much of the responsibility for the sad state of the religious world today rests with the pernicious doctrine that “Christ has done everything necessary,” and that man is such a miserable, hopeless creature that all he can do is close his eyes and throw himself in his corruption on the mercy of God.

All God’s beautiful, and wise, and detailed instructions whereby man CAN, and must—through the power of God—gradually transform himself to holiness, are quite generally ignored by the churches of the world, because men have been taught that faith alone will save, and once saved they can never be lost.

The stern Word of God, if they would but study it with reverent fear, would rudely awaken them from these baseless dreams of wholesale and effortless salvation. Does not Paul himself say—

“WORK out your salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12).

Jesus declared plainly—

“The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father ... then shall he reward every man ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS” (Matt. 16:27).

Three times in the Revelation (last book of the Bible), Jesus says—

“Every man shall be judged according as his WORKS shall be” (Rev.2;20;22).

Peter adds a solemn word of warning right on this point (I:1:17)—

“If ye call on the Father, Who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s WORK, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”

And James says—

“Faith without works is DEAD” (2:26).

Surely it is very clear from many scriptures that there must be works, fruits, results—to obtain the glorious salvation of God.

2. SALVATION ITSELF (not just degree of reward) DEPENDS ON WORKS

Popular religion says: ‘Once saved, always saved.’ That is, once an individual has ‘believed’ and been ‘saved,’ then nothing they do thereafter can lose them that salvation.

They say the passages we have quoted merely apply to degree of reward, beyond salvation. They will refer to passages in which salvation is spoken of as a thing already accomplished, as—

“He HATH saved us” ... “Ye ARE saved” ... “We which ARE saved.”

As 2 Tim. 1:9—

“God HATH saved us, and called us with an heavenly calling, NOT according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace.”

Here Paul says God *hath* saved us (as something already complete), and also he says it is *NOT according to works*, but His Own purpose and grace. We find a similar expression in Tit. 3:5—

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.”

Note the past tense: a completed action: ‘He saved us.’ Does this mean God arbitrarily calls certain ones and unchangeably bestows salvation on them, regardless of their subsequent actions?

We might assume this, if we confined ourselves to these verses, but we know that this is not so, for we have many testimonies like this from Peter—

“God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, AND WORKETH righteousness, is accepted with Him” (Acts 10:34-35).

And other parallel passages leave no doubt that when Paul said, ‘Ye are saved,’ *conditions* were implied, and were well understood by both writer and reader. For instance, quoting again from Paul—

“Ye ARE saved ...” (Shall we stop there? Would our picture be complete?)—*“Ye are saved IF ye keep in memory (RV: hold fast) what I preached unto you”* (1 Cor. 15:2).

Note that salvation itself is conditional on following a certain line of conduct. Similarly in Hebrews 3—

“We ARE Christ’s house IF we hold firm unto the end” (v.3).

“We ARE MADE partakers of Christ IF we are steadfast to the end” (v.14).

And Col.1: 21-23—

“Christ HATH reconciled you to present you holy and unblameable ... IF ye continue in the Faith and be not moved away from the Hope.”

In all these cases, salvation is first spoken of as a past event and a present possession—immediately followed by a big IF. We are saved, we are partakers of Christ, we are Christ’s house, we are reconciled—IF we continue to comply with certain conditions steadfast to the end. If these words have any meaning at all, then clearly we are not saved—we shall not continue saved—if we do not continue to comply with the required conditions. As Paul said of himself—

“I bring my body into subjection (that’s works) lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor.9:27).

It was possible for Paul—after all his preaching, visions, labors, his special position—to be at last a castaway, if he did not control his own body. It is plain that Paul had no illusions about ‘Once saved, always saved.’

And when Jesus, at the end of his ministry, stood before the Temple and told his disciples what was to befall the world, he said—

“The love of many (RV: the many, the majority) shall wax cold, but he that endureth TO THE END, the same SHALL be saved” (Mt. 24:12-13).

Could any words be plainer? Many—the majority—who had loved the Truth, who had been ‘saved,’ would grow cold and fall away, but only those who ‘endured to the end’ should be saved. It will be argued that the cold majority had never really been saved in the first place, but this is begging the question and making it meaningless. The claim today is that all ‘saved’ people know they are saved now—before they endure to the end, and that growing cold or anything else cannot alter that irrevocable salvation.

As to whether men once ‘saved’ can ever again be ‘lost,’ we are given this solemn warning (Heb. 6:4-6)—

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance.”

So believers of the first century, who had actually been partakers of the Holy Spirit, not only could fall away from salvation, but could reach a position from which they could never be restored. We find a similar clear statement in Heb. 10:23-26—

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering ... For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversary.”

Note the ‘us’ and the ‘we.’ Paul includes himself, and if anyone ever could have claimed to be ‘saved,’ surely it was he.

Rom. 11:29 is often quoted—

“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

True indeed the gifts of God are without repentance: *“God is not a man that He should lie.”* But when He attaches conditions to a promise, we must fulfill the conditions to receive the promise. Though God freely receives us as sons on the basis of our acceptance of Christ without works, He makes it very clear that our continuing in that favored condition depends on our fulfilling His requirements. Paul makes this quite clear in this very same chapter. He says (vs. 21-22)—

“For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God. On them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness, IF thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be CUT OFF.”

Note that he is speaking to baptized, ‘saved’ believers who were at that time ‘in God’s goodness.’ He is plainly warning them that they had no irrevocable guarantee of never being ‘cut off.’

3. THE TRUE MEANING AND PLACE OF THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

We have seen that Paul, as well as Jesus and other apostles, makes much of (1) the necessity of works, (2) the dependence of salvation on continuing in well-doing *to the end of life*, and (3) final judgment according to deeds. What then of those passages where he says—

“If by grace, then it is no more works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

There are three scriptural principles which together clarify this apparent contradiction—

1. Man can never earn a right to life on his own merit, no matter what or how many ‘works’ he does. In THIS sense, salvation is not of works.

2. In the plan God has provided for man’s redemption, immediate justification IS offered as a free gift as soon as a man obediently believes.

3. The required ‘works’—FOLLOWING justification—to ‘make the calling sure’ are not man’s works, but are done by God Himself through and in man: *“It is GOD that worketh in you ...”*

On the first point, Paul’s whole argument regarding faith and works is directed against the conception that man can earn eternal life—particularly by the Law of Moses, as the Jews thought. To earn life man would have to give perfect obedience throughout his whole life, which is impossible.

Paul shows that the Law of Moses, far from being a way to life, was given for the very purpose of demonstrating to man that the inherent principle of sin within him makes it impossible for him to render perfect obedience; and that, therefore, though life was offered through a perfectly reasonable and just law, man—because of inherent sin—cannot of himself achieve it. It was to humble man and teach him wisdom, not to glorify his ignorant and foolish self-assurance. Paul says, explaining this (Rm.3:23)—

“ALL have sinned, and COME SHORT of the glory of God.”

All have come short of earning or meriting that glory. He explains—

“By the deeds (RV: works) of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the Law is the knowledge of sin” (v. 20).

By the Law, God demonstrated to man his sinfulness and helplessness to save himself by his own works. Then, with that made clear and inescapable, God provided and strengthened Jesus Christ, who condemned sin by a life of perfect obedience even unto death. And on the holy, God-honoring foundation of Christ’s perfect obedience, God freely offers eternal life to all who through faith, renounce themselves completely and join themselves to Christ, and become part of him and covered by him. It is a beautiful contrivance of divine love and wisdom: God is honored; His love and mercy is manifested; and man is both blessed and humbled.

In this way, men confess their own HELPLESSNESS, and repudiate their own inherent SINFULNESS, and renounce their ALLEGIANCE to the old, death-bringing Adam, and covenant their allegiance to the new, life-bringing Adam, Christ. Now, here is the big and vital point missed by the “Christ has done it all for us miserable sinners” school: This covenant includes a dedication for the rest of their lives to WORKS of righteousness, not by their own power but through the power of God offered to guide and strengthen them. On the basis of this covenant, God provisionally accepts and ‘saves’ them. And if they faithfully fulfill their part of the covenant ‘unto the end,’ He will eternally accept them.

This is ‘justification by faith,’ as contrasted with justification by works, which man finds impossible because of the sin-principle in his flesh. This is the substance of all Paul’s teaching regarding faith and works. But, as we believe we have amply shown, Paul never fails to make it crystal clear that—though no man can earn eternal life by works—still every one will be accepted or rejected on the basis of his works. These ideas are not contradictory, but complementary. It is man who has represented them as contradictory.

* * *

The second point ties together the first and third. That is, the justification is a *free gift* at the beginning of the race, and not the earned result of works, at the end of the race. Rather, it is the basis and cause of the required works. Justification is union with God through loving faith, and the works are the fruit of this union with God. The works follow and confirm and manifest the faith.

* * *

This introduces the third point that explains the apparent contradiction between faith and works: that the required works are of and by God, not of man himself. Man of himself can do no good.

This is a divine mystery: the deepest and most intense experience possible for natural man. Paul says—

“WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION” (Ph. 2:12).

But elsewhere he says—

“It is not of works, lest any man should boast.”

We have the explanation in the very next verse (Eph. 2:10)—

“For we are His (God’s) workmanship, created unto GOOD WORKS which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

It is in Ph.2:2 where Paul says *“Work out your own salvation.”* In the verse immediately following he says—

“For it is GOD which WORKETH IN YOU, both to WILL and to DO of His good pleasure” (v. 13).

It is evident that Paul is careful that these two thoughts should always be coupled together, that man may take a humble and thankful view of what is accomplished in him. The same thought occurs in 1 Cor. 15:10—

“I labored (worked) more than they all: yet NOT I, but the GRACE OF GOD which was with me.”

Paul performed the work. He struggled and labored. It would not have happened without his volition. But actually God was doing it through Paul. Paul fully realized this, and he realized that no man has any power of himself for good. That is why, while constantly insisting on the necessity of works, holiness, righteousness, lifelong labor, Paul is equally insistent on the fact that it is the power of God that actually performs them. In truth, we have no power in ourselves of any kind: our every breath is a gift of God’s power.

This is a crude illustration, but it may help us see the picture: We drive an automobile, and we determine what course it will take: the direction, the speed, whether it will stand still, move forward, or backward, or to the right or left. We are responsible for all that. But we do not supply the *power*. If anything cuts off the power, we sit helpless and immobile at the steering wheel.

So we may choose which way we shall direct our life, and that is our responsibility, and we shall be held responsible. But the *power* to transform ourselves and work works of righteousness to His glory is not of ourselves, but of God through Christ. Paul says (2 Cor.4:6-7)—

“God hath shined in our hearts ... but we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

Jesus himself said—

“I can of mine own self DO NOTHING” (John 5:30).

All his power was derived from God. Likewise to his disciples he said—

“Without me ye can do nothing ... a branch cannot bear fruit of itself” (John 15:4-5).

The fruit is the work of the TREE through the BRANCH. But this does not excuse the branch, if it brings forth no fruit, for he says—

“Every branch that beareth not fruit GOD TAKETH AWAY” (v2).

This figure of tree and branch well illustrates the scriptural principle concerning works: their necessity, their dependence on God, their exclusion of man’s glory. *Faith* is that which unites the branch to the tree—that makes the life- and power-giving contact. *Works*, the fruits, are evidence that faith is alive and active; evidence that the branch is healthy and productive and is truly and vitally united to the tree—and not just dead lumber, artificially and mechanically attached to the tree, just *looking* like part of the tree.

Here is also clearly shown that the union of believer to Christ is *conditional*, and not unalterable, for Jesus further says (v.6)—

“If a man ABIDE NOT in me, he is CAST FORTH ... and withered, and cast into the fire, and BURNED.”

We remember, as quoted earlier, that Paul also (Rm.11) uses the same figure of tree and branch, to prove that salvation is conditional upon bringing forth the proper fruits. He warned the Gentile believers that they, though grafted in and ‘saved,’ could just as easily be ‘cut off’ and lost, if they were unworthy.

This divine mystery of the transforming work of God in those that are His had a prominent place in the mind and writings of Paul. Beside those already mentioned, we find such as the following—

To the Ephesians: *“That God would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

To the Colossians: *“Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power”* (1:11).

To the Hebrews: *“May the God of peace make you perfect in EVERY GOOD WORK, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight”* (13:20-21).

What a sad perversion of the glorious Gospel of God that minimizes or denies the vital necessity of good works, consistently performed ‘to the end’ by the guidance, help and power of God. Surely we can understand why James was moved to exclaim (2:14-19)—

“What doth it profit, brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and HAVE NOT WORKS? Can faith save him?”

“Faith, if it hath not works, IS DEAD.”

“Thou believest (hath faith: same word in original) that there is one God: thou doest well ... The devils also believe!”

This whole chapter is a direct answer to and confutation of those that say ‘Only believe.’ James continues (vs.21-24)—

“Was not Abraham JUSTIFIED BY WORKS when he had offered his son on the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and BY WORKS WAS FAITH MADE PERFECT.”

“Ye see then how that BY WORKS a man is justified, and NOT by faith ONLY.”

That is conclusive. Let us keep *all* scripture on this subject harmonized. The harmony lies in the three divine principles considered above. To sum up, they are—

1. Having demonstrated to man by the Law of Moses that man is helpless to earn life by his own efforts, God freely offers justification from sin and full heirship as His sons to eternal life, to all who confess their own helplessness, and accept the God-provided righteousness of Christ as their covering for sin.

THIS is ‘justification by faith’ without works.

2. This free adoption as God’s sons is a tremendous responsibility, and God requires all such, whom He has freed from the deadly bondage of sin, to henceforth walk in righteous obedience to His commands.

He does not expect perfection, but He does expect and demand a constant effort toward perfection, and a sincere, determined putting away of all fleshly things that stand in the way of perfection.

THIS is ‘works making faith perfect,’ without which faith is dead.

3. God promises both will and power of spiritual self-transformation to all who sincerely desire it, and properly seek for it.

THIS is ‘God making us perfect in every good work to do His will, and working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight.’

This third point is the key point, for it rules out any excuse on the basis of weakness, because God tells us (Heb.11:34) that many, *through faith*, were (by Him) ‘out of weakness made strong.’

And Christ assured Paul with these words (2 Cor.12: 9)—

“MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS.”

So that Paul could say—

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Ph. 4:13).

Let us take deeply to heart the one great lesson of this whole consideration of faith and works: the fruitless branch, though once joined safely to Christ, is rejected; cut off; cast into the fire; burned.

Do we have fruit for that great day of account? What have we to show? The fruit required is the overcoming of the natural mind and thoughts and desires of the flesh, and the dedication of the whole heart and mind and life to God’s service. Anything less is tragic self-deception:

“Many are called, but few are chosen: narrow is the way, and few there be that find it.”
—Bro. G.V.Growcott

The Epistle of James

“James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ”—James 1:1

THIS is the title James puts upon himself—a servant, literally, a bond servant—a slave. Now a servant cannot do as he pleases, a true servant serves his master faithfully in all things, so how many of us could rightly claim this title?

In vs. 2-4 he speaks of those things that are common to all such servants during their time of probation—

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

In the days of James these temptations would be two-fold. There were the fiery trials by their pagan persecutors—hardships of probation which none in our day experience.

Then there would be the constant struggle to overcome the weakness of their own natures. James uses the authority of Jesus as he exhorts to count these trials as joy; for we find in this epistle about 14 references to Jesus’ address given on the mount.

There are always some in the Household who are passing through a period of severe trial, each of us having our own peculiar troubles, difficulties and problems. But we can find encouragement in verse 12—

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

Thus we see that endurance is an evidence and measure of our love of God, and will ensure for us a blessing in the day of account. Knowing this, would we wish to be free from our trials and troubles? Would we wish for them to be taken away, when we know they are necessary for our salvation?

How much rather should we rejoice in the things God sees fit to bring upon us, that may work in us patience and long-suffering.

There is encouragement for the aged and the infirm, as they look forward beyond the days of their failing health to the Kingdom of God, to that perfection of health far exceeding anything experienced in this life. Thus they are able to bear with patience the many trials that come with age.

Those who are related to God and His future kingdom do not feel that depression and despondency such as are common to those who have no hope.

James implies that there is no excuse for the servants of God who lack wisdom (v. 5); for it may be ours for the asking, if we ask in faith, nothing doubting.

In this epistle James is very insistent that every believer irrespective of circumstances should be zealous in the task of working out his own salvation.

He points out that the poor and the prosperous meet here on common ground; the physically weak with the strong; none have priority over the others. He shows that eternal life depends upon service rendered to others.

Faith must be demonstrated by works. Faith or knowledge is of no value if not supported by works. Therefore, true faith is not a quality we can secretly possess; not something we can keep from others and just have it between ourselves and God.

If we fail to show our faith by service to others, then we have NO FAITH.

To speak to or of another spitefully or unkindly is clear evidence of faithlessness. This is plain from v. 26—

“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain.”

The practical works as given by James in v. 27 are the equivalent of the fruits of the Spirit, as given by Paul, and which are born of knowledge. Knowledge and faith of themselves are unacceptable unless they produce the fruits of the Spirit and work by love; but a living, active faith is wholly acceptable to God, and in the end will bring salvation. James says—

“Faith without works is dead.”

The measure therefore of our individual faith in the things we believe, is the amount of our service to the Body—whether in the example of our patient and cheerful endurance of trials, or the tireless use of the talents given us in whatever field of endeavour we may be called, such as lending a helping hand in the various needs of others, whether we think they deserve it or not.

That is the only faith that will be recognized when we stand before the Judge. Have we always shown our confident hope in the Gospel implanted within us by our thoughts and actions of each day?

Is it not because we need each other that God has brought us together in ecclesias and fellowship? The weak need the strong; the stubborn need the clear thinking; we are all dependent one upon the other.

To resent, or to give service grudgingly; to discourage others in their work in the Truth, or to offend, is to give the lie to the profession of faith and love for God and His children.

James clearly teaches that one cannot afford to plow his lonely furrow in the way to the kingdom. It is important that each one judge the extent and value of his own services, and not that of others. James insists that there must be no exceptions, no partiality whatsoever, irrespective of conditions or circumstances. We find a wonderful example given in Mark 12:41. There we find Jesus sitting and watching as people cast money into the treasury—

”And a certain poor widow threw in two mites, which make a farthing.”

Who could better have excused themselves than that poor widow as she stood before the treasury? Who could more justifiably have passed by and said—

“There is nothing I can do to help; my two mites are as nothing?”

But what did Jesus say?—

“Verily I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.”

She had done a work in the Master's service, and her work has come down as a memorial of her, just as the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; likewise the good Samaritan, and Mary who anointed Jesus for his burial.

Nothing can escape the penetrating eyes of God. Nothing can be too insignificant, if done in love for the Master. James says (2:15-16)—

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

The next verse supplies his own conclusion—

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

There are always those who need a helping hand, encouragement, sympathy and love.

One third of the epistle of James is in condemnation of those with strife in their hearts. In 3:5 he says—

“Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!”

A word here or there in contention or controversy can become a major issue (v. 8)—

“But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.”

“Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.”

Then he adds—

“My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

In Eccl. 7:21-22 we read—

“Take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others.”

Thus James continues his warnings. And Paul also points out that Jesus died for all of us; we therefore mock the work of Christ when we speak evil one of another.

James emphasizes faith and purity of motive in all our works that we may be a genuine help to those who need it (and who of us do not need help at some time?).

Being quarrelsome and wrangling, and critical of others will never further the work of the Truth; for we read—

“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

To hold resentment or grudge against another will be against US when we stand before Christ; for such is disobedience to the command of Christ that tells us to love one another. —*Bro. Harry Thompson*

Signs of the Times – Iraq

What the US and UK took 10 years to accomplish in Iraq, costing thousands of lives and billions of dollars, is being nullified in under a few weeks. The same will happen in Afghanistan after 13 years. The weakness of the West is perceived around the world. This gives every opportunity for adventurism and geopolitical advantage not only with Islamists but also Russia.

Bro. Michael Jasionowski

Al Qaeda Makes Strong Military Mark. The ISIS Whirlwind Wiped out US War Gains in Iraq

Debka 13-Jun-14

When ISIS fighters smashed through northern, central and eastern Iraq this week, knocking over city after city in three days – June 9 -11, they showed the world a new breed of Al Qaeda, savage terrorists with high military capabilities.

The first shock was the fall of Iraq’s second city, Mosul on June 9, into the hands of the Al Qaeda’s Islamist State of Iraq and Syria, followed the next day by the Baiji oil refinery and power center of Baiji, then Hawajah and Tikrit. Thursday the Islamists said they were ready to march on Baghdad, 170km away but have halted at Samarra.

Their previous conquests were Baquba, East Samarra, Fallujah and parts of Ramadi, capital of the western province of Anbar, taking in much of Iraq’s Sunni heartland.

For the most part the million-strong Iraqi army collapsed and scattered in the face of the advancing Islamist juggernaut.

This Islamist blitz in Iraq has changed the face of the Middle East in more ways than one:

1. The conquest of Mosul alone was Al Qaeda's most strategically important victory in its 27 years of existence.
2. It brought ISIS and its chief Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi closer than ever to realizing their ambition to found a vast independent Islamic state stretching from Al-Raqqah in north-central Syria to the southern edge of Baghdad, some 750 kilometers away.

Meditations—Deity's Ways No. 58

“COME, Lord Jesus.” Is this our mind? If it is not, one of two causes is at work; either we do not think that there is a Christ to come, or we do not want him, because we are doubtful of our acceptance at his coming. Both these causes are removable. Sincerity is above all things necessary, then there must be a determination to reflect. Having brought the mind into this condition, helps such as brother Roberts' admirable *City Hall Lectures* will do the rest.

What an astounding privilege that we poor erring mortals can become a part of the family of God. Yet such is the case. No truth is plainer, and none more precious. Provided we allow ourselves to be actuated by the Spirit of God (and His words are spirit) then are we His sons and daughters (2 Cor. 6:18; Rom. 8:14).

Useful men are men who do the right independently of frown or smile. This is the type of man that will come to the front when the government of the world is taken over by Christ.

An intellectual brain that is everlastingly leading its owner into a fog is not an enviable possession. The worst of it is that those so cursed invariably think that others should readily confess to being in their condition of doubt and muddle.

“Hands off.” Because for the moment God has said this in regard to many of the earth's good things, let us not, in the spirit of the fabled fox and the grapes, abuse these good things. Culture, art, music, and beauty in all its forms, will be to the front in the Kingdom of God.

If you want to be of service to a man in trouble, put yourself in his place, and speak sensibly and sympathetically. A man in this position doesn't want to listen to a flood of unfeeling, unpractical utterances; he needs wise counsel and comfort. Take pains, therefore, to enquire into the ins and outs—the drawbacks and trials—that surround his case, and then advise as a brother.

Husbands, listen to your wives' counsel. If it be good, appreciate and adopt it. Do not forget the wisdom and devotion of Abigail. There

are Abigails now, though they are often hidden from view by the conceit and boorishness of men.

If a man sin, he should confess his sin, but there is a confession that must be infinitely more pleasing to God—the confession of right-doing. See the words which God puts into the mouths of His dutiful children in Deut. 26:13, and also in the Lord’s prayer.

Some complain about not being loved. It may be so, but what is the cause? Let loved ones apply at home for the answer. To have friends a man must show himself friendly. If he show himself unlovable—grumpy, fault-finding, spiteful, treacherous, what can he expect?

Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1900

A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel

Sixth Visit to the Holy Land

AT CYPRUS.

When nearing Cyprus we overheard a conversation in which one speaker, who evidently knew something of the place, stated that at Larnaca, its principal port, and where we should land, was badly provided with vehicular locomotion, and that there were but two or three motors available. As we wanted to see as much as possible in the short time at our disposal, we determined at all costs to get ashore first and secure one of those motors. Therefore, as we drew near the island and could see from which side of our ship we should alight, I got my beloved partner to be ready to make for the ship’s boat which would depart as soon as we anchored. She was equal to the occasion, and we were not only the first to get from the ship into the little boat, but we were the first to get out of the boat on to the landing stage at Larnaca.

With Sicily first, and Sardinia second, Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, being about 140 miles long, and up to 40 miles wide. Immediately we landed we spotted the two motor cars, and seeing a man standing by with “Interpreter” on his cap, we asked him a few questions. We realized afterwards we were asking for trouble, for he saw we were “strangers” and he did not hesitate to “take us in”. We have heard something of certain people who “rush in where angels fear to tread”, and that is just how we felt as we found ourselves motoring at full speed to somewhere—where, we had not the slightest idea—and that too, with a chauffer who could not, or would not, understand a word of English: apparently he was a Turk, or a Greek, or a bit of each! I had simply told the Interpreter we wanted to “see the island”, and he was determined to oblige us, cost what it would, and leave us to pay whatever the owner of

the car thought fit, for when we arrived back at Larnaca, no Interpreter was to be found (oh, that settlement—drop the curtain). Except to take photographs of primitive ploughing and threshing, we did not stop until we reached Nicosia nearly the other side of the island. Nicosia is the capital, with a population of fourteen or fifteen thousand (Larnaca has about seven thousand).

It was a grand drive, and although we should not have gone had we been told the mileage and the expense, yet, I would not now have missed it on any account. Dr. Poole and the other passengers were “green with envy” when they heard of our escapade, and wanted to know why we did not let them know we were going the trip (the simple answer was, we did not know). They had simply frittered their time away along the southern shore.

As Bible Students we could not fail to be interested in Cyprus, seeing it was from here came the noble example of one who adopted no half measures when the Lord's work was to be done. Here it was that, in a time of need, “*Jose, surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation, a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet*” (Acts iv. 36, 37).

The persecution that arose about Stephen (Acts viii. 1-4) reached as far as Cyprus (Acts xi :19), which resulted in the Cyprian believers carrying the Gospel to Antioch (ver. 20). In Cyprus it was, Paul, in the company of Barnabas already referred to, preached in the synagogues. On this visit, at Paphos, the then capital of Cyprus, Serjius Paulus, the Roman proconsul was converted to Christianity. Here too, it was, that the sorcerer Elymas was struck blind (Acts xiii :6-12). All that remains of Paphos are portions of its once colossal walls.

Still later, we read of another visit by Barnabas to his native country in the company of Mark (Acts xv. 39). And, finally, we behold Paul having a last view of the Island on his way to Rome (Acts xxvii. 4). The Old Testament name of Cyprus is Chittim, and with a map in the student's hands, he will appreciate the Scripture references to Chittim (see Num. xxiv. 24; Is. xxiii. 1, 12; Daniel xi. 30).

Another reason for Bible students being interested in Cyprus, is the position it occupies in the prophecies, for there is no doubt that this Island is one of “the young lions” of Tarshish, which is to play such an important part in the future, in relation to the Holy Land (Ezek. xxxviii. 12, 13). Cyprus has been under the sway of Great Britain, ever since 1878, under the Anglo-Turkish Convention. No doubt “the ships of Chittim”, that is the British Fleet will assist in destroying the coming invader and spoiler of Palestine (Dan. xi. 30).

After our exciting experiences—and with a depleted purse—we were not sorry to find ourselves in the little boat being rowed back to our home in the “Sphinx”.

RHODES

Sailing in a north-westerly direction the next island we make the acquaintance of is that of Rhodes—in size about forty-five miles by twenty-five—but our acquaintance therewith is only about that of the Apostle Paul's, for, apparently he did no more than we are doing—passing close by. In fact apart from having read Acts xxi. 11, we do not suppose it would have been mentioned in our diary.

The city of Rhodes is situate at the N.E. end of the island, and has a very imposing appearance from the sea, with its two harbours. The population of the whole island is less than 30,000, of which 10,000 live in the city. The islanders are mainly Turks with a fair sprinkling of Jews. But one of the principal islands we are bent on visiting is that of

PATMOS

Oh, how we had looked forward to this visit. Ever since our eyes were opened to the importance of the last message of Christ as the result of a study of that valuable work *Eureka*, we longed to see and walk about the Island where John received the book we call “Revelation”. Evidently, however, that was not the mind of the one hundred and fifty or more pilgrims on board the “Sphinx”, professing Christians, calling themselves “Pilgrims to the Holy Land”. It is difficult to understand why they made the pilgrimage. Without doing them the least injustice we are bound to say it would be more truthful to label most of them “trippers” or “globe trotters”. The word pilgrim suggests something Abrahamic, but there is nothing about most of these pilgrims to remind one of either Abraham or “the promises made to the fathers”. True they have mentioned “the fathers”, but they were referring to the “pilgrim fathers” who sailed in the “Mayflower” from England in 1620, and founded the Colony of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Some of our pilgrims could talk fluently of such, and give all the details, but of the Abrahamic promises they knew very little, and apparently cared less. They knew more about American Prohibition than Bible Redemption. They would fill the Saloon when some popular American or British “great man” was to be discoursed upon—but the Apostle John, and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, had very little concern for them. This fact was made manifest a night or two before we arrived at Patmos. A wireless message was received by the Captain of the “Sphinx” from the Patmos authorities intimating that no pilgrim would be allowed to land without a special visé to his passport, which in the case of the United States pilgrim would cost ten dollars each. True it was an imposition seeing that our passports had been viséd for the country to which the Island of Patmos belongs (Italy), but from the way and manner of the protests, an

onlooker would almost have concluded that the impost would mean robbing them of all their belongings. One loud-voiced “reverend” actually moved a proposition that the whole of the party refuse to land and that the captain be instructed to pass the Island of Patmos! Such a dog-in-the-manger suggestion was more than we could stand, and at the after-dinner meeting when the announcement was made, I proposed that those who desired to land and visit the country should be allowed to, and expressed my determination to do so and visit the scene of Rev. iv. 6. The majority were evidently against me, and by way of pouring oil on the troubled waters, after expatiating on the spirit of camaraderie, he quietly dropped the subject and talked about the next item on the programme!

The “reverend” to whom I have just referred afterwards accosted me on deck with: “So, Mr. Jannaway, you think a visit to Patmos is worth the money”. My reply can be better imagined than described. I was not at all surprised to learn from Sis. Jannaway that this “reverend” was one of the restless individuals at my lecture on “The Holy Land” at the beginning of the voyage. My beloved also had to explain to another “pilgrim” why we were interested in visiting Smyrna, etc. We conclude that while endeavouring not to lose any opportunity of speaking a word in season for the Truth, it is a waste of time to cast pearls before swine. The late editor of the *Christadelphian* was but following the Lord in referring to the “swinishness” of the merely natural mind, in the “Preface” to the *Bible Companion*. We much regret that the striking truth has been turned down in later editions.

We did land at Patmos after all. The anticipated ten-dollar levy and the suggested boycott came to nothing. An exchange of counsel over the wireless worked the oracle.

It was very early one morning we were awakened by the clanging of chains. Our anchors were being lowered off “the isle that is called Patmos”. We had passed the Isle more than once upon previous Eastern Tours, but had never had the good fortune to land and explore the country. Now that we have done so, we discover that in many a platform address we have libelled the Island; for, instead of it being a barren and repulsive volcanic district, it is really well cultivated and attractive in more senses than one. It is about ten miles long and five miles across. These are extreme measurements, for it only embraces about sixteen square miles. It was used by the Romans in the first century as a kind of Botany Bay or Transport island. And this was where the poor, yet rich, Apostle John was banished “for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev. i. 9). The island has several small harbours. The population is variously estimated by “authorities” at from 600 to 4000. From personal observation and other data we should put the figure at a little more than half the two figures added together. Upon landing from the little boat

which took us from ship to shore we found ourselves in a little village (close to the beach known as Scala) with about forty or fifty cottages. We at once made our way to a “store” where, among other articles for sale, postcards were obtainable. Having purchased a supply for those, like ourselves, deeply interested in Patmos, we enquired as to where we could get stamps. Turning here and there round what was an unspeakably primitive, and foot-twisting way, we arrived at what served the purpose of post office whenever a ship happens to call, which is not very often. The official in charge, so far as we could tell, seemed to be Post-master, Consul, Magistrate, Policeman, Money-changer, etc., all rolled into one, and a very decent fellow in the bargain. He very kindly provided us with a chair and a table for the purpose of writing and addressing the cards. We were so convinced of the Postmaster's trustworthiness that we left sis. Jannaway to attend to the correspondence, while we set out to explore Patmos.

As usual, when on an exploring expedition in an unknown place, I took an upward path, in fact it seemed the only beaten track. The higher one went, the more one could see of the attractions of Patmos. At almost every bend of the path, there was a good view of the picturesque little village we had left on the edge of the shore: there too, a little way out in the roadstead, was our S.S. “Sphinx”.

After climbing up some thousand or more feet we reached the little town which they (the villagers) call Patmos; and then a little higher, on the summit of the hill, or mountain as some call it, we arrived at the famous “Monastery of St. John the Divine”. The hill is also known as the “Mountain of St. Elias”. From the sea the Monastery has the appearance of a fortress. Entering with some other visitors we were very hospitably received by the monks—quite a little company of them—they even brought out the Benedictine while we were examining the ancient Greek and other manuscripts, one of which they assured us dated back to the fourth century, which would mean that it is more ancient than the world-renowned Vatican, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrian Codexes; we have our doubts. Halfway up the mountain we saw the natural grotto or cave in which it is said that John wrote the Apocalypse.

While some of the pilgrims were “tarrying long at the wine” (or Benedictine), we slipped away to ascend the roof of the Monastery, and what a bird's eye view of Patmos and adjoining islands we had! No doubt the Apostle John frequently gazed upon the same outlook when he was an exile here: but, how different his circumstances to ours! Footsore and weary we finally reached the shanty where we had left our beloved life-partner—and we found her like Casablanca faithfully at her post—not on the burning deck however, but protected from the broiling sun awaiting our return.

—*Bro. F. G. Jannaway—1926*

The Truth In Conway Arkansas 1896

CONWAY (ARK.)—As I see no report from this part of the State, I will say that the interest in the truth is not diminishing, but is on the increase. During January I was called to Morrilton to assist a Mr. MURPHY to put on Christ in the Father's appointed way. A few days later I also helped a Mrs. IDA LEBLOWITZ to change her relationship from the old man to the new. In March I was called to Springfield, Mo., near which place I gave several lectures, and baptised four of brother and sister W. E. F. Keltner's daughters. I then went to Hartley, where I lectured twice, and was called upon to plant in the likeness of Christ's death Mr. and Mrs. JOHN A. TATE and Mrs. E. J. DOTSON. These were formerly Campbellites, but, after hearing the truth at different times for the last three years, they made the good confession, and came out of Gentilism by taking refuge in Christ. I returned home, and on the 1st of April, by invitation of the brethren, I started for Henderson, Ky. On reaching this place I went directly to brother P. A. Blackwell's, this being the first time I ever met him, as this was my first visit to Kentucky. In 1855 he invited brother Dr. Thomas, from Virginia, to come to Henderson, which the doctor promptly did, and, after brother Blackwell heard him "expound and testify the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and the Prophets," he believed those things spoken of Paul, and he was baptised, his beloved wife also going with him. The trials incidental to an upright walk before God have not changed or altered his course. His loving wife, who now lies sleeping in the dust, walked with him by faith for nearly forty years. I never saw sister Blackwell, but I heard of her many noble traits of character, and how, above all things, she loved the things of God most dearly, and died like the ancient worthies, "in faith, looking for a city whose builder and maker is God." As the results of this visit by the doctor and many more, there are to-day some seventy-five brethren in Henderson Co. Among those who have visited Henderson and worked for the Master there in times past, are brothers Roberts, Williams, and last, and least, myself. Fires of the truth are still burning, and we hope will continue to do so until the Lord returns from the far country, then may these little ones be found occupying, as he directed when he went away. The brethren have a good meeting-house some nine miles east of Henderson. Here Dr. Thomas has stood and blown the trumpet of no uncertain sound, and was instrumental in sowing the good seed that has stood the conflicts of war and all the trials of these evil times. After spending ten days in Henderson Co., lecturing at Spottsville, Midway, Baron Church, Robards, and Henderson, I left for Creal Springs, Illinois. Here I met some twenty or more brethren, who had me lecture three times on "What is the

Gospel?" These were given in the meeting-place of the Campbellites, and on the heels of a long, protracted effort of theirs. During the two weeks they held forth they immersed in water a dozen or more deluded men and women. What a blessing it is to be enlightened in the light-giving truth, which frees us from the traditions of men! The hearing was very good here, and several manifested much interest towards the things of the Kingdom and Name of Jesus Christ. From Creal Springs we went into the country some four miles, where the brethren have a nice meeting-house, and here we delivered three lectures to good, attentive audiences. The brethren here are letting their light shine, as it becometh the children of God. It is certainly a great pleasure to meet with people whose hearts are so full of love of the truth, and their everyday life goes to prove that they believe the things they find the Bible teaching. From this point I returned to my home and family, and, thankful to say, I found them well.—JOHN W. TEAS

Christadelphian—1896

A Chaste Virgin

The period of betrothal is the period of each man's probation. The ultimate issue depends upon the divine estimation of this. No man is fit to perform this part of judgment. All judgment is committed to the hands of Christ, before whom we must appear to receive it, and who at his appearing is represented as saying: "*Gather my saints together unto me, those who have made a Covenant with me by sacrifice*" (Psa. 50:5).

The supreme question of the hour in its individual application will be: How has the Covenant been fulfilled? Have we sustained the part of the chaste virgin getting ready for marriage-presentation to the Bridegroom? Have our affections fastened and fed upon Christ, our coming husband? Have we been as devoted to his affairs as he wishes?—as tender and loving toward him as he exacts?

The answer to these questions will appear in the shape of our lives, which will be made manifest by the faithful reproductive photography of the Spirit of God in the hands of Christ. The divine measurement of love is obedience. A 'LOVE' THAT IS BARREN OF ACTION IS USELESS SENTIMENT, having no value in the divine mode of appraisal—

"This is love, that we walk after his commandments" (2 John 6).

"Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in DEED and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

“Ye are my friends, if ye DO what I command” (John 15:14).

Consequently, the DEEDS of our life will be the index of our hearts. If those deeds, written as a whole, are deeds of conformity to the expressed will of Christ, our part of the Covenant will be declared performed.

Not that there will be a perfect performance in any case, for the congregation of the accepted are a forgiven congregation: a blood-washed throng. Their Judge is their compassionate High Priest, who occupies the interval of his absence in making request for his House in his own Name.

Still, there is a point to which obedience and consecration MUST come, before the benefits of Christ’s Priesthood will be extended. Jesus is the Judge of this point, in each case at which he will say, *“Thy sins are forgiven thee,”* and invite the blessed recipients of his favor to enter into life.
—Bro. Roberts, 1880

The Baptismal Formula

An objection is raised to the use of: *‘Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.’* The reasons for the objection are not good. No construction we may put upon the actions of the apostles afterwards must be allowed to displace the instructions of Christ under which they acted. He told them to baptize believers in (into): *“The Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matt. 28:19).

What Christ told the apostles to do, no believer will deny the apostles did. We are not furnished with the form of words employed by them in the act of immersing those who believed. This is a matter of little importance. It is the understanding of what is being done, and not the sound that issues from the lips of any performer in the matter, that determines the character of the act.

The spoken words should, of course, be in harmony with that understanding. That understanding is expressed in the formula prescribed by Jesus in the words quoted above, which is the formula in use among his brethren.

And this formula is expressed in the form to which the objector calls attention, when that form is understood. *“The Name of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 19:5) is the *“Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* For who is the ‘Lord Jesus’? He is the Father manifested in the Son by the Holy Spirit. He is therefore the impersonation of the formula which he prescribed.

But why should he prescribe in the baptismal formula the elements of the *'Mystery of Godliness,'* instead of the simple person in whom the Mystery was revealed? Because that in all things the Father might be glorified. The formula keeps the relation of things in view, which might otherwise be lost sight of. The Son can do nothing of himself, except as the Father empowers him (John 5:19).

If the person of the Lord Jesus merely were expressed, the Father's supremacy might in time be hid from view. In the days of his flesh, Jesus repudiated a compliment leading to this. When saluted as *'Good Master'* (which he was) by one who only saw in him a wonderful man after the flesh, he said—

"Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One: that is, God" (Matt. 19:17).

We may be sure that this zeal for the Name of the Father continues, and that we do well to help him (as far as it is permitted puny mortals in such a matter) to hold high the honor of the Father's Name by immersing believers *"into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*

—Bro. Roberts, 1898

* * *

It is better in immersions to use the formula, *'baptizing into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,'* than simply *'baptize into the Lord Jesus,'* for this reason: The former keeps the truth concerning Christ in the foreground, that he is the manifestation of the Father by the Holy Spirit, and that what he did, he did not of himself as a man.

The latter leaves the way open for the idea to grow up that Jesus came in his own name (which he expressly says he did not), and not in his Father's Name (which he expressly says he did). True, the formula is 'orthodox,' but it's also apostolic (Mat. 28:19), and it is essential to the full expression of the Truth concerning Jesus.

The formula in use in Birmingham is this: The person about to obey the Truth having declared his belief in *'the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ,'* the immerser says—

"Upon this public confession of your faith, you are baptized by God's commandment into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, for the remission of your sins."

This is a seemly, scriptural, and appropriate description of the act to be performed. But nothing depends upon a set form of words. It is the believer's submission to the commandment of God that is counted to him for righteousness and union with Christ. —Bro. Roberts, 1883

Pity and Vengeance: Kill and Kill Not: Contradictions?

THERE is no contradiction between the various passages you refer to, when the whole truth in each case is taken into account. When James says (5:11)—

“The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”

—he is speaking of what He is *to the class described* in the previous two verses: those who are submissive to Him. It is the universal teaching of the Scriptures that— *“The Lord pitieth THEM THAT FEAR HIM”* (Psa.103:13).

“He taketh pleasure in THEM THAT HOPE in His MERCY”
(Psa.147:11).

He does NOT ‘pity’ or take pleasure in those that set themselves against Him. Of them it is written (Psa. 5:5-6)—

“Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. Thou wilt destroy them that speak leasing. The Lord will destroy the bloody and deceitful man.”

Therefore when we read in Num.25:4 the Lord’s command to Moses to hang certain leading men who had seduced the congregation into disobedience in the matter of Baal-worship, we do not read anything that contradicts His pitifulness toward the *obedient*, but rather a something that confirms it.

So when we read in Ex. 20:13, *‘Thou shalt not kill,’* the meaning was— “Thou shalt not in thy private practice and of thy own motion, and in ordinary circumstances, kill.”

God did not and could not mean they were not to kill when He commanded them to kill, as when the congregation had worshiped the golden calf (Num. 32:27). *God commands to do or not to do, as He pleases.* His hands are not tied by the commands He gives to His creatures.

Even public law says ‘Thou shalt not kill,’ and the same public law says ‘Kill’ to hangmen and soldiers when it chooses. Would any man say there is contradiction between the two in that case? Why then should there be any difficulty about God Who— *“Doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven: none staying His hand, or saying unto Him, What doest Thou?”*

So the law to Israel in ordinary times, *“He that killeth a man shall surely be put to death”* (Lev.24:17) did not interfere with

the authority of God to command Saul to destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3).

Finally, the fact that *'all things are possible with God'* (Matt.19:26) is not in conflict with the statement of Jdgs.1:19 that *Judah* could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron. God was with Judah, but Judah was not wholly obedient, as we learn from the next chapter (Jdg.2:1-3), and consequently found difficulty where there would have been none.
—*Bro. Roberts, 1893*

Jewish Restoration

Question: “If the Jews are to be so much restored to their own land as to tempt the cupidity of Russia, how can Eze. 20:34-38 (the wilderness gathering) be fulfilled? Russia finds them in Palestine. Their wilderness gathering is after Christ’s advent. Yet Russia’s invasion precedes the advent.”

JEWISH restoration will be a work of two parts. Christ will find Judah to some considerable extent in occupation of the land when he arrives again upon the scene. He will come to their help in the extremity of the crisis developed by the invasion of their newly-acquired territory by Russia.

This conflict will result in the loss of 2/3 of the number thus returned (Zech. 13:8), while those who survive will have been prepared for what is to follow by the fiery ordeal from which they will have just emerged.

Preliminary to the further operations by which the House of Israel will be restored, the Lord Jesus will make himself known to the elders of this partial restoration, with whom also he will establish the Covenant and the Kingdom.

This being accomplished, the statements of Ezekiel (20:34-38) will next be fulfilled in the second wilderness experience of the Ten Tribes, as the means by which the rebels are to be purged out, and the remnant qualified to be participators with Judah in the blessedness and peace of Messiah’s reign.
—*Bro. Roberts, 1879*

Job’s ‘Satan’

The adversary of Job (Heb. *satan*) doubtless exerted the power that produced some of the afflictions that came on Job (Job 2:7). But it was power divinely conferred, and used by divine permission for the
245—Berean 2014

purpose. It was not power in the adversary's own hand in the way popular theory ascribes to the popular Devil. It was power granted by God for the purpose of subjecting Job to evil in proof and vindication of his excellence. This is shown by Job 2:6.

The whole operation was divine. The adversary (whoever he was) was used instrumentally to accomplish divine ends, as in the case of Jesus (John 19:11; Acts 4:27-28). It was the Lord that brought all the evil on Job (42:11). It was the *'hand of God'* that touched him (19:21). If the power so used was exercised in some cases through an adversary, it was nonetheless the power of God, not the adversary's power.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1883*

The Gospel Preached in All the World

QUESTION: *"This Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness: and then shall the end come"* (Matt. 24:14). How is this to be reconciled with the fact that the Gospel of the Kingdom is not being preached to all the world?

ANSWER: The words of Christ had reference to the apostolic age, as a consideration of the whole discourse will show. The key-note is contained in the statement—

"See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you. There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down" (v. 2).

It was this remark that led the disciples to make the enquiry which Jesus answered in the discourse in which the words occur. The "end" in question was the end that was hovering over the land and people, and Law of Moses, which had their center in the beautiful buildings to which the disciples called attention, and whose overthrow Jesus declared imminent. Before this end came, the Gospel was *"preached in all the world,"* as Paul testifies—

"The Gospel which is come unto you (Colossians) as it is in all the world . . . WAS PREACHED TO EVERY CREATURE WHICH IS UNDER HEAVEN" (Col. 1:6-23).

Again (Romans 10:18)—*"Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world."*

This is in accordance with what Jesus said in sending out the apostles—*“Ye shall be witnesses unto me . . . unto the uttermost parts of the earth”* (Acts 1:8).

The Gospel preached by the apostles was the genuine Gospel of the Kingdom. There is no reason to expect the wide preaching of this in our age, which is foreshown as one of *“darkness covering the earth”* just before the breaking forth of the Lord’s glory (Isa. 60:1-2). Hence Jesus’ question:

“When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find the Faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8).

It is generally supposed that “missionary effort” is the thing contemplated in Christ’s allusion to the end; but this idea must disappear before scriptural enlightenment.

The “gospel” of the missionaries is not the Gospel of the Kingdom; and it was not the Gentile end, but the Jewish end that Jesus was referring to.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1891*

The Irish Problem

The Irish have enough to complain of, God knows: the land sucked for the nourishment of men who live in opulence in London or abroad; their way to advancement barred by laws that make them the virtual serfs of a foreign race, and doom them to lives of perpetual poverty and labor. They see no hope but in incessant agitation and revolt; and easily feel that it is better to die outlaws than to live in legal misery.

All parties are to be pitied when the question is looked at in its merely human bearings. ‘The people weary themselves in the fire of vanity: But—*’Is it not of the Lord of hosts?’*

There is a divine aspect to the question, though it may not be easy for the merely human mind to open to it. The divine precedes and governs all. Men forget this in the strength of their self-consciousness. Divine power and wisdom were before human feelings. God is Proprietor, though men forget and even disbelieve He is. Human feelings govern nothing in the eternal issues of things.

Jewish feeling has writhed and revolted under the reproaches and persecutions of ages. But the reproaches and persecutions have continued for all that, because they had a root higher up or deeper down than human philosophy recognizes. Centuries of insubordination in their land laid up a store of divine retribution—not yet expended, though near its end.

So—is there nothing in English pride, nothing in Irish obeisance at the shrine of Romish abomination, requiring that God should afflict them with this vexing and inextricable tangle, of which the worst has not yet been seen?

The thought will be very distasteful to those who think only of ‘human rights.’ To those who recognize divine rights, there is a philosophy that solves the Irish and many other dreadful problems that darken the present condition of the race. —*Bro. Roberts, 1891*

AND here we are, 90 years later, and—as bro. R foresaw—the Irish problem is worse than ever. A shameful history of arrogance and oppression all over the globe is bearing its bitter fruits in these last days for many once-dominating countries. We see it today in Iran and elsewhere. The ‘*sea and the waves*’ are ‘*roaring*.’ We live in very significant times. Let us be ready! GVG

The Spirits in Prison

“When Peter writes (1 Pet. 3:19-20) of ‘*the spirits in prison*,’ he seems to give countenance to the popular idea that men can become disembodied spirits existing in a death-state. It looks so wonderfully like it that I should like to know how you can explain it.”

THE phrase in question is a mere synonym for the men now in *hades*, or the death state. A careful reading of the context will show this—

“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient when once the longsuffering of God waited IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, while the ark was a-preparing.”

Now, who were disobedient in the days of Noah? The men who were contemporary with him. Hence ‘spirits’ and ‘men’ are in this case equivalent.

What was the condition of those men at the time of Peter’s writing? They were dead and in their graves and gone to nothing. Hence ‘prison’ is interchangeable with ‘grave; of which we have illustrations in Isa. 26:2; Zec. 9:11-12. The grave is certainly a prison of the most effective description. There is no escape from it.

When were these disobedient men preached to by the Spirit? The answer is: “*In the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing.*” The Spirit preached through Noah, who is styled ‘*a preacher of righteousness*’ (2 Pet. 2:5). This was ‘*the Spirit of Christ which was in*

the prophets' (1 Pet. 1:2)—in Noah among the rest. The anointing Spirit of which Jesus of Nazareth was the complete embodiment, was common to all the servants, messengers, and prophets of ancient times. Hence the Spirit which quickened Jesus in his resurrection and developed a saving Name through him, was the same power, influence or agency that operated through Noah in proclaiming a salvation which Peter says was a figure of that to be achieved through Christ (2 Pet. 3:21).

If it be asked why Peter should suddenly diverge from Christ to Noah, the context would suggest that he did so to show the parallel between the two dispensations, thus: There was preaching in Noah's time, and preaching in the apostles' time; disobedience in both; salvation in both; by water in both.

If you contend that Peter means that Christ in a disembodied state went to hell during the three days he was in the grave, and preached the Gospel to the immortal souls of those who were drowned at the Flood, you involve yourself in strange difficulties. There is no hell, no disembodied state, no immortal souls. These are myths of paganism.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1892*

Tribulation

Tribulation is no accident. It is part of the plan. Out of it victoriously we shall at last come, if we cast not away our well-founded confidence. At last we shall stand in the assembly of the tried men and women of all ages who will stand on Mt. Zion in the strength of immortality, and in the rapture of praise that will only find fit expression in the song that John heard them sing in vision with a sound like mighty thunderings, and the roar of many waters.

—*Bro. Roberts, 1891*

Open your Bible and look at Paul's words in Romans 8:35-39. Think of the eternal safety of the child of God. You may know severe pinching in this life, like millions of believers before you. But endure. Tribulation is for our highest good, though you may not feel so. Bear all without murmuring, however protracted it may be. Nothing will crush us, be its weight ever so great, while our whole trust is in the living God. All present matters are but for a moment, comparatively. Gone will they all soon be! O, secure the immortal prize!

—*Bro. Roberts, 1888*

Dr. John Thomas

GEMS FROM HIS WRITINGS

CHURCH AND DISSENT.*

“Sectarianism is not Christianity. The aggregate of sects vaguely termed “the Church,” or the ecclesiastical system of Europe and America, is “the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” These “abominations” are the “harlots” styled “Women” — Rev. 14:4 — with whom Christ’s virgins “are not defiled.” *Every system or tradition that makes the Word of God of none effect is a harlot abomination*, and proceeds from the “carnal mind,” that is, from *the thinking of the flesh* (το φρονημα της σαρκος), ignorant of the gospel of the kingdom and the obedience it requires. This is the fountain and origin of all those heretical formula which are incorporated in the Romish and Protestant sects, which are all of them “corruptors of the simplicity that is in Christ.” As a whole, they are “THE APOSTASY” — ἡ αποστασια — foretold by Daniel and Paul, whose character is confusion worse confounded, and its institutions demoralizing and subversive of the truth. They preach “another Jesus,” are animated by *another spirit*, and proclaim *another gospel*, than those ministered by the apostles. Their “faith” is the credulity of excitement or of authority; their “Lord,” the thing they call “the Church;” their “baptism,” an irrational and blasphemous invention; and their “hope,” the mere baseless fabric of a vision. It is because of these abominations and their fruits, that the judgments of God are impending. From such a system of defilement, then, it is imperative on every man who would be saved to separate himself, even if he have to stand alone; as it is written, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”—*Proof*; Rev. 17:5; Matt. 15:6–9; Rom. 8:6, 7; 2 Thess. 2:3; 2 Cor. 11:1–4; 6:15–18.” —DR. J. THOMAS. *The Herald of the Kingdom and Age To Come* 1855

* * *

FLABBY CHRISTADELPHIANS.*

“They would have you adopt their style, as if you were pleading a case in court, in which you had no more interest than the fee you

expected to obtain when you had got through your otherwise irksome task. They would reduce you to the cold, unimpassioned, style of a clerical reader of sermons, purchased in Paternoster Row, at so much per dozen. Whatever they may think, they dare not accuse Paul, Peter, John, Jude, and Christ of reviling; but they condemn their words in the mouths of Christ's brethren. Oh say they, "Christ was inspired and infallible; but you are not, and have no right to do as he did." But Peter exhorts us differently. He tells us, that Christ left us an example, that we should follow his steps: who did not sin, *neither was guile found in his mouth*: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. Now, it is well to follow his steps in speaking, as well as in action. No better model for style than his can be found."

—Letter from DR. J. THOMAS *Christadelphian*, 1865

* * *

CHRIST'S MEANING OF REVILING.*

"He was a guileless enunciation of the truth in word, tone and gesture, which left his hearers unmistakably impressed with his meaning. He has not left us to the dictionary for the definition of the word "revile." Matt. 5:11, clearly shows, that to revile is "to say all manner of evil against a man falsely:" to say evil of a man, or body of men, *truly* is not reviling. All said against Jesus reproachfully, was false, and therefore reviling; but all he said of his foes was true, and therefore not reviling, else to earnestly declare the truth is reviling. Now, it is not necessary to be miraculously inspired, nor infallible, to qualify for discerning the truth in relation to modern teachers as surely as Jesus did in regard to the Scribes and Pharisees. He judged them by their fruits; and by the same rule, he said they should be known. When, therefore, men ascend a pulpit, and proclaim themselves to be the "ministers of Christ," and "successors of the apostles," we are as infallibly certain that they are the ministers of Satan, as Jesus was, that the Scribes and Pharisees were a generation of serpents; because they neither know the gospel nor have they obeyed it; and it is not reviling to proclaim this truth upon the housetops." —

Letter from DR. J. THOMAS *Christadelphian*, 1865

*Headings added by GVG

Hints For Bible Markers

The Psalms

Psalm 3

This Psalm has a historical aspect, and is also particularly scripturally stimulating. Let's get the historical tidbit out of the way first.

According to the *Word in Life Study Bible* the fifth verse of this Psalm is the basis for the famous children's bedtime prayer. Not that any person who understood the truth would teach this garbage to their children, but it is very famous dogma among those who know not God. This Psalm gave rise to "Now I lay me down to sleep," a horrible corruption of the beauty and simplicity of the word of God.

If you look at the heading for this Psalm we see that those who know not the truth feel that this third Psalm was a Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom. Many worldly commentators do much to try to prove this thought. Whether or not this is when David penned it matters little. For this again, is one of the Psalms primarily showing the sufferings, obedience, and glory of Christ. When considering this psalm we do well to remember that the spirit made use of David's individual emotions in portraying the mind of Christ. With that thought in mind, it is readily apparent how Jesus was mentally sustained by this third Psalm during the "days of his flesh."

Psalm 3:1

LORD, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me.

Jesus with greater cause than David could grieve over the increase of those who troubled him and that rose up against him. David was a man who was exalted by God's favor to a position of honor as the king of Israel. He had no claim to the throne other than God placed him there. Then how could he complain when the situation had reversed itself as when he fled from Absalom. It is exactly the position that he took when Shimei cursed and threw stones at him.

"And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it? let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him." (2 Samuel 16:11)

Bro. Beryl V. Snyder

Continued next month should the Lord will.