

THE BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN ECCLESIAL NEWS

A monthly magazine devoted wholly to the Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial welfare, with the object of providing Ecclesial news, exhortations, articles and information of fraternal interest to the Brotherhood. Defending the original, foundation principles upon which the Truth was uncovered from darkness and upon which the Christadelphian movement was developed. Opposed to the dogmas of papal and protestant christendom. Upholding the Truth as Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

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Please send Ecclesial communications to:

Bro. Fred J. Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, Mich. 48035 U.S.A.
Phone: (586) 790-2156 e-mail: fhigham@gmail.com
Web Site: www.BereanEcclesialNews.com

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God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the Brotherhood. Ecclesial news and correspondence, Fraternal Gathering notices, special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to upbuild and prepare us in heart and mind for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Berean Christadelphian Ecclesias

AUSTRALIA

BRISBANE, QLD, Bro. Ted Mingham, 8/2 Denison Ct, Capalaba, Qsld 4157
SYDNEY, NSW Sis. Rachel Johnnatty-Theaker, 201/24 Karrabee Ave, Huntley's Cove 2111

CANADA

EDMONTON, AL, Bro. Steve Armstrong, Box 16, site 440 RR#4, Stony Plain, T7Z 1X4
KINDERSLEY, SASK, Sis. Grace Punter, 24 Rutley Cr, N0E 1Y0
LETHBRIDGE, ALTA, Bro. Michael Bennett, 377 Laval Blv., T1K 3W7
RICHARD, SASK, Bro. Sid Jones, RR 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0
STURGEON FALLS, ONT, Bro. Gilles Robineau, 5 Third St, P2B 3E6
VANCOUVER, BC, Sis. Kaye Yuen, 4639 Caulfield Dr, V7W 1E9
VERNON, BC, Bro. James Fuhr, 8945 Peters Rd, V1H 1K1

KENYA

IKUTHA, Bro. Leonard Mwema Makiti, PO Box 229, Kibwezi, 90137
KAMUKUWYA, Bro. William Kilui, PO Box 27, Kamukuywa, 50216
KIMILILI, Bro. Rodgers Musebe, c/o Kamusinde Secondary School, PO Box 267, 50204
KIMUKUNGI, Bro. Arphaxad Wekati, PO Box 552, Bungoma, 50200
KITUI, Bro. David Njoka, PO Box 1, Kitui 90200
MAYANJA, Bro. John W. Simiyu, PO Box 2467, Bungoma 50200
MTONDIA, Bro. Julius Garama, PO Box 1177, Kilifi, 80108
NAIROBI, Sis. Mary Agnes Kariuki, PO Box 1406, Kikuyu 00902
NAKALIRA, Bro. Paul Walukana, P.O. Box 65, Kamukuywa 50216
ODIADO, Bro. Humphreys O. Budedu, PO Box 142, Bumala 50404

NEW GUINEA

PAPAU, Bro. Macx Kota, PO Box 2583, Lae Morobe Province 411, Papau, New Guinea

NIGERIA

OWERRI, Bro. Sylvester Ebere, 191 Tetlow Road, Owerri, Nigeria

TANZANIA

SANYA JUU TOWN, Sis. Agnes Kiwalo, Sanya Juu town, Moshi Province, Tanzania

UGANDA

AWIRI, Bro. Goerffrey Ogweng, Awiri, Uganda, East Africa
BUSIA, Bro. Francis Juma, Busia, Uganda, East Africa
DOKOLO, Bro. Dennis Okabo, PO Box 562, Dokolo, Uganda, East Africa
LIRA TOWN, Bro. Moses Ocen, Lira town, Uganda, East Africa
NAMBIECO, Bro. Benson Etut, Nambieco, Uganda, East Africa

UNITED KINGDOM

BERKS, Sis. M. A. Dobson, Bushlands House, Thibet Road, Sandhurst, Berks, GU47 9AR
HENGOED, Bro. Phillip Hughes, 25 Heol-Y-Gelli Fforchneol Parc, Godreaman, Aberdare, Mid-Glam CF44 6LN
LLAN-Y-BRI, Bro. Stephen Ford, "Aweldeg", 4 Parc-y-Delyn, Llan-y-Bri, Carmarthen, SA33 5HF.

UNITED STATES

AUSTIN, TX, Bro. Seth Brown, 3300 Killingsworth Ln, #201 Pflugerville TX 78660
BOSTON, MA, Bro. James Sommerville, 34 Birch Hill Rd, Northboro, MA 01532
CANTON, OH, Bro. Beryl Snyder, 4095 Prosway SW, Massillon, OH 44646
CONWAY, AR, Bro. Bob Widding, 2904 Dickens Circle, Conway, AR 72034
CARROLTON, VA, Bro. James Hassel, PO Box 777, Carrollton, VA 23314
DALLAS/FT. WORTH, TX, Bro. Bob Bent, 3032 San Martin Drive, Arlington, TX 76010
DETROIT, MI, Bro. Fred Higham, 20116 McKishnie, Clinton Twp, MI 48035
DENVER, CO, Bro. Dave Sargent, 4555 Red Forest Rd. Monument, CO 80132
GOLDTHWAITE, TX Bro. Curtis Hurst, 250 CR 517, Mullin, TX 76864
HARPER, TX, Sis. Doris Edwards, 675 KC 442, Harper, TX 78631
HOLLADAY, TN Bro. James Rankin, 115 Sherwood Dr, Camden, TN 38320
HOUSTON, TX, Bro. Michael Kramer, 12118 Cloudt Road, Needville, TX 77461
LAMPASAS, TX Bro. Lee Freeburg, 455 Private Road 3004, Lampasas, TX 76550
LAS CRUCES, NM, Bro. Jonathan Morrell, 5543 Kalahari, Las Cruces, NM 88011
LYNNWOOD, WA, Sis. Gloria Russell, PO Box 123, Lynnwood, WA 98046
MILAM COUNTY, TX, Bro. Robert Wolfe, 495 Wolfe Field Dr, Rogers TX 76569
NEWTON, NC, Bro. Mike Murphy, 347 S. College Ave, Newton, NC 28658
PALESTINE, TX, Sis. Mickie Lucas, 130 AN County Rd, Palestine, TX, 75803
PORTLAND, OR, Bro. David Burnett, 25321 NE 72nd Ave, Battle Ground WA, 98604
RICHARDSON, TX, Bro. Roy Johnson, 1305 Magnolia, TX, 75086
SAN ANGELO, TX, Bro. Gary Smith, PO Box 447, Blackwell, TX 79506
SOUTHEAST, Bro. Dale Lee, PO Box 590-605 Belmont Street, Windsor, NC 27983
WORCESTER, MA, Sis. Jessie Prentice, 339 Greenwood St. #55, Worcester, MA 01607
Please advise us of changes or corrections to the above information.

Ecclesial News

AUSTIN, Texas – Sunday School, Sunday 10:00 AM; Breaking of Bread,
Loving Greetings on behalf on the Austin Berean Christadelphians,

We are writing to inform the ecclesial world of our affairs of the past few months.

There have been some changes in membership in the ecclesia, with brethren and sisters moving on from one ecclesia to another. The current membership is as follows: Bro. Lee and Sis. Kristi Smith, Bro. Jon and Sis. Leah Lorquet Bro. Beryl Snyder, Sis. Sarah Brown, Bro. Seth Brown.

We also frequently get visits from Bro. Frank Darter and Bro. John Wolfe, and have also enjoyed the companies of Bro. Bob and Sis. Beth Lorquet, Bro. Mark and Sis. Naomi Braune, Bro. Gary and Sis. Brenda Smith, Sis. Becky van Pelt, and others.

For the moment, our Sunday schedule has been set to the following (all times CST): 9 AM: Nazareth Revisited, 10 AM: Daily Bible Readings, 11 AM: Memorial

As time moves forward and the shape of Our Father's plan comes together, let us all continue to strengthen ourselves in the ways of the Gospel Truth and the Hope contained within.

Love in Our Master and Messiah,
Bro. Seth Brown

GOLDTHWAITE, Texas

It is with great pleasure that we announce the baptism of **Ross Rhoades**, son of Bro. Glenn and Sis. Julie Rhoades of the Goldthwaite, TX, ecclesia, following the command in Acts 22:16 “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Rejoice with us. Pictures can be seen at
<http://rossrhoades.shutterfly.com/>
Ross's email is rjrhoades10@gmail.com.

From the Goldthwaite ecclesia recording brother,
Curtis Hurst

LAS CRUCES, New Mexico

Hello from Las Cruces Berean Ecclesia! We have been meeting regularly for meeting and mid-week bible class, split between Bro. Mike and Sis. Leslie's home (meeting) and Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Maria's (bible class).

We are currently studying the book of Revelation during Sunday school prior to meeting, which starts at 10:00 am (MST), and Ecclesiastes at 6:30 pm on Thursday evenings.

Our members still include Bro. Michael and Sis. Leslie Morrell, Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Maria Morrell, and Bro. Malachi Morrell. We hope and pray for more members.

In recent news, Bro. Mike and Sis. Leslie have purchased a new home and will be closing soon, on December 12th (12/12/12)! We are very excited for them and anticipate having both Bible class and Sunday meeting at their new home. The new address for Bro. Mike and Sis. Morrell is 5494 Monte Luz, Las Cruces, NM 88012.

We welcome any visitors to our ecclesia for either Bible class or Sunday meeting. Please feel free to contact us by phone or email: Bro. Mike Morrell ph. 575-312-1025 (mgm@nmsu.edu) thank you, and God bless, Las Cruces Berean Ecclesia

PORTLAND, Oregon — All meetings are now held in our respective homes. Please direct communications to brother Dave Burnett, 25321 NE 72nd Avenue, Battle Ground, WA 98604, 360-687-5641.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus Christ,

We send loving greetings to all of you from each of us here. It is wonderful that although separated by such distances, we can always carry with us the closeness and warmth of true fellowship with one another in our Father's house, having complete assurance that we all share and uphold the real and complete truth of the gospel message.

“The days are quickly flying, and Christ will come again.” How the days do fly by, and that's good. The question is, though, how are we using each day while we have it, before it flies into the past where it cannot be lived over again or altered in any way?

Time has quickly flown by since our bro. Dale fell asleep in Christ over a year and a half ago. Since then our situation here has changed somewhat. We have given up the Oregon Stamp Society building that we rented for a number of years for our meetings. We continue in close touch, do some reading together by phone, and as often as possible we meet together around the table of our Lord. And whether meeting separately or together we always have that shared anchor and connection through our Creator, both here locally and around the world — what a blessing this is, especially surrounded by so much that is unstable and evil. And we also send a very warm thank you for the calls, letters, and CDs that come our way from you, our brothers and sisters.

As you all do, we maintain our efforts, primarily here by individual contacts, to introduce others to God’s purpose and plan for this part of His creation. In this connection it is really encouraging for us to hear that there are still quite a few in various places who are so interested in learning and taking hold of God’s gracious invitation. We pray that our own dedication and enthusiasm will be continually strengthened by the dedication and enthusiasm of all our new brothers and sisters who have come to God with such eagerness and rejoicing. And how thankful we can be that we have the opportunity and means to join our hands together and use God’s provisions to lovingly fill both spiritual and temporal needs around the world through the BCAF — by participating in the various committees, offering monetary help, sending literature, supporting those who travel in this work, etc., and above all making continual approach to our heavenly Father for His help and guidance.

May the day of our Lord’s return soon be upon us, and may that day find us awake, watching, working, praying, and praising!

With love to all of our beloved brothers and sisters, on behalf of the Portland ecclesia, Brother Dave Burnett

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

HOUSTON FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **March 29–31, 2013**

Bro. Bob Lorquet, blorquet@consolidated.net

LAMPASAS FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 8–9, 2013**

Bro. Ricky Hurst, PO Box 1381, Goldthwaite TX, 325-451-4075

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**June 28–July 1, 2013**

Sis. Christine Jones, RR# 1, Richard, Sask, S0M 2P0, Canada, sc.jones@sasktel.net

HYE FRATERNAL GATHERING.....**July–22, 28 2013**

Bro. Mark Braune, 209 Ranger Dr., Buda, TX, 78610, 512-757-3088, markbraune@gmail.com Study, “Ecclesiastes”

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

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

The BCAA

The Berean Christadelphian Audio Archives, or BCAA for short, has made available a large selection of talks on MP3 online. The address is www.bcaudioarchives.blogspot.com. Please check this link often as we will be updating with new material as much as possible.

The purpose of this site is to restore and make available lectures, exhortations, and study classes. Some of these talks are decades old and have seldom been heard.

We are always looking for tapes, and if you have some talks that you would like to share, please email Bro. Craig Kiley (craigkiley@yahoo.com) and we will be happy to transfer the talks to MP3 format and post them.

Tribulation Worketh Patience

*“I will show him how great things he must suffer
for my Name's sake”—Acts 9:16*

IN Acts 16 and 17 we are again traveling with Paul. At the close of chapter 15 he set out with Silas on the second of his three great journeys of proclaiming the Gospel to the world. It was about 50 AD, 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.

He suggested to Barnabas that they revisit the ecclesias they had established in western Asia Minor on the first journey. From this arose the dispute over taking Mark, who had left them and turned back on the first journey. This disagreement between Paul and Barnabas could not be settled, so after working together for over 15 years, they parted.

Paul and Barnabas had been close from the beginning. It was Barnabas who introduced Paul to the brethren at Jerusalem, when they were afraid of him. And it was Barnabas who got Paul to go to Antioch to help him with the work there.

Both these men had the Holy Spirit in great measure. Of Barnabas it is said he was *“full of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 11:24). At the beginning of the first journey, the Holy Spirit specifically selected Barnabas and Paul (mentioning Barnabas first) to go forth together to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 13:2).

Yet still, they could not solve this point at issue between them, and this divinely appointed team broke into two. There is much food for profitable thought here and much comfort for our present dark day. Why did they not appeal to God, and why did not God settle it for them by the direct guidance of the Spirit?

Doubtless they DID fervently appeal to God, and doubtless He DID settle it, but not necessarily in the way we might desire or expect. Of another trouble of another kind at another time, Paul said it had worked out *“to the furtherance of the Gospel”* (Phil. 1:12).

So here, two expeditions set out instead of one. Of Barnabas we do not hear again, but this is no reflection on him, for the record is concerned with Paul and we hear very little about any other at all.

Of Mark, Paul later speaks very highly more than once. In Col. 4:10-11, he was with Paul in his first imprisonment in Rome, and Paul says he was a *“comfort to him.”* And in 2 Tim. 4:11, at the very end of Paul's life, again in prison in Rome, the one person he tells Timothy to bring to him is Mark, and he speaks of him as *“profitable to him for the ministry.”*

Of these two Holy Spirit-filled men, Paul and Barnabas, which was to blame? Which was wrong?

Not necessarily either. Nor is there any evidence that either behaved in an unChristlike way. The word in Acts 15:39, translated “contention” is more often used in a good sense than a bad one. It denotes very strong feeling, but not necessarily wrong feeling. It is the word translated “provoke” in—

“Provoke unto love and good works” (Heb. 10:24)

It is the word used for “stirred” in Acts 17:16 where Paul's heart was compassionately and zealously stirred by the ignorance of the Athenians' pitiful, intense worship of what they knew not.

There was very strong feeling on both sides of this disagreement, each for his own unshakably determined course of action. Paul was determined he would not take Mark on this trip. Barnabas was determined he would not go without Mark. Both may have been perfectly right in their judgment. We are not specifically told their reasons, but they seem quite clear and both legitimate.

Paul would not take him because he had failed them on the first trip. Paul's reason may have just as much out of love and consideration for Mark as Barnabas' was. The hardships of this second trip were greater and more prolonged than those of the first. We have only to think of the terrible beating with iron rods the apostles suffered in Philippi, and the mob uproars and vicious treatments at Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. He would know young Mark was not ready, and another failure could be disastrous for both Mark and the expedition.

Barnabas, on the other hand, would not go without his nephew Mark. He too was probably right. Clearly Mark wanted to go. Clearly therefore he regretted having abandoned them on the first journey. Clearly he was anxious to redeem himself. To deny him the opportunity might have destroyed him by remorse and disappointment.

So two expeditions would clearly be the answer, dividing the proposed field of visiting the ecclesias they had established, one by Barnabas and Mark to more familiar and less hazardous territory, until Mark was more fully matured as a soldier of Christ.

There are many lessons for us, but what surely is the great one? That even very outstanding apostles filled with the Holy Spirit may sincerely and irreconcilably disagree. God does not always choose to give all the answers to everything, for He is testing us to see how we react to problems and difficulties.

If we always react with gentleness and kindness and fairness and meekness and patience and brotherliness and love, all will at last be well for us, and God will in His good time clear all the clouds away. But if the flesh comes to the surface, and we react with harshness and

bitterness and rudeness and unkindness, and believe and spread false reports about our brethren, then woe betide us, for our just condemnation will be terrible indeed!

We shall never know all the answers to all problems. But if we do not consistently manifest the meek and loving spirit of Christ in all our dealings with our brethren, and scrupulous truth and fairness in what we say about them, then we might as well forget everything and join the world, for we are the world's biggest hypocrites.

We cannot possibly be right if our spirit is wrong, for God will only guide those of the right spirit. If we cannot control our own tongue and temper, then that—and that alone—is our number one life-and-death problem, and we had better worry about ourselves and forget about condemning others.

So Paul starts out on Journey Two with Silas, a new companion. This time they went by land across the mountains into eastern Asia Minor, to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, etc.

The first incident, beginning ch. 16, is the addition of Timothy to the party. It is clear that a devoted young man, to take care of the many details of traveling, would be a tremendous advantage in the work, and the loss of such, in the middle of the journey, a great blow and handicap to them. Twelve years later, Timothy is still especially noted for his youth, so at this time he must have been very young indeed, most probably in his teens.

The first thing Paul does is to have him circumcised, though he taught to these very same ecclesias, in Gal. 5:2, that—

“If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

There are always those who are eagerly looking for “inconsistencies” to condemn in their brethren, and here indeed is a perfect example—

“Paul! You said, *‘If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.’* But here when faced with a problem yourself, you directly violate that principle, just as an expediency to save yourself trouble with the Jews!”

We know there was no inconsistency. We know Paul's motives in both cases were perfectly correct, and completely harmonious with each other. We see the picture clearly. But how can you convince someone who is seeking for something to find fault with, and to use to discredit someone? The scriptural command is, over and over—

“JUDGE NOT, THAT YE BE NOT JUDGED.”

With our puny little limited minds, it is impossible for us to judge fairly, even if we should have all the facts. And we never have ALL the facts.

This is not to say that there must not be a strong fellowship stand, strongly adhered to. Otherwise we would all be still in the Catholic Church. We must decide where the fellowship line is, and we must faithfully adhere to it, very gently and kindly, but very firmly.

But we must never judge motives, or seek occasions of fault-finding, or believe and peddle hurtful rumors, or talk behind peoples' backs, or speak of sins—either real or supposed—TO ANYONE EXCEPT THE PERSON INVOLVED. In doing such, we condemn ourselves. The stern penalties of the law of Christ are very fearful against any of these fleshly abominations—

“AS YE JUDGE, SO SHALL YE BE JUDGED.”

Many do not seem to realize the terrible judgment in store for those who accept Christ, and then violate his laws of brotherliness and kindness.

So Paul circumcised Timothy, even though he said the circumcision would cut a man off from the salvation of Christ.

The next few verses (6-10) are very interesting. We remember that these men—especially Paul—had the power of the Holy Spirit in tremendous measure, that Spirit which Jesus said should *“lead them in all truth.”* In these verses, we are reminded of Abraham, who, Paul says (Heb. 11:8)—

“Went out, not knowing whither he went”

God just said to him, “Leave home; start out; I’ll tell you later where you are going.” We tend to get impatient. We tend to worry about what is coming, and what to do about it. But—

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

God doesn't have to tell us what to do until the time comes to do it. All we have to be concerned about are the problems of today. That is the big lesson we find so hard to learn. We worry about so many things that haven't happened, and never will happen. When shall we ever learn that God knows what He is doing, and we can very safely leave all the worrying to Him?

But getting back to Acts 16:6. These men were filled with the power of the Spirit, and they were out doing the Spirit's work. But what do we find? They must stumble on their way by trial and error.

They made the circuit of the ecclesias, confirming the disciples. Then they considered where to go next. Did the Spirit guide them? Not

at all, except negatively. They apparently first considered going to Asia. This refers to the western end of Asia Minor, centered around Ephesus. This would be the logical move on the basis of Paul's pattern of moving gradually west by way of great cities.

But the Spirit just forbade them to go to Asia. So they headed north for Bithynia, but again the Spirit said no. They had tried west and north, and been barred, so they tried northwest, in between, and this time they were permitted to proceed.

Why did God act like this? And why are we told about it? Surely to teach us essential lessons. We have got to have patience, and we have got to have faith, and we have got to have complete, calm, unworried dependence. Answers will come, when they are needed.

So they finally by trial and error, reached the coast at Troas, at the northwest tip of Asia Minor, opposite Europe. And still the destination God had in mind for them has not been revealed. But after they reached Troas, Paul had the vision of the man of Macedonia, calling for help. Even then there was no direct instruction. How easy for God to have said at the very beginning—

“Don't waste your time trying this direction and that direction. Go straight to Macedonia.”

But God, in His Own good wisdom, did not choose to do it that way. They still, by putting everything together, had to reach the conclusion that this appeared to be what God wanted them to do. And this time they were right.

Surely this whole impressive train of events is to emphasize our day-to-day dependence on the guidance of God. As soon as He tells us too far ahead, as soon as we begin to confidently plan for the future, as soon as problems seem to be clearing up and answers seem to be coming, we begin to lose touch—to lose the urgent sense of the need of daily guidance. Right away we relax. Our minds—released from pressure—turn to worldly things. We begin to build sepulchres on high, as if this were our eternal resting place.

The next deeply instructive event is the beating and jailing of Paul and Silas. Up to the time he wrote 2nd Corinthians (which was about 2/3 through his life in the Truth), Paul had been beaten 3 times with iron rods by the Romans, and 5 times lashed with 40 stripes by the Jews. The beating with iron rods was a terrible punishment, not only at the time but in its long painful crippling effects afterward. Often it broke bones and did great permanent injury.

Why did Paul have to suffer these things? Why did Christ have to suffer as he did? Why is it—as Paul told the Lycaonian brethren after

his own stoning at Lystra—that (Acts 14:22)—“*We must through MUCH tribulation enter the Kingdom of God.*”

Of Christ himself it is said (and it is one of the deepest statements of Scripture), that (Heb. 5:8)—

“He LEARNED OBEDIENCE by the things that he suffered.”

How could a perfect, sinless man “*learn obedience*”? From the very beginning he was sinless: but he was untried, unexperienced, undeveloped in character. He had not “*overcome.*” At the end he was tried, and experienced, and established—having perfectly overcome all trials and sufferings.

Suffering is the crucible in which character is purged and purified and beautified, and then fired to indestructible permanence. In our original, natural state, we are rotten, ugly, fleshly, animal creatures. Some of us never get to be anything else but rotten, ugly, fleshly, animal creatures all our lives, though we are given the inestimable privilege and responsibility of living, like Judas, in the presence of divine beauty.

Suffering takes many forms, and only God knows what each suffers, and how much. Suffering does not NECESSARILY beautify and purify. Sometimes it makes us even worse than our original natural ugliness was. It is a matter of how we are exercised by it. If we really believe God—and sadly there is much less REAL belief than there appears to be on the surface—if we really believe God, then we really believe that—

“All things work together for good to them that love God.”

“*All things*”! If we haven't got that connection, we haven't got ANYTHING. And if we have got it—how can we ever be unhappy—how can we ever be disappointed—how can we ever wish things to be different than they are?

Truly we wish them to be different in the sense that we wish them to be working in a certain direction of change and accomplishment. But they ARE doing that! We KNOW they are, for—

“All things WORK TOGETHER for good—toward good—for them that love God.”

All we have to be concerned about is that we are among those that truly “*love*” God—in the scriptural sense of complete and unrestrained devotion and obedience. And this is indeed a tall order, a lifetime effort, a fulltime project. It consists mainly of always doing what God wants, and not doing what WE want—of always acting in harmony with the beauty of the Spirit and not the ugliness of the flesh. That's our

main concern—our own character and conduct, or we are just hypocrites.

But why should Paul need more suffering than anyone else? We would think it was terrible if we were nearly beaten to death once, but Paul experienced this at least 8 times, and never knew when it was coming again.

It was not because he deserved or needed it more. There is another aspect to suffering, another marvelous and beautiful aspect. Jesus said of Paul at the very beginning—

“I will show him what great things he must suffer for my Name.”

Of Peter, Jesus spoke concerning the death whereby he should glorify God. And of himself it is recorded—*“With his stripes we are healed.”*

How does suffering serve the Name of Christ, and glorify God, and heal others? These are strange and wonderful divine things. There is much we do not know, but there is also much we can dimly perceive, and somehow feel rather than actually comprehend.

Paul speaks of striving to participate in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, and there IS indeed a “fellowship of suffering” that is far deeper and closer than any fellowship of mere joy could ever be. If we are Christ-like and compassionate, and kind to one another, we shall come through all problems more closely knit together in love, for we shall have experienced the beautiful “fellowship of sufferings.”

The reaction to suffering is the key to its value. It is the beauty of character born of bitter tribulation that makes all worthwhile. If Paul had just endured these things stoically and courageously, it would have been commendable, but it would have had no living power. Many do that, and yet they are nameless and forgotten.

But let us consider the apostles' reaction. First, their clothes were torn off and they were beaten severely with iron bars. The record specifically says that “many stripes” were laid upon them—that is, more than usual—especial severity. They would be in constant severe pain for many days after; any movement would be agony.

Then they were thrown—literally thrown—into prison. The jailor, being specially charged with their safety, in turn “throws” them into the inner prison—the dungeon, and fastens their feet in stocks. These stocks were an instrument of torture to create a position of great discomfort.

All this time they would be wounded and bleeding, with their wounds completely unattended to. But the main thing is, what was their

reaction to all this? All down through earth's dark history of man's wickedness this has happened (and still happens) countless times to countless millions. Natural man is a vile, jungle creature of hatred and vindictiveness and backbiting and vicious falsehood.

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God.”

They were not putting on an act. This was the true, deep, spontaneous reaction of their hearts. These men were really IN the Truth. They really knew what it was all about. Their minds were thoroughly and inseparably in tune with God. They knew that all was of God, and all was for some great eternal good, and that they were a privileged part of that great purpose of at last filling the earth with God's glory.

Let us not be sorry for them. Let us rather be sorry for ourselves that in this day of ease and comfort and luxury and self-indulgence, we are so pitifully out of touch with those glorious realities the apostles' experienced. How many of us are really IN the Truth, as they were?

They did not seek martyrdom. They fled from it whenever they faithfully could. They did all they faithfully could to avoid it. But when it came, they knew it was of God for some strange and glorious purpose, and they rejoiced in tribulation, they *“rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer”* for the great Name of Jesus.

One result was the conversion of the jailor—the one who just previously had cruelly added to their misery by roughly throwing them into the dungeon and putting their feet in stocks.

Was it worth it? Would we consider it worth it, if we could save a soul from death? Here is the key to the whole matter. Here we can test our hearts to see if we really are in the Truth and have any idea what it is all about. To them it WAS worth it, worth all the suffering, because they were driven by the mighty power of love for their fellowman. They were not self-centered. They thought nothing of themselves.

To what extent are we driven by that power? Is it a vital overwhelming force within us so that we are constantly seeking to do good, and willing to suffer anything for it? Are we really IN the Truth—God's glorious TRANSFORMING Truth—or do we just have a religion? *“Let a man examine himself,”* says Paul, as he turns our hearts and minds to this great sacrifice for mankind, this supreme manifestation of love—*“Greater love hath no man than this”*—

“Let a man examine HIMSELF.”

To examine ourselves is an ugly, stomach-turning task. Few indeed are willing to face what they see, but those few are God's eternal jewels.

—Bro. G.V. Growcott

Spread Thy Skirt over Thy Handmaid-2

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.” Ruth 1:16

Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem at barley harvest—

Ruth 1:22— *“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.”*

This was the solemn time of the yearly Passover season. They had crossed the Jordan (“Descender”—into the Dead Sea). They had gone down together into death, as it were, and they had risen to a newness of life in Promised Land. The famine was over. A new bright springtime had come. God’s blessing was upon His people.

Ruth—industrious, faithful and considerate, as already manifested in her statement of devotion to Naomi and Naomi’s God— goes forth in further service to the Almighty, by service to her mother-in-law. Solomon wrote of this kind of woman in Prov. 31, and his words have deep spiritual import for the Bride of Christ—

“Who can find a virtuous woman?—for her price is far above rubies. She will do good and not evil all the days of her life.

“She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands. She riseth up while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens.

“She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard. She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms...

“In her tongue is the law of kindness...she eateth not the bread of idleness...Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.”

This is THE WOMAN, the Spiritual Woman, the Woman of virtue and of wisdom, of kindness and of love.

Ruth 2:2— *“And Ruth said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace.*

“And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.”

With continued confidence in God, regardless of the setbacks that her adopted family had received in the land of Moab, regardless of the wickedness of the nation into which she had now become related—she could see that she would find grace and mercy if she cast her life into the hands of Him Who was in control of all things. God certainly was

in control of this young woman's life, though it may not to this point have become manifest.

Ruth 2:3 — *“And she gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.”*

The record continues to tell us that in process of time Boaz as he visits his workers meets this young reaper. The command of distinction and separation is immediately made—

Ruth 2:8-9— *“Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens.*

“Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?

“And when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn.”

Very gracious, but authoritative instruction not to be ignored. The principle of separation is clear: the wisdom of Boaz is immediately manifest herein. We note also his use of the term “my daughter,” implying that he was considerably older than Ruth further confirmed by his remarks in 3:10.

We also observe the character of Boaz, shown as he approaches the field of reapers, greeting them: “The Lord be with you”; to which they replied, “The Lord bless thee.” What a clean, godly atmosphere!

What a foretaste of the purity and wholesomeness of the Kingdom! What a contrast with present conditions! The character of Boaz is clearly manifested in all his works. From the prophets and Christ we learn that—

“To this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.”

How kindly did Boaz look unto those who were his brethren and sisters!—certainly an example for us to follow. This is true service to God, the real spirit of the Law of Moses and of Christ—

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. Upon these 2 commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

This principle is beautifully reflected in the life of Boaz. Boaz means “strength.” It was the name of one of the 2 pillars in front of Solomon's Temple. The other was named Jachin (*He will establish*). The purpose (illustrated in that Temple) is *“Established in God's strength,”* not in the strength of the flesh. God's strength made perfect in weakness: of trial, experience and faith.

Ruth, in humble recognition of mercy wrought by God, asks—

Ruth 2:10— *“Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?”*

The faithful are never strangers to God; though they may be strangers scattered abroad—strangers to the world in walk and conduct: but never strangers to God. They will always find “grace” in the eyes of God. He will bring forth their righteous desires in His own good time. Boaz replied to Ruth—

Ruth 2:11-12— *“It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people thou knewest not heretofore.*

“The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel under Whose wings thou art come to trust.”

This word “wings” is *kanaph* in Hebrew, meaning also “skirt,” leading to an interesting fact, as we shall see.

Similar to the call of Abraham to become a wanderer and a stranger, Ruth followed the same course, “coming out” unto the God of Israel. She had come to the people of God, to this bright spot in the general wickedness of Israel, to the house of Boaz.

There would truly be other faithful families at the time whose lives are not recorded in the Word, but they are safely recorded by God. This illustration is sufficient to prove the righteousness of God, in the lives of the faithful, through the long centuries, as the sons and daughters of God’s family have been developed—

“...under Whose wings thou art come to trust.”

“Under Whose wings”—our minds are carried to the wings of the Cherubim on the coverlid of the Ark, where the Shekinah Glory rested, in the Most Holy Place. “Under Whose wings,” then, speaks of Divine protection and care. It is under the safety of these wings that we also must place all our trust and confidence. The record continues with a gracious invitation from Boaz to Ruth:

Ruth 2:14— *“At meal time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar (sour wine).*

“And she sat beside the reapers, and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.”

Parched corn—that wheat or bread of life which has been prepared through the heat and affliction of trial, necessary in the refining of God’s people -is held out to Ruth as a portion to eat.

Here is true fellowship with the reapers of God, the reapers of Boaz—of “strength.” Ruth, the young widow, now takes her part as a gleaner, in fellowship, eating the bread and drinking the wine.

So Ruth returned to Naomi in fullness, because the law of God in this Man of Strength was manifest.

Ruth 2:20— *“Blessed be he of the Lord, Who hath not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead... The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen (our Redeemer)”*.

Here is a change in the perception of Naomi. She now realizes that God is indeed working out a salvation which, naturally, her husband and sons could not accomplish. *“He is one of our next kinsmen”* — *gaalim* —redeemers.

Again the injunction to strict separation—

Ruth 2:22-23— *“It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in another field (a stranger’s field).*

“So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.”

From barley harvest to wheat harvest -from the Passover unto the First fruits— *“Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.”*

—incorporating all the time from the sacrifice of Christ until the judgment of the saints.

The picture of salvation enlarges in chs. 3 & 4. The principle of redemption for all is unfolded, that a family in Israel should not fail because of the weakness of the flesh.

Ruth 3:1— *“My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?”*

This is instruction to Ruth to go to the threshing floor of barley, and to perform certain things. The threshing was taking place at night (v. 2), because of the strong winds to separate the chaff from the grain. It speaks of a night of judgment and trial—of winnowing and threshing, and the final redemption and reward of the righteous in the morning. Ruth now realizes that she is an instrument to be used by God in the development of His purpose—

Ruth 3:2— *“Is not Boaz of our kindred (our redeemer), with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing-floor.”*

With characteristic humility and obedience, Ruth responds in the same way as Mary to the angel concerning the birth of Christ:

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word.”

Thus Ruth replied—

Ruth 3:5— *“All that thou sayest unto me I will do.”*

In obedience to Naomi’s request, Ruth enters the scene of the threshing floor, having *put on her raiment*—

Ruth 3:3— *“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor.”*

Typical is this statement of the necessary cleansing, anointing and pre-clothing of the servants of God with righteousness—

“Clean linen, which is the righteousness of saints.”

—before they appear for judgment and redemption. Ruth marks the place where Boaz is lying: she goes softly to him and uncovers his feet, and thus reclines at his feet. The wonderful plan of redemption is now about to begin. To put oneself at another’s feet is to submit to their authority and seek their help.

Boaz is startled, suddenly aware a woman is lying at his feet—

Ruth 3:9— *“Who art thou? . . . I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt (kanaph —thy wings) over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman.”*

—”thou art a Redeemer.” This is the key verse of the whole record—

“Spread therefore thy protective wings over thine handmaid, for thou art a Redeemer unto me.”

Here was a humble and obedient submission by Ruth to the requirements of the Law of God given through Moses. Boaz too would know the Law, and the circumstances of Naomi’s family.

Ruth would also have been acquainted with the stipulations of the Law relating to the one required to raise up seed to the dead.

Why did not Boaz act before Ruth came to him with her petition? For 2 reasons. First there had to be the freewill offering of Ruth to the service of God. And 2nd, there had to be the revelation of the nearer of kin, the nearer redeemer, and of his inability —or unwillingness—to bring redemption. The principle of redemption is defined in Deut. 25:5-10—

“Her husband’s brother...shall take her to wife, and perform the duty of an husband’s brother unto her...”

“The firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out in Israel.”

Then follows the consideration of the possibility of the next of kin refusing to perform this duty, of the presentation of the case before the elders of the city, the removal of his shoe, and the spitting in his face: with the odious name being given—

“His name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”

This principle was embodied in the patriarchal code long before the Law of Moses. We see it in the ancestral line of Boaz in the case of Judah’s son Onan, and the unusual circumstances brought about by the failure of Judah to perform his promise to Tamar in relation to Shelah. The Divine displeasure toward Onan was clearly evident. Tamar—the Gentile—taking the initiative, caused Judah himself to perform the law which was required, producing thereby the line of Pharez, from whom came Boaz, David and Christ—another strange link in this chain of man’s redemption.

The basic teaching of this Law is of death and resurrection: a raising up of the name of the dead — a renewal of that which is broken off by death—through redemption. There are no mistakes in the purpose of God. He requires His people to act upon the unselfish principle of loving our neighbor as ourselves, of doing to others as we would that they should do unto us—even if so doing would, naturally speaking, *“mar our own inheritance.”*

Matthew, Mark and Luke all record the Sadducees’ illustration of the woman that had 7 husbands, and the beautiful and conclusive manner in which the Master answered the hypothetical question posed by the petty and caviling opposition—

“Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?”

The very fact that Christ teaches that marriage is only a passing stepping-stone to the glorious spirit state of resurrection shows the underlying lesson of this ancient law—that resurrection from the dead has always been understood as the only avenue to life everlasting. Verily, the natural line of Elimelech had died, but a new beginning was to take place.

We see the high principles of Ruth: no presumptuous advance toward Boaz, but a humble acceptance of God’s requirements. She was a willing vessel in the hands of God. Boaz declared his recognition of his responsibility—

Ruth 3:10-11— *“Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than in the beginning, inasmuch as thou followest not young men, whether poor or rich.*

“And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.”

There was no desire for personal advantage or satisfaction on the part of Ruth, no desire to follow after young men. This again illustrates that Boaz was older than Ruth.

Boaz, however, has to instruct Ruth that there is a kinsman of nearer relationship than he, who had the primary duty to carry out the law—but that failing this, Boaz would perform that which God required. There was a closer relation that Boaz—in the flesh, in Adam. Paul said— *“in Adam all die.”*

The natural, closer redeemer was of the flesh. But Boaz would not impose himself until the inability of the flesh was manifested. Paul further declared—

“Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

Certainly the flesh cannot redeem. Paul answers his own question—

“I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 7:24-25).

Boaz asked Ruth to *tarry all night* (v. 13). *“I will, in the morning, perform thy desire, if the closer redeemer does not.”* Once more Boaz’ characteristic of love to his neighbor is illustrated—an assurance that God will provide that which is necessary, if we tarry close to Him until the morning light.

Ruth 3:15-17—*“Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. And he measured 6 measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.”*

Naomi is satisfied her suggestion is of godly origin. She says—

Ruth 3:18— *“Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter shall fall: for the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day.”*

God never rests; He never wearies; He slumbers not nor sleeps. But we must await His pleasure.

Later in the day, when the morning arose, an assembly of the elders of Bethlehem is called—at the gate of the city, the usual place of judgment. Then came by the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken. Said Boaz to him—

Ruth 4:1— *“Ho, such an one! Turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside and sat down.”*

The kinsman’s name is not recorded. He comes and goes undistinguished, unidentified. Those who do not, or will not, perform the will of God have their names blotted out of the Book of Life. Boaz, who did that which was required, has a perpetual memorial.

A proposal was made for the unnamed kinsman to perform the requirements of the law by the purchase of the property of Elimelech. The response was in the affirmative with eagerness—

Ruth 4:4— *“I will redeem it.”*

How naturally the flesh is responsive to take advantage of a situation! The unknown kinsman would take advantage of Elimelech, of Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion, in Naomi’s distress and need, if it suited his purpose. But Boaz pursued the proposal—

Ruth 4:5— *“What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”*

But to the kinsman, this was unacceptable, and he declined because of assumed personal disadvantage. He would have redeemed it for himself, but not to help Ruth—

Ruth 4:6— *“I cannot redeem it to myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance. Redeem thou my right to thyself, for I cannot redeem it.”*

“Lest I mar mine own inheritance.” The flesh again. When it is to disadvantage, marring the natural inheritance, refusal is encountered. His natural inheritance and possession was far more important to him than the inheritance which God had promised to them that love Him in obedience. But how shortsighted! Could not, and would not, God bless him abundantly for kindness and obedience? Thus his name is not recorded in the Book of Life.

Under the Law, the removal of the shoe—the symbolic removal of the right to walk in God’s land—was commanded: a removal of the right to walk on his brother’s inheritance. The word “shoe” in Hebrew is *naal*, “a binding, bolting, or locking together.” It ensured the enclosing of the covenant: a binding of the covenant.

In the parable of the 10 Virgins, the door was shut, bolted against the entry of the 5 foolish and unprepared virgins, when the announcement of the return of the Bridegroom was made. The judgment is pronounced—*“Depart from me: I never knew you.”*

The name was not written: there was no recognition.

This man had his shoe removed: the unknown, unwilling redeemer. He declined all right to the inheritance of God, for indeed all the land was God’s. It was God’s Own land, His eternal possession, lent to Israel only upon the condition of continued obedience. His shoe was removed from walking thereon, and the door was locked against him forever of receiving that land again.

Now the part of the glorious Redeemer comes into play—

Ruth 4:9-10— *“Ye are witnesses this day (said Boaz), that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi.*

“Moreover Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased (redeemed) to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place.

That the boundary of the inheritance should not be moved, that the ancient landmark should stay in its place—all the people at the gate and the elders of the city said—

Ruth 4:11— *“We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which 2 did build the house of Israel. And do thou worthily in Ephrath, and be famous in Bethlehem.”*

Boaz did worthily. He was a restorer of the line that had been cut off by death—a worthy type of the Redeemer of all mankind, even our Savior. Not only was he a restorer of the natural line of Elimelech, a seed raised up to the dead, but also that the designated spiritual line would continue through David and Christ.

It would appear from the statements which we have read, and from the words of the elders of Bethlehem, that Boaz had no seed, no descendants. Possibly he was not married, or was a senior widower without children. Thus the seed which should be born to succeed in the line of Elimelech would be united in Boaz as well. This gives more force and beauty to the faithful character of Ruth in the statement of Boaz—

“Thou followest not with young men, whether rich or poor.”

He was a restorer of the line, through the handmaid of the Lord. He was a restorer of broken lines, which would have ended with Elimelech and Boaz.

Ruth, the mother of Obed, in the line from Tamar by Judah: Pharez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon. Salmon was the husband of Rahab the harlot. Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah, selected by Moses at the numbering of the people at Sinai, and director of that tribe through the wilderness wandering. It was this tribe that led the armies of Israel, preceded by the pillar of fire and cloud, and the Ark of the Covenant.

The women of Bethlehem say to Naomi—

Ruth 4:14-15— *“Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee without a kinsman...He shall be unto thee a restorer of life, a nourisher of thine old age. Thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than 7 sons, hath borne him.”*

How had she borne him? Notice these words in v. 13—

“The Lord gave her conception (a Divine intervention) and she bare a son.”

She had had no children by Mahlon (in a period of up to ten years). Possibly she was barren. This appears to be parallel to the case of Sarah, of Rebekah, Rachel, and Elisabeth. These are all types of the Divine provision of the Son of God — of the Spirit of God coming upon Mary in the birth of Jesus, the Restorer of Life for all those who put their trust in God. Here was Ruth’s faith in God, that she should have a son by Boaz, a man apparently of considerably greater age than she: and the faith of Boaz that God would provide. The son is named Obed—*servant*— the servant of the Lord—

“Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

The names of Ruth and Obed are linked in this expression of the Master: Ruth, *Friend*, Obed, *Servant*. The ‘servant’—a reflection of his mother’s beautiful service to God—was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The final verses of the book of Ruth give the line of descent from Judah to David, a genealogy given twice in the Old Testament, and twice in the New. But Ruth’s name appears only once—in Matt. 1 — other than in this story of her faithfulness and godliness. What more do we need? A whole book bears her name: Ruth, *a Friend*, our Friend.

“All my city doth know that thou art a virtuous woman!”

—Bro. E.F. Higham

Why Bible students are watching current events in Syria, Turkey and Russia.

Daniel, chapter eleven, covers events from the prophet's time through our day and beyond. Briefly, the verses deal with:

11:2 Persia, ca. 538 BC.

11:3-4 Greece, ca. 333 BC. (Upon the death of Alexander the Great, Greece was divided into four kingdoms, two of which were the Ptolemaic and Seleucidae.)

11:5-29 Ptolemaic (King of the South: Egypt), and Seleucid (King of the North: Syria) 309-168 BC.

11:30-35 Rome - Pagan, enters the prophecy ca. 168-312 AD.

11:36-39 Rome “Christian,” from 312 to 476 AD (West: Rome), and to 1453 AD (East: Constantinople).

In the verses that follow, it is important to note that the “HE” in verse 39 is the last of the above kingdoms (Rome), and that up to the time of its demise in 1453 AD, it was known as the Eastern Roman Empire with capital in Constantinople (present day Istanbul, Turkey):

“Thus shall HE do in the strongest fortresses {most strong holds} with a foreign {strange} god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain. And at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at HIM; and the king of the north shall come against HIM like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass through {over}. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown, but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries; and the land of Egypt shall not escape. But he shall have power over the treasures of gold and of silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; and the Libyans and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps. But tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him; therefore, he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to sweep {make} away many. And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (11:39-45).

The “push” at “HIM,” Constantinople, took place in 1830s when the King of the South (M. Ali, the Ottoman ruler in Egypt) revolted against the Sultan, or head of the Ottoman Empire in Istanbul, or Constantinople. This set in motion a series of events that gradually pushed the Ottoman out of the region and into her geographical limits today, or Turkey.

We now await the King of the North to come “against HIM,” Constantinople, or Istanbul. Will this invader be the present Syrian government? Not a chance! There is no way that the Syrians could mount the kind of invasion of both Turkey and the Holy Land as described in the closing verses of the chapter - an event, we might add, that culminates in the earthshaking “time of trouble” prophesied of the last chapter of Daniel.

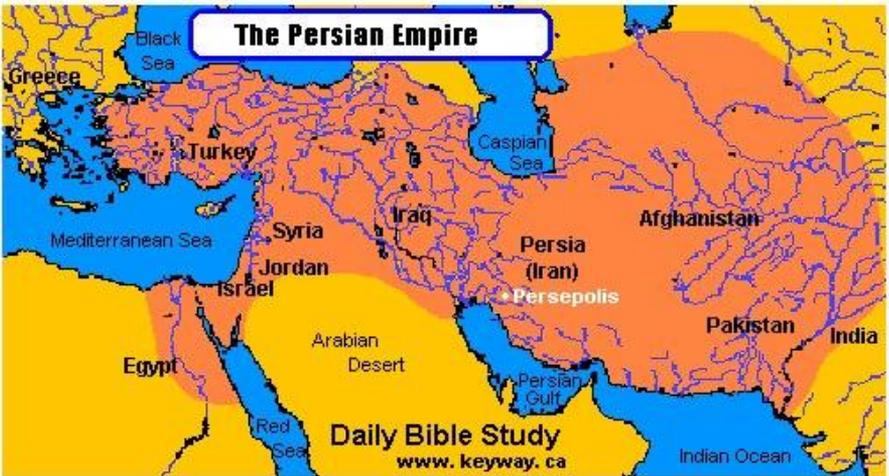
Who, then, will fill the role of the King of the North? Ezekiel, chapters 38-39, also prophesy of this massive latter-day invasion of the Holy Land by a power descending thereupon from the uttermost parts of the North. This Northern Power is, in the Hebrew scriptures, styled Rosh, which just happens to be an ancient appellation for Russia (38:2.) According to the prophecy, when Russia invades the Holy Land, Persia

is with her - the historical extent of which encompassed a sizable territory, including the Seleucidae or Syria.

Thus will the Russian Host have in her possession the Syrian lands and, accordingly, will take up the mantle of the King of the North in the last days - all of which shall witness the return of Yahshua, the defeat of Rosh, and the re-establishment of the First Dominion to the Daughter of Jerusalem.

With all of this in view, Bible students understand that present tensions between Turkey and Syria could create a situation wherein Russia - a long time Syrian ally - commences her move south as the prophets have foretold.

Bro. Bob Widding



Meditations – Deity’s Ways No. 39

“WOE unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you?” (Amos 5:18.) These surprising words were addressed to certain ones in Amos’ day, who, though neglectful of the conditions on which divine favour can alone be obtained, yet thought they were on good terms with God. Are there not any in our day who are similarly deluded? Alas! the judgment work of Christ will disclose the fact that no generation has been exempt from these self-deceivers—men who have known enough of God’s revealed will to bring them to resurrectional judgment, but who have not been sufficiently obedient to secure the eternal reward. These are not the people who will go to the great tribunal in shame and self-condemned, but who will appear there expectant, and whose expectancy will only be shattered by the recounting by Christ of conditions which they in their carelessness and perverseness have neglected. There will be argument about their having known Christ, having been in his company, having heard him speak, but the argument will be cut short by the stern, decisive, and dreadful words of Christ—“I know not whence ye are, depart from me ye workers of iniquity.” May it not be our unhappy lot to find ourselves excluded from the Kingdom! Let us examine the conditions.

“Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (Jno. 7:24). How practical and pointed are Christ’s precepts. They give human nature with its legion of evil ways no quarter. How common it is for one man to pass sentence on another on flimsy and imperfect evidence, or a mere surmise or guess. How frequently has a man been unjustly condemned as a tippler because of a red face, or because he has been seen to leave a refreshment bar; or as a smoker, because his clothes smelt of the noxious weed; or as covetous, untruthful, and “fast,” on equally unwarrantable grounds. If we would find mercy at the hands of Christ, we must be careful how we form conclusions regarding another’s conduct. “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” It is not sufficient for us merely to *think* that we are right in our judging; our judgment must either be founded on positive evidence, or altogether suspended. How much more pleasantly things would work if all were faithful in this matter. Scandalmongers would soon pine and perish from our midst. Let those who have been guilty in this respect, confess and forsake their sin. Let us determine henceforward to put a charitable, loving construction on our brethren’s actions which have the appearance of being (though are not necessarily) wrong. Charity “thinketh no evil.”

“Be just before you are generous.” This maxim is according to Scripture. God loves the cheerful and bountiful giver, and even commends those who by their generosity “pinch” themselves, but it is always on the understanding that what is given is “out of what we have” and not out of that which is due or belongs to another. Liberality

at the cost of another's dues is dishonest, and productive in the long run of manifold evils. A brother's benevolent and sympathetic organs must be controlled and guided by the word. Let no brother be freehanded in money matters, whilst his wife or children, or other fleshly belongings, are indifferently provided for (1 Tim. 8; 4:16): or whilst his servants or employes are unfairly paid (Col. 4:1); or whilst his landlord's or trademen's demands are overdue (Rom. 13:8). These are some of the calls of justice, and should be answered before generosity steps in. Let us not overlook the circumstance of Christ denouncing the gift which negated a prior obligation (Matt. 15:5). There is great wisdom, as well as beauty, in God's arrangement, both in the matter of justice (our obligations to others), and generosity (the latitude for liberality in ability possessed). It is not the amount of pounds, shillings, or pence, that makes a man's gift acceptable, but the mind which prompts the gift. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." In this connection, how sublime is Christ's praise of the poor widow—"Of a truth I say unto you that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all."

To study the Bible with the view of "proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" is as much a matter of necessity in the attainment of life as is the study of the Bible to ascertain what is embodied in the phrase "The Kingdom of God." The brother who wilfully refrains from searching what the will of the Master is, need expect no mercy in the day of Christ's coming. That salvation is conditional is the great argument of the Bible. God has made this truth to stand out on almost every page of His Word like the brilliant noon-day sun. Let us not forget that the conditions embrace not only belief and immersion, but also a faithful continuance in well-doing in those things which God brings before us in our daily reading of the Word. Let us underline in our Bible, in the most attractive of ink, the little word "IF." Here are a few passages to make a start on—those relating to Salvation first: "If we faint not," "If we walk in the light," "If we are led by the Spirit," "If we do whatsoever Christ commands us," "If we continue grounded and settled," "If we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Now for those concerning condemnation: "If we deny him," "If we live after the flesh," "If any man draw back," "If any man defile the temple of God," "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," "If we sin wilfully after we have received a knowledge of the truth."

"The Apocalypse," scoffingly remarked the *Daily Telegraph*, "either finds the student's reason already unhinged, or leaves it so." This is a compliment to the book, though not intended to be one. Students do not, as a rule, go off heads over the vagaries of a madman, or a tipsy dreamer, which John is alleged by one and another to have been. But to come nearer home, how do we view the book? Whilst, perhaps, refusing to go to the blasphemous length of the *Daily*

Telegraph, do we regard it as thousands in the religious world regard it, as a book too deep and enigmatical to be understood? If so, we take a very unworthy attitude—an attitude towards which Christ's opening words are a rebuke: "Blessed is he that readeth." Christ does not mock us by inviting us to engage in a vain study. The Apocalypse is not sealed—"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (22:10). That this book is understandable, Dr. Thomas' *Eureka* is a witness. With *Eureka* before him, let no brother foster the idea that the Apocalypse is a book beyond comprehension. But some brother may reply, "I don't want *Eureka*. I object to read through another man's spectacles, I want to interpret for myself, without bias." Be consistent, my brother. If through the assistance of the Doctor you have acquired a knowledge of the first principles of the truth, why scorn his help in *Eureka*? If your own ability is insufficient to unravel the wonderful contents of this last book of Holy Writ, gratefully accept the providential help of *Eureka*. Oh! the innate ingratitude and shortsightedness of human nature. Bro. A.T. Jannaway—1893

A Christadelphian on the Land of Israel

INTERVIEW FOR "THE JEWISH CHRONICLE," WITH MR.
FRANK G. JANNAWAY.

Our readers on several occasions have noted that very great sympathy displayed towards Judaism and Palestine and the Jews generally by the Christian sect known as the Christadelphians. Mr. William Grant, of Edinburgh, the editor of *GLAD TIDINGS*, has on many occasions appeared on Zionist platforms, and the readers of his journal have subscribed considerable sums to the Zionist cause. Another Christadelphian who has given very practical support to Zionism is Mr. Frank Jannaway (co-editor of the *BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN*), who has made several visits to Palestine, and is the author of three books, "Palestine and the Jews," "Palestine and the Powers," and "Palestine and the World," in which the Jewish colonies are described. To a representative of the *JEWISH CHRONICLE*, Mr. Jannaway has, in an interview, indicated the reason which induce Christadelphians to take so keen an interest in the restoration of Palestine.

BIBLE PROPHECIES

"The Christadelphians," said Mr. Jannaway, "believe in the Bible and its prophecies. We are all keen students of the Bible and have no paid ministry. We believe that the inspired messages therein contained all point in no unmistakable terms to the restoration of the Jews to their ancient homeland, and we hold that that restoration is an essential element in the

fulfillment of the wider hopes contained in the holy book. Much of the error of modern theology is due to a misreading of the Bible, or to the adoption of pagan ideas that are not in the Bible at all. Thus the idea of a triune God is nowhere outlined and is, indeed, expressly repudiated by the founder of Christianity.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

“Our faith in the Bible is based on the remarkable fulfillment of prophecy in the pages of history. One of the early Christadelphians, Dr. John Thomas, a medical man who came in touch with the ‘Campbellites’ in America, and was led to a close study of the scriptures, wrote a remarkable book, entitled ‘Elpis Israel,’ seventy-five years ago, in which he predicted, solely on the basis of biblical data, that there would be a remarkable colonization of Palestine by Jews, and that England would acquire a protectorate over Palestine, and take the Jews under her wing, and he was almost able to give the date of that happening. ‘The finger of God,’ he wrote, ‘has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain, which cannot be evaded and which her Counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them.’ He also, in the same book, unhesitatingly asserted that Great Britain would contain a control of Egypt. When Dr. Thomas made these bold forecasts there was not the slightest sign of their coming to pass. ‘Elpis Israel’ it is that provoked my ardent love for the Land and the People. ‘The Maranatha Press’ have just issued a popular edition—an exact reprint of the original—covering over 400 pages.

HISTORY MADE

“The Bible prophecies can be applied to most of the great past events in history. I have been particularly interested in another aspect of Bible study—the confirmation of the Bible from ancient monuments and archaeology. In my little book, “Round the British Museum with Bible in Hand” I have tried to show how some of the treasures in our great collection illustrate the Bible, and in many cases confirm in an almost uncanny way the verbal text. Unfortunately, the arrangement of the collection does not facilitate examination by the casual visitor interested in the Bible, and a guide is really a necessity. It would be a good thing if the Museum authorities appointed special guides to show its exhibits that had a direct leaning on the Bible.

VISITS TO PALESTINE

“I have been to Palestine five times,” said Mr. Jannaway, “my first visit having been made in 1901, and my last in 1922. I have seen very remarkable progress in the Jewish settlements, most of which I made a point of visiting. On my first trip Tel Aviv did not exist, and I remember

seeing a sandy waste and a dead camel where that wonderful Jewish township now stands. Tel Aviv is really an inspiration. I, unfortunately, do not know Hebrew, but I got on quite well with the Jewish colonists, and I shall never forget my reception by a stalwart party of Chalutzim who were working on a lonely road and living in tents. I came upon them when I was motoring through the country, and I stopped and showed them my letter of introduction, which was written in Hebrew. They cheered me and threw their caps in the air. I received much hospitality and many kindnesses from the Jewish settlers, and made many Jewish friends, both in Palestine and en route. One of my most interesting rencontres was with Mr. Herbert Loewe, whom I met in the smoking room of a little steamer we had both embarked on at Jaffa. We had a long chat on Biblical subjects, spent much time together in Jaffa, and I think we each learnt from the other. I should like to say, before we conclude this chat, that our aim is not to proselytize. Our meetings are open to all. I do not think much of the Jew converted to a Christianity with a triune God.”

* * *

(The foregoing is verbatim from the Jewish Chronicle for November 14th. It is the outcome of compliance, by bro. F.G.J., with a request from its editor for an interview to talk over the Christadelphian attitude towards the Palestine Movement. He disappointed our contemporary by refusing permission to reproduce his photograph with the article; but, as he explained, no true Christadelphian would sanction anything likely to savour of leadership—our only “Head” not having permitted us to possess his photograph—2 Corinthians 5: 7; 1 John 3: 2. —G.H.D.).

Another Holy Land Visit

We have received an invitation to attend the Opening Ceremony of the Jerusalem University by Lord Balfour in April. Although declining the honour, we are arranging shortly to visit the Land under entirely new circumstances; for, whereas our five previous visits have been in winter or spring, this visit will be in mid-summer. We are including, God willing, visits to Constantinople, Smyrna, Ephesus, Patmos and Athens; and purpose letting Berean Christadelphian readers have the benefit of snapshots and word-pictures.

This intimation will meet the inquiries of C.A.B., C.E., and others who have expressed regret that our articles on Eastern Travels, were cut short in 1923 (as the result of the Birmingham Trouble).

The letters of regret are typified by a letter received after a previous visit, from sister Eusebia Firth, on behalf of the Temperance Hall Sisters’ Guild, in which she wrote: —

“There will be a ‘wail’ of disappointment if you insist on taking any other subject ... What we want is what we can only get from you—your recent experiences; which are quite unique in the brotherhood—And our Society will not be put off with anything else. Even if you do touch the same grounds as bro. —that will not in the least matter.”

In our narrative we shall include matter excluded from the pages of the Christadelphian, 1922-1923. It goes without saying who “our companion” will be. —F.G.J.

Sixth Visit to the Holy Land

A sixth visit of course pre-supposes a first, second, third, fourth and fifth, and naturally, if the reader is interested in the sixth, he would like to know something about the previous five, so we will try and satisfy his desires.

THE FIRST VISIT

It came about in this way. As long ago as the writer remembers, it was his ambition to see Jerusalem, before ever he knew it would one day be the city of the Great King—Great David's Greater Son—but it became much more his ambition when, having learnt all about the Promises to Abraham and the Covenant with David, fifty years ago (on the 11th day of July, 1875), he became an “heir of the promises” by having “put on Christ” in the appointed way in the bath of the little meeting room at the back of a Dental Establishment, 69 Upper Street, Islington, then the only meeting place of the few Christadelphians in the metropolis of the British Empire.

The next, and not by any means the least noteworthy landmark in our life was the meeting with the little sister about our own age, and with whom, at the ages of twenty-three we set sail together on the ocean of married life, and for which embarkation we have ever given thanks to our Heavenly Father. As with this sixth pilgrimage to the Holy Land, so with the previous five, we have always had the other's company; and our prayer is that our seventh will also be together in the March to the Holy Land from Sinai, the scene of the Great Judgment so clearly treated of by the prophets of old, so graphically pictured in Eureka by our beloved forerunner Dr. Thomas, and now being so interestingly paraphrased by our worthy and beloved co-worker, bro. J. M. Evans in the current issues of the Berean Christadelphian.

Soon after marriage we remember telling our beloved that as soon as she had saved half the cost of a tour to Palestine we would provide the other half: she never did! But, eighteen years rolled by and we went. We communicated our plans to bro. C. C. Walker, for whom we had formed a strong attachment, and invited him to join us. He at first declined, but just

before the time to set sail arrived, we received a telegram from him, soon followed by himself, to make arrangements to accompany us, with the result that “we three” set out on our pilgrimage on Thursday, the 17th day of January, 1901.

Ah, what a happy and profitable time we had together, visiting not only Jaffa and Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Bethany, Jericho and Hebron, but also Egypt, Turkey, Greece and Italy. Enjoyable, however, as the tour was, the writer was not satisfied. Not the least important reason for making the pilgrimage was to see what had actually happened in the way of Colonization of the Holy Land by Israel after the flesh. Well, after our return home, and when the glamour of the pilgrimage had become somewhat subdued, we discovered to our disappointment that we had not much to tell our brethren concerning Jewish Colonies in Israel's Land. We took about 250 photographs in the course of our travels and made lantern slides of all. Our companion of the Birmingham ecclesia, offered to describe them in the Temperance Hall and a mass meeting was the result. *

We attended that meeting, and, being invited to add a few words to what bro. Walker had said, we realized an utter inability to record any information with regard to our tour that would arouse enthusiasm as to the Zionist Movement in Palestine. The pictures afforded little else than material for ordinary Travel-gossip.

* Yes: a mass meeting can always be obtained to “see pictures”, or when an enemy in the shape of a “Rev.” is given the platform, or, as the Christadelphian editor said, when a noise was expected, or when sisters were going to sing solos or cantatas; but to hear solemn words of counsel was altogether another matter—see Christadelphian, 1922, p. 80, only 90 out of 1300 turned up.

Bro. F. G. Jannaway

House Meetings

Mosheim speaking of the episcopal presbyters, or overseeing elders, of the apostolic ecclesias and those of the second century, says: “Let none confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the ecclesia with those of whom we read in the following ages. For though they were both designated by the same name, yet they differed extremely in many respects. A bishop during the first and second centuries was a person who had the care of one Christian assembly, which at that time was, generally speaking, small enough to be contained in a private house. In this assembly he acted not so much with the authority of a master, as with the zeal and diligence of a faithful servant. The ecclesias, also in those early times, were entirely

independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each of them governed by its own rulers and its own laws. Nothing is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive ecclesias; nor does there ever appear in the first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial ecclesias from which councils and metropolitans derive their origin.” “Nothing,” adds Jones, “could be more abhorrent to the first churches than to acknowledge any earthly potentate,” and he not even a Christian, “as their head.” “Be not ye called Rabbi,” said Jesus to the apostles, “for one is your guide, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called guides; for one is your guide who is Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your minister; and whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” These divine maxims, which are constituent principles of the Christian ecclesia, were lost sight of by the ecclesiastics who undertook to remodel the churches under the auspices of the Emperor Constantine, whom they, as a matter of courtesy, condescended to make their earthly head” —the Head of every “Tribe of Israel's sons.”

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka vol. 2 page 321 Logos edition

The 144,000 Sealed

John says: “I heard the number of them who had been sealed;” and then informs us that the number amounted to 144,000. As we are expounding a revelation hieroglyphically communicated, we must not suppose that this is the literal number of the sealed. Like all other numbers in the apocalypse, it is symbolical or representative; and subject to the like rule for its interpretation. They do not represent less numbers than themselves, but more. This remark, however, does not include the thousand years, which is the numerical symbol representative of “the Day of Christ,” comprised between the binding of the Dragon, and his release for a little season.

The 144,000 represent the whole number of the redeemed. This appears from ch. 14:3, where they are styled *hoi egorasmenoi*, “the redeemed” (or those acquired by the Lamb by a ransom or price paid, his blood) “from the earth.” The real, or exact, number of the redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18,19), we are told in Apoc. 7:9, is “a great multitude which no man could number.” Abraham was invited to number the stars, if he were able, which, of course, he was not able to do; upon which he was told, “So shall thy seed be” (Gen. 15:5). Paul

tells us, we are Abraham's seed, if we be Christ's; otherwise, we are not; and in Rom. 4:18, informs us, that the promise embraces whole nations of mankind, which, in the day of Christ, when he dwells in the midst of Zion, will "be joined to Yahweh and be his people" (Zech. 2:11; Apoc. 15:4). The number of the redeemed, saved, or sealed, it is impossible for any but the Deity to define. He has chosen to be reticent upon this point — to conceal it by saying nothing about it, further than to let us know that no man can count them. It is clear, then, that 144,000 is only a definite number representative of a much larger multitude, which the Deity himself alone can define to a man; for "known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world" or aion (Acts 15:18) and every redeemed man is one of his works, as saith Paul, "we are his workmanship" (Eph. 2:10). In this counting up the number of the saved, he will, therefore, remember exactly how many he has created after the likeness of his Son Jesus. We must, then, be content to know simply the number by which he has thought proper to represent the unknown, and the mystery that number secretes, from all who have not the wisdom to "see" and understand.

Thus, then, the 144,000 being a miniature representation of an unknown predetermined original, it cannot be interpreted by what is called the literal; a rule which, when applied to the Apocalypse, reduces it to an unintelligible absurdity, which commends itself only to the mind of a "churchman," or of one hopelessly spoiled by "philosophy and vain deceit."

But what is the mystery of the Deity secreted in this number? Why should the number representing the redeemed be 144,000? Why might not 121,000, or any other number, have sufficed? I reply, because 12 and not 11, is the square root of "that great city, the Holy Jerusalem," which is the Bride of Christ (ch. 21:2, 9, 10). The holy root of the Good Olive Tree is 12; which, when multiplied into itself, produces 144, thousands, furlongs, or cubits, as the number or mensuration may be in the premises. If, in the Holy Root, there had been only 11 sons of Israel, "the Urim and the Thummim" would have consisted of no more than eleven precious stones; the foursquare breastplate of judgment would have been defective in one of its rows, a twelfth stone would have been wanting; there would have been only eleven oxen under the laver, and eleven tribes of Israel; only eleven lions on the steps of Solomon's throne; there would not have been a double 144, "instructed in the songs of Yahweh" (1 Chron. 25:7); nor a double 144,000, under twelve captains, or princes (1 Chron. 27:15): there would have been only eleven thrones of the House of David, which would have required

only eleven apostles to occupy them in the regeneration (Matt. 19:28). Had 11 been the square root, and not 12, there would have been only twenty-two elders, and 121,000 sealed, 11,000 from each of 11 tribes; there would have been only eleven gates to the Holy Jerusalem, and at the gates only eleven angels standing; there would have been only eleven foundations to the city on which only eleven names of apostles would have been inscribed. The city would have been only 11,000 furlongs, and the encircling wall but 121 cubits; and lastly, the Wood of Life would produce only eleven fruits. From this, the reader may see how the difference of a unit in the root of the Holy Square would have affected the divine numerical system from Genesis to the end of the Apocalypse.

Any number multiplied into itself will produce a square. In 144,000 we have a square number given, from which the square root is extractable according to rule. The extraction is the finding of the number, which, multiplied into itself, will make the given number.

Thus, $12 \times 12 = 144$ — thousands, furlongs, or cubits, as the case may be. It is the square of twelve, and, as the symbol of a commonwealth, polity, or city, applicable only to a community all of whose citizens are based upon a square root of 12. In the Apocalypse, this root is doubled in ch. 4:4, there being “twenty-four elders;” and in ch. 21:12, there being twelve gates and twelve angels at the gates. The reason of this is, that the Holy Square, styled Jerusalem “holy” and “new,” and “above the Mother of us all,” both Jews and Gentiles in Christ, consists of two classes; the one, based upon the prophets; and circumcision of flesh, which made them citizens of the polity founded on the twelve sons of Israel — their faith in promises made and covenanted to the fathers, giving them citizenship in the Holy Square; one 12, therefore, is their symbol: the other class, without regard to flesh, are adopted into the Foursquare Polity, and partake of the square root 12 with those under the law; and are also based upon another 12, the apostles of the Lamb, with whom the believers before Christ came as yet had no acquaintance.

Hence, to represent these two classes united in one and the same square, the square root is doubled in the elders, and the gates and their angels; and in Chronicles both the root and its square, where the numbers are 24 and 288, the last being a double 144. The 24 has been transferred to the apocalypse, where the 288 has been halved, 12 being the square root of neither 24 nor 288.

Bro. John Thomas—Eureka vol. 2 page 325 Logos edition

Hints For Bible Markers

It is an interesting thought we are given, when the spouse takes on the saving name of Christ Jesus and their mate does not, that they should stay together provided they consent peaceable life. Here is a case, God willing, where the close association (and there is no closer association in this life than marriage) of a believer and a nonbeliever, may cause the unbelieving spouse to be influenced for good by the believer. One may wonder how one unbelieving husband is sanctified by a believing wife or vice versa? It's not by the matrimonial alliance which only establishes a fleshly unity. It is by the principal where a person is influenced by the teachings of the spouse, both in speech and in deed. This is evident from the words of Peter, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; (2) While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." (1 Peter 3:1-2) it is the power of moral influence which may cause the unbelieving spouse the influenced for good.

Husbands love honor and cherish your wife! Why? Because Christ loved the ecclesia. Considering man's nature, sometimes this may be harder than it sounds. It is hard for some husbands to put their wives happiness before their own. To sacrifice a little for the sake of peace. If both parties would put away selfishness and make sacrifices for the other person they would find true happiness. Many think they fight for principal, that they are the master, unaware they are being unreasonably obstinate. A man of Christ does not grow angry over little things. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Galatians 5:14)

Ephesians 5:28-29 "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:"

bro. Beryl V. Snyder

The Commandments of Christ

As collected and organized by bro. Roberts

VIII. CONCERNING MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS

A husband or wife becoming a believer without the other, not to leave the other, if he or she consent to a peaceable life.

But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. (13) And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (14) For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. (15) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. (1 Corinthians 7:12 – 15)

Husbands to love, honour and cherish their wives.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (Ephesians 5:25)

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. (Colossians 3:19)

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)