

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 The Berean Christadelphians since 1923.

Vol. XXI (CVI) No. 9

September 2018

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	
EDITORIAL	Cry Aloud And Spare Not!.....	290
EXHORTATION.....	The Epistle to the Ephesians	297
EXHORTATION.....	The Grace of God.....	306
SIGNS	The Past 40 Years	307
THOUGHTS	Meditations—Deity's Ways No. 109.....	310
.....	Thoughts Gleaned By The Way	312
.....	Eureka – A Temple of Light	315
BIBLE MARKING.....	The Psalms – Psalm 9:5-6	316

God Willing, The Berean Christadelphian Ecclesial News will be published monthly as an avenue of providing information of Ecclesial interest to the special activities and upbuilding exhortations are encouraged. This is an effort to buildup 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, Texas

August 18, 2018

Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings in the Things Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ,

Once again, the Lord has called out someone for His purpose, who has accepted His invitation to be part of the bride of Christ in the soon coming Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

We joyfully report to you that **Joey Hall**, son of the late Sister Ruthie Hall, and grandson of Bro. David and Sis. Lois VanPelt, after a good interview last night, and a public confession of his faith to those attending at Bro. Wayne Wolfe's home in Lampasas Texas, has been immersed today into the Name.

He will be given the right hand of fellowship, Lord willing, at the memorial service tomorrow in Goldthwaite.

Please welcome our brother and share with him this joyful news.

His contact information is:

Joey Hall

250 CR 517

Mullin, TX 76864

email: HallJoseph2002@gmail.com

phone: (512) 525-4192

In other news, Lord willing, we are planning to host our November gathering. Dates: Friday Nov 23 through Sunday, Nov 25 (USA Thanksgiving Day weekend) in Comanche, TX

Theme: THINK ON THESE THINGS (a study inspired by the writings of bro George Gibson) Details will be mailed at a later date.

We would also like to thank those brothers and sisters who have visited our ecclesia throughout the past year, attending last year's November gathering, the Memorial service and Wednesday night class; their company is most rewarding.

Lord willing, should you be in the area and would like to visit, the meeting hall location is: 1109 Reilly Street, (at the corner of Reilly and 3rd streets) Goldthwaite, TX 76844

Our schedule is, Sunday School class (Nazareth Revisited) 10 AM
Memorial Service 11 AM, Mid-week Study class (13Lectures)
Wednesday at 7 PM at the Hall

Public lectures, 2nd Sunday of the month (Jan-June, Sept, Oct, Dec)

We thank our Heavenly Father, for the Fellowship we have with His Son and with all of you. And we realize that there is nothing that we have that He has not provided and we are thankful for that.

May He continue to comfort, guide and strengthen us all as we wait for Jesus to return and free us from the chains of the flesh.

Love and Peace, in our Lord Jesus Christ, (-:
On behalf of the brothers and sisters of the Goldthwaite Ecclesia,
Bro. Len Naglieri

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1st Corinthians 10:31

EDITORIAL

Cry Aloud, And Spare Not!

“Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head”—Psa. 141:5

IF, IN some manner, we were cast into a great body of water, and struggled for many hours to keep ourselves from sinking, while we looked and longed for help, we would soon become despondent, and ready to give up in despair. Then if some man appeared from an unexpected source, and rescued us, would we not always feel genuinely grateful toward him for his labor of love, and thank God for our deliverance?

Metaphorically speaking, that is an experience many of us have undergone. We were puzzled about so many religious bodies, and as we sought for information regarding the matter of salvation, no reasonable explanation was forthcoming. Finally, we came in contact with a Christadelphian, who directed us to Christendom Astray, a book by Robert Roberts, and to Elpis Israel by Dr. John Thomas. After reading these, by which our minds were directed to the Bible, *we were astonished to find it to be a Book we could understand!* We discovered that it was not a classical text book, nor a book of mystery; but the Word of God—

“Which is able to make us WISE UNTO SALVATION through faith which is in Christ Jesus”—2 Tim. 3:15.

As our knowledge and understanding of the Bible increased, we next turned to Eureka, the last and crowning labor of love by John Thomas, an exposition of the Apocalypse—a literary work that has no equal aside from the Bible. As we read it carefully and prayerfully, we became fascinated by the author's unstaggering faith, and keen discernment of the Word of God. We began to realize how “with joy he drew water out of the wells of salvation,” and “as he thirsted for the living God,” he drank freely “of the fountain of water of life.”

A few months ago, we received a stimulating letter from a brother, and in one place he said,

“How stirring the events are today! How wonderfully they fit in with what our beloved brother Thomas has taught us to expect! Where would we be if God had not, in His loving providence, provided such a devoted and dedicated student to point out these things to us?”

We too, are genuinely grateful for his untiring labor of love, and thank God daily for it.

* * *

BUT ALL do not view his works with appreciation. Even during his lifetime, he had many unfriendly critics, and they have increased as the
287—Berean 2018

years have passed. Some have complained that the language he used was too strong when he assailed with censure the doctrines of Christendom. But how could he have accomplished what he did, if he had not been firm, and fearless? Because of his courage to "Cry aloud, and spare not," there are thousands of men and women who are today rejoicing in the knowledge and understanding of the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the Name of Jesus.

As we reflect upon these things, we recall the words of brother Roberts when he said, "*Honesty of utterance* (even if erring on the side of severity), so far from being incompatible with true Christian character, is a distinguished feature of it." One has only to turn to the teaching of Jesus and the apostles for confirmation of this distinct or unusual characteristic which marks off an individual in the class to which he belongs.

Have we not read how Jesus addressed the clergy in his day, calling them "*whited sepulchres*," "*blind leaders of the blind*," and many other similar epithets? And, likewise, have we not observed the fearless manner of the apostles when they opposed the leaders of the people, and the high priests and their associates? We do not suggest that we copy Jesus' language, for he had direct divine authority, but we do maintain that *we should never hesitate to make our position clear, and show the public that we are unmistakably opposed to the unscriptural teachings of the papal and protestant churches of the world.*

* * *

THE WORK of Brother Thomas, which resulted in the revival of the One Faith and Hope of the Gospel, is of such magnitude that we are overwhelmed with astonishment that *so few seem to appreciate its greatness*. Let us put on the cloak of humility, like the Ethiopian eunuch, and acknowledge that with our own ability we are unable to understand the Bible. But with the help of brother Thomas, who has drawn aside the veil of superstition by which Christendom is shrouded, the sunlight of God's Truth has shined into our hearts, and opened the eyes of our understanding, and now we can rejoice in the hope of salvation.

A brother, writing 70 years ago, said that there are some who say, "We neither want Dr. Thomas or brother Roberts." Commenting on it, he further said, "A new generation has come upon the scene, like the Pharaoh who '*knew not Joseph*,' who under the tuition of other doctrines than those we first received (*'from which some having swerved'*) are unconsciously laying the foundation for a still more general departure in the long run, from all that constituted 'first love,' and 'faith unfeigned'."

In another place, this brother said, "It would be an advantage to the work of the Truth in Yorkshire (as also elsewhere) to have classes for

the reading of Elpis Israel and Eureka; *they are a good preventative against the inroad of false doctrine, and a complete antidote to the laxity of faith and fellowship into which some have relapsed.*"

Another brother, writing 40 years ago, said, "Where 'Eureka' that grand legacy of brother Thomas, is studied, there the Bible is best revered, known, and understood. On the other hand it is our experience that those ecclesiastical presidencies over by brethren who have not made a special study of the writings of brother Thomas are of a Laodicean type, and are very poorly attended at their meetings."

We are fully convinced, through the evidence submitted in their writings, that brethren Thomas and Roberts possessed a saving knowledge of the Truth, and we repeat here what we said 11 years ago. We do not idolize or glorify these brethren, but we recognize their labor and position in relation to the establishment of the Household of Faith in these latter days. *We believe they were thoroughly sound brethren who fully understood the fundamentals of the Truth.* We are not at all ashamed of them. We feel no need to apologize for their supposed limitations and peculiarities. We are very pained when we see them belittled and condescendingly patronised as well-meaning but somewhat quaint and old-fashioned, in current periodicals. This "modern" trend is not good, sound Christadelphianism.

We are entitled to, and it should be our prerogative, to be able to read what these brethren have written. It is unfair, unkind and unjust for others to attempt to tell us what they think these brethren should have written.

—*Bro. George A. Gibson, Editor*

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

MALAWI, Chikanda Ecclesia Study **Sep 1-2 2018**
Bro Victor Magwira, victormagwira@gmail.com, "The signs of the Times nearest of the Christ's return"

TENNESSEE Fraternal Gathering **Oct 6-7 2018**
Bro Jim Rankin 115 Sherwood Dr, Camden Tn 38320 731-441-8864
email jttrans04@gmail.com "David and The Psalms"

GOLDTHWAITE Fraternal Gathering **Nov 23-25 2018**
Bro. Len Naglieri Email: len@naglieri.me (Details to follow)
"Think on These Things by Bro George Gibson"

BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN YOUTH GATHERING KENYA..... **12 -16 December, 2018**
Place: Mumias, Bungoma County, Kenya. Theme: 2 Corinthians. For info email Bob Bent or Epa Wekati.

RICHARD FRATERNAL GATHERING..... **June 28-June 31, 2019**
Sis. Linda Jones, PO Box 48 Richard, SK, Canada S0M 2P0, gljon@yourlink.ca 1-306-441-2248 or 1-306-246-4628

Epistle to the Ephesians

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a general epistle in the sense that it does not deal with any specific problems, but with the *deep principles* of the Truth. It has no special greetings to, or even reference to, any individuals, as would be expected in an epistle to one ecclesia, especially where Paul had but recently spent three years, as he had at Ephesus.

It gives the appearance of being intended, not just for Ephesus, but for the brethren and sisters of all the ecclesias of Western Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the centre and hub—the same group of ecclesias to whom John wrote from Patmos.

In the first two chapters, Paul describes the eternal purpose of God to unite in one perfect, harmonious, unblemished (that's the point), spiritual whole, all things in Christ.

The epistle is addressed (v.1) to the *saints* (holy ones) and the *faithful*—not two classes of course, but two essential characteristics: those who are holy and are full of faith. Both are essential: either alone would be sterile, actually impossible.

The epistle is addressed to none other than these, except in the sense of exhorting all others to make themselves holy and full of faith. It is our wisdom to be sure we know what God means and expects as to holiness and fullness of faith, and to be sure that we—to the best of our ability—constantly and continuously labour to be in that very limited class—holy and without blemish.

Holiness is total sanctification unto God and separation from the things of the flesh—the passing meaningless, animal things of the natural world. And we are told that—

“*without holiness, no man shall see the Lord*” (Heb. 12: 14).

Holiness and fullness of faith are a total, every moment way of life, way of thinking and speaking and acting—*totally* different from the ordinary way of the world. They are total, absorbing, exclusive interest in God and in divine things.

Verse 2: “*Grace and peace from God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

This is not, as some make it, just a technical, formal opening salutation to a letter like “*Dear Sir.*” It is a reference to the very heart of the divine purpose itself.

Paul uses the word “*grace*” twelve times in this epistle—three times in each of the first three chapters. “*Grace*” is God's divine favour and benevolence toward us—the means and the secret of our salvation. It is far above and beyond mere justice. It is even above and beyond mere mercy. It is active, all powerful, all transforming, redeeming compassionate love and blessing.

“And peace”—The peace of God—perfect peace—is that essential state of mind to which we can and must attain by laying hold upon the freely offered grace of God.

Verse 3: *“Blessed be God.”*

To those who have the least conception at all of the depth and stupendous magnitude and glory of these things, that can be the only and the irresistible reaction. And not just once, nor even just periodically, but constantly, all day long. *“Blessed be God.”* If this is not our total and continuous frame of mind in all our waking moments, then we have just not made real contact with the glory and greatness and goodness of God at all.

Verse 3: *“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings . . .”*

“Blessed be God . . . who hath blessed us.” Our blessing of God is, of course, a totally different thing from His blessing of us and the words in the original are different. *“Eulogetos”*—is always applied in the New Testament to God, and *“Eulogeo,”* applied to His blessing of men. But they are very closely related, and English has no better than *“bless”* for both of them. The former carries the idea of praise and worship, the latter more that of poured out goodness.

Verse 3: *“with all spiritual blessings.”*

The original is even stronger, *“with every spiritual blessing”* (as R.V.)

God has held absolutely nothing back of all the spiritual blessings He could possibly give us. We may think, in some of our circumstances and abilities, He could have done differently and better—but that is not wisdom.

He has done the *very best* and most possible for us spiritually. If we do not lay hold on it all in its infinite fullness, that is our fault and our loss. To lay hold on it, to possess it and absorb it, is a full time, full-hearted, full-devoted thing.

Verse 3: *“In the heavenlies.”* The word *“places”* is not in the original. It could be heavenly things. It appears to mean, more abstractly, heavenly realm or sphere—that is, spiritual relations as against natural relations.

It is used five times in this epistle; twice (as it is used here) of the present blessed state of the believer; once of Christ, as and where he is at present; and twice of the spiritual powers of the present world—those who hold religious authority and rule. In the last use (6: 12) Paul speaks of spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies against which the soldier of Christ must do battle.

Verse 3: *“In the heavenlies in Christ.”*

The whole plan is *in Christ*. All centers in him. He is the means by which God is destroying all evil and bringing the whole creation into

eternal harmony and glory. Only “*in him*”—inside of him, totally absorbed into and covered by him, can we have any *Hope* or *Life* or *Peace* or *Joy*.

Verse 4: “*According as He (God) hath chosen us in him (Christ).*”

Paul deals here, and in the next verse, with Election and Predestination. It is vital to our salvation that we understand what these are, and how they apply to us.

“*Election*” is simply “*choice*” and to elect is simply to choose; and the word is usually so translated. Our word election is from the Greek word for choose, and it’s simpler if we drop the words elect and election and stick to choose, which is plain and clear.

“*Pre-destinate*”—as in verse 5, is simply that; pre-destinate, to decide the destiny beforehand, and we have no better word for the idea and that’s the literal meaning of the original. God, *by His foreknowledge*, (and that’s the point), chooses men and predestinates them. Paul is speaking, all through this epistle, only of those who will be the final redeemed.

He keeps two things clear and we must keep them clear. First, God is no respecter of persons. He chooses men to salvation upon the basis of what He knows they will do. We are told in the Old Testament that—

“*The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him*” (2 Chron. 16: 9—the prophet Hanani).

And Christ says the same—

John 4:23—“*The Father seeketh such to worship Him,*” that is, He is hunting for them. The problem is not discrimination by God; the problem is trying to find enough individuals in the vast heap of human flesh who will give their lives totally to God without reserve. That’s whom He is seeking so hard to find.

The second point is that whether or not we are ultimately part of this choice and predestination *depends upon what we do*. It’s up to us.

Paul speaks throughout this chapter of the ideal Body, the ultimate redeemed. It may sound to some like it’s a cut-and-dried affair, arbitrarily determined by God; that is, that He predestinated before the world began, so it is immutably set, regardless of what man may or can do. But He predestinated on the basis of His foreknowledge of the course that we would choose and His predestination had no influence upon that choice. In His foreknowledge our own choice comes first and then His predestination, based upon that choice.

Some may not be able to understand this—though it should not present any problem to the reasonable mind. But whether we

understand it or not, we must accept it as a fundamental divinely attested fact. (There's nothing cut and dried). Peter warns us to—

"give diligence to make our calling and election (choice) sure." (2 Pet. 1: 10).

And he tells us how to do so; by abounding in certain virtues; knowledge, patience, godliness, etc.; not just having them, but *abounding* in them. And Paul tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2: 12).

The whole thrust of Scripture—all its instruction and exhortation and solemn warning is to the effect that it's up to us, and it requires total effort. The Scriptures are full of such expressions as "*Let not slip*", "*keep in mind*", "*always abound*", "*overcome*", "*endure to the end*", "*patient continuance*", and many more. Some say, "*it is already predestinated, then nothing I do can make a difference.*" That's utter blind stupidity or deliberate wickedness.

Though the Redeemed have from the beginning of the world been chosen and predestined, it is entirely on the basis of God's foreknowledge of the total effort they will make and the total devotion they will show. None of this is to say that they earn or even merit eternal salvation. Salvation is wholly a free gift of God's grace. But the effort and devotion *will* determine to whom the free grace is shown.

"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).

If we don't work righteousness to the limit of our ability, we shall *not* be accepted—we shall *not* receive the grace.

Verse 4: "*Hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world.*"

The "us" cannot be pressed to prove either Paul or his readers had guaranteed, irreversible salvation. He is speaking ideally of those who will prove faithful to the end. It is he that endureth to the end that shall be saved. And though a man may be "*in Christ*", if he does not "*abide in him*" he is "*cast out and burned.*"

Note in passing that if to be chosen before the foundation of the world indicates pre-existence for Christ, it equally indicates pre-existence for all the redeemed, which few, if any, would claim.

Verse 4: "*That we should be holy and without blame*—more correctly—*without blemish* (as R.V.) *before Him in Love.*"

This is the central and key fact of the epistle—yea of the whole plan of salvation.

"That we should be holy and without blemish."

Paul comes back to these central and basic fundamentals in chapter 5, speaking of the Bride of Christ, the Ecclesia—

"That he (Christ) might sanctify and cleanse it (the ecclesia) with the washing of water by the Word. That he might present it to himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (vs. 26, 27).

We note that this making holy and without blemish is done "by the Word," so it is clearly something that has to occur and be accomplished at the present time by diligent, prayerful, continuous study of the Word—always of course, seeking the essential help and guidance and power of God through Christ.

We must ourselves do it, but still it must be—and must be recognised as being—the work of God. Can we, in this weak, mortal flesh, achieve holiness and unblemishedness? We not only can but we *must*. Does that mean that we must achieve permanent perfection? That is obviously impossible. The flesh could not achieve that for one day, let alone a lifetime; for it means not only not doing any wrong, but—which is much more important—doing everything right, total service, not wasting a moment of God-given time, not forgetting God for a moment.

What is required is that we follow a course that keeps us in God's sight, holy and without blemish. What then is that required course to be followed in order to achieve salvation?

Primarily, we must have—we ourselves must provide—(always of course with God's help) three things—

1. A *goal* of perfection. 2. Total *desire* for perfection. 3. Total *effort* toward perfection.

If we do not have the goal, obviously we are hopeless. God is not going to force a blessing upon us that we do not even perceive as necessary. And if the glorious prospect that God has laid before us, and the marvellous love that He has manifested to us in calling us to the light, and offering us the blessing of His power and guidance, offering us eternity in the joy of fellowship with Him, and limitless spiritual vitality forever—if this does not create a total reciprocal devotion and desire, then we are dead indeed.

And if such a desire does not automatically translate into total absorption and dedication and effort to achieve the desire—if there isn't sufficient wisdom and intelligence to cause us to strain every nerve and sinew to make sure we do not let slip from us such great salvation—then what good would such dull apathetic creatures be to God?

The present life, at best, is less than one hundred years. But after a billion times a billion years, *eternity* hasn't even begun to begin. Who but a fool would jeopardise the one for anything in the other?

So we must come to God with the goal, the desire, and the devotion of total effort. In baptism, we are washed perfectly clean. We rise from the waters “*holy and without blemish before Him in love*” (1: 4). How do we maintain that essential perfection? He has lovingly provided a way—study, learning, meditation, self-examination, steady striving to overcome every aspect of the flesh, fixed determination to work to the limit for God in the joyful thanksgiving of grateful love, confession and repentance, prayer and supplication and, above all, constant washing out, re-purifying by faith in the all-cleansing blood of the Lamb.

We must constantly, repeatedly, keep purifying our heart before God. We must keep ourselves—by the merciful provision of cleansing—holy and without blemish before Him in love. It must be a continuous process, all day and every day.

Our strong desire for the love and fellowship of God must give us a strong desire for holiness.

There have been, and are, those who are thus holy and without blemish before Him in love. Only God knows who they are, for only He knows the hearts, and He alone can measure the labours against the abilities and the overcoming against the degree of testing.

They may be few and rare, but the number will at last be made up, after all the travail of the ages—which is for their sakes alone.

Verse 5: “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*”

All mankind are, as Paul says, in a natural sense, “*His offspring.*” He is already the Father of all. But this adoption is much higher. This is for those who with all their hearts aspire to His beauty of holiness and hate in themselves any falling short of that holiness; those who seek his spiritual likeness.

Verse 6: “*Wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.*”

The Beloved, of course, is Christ. All is in him. We must never lose sight of him as the God-appointed covering making us acceptable; but never as just ritually or imputedly. It is only as our heart and labours and desires are purified by faith and love.

Verses 7 and 8: “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.*”

Riches, abounded, all wisdom—These are the thoughts we must keep in mind constantly. First, we have been forgiven. Jesus taught that, “*he to whom most is forgiven will love the most*” (Luke 7: 43).

We must realise the extent of our forgiveness, and of our need for forgiveness. And we increasingly so realise this by dwelling our minds on the infinite purity and beauty of God’s holiness, and the natural ugliness of our flesh.

The natural man is quite satisfied with himself. He sees nothing wrong, no ugliness, no loathsome disease with himself. But Paul says in chapter 2, he is “*dead in trespasses and sins*” (v. 1), “*fulfilling the lusts of the flesh and the mind*” (v. 3), “*children of wrath*” (v. 3)—and chapter 4—

“*Alienated through ignorance*” (verse 18).

We must realise that our natural way, our natural thinking is an abomination to God. We must *learn* His way and His thinking.

After a full realisation of the depth of our forgiveness, consider Paul’s subsequent words—

“*The riches of His grace, wherein He hath abounded to us in all wisdom and prudence*” (Eph. 1:7-8).

This is the Almighty Creator of this infinite universe condescending to the passing vapour of the worm called man, riches, grace, abounding in all wisdom and prudence.

When anyone does us a kindness, we feel, or should feel, a sense of obligation, not a legal obligation, but an obligation of affection. This is what the Almighty God is striving to create and awake in puny man so that man will be driven to lift himself spiritually to God in love.

“*All wisdom and prudence*”—that is, the understanding itself (wisdom) and the beneficial application of that understanding (prudence). Most of us, by our actions, write ourselves off as ignorant and content to stay ignorant. But the Word of God is a vast and inexhaustible treasure of knowledge, and God has offered us all wisdom to increasingly reap these treasures. He will not be pleased, He will not see His likeness growing in us, if we do not take—if we are not intensely anxious to take—full advantage of that wisdom to the limit of our time and opportunity. If our mind is on earthly things, it will forever remain earthly and *perish* as such.

“*To be carnally minded is death.*” (Rom. 8: 6).

“*Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. That in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him*” (Eph. 1: 9-10).

This is the glorious, eternal, Divine Purpose which He has, in incomprehensible condescension, revealed unto us. The essential characteristic of this final eternal result is that it be “*holy and without blemish in love.*”

Those who have chosen this—given their *whole* heart and strength and mind and desire to this, will be those who remain in those glorious and endless ages, when all who have chosen anything less will have been swept forever away.

—*Bro. G.V.Growcott*

The Grace of God

Our subject is one that gives us a reason for all of us to be here. It's why we have hope despite our sin nature. We sin, we break commandments specifically given to us to follow and show our love for our Heavenly Father, and we break those commandments constantly. In fact we know that only one man has ever been able to live a life free of sin, and by the grace of God, he was crucified so that we might all be able to be forgiven of our sins and to be given the opportunity for salvation.

Grace is a term sometimes misused. Do we truly understand what grace is? Are we deserving of it? Some may even confuse grace and mercy, they are similar, but still different words that should be used in different ways. Mercy, by definition is "compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm." In most cases, mercy has to do with freeing from punishment or harm, it certainly goes hand in hand with grace but is still not the same thing. Grace, on the other hand is "a giving of unmerited favor" or in the case of our reference this morning, giving unmerited salvation. It is less to do with freedom from punishment, and more about the giving of unmerited favor, and love. Yahweh, the Heavenly Father of mankind has given His grace to all those who choose to seek Him. Those who do not seek after Him, still have that same grace provided to them, but their choice to not accept it is why they are undeserving of it and in the end will not be recipients of it. Titus 2:11-13 *"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodly and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."* James 4:6 *"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."*

Man has no part in how Yahweh's grace is given to him. His grace is completely undeserving. We are not given it by any works of our own. No matter how much studying of the Word, caring for our brothers and sisters, or preaching the Gospel that we do, unfortunately we are still sinners. The "doing" or "works" of man can only take us so far, in the end man cannot save themselves. Eph. 2:8-9 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* It is a gift, it is nothing that comes from works, this is why the Law cannot save. We will discuss this further in a moment. The second portion of this verse points out that the gift of grace is given "lest any man should boast". Humanism shuns that gift, it refuses it, because to accept it would be to

lessen the pride of man. This is why we are “saved through faith” as this verse states. It is faith that gives us hope, and we are allowed this hope by the grace of God, given as a “gift”. Without hope, what purpose would we have in our lives? We would have no reason for living, we would live our lives like evolutionists and humanists. They live and die, and their only hope is that they die with some sort of legacy, but nothing more. All of us, obviously, want more, we have hope and we love our Heavenly Father who, as Paul says, “by grace has given us the hope of a promise”.

He says this in Rom. 4:13-16 *“For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”*¹⁴ *“For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:* ¹⁵ *Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,”*

It is interesting that he is putting together faith with grace and showing their importance in being a part of the promises. Number one, it is not by any works or the law but by faith that Abraham was given the promises. If it were simply by the law and not faith, the promises would be made of none effect! What would be the point of Abraham’s faith in the promises that were given to him? Without them, all that would be left would be his works and later following the law. But the law cannot save! It all starts with faith, as vs. 16 says, and then by extension, so “that it might be by grace”, faith allows salvation to be by grace. Paul then explains, to the end, the promise is then not only for Abraham but all his seed, including those of us who are adopted into it. And so, all are included under these promises, both those who lived and died under the law, and those of us who are no longer under the law, but we still have the faith of Abraham. Or to quote again from Ephesians *“for by grace are ye saved through faith”*, *“not of works, lest any man should boast”*.

I know there are some who may say “works” are not “the law”, and it causes a misunderstanding of these verses. But, we need only to look to Scripture to see the law are indeed works. Consider Galatians chapter 3. While the whole chapter and frankly the whole book would be great to read, we will just look at a few verses quickly, vs. 2 *“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”* and then vs. 5 *“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth*

he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" and vs 10, 11
“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”

Again we see here the same theme of justification by faith and not simply by works, and in particular the works are the works of the law. To take away justification by faith is really equal to removing grace from justification. It is only by the grace of God that anyone is allowed justification, but having faith in that grace is what gives us this opportunity. And of course to take it further, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”. We can't gain faith and justification by the grace of God without **first hearing the Word!** The Word must be studied and understood and taught. This is how we not only gain faith but strengthen it. Think about our time here at gatherings like this.

So, we have considered a number of key terms in these last few minutes. Terms like grace, mercy, faith, and works, but one term we have not considered is one that cannot be left out when considering grace. In particular the grace of Yahweh granted toward man. That is forgiveness. Forgiveness is something man has always attempted to accomplish on their own. Just walk into a catholic church and see the rows of booths made for the purpose of priests forgiving those who confess their sins to them. In reality we know, man does not forgive man. Forgiveness is given through grace, both the grace of providing his son who was sacrificed so that we might be allowed this forgiveness, and the grace Yahweh offers every time we ask for forgiveness and it is granted.

Acts 13:38-39, “*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:* ³⁹ *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*”

The “man” from this verse, through whom is preached forgiveness of sins, is of course Jesus. There would be no hope for any of us if not for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through him that we are able to have our sins forgiven. It wasn't until he came, that sin was finally able to be destroyed. Until then there was only hope that a savior would come to defeat the thing that has plagued mankind since the day sin entered the world. And as the verse says, “by him, all that believe are justified from all things”

So, forgiveness is not unconditional, as much of the world seems to believe. It is not as simple as confessing to another man in a booth and being forgiven by him, or even asking Yahweh for forgiveness through prayer. We must truly repent and realize our own faults as we ask for guidance through prayer. Forgiveness is through Christ, and by the mercy of Yahweh. Men have no part in it, and certainly are not capable of it. We would have no hope of forgiveness if not for the mercy of Yahweh and the great sacrifice of Christ, and so we seek them both when we ask to be forgiven.

Before Christ, under the Law, forgiveness was asked for through the high priest who offered sacrifices for himself and for the congregation. Unlike priests of today, the priests under the law did not forgive sins, or attempt to forgive sins, they offered sacrifices to Yahweh in an effort to cover them. The process required exact directions to be followed in order for the sacrifice to be acceptable. Once completed, the sacrifices did not end, but were a part of an on-going effort throughout the lifetimes of individuals, both Levitical priests and the members of the other tribes. The sacrifice to end sacrifices was not an animal, but was required to be made by a man who was born of a woman and thus was born with sin in the flesh. He also, like the animal sacrifices, had to be outwardly perfect. We know that there was only one man who lived his lifetime without committing a sin. Once Christ was able to destroy sin in the flesh, sin was no longer part of him and sin was finally defeated. Christ was able to approach his Father undefiled.

That is of course the hope that we all have for ourselves sometime yet future, but what about today. When we ask for forgiveness, what is the state of things between man and Yahweh? It's important to understand the two points of view involved in forgiveness, that of man's and that of Yahweh's. Forgiveness between two men is one thing, a man can only take another man by his word. When a man asks forgiveness from Yahweh, he cannot lie, even to himself. If he is truly repentant and is forgiven by Yahweh, his status changes, there is no longer an estrangement; he is accepted by his Heavenly Father. Seeking forgiveness and knowing it is by His grace that He forgives us serves as another opportunity to strengthen our faith. Knowing we are loved enough to be forgiven should make us truly love (Agape) our Heavenly Father; particularly when we know we are given grace that is truly not something we deserve.

Justification is another term we have already mentioned but it has an important relationship with forgiveness. Not only can forgiveness bring about justification, but forgiveness is an important part of the justification of Yahweh, or what makes Him just. Firstly we should

define it. The word can have two different but also similar meanings. It can refer to a vindication which then leads to a declaring to be just, as we just said, and secondly, it can refer to an acquittal or a reconciliation and hence forgiveness. When we are forgiven by our Heavenly Father it brings a reconciliation. As Col. 1:21 says "*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*". So, a reconciliation after forgiveness for wicked works.

With reference to the first sense, the making Just, it can apply to Christ as well. John 9:24, the Pharisees called in the blind man who was healed by Christ and said that he was healed by a sinner, whom they considered Christ to be. "*Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. 25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.*"

As we know they followed through with their accusation and later treated Christ as a sinner when they had him crucified. But, we see the importance of the first meaning of justification when Yahweh raised Jesus from the dead to eternal life and declared him before all men as the Son of God, in doing this he was justified or vindicated before those who called him a sinner, and was made just by Yahweh. So, in that since, Christ was Justified.

Justification is different than simply disregarding a crime. We know for example, there are many cases of men and women being pardoned. These are people who have committed a crime or crimes and are caught and sentenced for them. Some have completed their jail time, some are pardoned while in jail, in either case, are they justified? Or made just through this pardon? No, they simply have the crime removed from their record. In order for someone to be justified for a crime, the world would have to see that the accusations were incorrect. They would have to be proved innocent, and the world shown either the true guilty person, or the evidence showing their innocence or both. In the case of the resurrection of Christ, many in the world still refuse to believe it. But the record of it is still there, and one day they will have no choice but to believe it.

We can see the second sense of Justification in our baptisms. We are all acquitted, reconciled and forgiven through our baptisms. Of course baptism is not the only time those things can happen, but it is certainly the most important case of it happening in our lives. It also would not be possible if not for the Justification of Christ. In fact, Christ's Justification allowed for own Justification.

In bearing our iniquities, we know that Christ acquitted us, or reconciled us to our Father in Heaven, and allowed our sins to be forgiven, or in short Justified us. Let us consider Acts 13:39 again “*And by him (Christ) all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.*” So, again, we see that it is through Christ that believers have been allowed to be justified, both the justification at our baptisms, and also the ultimate justification that will take place when we are made just in the same way Christ was made just, when sin is removed from our bodies and we put on eternal life, become one with Christ and our Father and are truly made Just. As is pointed out in this verse in Acts, this is not something the Law could do. But, that goes back to forgiveness, the law could not take away sins the way Christ was able to. So, in the end, how are we justified? Not by the works of the Law. We are justified by Grace. Rom. 3:24 “*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*”

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God”. So, knowing a definition of Justification is, acquittal or reconciliation or forgiveness, we can see the importance of justification for all of us. All have sinned and so all require forgiveness. But not only that, we also see two more important things; we are both justified through the grace of Yahweh, and as a result of the sacrifice of Christ. These are two very important parts to understanding our hope for salvation. If we do not understand either, we will not be given that salvation. We also must understand that the grace of Yahweh is also what justifies Him. He is shown to be just by His Grace, and the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. Do we want to be a part of those who show the World the grace of Yahweh, thus making Him just? Then we must, through our own faith, and love of our Heavenly Father seek to glorify him and show the world how just He is. And so, if we were to read further in Rom 3, we can see how he concludes, in vs 28, “*man is justified by faith*”, or his own belief, he must understand it and believe it with all his heart. Having faith in the grace of our Father can justify us. While we can’t say anyone is deserving of the grace of God, we do know there are those who will be given it and those who will not. Those who are given His grace are those who have the strongest faith. Those who love Him the most. Those who understand how they are given salvation, not by any works done by Man but by His Grace.

Let us now consider another part of grace. We’ve talked about the Grace of our Heavenly Father, and how we have this opportunity for salvation through His grace. But if we are to expect to be shown grace, shouldn’t we be able to offer grace ourselves. We’ve all been told we can’t expect to be forgiven if we can’t forgive others ourselves. The

same should apply to grace as well. Shouldn't we show grace to our brothers and sisters? Even those outside of the ecclesia as well, people of the world. Certainly there are many examples of great men and women in Scripture, most importantly Christ showing grace to all types of people, believers, sinners, Jews, Gentiles, bond, free, etc. Grace really should have no bounds, purely by definition, it is given to someone undeserving, as we have said, it is unmerited. We should always be willing to offer grace to others. And what about our brothers and sisters, is it easier or harder to offer grace to our brothers and sisters? Really the best answer is it doesn't matter, none of us are perfect and we have to first look at ourselves. In some cases we simply cannot offer grace for the sake of the brotherhood, but there are also many cases when we don't but should. We don't give grace to someone who doesn't need it, someone who has not made a mistake, or even purposefully committed a wrong. It is given to those who need it. Sometimes I think it is actually easier for us to offer grace to the sinful world than to our brethren. Granted, part of that is we expect more from them, "they should know better" we might say or think. I've always thought one of the most unforgiveable sins among brethren is to say something in error, or in the midst of an argument over doctrine. Do we not all hold a brother to what they say for the rest of their lives in those situations? Or even worse, if it is done in writing. Would any of us consider tossing out the letter, or deleting the email? Perhaps we should, but in most cases we probably don't. We keep it because we might need it later, right? Or maybe because we want to show others.

For those who have said something in error, but pride keeps them from correcting it, perhaps we should consider giving the benefit of the doubt. Don't hold them to it, don't run to others to show them what was said. Consider grace. Maybe let some time pass and then bring the subject up again in hopes of having a level-headed discussion. This is an example of showing grace, unmerited favor.

Suppose a brother or sister commits a sin and openly asks the brotherhood for forgiveness. We would all agree that to refuse forgiveness is not showing the grace we are all expected to give in those situations. Now it should also be pointed out, that in cases where a brother or sister refuses to admit guilt or say they are teaching error, it should never be said that we need to show them grace. Not in the sense of looking the other way. But a separation in those cases should always be for the purpose of showing them the error of their ways in hopes that they would return and admit where they are wrong. This should in fact be done out of love and grace. Both for the love of the one in error, and the love of the brotherhood that a little leaven could affect.

Much of the Christadelphian community considers the Bereans unloving and lacking in grace and forgiveness. But if we allowed all sin and error for the sake of unity, there is no love there, it's like the parent that doesn't care and allows their children to do what they want without consequences. It is a lack of love for the brotherhood and body of Christ. It doesn't allow for grace, because there really is no unmerited favor, there is no favor at all, it is a lack of caring. It is lukewarmness.

Grace is for those who don't deserve it but are seeking acceptance. The grace of Yahweh is given to those who seek Him out and desire His truth. Those who reject the truth and thus reject Yahweh will not be given His grace. Those who seek their own way of serving Him, and not the way expected, will not be given His grace. Those who believe it is through their own works that they can be justified will not be given His grace. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves:"*

As members of the one body we cannot give grace where our heavenly Father would not. But where He would, we must and are expected to, or perhaps it will not be extended to us.

Where can we look for an example? A Scriptural example of grace that will provide a lesson. I wanted to give an example of a man or women in scripture that would show us what grace is. Whether it is grace that they gave, or how they were given grace by Yahweh. We can think of men like Abraham, Moses, and David, or women like Esther and Ruth. All are great examples, but really, we should look to our greatest example of grace, Christ, the son of God. As we know, from John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son". God so loved the world, a world that mostly cares only for itself. We are all familiar with the world. Even the small minority like us, who do love our Heavenly Father, still are not deserving of this grace. Yet, He still gave His only begotten son. Do we truly understand His love for us? I think those of us who are parents know how difficult it would be to cause our children to suffer the way Christ suffered. But out of grace, and love for us, it was done.

We know there are other cases in Scripture of the love God has for us. Paul describes it as the love a father has for his son. A father will chasten his son out of love just as our Heavenly Father will chasten us. He is the father of lights and we as those enlightened are among those lights. We have been given this wonderful opportunity, and all out of love. The giving of His only begotten son, is what truly justifies all involved; Yahweh, Christ and all who accept Him, and it all comes out of grace. We all know how truly undeserving the world, which includes

us, are of this grace. But, as we have said before, it wouldn't be grace if we were deserving!

Christ on the other hand did deserve grace. His character was more pure and clean than any man that ever lived. He did not sin. And yet, it was his nature that required his death. It was his nature that was the one thing undeserving. He still had to die, but he could not remain in the grave. We might also add, that whether we call it mercy or grace, his suffering did not last long, at least not the normal length of time for a crucifixion. We know when the soldiers went to break their legs, and in the case of Christ, stab him in the side, he was already dead.

We should also point out another important aspect of grace with Christ, and this is the grace that he gave. Certainly we can see many cases of his grace on others during his lifetime, but his most important bestowal of grace came in his death. It was something that he gave for all of us. He was not murdered against his will. He saw it before it happened, he was prepared for it, despite the agony he knew he would be under. He willingly took part out of serving the will of His Father and to bestow grace on all of us in providing a way for salvation. He laid down his own life, no man took it from him. It was truly a self-sacrifice John 10:18 "*No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*"

We too have power to lay down our lives. Not in the way that Christ did, but in sacrificing our lives to God. It is not something any man can do for us, much the way no man could take it from Christ, it was his will. We have to make the decision to sacrifice our lives for the truth. To "lay it down of ourselves" as Christ did. And also just as Christ was commanded by his Father, so are we. This is the true way that we may be recipients of the Grace of God. Obviously to think any other way is basically having the assumption that we should continue in sin that grace may abound. To that, we should all reply as Paul did, "God forbid."

We should seek the grace of God by doing what is commanded of us, not the opposite in hopes that through His grace, we will be forgiven. His grace is a blessing on those who seek him out, and like Christ, lay down our lives *of ourselves*. We make a personal sacrifice of our time, money, brain power, daily lives, whatever it maybe, we strive to give all to our Heavenly Father. We do it out of love and thankfulness. We want grace to abound out of the good we do, not evil.

We know one day, grace will truly abound, and we pray the grace of our Heavenly Father will fall upon all of us. —*Bro. Scott Ricks*

Signs – The Past 40 Years

Bro. Paul Garvey asked us Monday evening, at the start of this gathering, has in any year since we have been coming to this gathering, have the world's governments been in more turmoil, than they are this year? I've been coming here since 1979, so this is my 40th Hye. And I can easily answer, no. There has never been a time in the last 40 years, when the whole world has been in as much turmoil as it is in today.

This year, we saw the US amass three carrier groups around the Korean peninsula, then intercept Russian and China supply ships which tried to run the US blockade. We saw the US taunt the Chinese Navy in the sea of China. We saw the US launch two large missile strikes into Syria, warning Russia not even to turn on their anti-missile sites. We saw the Russians launch a land-based attack, trying to drive the US out of Syria and back across the Euphrates into Iraq, resulting in a pitched battle, in which the Russians lost 200 soldiers. And just this week, we saw Israel shoot down a Syrian plane, and in this month, destroy all of Iran's positions in Syria, along with many Hamas installations in the Gaza. We've seen the US crush ISIS in the middle east and continue to war in Afghanistan.

We see the US and its European "supposed" allies on the brink of a trade war. We see them quarrel, and question the value of NATO, the American president even questioning whether the US should defend certain NATO states, like Montenegro, against a Russian invasion. And we see sanctions and rhetoric increasing over Russian aggression in Europe, the middle East, and even in American elections. So yes, this has been a tumultuous year.

But how about ever? Has there ever been a time in recent history, say since the French Revolution of 1790, when the world's governments found themselves in similar turmoil? Well, certainly the first 20 years of the French Revolution was such a time. Again, in the late 1860s which Bro. Thomas li/ved to see, and of which he felt that time had such promise of bringing Christ's return; that would have been such a time. Then we had World War I around 1917, and World War II in the late 1930s, and early 1940s, these were times of great turmoil which caused the brotherhood to look intensely for Christ's return, and they would also have been times of great worldly turmoil within the world's governments. These were all similarly tumultuous times to the time in which we now live, so similar in fact, that many commentators around us draw comparisons, and are currently describing our times as the beginning of World War III.

But you know what was different in the past? There are many things prophesied in plain language in Bible prophesy, so plain that

they could not reasonably be ignored, which did NOT exist in those other tumultuous times of the past. These things which I'm talking about, were necessary events in Bible prophesy, and the brethren knew them, and they spoke about them. As they contemplated whether or not Christ's return was near, they speculated about things which were out of place: "well, maybe those things which we know must happen, will happen *after* Christ returns." And I think we can all agree that such speculation was reasonable. But this evening, the subject of our lecture will be the fact that the fulfillment of these prophesies, these aspects of the plan of God, which did not exist in the past, ALL, (not some,) ALL exist today.

First and most importantly, during all these past periods of turmoil, they did not have the fulfillment of Ezekiel 37, and the establishment of the nation of Israel upon the mountains of Israel, such as we saw in 1947, which Bro. Josh touched on Thursday evening. Before the power identified as Gog in Ezekiel 38 could descend upon the mountains of Israel to destroy Israel, there first had to be a nation of Israel on the mountains of Israel. This is obvious: and equally obvious is the fact that the nation of Israel did not exist in all those previous times of great turmoil. But Israel was certainly not the only difference between then, and now.

You know, I know of no prophetic expositors of any faith, who interpret Bible prophesy on the continual historical method, called in the world "Histerosity," who does not believe that the Ezekiel 38 outlines the battles which ultimate in Armageddon, or the victory of Christ at Jerusalem.

For instance, I grew up near a small city in California, called Santa Barbara. And in the court house there, they had a display celebrating a particular general who was from Santa Barbara. And in his display they had his medals, and his sword, but they also had his Bible. And for this display, he had them open his Bible to Ezekiel 38. He was trying to warn the world of its destiny.

—*Bro. Jim Phillips*

Meditations— Deity's Ways No. 109

"NO degradation more ignominious can befall a servant of the Lord than that of being a blood-shedder in the service of any of the sin-powers of the unmeasured court." —*Dr. Thomas*. This quotation from *Eureka* (vol. ii., p. 612) is deserving, at this moment, of a place on the wall of every Christadelphian home. We are living in times of exceptional temptation. The ability of the country is being employed (sincerely enough in many cases) to lead us into paths of disobedience. We are being told by king, statesman, and priest, that the war that is raging is a holy and a glorious war, and that for us to refrain from taking a part in it is to show ourselves unworthy. We are being coaxed,

taunted, threatened. Well, brethren, we must not give way. To do so would be for us to violate the simple teaching of Christ, and to repeat one of the sins of the backsliding, life-taking Christians of the early centuries. W. E. Wilson, in his *Christ and War*, tells us (and his statements are borne out by history) that till the year 200, the Church disapproved of war, and that Christians refused to become soldiers. That from 200 to about 313, Church writers protested strongly against Christians joining the army, although some did join. That from 313, and onwards, the Church, having allied herself with the Empire, could no longer maintain her protest against war. Mr. Wilson says "the Church" thus at last gave way. But which church? Not the true Church, for at this period the true Church, in order to uphold her integrity before God, had to separate herself, and in sadness and in shame (on account of the fast-growing apostasy) flee into the apocalyptic wilderness (Rev. 12:14-17).

Between Christianity in theory and Christianity in practice there is a great gulf, writes a Jew in *The Jewish Chronicle*. Pointing to the Sermon on the Mount, he says, scornfully, that the faith of Christians is only on their tongues—that their acts belie their profession. How true is the indictment! Europe, as Dr. C. E. Jefferson, of New York, observes, bristles with church spires and with bayonets—is sown with cathedrals and yet is a vast military camp. What is the answer of fighting Christians to this accusation of inconsistency and hypocrisy? Few attempt to give one. Most apologists for war prefer to leave Christ and his teaching alone, and to expatiate upon the outrageous deeds of the enemy—to suggest what awful things would happen if the gun were not shouldered and the sword unsheathed—and to talk of the unspeakable boon it would be to the world if Prussian militarism were crushed. But why the shyness, the obvious disrelish to face the accusation? The Editor of *The Clarion* gives the reason. Mr. Blatchford, although an unbeliever, hits the nail on the head in saying that the reconciliation of "the principles of Christian religion with the principles of patriotism" is impossible—that "they will not mix." No, they will not mix, and were never intended to. Christ's religion was arranged for men and women who would be willing, in the days of his absence, to eschew patriotism, and to adopt, in whatever country they might find themselves, the position of "strangers and pilgrims." Dr. Thomas has well said: "True believers are neither traitors, rebels, nor tyrants, but law-abiding submissionists under all governments, be they abolitionists or secessional, republic or monarchical, imperial or papal, so far as their laws do not contravene the laws and principles of the Gospel."

There are few words in the Bible which possess a sweeter meaning than the word "saint." To the brother enlightened in the truth, it is a word which speaks of the goodness and graciousness of God—of His

love, friendship, and marvellous promises. "The Lord forsaketh not his saints," he preserveth their ways, and their death is precious in his sight (Prov. 2:8; Psa. 116:15). It is for the saints that Christ maketh intercession (Rom. 8:27), and it is for them that inexpressible glory waits (Eph. 1:18; 2 Thess. 1:10). Saints have existed in all the ages, and they are among us to-day. Are we saints? Certainly, if we believe and obey God, and stand apart as He requires from the works of unbelief and unrighteousness. But not otherwise. As a help to true saintship, God asks us to study and copy the lives of departed saints—Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and other holy men whom He has approved and commended. But let us not confound the saints of God with the saints of the churches—St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and others. There is no reason why we should make this mistake with *Eureka* in our hands. . . .

Is it necessary for me, said Paul to the church at Corinth, to carry that letter of commendation? (2 Cor. 3:1). What pardonable irony was contained in this question! How it must have caused both his enemies and his friends in this ecclesia to think. The apostle was never slow to assure genuine truth-seekers as to his divine authority and reliability, but often was he grieved and righteously angry with brethren who, through perversity or thoughtlessness, failed to trust him. Oh! foolish Corinthians, why did you hesitate in your acceptance of Paul? Was forgetfulness the cause? Or had your minds been poisoned against this noble man by the wicked and plausible chatter of his envious calumniators? Were you not aware of his miraculous conversion, and the facts relating to his apostleship? Had you not seen, time and again, proofs of his claim to be a true ambassador of Christ? Had he not worked signs and wonders in your midst? Did he not bring your meeting into being, and watch over it with the anxiety and love of a parent? Then why did you distress this good man, and move him to ask, in tears of rebuke, if it was needful for him to carry about a letter of commendation? In the folly of these Corinthians is contained a lesson for us. Paul, as a God-sent apostle, is as precious to us as to our brethren in the first century, and it is equally essential for us as it was for them to keep our minds fresh and healthy as to his credentials. Let us not grow forgetful, nor lend our ears to Paul's enemies, however high may be their status in the world of letters.

Russia is the Jews' great enemy. Her bitter antipathy is shared by all classes and is deep-rooted. Some people are saying that she has changed since the outbreak of the war. The Jew questions it, and not without good grounds. A nation hardened in sin does not reform quite so easily and quickly. The scriptures lead us to believe that nothing short of the eye-opening and staggering judgments predicted in Ezek. 38. and 39. will turn this great northern oppressor from a foe to a

friend. Not long since, a vast Hebrew gathering in Shoreditch Town Hall was to be seen weeping and wailing on account of the pitiless massacres of their relatives and co-religionists in the land of the Czars. In Russia, in one year, 1906, twenty thousand of the seed of Abraham were murdered, and one hundred thousand injured, said Dr. Adler. In 1912, Mr. Lucien Wolf, in a preface to the pamphlet, *The Persecution of the Jews in Russia*, stated that "neither Duma nor *entente* has in the least degree modified the harsh incidence of the Russian law in their regard, or alleviated the unexampled tragedy of their sufferings in the Inferno of the 'Pale.'" And now, in 1915, what do we read? Why that Russia's old-time inhumanity has not abated one whit. "Truly now, as in the time of Moses," observes a Hebrew in the *Jewish Chronicle*, "their complaint comes up unto God by reason of their bondage." And in another issue of the same journal, a writer says, after referring to the unreasonable ingratitude shown towards certain ones who had served in the army: "In almost every other field of Russian social life the treatment of the Jews since the war began has been equally harsh, cruel, and barbarous."

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway 1915*

I Have Given Them Thy Word

"Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth"—John
17:17

WHAT a great blessing it is that, in our homes and everywhere we go, we all have the Holy Scriptures! We can, at any time, reach out and open the Book and read the wonderful, thrilling Message that God has revealed to man concerning Himself, His purpose in the creation of man, and what He would have us to do that we might realize to the utmost the greatest good possible for man, even joyful life forevermore!

Now the value of any book is measured by the position and importance of its author and what it brings to the reader that may be of interest, pleasure or material well-being to himself. Looking at the Bible according to these standards, where could any other book be found that could even faintly be compared to it?

Yes, we say; it is the greatest book in the world. A most marvellous thing—a direct message from the Creator of the universe!

But do we ACT as if this were so? It lies in many homes, as just another book, to be picked up and read, just like another book, when we can find the time away from other things that we feel "must" be done.

It is true that among Christadelphians the daily reading of the Scriptures according to the Companion is almost universal; but there is

a danger that we do not give it the place it should occupy in our everyday lives.

This is the most important thing we do each day, and ample provision should be made in the ordering of our affairs so that we can approach our reading period with the best of our efforts of mind.

Let it not be done as a matter of duty or habit, to be gotten over with as soon as possible, so that we can be free to pursue other things more pleasant to the flesh.

Reading will become a pleasure to us and bring growth and strength in the wisdom and knowledge of God, in proportion as we understand what we read and apply it to ourselves.

It is a dishonour to God to read His Word without the most careful and reverent attention to the thought conveyed by the Spirit.

Do we not take care to catch every shade of thought and meaning as we read a letter from a loved one? Not a word or a sentence is passed till the meaning of the writer is understood. How we examine every phrase for the sweet message of affection it may contain! Is it possible that we treat God's Word with less respect than that of our friends!

Bro. Roberts writes in the preface of The Bible Companion:

“Salvation depends upon the assimilation of the mind to divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the Gospel but is by no means completed thereby; it takes a life-time for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment.”

It is plain, then, as we consider these things, that those who in the end obtain oneness with the Father in nature, and so become partakers of the glorious life to come, will have attained to such a state by the influence of the Word of God in their lives. Jesus said—

“The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

* * *

THE Bible speaks of the “carnal mind” and of the “spiritual mind.” Our minds are all carnal to begin with, and they only become spiritual, or in accordance with the Spirit, when the transforming influence of the Spirit-Word has elevated and purified our minds so that we think and act in accordance with divine principles—

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:5-6).

Many of us, no doubt, can remember when we were children, before our interest in divine things had developed, when we were required to sit and listen to the daily readings, how glad we were when it was over, and we could run out to play.

There is an example of the mind that is still carnal, that walks after the flesh. But, sad to say, this condition is not confined to children. There are mental and spiritual infants, too.

But as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we come to rise to the beauty and holiness of the spiritual outlook, by continual association on the higher plane with the power that is in the Word of God, we can find delight and pleasure in reading and meditating upon it. We can then enter into the spirit of David's words in Psalm 119—

"I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies, as much as in all riches.

"I will meditate in Thy precepts and have respect unto Thy ways."

"I will delight myself in Thy statutes, I will not forget Thy Word."

"I will delight myself in Thy commandments which I have loved."

To arrive at this state of mind that David had, to learn to love the law of God, and delight in knowing and doing of His will, is not the natural thing for a human being to do. Much labour and diligent application over a period of time, in the channels of God's Truth, are required before we reach this high level of spiritual discernment. Peter said—

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away; but the Word of the Lord endureth forever." —*Bro. E.W. Banta*

THOUGHTS GLEANED BY THE WAY

By a Wayfarer

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword." — Matt. 10:34

Peace is spoken of in the Scriptures in three principal ways:

1. "Peace with God" (Romans 5:1)
2. "The peace of God" (Phil. 4:7)
3. "Peace on earth" (Luke 2:14).

In Romans 5:1, we read: "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Through faith the sinner gains access to God's grace or favour; meets the terms which

God has prescribed for healing the breach between God and man, accomplished through God's purpose in Christ Jesus. Through the operation of belief of the word of God on the mind, the believer is reconciled to God; enmity is turned to love and trust. "*And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. . .and you who were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel*" (Col. 1).

Christ, through obedience, even unto death on the cross, opened up the way for sinners to become reconciled to God, thus effecting "peace with God."

In Phil. 4:6-7 the Apostle Paul speaks of "*the peace of God*" in these words: "*Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

"Be careful for nothing" means "be not anxious;" that is, be not filled with anxiety for the things of this life. The "peace of God" describes that inward state of mind of the believer who has found "peace with God" through faith and obedience, having committed to God through "prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" all his anxieties, placing his trust in God, that, so long as he serves Him faithfully, all things will work together for his good; a peace that passeth the understanding of the natural mind; peace, even in the midst of affliction, sorrow or distress.

The Lord Jesus Christ had no reference to "peace with God" or "the peace of God" when he said, "*I came not to send peace, but a sword.*" For, it was through Him that peace with God and the peace of God was made available to believers. But Christ's teaching was not to bring peace to the world, but the reverse. He knew that his teaching would never quell the hate, envy, malice, greed and the desire for power in a godless world; that strife and war, caused by these human passions would continue, because only the few would be turned away from the lusts of the flesh by his teaching, and that so long as sinful man ruled the world, the effects of human desires and emotions would cause war and strife.

Moreover, he knew that his teaching, which is contrary to the thinking and desires of the flesh, would bring more opposition and conflict than peace. That his teaching would bring the peace of God only to the few; that the great majority would resent and resist the

principles of his teaching, and so it has proved to be the case. The world has scorned any religion which denied them the privilege of following the desires of the flesh and the ways of the world. In fact, as the kingdom of man is constituted, its affairs could not be conducted in accordance with the principles of Christ, and were never intended, in the purpose of God, to become a basis for the laws by which sinful men were to be ruled. The peace of God can only be obtained by THOSE WHO SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD AND ITS WAYS. No peace of God can be had by those who try to serve God and the world at the same time, for, "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 John 2:15), and whosoever loves the world is the enemy of God.

Christ did not promise his followers peace in the world in the ordinary sense, but rather opposition and persecution; that faithful service to Christ would turn friends to foes, even they of his own household would in many instances turn against the faithful disciple.

It will only be when the Prince of Peace returns to earth and suppresses wickedness and strife that "*on earth peace*" will be realized. Meanwhile the peace of God will continue to reign in the hearts of Christ's faithful disciples in the midst of the strife and confusion rampant in the world.

* * *

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight." — Isa. 5:21

Self-esteem and self-exaltation, or egotism, is one of the most odious characteristics of the fleshly mind. Divine condemnation is pronounced against all who exalt self. Self-esteem is in direct contrast to humility and self-renunciation, the opposite of a contrite spirit. Altruism, which is devotion to the interests of others, is the spirit which works in the mind of the true servant of Christ.

The person afflicted with self-esteem considers himself wiser than all his associates and never misses an opportunity to exalt himself and belittle others. He loves the praise of men and is envious of all who might stand in the way of his self-exaltation. He seeks leadership, and envies those who attain honour in any organization to which he belongs.

While self-esteem is obnoxious to worldly people, it should be unthinkable to a servant of Jesus Christ, who set the example of humility and self-renunciation. "*He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant*" (Phil. 2:7).

When a strife arose among his disciples as to "which of them should be accounted the greatest," he gave the divine estimation of greatness. It is he that serves most and best (Luke 22:24-27).

Self-esteem, instead of being evidence of superior knowledge and wisdom, is just the reverse. It is evidence that the self-centred person is unaware of his own lack of wisdom and the fact that the human mind, at its best, can cover but a very narrow range of intelligence; can only absorb a limited amount of knowledge. In other words, he that is wise in his own eyes; he that considers himself superior in knowledge and wisdom to all his associates, is only exposing his own ignorance.

Self-esteem and self-exaltation are contrary to the spirit of Christ; contrary to every divine precept that God alone shall be exalted, and that self-abasement is the only attitude on the part of man which is acceptable to God. What pleasure the conceited person obtains from self-exaltation now, is all that he will ever get. "*For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased*" (Luke 14:11). The proper attitude for the disciples of Christ is eloquently set forth in 1 Peter 5:5-6: "*Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*"

This is the divine estimate of who is the greatest and the wisest of all God's children.

—*Bro. Oscar Beauchamp*

Eureka — A Temple Of Light

Eureka does for its generation what Sir Isaac Newton did for the mariner. It places a man in such a mental relation to before-perceived but not understood objects of the Apocalyptic firmament, that he is able to extract from them information of his whereabouts in the apparently benighted journey he is running.

The Scripturally-enlightened reader is made to feel himself in the company of generations past, who have trodden the same unpopular path of obedience to the Word...His faith is strengthened: his ardour strongly excited, his enlightenment increased, and his mind in every way exercised unto godliness, with a vigour that is bracing in the extreme.

Eureka is a breeze of truth that comes from the high hills of prophetic vision upon the nearly-stagnant atmosphere of the plains of ignorance below, blowing away the sultry vapours, and dispersing incipient disease.

Eureka is a temple of light, resplendent with hues of precious stones: in the courts of which, those who love the light and the truth will often be found.

—*The Ambassador, 1869*

Hints For Bible Markers

The Psalms

Psalm 9:5

Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name forever and ever.

As the first few verses of this Psalm bring out the death blow is sounding for the wicked. At the return of Christ, as we all should be well aware, there shall be a judgment. At that time the wicked, “*That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God:*” (Romans 9:8) shall have their name put out forever and ever. We all realize that a name represents something that exists or has existed. It is always used in the identification of an individual person, whether alive or dead. So, to put out a name has been put out of existence, so has that for which it stands. There will be no memorial or remembrance of those of the wicked when God “*hast put out their name forever and ever.*”

Psalm 9:6

O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end: and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them.

And of course, in due time he will follow through with the destruction of the hedonistic world as we know it today. The kingdom of men to come to an abrupt end such as when, “*And spared not the old world*” (2 Peter 2:5) “*And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly;*” (2 Peter 2:6) “*But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.*” (Luke 17:29-30). It is difficult to bring our mind to conceive such a great destruction. We can see destruction on a small-scale, although it seems vast to us, in fires, floods, earthquakes, tornados, and volcanoes. How puny the power of man will seem, especially, should God of Hosts decide to release these forces of nature all at one time. The cities of man, his monuments will be brought to rubble. Nothing shall be left to remind him of those days when the Deity allowed man to be the reigning power on the Earth. “*their memorial is perished with them.*”

Continued next month should the Lord will

bro. Beryl Snyder