

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.

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

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

Ecclesial News

NAKALIRA, Kenya

Dear Brethren,

The Nakalira Ecclesia has the pleasure to announce the immersion and subsequent conferring of the right hand of fellowship to **Bro. Francis Wafula** and **Sis. Celia Waluka** on 2nd May 2016 we were with Bro. Epa Walunywa who interviewed. We were thankful, on 3rd May 2016 were Baptist, same, they got the right hand of the fellowship. Join us in encouraging them in their walk Zionwards.

Yours in The Truth,

Brother Moses Wafula Makokha on Behalf of NAKALIRA Ecclesia
P.O.BOX 646 Webuye Kenya
Phone no. +0704211628

MILAM COUNTY, Texas

Loving greetings to our Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus,

Once again, we rejoice and give thanks to our Heavenly Father as yet another of our Sunday School Scholars – **Toni Marie Wolfe** – has obeyed the Gospel and asked for an interview for baptism into the Saving Name. She was examined on July 20, 2016 concerning the Things of the Kingdom and of the Name of Jesus Christ. She was found to be sound in the doctrines we hold, giving a good confession of her faith.

After the interview her dad, Bro. Dan Wolfe, performed the immersion into Christ, our Lord, as the rest of the ecclesia gave witness. As they came up out of the waters, we sang hymn 71 hoping it would ascend as a sweet sound unto Our Father. We extended the right hand of fellowship to our new sister on Sunday, July 24th. May she walk the road to Zion with hope and faith, and be found acceptable to the Lord at his return, and to be joined with his Saints of all times.

For those who would like to contact her, the address is: 349 Wolfe Field Rd., Rogers, TX 76569 or her email address is: tomarwolfe@gmail.com.

Truly we have been blessed. May the Good Lord of heaven and earth watch over us all and guide us in His ways: and let us be ever vigilant in doing His will in love and peace carrying one another's burdens as the need arises.

On behalf of the Milam County Ecclesia – your Servant in Christ,
Bro. Bob Wolfe

LAMPASAS, Texas

We here at Lampasas were excited when we learned of our Sunday School scholar, **Jacob Hendershot**, continuing his studying and asking to be questioned while at Hye. He chose to delay just one day so his mother, sis Becky Hendershot, could be there for him. Thursday, July 28th during the long afternoon break allowed for the Lampasas examining committee to gather round with Jacob and his family. After an excellent questioning session, Jacob was taken to the Pedernales River below the campgrounds to be baptized by the hand of Bro. Shawn House and after that a few encouraging words were given by Bro. Ben Naglieri.

Contact info for Jacob is:
Bro. Jacob Hendershot
705 W 2nd Street
Lampasas, TX 76550
hendershotjacob55@yahoo.com
254-423-6774

We were also very happy, after an arranging board meeting, Sunday, August 7th, to bring back into fellowship, Bro. Jacob's dad, Bro. Robin Hendershot. With the help of God and his brethren and sisters of the ecclesia, Bro. Robin will now continue on his walk Zionward together with us.

Contact info for Bro. Robin:
Bro. Robin Hendershot
705 W 2nd Street
Lampasas, TX 76550
robinhendershot@yahoo.com
254-317-9189

Recording Bro. Jerry Connolly

GOLDTHWAITE, Texas

The Goldthwaite ecclesia is pleased to announce the baptism of **Chandler Jacob Hurst**, son of Bro. Richard and Sis. Melissa Hurst. After a good confession of his faith, he entered the waters of baptism July 23, 2016. Many people were there to witness it as it was after the fish fry in Lampasas before the Hye gathering.

We hope all will join us in encouraging our new brother on his walk Zionward.

1317 FM 218E
Zephyr, TX 76890
hurst_chandler@yahoo.com
Much love, Bro. Curtis Hurst

LLANYBRI, Wales

Dear brothers and sisters in the Berean community,

Loving greetings,

It is with deep sadness that I am leaving the Berean Fellowship and closing what's left of the Llanybri Ecclesia. For the past year Hengoed, my only local ecclesia has prevented contact with me for no legitimate reason.

I send my love to the brothers and sisters across the world, thanking those who have offered support during this prolonged trial. Also, I would like to thank those who have welcomed me into their homes during my visits to the U.S.A. and Canada. I have had some wonderful times in the company of some very special brothers and sisters. May Yahweh bless you all on your walk to the Kingdom.

Love in Christ, Bro. Steve Ford (Llanybri)

GATHERINGS & ACTIVITIES

(To be held Yahweh Willing)

SOUTHEAST FRATERNAL GATHERING.....October 29-30, 2016

The gathering will be held at the Elder-Care of Alachua County Senior Recreation Center, 5701 NW 34th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32653.

Bro. Michael Jasionowski, mjasionowski@gmail.com

The gathering will be held at the Elder-Care of Alachua County Senior Recreation Center, 5701 NW 34th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32653.

Bro. Michael Jasionowski, mjasionowski@gmail.com

BEREAN CHRISTADELPHIAN YOUTH GATHERING KENYA, AFRICA. December 18-22, 2016

To be held in Kisumu, Kenya. Study Theme: 1 Corinthians

For more information please email Bro. Bob Bent. Eyeglassman39@yahoo.com

Bro. Epa Wekati. Ewekati@gmail.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.

The Spirit of the Law *The Spirit of Christ in the Law of Moses*

“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law!”—Psalms 119:18

WE are apt, in shallow thoughtlessness, to look upon the Law of Moses as merely a code of harsh regulation and bondage, and the Law

of Christ as a liberal and tolerant message of indulgence and freedom.

This is not the true picture of either, as a consideration of the words of Paul to the Hebrews immediately shows—

“For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” (2:2-3).

*“He that despised Moses’ Law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much **sorer** punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God...and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (10:28-29, 31).*

* * *

THE emphasis in the Law of Moses is holiness: the emphasis in the Law of Christ is love.

But they are not contradictory opposites: they are rather a harmonious unity of essential parts.

The Law of Moses lays the necessary foundation upon which the Law of Christ is built. It was a schoolmaster to bring mankind to a realization of their sinfulness and helplessness and need. It always pointed forward comfortingly to the divine remedy of mercy and love.

Consider, indeed the very name of the central object of the whole Mosaic system, where God’s glory shined, and where He said He would meet with Israel—the MERCY-SEAT, that is, the **Place of Mercy**.

Mercy and forgiveness in love constitute the true inner spirit of the Law. Both Christ himself and his apostles tell us that the whole Mosaic Law was fulfilled in one word, *“Love.”*

Love, then **MUST** be its basic principle. Every one of the endless, countless sacrifices of the Law was a testimony, not only of sin and failure and punishment and death, but infinitely more so of mercy and forgiveness and hope and life.

The requirements of holiness, the great message of the Law, have not been relaxed. Rather they have been infinitely intensified and broadened. Christ carried this principle right back through mere outward act into the deepest and earliest wellsprings of the heart and soul and mind—

“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

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

“Be ye PERFECT, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt 5:48).

The Law of Moses is a judicial code for the regulation of a nation for enforcing order and justice, and punishing crime.

As such, it must be firm. As such, it must require an eye for an eye. It will be the same again in the Kingdom of God: sin will be punished, swiftly, unerringly, appropriately, inexorably.

It is only the utter folly and confusion of man, and his total inability to regulate himself in society, that regards justice and punishment of evil as old-fashioned, and blind, hazy, sentimental indulgence toward crime as progress and *“enlightenment.”*

* * *

BUT the law had a much deeper and more beautiful lesson than this for those able to comprehend. It made provision for, and pointed the way to, a beautiful society of mutual, peaceful, self-sacrificing love, if Israel had only ever been able to rise to its glorious sublimity.

It did this by commands whose fullness and depth were limited only by the capacity of the hearer to comprehend and respond. Let us look at some of them.

“He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack” —Ex. 16:18.

A marvelous window into the mind and will of God is opened by the Spirit through Paul when he applies this as an allegory of the Body of Christ. He is speaking to the Corinthian brethren about care for one another, sharing freely with others the blessings God has given us, and ministering to one another’s needs. ALL that we have is God’s, and is given us, not for our own selfish indulgence, but to be used faithfully in the common good.

In expounding this beautiful principle, he says (2 Cor. 9:6-7)—

“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully, for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

“If thou lend money to any of My people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury (NRV: interest)” —Ex. 22:25.

The principle of taking interest on money is a very vicious, evil principle. It is the principle by which the rich get richer and the poor poorer. It is the foundation of the world's evil, fleshly, selfish, grasping economic structure. There is very deep spiritual wisdom in the Law of Moses.

This principle is obscured by our translation. To us, the word "usury" means *excessive and oppressive interest*. There is no such distinction in the original.

In Neh. 5:10-11, for instance, the term "usury" is applied to interest of 1% per month—well below today's legal limit. Nehemiah condemns it, and urges the exacters to restore it.

In Hebrew, the words for "interest," "buying on credit," and "deception" are all the same basic word.

All this is out of harmony with the mind of Christ, and the Law—if Israel could only have seen it—beautifully reveals that spiritual mind.

"If thou take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down...It shall come to pass that when he crieth unto Me, I will hear, for I am gracious"—Ex. 22:26-27.

We find that in God's infinite love and wisdom, the Law set up a necessary system of national order and regulation, but by gentle, kindly loopholes, it took away all the real sting and harshness.

If a man were poor, and had to pledge his last garment, it must be given back each night for him to sleep in. Actually, this took all the meaning out of the pledge, and made it more of a nuisance than a security, especially as a creditor, however powerful, was not allowed to go into a man's house, to claim a pledge, but must stand outside until it was brought to him. The wise and godly lender would see the point. So must we.

Often, for practicality and the self-respect of others, we must go through certain forms, but we must be very careful that the restraint is measured and gentle and does not become oppressive and destructive.

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him"—Ex. 23:4-5.

This goes as far and as deep as any New Testament teaching. Here is the basic principle of good for evil—loving our enemies. Not just

forbearing to retaliate—that is at best a cold, dead, negative virtue: not just piously wishing them well—that is cheap and easy self-satisfaction. But an active, interested, guileless laboring and putting one’s self out to do good to those who are opposed to us and injure us.

The wisdom is that this is the way to reconciliation—to the transformation of enemies into friends—to the overcoming of evil with good. We can never rest as long as there is estrangement.

We must seek for opportunities to do good—to manifest the beauty of the more excellent way of love, and the ox astray or the fallen ass may be a God-provided means of healing a breach, for which we must be constantly on the watch. Sometimes there is nothing we can do but pray, but **let us never underestimate the infinite power of prayer.**

And we must always remember the basic principle of all sound giving—

“God loveth a cheerful giver.”

The reluctant, or self-righteous, or publicity-conscious, or small-minded, carefully weighed and measured gift is an abomination to God.

“The seventh year thou shalt let thy land rest and lie still: that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and thy oliveyard”—(Ex. 23:11).

How MUCH Israel could have learned from this!—of Faith, and Promise, and Kindness, and even a foreshadowing of the opening up of the love of God to the Gentiles, for what else can be meant in this special provision for the beasts than the call of the Gentiles to partake of the children’s bread?

One year in seven would not of itself be too great a help, either to the poor or to the beasts, but it should teach a gentle lesson of consideration that should sweeten and beautify the other six years—just as the Sabbath day devoted exclusively to the things of God was simply a focus and a pivot for bringing the whole life, and every day, and every moment, into a pattern of God-centered holiness.

To skip a year’s sowing and reaping (especially if need were pressing and the previous year had not been too productive) would be a tremendous exercise of faith, and more so if others less scrupulous were prospering who were not doing the same.

There is much we can each learn from the Law of Moses.

“Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it **WILLINGLY WITH HIS HEART** ye shall take My offering.”

We think of the Law as external regulation, but the whole heart and meaning of all obedience and service is the **spirit in which it is done**—

“God loveth a cheerful giver.”

The giver himself must be part of the gift. No gift has any meaning unless we give ourselves with it, from the heart—

*“Of every man that giveth it **willingly with his heart** ye shall take My offering.”*

This wise requirement of the Law changed a cold, legal obligation into a warm and loving personal joy. It drew God and the giver together in mutual affection and fellowship.

Actually, we can give God nothing. All is His already. And we can do nothing for anyone that God Himself could not do for them infinitely better. But God in His wisdom provides scope for the manifestation of the yearnings of the heart and the pouring out of love one to another.

Without this, any gift, any service, any sacrifice, is an abomination in God’s sight.

“Thou shalt make a Mercy-Seat of pure gold...There I will meet with thee”—Ex. 25:17,22.

What glorious significance there is in the name of the object that was the center and apex of the whole Mosaic Law—

“A Mercy-Seat of pure gold.”

A *“Place of Mercy.”* Here was where the Shekinah-glory of God’s presence dwelt, and before which the High Priest approached in reverence once each year.

Truly it was hidden in the deep recesses of the Tabernacle, far beyond where any ordinary Israelite dare tread. Truly it was only once a year approached, and only then by one specially-chosen, specially-prepared, specially-equipped man. This befitted the Law’s position and purpose and dispensation.

But it was there. All Israel knew it was there. All Israel knew, or could have known and realized, that all the Law, all the elaborate Tabernacle arrangements, pointed inward to the Mercy-Seat of pure gold, the Ark of safety and covenant-relationship, the Glory

foreshadowing the Redeemed of the Lord—and in and through, and over all: the marvelous, radiant effulgence of the indwelling presence of God.

“Thou shalt make an altar”—Ex. 27:1.

The Mercy-Seat of gold was the place of meeting. The Altar of brass was the way of approach. Without the Altar—without provision for repentance, and sacrifice, and cleansing, and forgiveness, and reconciliation—the Law truly would have been a *“ministration of condemnation.”*

But the Altar taught that God had made loving provision for the redemption of fallen man—that the Law not only commanded and condemned but, in a type and figure of Christ, healed and strengthened and purified and redeemed.

“Take ye from among you an offering. Whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it”—Ex. 35:5.

Here again is that same vital principle of willingheartedness. We come back to its consideration because of the aspect of its so significant repetition in this chapter—see also vs. 21, 22, 26, 29.

God does not waste words. When He repeats something, He has a purpose. When He repeats something over and over, there is surely an importance and an urgency that we do well to note and ponder on. Constant repetition is the way to deep and abiding memory.

The heart is everything. Where our heart is determines our destiny. God demands the whole heart, given willingly, eagerly, enthusiastically, unreservedly.

“When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard. Thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord”—Lev. 19:9-10.

Here certainly is carelessness and inefficiency! What conscientious farmer could be comfortable and satisfied in half-doing his work in this slipshod way?

But often inefficiency is really a greater efficiency, and carelessness a deeper and more beautiful form of care. We call to mind the godly Boaz—

“Let fall some handfuls of purpose.”

The whole underlying spirit of the Law is a free, uncalculating, almost reckless liberality—as befits the noble children of a Father of

unlimited wealth and benevolence.

God can pour out riches in abundance—cause the barrels of meal never to empty, and the widow’s oil never to run dry.

The purpose of life’s probation is to teach us to be like God—teach us the inexhaustible abundance of the blessings that God is eager to pour on those who can free themselves from the mental shackles of natural, human, cramped and calculating smallness.

And it was far wiser to leave it in the field for the poor to themselves labor over and slowly gather, than to harvest it all very efficiently; then dole it out on demoralizing breadlines.

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him (RV: not bear sin because of him). Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge, against the children of thy people: but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself”—Lev. 19:17-18.

This, Jesus said, is the 2nd greatest commandment—

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

This, and the love of God, he said, contains all the Law and Prophets. This, then, is the basic spirit of the Law. Here we come to the very heart and core of the matter—that one fundamental thing which it all was designed to teach and foster and gradually develop in the character.

In this connection, the two points specifically mentioned here are significant—

Thou shalt not avenge.

Thou shalt not bear a grudge.

—the outward and the inward manifestations of unforgiveness and nursed malice.

The Law of Moses required the strict carrying out of justice, and prompt, proper punishment for crime. But it forbade any spirit of revenge or illwill. We see how the Law, in its deeper aspects, went beyond the external act and reached into the depths of the heart—

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour.”

Differences and estrangements could not be allowed to fester: they must be faced and cleared, then forgotten forever.

“Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself”—Lev. 19:34.

The Law in many ways made a distinction between Jew and Gentile, to teach them their separateness and holiness. But as to their personal treatment of, and care for, the strangers who chose to dwell among them, there was to be no distinction or discrimination. They must treat them in all respects with love and kindness and even especial sympathy, because they were strangers.

What a wonderful nation, what a pure power for joy and good in the earth, Israel would have been if they had perceived and embraced the true spirit of that wonderful Law that was designed to purify their hearts and lead them to Christ!

This is a lesson for us too—

“Thou shalt love the stranger as thyself.”

—for all these beautiful principles of the mind of Christ must be universal to mean anything at all. **There can be no limits, no restrictions, no exceptions**—or all immediately loses all its eternal, life-giving power and shrivels to an ugly and meaningless sectarianism.

“Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family”—Lev. 25:10.

Perhaps the most refreshing aspect of the whole Law was its constant emphasis on a new beginning—a frequent, periodic clearing away of all accumulated inequities and disadvantages.

Every 50 years, everyone went back to the possession of his basic inheritance. All debts were cancelled. All big land holdings were broken up. Every family that had fallen on hard times through misfortune or mismanagement was given a fresh new start.

Here, truly, was a revolution indeed! Each person, in his own lifetime, would normally experience one of these marvelous national rejuvenations. Each, whatever his present burden or disability, would have this glorious prospect to look forward to—

“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land!”

For those who had eyes to see, this periodic joyful jubilee was a great type and promise of the final, glorious, eternal jubilee of jubilees to come.

“And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him. Yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or

increase”—Lev. 25:35-36

Paul tells the Galatians—

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”
(Gal. 6:2).

And James says that this is the *“royal law”*—that is the law of the Kingdom, the supreme, ruling law of all laws, the *“perfect”* law, the *“law of liberty”*—

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

How is this the *“law of liberty”*? How can law be liberty? Because, as John says—

“We have passed from death unto life, IF we love the brethren” (1 Jn. 3:14).

—ALL brethren, brethren universally. Truly this is glorious liberty indeed! The Law of Christ, the Law of the Kingdom, the Law of Moses—all are one in spirit and in purpose.

“That the man of God may be PERFECT.”

—**may be like God Himself.**

“If thy brother be poor, thou shalt relieve him, that he may live with thee.”

“But he, willing to justify himself, said: Who is my neighbour?”

That is: How cramped and narrow can I make the application and obligation, and still technically satisfy the law?

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thy heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL thy might”—Deut. 6:5.

This is at the beginning of Moses’ farewell address to Israel that comprises the book of Deuteronomy. It immediately follows his recital of the Ten Commands that came directly in the voice of God (ch. 5), and it is the start of his own last message.

Two points—two words—deserve especial attention as the heart of the command—*“love”* and *“all.”*

No action, no service, no self-denial, no sacrifice—means anything if the motive is not love. And this was the basic principle of the Law of Moses, just as much as of the Law of Christ.

And no action or service means anything unless it is TOTAL. **God abominates half-measures and half-heartedness.** Not so much

because of the quality of the service itself (for at best our efforts are pitiful and puny), but because of the sad state of the heart and understanding that half-service manifests.

God said pointedly of such service (Mal. 1:8)—”Try offering it to man—try offering it to your master or employer—and see how long you would last.”

Offer your employer a once-a-week, Sunday morning attendance. Offer your employer unfaithful stewardship: squandering his goods on yourself, wasting his paid-for time in self-enjoyment, carelessness of his instructions, leaving the work to someone else, ill will toward other employees, serving his enemies—and see what the result would be.

“What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?”—Deut. 10:12-13.

We note especially the direct connection of thought—

“Love the Lord thy God—to keep His commandments.”

These are inseparable parts of one harmonious whole, both in the Law of Moses and in the Law of Christ.

There can be no true love without a careful, eager keeping of the commandments, and there can be no acceptable keeping of the commandments except because of, and through the medium of, love. And note the final phrase—’**For thy good.**’

All was designed for their well-being. The Law of Moses was not merely a harsh code, designed to condemn them. Truly its holy purpose was first to expose and condemn the universal tendency to sin and disobedience, but this was only the preliminary part of its glorious manifestation.

“God loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger”—Deut. 10:18-19.

The Hebrew mind tended to an arrogant, self-satisfied and exclusive smallness and despising of all the rest of the world. **We too face the same danger.** We have been called out, and told to be separate from, and to have no part in, a world that lies in Godless wickedness.

But we must not become self-centered and thoughtless and indifferent as regards the world. We must let our light shine, that men may see our good works, and this means far, far more than merely preaching the Truth to them.

“God loveth the stranger.”

There cannot be a universal brotherhood until there is universal righteousness and truth, but there can—and must—be universal kindness and love.

The Hebrew nation was appointed to be a divine light of guidance and comfort and inspiration in the earth. But they wrapped themselves up in an intolerant and bigoted self-righteousness, justifying themselves by the very Law that was designed to teach them the very opposite characteristics. This can so easily happen to us too.

“Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in ALL that thou puttest thine hands unto”—Deut. 12:18.

Surely this goes deeply into the beauty of the law of Christ. They were **commanded** to rejoice. Can we rejoice to order, by command? Is not rejoicing a spontaneous reaction as a result of external experience?

Let us look a little deeper. This could be, in fact, the deepest and most significant command in all the Mosaic Law—

“Thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in ALL that thou puttest thine hand unto.”

How can we rejoice as we helplessly watch the collapse of a long-cherished dream? How can we rejoice in laying a loved one to rest? Here is, perhaps, the greatest secret of all. **God will teach us how, if we will only let Him—**

“With God, ALL things are possible.”

“ALL things work together for good to them that love God and are called according to His purpose.”

The great treasure of the Law of Moses, as of the Law of Christ, was this **divine assurance of unassailable, indestructible rejoicing**—this marvelous command to rejoice in everything and for everything—

“For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.”

“At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbor shall release it...Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land”—Deut. 15:1,2,11.

One of the great beauties of the Law of Moses is its glorious, divine impracticality. Under it, faithfully carried out, Israel would have been a joyful, mutually blessed and blessing community, all elements

contributing in love to the common family joy and prosperity.

By gentle, merciful regulations, God sought to teach them the spirit of open-hearted generosity and benevolence and love. He took the sting and harshness out of debt and debtor by a frequent, joyful clearing of the accounts and beginning again.

What tenderness and wisdom is manifested in these marvelous and unearthly regulations! Under the assured shadow of God's constant oversight and care, the usual merciless framework of business and society, whereby the rich oppress the poor, was transformed into an atmosphere of hope and relief.

“If thy brother be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy flour, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him”—Deut. 15:12-14.

The Law of Christ says that if a man will not work, he shall not eat (2 Thess. 3:10). This is only wisdom and kindness, both to the giver and the receiver.

The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses were to build character in both the donor and the recipient. It is not kindness to give what could and should be earned.

Under Moses' Law, a debtor must work out his debt, if he is able. But six years' service was the divine limit. Then the creditor must release him for a new start in life, and says the Law, ***“furnish him liberally,”*** out of flock, threshing-floor and winepress.

“Liberally” means different things to different people; yea, even different things to the same people when considering different things, and whether they happen to be giving or receiving.

The Law strangely, wisely, beautifully left it open to each heart to apply its own measure of liberality. God often leaves us with such decisions, that we may reveal the true measure of our heart and love for Him.

“He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.”

“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee in that place which he shall choose. Thou shalt not oppress him”—Deut. 23:15-16.

This is generally taken to refer only to slaves from outside of Israel escaping into Israel, and not to legitimate bond-servants within the

framework of Israel's own laws. This suggested restriction of meaning may be true, or it may be due to the natural mind not being able to receive the full breadth of the Spirit's deep wisdom.

A wider meaning would be more in harmony with the unearthly spirit of compassion that breathes through all the Law's regulations concerning human relationships—a spirit too lofty and divine for the natural man to encompass.

The Law of Moses is in no sense practical. Naturally speaking, it is utterly unworkable. It depended entirely for its workability on man's faith and God's continuous Providence.

Here again, it so beautifully manifests the spirit of the Law of Christ. The Law of Moses, like the Law of Christ, was a law of faith and trust and childlike, unquestioning dependence upon the assurance of a constant, active, divine control of all natural events.

We can never predicate the meaning of any aspect of the Law of Moses, or of Christ, on the basis of whether it is practical or workable in human society. To do so leaves out the primary ingredients—God's Providence and man's faith.

“When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat thy fill at thine own pleasure. When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbor, then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand”—Deut. 23:24-25.

This is one of the most thought-provoking regulations of the Law. As long as there was anything growing, which would be most of the time, anyone could go onto another man's private property and eat as much as they liked, as often as they liked.

We can imagine what would happen to some crops; and a concerted effort of a large mob could, quite legally, ruin anyone.

But COULD it? Here is where the element of faith becomes prominent. What would God permit? This regulation came, and could only come, from Him who could replenish inexhaustibly the cruse of oil and the barrel of meal.

What are these strange regulations designed to teach us? For we are plainly told that all was written for our instruction and admonition (1 Cor. 10:11).

They are to teach us the utter unreality of what man in his proud ignorance calls reality, and the existence of a true reality which the natural man doesn't, cannot know exists.

“O ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

“When thou and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it. It shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow, that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands”—Deut. 24:19.

How beautifully the Spirit of Christ shines through these commands! How gently yet effectively the wisdom of the Spirit suggests to the godly Israelite that he allow his memory to lapse in the interests of compassion and fellow-feeling!

What a haphazard, but utterly delightful, state of society when a man’s spiritual tenderness can be measured by the inefficiency of his farming and the poorness of his memory for forgotten sheaves! **How gloriously different from all man’s cramped thoughts and ways!**

Israel could have been a little refreshing oasis of impractical but utterly joyful Paradise in a dreary world of Gentile blight, if they had only had the wisdom to see the real glory and beauty of their holy Law. So can we, in this our day. The glorious opportunity to enjoy and manifest the unearthly, God-overshadowed life of Christ-likeness is now ours. Israel failed. Will we? —Bro. G.V.Growcott

Our Duties

The city is smitten. We have been here in captivity, according to verse 21 of this 33rd chapter for 12 years, 10 months and 5 days. Ezekiel has been telling us that Jerusalem was going to be taken. His prophecy was very clear and direct. Remember he told and showed us the old rusty pot and he kept making the fire hotter and hotter. Then he emptied it out and let the pot burn. There could be no mistake he was telling us that Jerusalem was full of sin and God was going to pour out His wrath on her. Our beloved city was going to be destroyed.

And remember when his wife died. The desire of his eyes. He wasn’t to mourn for her. That was a sign for us that the temple and Jerusalem were to be destroyed. Well today the messenger came and told Ezekiel that the city was smitten. Ezekiel knew there would be a messenger coming with this message as he was told in chapter 24:25-26 Also, thou son of man, shall it not be in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

That he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause thee to hear it with thine ears?

That was 2 years ago that he was given that message and today the messenger came saying “the city is smitten”.

I’m glad we didn’t listen to those false prophets who were telling us that we would be going back to Jerusalem soon. They tried to tell us what we wanted to hear but now we know Ezekiel was right.

Jerusalem, our beloved homeland, now in ruins. Ezekiel’s prophecies are proven true. Just what he was telling us has come to pass.

And he was told that when this happened he would be able to speak again and be no longer dumb. In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD— Eze 24:27.

Ezekiel now tells us in Eze 33:22 “Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.”

This really doesn’t surprise us because Ezekiel was appointed to be a watchman. He was given messages from Yahweh that he was to pass on to all of us in captivity. Many did not listen. It is much more pleasing to hear that the captivity would be short and we would be going home. But still he continued to warn and give signs to get the message to everyone. He was constantly telling us of our sins and trying to get us to change our ways. But now Jerusalem has been smitten. Now what?

Fortunately Ezekiel’s message does not end here. He is still the appointed watchman giving a message from Yahweh. But did you hear his message? Listen to this: “Eze 36:24-28 “I’m going to remove you from the nations, gather you from all of the territories, and bring you all back to your own land.”

Eze 36:25 “I’ll sprinkle pure water on you all, and you’ll be cleansed from your impurity and from all of your idols.”

Eze 36:26 “I’m going to give you a new heart, and I’m going to give you a new spirit within all of your deepest parts. I’ll remove that rock-hard heart of yours and replace it with one that’s sensitive to me.”

Eze 36:27 “I’ll place my spirit within you, empowering you to live according to my regulations and to keep my just decrees.”

Eze 36:28 “You’ll live in the land that I gave to your ancestors, you’ll be my people, and I will be your God.”

What a contrast this is compared to our current conditions. It seems too good to believe. But I believe it. I know it will happen because Ezekiel our watchman has told us. There are many other prophecies he and the other prophets have given us that are still to be fulfilled in the future.

We brothers and sisters are studying his message this week. We have this hope. It has been extended to us. Do we truly recognize this blessing? Do we understand the value of these words?

On Saturday night there will be a lecture Lord willing about the signs of the times. We have come from near and far to hear these words. To try and understand more clearly the Divine message of the prophets, apostles and Christ himself. It will be our brother's duty to rightly divide the words of Scripture and explain to us what is happening now in the world and what will happen in the future. Our duty is to listen. But then what? What are we going to do with this information we acquire? Will we as Zion's true watchmen pass it on to others clearly and distinctly as we should? Or will we lose our enthusiasm as we go back home and settle into our daily routines. Will we go from here with eagerness to continue watching the signs daily? Or will our passion die down when this week is over? Many will not want to hear our message. They are content thinking they will go to heaven and see their loved ones. But there may be some sincere ones out there who will listen and it is our duty to seek them out and talk to them. Without our message they have a false hope, which is no hope at all.

As a watchman Ezekiel was responsible for watching the signs and peering into the distance to see what was coming. This was a great responsibility for if he did not warn the people he would lose his life. However if the people did not listen to him and make the changes he commanded then they would lose their life. This same law for watchmen applies to us today. As we sing in our hymn.

“Few in number little flock, by the world despised forgot,
Fear not, arm ye for the fight, God will bless you with his might.
If you faint not you shall reap,
Israel's God the seed doth keep:
Do but sow it; it will grow,
Though the way you may not know.

Brave the foe, proclaim the Word, Sons and daughters of the Lord;
Work ye for the Lord of heaven; Give, as He hath freely given. ...

Ye who have the truth received, By God's grace to you revealed;
Should you dare to keep it back, You the rich reward may lack.

This shows the responsibility that comes with our position. It is not something to be taken lightly.

Christ gives the same command in Luke 12:8-9 “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

We have the example of Anna who we are told in Luke 2 that she was a prophetess, of a great age. She came into the temple at the same instant that Mary and Joseph brought Jesus in and offered the sacrifice for him according to the law. She was on watch and when she saw him we are told Luk 2:38, “And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, **and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.**” She did not keep this message to herself but she spread it.

I couldn't help but see the irony in this message as I was writing it. My duty as a watchman is to pass on to you information on your duties as watchmen so that you can pass on information to others about their duties ...and on and on. But this is as God intended it. the Apostle Paul says “it pleased God by the foolishness of **preaching** to save them that believe.” We may not like preaching to others but it is a divine command and we must do it. Paul tells Timothy “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”

So basically what we are talking about now is communication. And this is a very serious important subject. There are two sides to communicating, the first is to get our message out there, either in a written or spoken form and the second is the listening part. Communication is a good thing. It is a necessary thing, but it must be done effectively or there may be more problems than we started out with.

1. When in doubt over communicate. (repeat the message to ensure clarity.) Did I understand you to mean this?

2. Be Audience Focused, Review your talks or letters, e-mails before you send them and read them through the audience's perspective. Although you may understand what you are trying to say, will they? Or will they be offended? Our words are extremely important brethren. There has been much communication circulated recently within the brotherhood and we must, absolutely must, consider the audience. The one that we are writing to is the one that we, as watchmen are sending the warning to so that they will change their ways and save their lives. **We are not writing to clear our reputation or justify our position or condemn our brethren**, we as watchmen are sending out a clear trumpet blast that the time is short and we want to do all we can to help and encourage one another as well as our erring or mistaken brethren.

As the apostle Paul says in 1Cor. 14:8 “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” That would be disastrous if someone did not understand the trumpet sound to battle and was killed. That would be the watchman’s fault.

Christ said in Mat 12:37 “For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Will we be justified or condemned by our words? These are very sobering thoughts.

It is interesting to note that most people when writing up a resume would list “a good communicator” as one of their skills. For some reason we all just feel like when we say something everyone should understand what we mean. But unfortunately that is not always the case.

Brothers and sisters, I am not talking about chit chat about the weather here, we are talking about things that affect our eternal salvation. But another ironic point is that if we concern ourselves so much with **our salvation** and don’t show the necessary care and concern with helping our brethren and sisters that we will **lose our salvation**. Think of the Pharisees. They were so self righteous and bent on keeping the little details of the law that they missed the big picture. Christ says in Mat 23:23, “Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, **judgment, mercy, and faith**: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Mat 23:24 “Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.”

Mat 23:25 “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.”

Mat 23:26 “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

I found an interesting article in the Berean from 80 years ago entitled “Watch, Brethren, Watch!” Berean 1936 page 227

(The Arranging Brethren of an ecclesia have drawn up and sent a copy of this Circular to each of its members; every brother and sister of all the household of Faith will benefit if they consider it addressed to themselves.)

I considered reading it, but time won’t permit me to read it all right now. I do have a copy of it here if anyone would like to read it.

But I thought it was interesting how it was prefaced with the statement that each member of the household should consider it addressed to themselves. How easy would it be to read it and say “that’s so true, bro. so and so needs to read this or I wonder if I should

send this to so and so?”. **No brethren!** These warnings are for ourselves first and foremost. When we are in an air plane they tell us every time that if O2 is needed put your own mask on first and then help a child or someone in need. We must examine **ourselves** and apply these thoughts **at home** and then when we are “converted we can strengthen our brethren”.

So at this point you are most likely thinking, why is he the one appointed to talk to us about our duties as watchmen. He has just given this confusing message. He starts out telling us how we must warn others and then he tells us not to focus on others, to examine ourselves. What is he trying to say? I believe the key to this issue is **love**. When we have examined ourselves and are in the right frame of mind, then and only then can we reach out to **others with love** and compassion. We are then ready to implement the weightier matters of the law, Justice, mercy and faith. We can't show justice if we have a self-righteous attitude and no concern for our brother. When we reach out and show them our care and concern, then they hopefully will be more willing to listen and the communication will be effective. The apostle Paul begins his letters to the Romans with Rom 1:7, “To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Rom 1:8 “First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.” Rom 1:9, “For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;”

Are we thankful for **all** of our brethren and sisters? Are our erring brethren and sisters in our prayers? **Do we really care?**

Another question we should ask ourselves is, Are we strong enough, do we LOVE THEM ENOUGH, to talk to someone about their faults? It is much easier to speak to others about it and not the person with whom we have the issue. If we really care about them I'm sure we would find the appropriate way to **lovingly** approach them and **show** them how much we care about them and are concerned with their actions or whatever the issue is. Are we more concerned about our own salvation ? Christ tells us the proper way to handle someone who trespasses against us in Mat 18:15-17. “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

Mat 18:16 “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

Mat 18:17 “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church (ecclesia): but if he neglect to hear the church (ecclesia), let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

These are very familiar words to all of us. They usually become part of a baptismal exam to make sure they are understood before one enters the waters of baptism. As I was baptized many years ago, I thought I understood them but recently it was brought to my attention how the 17th verse ends up. “If he neglect to hear the ecclesia, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” What does that mean? I always thought we were to have nothing to do with them, stay clear of them. But How did Christ treat the heathen or the gentiles, the Samaritans and the publicans? He was accused of being a “friend of publicans and sinners!”

Christ tells us in Mat_9:13 “go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” It seems to me that these are the ones who need our help or our love the most. Let’s be sure to include them in our prayers and reach out to them as a true watchman would. We do not want them to misunderstand and think we are approving of wrong doing, but we want them to repent, change their ways and walk Zionward **with us**.

The situation at the time of Christ was that the Jewish tax collector would be despised. If a local Jew was unable to pay his taxes, the publican would accommodate him by loaning him the money at exorbitant interest rates. Consequently the average citizen’s financial burdens could become impossible. If the individual was unable to pay these heavy assessments, he could be treated in the cruelest fashion. He could be grabbed by the throat and hauled off to the local jail. There he could remain and rot until his relatives or friends were able to raise his sum. The Pharisees and rabbis began to develop a system to exclude the tax collector from all of their activities. They were considered on the same level as professional robbers. They were not allowed to give testimony in a Jewish court. They could not hold any communal office. Any gifts they gave to charities were to be refused. And so on, you get the picture I’m sure. But suppose the tax collector became convinced of the errors of his ways and decided to repent. He would like to turn from his wrong doing and be reunited with God. The rabbis were persuaded that such repentance was impossible. After all, the tax collector had stolen so much money that there was no possible way for him to make restoration. (This was altered Later). So Christ, early on in his ministry said to a tax collector, Matthew “Follow Me” When the Pharisees saw that Christ ate with Matthew and the Publicans they concluded he could not be the Messiah. But tax collectors, for all of their faults, were a spiritually starving people. There was no one to minister to them and demonstrate that they cared. Consequently when Christ opened his love

toward them, they responded in droves. Luke tells us that on one occasion “all” of the publicans came to hear Jesus Luke 15:1. Whether we take “all” literally or as a hyperbole, we realize that large numbers came readily.

Our thoughts could be directed to Christ’s parable of the good Samaritan. I read that several years ago that a” Human Behavior magazine conducted a sneaky test. They asked a number of seminary students to prepare a short devotional on the Good Samaritan and report to a building to deliver it on the radio. The magazine staff then placed an actor to pretend he was sick on the path to the building. More than half of the students walked past him or even stepped over him because they were too busy preparing their message on the Good Samaritan.”

Are we too busy writing our exhortations, talks, lectures or in our puny lives to reach out to those in need?

As you listen to this talk, I can imagine you are thinking, He is probably referring to “them”, or to “him or her”, or to “what I wrote”, or me ... No. I am not personally referring to any particular situation. I know there are many things that concern us in these last days and yes I am concerned about all of them. But specifically in this talk I’m speaking generally to, firstly myself, I have a lot of room for improvement in this area and then all of you when doing our duties as watchmen and we follow the Scriptural commands as Christ’s brethren, as Zion’s true watchmen should. If I could blow a trumpet today and give a warning sound the sound would be as the prophet Isaiah said in the first chapter, “Isa 1:16. “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;”

Isa 1:17 “Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. But my emphasis would be on verse 18 “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Come now and let us reason together!

Isaiah speaking of the false watchmen says “His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.”

This is not the kind of watchmen we want to be. “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh”—Matt. 24:44.

Mark 13:34-37 “For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to **watch**. **Watch ye** therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, **Watch**.”
— *Bro. Stephen Osborne*

Meditations —Deity’s Ways No. 84

THE reward for faithfulness is indeed great. Briefly stated it is eternal life in the Kingdom of God. How very feeble is our ability to appreciate this future glory. Whose fault is it? Largely our own. We do not think and talk enough about the matter. We do not sufficiently make our present experiences a means of reminding and encouraging ourselves in regard to the better things to which we are heirs. We too often allow a fleeting and alloyed joy to satisfy our aspirations, instead of making that joy an incentive to press forward to secure the same kind of joy in its promised perfect form. Are not the highest pleasures of our present life but a foretaste of the pleasures to come? Let us strive to strengthen our faith in these things. The more we do so, the less likely shall we be to lose our reward, and the happier and nobler shall we now be. How can we strengthen our faith and love in God’s promises? In this there is no great secret. What makes the prospect of a holiday at the sea-side so attractive? Is it not the outcome of thinking seriously and often about it? What a holiday for us will be unending life in God’s kingdom! What will it not embrace! What is there for which the heart of a wise, righteous man can wish, that will not be included in this reward? Honour, praise, power, splendour, incorruptibility are among the blessings that are comprehended in it. And if we reach it, what shall we not leave for ever behind?—tears, suffering, death. If we have not confidence in our own judgment in appraising the promised reward, let us listen to Paul. He knew much more than we do about the Kingdom and its joys—he had visions and revelations upon the subject (2 Cor. 12:1–4) which made him a valuable witness. This is his sum of the matter—”I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Rom. 8:18).

“Men of science seek, in all reverence, to discover the Almighty, the Everlasting.” These were the words of Professor Ray Lankester, in his presidential address, at the last but one annual meeting of the British Association. The sentence has a pleasing sound, but what does it mean? What is it in relation to God that scientists wish to discover? Is it God’s abode? No, they are not quite so simple as that. Is it a knowledge of His greatness? Surely not, for this is a fact obvious to the man in the street. Microscopes and telescopes and much study may make the fact more

palpable, but these things are not requisite to reveal it. Is it better acquaintance with the workings of God in nature that these savants are seeking? If so, the Professor should have said so plainly. But how limited must be our knowledge of God, if we are confined to what nature can disclose. What is there in nature that can tell us of the Creator's glorious purpose with the earth and man? Of the mind which we must exhibit if we are to please Him? Of the power and efficacy of prayer? Of miracles? Upon these transcendently important matters the Bible alone is God's medium of revelation. And without information upon these subjects can a man be said to know God? Ah! Nature's contribution to the knowledge of God is very limited, and only baffling and misleading when the Bible is ignored—as the statements of scientists so often and painfully show. Why do men of science turn from God's beautiful, reason-satisfying, ready-to-hand revelation, and spend their best hours in star-gazing and rummaging among the dust for knowledge which they can never get? The world by wisdom knows not God—“His ways are past finding out” (1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 11:33).

“A bigoted, contentious, self-glorying lot of tub-thumpers.” This is not a flattering description, but it is one that was once applied to the Christadelphians. It is not true, of course; but, at the same time, we can quite understand it being applied by a very conservative church-goer, who heard for the first time certain brethren publicly declaim upon the errors of the clergy. The criticism suggests the wisdom of exhibiting care and tact in our eloquence. There is a danger of allowing our preaching to drift into raillery. Our duty is to proclaim the Gospel—to unfold the Scriptures. Whatever else we introduce should be as a means of forwarding, not retarding, the exposition. We must strive to please, and not offend. We want to demonstrate that Christendom and the clergy are astray by a faithful and logical handling of the Word. A fine example of the right method and style in this respect is to be seen in Paul's tactful address at Mar's Hill (Acts 17.) The town clerk's remonstrance with the Ephesians is also a testimony to the apostle's skilfulness (Acts 19:27). “Give none offence,” said Paul, “neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved” (1 Cor. 10:32, 33). All the clergy are not evil-living villains, and if we are unguarded in our reference to them, we shall naturally and unnecessarily wound the feelings of many hearers, and prejudice them against the truth. How should we feel if we heard a speaker denounce Christadelphians as a whole, because of a few who had disgraced the name of Christ? Let us remember that no amount of exposure of the shortcomings of the clergy will enlighten in the way of life. People who love to hear the parsons abused are certainly not the people for whose tastes we should cater.

—*Bro. A.T. Jannaway* — 1906

Principles of Righteousness — “Is Adultery A Continual State After Remarriage?”

The well-meaning interjector may reason however that such a person is “living in a state of adultery” because the second marriage after divorce is not recognised by God as a marriage, that the first union remains binding, and therefore until further “sacrifice” of separation and the consequent breakup of family occurs, forgiveness cannot be obtained: and that this condition remains until reconciliation or the death of the first spouse has occurred. Only then can marriage to a second spouse be allowed! In response to this theory we submit the following points as a sample of some of the obvious objections.

(a) If this reasoning is correct then the conditional clause of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 need explanation that covers the many contradictions that a whole range of theories *have suggested over many years. Such theories ignore what brethren Thomas and Roberts believed was **the simplest and most obvious interpretation**. These theories set aside the principles of Bible interpretation which marked the rediscovery of the truth from Papal and Protestant blasphemy. These principles of Bible interpretation are consistently used on other first principles, but sadly appear to be set aside when it comes to the subject of divorce and remarriage! Bro. Roberts points out “It ought not to be a matter of difficulty to determine how the Scriptures are to be interpreted. It ought to be easy to maintain that, with certain qualifications, **the Bible means what it says**”⁵. These theories are often made a test of fellowship to the point where Bro. Roberts would not today be fellowshipped by other Christadelphian groups! We cannot but wonder how different the ecclesial world would be today if all brethren and sisters on all the issues that have divided the household of God and none more than the divorce and remarriage question, had instead stood fast with Brethren Thomas and Roberts in their understanding of Scripture; their spiritual maturity made plain the demands of God’s holiness and truth while dealing with the realities of life where sin has marred the divine ideal.

(b) Nowhere in Scripture does the term, “living in adultery” apply to a second marriage after divorce.

⁵ Christendom Astray by R. Roberts: Lecture 1: The Bible—What it is and How to Interpret it

(c) If the above explanation is correct then those who have divorced and remarried before coming to knowledge of the truth, ought to separate before they are baptised to manifest “true repentance”. Members of the Dawn fellowship, in trying to circumnavigate this consequence to the above theory, state that it is a **false** deduction to claim that as “sin is the transgression of God’s law and seeing that the people in the world are sinners, such people, although in darkness, transgress the precepts of God’s law”⁶. Interestingly, this type of reasoning is adopted when the subject of divorce and remarriage is

raised but abandoned when other pre-baptismal sins are discussed! The same author states, “We have no authority for saying that a faithless Jew or Gentile sins in ignorance against the precepts of Christ’s law, for they are outside that law”. This theory, charged by some Central brethren as “Andrewism”, makes baptism the point of responsibility, greatly weakening their witness. It goes without saying that Bro. Roberts roundly dismissed such a theory. In response to the question, “Have we any actual sins of our own to be forgiven at our baptism? Or is the effect simply to free us from the law of sin and death that we inherit from Adam”. Answered, “How could any doubt exist on the point? Why should it be necessary to put such a question? Presumably because someone suggested that as the Gentiles are without God, and not under law to Christ, they cannot commit sin, which is the transgression of the law. **This is a mistaken application of truth.** Though the Gentiles are not accountable, because helplessly what they are, they are nonetheless **transgressors**, who must be forgiven before they can obtain favour. Leviticus 20:23 shows that nations not under law are odious, because of their wickedness”⁷.

6 “Christ’s teaching on divorce and remarriage” by GM Clements, published by The Dawn Book Supply

7 The Christadelphian 1873 pp 232

(d) Nowhere in the New Testament is there a case of the Lord requiring a second divorce and separation as proof of repentance.

(e) Let us not forget the spiritual guidance of Deuteronomy 24:1–4. Verse 4 illustrates how Yahweh deals with the practical realities of the divorce and remarriage question. The divine commandment in verse 4 was designed to make an Israelite reflect deeply upon his actions against his wife; once divorced and **remarried**, if she was then loosed by her second husband or even if the second husband died, the first husband **could never take her to himself again**. This command should have discouraged the practice; yet because of the “hardness of their hearts” Israel ignored God’s warning. This was the practice the Lord condemns in Matthew 19 where the Pharisees divorced and remarried multiple times. **Nevertheless, Deuteronomy 24:4 proves that this second marriage is binding by God, though an obvious departure from the divine standard.**

(f) The Lord Jesus differentiated between the woman of Samaria’s five husbands and the man she was then living with. In doing so, the Lord Jesus did not in any way condone her immorality yet noted her previous marriages as marriages.

In Matthew 19:9 the Lord speaks of a second marriage following divorce and of a marriage to a divorced person as “committing adultery” because **the motive** of the man who divorces his wife, innocent of porneia, that he may marry another, is no different in the Lord’s

estimation from a man desiring to satisfy his lusts with one other than his wife.

The penetrating motive revealing teachings of the Master of **Matthew 5 again becomes the key to correctly interpreting the Lord's terminology in Matthew 19:9.** Matthew 5 shows us that the Lord judges hidden motive as if it were literal action taken to its contemplated fulfilment. In Matthew 19:9 the Lord is judging the **motive** of the man who puts away his wife, whom he knows is **innocent** of unfaithfulness, so that he may marry another, as outright adultery which to the Jewish mind under the Law meant the death penalty. Likewise, the one marrying the divorced wife is said to commit adultery because his heart with its most intimate desires is improperly directed to one whose love, faithfulness and affections are covenanted to another.

Though the sin committed in the second marriage does not strictly conform to the normal definition of adultery, the motive and the unlawful desires and affections aroused by it are comparable to an **act** of adultery. We emphasise the word **act**, because adultery is not a condition or a state. It may be a series of acts but it is not a “state”. **The Lord says that the sin of remarriage in Matthew 19:9 is compared to an act of adultery. Again we emphasise the key in understanding this is Matthew 5:28–32 where the Lord shows that this adultery begins with deceitful lusts and covetously ends in divorce and remarriage.**

It is also interesting to note, that with reference to the Greek of Matthew 5:32 and the Lord's words “causeth her to **commit adultery**” is in the “aorist infinitive tense and passive voice”⁸. This refers to simple action and **not** linear or continuous action while the “passive voice” represents the subject (the wife wrongfully put away) receiving the action of the verb. The second occurrence of the phrase “commits adultery” at the end of verse 32 is the same verb in the Greek that is used in Mark 10:11–12; Matthew 19:9 and Luke 16:18 and is in the “present indicative”. This tense represents action in progress now as opposed to action in the past or the future. As we would expect the spirit consistently selects the language that best reflects the teaching of Christ set forth in Matthew 5:28–32 i.e. the **adultery was progressive from its inception in the mind, to its physical manifestation in remarriage** and the language and grammar used illustrate this point. We cannot overemphasise the importance of a correct understanding of Christ's principles taught in Matthew 5 on this matter. It not only sets forth the grave sin of allowing deceitful lust to harbour in our hearts to the point of leading us to divorce and remarriage but it also (verses 21–48) reveals what ought to be **the spirit of the wronged party by the appreciation of the grace of God**—to know Him and Jesus Christ whom He sent.

8 “A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament” by Nathan E. Han

“For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example**, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was **deceit** found in his mouth. When he was **reviled**, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he **did not threaten**, but continued entrusting himself to him who **judges justly**. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:20–24).

Note: This is the correct Berean belief on this subject. Those who believe differently are following an incorrect doctrine that the Bereans were separated from in 1941 and 1971. (The Dawn and Four Points)

Jerusalem Revisited — 10

OLIVET HOUSE, JERUSALEM, *March*, 1912.

DEAR BROTHER WALKER,—Have had another grand night’s rest. We are indeed blessed in every respect — opportunity, health, protection, weather, and environment. It is utterly impossible to “count our many blessings.” The most we can do is to open our eyes and “see what God has done.”

We note, by the dining tables, that another of the tourist parties, which continually come here for the stereotyped five days’ visit, has taken its departure. Another party of thirty-five, under the conductorship of Mr. Samuel Schorr, of “Palestine Exhibition” fame, is due here this afternoon. Last week there was a party of six hundred from a ship (the *Cincinnati*, Hamburg - American line), chartered by Mr. Clark, the “Thomas Cook,” as it were, of America. They had difficulty in finding accommodation, and had to be “billeted” all over the place. A great number had to be housed at the French, German, and other hospices. One good thing, they do not stay long. Just long enough to be rushed in parties, of about twenty to each dragoman, or native guide, and interpreter, round the sights of Jerusalem. Two days out of the five or six being taken up with the proverbial ride down to Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the river Jordan. Happily, most of them are located at one or other of the hotels and hospices near the Jaffa Gate, from which we are about seven or ten minutes distant.

As you, and many others, have good reason to know, I don’t go to sleep when “on tour,” but I am “not in it” with these “guessing” American “globe trotters.” We have had a few placed here at “Olivet
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House,” one of whom, a lady, got on the nerves not only of myself but of my most naturally kindly-disposed and amiable partner. The mother of the lady in question, who acted as a kind of companion or lady-in-waiting, told Sister Jannaway that her daughter was taking the tour round the world for health’s sake, having lost her husband a few months previously. She is quite young; and I pity her with a pity which, I regret, is *not* akin to love. If she carried on during her married life as she does here in the dining room, and drawing room, and writing room, and (as we can distinctly hear) in the bedroom, I do not wonder at her husband being dead, for I feel sure if death had not delivered him from his “trouble,” the lunatic asylum, or madhouse, would have had to make room for him, poor fellow! Sir Henry Lunn has a party due in Jerusalem to-day. I do hope they will fill all the spare bedrooms here, and thus exclude the unknowables, for we have never had to take exception to his clients.

After breakfast, we made our way for Cook’s office, to change some circular notes (Oh, how true Prov. 23:5, when travelling in foreign lands—and at home!), also to get our weekly supply of letters, cards, and newspapers from our dear ones at home. Oh, what a supply! While I was attending to the finance part of the business my beloved was busy dissecting the correspondence, and arranging all in the order to be read, for all the handwritings were familiar to her. We then sat down and read them “one by one,” every word.

Not the least interesting and amusing document, and, too, unique and original, was what its editor dubbed *The Palestine Edition of the Daily Mail*. I ought to say *editress*, for its compiler was no other than my brother Arthur’s conjugal partner, “C.H.J.,” as she is known to readers of *The Christadelphian*. She assured us, in a separate note, that the journal in question was “quite up to date” with things at home. It was made up of cuttings from the *Daily Mail*. As to the value we set on the letters and cards, you can well imagine when I tell you that when I was about to tear up the envelopes my companion exclaimed: “Oh, don’t do that! Save them all, I want to go through them all over again,” and she even picked up a cast-away newspaper wrapper and put it with the rest.

We then made for the “Russian Quadrangle.” Sister Jannaway was very timid at first, being fearful of being regarded as trespassers, and ignominiously ejected; or something worse. But, she gained courage as time went on, and is beginning to agree that my plan is the right one; or, at any rate, that its adoption means the overcoming of many obstacles, and the accomplishment of much more, than by a continual and apologetic asking if we might go so and so; or, do this, that, or the other?

My plan is to walk into every open door, and follow other people wherever they may go, until you are stopped, or discover it to be somewhere you have no right to be. The Russian property, or “Quadrangle,” or “Colony,” as it really is, is built on a parcel of ground the shape of a boy’s kite, with two main entrances, one at the pointed end, where the tail of the kite is, and the other entrance in the centre of the upper end. Roughly speaking, it occupies about the same space as the Temple Area, I believe about thirty acres.

This Russian Governmental Settlement includes the Imperial Consulate, the Cathedral, a large hospital, several schools, a post office, a market, and at least three tremendous blocks of buildings and wings, in which several thousands of pilgrims are continually accommodated. I am told that as many as seven thousand have been accommodated there at one time, and that it would garrison ten thousand. I was always under the impression that even penniless Russian pilgrims were welcomed there, but now learn that such is not so, although they are admittedly very, very poor in the majority of cases. It seems that so many were stranded, not having the wherewithal to pay their passage home, that no Russian is granted a passport to the Holy Land unless he first deposits a certain sum of money—I believe, ten pounds. Given that, he or she, or both, are made welcome at this Russian Hospice. Room or rooms, or dormitories, are allotted them, which they have to look after and keep clean. Ongoing round it was easy to tell the clean or dirty by the general appearance of their apartments. Here is a snap-shot of the place, from a point not far from the south entrance, looking towards the Cathedral, which is at the north. The men’s apartments are in the buildings on the left of our picture, and the women’s quarters are on the right. There are businesses and trades of all kinds in connection with this Russian enterprise—grocers, fruiterers, bakers, butchers, stationers, china dealers, cabinet makers, tailors, drapers, fancy (!) bazaars, moneychangers, etc.

There was one sight which, in our joint inspection, took our fancy more than aught else, and that was a large open space in one corner, where there were long tables, at which were seated scores of the poorest of the pilgrims, clothed in mere rags, skins, etc. Large clothes baskets, or cradles, laden with chunks of dry bread about ten or twelve inches long, about four inches wide, and about three inches thick, dark brown, after the style of the German black bread, that the British Free Traders are so fond of talking and writing about—*The Daily News and Leader* in particular. One piece was given to each pilgrim. On each table were several immense metal bowls, holding several quarts, if not gallons, of some kind of soup, or “skilly,” to which each of the seated

ones helped himself or herself with large wooden spoons or ladles. It reminded one of the Zoological Gardens at feeding time, they were so voracious, and their eyes casting such anxious glances as the bread receptacle, or soup container, approached them. To their credit it must be recorded we did not see a single pilgrim begin his or her meal, which was evidently *the meal of the day*, without first beseeching a blessing and returning thanks in Greek fashion.

As we wandered round about the tables and in and out of the various buildings, and walked about the extensive grounds, many and frequent were the glances cast at us, and remarks passed, but no one attempted to interfere with our progress. It was manifest they took us to be privileged individuals. Such was apparent from the deferential demeanour of the officials, who evidently did not care to betray their ignorance of us by venturing any questions. I refrained, at my beloved's request, taking any snapshots while in her company, but returned alone, later on, and took a few which I think will be of interest. The print sent herewith is a sample. At one section of the "Quadrangle" there were scores of mules and donkeys, evidently open for hire, to take down to the Jordan such of the pilgrims as could afford such luxuries. They all, of course, "do the Jordan." It is their life-long desire to bathe in that sacred river. The colony also contains a quarry, in which there is an immense half-quarried pillar, forty feet long and five feet in diameter, cut out of the solid rock, but not completely severed therefrom. No one seems to know anything as to its history. The most feasible opinion, to my mind, is, that it was intended for the Temple, but has been left unfinished in its quarry bed.

We walked all-round the grounds, and viewed the surroundings from various points of view; but whichever point we viewed the Holy City from, there, on the other side of Jerusalem, across the Valley of Jehoshaphat and up on the summit of the Mount of Olives, was that Russian tower which you and I ascended eleven years ago, containing that immense bell (how many cwts. or tons did it weigh?). You remember, we were told how Russian pilgrims, as a labour of love, pulled it up the slope of Olivet unaided by any other power than that of their own hands and feet. Yes, there cannot be two opinions about what the Russians are doing here, and why they are doing it. Beyond question they have already got into possession of the best points of vantage among "the mountains of Judah," in fulfilment of the divine prophecies of Ezekiel.

To further illustrate what I say, and further evidence I must leave for my next letter. Meanwhile, I remain as ever,

Your fellow pilgrim, FRANK G. JANNAWAY.

4. One Day

“On account of this her plagues shall come in one day”.

In the prophecy against the Chaldean Babylon, it is written, “thy day is come”; and in the next sentence, the exposition of this is given in the words, “*the time that I will visit thee*” (Jer. 50:31). Again, “Babylon is *suddenly* fallen and destroyed” (ch. 51:8). And again, “My people go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of Yahweh. And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumour that shall be heard in the land: and there shall come *in a year* the tidings, and after that *in a year* the tidings and violence in the land, ruler against ruler” (verse 45, 46).

Now this prophecy against the Chaldean Babylon, though having its own special fulfilment, which commenced in the time of Cyrus, and Belshatzar, the Lucifer of Isa. 14:12, was typical of the fall of the Roman Babylon; so that the language descriptive of the judgment of the ancient city and state, becomes the key of the figurative expressions in the Apocalyptic prophecy. I conclude, therefore, that it will be with the Roman Babylon as with the Chaldean; and that “her day, or time,” of judgment will come “suddenly,” “as a thief in the night;” that there will be violence in Italy, “ruler against ruler”; that the tidings inviting people to emigrate will find the country in this anarchical condition; and that in the “next day,” or “year”, her plagues will commence, even “death, and anguish, and famine” — *death*, or pestilence, and anguish, as the result of it, combined with famine. How long these calamities will continue after they have come into play, does not appear. Her judgment is consummated by a fiery overthrow — “*she will be consumed in fire*”. The foulness and filthiness of her abominations, and the similitude of the fate that awaits her, has caused the Great City and State to be “spiritually called Sodom and Egypt” (ch. 11:8). The punishment of Sodom will be Rome's, and perhaps, that also of the whole “Patrimony of St. Peter”. This will consummate the plagues which begin her torment and sorrow in one and the same year after the Aion-tidings of good salutes the ears of Israel in Rome. But following upon “pestilence, and famine” is the twofold rendering of torment and anguish by the troops of Michael, the Great Prince, who invades her territory and becomes a smoking furnace of judgment, “a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (ch. 19:19). From this she never emerges, and therefore, like Sodom, suffers the vengeance of a fire which is eternal (Jude 7).

—Bro. John Thomas Eureka vol 5 pg 291

Hints For Bible Markers

The Psalms

Psalm 6

Psalm 6:2

“Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.”

We have the deep and mournful cry of one who knows the full depths of the adamic curse. In the days of his weakness, Jesus was not a specimen of the glorious, powerful, incorruptible and immortal race that will yet inhabit this globe under his visible leadership. He full well knew what is and what is to come and deep felt sadness for the weakness created by estrangement from God..

Psalms 6:3

My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?

In a continuing theme of suffering we see how greatly Jesus is distressed at the conditions he must live in. It is a sadness which all the brethren of Christ know well. Jesus brought this out in Matthew 5:4 “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Ezekiel 9:3-4 “And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house. And he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer’s inkhorn by his side; (4) And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”

So great was His understanding of nature of man He longed for the passing of his time of probation. How long until his desired release from persecution and death.

Psalms 6:4

Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies’ sake.

Here we have Christ’s prayer for rescue before Yahweh 900 years before he suffered. The Spirit of the Lord dictated this application for deliverance, showing us the mind of our Savior, throughout this Psalm.