

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN
TIDINGS
of the Kingdom of God

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Peter Hemingray, Editor

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The Time When, Baptism is to Be Administered

God's approbation sends sure premonitory tokens before it; every "petition" may both deceive and be deceived. And so, according to the circumstances and disposition, and even age, of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children. For why is it necessary— if (baptism itself) is not so necessary — that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger? Who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfill their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition, in those for whom they stood? The Lord does indeed say, "Forbid them not to come unto me." Let them "come," then, while they are growing up; let them "come" while they are learning, while they are learning whither to come; let them become Christians when they have become able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the "remission of sins?" More caution will be exercised in worldly matters: so that one who is not trusted with earthly substance is trusted with divine! Let them know how to "ask" for salvation, that you may seem (at least) to have given "to him that asks." For no less cause must the unwedded also be deferred — in whom the ground of temptation is prepared, alike in such as never were wedded by means of their maturity, and in the widowed by means of their freedom— until they either marry, or else be more fully strengthened for continence. If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay: sound faith is secure of salvation.

Tertullian "Treatise on Baptism" circa 200 AD

Editorial

Adult Baptism

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

An encounter at the border

Christadelphians who live close to the US/Canada border are quite used to discussions with the customs agents. The following was an exchange recently reported to me.

Where are you going? — To a religious meeting. What sort of meeting? — a baptism. An adult baptism? — Yes of course. Customs agent — I could never understand the way most church practice christening! (Hand over pamphlet.)

Thus is the message spread: but it did give rise to some thought about the ways we practice “adult baptism”. All agree as to the fact that baptism of adults, after acceptance of the gospel and a true confession of faith, is a crucial, critical, vital step in the walk of a disciple to the Kingdom. But there are a few related topics I would like to consider.

The beginning

As most know, John Thomas, an emigrant to the USA from England in 1832, began to discover what we regard as the True Gospel. And in fact it was by the act of adult baptism that the initial steps towards that end began. In July, 1835, one Albert Anderson was baptized, at his own request, by John Thomas, and this began the rift between the Campbellites and John Thomas (for it was that community he had joined by being baptized in 1832.) This event had ramifications:

- many Christadelphians trace their descent from Albert, who was the first follower of John Thomas,
- not much later his wife, Louisa, wrote a letter that questioned the fact that Thomas Campbell did not insist on adult baptism as a requirement for salvation. This letter caused a firestorm of controversy, which later divided the Cambellite movement.¹

So John Thomas studied the gospel, and it was on his recognition of the importance of the True Hope of Israel in 1847 that he requested re-baptism by one John Tomline Walsh. Walsh, although at the time sympathetic, soon became estranged. So John Thomas’ true baptism was valid, not because of who baptized him, but because of his beliefs when baptized.

Many were baptized in the following years, with the name “Christadelphian” being coined when the baptized members of the Coffman extended household in Illinois wanted to register as conscientious objectors, and a denominational name was needed for that purpose. The house where this event took place still stands deep in the farmlands of the state.

The next baptism we might note we might note is that of Robert Roberts, who was baptized in the River Dee “on a beautiful Sunday Morning”, in the city of Aberdeen, Scotland. This took place in the summer of 1853, when he was 14. He was re-baptized ten years later, an event noted only in the magazine of our community at the time, the *Messenger of the Churches*. He commented on the reason in 1874: “The Editor has only once been re-immersed, and that was twelve years ago, on attaining to an understanding of the things concerning the name of Jesus, of which he was ignorant at his first immersion, when 16 (sic) years of age.”²

The age of adulthood and baptism today

Of the tens of thousands of baptisms recorded, relatively few give the age at which the individual was baptized: and it is interesting that the vast majority of these cases, the age is over 70. Of those somewhat younger, a very few are younger than 16, but as with Robert Roberts above, we have a couple of examples around 14, and at least one just under. The topic for the appropriate age for baptism has been discussed a little. This was particularly when there was an urging some while ago that no-one under the age of twenty should be baptized, based primarily on the age of adulthood mentioned in the Old Testament. For example, the age is typically 20 (Lev 27:3, Num 1:18 etc.). The age of commencement of service for Levitical priests is sometimes 30 (Num 4:3) but can be as low as 20 (1Chron 23:27.) Thus, it was argued, from Acts 8:12, where it says “*But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women*”, hence only those above 20 could be validly baptized.

This was discredited at the time, and is clearly erroneous based on examples such as Joseph, who was a man at seventeen (Psa 105:17, Gen 37:2). We can also remember Josiah: “*For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images and the molten images*” (2Chron 34:3). As he was eight years old when he began to reign (see vs 1), clearly at the age of 15-16 he was “*seeking after the God of David*”. And of course Jesus was quite capable of debating with the elders in the Temple at age 12.

It is sometimes pointed out that our American society regards the age of true adulthood at eighteen: before that age, one cannot vote, enter into legal contracts, nor marry without parental permission before that age (with rare exceptions.) However, when it comes to criminal responsibility, the picture is far different. I believe the State of Michigan still holds the unfortunate title of convicting as an adult one who was eleven years and nine months old when he committed his crime.³ In general courts are quite happy to assume an adult knowledge of right and wrong anywhere from 14 years old.

The best comment that I have come across was made by CC Walker almost a hundred years ago.

“[Can 15 or 17 year old be considered adults?]. This is rather a difficult question. Such would, of course, be “babes” by comparison with what

they would soon become under the influence of the word of God and the meetings. But it would be possible to err in deferring the obedience of faith. Practically we can only do our best in individual cases as they arise. It is very difficult to draw the line of ‘average.’ Not many girls of fifteen and boys of seventeen have a serious grasp of the truth; and this should be remembered in dealing with such cases. On the other hand, far be it from any of us to discourage the young in any way.”⁴

My comments on this, and it must be my personal opinion, is that anyone below the age of 15 should be carefully counseled, but not discouraged in their desire for baptism. Thirteen, or even fourteen year olds, should not be refused, but it would be an exceptional case for one so young to be baptized. Undoubtedly some who are this age are mature enough to realize the life-long commitment they are making, as was Robert Roberts (but recognize that he chose to be re-baptized upon a fuller understanding of the Truth.)

By whom baptized?

It is sometimes assumed that we are baptized into the Christadelphian community. This is quite incorrect: as we pointed out before, certainly John Thomas was baptized on the basis of his faith and beliefs, and not by someone who shared his beliefs. We are baptized “into Christ”. All who are baptized and who share, with us, the set of Biblical beliefs as summarized in what is known as the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith, or equivalent document, are accepted as members.⁵ Thus it is possible (although rare) for an individual, unassociated with the Christadelphians, to have been baptized holding these same views. When I say rare, I personally know of only a couple of cases. It is much more common that a person would like to join with us in fellowship, having become convinced of the Truth, but is reluctant to be baptized, even though their former baptism was on a very defective basis.

Of course, the case of someone joining the “amended” fellowship from any of the large number of affiliated, but divided, groups is quite different. Several editors of *The Christadelphian* magazine, for example, joined the “amended” fellowship having been baptized into one of the other groups, but were not re-baptized on joining the “amended” community. This is true of the vast majority of similar cases. An interview to establish the validity of the original baptism is all that is required: what differences there are in beliefs between the communities is often not even mentioned in the original baptismal interview. Of course, it is a personal matter: but re-baptism is something that is hardly practiced, by and large, within our larger community.

These are only a few thoughts on the topic of baptism. Its importance cannot be denied: but many details of by whom, to whom, and even the topic of the significance of the “right hand of fellowship” must be left for another time.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. For more (or an abundance of) information, simply do an Internet search for “Lunenburg Letter”.

2. *The Christadelphian*, 1874, p 610.
3. We was eventually sentenced to Juvenile detention, was released, but is back in prison on other charges.
4. *The Christadelphian*, 1915, p 267.
5. Of course, this assumes that fellowship is restricted to those who share such beliefs.

Exhortation

Arks

The background to this exhortation

First, a brief history of this exhortation. It originally stemmed from a Wednesday night class at which we got onto the subject of arks. I would like to share with you what I learned from that evening, as well as the things I discovered during almost half a year of focusing on the subject.

If we were to ask someone at random to think of all the arks in the Bible, we would probably get a normal average answer of two arks. The first one that comes to most people's minds is usually Noah's Ark. We are quite familiar with the story of the one faithful man in the world and his family, building an ark and filling it with two of every animal (with variations based on the animal's cleanliness). The ark protected the inhabitants as God rained down judgment (literally) on the sinful world. This story is familiar with to those even without a Biblical background: it is often regarded as a children's story.

If one has slightly more of a Biblical knowledge, one might give a second answer to the list: the Ark of the Covenant. This is the most heavily mentioned ark in Scripture, as its story involves several generations of Israel's history. We know that it was created in the wilderness by Moses and the people of Israel. We also know that there was placed into the Ark three things: the Ten Commandments, a jar of Manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. The children of Israel (and any nation who got their hands on it) often viewed it as a war banner; whoever carried the Ark into battle had God on their side. There is, in fact, a third time the English word ARK is mentioned in Scripture, and this also is relatively well known among Bible loving Christadelphians. .

We read:

“And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink” (Exod 2:1-3).

Moses, it seemed, had more than one involvement with arks. As we read, in order to preserve her child's life, Moses' mother hid him in an ark, perhaps thinking back to Noah and how it saved his family. We know that God watched out for the young Moses, eventually allowing him to be raised in the palace of the Pharaoh.

In both Noah and Moses (as a baby)'s case, the word for ark is tay-baw', H717: "Perhaps of foreign derivation; a *box*: — ark" — Per Strong's.

It changes, somewhat, when referring to the Ark of the Covenant: aw-rone', H727: From H717 (in the sense of *gathering*); a *box*: — ark, chest, coffin.

In light of the other possibilities of "boxes" in the Bible, I searched for the Hebrew words used for ark (tay-baw' and aw-rone). Tay-baw' only ever occurs in the case of Noah and Moses as a child.

Other uses of aw-rone'?

When we look at the word aw-rone', we find it occurs regarding two other boxes in Scripture:

The first is thus:

"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin [aw-rone'] in Egypt" (Gen 50:24-26).

The word used for Joseph's coffin is the same word used for the Ark of the Covenant. We will go into more detail on that in a moment.

The second situation is this:

"And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. And at the king's commandment they made a chest, [aw-rone] and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest [aw-rone], until they had made an end. Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest [aw-rone] was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest [aw-rone], and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD. So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it" (2Chron 24:6-13).

This was an interesting time for Judah. It was just after the evil Athaliah had been removed from the scene and we have a new king. At Jehoiada's suggestion, the king orders that funds be made to repair the temple. What we are seeing is a refocusing of Judah, a restoration of God's temple, and as such, a return to focus from Athaliah's wicked influence. Granted, this return to glory lasted only as long as Jehoiada's life did, but for a brief shimmering moment, the land rejoiced for God's glory.

Now there are numerous exhortational points that can be made from each of these boxes. But there is only one we will focus on this morning.

When we think of a box, we must ask what is the purpose of a box? While we could use a box for various things, be it standing up to reach something, or blocking a door to keep the cold out, there is only one real original intention: to put something in, so that that things may eventually be taken out.

This is something that all of the 5 examples have in common: something was placed in each box, only to be taken out at a later point (some metaphorically)

As we just looked at the ark of Jehoiada, we understand that it was money placed in the ark. That money was then taken out and used to repair God's temple. In the ark was more than mere coinage. It was a refocusing, as we have already stated, a restoration of Judah's spiritual focus, even if only for a moment.

The first example we were given was the ark. By far the largest box recorded, we now ask: what was placed in this box?

The answer: re-creation. Noah, his family, and all the animals in the box were God's way of resetting earth, giving it a second chance. In order to do this, he put the most important thing he could possibly put into the box: restoration. When the world was wiped of the face of God's sight, he left a remnant that would be the re-creation of the world.

Joseph's coffin

As most coffins contain bodies, it seems natural that Joseph's coffin contained something similar. But there is something special about Joseph's bones. We read:

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence” (Gen 50:24-25).

So the bones are more than just a set of bones: there is a promise attached. GOD WILL VISIT THEM! They would leave the land of Egypt, at some point in the future. What was put into the box was not salvation specifically, but faith. A promise of God's grace and a fortelling of future events.

Next example, Moses' baby basket. In this case, similar to Noah, there is a live individual placed in the box. But even more importantly was the fulfillment that Moses represented. His life was the answer to Joseph's final promise. God placed

his messenger in the box in the bulrushes, the servant that would bring God's message to Pharaoh, Egypt, and most importantly His people. The message that God was the lord of all creation and that He would fulfill the promise of Joseph's bones:

“And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you” (Exod 13:19).

Now, the Ark of the Covenant is the most mentioned ark in the Bible. Inside were three particular items:

- The tablets containing the ten commandments given to Moses.
- The pot of manna.
- Aaron's rod that budded.

Now we must ask what significance these objects had. There were numerous miracles in the wilderness. Why not sand from the red sea? Why not the water from the rock Moses struck? Why not the ROCK he struck?¹

The commandments are an easy example: they are literally, and metaphorically, the law. The old covenant given to Moses.

The bread might take some figuring out. But let us think about it: the bread was what brought life and sustenance to the children of Israel when they needed such life.

And that seems familiar when we consider

“I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:48-51).

So the manna is representative of Christ, a fulfillment of the previous law.

Which leaves the rod that budded.

The key thing to remember about this object is that as a rod, it was no longer alive. Another word commonly used for this is “dead.” So we have a dead object, suddenly brought back to life. There are many possibilities and symbols that the rod can represent, but for our case it represents resurrection. The law, the fulfillment of the law, and the hope of resurrection and the coming kingdom.

So God's plan, beginning to end, was contained in the box. On each occasion, the item or items placed into the box was the most precious thing, the most important thing God desired in the box, that when it was taken out, God's will was fulfilled.

- When Noah was taken out, God's creation replenished the earth
- When Moses was taken out of the ark, God's people were taken out of Egypt
- When Jehoiada's ark was opened, the temple was restored
- While Joseph's was not opened, it was taken out of Egypt, a fulfillment of the promises he originally made

- The Ark of the Covenant was lost, and has yet to be opened as we are still awaiting the day of resurrection (See Rev 11:19).

The box itself was not the important object, but the object in the box and what it represented.

Now, there must be a practical application to all of this.

The Bible

This is just a book. On its own, it holds no more significance than me holding up a copy of Huckleberry Finn. The fact that I can hold it does no more than me holding a box. But inside this book, the Bible, are volumes of information, lessons, plans, intentions, miracles, and so much I could go on for hours. Placed in the book is God's message to us, his purpose for this planet. But we can use none of this unless this book is opened up and the words taken out.

But even more personally, let us look at a verse:

"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2Tim 2:21).

We, brethren and sisters, are vessels. Or more specifically, our heart or mind is a vessel. What we put into our heart, what we place in ourselves is similar to placing something in a box.

Now Christ distinguishes what items actually matter as far as what we put in.

"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt 7:18-23).

It is not physical things like food and drink that Christ states that defile a man, but what comes from the heart. And in order for something to be taken out, something must be put in.

So what do we put into our heart? What goes in that must come out? In truth, Everything. Everything we experience in our day to day lives is recorded in our hearts. The sights, the sounds, the feelings, even the smells, all of it is recorded and placed in our hearts to be taken out at a later time.

The question is, do we have control over what our hearts take in? Absolutely. If we see a movie, we remember the film. If we smell a flower, we recall the scent. If we read a book, we can bring back the words from memory. There is no real way to stop this process. It is constantly working.

It makes a difference, therefore, what we place in our hearts. What we watch, what we read.

Why? Aren't we in control of what we take out? Can't we choose to do and say things?

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matt 6:19-23).

If we put in things that are not of God, that is what will be found in our hearts. If we put in things of God, again, things of God will be found within. When we are asked to open our hearts, when we speak to those around us, be it in the truth or in the world, we take out from our hearts what is within. Therefore it is important that what we place in our hearts be things we are willing to share with those around us.

Furthermore, when we stand before Christ, when we are judged before the throne, do we think that God through Christ is going to be concerned with the number of films we have watched, or best hits songs from the radio? Or will His concern be with the truth, with his word which we place in our hearts?

And this is the reason we are gathered here today. To refocus and fill our hearts with God's word, with His plan and purpose for us, for this world. It does not mean we leave here today and go out to fill ourselves with whatever we please. We must constantly fill ourselves, continually with God's will so that when that day comes and Christ returns we can go forward, hearts full of precious things, ready to be opened for our Lord.

Ethan Bearden (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. [Editorial note]. I am personally of the opinion that the rod with which Moses struck the rock was Aaron's rod, which is why Moses was punished for his action. It is never referred to again as being in the Ark: see 1Kgs 8:9.

The fate of Aaron's rod and the pot of manna can only be conjectured. It is tempting to suggest that these two emblems were removed during the period the ark was in the hands of the Philistines, and was carried hither and thither by them in their endeavors to get rid of it by passing it on to someone else! There is said to be a Jewish tradition to the effect that these emblems were not in the ark in Solomon's time, but no suggestion is made as to the time of their disappearance, or when they were last known to be in the ark. We cannot conceive of their being removed by any of the Levites, who alone among the Israelites had access to the ark. We can only conclude, entirely without evidence, that the two emblems disappeared during the ark's seven months wanderings among the Philistines.

The Testimony, 1936, p 220

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince : (3) By Many or by Few

Towards the cliff

The young prince and his armor bearer walked through the gully. It would only be a short time before they met their enemies. Finally, they reached the cliff. Above them sat the Philistine garrison. Upon reaching the cliff, Jonathan turned to his friend:

“And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armor, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armor bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart” (1Sam 14:6-7).

Jonathan gave his faithful friend a few last words of encouragement. He reminded him that the Philistines were the *uncircumcised* — the ones *outside* of the covenant with God. The Philistines were merely thorns which needed to be cut aside and destroyed. On the contrary, Israel was the circumcised; they were the covenant people, they were God’s special treasure — a group of people whom God sought to clothe in white. If He so willed, God would be with them and He would fight this battle for them — just as He had done so many times to all of the other inhabitants of the land who *were driven out* by Joshua. In this case, they only had a few men — just the two of them — but God’s hand was not shortened. He could save by many, as was the case of Joshua, or by few.

After finishing the words of encouragement, Jonathan waited for his friend’s response. This truly was their last chance to turn back. If his armor bearer had changed his mind or if he no longer felt able to go up to the Philistines, he needed to make that clear immediately. Once they started going up the cliff, they would immediately be spotted by the Philistines, and there would be no options for flight. Was his armor bearer ready? Was he still willing to go? Jonathan posed the question and his friend responded affirmatively — Jonathan had inspired a Godly confidence in this man and he was ready to follow him wherever he went — even if it meant probable death.

And that was the one bit of trouble — death was entirely possible. Jonathan didn’t actually know if Yahweh would be with them in this endeavor: *“It may be that the LORD will work for us.”* He knew that it was entirely possible for God to save them and to defeat the Philistine garrison through them, but he didn’t know if He would. It was a similar circumstance to that of Azariah, Mishael, and Hananiah so many years later. As they stood before Nebuchadnezzar, the emperor of Babylon, they spoke similar words:

“Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so,

our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up” (Dan 3:16-18).

Standing before the furious king, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah stated that they believed in the power of their God to deliver them. They knew that Yahweh had the strength to quench the flames of the furnace and keep them alive through their punishment. Yet at the same time, they confessed their lack of foreknowledge — they didn’t know if He actually would save them or not. Their doubt did not lie in God’s *ability* to save, but rather His *willingness* to do so. Nevertheless, despite what God may choose to do, they rested firm in their knowledge and belief that it was *right* for them to refuse to worship Nebuchadnezzar’s golden image. While they didn’t know if God would protect them from their punishment, they knew that He could and they knew what they needed to do.

The confidence of Jonathan

Such was the situation before Jonathan. He had absolute confidence in Yahweh’s ability to save and in His ability to work solely through him and his armor bearer to destroy the innumerable Philistines. Yet he too, just like those three kindred spirits who would come after him, didn’t know if God *would* actually save them. It was possible that they would charge into the Philistine garrison, and immediately be thrust through by the enemies. Such could have been the will of God — Jonathan simply didn’t know. Yet despite his lack of foreknowledge, Jonathan knew that something had to be done — and so just like Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, Jonathan *knew* that he and his armor bearer had to resist the idolaters and fight against their wickedness. Thus, he devised a method so that he might better know God’s plan for his own life — but regardless of if it was for him to live or die, he was determined to fight against the garrison:

“Then said Jonathan, Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us” (1Sam 14:8-10).

In his mighty confidence in Yahweh, Jonathan laid out his plan. In both of the two options, he and his armor bearer would come out of their hiding place. After that, when the Philistines saw them, they would say one of two things:

“Tarry until we come to you.” If the enemy told Jonathan and his friend to stay put, then they would do so and they would wait for the battle.

“Come up unto us.” In this case, if the Philistines told them to come up and fight — then Jonathan and his armor bearer would go up and fight, because Yahweh would fight this battle against the enemy.

It was a show of true, powerful faith. Jonathan prayed for a sign — not for guidance as to whether or not he should actually fight, but as to *how* he should fight. In either

scenario, whether the Philistines told him to wait in his position or whether they told him to come up, Jonathan and his companion were going to stand against them! What an act of faith! They were determined to take a position against the Philistines. This wasn't a sign to determine whether or not to challenge the Philistine, but it was a sign to see if God would be with them in their endeavor. Just like Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, that was the question that they longed to have answered. Thus, one response would tell them if God was going to be with them, and one response would not.

If the Philistines told them to stay put, then Jonathan would know that God was not going to protect them in this effort. Truly, He wanted them to resist and wanted them to stand against the Philistines, but in His ultimate wisdom, He had not chosen to protect them. Jonathan and his armorbearer were ready to accept this if this had to be the answer. Yet on the other side, if the Philistines were to call them up — and tell them to come and fight at the top of the cliff, then Jonathan would know that Yahweh had given them into his hand. They would live another day and God would protect them.

This entire matter of the sign shows the different level of thinking which captivated the mind of Jonathan — for him, it wasn't about prowess on the battlefield and it wasn't about military might. Jonathan lived in faith. If God wanted him to win, then he would win. If God wanted him to lose, then he would lose. It was simple. Jonathan lived his life with this understanding — that whether he lived or died, it was in the hands of God. Regardless of the end result, he knew that he needed to do what was right — he needed to resist sin and stand against its representatives in this battle.

Truly, in all of these things, the attitude of Jonathan is one to take as our own. May we remember that our own abilities and our own talents are not what is important — God could give us those abilities immediately or at the exact time that they are needed, if He so wills. The important part is that we remember His principles and we choose to give our lives for them — knowing that God can make the plan succeed, regardless of our own weakness.

Thus Jonathan and his armor bearer, in a full understanding of what they needed to do — with palms sweaty and hearts beating in their ears, knowing that the next words that they would hear would determine whether they lived or died — they showed themselves to the Philistines:

“And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they have hid themselves. And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armor bearer, and said, Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing. And Jonathan said unto his armor bearer, Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel” (1Sam 14:11-12).

As the two men stood there in the open, at the bottom of the cliff, the Philistine warriors spotted them. Mocking the fear and trembling which had plagued the Hebrew army, the Philistines laughed at Jonathan and his friend — saying that

they were coming out of the caves where they had been hiding, just like the rest of the army. In their cockiness, they spoke words which would have brought a feeling of relief cascading through Jonathan's entire body. He would live another day. Yahweh was with them. He and his armor bearer would slay the uncircumcised blasphemers. Perhaps even a smile crept across his face as he turned to his armor bearer and said *"Come up after me: for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Israel."*

Up the cliff

So Jonathan and his friend began to climb up the cliff — looking for footholds and places to put their hands. Eventually, they reached the summit, and the battle began:

"And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armor bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armor bearer slew after him. And that first slaughter, which Jonathan and his armor bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow" (1Sam 14:13-14).

Jonathan gave the first blow, and his armor bearer finished the job. The two of them were a perfect team, given strength and precision by the Almighty. As a result, twenty men of the Philistines lost their lives that day. It was a marvelous victory, a perfect follow up to the slaughter at the first garrison which Jonathan had smitten. Yet though it was astounding that two men were able to slay twenty — there was still a bit of a problem. Would Yahweh intervene and give the two men so much strength that they would be able to smite the 30,000 chariots, the 6,000 horsemen, and the innumerable amount of foot soldiers? While Jonathan and his armor bearer had accomplished an initial victory, how would the rest of the battle be won?

Jonathan would have had no idea as to the answers of these questions — but he was willing to fight as long as was necessary. Nevertheless, how his smile would have broadened as he began to feel the ground beneath his feet start to tremble — and as he realized that his God was intervening.

"And there was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people, the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling" (1Sam 14:15).

As Jonathan and his armor bearer kept up the fighting, suddenly the ground began to shake. Not only had God strengthened and protected Jonathan and his friend, but He had miraculously intervened in this battle. Thus, as the ground started to ripple and tremble, the confusion in the camp of the Philistines became insurmountable — no one knew what was happening, and no one knew who was friend or foe. The Philistines began to attack one another, blindly using their weaponry to slay their own brethren:

"And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another" (1Sam 14:16).

Through the faith of one man and his friend, the tide had been turned. The impossible victory had been achieved. Yahweh intervened and won the battle for Israel because of the faith of Jonathan and his armor bearer — and that same God can do the exact same thing in our lives today. May we remember the willingness of Jonathan to put his decisions in the hand of his God, and may we remember the saving power that is held by the God of Israel.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)



Bozez and Seneh (Library of Congress: Michmash Gorge)

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Bring it to Life! (Using Drama in Sunday School)

The various uses of Drama

As a Sunday school teacher and Bible school teacher for many years, I have learned the benefits of using drama to engage and enlighten my students. Drama can be used with all ages. It gets children involved in the lesson, and it can be used to share information about a Bible story in an entertaining way.

There are many different ways to incorporate drama into your lesson. A really simple way is to adapt a Bible story into a dramatic reading. To make things easier for your students, you will probably need to type out the story with parts clearly marked. It is also helpful to use a modern version or rewrite the lines in more modern English. And you may need to add a few lines of your own to flesh out the story. Then you can have your students sit and read their parts, or, for bigger impact, provide a few costumes and props and have them act out the story. Choose a good reader to be the narrator (or do this yourself). If your students are nonreaders, you can read the story to them and have them act it out as you direct them. As simple as this method is, it is much more engaging and entertaining than sitting and listening to the story being read aloud.

When our own children were young and at home, we often did Bible readings by assigning a part to everyone. They had to pay close attention so they knew when it was their turn to read. Of course, this only works with stories that have a lot of dialogue. This is another simple method you can use with your students.

For those who like to write, writing your own script can be very effective.¹ This gives you the opportunity to incorporate lessons into the play. One fun and simple way to do this is to write a radio play. This type of play is simply read aloud, as if you were listening to a radio broadcast. For a Bible school class I taught a few years ago, I wrote a radio play about the time of Ezra and the return to Israel. The play involved two fictional radio “personalities” who lived during the return from exile and had a radio show called “Voice of the Remnant.” Each act involved an interview with an important personality of the time. The interviews reflected the passage of several years as the people prepared to return to the land, made the trip, and then began and finally finished building the temple. Our radio hosts interviewed Daniel, Zerubbabel, Haggai, and Jeshua, as well as some fictional characters that represented people of the time. The interviews provided a way to share with the students the timeline of the period and the events that took place. They also helped the students realize the impact that the events had on the people involved. This can be a simple and very effective way to learn important Bible history.

A Play

For a more ambitious project, a full-fledged play can be written, complete with stage directions. Last year, our entire Sunday school was involved in the perfor-

mance of a play about the birth of Christ. The script was written as an outreach tool. The idea was to:

- Share the details of the birth of Christ,
- Examine some of the common misconceptions about his birth, as a way to demonstrate the importance of reading Scripture carefully,
- Emphasize that Jesus is soon to return to the Earth to establish the Kingdom on Earth.

The script included a narrator/presider who did the bulk of the talking and was able to read his part. We used an adult for this part. Then there were some longer parts that could be read, a few smaller parts that had to be memorized, and several nonspeaking parts for our younger children and those who were not comfortable with a speaking part. With the exception of the presider/narrator, all the speaking parts were directly from the Bible. This was a really big project that took several weeks to prepare but was well worth the effort as all the students worked together to present a really nice production to family and friends.

A similar project on a simpler scale was a play written about the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem at the time of Nehemiah. This play was written for a class that included five girls and three boys. Since girl parts are often in short supply in Bible stories, Shallum and his daughters (Neh 3:12) were chosen as the characters for the play. In the play, Shallum and his five daughters worked on rebuilding the walls and then joined in the celebration when the walls were completed. Each act in the play revealed the motivations, challenges, and rewards that the people rebuilding the walls experienced. The two youngest boys in the class took the role of Samaritan boys, representing the opposition that Israel experienced from the locals.

In writing scripts, it is important not to get lost in your own story. As much as possible, stick to the information found in the Bible, adding only what is needed to get your points across. If you are making up a story to teach a lesson, ask yourself if each action in the play is bringing out the lesson or detracting from it. It is fine to include a little humor or action to add entertainment value, but don't let the lesson get lost in the production.

If you are not a writer, there are scripts available on the Internet and elsewhere that you can use and modify as needed.^{2,3} Or ask around the brotherhood. No doubt there are others who have scripts they have written and would be willing to share.

Once you have a script, you need to decide how much time and effort you want to put into the production. Is this something you are going to use just once, the students simply reading their parts with few or no props and costumes? Or are you going to put a little more time and effort into it, with rehearsals and a set? Are you going to perform it for others or just use it in class? Any of these methods can be very effective. A play doesn't have to be a big production to have a big impact. On the other hand, working together on a bigger project can be a great experience for everyone involved.

In whatever way you choose to do a play, remember to get all your students involved. Some students don't really like to perform or even read aloud for others.

Give them another job to do. Can they help with props? Paint a set? Help you with the directing? Take a part that doesn't involve a lot of speaking or even acting? For example, in a radio play like the one described above, a more reserved student could pretend to be the radio producer, signaling the radio personalities when to start and stop each "interview." Or, in a larger production, he or she could help set up the scene for each act. Just make sure you don't leave anyone sitting around with nothing to do.

If you are looking for a way to get your message across in an engaging and entertaining way, consider using drama. With a little effort, you can bring a lesson to life and get your students very actively involved.

Jane Hewitson (Baltimore, MD)

Notes:

1. Do you have a script to share? Do you need a script? The Tidings has a small number of play scripts available and would like to receive more. Please contact sundayschool@tidings.org.
2. If you are interested in learning more about the play scripts mentioned in this article, please contact sundayschool@tidings.org. Copies are available on request.
3. The Christadelphian Sunday School Union (UK) offers a Play Library on its website (www.cssu.org.uk). Under "Printed books and magazines" click the "If you are a Christadelphian" link to access the Play Library Index.



Christadelphian Sunday School Play (Newbury, UK)

History

Jim and Lizzie Cheetham: A Love Story Part 2

Introduction

This is a continuation of the accounts of the early history of some Christadelphians in California, as covered previously in *The Tidings* (Jan 08 p 21, June 08 p 229, Oct 2008 p 441, Feb 09 p 72, May 09 p 170, Jan 10 p 22, July 10 p 283). The previous article (May 2013) dealt with the start of the romance between Jim and Lizzie, which began in England but was interrupted by Jim's emigration to California.

Jim to England

During the first part of James' journey to England, which took him down the coast of California and Mexico, he mused about the trip, writing in his diary:

"I have been at sea one week and I thank Him who alone watches over us that He has kept us up to this present time amidst all the dangers by which we are surrounded and subject to upon the ocean. As each day passes over me, I begin to realize that it is a great undertaking to which I have entered, a journey of something like 8,500 miles by water. If I reach my journey's end, I shall be more than compensated in seeing and being able to converse with those whom I love in the truth, dearly loving the same glorious hope as myself, the restoration of Israel and hope of eternal life and to share in the glories of the age to come. I think that I shall be amply repaid for this long journey in associating with those who have brought me to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, for were we not all at one time aliens from the common wealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the World? True we had a hope, but it was a false hope, a delusion and a snare, a sugar coated lie by which so called Christendom is ensnared..."

When James reached New York several weeks later, he looked up an old friend. "Took the boat to Brooklyn, strolled through Brooklyn to see Bro. Walter Andrews. I found him in his room and had quite a chat with him on the Truth. He walked back with me as far as Brooklyn Bridge, then I walked over the Bridge to New York. There is also a cable line running over it. It is a great structure, the greatest piece of engineering skill I have ever seen." Before he came to the end of his life, James would see several great bridges built in the San Francisco area.

In England with Lizzie

While he was in England, Jim spent a lot of time with Lizzie. She realized that the relationship was becoming quite serious and asked Jim in a letter to think about their future.

"They say, you know, love's blind. Don't let it be so in your case. I am not joking, I assure you. Although I believe as regards the Truth (which is the most important thing to be considered by us) we are truly at one

and shall have very much the same ideas I think. Still if we consider that point settled there are smaller ones we must take into consideration or we shall never get on well together... You may not find me altogether as you think or as you wish, in that case what would you do? Will you think these things over and don't get lonely and then if you still keep the same mind, I will with our Father's help (until our King shall appear to take his chosen ones to himself) try to be your loving Lizzie."¹

Jim, on the other hand, was certain about his feelings for Lizzie. He wrote to her from his parent's home in Halifax:

"I believe you told me in Huddersfield you would require loving a great deal. Well dear Sister, I do love you dearly. Words fail me to express to you how much but I can assure you I should certainly have never undertaken the journey I did, and braved the dangers which I did, if it had not been for the love of you and now since I came home I love you far more as every day passes over me and I hope and trust you will do the same and that we may never regret so doing."²

Back in California

On March 31, 1892 James left England to return to California going by steamer to New York and by railroad to the west coast. He wrote to Sarah:

"My Dearest Lizzie, Greeting in Christ Jesus. Grace be unto you and Peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I thank our Heavenly Father for having in his goodness and mercy watched over me and brought me safely to the end of this long and tedious journey. I arrived safely in San Francisco last Monday night the 17th at 11pm... The weather is beautiful here, the flowers and trees are beautiful now. I feel quite at home again here in some respects of course, but I cannot feel happy with the thought of you being so far away..."³

Jim wrote later to Lizzie telling her why he loved her. "... Though I had only seen you a few times before I wrote my first letter to you, yet I had taken particular notice of you, and formed an opinion of you, and I have seen no reason yet to alter my opinion of you but everything to confirm it. Shall I tell you what it is? Your sweet disposition, loving nature, and kindness, and lastly but not least in importance, your love for the Truth."

At the same time that Jim was struggling with missing Lizzie he was also dealing with unemployment, obviously not a good situation for a young man who wants to get married. "Is it to be wondered at that I feel a little downcast, seeing that I have not been able to get any work yet in my line of trade? I need something to occupy my time and mind. I was out this morning soon after 6:00 o'clock after a job. It is work that I can well do, interior finishing, but they would not give me any show because I have never worked in that particular line. The furniture business is very dull indeed now ... have never seen anything like it for the time of the year."⁴

While James struggled with his lack of employment, his focus was still on the things of God. In another letter, he asked Sarah to try to encourage his mother to

accept the Truth. "Hope you will go and see my mother when you visit Sis. Halstead's. They will be very disappointed if you do not, so go for my sake and try to get mother to go to the meeting with you if you are there on a Sunday, now won't you dearest. I would like to see her take more interest in the truth and attend the lectures regularly. Tell her this for me. Perhaps you can persuade her better than me" He also told her that he was back at work. "I went down to Bro. Clark's store to see when I should have to start again and had to commence right away..."⁵

James was very certain that marriage was the right path for them:

"Dearest one, I quite agree with what you say and I cannot see that our love for each other will come between us and God and the Truth. No dearest, I am sure that in the married state, with your help and your love that I can serve God better than in this present state and I believe I shall have a true help mate and companion in you. No, I do not think it is wrong to love each other as we do, for it is God who has planted this desire within us and it is in some people more than others and it is God who instituted marriage and Paul certainly never forbid it..."⁶

As the days went by, it became more and more obvious that Jim wanted Lizzie to be his wife. She was working hard as a seamstress and Jim let her know that he believed he could take care of her. "Yes, dearest there is never a day passes but I think of you and pray for you... I am quite anxious for you to come as soon as ever you think fit and I will send you a cheque to defray expenses and time. I think I am in a position to keep you without having to work such long hours at dress cutting."⁷

At the time he was writing these letters to Sarah, James was living with Bro. Peter Innes who "was well acquainted with Dr. Thomas, living near him in Illinois."⁸ He wrote to Sarah telling her, "We have spent some very profitable evenings together here at Bro. Innes's these last few nights. Have had a few interested people here. One was a Mormon and a few Adventists. We have been staying with Bro. Innes. [Also] Mr. Benjamin Wilson, author of the *Emphatic Diaglott* and one who spent considerable time with Dr. Thomas in Illinois, he is well up in the Truth and an able speaker, but he does not profess to be a Christadelphian. He differs on some points with us."⁹

Jim's opinion that he was the one for Lizzie was shared by Sarah's sister-in-law:

"First of all, I congratulate you upon being engaged (for I suppose you are) to Bro. Cheetham. I was most pleased for him to be with us and I think from what I saw of him, I think he is just the one for you. He will make a most kind and loving husband. I think and I do hope my thoughts will hurry to be facts... Dear Lizzie, I dare say you feel sometimes like I used to, and wonder whether it is God's will for you to be united to Bro. Cheetham for this present life whether it be long or short. It is a serious time of our lives and we only do right by considering things all round and above all make it a matter of prayer to our Heavenly Father, who alone knows all things, both past present and future and ask for his guidance in all our ways and we have the assuring knowledge that if we do so, He will direct

our paths. It is right that we should see that the one whom we accept to be our companion for life is earnest and endeavors to live in accordance with the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ and let us by no means be looking for something in him that is deficient in ourselves... you see my dear if we all make that rule, we shall not be far wrong for if wives make up their minds to serve God first and then their husbands and vice versa, why what a happy state of things would exist. Let's you and I dear see what we can do in that way."¹⁰

Lizzie to America

Jim's efforts to win Lizzie's heart had been successful. She was coming to America to marry Jim, leaving her friends and family behind for a new life in the new world. This was a momentous decision on her part because in the 1890's travel was very difficult and she would be truly separated from those who had meant so much to her. Even the trip to America would be a difficult decision because it was so arduous and even dangerous in those days.

Jim was elated with the news, but a little concerned as well. "So you are willing to come out here this year are you, God bless you dearest one, yes, I do prefer you coming sometime this year...how would September suit you or at the latest October... Do you think you will be truly happy when you come out here and are so very far away from your home and those who are very dear to you?"¹¹

Now that their marriage was set, Jim made plans for the future that included Lizzie. "...Yes my little one, I know that you love me very much, or you would not make the sacrifice and come all this journey alone, nothing but your great love for me would induce you to do this and I am so thankful to our Father that he has given me the love of such a one...I shall just be delighted to have my loved one with me. Won't we have some walks out in the Golden Gate Park and the Beach? The time is quickly passing dear one. Seven more weeks and then I shall have my own little one to love me, to kiss and caress."²²

Finally, the day had come for Sarah to begin her journey to California. Her ship, the Teutonic, left Liverpool, England for New York on October 23, 1892. It snowed that night as Sarah left England to marry James and begin a new life in the Golden



A painting of the Teutonic leaving Liverpool for New York by William Lionel Wyllie.

State. Her family worried that the sea passage would be rough and were elated to receive a letter from her when she arrived safely in New York.¹³

Just about the time Jim and Lizzie were getting married, Robert Roberts visited the Genders' home in England. "Last Sunday the 4th, we had a visit from Bro. Roberts, he



**Jim and Lizzie
on their wedding day**

came here to tea and to get a rest ... we were looking at your photo and they were agreed that Elsie [Sarah's young niece] is really like her aunt Lizzie, and the child talks about you and Jim in such a way, as though she understood a lot, and I believe she does, too. ... When Bro. Roberts saw Elsie he put his hand over her head and said 'there is the good ground for the good seed and if Christ should come now there will be little children like Elsie in the kingdom. It is a good head.' I was gratified to know the ground was good and with God's help and blessing we will strive to sow the good seed."¹⁴

Jim was 25 and Lizzie was 24 when they were married in Stockton California on November 10, 1892. Although James lived in San Francisco and Stockton was over 80 miles away, it was a more logical place for

their wedding than might be thought. There were several brothers and sisters in Stockton including James' good friend, Bro. W. B. Edmonston, whose idea it was for the wedding to take place there. James and Sarah would spend a lot of time over the years with the brothers and sisters in Stockton. In fact, Sarah, "who was an expert seamstress, spent many summers in Stockton sewing for the Learned family, who were Christadelphians, because James didn't make much money."¹⁵

It would be nice to be able to record that everything went smoothly for James and Sarah in their marriage. If we were writing a fictional story, that's how it would have ended. But our early brothers and sisters were real people who faced real issues in their lives, the same way we do today. There were a number of challenges faced by the Cheetham's in their married life, including the loss of a child (stillborn), a child who failed to embrace the truth, unemployment, serious health issues, and homesickness. But despite what might be called a difficult marriage at times, they loved each other and shared their lives together in Christ until James' death nearly 50 years later. During that time they raised a faithful daughter, Edith Rosamond Wade, who is the ancestor of 21 Christadelphians today. Of those 21, 16 attend California ecclesias while the rest are in Texas.¹⁶

To be continued...

Gordon Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. Personal letter from Sarah Genders to James Cheetham, January 7, 1892.
2. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, January 26, 1892.
3. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, April 20, 1892.
4. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, May 2, 1892.
5. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, May 20, 1892.
6. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, 5/26/1892.
7. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders 6/20/1892.
8. *Christadelphian Magazine*, 1893.
9. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, 7/21/1892.
10. Personal letter to Sarah from her Sister-in-Law July 28, 1892.

11. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders unknown date in fall 1892.
12. Personal letter from James Cheetham to Sarah Genders, September 20th, 1892.
13. Personal letter from Fred Genders to James Cheetham, September 29, 1892.
14. Personal letter from Sarah's sister-Elsie's mother- to Sarah, December 12, 1892.
15. Family history notes by Betty Hensley, Jan. 4, 2007.
16. Special thanks to Sis. Marion Sell, Sis. Elsie Simmons, Bro. Paul Wade (grandchildren of the Cheethams), and Sis. Debra Hensley, who helped in the research of this article.

Reflections

The Book of Mormon:

(7) Right First Principles are Essential to Getting it Right

In reading through the *Book of Mormon*, we noted a number of doctrinal areas where the teaching seemed to be correct according to Scripture. For example: baptism by immersion of believing, committed people; the necessity of a godly, moral way of life and the fulfillment of the Law of Moses in Christ.

However, when we tried to develop what we had thought were “correct” teachings, we found the major orthodox doctrines — immortality of the soul, the triune god and the supernatural devil — invariably intruded themselves. The only places where we can read an entire teaching and affirm it as Biblical is where whole sections of Scripture are being copied from the KJV and incorporated into the *Book of Mormon*.

Baptism

3 Nephi 11 is reportedly citing the instruction of Christ upon his visit to North America in 34 A.D. There Christ is quoted as commanding the necessity of baptism upon belief and repentance and baptism is defined as immersion in water:

v. 33 “And whoso **believeth in me**, and is baptized, the same shall be saved... (v.34) And who believeth not in me, and **is not baptized**, shall be damned... (v. 37) And again I say unto you, ye **must repent** and become as a little child, **and be baptized** in my name, or ye can in nowise receive these things.”

This immediately catches our eye as being sound teaching on the necessity of baptism after belief and repentance. We are further impressed by the definition of baptism as being immersion in water: “And then shall ye **immerse them in the water**, and come forth again out of the water” (3 Nephi 11:26). If that is all there was, we would say the book has it right. But when we read the whole context, (3 Nephi 11:24-27) which includes the baptismal formula, we find prominent inclusion of the trinity as was noted in the article on “God and Jesus” (Tidings, March-April, 2013, pg. 135).

We recall that the formula given is: “And now behold, these are the words which ye shall say, calling them by name, saying: Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, Amen...And after this manner shall ye baptize in my name; for behold, verily I

say unto you, that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost are one; and I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one.”

If the instruction had stopped with the phrasing, “in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” we could say this was coming out of Matt 28:19 and is acceptable. But when Nephi’s record goes on to repeat the formula in Trinitarian terms, we know that the false doctrine of the trinity has intruded itself into the teaching regarding baptism.¹

In this passage from 3 Nephi, we also note the indication that a person needed to be especially authorized to perform immersions. Such an idea is directly countermanded by the New Testament comments regarding the fact that Christ was not baptizing, but his disciples were (John 4:2) and Paul declaring he baptized few of the Corinthians (1 Cor 1:14-16). The Scriptural precedent is that there is no special authority required to validly baptize another person. The idea presented in 3 Nephi is an invention of the *Book of Mormon*.

Moroni is the other section of the *Book of Mormon* which has extensive comments regarding baptism. When he records: “And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end” (Moroni 6:3), we react that: “he has got it right, this requires a mature person who understands and believes the word and is committed to Christ’s commands”.

Chapter 8 of that book seems to confirm that Moroni’s ideas are correct: “And the first fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith unto the fulfilling of the commandments and the fulfilling of the commandments bringeth remission of sins...” (Moroni 8:25).

Moroni’s tress on the error of **infant baptism** is also correct. In chapter 8 Mormon, father of Moroni, laments: “he that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ” (Moroni 8:20). This is a clear rejection of infant sprinkling. And we may well react: “Good! He’s correct.”

Yet that phrase, “denieth the mercies of Christ”, causes us to read the whole context. When we do, we find the belief in **the immortality of the soul** has completely corrupted the teaching on baptism. Since little children are not able to have intelligent belief and repentance, and since baptism is a necessity for salvation, something must happen to a child’s alleged immortal soul if he/she should die before an age of understanding. Either “these must have gone to an endless hell” (Moroni 8:13) or “all little children are alive in Christ and also all they that are without the law. For the power of redemption cometh on all them that have no law...” (v.22). Rather than eternal torment, the choice taken in the *Book of Mormon* is **universal salvation** for all who die as children or who die in ignorance of the commands of God (see article #3 in this series, *Tidings*, Jan., 2013 pg. 26-27).

Considerations such as this reinforce our conviction that the first principles of truth must be understood and commonly believed to prevent a multitude of false teachings from intruding into the ecclesia of Christ.

Morality

Since the Book of Mormon includes 26 chapters of the Bible and paraphrases many other Scriptures (e.g. the ten commandments 2 Nephi 26:32; 1Cor. 13 on “charity” in Moroni 7:45-46), we would expect its teaching on right attitudes and behavior to be correct. Yet, even in this matter, when we read through sections of generally sound admonition the major false teachings keep cropping up. Here are some examples:

Mosiah 4:4-18 contains an excellent exhortation from king Benjamin. Yet integrated in it is the immortality of the soul and a fallen angel devil: “...(A person must) continue in the faith even unto the end of his life, **I mean the life of the mortal body**” (v. 6). This is good in opposition to the teaching of “once saved always saved”, but because of his belief that the person’s soul keeps living after death, he qualifies the life he’s talking about as that period during which the soul inhabits this mortal body.

In verse 14, the so-called supernatural fallen angel devil comes up: “ye will not suffer your children to...quarrel with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers, he being an enemy to all righteousness.” In this case, it seems like he goes out of his way to teach the personal devil.

Alma 7:23-25 contains a commendable exhortation to humility and true commitment and then spoils it with:

“And may the Lord bless you, and keep your garments spotless, that ye may at last be brought to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the holy prophets who have been ever since the world began...”

So the *Book of Mormon* teaches that immortal souls are **immortal**, they are pre-existent to their having a bodily life. Here is a hint of the idea that is developed by later “revelation” which becomes a feature of Mormon theology: no end and no beginning to the soul.

2 Nephi 26:30 contains a fine encouragement to true love: “the Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing.” However, the ‘Lord God’ is earlier (v. 24) defined as “[the one who] loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him”. This is the very confusion we elaborated in article # 5 of this series (*Tidings* March-April, 2013, pg. 136). According to the *Book of Mormon* Jesus is God the Father who died for our sins and then rose to life. Of course, how God could die, and who was God while God was dead, and who raised God from the dead are all quandaries left in the mists of theological mysteries.

At first reading, **2 Nephi 27** seems an exception to the foregoing examples. Here is sound condemnation of wicked behavior with no intrusion of false doctrine. But as we read along we begin to notice some familiar phrasing. No wonder! It is a copy of Isaiah 29 with a few inconsequential emendations. What is annoying is that there is no attribution to Isaiah, but the text is written as being the words

of Nephi. This, by the way, is not uncommon in the *Book of Mormon* and would normally be considered a shameful act of plagiarism.

The law of Moses fulfilled in Christ

In Mosiah 13:27-28, we find an expansive comment on the law said to be by Abinadi the prophet:

“And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet [dated 148 B.C.]; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no longer be expedient to keep the law of Moses. And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses”.

This teaching could almost come from a Christadelphian work if it were not for “the atonement, which God himself shall make.” From an earlier study (#5 pg. 136) we know what is in mind: the crucifixion of God himself.

Similar teaching is found in 3 Nephi 9:17-20 (dated as 34 A.D.) purporting to report the words of Christ in North America, “in me is the law of Moses fulfilled... and ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit”. And again in 3 Nephi at 15:8: “the law which was given unto Moses hath an end in me.”

In both chapters 9 and 15, however, the Christ who fulfilled the law introduces himself in purely trinitarian terms: “I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth and all things that in them are, I was with the Father from the beginning” (3 Nephi 9:15). It is evident Nephi is not speaking of the spiritual creation, but that of Genesis. “Behold, I am he that gave the law, and I am he who covenanted with my people Israel; therefore the law in me is fulfilled” (3 Nephi 15:5). Here the *Book of Mormon* has Christ giving the law on Sinai 1,500 years before the Lord Jesus was born. Belief in the trinity again intrudes itself.

Conclusion

Our original intent was to point out some fundamental teachings which are correctly stated in the *Book of Mormon*. As we have seen, there are some phrases which sound good when taken out of context. But such orthodox teachings as the immortality of the soul, the trinity and the fallen angel devil are so fundamental that they pervade the entire book. The result is the only places which have extended sections of right teaching are those sections taken directly from the Bible.

Next Lord willing: progressive revelation, the spirit and spirit gifts

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, MI)

Notes:

1. As noted in the March-April article, using the formula of Matt 28:19 has to it a very Trinitarian ring. This, of course, was not the case when used in the first century as the Trinity had not yet been developed as an apostate doctrine. But in our circumstances we should probably use the formula, “in the name of Jesus Christ” as was frequently used by the apostles — e.g. Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5, etc.

“And man created God...”, Part 1

In the mind of the child

When you are raising children you realize that you are, in fact, creating God in their minds. This goes on in every land in the world, in every culture and every language. Christians, Jews, Moslems, Hindus and Atheists are, to some degree or another, instilling in the children's minds an image of God. Or in the Atheist's case, non God. The Jesuits had an expression: “give us a child until he is seven and we will give you the man”. I expect that, for most of humanity, our paradigm of God and life is pretty well established by the time we are seven years old.

He who created us is aware of the effectiveness of training children. The Bible instructs us to “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*” (Prov 22:6). Moses told Israel to “*Gather the people together, men and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and their children, which have not known anything, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God...*” (Deut 31: 12, 13).

A concept of God can be created in a child's mind as the result of parents implementing the Bible's principles to the best of their ability, or indirectly. Sometimes this is accomplished subliminally, by the what they see and hear all around them in their homes and from their friends. However, the end result is that the child grows up with an image of God in his mind that is the end result of all the information he has received, understood and accepted. The child has a lot to do with this process as well. His (or her) basic personality impacts how he processes the incoming information. As he gets older he starts making decisions about what information he is willing to be exposed to. Without even thinking about it consciously, his mind will pick up and retain information that pleases him and select against facts that are opposed to conclusions he already holds, or conclusions he desires.

The grown child

And so the process continues. What begins with man creating God in someone else's mind in earliest childhood, transforms into a process wherein the grown child begins to create his own image of God in his mind. In the course of exercising his God given free will, he makes choices about what information he will seek out, and what criteria for acceptance he will apply. For example; we have a lower threshold for standard of proof regarding a statement that supports a conclusion we desire, than we do for a statement that supports positions opposed to our preferences. Information that reaches us about God that we do not wish to accept, must cross a much higher bar than that which we find pleasant. We have a natural aversion to information about the judgmental side of God, and a marked preference for that which emphasizes His love and mercy. And this selection process is both consciously and subconsciously at work in our lives all day, every day.

Mankind's self-centered desire to create God in an image of their preference, and to reformulate His teachings into what man wishes to hear, is at the basis of Paul's statement of condemnation.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, and being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish hearts was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things” (Rom 1:18-23).

The image of God

Extreme examples can help us understand an issue. However they can be dangerous in that they provide a too convenient way for us to excuse ourselves from any relation to the example. None of us have reworked our image of God into a golden calf that must be worshipped with fertility rites, but that is not to say we have not modified the image of God in our minds. This might be to suit our preferences or, in some cases, to answer a difficult question. By limiting, or even eliminating, our exposure to *“the whole counsel of God”* we set ourselves up as editors-in-chief of the Bible, and little by little this increases our control over the image of God in our minds and hearts.

There was an interesting statement made by a leading Catholic bishop in America some years ago, when the matters of birth control and abortion were raging controversies. The Catholic Church’s position was clear. Neither is allowed. End of discussion. The interviewer pointed out to the bishop that most sexually active Catholic women practice birth control. (Recent statistics indicate 98% do so.) It was also pointed out that leading Catholic political figures have voted for legislation allowing abortion. The bishop’s answer was unequivocal in condemning those actions but the term he used to describe those individuals is very telling. He called them “Cafeteria Catholics”. What an apt term to describe people who pick and choose what they are going to believe and obey, whether they are Catholics or Christadelphians or anyone.

We can all readily identify with the tendency in our own lives to pick and choose what we will deem as critically important in our own daily lives. Of course we can’t see it in our own situations quite as easily as we can see others making these kinds of choices but that is a matter for another day.

What we think and believe about God is the end result of many things:

- Our parental training
- Information about God that we have received from our environment consciously and subliminally,
- Our own reading of God’s word,

This is all molded and shaped by what we decide to accept or reject. These form our paradigm of God.

Our paradigm

There are times in our lives when we are forced to reexamine our paradigm. We learn new information, something happens to ourselves or our loved ones, a major catastrophe results in horrific death and destruction, and questions arise that we must grapple with.

When we are young we are inundated with new information. Everything is new. We see a man in a wheel chair that was born with a terrible disability. We lose a 13 year old friend to polio. We become aware of the suffering and starvation that exists in so much of the world. Untold millions of people who are trapped in miserable, and often painful, existence due to no fault of their own, and it shakes to the core the paradigm of God that the Bible seeks to present; that God is love. And then we must question and reexamine the image of God in our minds that has been created to that point.

There is probably no single question that has disturbed genuinely sincere people about God more than the challenge of reconciling a loving God with the tragedies in this world. This is complicated by the fact that God's offer of ultimate relief is so exclusive in its construct. Acts 4:12 in referring to the name of Jesus Christ states: "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*" What about the billions, literally, of people who are living today and have lived and died throughout the ages that have had no opportunity to even learn about Jesus Christ? Biblical principles set forth man's inherent nature as mortal versus immortal, and that he is totally dependent on being resurrected at the return of Christ when "*this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality*" (1Cor 15:53). When these two facts combine, extreme pressure begins to build up in some men's minds. And like flood water building behind the dike, it seeks ways around the obstacle.

There are many ways around the obstacle. A non-exhaustive list might include:

- **Atheism:** One can study evolutionary science and decide that it makes more sense than the seemingly irreconcilable issues of a loving God and a suffering world that is His creation. No God, no issue. Of course there is no future hope for anyone if we go down that path.
- **Deism:** The belief that there is a God force of some kind but it is not a person per se. A bit like the Hindu Brahman concept.
- **Agnosticism:** Whether or not there is a God is unknowable. I do not have a question about God's fairness to defend.
- **Reincarnation:** A "second chance". Ultimately we will all be saved.
- **Cafeteria Christianity:** I believe in the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ but I do not accept that the Bible is to be believed literally in some areas.
- **Christianicus Americus:** "I won't kill, rape, rob or steal and if there is a God, and He won't accept me in heaven, I don't want to worship Him anyway". It is a concept subliminally taught in old John Wayne westerns.
- **Ignore the whole question.** Go through life without questioning.

Human suffering

The problem of reconciling human suffering with an all-powerful, all-loving God is greatly exacerbated by the concept of an immortal soul. If every human born into this world already has immortality, what happens to their immortal souls when they die, if they have not accepted Jesus Christ and not been baptized into his name? After all, the Bible says that in his name is the only path to salvation after death.

Combine the erroneous belief in an immortal soul, with the doctrines that all immortal souls must eventually end up either in heaven or in eternal torment in hell, and the plot truly thickens. Now we have the picture of all who die outside of Christ being ineligible for salvation and therefore condemned to eternal torment in a burning hell. And while we might think a Hitler deserving of such a fate, we cannot get our minds around the idea that billions of men, women and children living (often in dire circumstances) should be sentenced to eternal torture in Hell. It strains our credulity...oft times to the breaking point. How can we reconcile this with the belief that God is both all-powerful and all-loving?

Job's friends had the problem of suffering worked out. There were only two alternatives. It was either the sufferers (Job's) fault, or it was God's fault in that He was punishing an innocent man. It could not be God's fault therefore it was the sufferer's fault. Job had but to come to grips with his sin, confess and pray to God, and he would be delivered. The possibility that there could be other causes never crossed their mind. Admittedly it is hard to allow for unknowns but minimally our limited knowledge in these areas should indicate a humble approach.

2,000 years later the same kind of thinking was current. *"And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man or his parents? that he was born blind?" (John 9:2).* In their question to Jesus they revealed that they too were troubled by the suffering of someone who was blind before he could do anything, good or bad. They were suggesting the possibility of his parents being at fault because, again, it could not be God. And certainly we are all aware of how parent's actions can curse and bless their children.

"Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3).

Jesus' answer to their question did not conform to the way they had framed the question. Their question offered only two possible alternatives, the third possibility being unthinkable. It was either the blind man's sin, or his parent's sins, because it could not be God's fault. Jesus' answer was that neither of their suggestions answered the case, but that God had His own purpose in the man's blindness.

We will consider some of the problems this answer leads to, and hopefully present an answer, in our concluding thoughts next month, DV.

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God is Spirit

The LORD our God is One LORD

Which is the greatest of first principle doctrine? Yes, that God is One! “*Hear O Israel, The LORD our God is One LORD!*” (Deut. 6:4) and so we show consent by attempting to seek One-ness with Him and within the community. Yet, at times we do not agree amongst ourselves on certain major doctrines. Where do we as individuals or as ecclesias stand on these questions which are first principles or, at the very least, impact upon these doctrines?

- Was and is Jesus a corporeal being?
- Is God Himself a corporeal being?
- Will there be a renewed temple and animal sacrifice in the Kingdom Age?
- Did Adam’s nature change **after** he sinned?
- Is Roman Catholicism the harlot system of Revelation?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, then you share beliefs with the pioneers, and more importantly, understand fundamental Biblical teaching. Often, these doctrinal issues don’t come up and we are surprised to hear that basic principles aren’t always understood. We seem to ignore that our community is often in need of re-learning their first principles. Even on lesser issues, are we emphasizing an agreement on the command to sisters to wear head coverings to the memorial service? Do we understand the necessity to marry in the One Faith? Are we acknowledging the fact that other so-called Christian denominations are apostate and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel? Or have we gone too far in the other direction in building too high a wall over much smaller issues?

The First Principle doctrines

This must be the time where we reaffirm the first principle doctrines, encourage study, discussion and re-learn what we found so precious when we first entered the waters of baptism. Consequently, as we continue to let issues within consume us, we neglect to spend our energies on combating the wickedness in high places and taking on the LORD’s controversy He has with the world and its pagan influences. In ‘Christendom Astray’, we read of our zealous brother Roberts’ exposure and renunciation of false Christianity, and we would do well to rally around the understanding which held our trail-blazers united. Let us read again this rich pioneer work and see how Biblically based and well explained it was and still is. The times call for preachers of righteousness, not an overemphasis inwardly.

We have a job to do brethren and it won’t get done pointing fingers. We have to be sure of the big picture and the details will take care of themselves. Even within our own community, we must admit that we can’t always answer a wrested Scripture. How then can we solve our community’s problems with more detailed issues? Where is the Ecclesia which will take the lead to organize study days again as we once did, where we go through the basics and re-establish the foundations of our faith? Our witness suffers if we don’t concentrate on putting emphasis on the need of the milk of the Word before we partake of the meat. Let us put our armor on

and renew our efforts into getting our own household in order so that we can once again become that city upon a hill to which all men are drawn. Though at times we are down-hearted and discouraged, let it fan the flames of zeal, that while the battle seems at its worst, we rise up to the challenge.

World War I Allied Supreme Commander, the French Marshal Ferdinand Foch is recorded as having sent this message during the second battle of the Marne, 1918: *“My centre is giving way, my right is in retreat; situation excellent - I shall attack!”*. In other words, like the famous sports’ idiom says: *“The best defense is a strong offense.”* Though our battle is spiritual, it is times like these that we need to rely upon God more than ever to win the victory against corruption, lies and superstition in a society ever in darkness. Let us take up our controversy with the world and hopefully the one that we have at home, by our faithful adherence to God’s Word, will take care of itself. We will at last have a concord amongst our communities and full agreement when the Kingdom comes, so until then let us mutually encourage our communities, as iron sharpens iron, and be busy preaching the Gospel to a world in darkness. May we all unite in the outreach work declaring to those in the highways and byways the wonderful message of this Book!

“Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee” (1Tim 4:15, 16).

Our intertwined beliefs

In my experience, it has been duly noted that doctrines of religion are distinctly related. When one believes the Truth, there is something very tangible about interconnect between all the tenets of the one true Faith. Each point has a direct correlation with the next. Hence the concept of an earthly promise imposes upon us the doctrine of a resurrection to life in a corporeal body upon this planet which, therefore, negates the need and the logic of heaven-going. The ‘immortal soul’ fallacy is also destroyed by this understanding and so is by extension the place of ‘hell-fire torments’ and thus the need for a supernatural devil. After all, where would he take up residence?! Over whom would he rule?

Of course, understanding who God is and our own (and our Lord Jesus’) human nature would also negate these man-made concepts. The greatest first principle that God is one, causes the trinity, pre-existence of Christ, idolatry, alien life-forms, evolution and a host of counterfeit ideas to dissolve.

On the contrary therefore, false ideas are also inter-connected and the lies (as in the case of Jehovah’s Witnesses) hinge upon another and so this house of cards just need their ‘three of clubs’ pulled out and the entire thing collapses, proving what a sham their concept of ‘Awake’ really is!

And so it is with no reservation that I declare that as long as JW’s or RC’s official church doctrine teaches something — then it is true that 99% of the time that their doctrine is absolutely wrong. I would even go so far as to say that if our community believes it, that it’s unknown to the rest of nominal Christendom and

it was a founding principle taught by the pioneers — then 99% of the time it can be deemed correct.

I say this without arrogance but with appeal. Our community's doctrines consequently, have never been appealing, savory or politically correct. Think about it: do the world's religions believe:

- The idea of our nature being the enemy
- That we conscientiously reject the bearing of arms
- That we cannot condone immorality and alternative lifestyles
- That our soul dies
- That Jesus is now a physical, material being with flesh and bone who will come again and wield unfathomable power?!

We can continue the list — but enough. I think not.

Just by the fact of the uniqueness of our teachings, we show that what makes us different happens to also make us right. This is just the blunt truth and I say it with humility.

The understanding of Ezekiel's Temple, the Corporeal nature of both God and Jesus puts us in an altogether different category, and we should be united in these. JW's do not accept the above nor ever will, as these Bible concepts would destroy them from within. I have personally seen our doctrines under-mined by a 'Watchtower' adherent and it caused much grief and mayhem. However, they must realize before it's too late that they too must 'come out of her my people' and reject these false RC ideas! Are we to then have league with any of these false systems? I can't for the life of me think of one doctrine with which we agree with the JW's.

And if we say that the Catholic Church is not the 'harlot', then who is?

If we let this vermin off the hook, as it were, then we find ourselves condoning the actions of her century's long corruption and anti-Christ teachings. Yes we must be in agreement with the Biblical principles for that is where our hope lies; and in not asserting these Bible doctrines as re-found by the pioneers, we draw further apart in the more detailed exposition of Scripture.

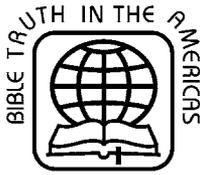
Let us base our collective body on agreement in these basic things and we would see a better solution to our divisions today.

And one more thing:

Can't we all see how not having the zeal like we once did in witnessing these things anymore has lead us to lose some of that understanding and so separate us?

- Who is on the LORD's side?
- Who will preach these things with me?
- What say you!? “

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Bible Mission News

Our Recent Bible Seminar Outreach Effort in Georgetown, Guyana

As we entered the month of April 2013, we had about 17 active students on our roll for the Birmingham 40 lessons Correspondence Course. Of these, three had just completed all 11 papers and several others were more than half way through and doing quite well. It became clear to us that the answers submitted, though academically correct, did not necessarily reflect a true grasp of the lessons by the students. We perceived the need for a seminar where many issues not challenged or questioned on the answer sheet, could be openly discussed under classroom conditions.

May 1st was identified for hosting such a seminar because it was a local holiday. We decided to deal with four critical subjects: 1) the Kingdom of God, 2) the Nature of God, 3) Is Baptism necessary? 4) The Devil and Satan. Each of these subjects was allotted one hour for presentation, including a period for questions.

Invitations were issued orally, mainly by personal telephone calls, and included an offer of lunch. All attendees were to be given folders, writing paper, pens, and a copy of the programme. About 16 were expected to attend.

On Wednesday morning, May first, we awoke to the chants of pouring rain and our faith sagged a bit as this could so easily affect attendance! Then we were greeted



Bible outreach seminar, May 2013

with repeated electricity outages, causing poor Joan to anxiously resort to candle light to complete cooking arrangements. However, by the grace of our Lord, these falters did not translate into failure!

Our first pick-up was octogenarian, Ms. Megan Richmond. When I approached her gate at 8:29 am, she was already standing there in her rain attire and waiting our arrival! Next was the door of a popular fast-food restaurant in downtown Georgetown. Delroy Daniels and Donette Lowenfield were equally prompt! As it all turned out, there were 13 participants out of the expected 16. Those who could not make it called to explain why it was no longer possible to attend. This level of attendance was considered very creditable in light of the turn in weather from the two previous sunny days.

We started promptly at 9:30 am with Bro. David introducing “The Gospel of the Kingdom of God” and trying to show it involves more than just the popular understanding of Christ dying on the cross, but a realization of God’s plan to fill the earth with His glory.

Next was “The True Nature of God” — the essential point made being that it is important to correctly identify the God we are worshipping as a ‘Unity’ and not a ‘Trinity’.

Our third topic was “The Devil and Satan”. There is no extra-terrestrial god of evil who once formed an opposition party before the throne of Almighty God in Heaven. The real slanderer of God lies within the powerful influence of our own selfish human thinking.

Finally, we emphasised “Baptism” as being necessary after coming to the knowledge of the Truth. Any previous immersion, according the Scriptures, is simply not valid. This was an important approach as many present already claimed baptism in another ‘faith’ and were doing the course to merely enhance their understanding of the Scriptures — not intending to make any significant change!

Intervening questions were few, but enlightening, and many expressed their appreciation for our putting on the seminar. Some asked that such exercises be hosted often. We are therefore thinking in terms of semi-annually.

At least one who had completed the 40-lesson correspondence course wanted to know “what next?” All those who complete this course get a copy of the book “Understand the Bible” and we now intend to move on to a higher level of instruction via other correspondence courses. Assessment is also being made with a view to commencing yet another First Principles Class as was done during 2010/2011.

We are most appreciative of the prayers of our Brethren and Sisters and for CBMC’s unstinting support.

*David and Joan Andrews,
Guyana*

Establishing an Ecclesia in the Faith Guadalajara, Mexico

One of the many challenges the Apostle Paul faced was building up and strengthening the converts in the first century, in order to establish ecclesias (Acts 16:5). All the Epistles aid our efforts today in this regard, especially the pastoral epistles of Timothy and Titus. The CBMA recently supported extra activities for the Guadalajara Ecclesia in Mexico to encourage the members in their growth, by means of a visit of brothers Phil Snobelen and Don Luff.

From February 14th to 19th extra Bible classes, a Breaking of Bread service and a public lecture took place — along with the usual daily Bible Readings at the Bible Centre every day at 3 pm except Sunday. The public lecture on the topic of “The Gospel of Prosperity — for the love of neighbor or the love of money,” was presented on Sunday, February 17 with 39 people present — 19 members and 20 adult visitors and youths in attendance.



Sidewalk view of outer entrance (two steel doors are open), vestibule for literature display and inner entrance doors.

Some of the 39 who were present on Sunday, Feb 17, enjoying a hot meal of goat meat stew and tortillas — yummy!



Some members have now been baptized for 8 years. There were eight baptisms in the 2012 and 28 baptisms in total since 2005. One of the goals is to develop unity

through service in the meeting. To this end, a two part study on stewardship took place, so as to stress the need for faithful and wise administration of all things in the home and as a result — good administration of all practical aspects of ecclesial life and spiritual ministration of “meat in due season” in the ecclesia as well.

It is also important to have a sure hope to help us all endure with patience until the Return of our Lord. To help the ecclesia develop a clear vision of the future, a talk was given on “The Work of the Saints in the Kingdom”. It was emphasized that in order to be Kings and Priests in the Millennium, we need to provide direction by means of the Word (as a King) and instruction (as a teaching priest) now. This will lead to proper worship in this age and result in divine worship in the future age during our Lord’s righteous rulership.

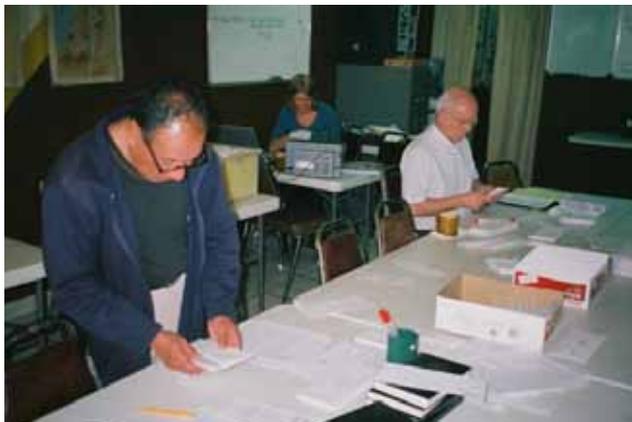
During the five days of special activities with the ecclesia, hospitality and a spirit of cooperative service was demonstrated by all. We pray for God’s richest blessing upon the efforts of the Guadalajara Ecclesia and that “with purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23) they may continue the process of establishing a strong ecclesia, and a lightstand for Truth in this Mexican city.

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



Six members of the Guadalajara Ecclesia with Bro. Phil Snobelen of the Vancouver Ecclesia on Monday morning Feb 18 after a Bible Class.

Folding correspondence course material and stuffing envelopes.



Bible Truth Campaign in Jamaica April 2013

From April 6th to April 14th the Christadelphian Bible Mission of Jamaica organized a number of ecclesial activities across the Island. They all started with a “Bible Truth Campaign” at the May Pen Ecclesial Hall on Saturday, April 6th. Advertising flyers were distributed prior to and on the Saturday for the two public lectures — *“The Gospel of Prosperity — for love of money or love of neighbor”* (dealing with the tithe appeal of many churches versus the Scriptural principle of giving) and *“The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth”* (as opposed to the false doctrines related to heaven and hell). A large banner was also displayed on the front of the Hall for the two weeks previous, and then moved to the street-side of a large marquee that was erected in front of the Hall for the activities.



May Pen Campaign banner hung on marquee in front of May Pen Hall .

Approximately 80 members and young people from nine of the 11 ecclesias arrived in the morning for flyer distribution. After a hot lunch, the first talk was presented at 3 pm with some regular visitors present. In the late afternoon, a session of the daily Bible Readings took place under the marquee followed by sandwiches and then the second lecture at 7:30 pm. Six first-time visitors were in attendance on this occasion, and several are continuing to come out to weekly meetings! It was a full and rewarding day, and some members had close to three hours of travel ahead of them, after the evening meeting, before they would arrive home. The other good news is that other ecclesias are now thinking of organizing preaching outreach this year as well.

The CBMC supported the activities during the nine days through the presence of Bro. Don Luff. From Sunday, April 7th, through to Friday, April 14th, Breaking of Bread Services and Bible Classes were held at the Spanish Town, Port Maria, Argyle Mountain, Round Hill and White Horses Ecclesias — as well as with members in isolation in the Norwood/Montego Bay area. The Argyle Mountain Ecclesia requested memorial table cloths and curtains for the six windows, which were supplied by the CBMC on April 6th. (See photo to the right.) They were very happy and appreciative! A CD player was supplied by the CBMJ a few months ago for



Members in attendance at Spanish Town Breaking of Bread and Bible class on Sunday, April 7th.

Members in attendance at Argyle Mountain Ecclesia on Wednesday, April 10th. Two other sisters were not present. Memorial table pictured below.



Most of those present for the White Horses Ecclesia Breaking of Bread Service on April 13th. Great kids — super quiet during the whole day!

hymns and we are now supplying CD's of exhortations and Bible classes for this and other ecclesias. The hospitality and fellowship enjoyed with the brotherhood across the Island was indeed heart-warming!

The other special activity was a Mutual Improvement Day held at the May Pen Hall on Saturday, April 13th. There were 34 members and young people from seven different ecclesias at the three sessions. The first session in the morning before lunch dealt with the importance of Bible reading, presiding guidelines and the purpose of an exhortation. During the second session after a nice hot lunch, brothers who were given chapters to read and topics for impromptu short talks during the lunch break, were called upon to put into practice what was reviewed in the morning session. The third session consisted of an actual (mini) Breaking of Bread Service which lasted about 45 minutes. This allowed brothers the opportunity to practice and improve on prayers, readings, exhortation content and presentation — as well as presiding. Although there were constructive comments made by those in attendance during the first two sessions, there were no remarks allowed following the Service — any comments could be made directly to the brother after the end of the third session. A table was set up for sign-up sheets for nine sample booklets and books on display. The items consisted of foundational works like Preaching the Truth (by William H. Brown), Preparing for Baptism (CBMUK version), Living the Truth and the Christadelphian Instructor. It was a very beneficial day for all — especially due to the fact that there was a good spirit of mutual respect and encouragement!

It was a rewarding time in Jamaica and God willing, we look forward to more of the same in the future!

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



**Most of those who attended the Mutual Improvement Day on
Saturday, April 13th at May Pen Ecclesia.**

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for current activities as well as to make US dollar donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact jeffandkellie@gelineau.org

Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC) supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and bequests for similar activity. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make Canadian dollar online donations.

Donations by cheque should be sent to Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada, V3R 0J7

CBMA Overseas Book Service welcomes gifts of used Bibles, reference books, and Christadelphian books. Please contact Jan Berneau, 1221 N. Whitnall Hwy., Burbank, CA 91505-2110.
Phone: 818-842-2868
jberneau@earthlink.net

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696, www.tidings.org

Christadelphian Tape Library. Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923.
Phone: 732-381-4590
Fax: 732-499-8415
christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Park Drive, North Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7, Canada

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2 or 521 Valmont Dr., Monrovia, CA 91016 or via website www.agapeinaction.com
Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com

Christadelphian Save the Children Fund provides Bible learning materials, personal items, and scholarships to needy mission areas.
www.christadelphianchildren.com

Christadelphian Heritage College c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457. For info email daconstiles@att.net

Karolyn Andrews Memorial Fund (KAMF) provides help in cases where brethren or families have been victims of persecution because of their faith. Checks in any currency to KAMF, c/o P.O. Box 87371, Canton, MI 48187-0371

Joy Fund, Inc., provides grants to ecclesias, individuals, and families to assist with basic needs. c/o Stan Newton, 6861 Skyview Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92647-2938

Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, email: jdhunter@gte.net

Christadelphian Care Line fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039

Alcohol Help Line fully confidential help for overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039

News & Notices

(Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month;
please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.
Word files or e-mail in text-only format are preferred.)

GRANITE STATE, NH

EDEN MCINTURFF, of the Granite State, NH Ecclesia, having given good confession of her faith, was baptized on Sunday, April 14, 2013.

Ralph Schwarz

GRANTS PASS, OR

It is with sadness that we report the falling asleep of our Bro. Rob Posey on March 11, 2013, after a lengthy struggle with cancer. Bro. Rob was a mainstay of the Rogue Valley Ecclesia in its functioning as well as at our annual Rogue River Bible School. He stayed the course in upholding the truth as a committed soldier of Christ. His enthusiasm and active smiling presence at the Bible school will be missed. His family in the truth includes: his wife, Pat; son, Robbie; daughter, Karen; and his sister, Sally Pursell, all members of our ecclesia here. His other daughter, Sis. Nicole Wisniewski, is a member of the Brant County, ON Ecclesia. Bro. Rob is also survived by his seven grandchildren. Now, he awaits the resurrection and that great hope of Israel.

We thank Bre. Fred Jahns (Seattle, WA) and Adam Ward (Jackson County, OR) for their words of exhortation. Presently, our ecclesia is making preparations for the Rogue River Bible School being held at the end of July 2013, with Bre. Jim Styles (Pomona, CA), Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON), and Stephen Bartholomew (Vernon Okanagan, BC). Also, there is a study day planned for October 5, 2013, on the topic, "The Man Moses", to be given by Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego, CA).

Our Christ told us that the fields are white, ready for harvesting. So for Southern Oregon, the Rogue Valley Ecclesia and the Jackson County Ecclesia have formed a joint Preaching Committee to develop and implement preaching strategies for this area.

Henry Wisniewski

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON

We welcome Sis. Hadassah Hammond who has transferred from the Cambridge, ON Ecclesia. We look forward to her company and encouragement as we wait for the coming of the Lord to establish his kingdom.

Martin J Webster

LARGO, FL

We have welcomed several visiting brothers and sisters around the Lord's Table since our last reporting and we thank all of them for their warm and loving support of our ecclesia. We also enjoyed a wonderful and exhilarating study weekend in November with Bro. Stan Isbell and his lovely sister-wife, Windy.

Also, we are very pleased to report that we have begun two children's Sunday school classes: Haley Davis, age 10; and Nate and Eli Davis, ages 5 and 3. They are the grandchildren of Bro. Troy and Sis. Annette Haltom.

Since early in 1970, the Largo Ecclesia has been a light stand and a pathway for those seeking the kingdom of God. Throughout the years we have welcomed all Christadelphians visiting Florida and have made many, many, many friends. We now find ourselves in a position where we are few in number and would like to ask those who may be considering relocation to think of this area. It has always been a great retirement location as well as offering many opportunities to establish a good family life in the Lord. Florida also has a wonderful year-round climate and beautiful beaches; employment opportunities also abound. Additionally, housing is relatively inexpensive compared to other large metropolitan areas. There is an abundance of educational and cultural resources available. We are also home to several professional sports teams and baseball spring training teams. Florida is growing and, Lord willing, we would like to grow with it! We feel there is no better location than Largo-Tampa Bay. If you are considering relocation, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Walt Dodrill

POMONA, CA

Since our last report we have witnessed the baptisms of a new brother and sister in our ecclesia, both from Iran. BAHMAN and SHAHLA SAHRANAVARD were baptized on January 27, 2013. They left all to come to this country and pursue their study of God's Word. May He bless and strengthen them as they now journey together toward His kingdom.

On November 17, 2012, we rejoiced with Bro. Michael Jennings and Sis. Alisa Markwith, both of our ecclesia, as they were united in marriage in the presence of a large number of witnesses. We pray God will bless their union and lead them safely to His kingdom.

It is a joy to announce the following additions to our Sunday school: Aidan was born to Bro. Matt and Sis. Erica Bessermin on April 7, 2012, and Blessing was born to Bro. Julius Ngong and his wife, Florence, on August 19, 2012.

We have lost several of our elder members recently. Bro. Homer Overton, husband of Sis. Beverly and father of Sis. Carolyn Spicer, fell asleep in Christ on September 20, 2012. Sis. Mabel Murray, mother of Sis. Suzan Rhoades, fell asleep in Christ on November 24, 2012. She was last a member of the Olympia, WA Ecclesia, but had lived in the Pomona area for many years. Sis. Naomi Cochran, mother of Sis. Diane Mobley and Sis. Robin Rakich, and wife of the late Bro. Bob, fell asleep in Christ on December 10, 2012. She was most recently a member of the Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia, but had been a longtime member of the Pomona Ecclesia in the past. Sis. Helen Jennings fell asleep in Christ on January 26, 2013. She was the wife of Bro. Bill, and mother of Bro. David, Bro. Steven, and Sis. Linda Coe. Our brother and sisters will be greatly missed, but we pray their sleep in the Lord will be short.

We rejoice to report the reinstatement into fellowship of our Sis. Cindy LaFavor on November 11, 2012. May God bless, strengthen, and guide her in the days ahead. Finally, we must report that Sis. Carolyn Spicer is no longer in fellowship with us.

David Jennings

THOUSAND OAKS, CA

During the past few months we have been pleased to welcome many brothers and sisters from our neighboring California ecclesias around the table of our lord. In addition, we welcomed brethren and sisters from afar including: Henry and Sharon

Wisniewski (Rogue Valley, OR); Everett and Anne Creekmore (Mendocino, CA); Paul and Belinda Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI); Ron and Barbara Kidd (London, ON); Tom and Sarah Muniz (Jackson County, OR); and Janet McDonald (Paris Avenue, OH).

Our thanks go out to Bro. Manny Rodriguez (Reseda, CA) and Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA) for their exhortations and afternoon classes.

Again, we were blessed to be able to hold our annual Day with the Word this year. Our subject was "The Unity of the Faith" and we thank Bro. Ron Kidd for his classes at the study and for his exhortation and classes he shared with us during his visit. We really appreciate our brothers speaking for us on these occasions as we endeavor to be ready for our Master when he returns.

We are also pleased to announce the arrival of a new potential Sunday school scholar as Bro. Aaron and Sis. Molly McDonald had a little baby girl, Evelyn Hope, on Mar. 5, 2013. We are thankful that all are doing well as our ecclesia continues to grow.

Tom Graham

TORONTO CHURCH STREET, ON

We are saddened to report that Bro. James Brian Henry fell asleep in the Lord on April 27, 2012, in his eighty-fourth year. Bro. "Brian" was baptized in Toronto on September 8, 1946. Our sympathies are extended to his wife Eleanor, his children, and grandchildren. We are also saddened to report that Bro. Keith Thomasson fell asleep in the Lord on September 14, 2012, in his seventy-eighth year. Bro. Keith was baptized in Coventry, England in 1961 and emigrated to Canada in 1966. Our sympathies are extended to his wife, Sis. Anne, and his sons, Matt and Bro. Neil. Lastly we are saddened to report that Bro. Arnold Smith fell asleep in the Lord on September 29, 2012, in his ninety-seventh year. Bro. Arnold was baptized in Toronto on June 7, 1942. He was one of the last surviving Christadelphians who as a conscientious objector to war was sent to the Shawinigan Lake Camp on Vancouver Island. There he, along with others of like precious faith was required to build a road through dense bush. Our sympathies are extended to his wife, Sis. Anita, and his nephew, David Potts. All our brothers were long time members of our ecclesia and demonstrated a good example to us of dedication to the things concerning the kingdom of God, being active participants in the ecclesia until age and illness forced them either into hospital or retirement homes. We look forward to the great day when we will be able to rejoice together with them once again in the kingdom of God.

We are pleased to report the baptism of EDITH LEIGHTON into the saving name of Jesus Christ on July 8, 2012. Sis. Edith was a student at our Learn to read the Bible Effectively seminars.

We wish to thank all the brothers who have assisted our ecclesia with exhortations, lectures and Bible classes over the past year. The ecclesia is most appreciative of their labour in the Lord for us.

William Perks

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting we have welcomed around the table of our absent Lord and Saviour the following brothers and sisters: Ed Newton (Verdugo Hills, CA); Stan and Eunice Newton (Pomona, CA); Linda Jones (Los Angeles, CA); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner (North Houston, TX); Jorge and Julie Garcia (Houston, TX); Theresa Mielke and Shannon Mielke (West Houston, TX); Gene and Seba Fay Farley, and Amanda Buck

(Austin Leander, TX); Becky Goodwin (East Texas, TX); and Andrea Banta, Morgan Wolfe, and Seba Wolfe (Abilene, TX). We thank Bre. Stan Newton, Ed Newton and Jorge Garcia for their words of comfort and exhortation.

In October we were pleased to welcome Bro. Peter and Sis. Shirley Weller (Cumberland Adelaide, Aust.). We thank our Bro. Peter for his Bible class on, "Healing Blind Men Twice".

Over the weekend of March 29-31, 2013, we held our annual spring gathering at the T4C Camp in Freestone, TX. Our class leader was Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD) and his topic for the weekend was, "Valued of God", a very enlightening study of the love and dedication of Paul's fellow laborer, Timothy. We all benefited from Timothy's example of discipleship in very difficult times as he overcame countless obstacles in the service of Christ's body! We're certainly pleased that Sis. Julia was also able to make the trip.

Our ecclesia is pleased to welcome Sis. Janet Sunday from the Aba, Nigeria Ecclesia, and thank our heavenly Father for such an enthusiastic new member.

John A. Clubb

Halifax, Nova Scotia is the oldest ecclesia in Canada

On Friday before the 4th Lord's day in September [1851], we set out from Richmond on our journey to Halifax in Nova Scotia, to which place we had been invited by a friendly community, styling itself "The Christian Association"—a name signifying a company of professors claiming to be christians. This is the character assumed by the congregations of all sects, except the Jews; and is therefore not distinctive. But the congregation in Halifax styles itself "the Christian Association," from which it may be inferred that whatever are the pretensions of other Haligonian assemblies, that meeting at the Harmonic Hall is the only genuine one in Halifax—its own members being judges. This is high ground, and the assumption should operate as a motive to superior excellence, which, if not yet attained, will, we hope, be the laudable ambition of every one there who has the interests of the truth at heart.

Having been invited, then, we departed as we have said, on an exploring expedition. "Oh! go to Nova Scotia with you," is vernacularly about as kind a wish as "Go to Jericho!" We had no very exalted ideas of things going by the name of Nova Scotia. We had heard that the British steamers touched there on their way to Boston — a sort of "touch and go" once a week in summer; and that an eccentric sort of judge, one Sam Slick, of the Haliburton species, of the genus homo, and class mammalia, applied the law when thought expedient and safe among the fogs and fisheries of the inhospitable north: — but what mammoth steamers and literary judges, things pertaining to the civilized world, could want in the modern Jericho, we could not pretend to say! We concluded, however, that we would go and explore the country, and see how the land lay, if there were any save when the tide were out.

Thomas, J. *Herald of the Kingdom* 1852 p 78.

Minute Meditation

Are we spiritually nourished?

There is a rather sad story about a young man in England who wanted to immigrate to America. He saved his money and finally accumulated just enough to buy a one way fare on a ship sailing out of Southampton for New York. Each day at mealtime he would walk the empty decks and look longingly in the windows of the dining room as the other passengers were enjoying their meal. He would then go back to his cabin and eat one of the crackers he was rationing so that they would last the whole trip across the Atlantic Ocean.

He was standing on the deck as the ship slowly sailed into New York Harbor, and standing beside him was one of the bus boys from the dining room, who commented that he had never seen him in the dining room for the whole trip. The young man explained that he only had enough money to pay for the fare and had none left over for food. The bus boy was surprised, and explained that the fare for the trip also included three meals a day. Due to ignorance this young passenger had starved the entire way when he could have eaten well.

Consider on a spiritual level how many in the world today are starving for the spiritual food that the Lord has provided and has made freely available to us. We are all fellow travelers on the road through life, and God has not left us without the sustenance we need to satisfy our hunger for spiritual meaning and purpose in our lives. How sad that so many are dying of spiritual malnutrition because they do not pay attention to the divine wisdom found in our Bibles. They are unaware of God's generous offer which the prophet Isaiah expresses so clearly: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

God wants to feed us with the spiritual food that is able to make us wise unto salvation. He wants us to have a better life now, and eternal life in the future. Jesus preached of life-giving bread, "This is the bread which has come down out of heaven....he that eats this bread shall live for ever." Yet most of the world is dying of spiritual starvation because they lack this godly food and are don't know enough to accept God's gracious offer to come and eat.

How do we begin? By reading the Bible. One approach is by a daily reading planner of three portions per day, starting in Genesis, Psalms and Matthew, which provides an assortment of Scriptural themes each day, and ensures we cover the entire Bible in a year. We may not understand everything at first or absorb it all. In the book of Hebrews, we learn that those who are beginners in learning about God's ways must start at a basic level, which is compared to a baby being fed milk. "You again need to have someone teach you the rudiments of the first principles of

the oracles of God. You have come to need milk, and not solid food.” Later, as our understanding grows, we can digest more of the meatier aspects of God’s message.

How can simply reading the Bible change us? The answer is found in the Bible: “For the word of God is living and full of power, and is sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through and making a division even of the soul and the spirit, the bones and the muscles, and quick to see the thoughts and purposes of the heart.” We understand ourselves, our world, and our lives differently when we have been exposed to the divine perspective. Just as the food we eat is absorbed and becomes part of our bodies, the spiritual food will be absorbed and we will be changed.

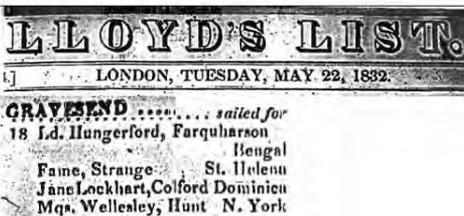
There was a time when the disciples of Jesus brought him food and said, “Master, eat.” He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.” The disciples wondered, “Has anyone brought him anything to eat?” Jesus’ answer? “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me, and to finish His work.”

This work should be our work also; this source of food should be where we look for sustenance. If it is our will to do the will of our heavenly Father, then we will come to His word and be fed with the spiritual food God offers us within the pages of His book. As we grow in understanding, we, like our Master, will be eager to do the will of God and to share the gospel by feeding others who are under-nourished in spiritual matters.

Paul expresses these desires beautifully in his prayer, “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Imagine, that we might be filled with the fullness of God! Paul continues his prayer, “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory.” Imagine, the Lord wants to bless us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think! Imagine, we can receive these blessings by feeding ourselves with the Word of God and acting on it according to His will! With Paul may we all say, “I have all, and abound: I am full.”

Robert J. Lloyd



John Thomas sailed from London (Gravesend) on Marquis of Wellesley on May 18, 1832. (Most biographies have date as May 1st).

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

(Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable.)

JUNE 2013

- 1-2 NYC Fraternal** with Bro. Nathan Badger. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul at yerubbaal@yahoo.com.
- 1 Simi Hills, CA Study Day**, "Jesus — The Amazing Son of God" by Bro. Devon Walker (Milnsbridge, UK). Studies begin at 9:30 AM. For all travel and hospitality concerns, contact Bro. Levi Gelineau, Leviandjessica@gmail.com.
- 16-19 Bible Reading Marathon** at Simi Hills Ecclesia, Simi Valley, CA. Non-Stop Bible Reading from Genesis to Revelation with live broadcast on *BibleReadingMarathon.com* beginning 2:00 PM PDT, June 16. For further information, email Bro. Doug Hawthorne *Cindy.and.Doug@Juno.com*.
- 19-23 North Houston, TX Children's Bible Day camp**. The topic will be "Keys to Unlocking Visions of the Kingdom"! Please visit <http://nhchristadelphians.org/bdc/bdc.htm> to register or volunteer to help out!
- 21-23 New York Metropolitan Sister's Retreat** at The Homewood Suites, 2801 Papermill Road, Wyomissing, PA. Speaker: Sis. Borgette Charles (Albany, NY). Topic: "Sisters role in the Ecclesia — A new beginning". Contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson (718) 881-8705, email: averilpsm23@juno.com or Sis. Patricia Hinds (917) 864-3867. Download registration forms at: <http://manhattanchristadelphians.com/#/sisters-retreat>.
- 23-29 Rocky Mountain Bible School** at Steamboat Springs, CO. Speaker will be Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "The God of the Fallen," Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON): "To Him That Overcometh — Overcoming Ourselves," and Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, UK): "The Exodus Deliverance." Contact info: www.denverchristadelphians.org.
- 29-July 5 Terra Nova Bible School** will be held in Terra Nova Park, Newfoundland and Labrador. Speakers are: Bro. Peter Tretola (Brighton, Adelaide, Australia), and Bro. Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Road, ON). Subjects to be announced later. Please visit our website www.terranovabibleschool.com. Contact Bro. Gary Hynes, 32 First St., Mount Pearl, NL, A1N 1X8; telephone 709-747-2750; e-mail info@terranovabibleschool.com.
- 29-July 7 Mid-Atlantic Bible School** at Shippensburg University in Shippensburg, PA. The theme this year is "Ye are my witnesses saith the LORD that I am GOD" — Isaiah 43:12. The Youth Program theme will be "The Nation of Israel – God's Witness." The speakers are Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, Australia) "Encounters With Christ: Minor Characters of the Gospels" adults and teens; Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, UK): "Powerful Points from Prison" and "Romans: The Gospel of Salvation" to the teens. Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON): "Yahweh Will Roar from Zion" and "Elijah's Preparation" to the teens. Contact information at <http://www.christadelphians.net/macbs/>.
- 30-July 6 California Youth Conference**. An exciting week of study and fellowship for ages 17 (or baptized) and up. The theme is "Return of the Exiles." The speaker will be Bro.

Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA). Register at www.youthconferencecalifornia.com. Contact info: Bro. Jason Hensley jason.n.ruthie@gmail.com.

JULY 2013

7-14 Toronto East, ON Prepare to Preach 2013. Are you prepared to Preach? P2P (Prepare to Preach) 2013 offers a variety of activities, and presentations from experienced missionaries and representations from various Christadelphian organizations to encourage, enable and empower missionary work at home and abroad. Contact Info: www.christadelphians.ca/torontoeast/p2p.

7-13 Southwest Bible School at Schreiner College, Kerrville, TX. Speakers Bro. Peter King (UK): "Joshua: The Servant of the Lord," teens: "Gems in Dusty Corners"; Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego County, CA): "Philippians," teens: "What Does Jesus Christ Have to Do With Me?"; and Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "To Be Spiritually Minded is Life and Peace," teens: "Our Spiritual Exodus." Register with Bro. Shannon Strickland, 9305 Nancy Ln., Tomball, TX or shannonjeh@att.net www.swcbs.com.

13-20 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA) Adults/Teens: "Family Life Lessons from Genesis"; and Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) Adults: "Peter's Epistles: Trials Within, Trials Without," Teens: "Far Above Rubies — Women of Virtue." See the web site: www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com.

20-28 Midwest Bible School at Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers are Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Straight and Narrow Steps"; Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "Proverbs"; Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas, TX): "Parables of the Kingdom." Registration contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Dr., Apt. 108, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

21-27 Pacific Coast Bible School, Idyllwild, California. Two of the speakers will be Bro. Ron Cowie (Wilston, Brisbane, Australia) and Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego County, CA). For further information, please contact Jeff Gelineau 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065. E-mail: mail@gelineau.org. Register at www.californiabibleschool.org.

27-Aug 3 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp. The speakers will be Bro. Andrew Johnson (Kings Norton, Birmingham, UK): "Travelling With Jesus"; and Bro. Mark Vincent (Stirling, Scotland, UK): "Leviticus — The Heart of the Law." More details on website www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Alex Browning at jabrowning@rogers.com or 416-284-0290.

27-Aug 4 Eastern Bible School at Connecticut College, New London, CT. Theme: "Surviving Perilous Times." Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor MI): "Hezekiah and Israel: The Odd Couple" (adults) and "Miracles" (teens); Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford ON): "Surviving Perilous Times" (adults) and "The Wise Shall Understand" (teens); Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, New Zealand): "Treasure in Earthen Vessels" (adults) and "In The Beginning" (teens). Contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501 or cindynevers@verizon.net.

28-Aug 3 Rogue River Bible School. Topics and teachers are: Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): "Night Visions of Zechariah" (Zechariah 1-7); Bro. Stephen Bartholomew (Vernon Okanagan, BC): "Moses, the Servant of God"; Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "Two Men Went Into the Temple to Pray" (Isaiah 6). Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida for further information, yoshidafamily@clearwire.net. For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey, robandpatposey@gmail.com.

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AUGUST 2013

10-16 Whatshan Lake Bible School held at the Whatshan Lake Retreat near Vernon, BC. Speakers are Bro. Ken Styles: "Prophecies of the Last Days"; Bro. Stephen Whitehouse: "The Rise and Fall of King Saul"; Bro. Carl Perry: "Be Ye Perfect." Register online at <http://wlbs.okanaganchristadelphians.org>. Contact: Bro. Skip Bartholomew 250-503-0191.

17-23 Winfield Bible School, Winfield, BC. The theme will be "Be of Good Cheer, I Have Overcome the World." Speakers are Bro. Jason Hensley; Bro. Gary Cousens: "To Him That Overcometh — Overcoming Ourselves"; Bro. Dafydd Jenkins: "Both Lord and Christ — The Gospel of Luke." Contact Bro. Don Zantingh 250-545-5988 or donzantingh@hotmail.com or Bro. Harold Cawston 250-478-0343 or hjcawston@gmail.com.

17-24 Manitoulin Youth Conference at Manitoulin Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island, ON. Speaker: Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilton, Brisbane, Australia): "Genesis." Register online at www.youthconference.com.

24-30 31st Annual Vancouver Island Bible Camp. Theme: "But the just shall live by his faith" (Hab 2:4). Speakers are Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): adults "Training to Become Equal to the Angels," and teens "James: Becoming Doers of the Word"; Bro. David Green (Sussex, NB): adults "The Spirit of the Lord," and teens "How Small is Your God?"; and Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): adults "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord," and teens "What Would You Do?." Registration info contact Sis. Karen Grover e-mail: karengrover@shaw.ca. Website: www.vibiblecamp.com.

SEPTEMBER 2013

14-15 Paris Avenue, OH Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Stan Isbell (Houston North, TX). Contact Bro. Everett Muniz at 330-497-2811 or everettmuniz@gmail.com.

OCTOBER 2013

5 Grants Pass, OR Study day. The speaker will be Bro. Joseph Palmer (San Diego, CA). His topic is "The Man Moses".

12-13 Sussex, NB Study Weekend. The speaker will be Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC).

12 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. The speaker will be Bro. Nathan Badger.

NOVEMBER 2013

2-3 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Road beginning at 10:00 A.M. Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas Ecclesia), Theme: "Signs of John (Law and Grace in Miracles)". Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at (219) 762-2704 or jkb8275@comcast.net.

9 Victoria, BC Fall Study Weekend. The speaker will be Bro. Chris Sales and his subject will be "Pictures of Redemption." Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csl.ca.