

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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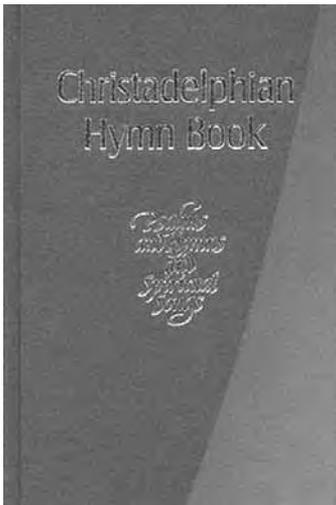
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Christadelphian Hymn Book in Electronic Format

The Christadelphian Office recently made the following announcement.



"We are delighted to announce that electronic versions of the Christadelphian Hymn Book 2002 is now available for download from our website. There are two formats, a words and music pdf version for £8.00 and a words only version in ePub format for £6.00. These should be purchased from our website www.thechristadelphian.com." (This converts to about \$12 and \$9).

We are making this known, as another electronic version has been quite widely circulated, which violates the copyright, not only of the Christadelphian, but also that of many of the hymns and tunes. This new version should be purchased by all individual brethren and sisters (and others) who wish to use an electronic version of the familiar green hymn book.

Editorial

Fellowship

“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”
(James 5:16).

Introduction

It is probable, if you read the title, that

- 1) You expect the subject of this editorial to be a further discourse related to the relationship between fellowship, our beliefs, and the resultant boundaries of our fellowship.
- 2) You wonder what the cited verse has to do with the topic. Perhaps it concerns the requirements for those in another “fellowship” to join our own.

Wrong on both counts, which is perhaps troublesome. Fellowship has become such a technical term, that we have become almost blinded to the enormous help we can gain from our association with those in our ecclesia, and with the wider brotherhood. The context of the passage in James is the way we can support each other in the trials we all face, whether the “sickness” be physical, mental, or some combination of the two.

It is a sad reflection, perhaps, of the state of our community when I have a folder on my computer called “fellowship”, but 80% of the 100 articles and probably 300,000 words are associated with unity, boundaries, and divisions. However, the vast majority of scriptural references to fellowship, particularly in widest sense, have to deal with the benefits we obtain from those with whom we associate in our walk towards the Kingdom.

And, of course, in the words of Paul:

“I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph 4:1-6).

Our fellowship with each other is possible through the fellowship we each have with the Lord Jesus and his Father. *“and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ”* (1John 1:4).

Practical applications

The New Testament abounds with exhortations and counsel to truly join together: So let us look at a few characteristics of practical fellowship:

Financial support (2Cor 9:13)	Partnership (Gal 2:9)	Faith (Philemon 6)
Teaching/learning (Acts 2:42)	Prayer (Acts 2:42)	Submission (1Pet 5:5)
Kindly Affectioned (Rom 12:10)	Love (1John 4:7 etc.)	Admonish (Rom 15:14)
Bear Burdens (Gal 6:2)	Edify (1Thess 5:11)	Forbear (1Thess 3:5)
Have Compassion (1Pet 3:8)	Assemble (Heb 10:25)	Confess (1Thess 5:11)

Space permits the consideration of only a few of the ways true fellowship is expressed. So let us reflect on confession, assembling together, and teaching or learning

Confess

“Confess your faults one to another.” There are several other Scripture passages, in addition to this one, where confession is enjoined. For example, in the Old Testament we read *“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy”* (Prov 28:13). Again John says, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1John 1:9). The world around us perhaps understands this in two ways:

- The sort of confession practiced by the Catholic Church, whereby one describes one’s sins to the priest, and he would, according to the dogma of the Church, have the power to forgive, usually also imposing some sort of penance.
- The occasional public confession of wrong doing by prominent religious leaders, seeking public forgiveness for their sins.

Neither of these ideas have any roots in the New Testament. The way I understand it is indeed closely related to fellowship. The confession of faults should indeed be part of your relationship with the ecclesia, but in particular with one member with whom you are particularly close. Paul directs us to *“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”* (Gal 6:2). In quiet, private dialog between two members of the ecclesia, in the total confidence that nothing of what is discussed will ever be revealed, the faults and burdens we bear are shared, and the law of Christ is fulfilled. A burden shared is in practice more than halved: as we confess our sins in prayer, and in confidence one to another, surely *“he [Christ] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1John 1:9).

This type of dialog should be part and parcel of our fellowship: who better to trust but one who shares our faith and our hope? It is all the more sad if we feel we cannot trust anyone in our ecclesia: for *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* (1John 1:8).

Assemble together

As the writer to the Hebrews says *“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching”* (Heb 10:25).

It is impossible to be in fellowship only with yourself, and those who decide to go into “isolation” for perceived errors in our community, are missing one of the main points of our discipleship. As we often stress, one cannot be in “isolation” and

be part of the main Christadelphian community. You can be isolated by distance from the desirable frequent interaction with your brothers and sisters, but you still remain members of an ecclesia, whether it is the one that baptized you, the nearest ecclesia, or the one you are most connected too. There is no “in isolation” section of the various address lists in our community. There might be “associate members”, but such ought to be regarded as ones with whom the contact is less frequent because of distance or frailty, not ones isolated from the ecclesia. (And it is the whole basis of our “ecclesially based fellowship”, whereby we are welcomed by others because of our association with known established ecclesias.) I, personally, have been pressured several times into relocating to areas of this vast continent devoid of established ecclesias, but have always declined such pressure, sometimes thereby being faced with employment difficulties. But I myself would always take the same attitude, trusting that our Father will not test us beyond our endurance.

Teaching and learning

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). Thus the three thousand who were moved by Peter’s address continued: not only in direct fellowship and prayer, but in the apostles’ teaching, as they listened to the personal accounts of Jesus’ words delivered by the apostles. They had already been baptized: as observant Jews they already had much of the gospel: the Hope of Israel, the promise of a Messiah, and the elevated moral principles of the Law. But this was not enough: they were hungry to learn more, and in company with their fellow believers they truly devoted themselves to the words of Jesus and the instruction of the apostles.

It is perhaps a little sad in these days, that we have the tendency to instruct well in preparation for baptism, but often have no systematic practice of post-baptismal instruction. The breadth and depth of the message of Christ and the purpose of God is only begun to be explored before baptism. It is perhaps a pity that what used to be an opportunity to hear the first principles expounded and elaborated in our “Evening Lectures” has in many ecclesias fallen into disuse: not only for the hearers, but for those who taught. It is often said that there is no better way to learn than to teach: it demands a level of understanding and organization that is hard to acquire in any other way.

We have to remember indeed that we are all part of the one body, and all parts have their own gifts, roles, and responsibilities. It is one of the vital parts of our community that we spread the burdens of teaching so widely, so that we might all learn the Truth in part by teaching: in so doing, we not only instruct one another, but the more especially ourselves

Conclusion

I have only scratched the surface of the true breadth and depth of what our fellowship truly means. It is not about defining the boundaries, but involving ourselves in the fellowship with the Father and His son Jesus Christ through all that is involved in true Christian Fellowship.

Peter Hemingray

Exhortation

Second Chance

One Sunday in our ecclesia, a brother spoke on the topic, “Fun with Genealogies”. The exhortation was rather memorable for several reasons. First, the chapter read as an introductory reading was 1Chron 2 — 55 verses of names. In all the 1,000s of meetings I’ve attended I’ve never heard one of those chapters read in public. The reader was deservedly complimented on doing a good job.

Then there were a couple of points in the exhortation that stood out. It was noted that Caleb, the Gentile, had 12 gentile sons. This is parallel to Jacob, “Israel”, having 12 Jewish sons. It’s a splendid testimony to the fact that the Gentiles always had an opportunity for salvation even during the 2,000 years of what we might call the Jewish era.

Then the exhorter drew our attention to a number of points involving Heman, the great musician. One of the references cited regarding Heman was 1Chron 6:33, 34 where he is identified as a grandson of Samuel (the KJV has “Shemuel” but other versions — NKJV, NIV, NLT, etc. have “Samuel”). This reference set off an interesting line of thought which ended in seeing a great exhortation from Samuel.

Scripture notes two bitter disappointments in Samuel’s life which were followed by a second chance.

Some background

There’s no doubt that the “Samuel” of 1Chron 6:33 and the “Samuel” of 1Sam 1, who became the last judge of Israel, are the same person. In both cases the genealogy goes “Samuel the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Eliel, the son of Toah (“Tohu” in 1Sam 1), the son of Zuph.

And there’s no doubt Samuel was a mighty man of faith. He’s listed in the roster of the heroes of faith in Heb 11:32 and he is grouped with another great servant of God in Jer 15:1. Jeremiah is told that, “*Though Moses and Samuel stood before me...*” to appeal Israel’s case, God would not change his mind about His punishment of the nation.

Failure of Samuel’s sons

Despite his own great faith, however, Samuel’s sons were abject failures. He had hoped they would follow in his footsteps and was mentoring them to this end:

“And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of the firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abiah: they were judges in Beersheba” [Beersheba was in the far south of the country and would be a good first assignment]. “And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment” (1Sam 8:1-3).

Of course each person is responsible for his/her own life, and can't blame his sinful behavior on his parents. But any father, especially a giant of faith, would be heartsick at having such sons. With his wife he would lament: "What did we do wrong? We set them a good example." Samuel certainly did that for at the end of his life he could say to Israel: "*Behold here I am: witness against me before the LORD and before his anointed...whom have I defrauded?...or of whose hand have I received a bride?...and they said, 'Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand'*" (1Sam 12:3-4).

He could perhaps further lament to his wife that: "We surrounded them with spiritual friends". He could say this because he had established a school of the prophets and lived at it (1Sam 19:18-20). In our day this would be equivalent to seeing our children were involved in Sunday school, CYC, young people's gatherings, Bible schools and ecclesial activities of all kinds. Yet, despite all of this encouragement, Samuel's children were abject spiritual failures.

Samuel's first second chance

But Samuel had a second chance with a grandson and even with his great-grandchildren. As we noted, in 1Chron 6 we find "Heman" listed as a grandson of Samuel. In 1Chron 25, Heman is one of the three men David appointed to be leaders of the new order of music that David arranged for worship of the Lord God (1Chron 25:1 note also 2Chron 23:18; Ezra 3:10).

This aspect of service was more than simply directing a choir or leading an orchestra. They "prophesied" with their music. That is they provided instruction in the commands, statutes and principles of God through their Psalms and musical accompaniment (1Chron 25:2-3). In fact, Heman authored Psalm 88. So this grandson of Samuel was a prophet used by God to write part of scripture. Further Heman was the "*king's seer in the words of God to lift up his horn*" (1Chron 25:5). What a contrast Heman was to his father and how Samuel must have rejoiced to see his grandson respond to the word of God where his sons had utterly failed.

We also note that through Heman, Samuel had 17 great-grandchildren and "*all these were under the hands of their father for song in the house of the LORD*" (1Chron 25:4-6). Today we would say they "were all in the truth".

Given the ungodly attitude of Heman's father, it was no doubt Samuel, the grandfather, who had a mighty influence on the spirituality of his grandson and through him even on his great-grandchildren.

The lesson for us is obvious: we may fail in the opportunity to mentor our children. But don't quit. We may well get a second chance with our grandchildren and through them with our great-grandchildren or we may even be able to regain our own children as the years progress. Let us never give up on our second chances.

Samuel's second second chance

Samuel gets a second chance in another area of his life. Again attention is drawn to it in a comment that seems buried in the genealogies when we read: "*All these which were chosen to be porters in the gates were two hundred and twelve. These*

were reckoned by their genealogy in their villages, whom **David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office**" (1Chron 9:22). As we note from the context, reference is being made to the new arrangements for worship which David initiated during his reign.



Samuel anointing David

When could David and Samuel have worked together to formulate these plans? With a little investigation, we realize that the planning David had worked on with Samuel had to have occurred long before David came to the throne.

At the earliest, David did not physically organize this aspect of worship in Israel until he was king over all the nation and had established a center of worship at Jerusalem. That didn't happen until David was in his late 30's. In fact the temple itself was not built until after his death; but he had moved the ark to Jerusalem well before that and probably put the new structure of worship in place in his 40's or 50's.

However Samuel died when David was in his 20's, while David was on the run from Saul (1Sam 25:1). This means that Samuel and David were working together on these plans for national worship when David was in his late teens or early 20's.

When and where did Samuel and David get their heads together on these plans? Probably shortly after Samuel had anointed David to be the next king in Israel.

It is perfectly reasonable that Samuel would have mentored David — he had anointed him to be king. Furthermore as a devout servant of God, David would surely have been a frequent visitor at Samuel's university of the prophets. In fact at one point David lived there: "*And he [David] and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth*" which was Samuel's home (1Sam 19:18). So here was a perfect opportunity for Samuel to mentor David in the things of God; and here was an opportunity for the two of them to plan the expansion of Israel's services of worship.

Samuel's first chance was with Saul

What we may not have noticed is that this was Samuel's second chance at mentoring a prospective king of Israel. The first was Saul.

When we go back to Saul's anointing in 1Sam 10:1, we find that Saul was going to be given every chance to succeed as king. Not only was Saul to be given three signs that Samuel's prophecy would surely come to pass (1Sam 10:2-5), but Saul was also to experience what it was like to be a true servant of God: "*And the spirit*

of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them [the prophets] , and shalt be turned into another man” (1Sam 10:6).

After these extraordinary events, Samuel wants Saul to go to Gilgal for mentoring: *“And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee...thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal...seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and shew thee what thou shalt do” (1Sam 10:8).*

Unfortunately Saul doesn't go to Gilgal to receive Samuel's instruction for several years. His long delay is the background to why he is severely rebuked as recorded in 1Sam 13:8,13: *“And he [Saul] tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed.”* Where had Samuel mentioned a “set time” of seven days? Back in 1Sam 10 several years earlier. So Saul had failed to show interest in receiving instruction regarding ruling God's people.

As we know, Saul ends up being a failure in God's eyes. This was a tremendous disappointment to Samuel as he greatly laments God's rejection of Saul: *“Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death; for Samuel grieved over Saul...Now the LORD said to Samuel, ‘How long will you grieve over Saul...’” (1Sam 15:35-16:1).* Samuel had tried to mentor Saul but had failed. Being a very godly and faithful person Samuel no doubt felt partially responsible for Saul's failure.

After Saul, there is David

But Samuel is going to get a second chance — with David. As we have noted, at some point, David and Samuel lived together “at Naioth” and made plans for the future structure of worship in Israel. It's not hard to get the picture: the religiously inclined would gather at Samuel's community where they would join together in much enthusiastic worship and instruction in the word of God. This would be completely to David's liking. He was a man after God's own heart and rejoiced in learning as much as he could about the law and the testimonies. Furthermore he was an excellent musician as a youth and would eagerly enter into the writing and performing of new hymns and psalms.

Again the lesson jumps out at us — we may fail in one mentoring situation but don't let that discourage us from trying again. The second time around may result in great success.

The whole idea of a second chance is an integral part of the breaking of bread to which we now look forward. For ourselves personally we would say a synonym to a “second chance” is the forgiveness of sins. In providing for the forgiveness of our sins, the Father has provided us much more than a “second” chance. He provides opportunity after opportunity to regain our spiritual footing and seek to again walk in the footsteps of His Son.

May we do just that in the coming days as we know the time draws near when we will see our Lord Jesus Christ face to face.

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

Bible Study

The Way of Cain (4) Cain: Crime and Punishment

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth." Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me." But the Lord said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. So Cain went out from the Lord's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. (Gen 4:8-16 NIV¹)

Rhetoric

Genesis is silent as to how long after Abel's death God inquired of his whereabouts. Probably not long. The idea of "*blood crying from the ground*" (Gen 4:10) suggests that Abel's corpse might still have been fresh when He confronted Cain.

At some point after Abel had been slain, Cain must have approached the cherubim or come into its presence (for what purpose is unclear). God, as manifested by the cherubim, confronted Cain about his brother. However, the LORD did not confront him with an accusation, rather He posed a question: "*Where is your brother Abel?*" (Gen 4:9). The question was rhetorical. God knew where Abel was. Rather, His question was an accusation, meant to elicit from Cain an admission of guilt (or self-reflection) — the first step towards forgiveness and ultimately instruction in righteousness.

This wasn't the first instance where God posed a rhetorical question. In the Garden, God asked Adam and Eve, "*Where are you?*" (Gen 3:9). Of course the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Deity knew where they were hiding; what He wanted was for them to acknowledge what they had done. God phrased it as, "Where are you?" in order to point out to them that, having eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were no longer in a place or *state* God recognized — they had changed in some way and were mortal, sinful.

The second instance where God posed a rhetorical question is in the aftermath of Cain's rejection, when He said to Adam's eldest: "*Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?*" (Gen 4:6). Again, God knew the answer to this question. What He was really pointing out was that Cain had no right to be angry. For, as

He explained, *“If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?”* (Gen 4:7).

In the case of Adam and Eve, God’s use of rhetoric did elicit the proper response, for Adam and Eve admitted to what they had done. However, unlike his parents, Cain did not do “what was right,” nor later did he admit to his sin when God asked, *“Where is your brother Abel?”* (Gen 4:9).

In this latter example, God’s rhetoric failed to illicit from Cain an admission of guilt. Instead, Cain was audacious enough to respond to God’s question with one of his own: *“I don’t know... Am I my brother’s keeper?”* (Gen 4:9).

Cain’s response to God was a lie. Obviously he knew where Abel was — for somewhere in that field, his brother’s body lay, rotting in the earth. What isn’t clear is why Cain lied. Was it merely the instinctual response of a guilty man, or did he really imagine that he could lie to the Almighty? If the latter is true, then what does it say about Cain’s perception of God?

As has already been discussed, Cain, in his willing neglect of spiritual instruction, did not realize who God really was. We might find that surprising, but Cain did not think of God as we do: an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator. Instead, his perception of the deity was limited to that of cherubim: those frightful, mystical creatures that guarded the entranceway to the Garden of Eden with their fiery or flashing sword (Gen 3:24). And, as such, their nature and purpose informed his understanding of God.

As the guardians of the way to the Tree of Life, the cherubim were bound to a specific geographical location. That this was Cain’s understanding is evidenced by Gen 4:14, when, in considering his exile to Nod, Cain concluded that he would be hidden from the presence of God, since the cherubim guarded the entranceway to the Garden of Eden.

Thus, when confronted by God concerning Abel’s whereabouts, Cain must have asked himself, “How could these creatures, who are bound to specific, geographical place, possibly know what I have done to Abel?” And thus he concluded that they could not know what had transpired, and decided to lie to God (the cherubim), not realizing that they, a manifestation of God — who knows all and sees all — already knew the truth.

My brother’s keeper

“Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen 4:9) — this is next part of Cain’s response. Was it genuine or rhetorical, as if to say to God: “I am not my brother’s keeper”?

Given what we already know about Cain and his character, it seems likely that the latter is true; he had answered God’s rhetorical question with one of his own. Therefore, he was making a statement about how he felt towards Abel, and by doing so, he revealed two things: one, that he did not love his brother; and two, that he was an ignorant man.

As to the first — why did Cain not love his brother? — the simple answer is that pride or ego has a way of blinding oneself to everyone else; it creates a selfishness that has no room for the welfare or concern of others. As has been shown, Cain

placed great pride in his name — *even Jehovah* — along with the identity that he built around this “birthright,” which had the effect of blinding him to everyone, including Abel. This explains why he was able to respond to God by saying, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” By responding in this way, Cain sent the message to God that he felt nothing for his brother. Hence his indifference. And even when Cain was confronted with his crime, he still showed no signs of guilt or remorse. He did not clasp his hands together and cry out, “What have I done!” Rather, all he cared about was his himself, for he said to God:

“My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me” (Gen 4:13-14).

As noted, Cain’s response to God also revealed his ignorance, for by saying to God, “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” he revealed that he did not understand the very nature of God, which is love (1John 4:8).

According to John, to know God is to know love. Christ confirms this when he sums up the Mosaic Law:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ ” (Matt 22:37-39).

By saying to God, “*Am I my brother’s keeper,*” Cain was telling the Lord that he did not need to love Abel, and, by doing so, he was in fact saying to God — unknowingly — that he did not care to understand or *know* the Almighty. For as John says, “*Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love*” (1John 4:8). Thus, through his response, Cain confirmed his ignorance in spiritual matters, including the very nature of God. But of course, his ignorance of God and his lack of desire to know the LORD better is something he expressed throughout his life: first, when he failed to offer a blood sacrifice and again, when he limited his understanding of who God was to that of the cherubim.

Blood cries out

When God first approached Cain, His tone was that of restraint. There was no expression of anger in the LORD’s words: “*Where is your brother Abel?*” (Gen 4:9). However, after Cain’s audacious response, God’s tone changed dramatically: “*What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground*” (*ibid.*, 10).

At this point, God’s tone was accusatory, for He said, “What have you done?” Moreover, He demanded Cain’s attention by exclaiming: “Listen!”² In this moment, God was no longer going to be ignored.³ And once He had Cain’s attention, the Lord continued by telling him that Abel’s blood “cries out to [him] from the ground” (*ibid.*).

Now, we might be tempted to think that this is how God found out about the crime, but bear in mind that God is all-knowing — He didn’t need “Abel’s blood” to reveal to Him that Adam’s younger son had been murdered by his older brother.

Moreover, the blood crying out was not literal, but rather a personification of a martyr's cry for justice and vengeance.

Future justice

Firstly, there are many instances of personification in the Bible. For example, Prov 1:20 says, "*Wisdom calls aloud in the streets; she raises her voice in the public square.*" As we know, wisdom is not an actual being, "calling aloud" as a human might. Likewise, there is no reason to suspect that the "blood of Abel" had a voice and cried out to God. As such, "blood crying out" is clearly an example of personification.

As noted, the blood cried out for justice and vengeance. This might seem out of character, since we don't often associate Abel with the idea of wanting to be "revenged." Yet, even Hebrews recognized that this is what Abel, as a righteous man slain, represented, for it says: "*Jesus the mediator of a new covenant and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel*" (Heb 12:24). Commenting on this comparison, Ellicott wrote that the reason Jesus' blood spoke better than Abel's was that, while Abel's voice cried for justice and retribution, Jesus' voice cried for "reconciliation and peace".

However, we should not be fooled into thinking that Christ also does not intend to administer justice or seek to avenge the slain. Just because Christ initially came to bring reconciliation and peace, does not mean that, at some future date, he won't return to administer justice and retribution. For Rev 6 reveals that God, through Christ, intends to do just that when He sends His son back to the earth.

"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice, 'How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?'" (Rev 6:9-10).

As Revelation reveals, these souls under the altar⁴ are the voices of those who have been slain because of their testimony — Abel being the first of such living "souls." Though dead, they metaphorically plead to God for justice and vengeance, since He, alone, is their avenger: "*It is mine to avenge; I will repay*" (Deut 32:35). In response to the souls' query, "How long?" Rev 6:11 says that their blood will not be avenged until "*the number of their fellow servants and brothers who were to be killed as they had been was completed.*" When will this occur? Revelation continues:

"Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and everyone else, both slave and free, hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can withstand it?'" (Rev 6:15-17).

The Lamb is Christ, and his "wrath" is revealed when he sits on the throne, which of course can only occur upon his return. Thus, Christ will, when he comes again, avenge the souls under the altar; dispensing justice and avenging the slain, which, in Revelation, is described as "the wrath of the Lamb" or God's vengeance.

The “wrath of the Lamb” is, however, a future event. And yet, God was faced with a murderer. So, what does one do with a murderer in those early antediluvian days?

An aspect of murder is that when someone commits it, he/she can no longer be trusted not to do it again. The mistrust and fear that inevitably follows in the wake of murder weakens a community’s cohesion, and, with the threat of more violence, threatens a community’s reason for existence — that is to be united so as to benefit all members. As such, a murderer can no longer remain in society and must therefore be removed.

Moreover, there is also the fact that murder creates in others a desire for revenge (more on this later when dealing with the mark of Cain). Thus, whether it is to keep the community safe from the murderer, and/or to prevent more bloodshed as a result of vengeance, God had to remove Cain from his family/community.

Crime and punishment

While exile caused Cain obvious worryment — *“My punishment is more than I can bear”* (Gen 4:13), it was, in fact, merciful — especially compared to the death sentence a murderer would have received under the Law (Num 35:16-18). That punishment — death — did not allow for the forgiveness of sin. Thus, even in spite of the nature of Cain’s crime; in spite of his lie; and in spite of his “bad attitude,” God — by exiling him — was being merciful. And by doing so, the Lord gave Cain an opportunity to ask for forgiveness — assuming, of course, he chose to do so.⁵

There is another aspect of Cain’s exile that is important to his story. Though the reasons above are valid, and certainly played a role in God’s decision to exile Cain, the LORD, himself, states that the agent directly responsible for causing Cain’s exile was that he was “under a curse”:

“Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you” (Gen 4:11-12).

The result of this curse was that it transformed Cain from a farmer into a nomad: *“You will be a restless wanderer on the earth”* (v. 14). Unable to stay stationary, Cain was forced to move, which resulted in his being exiled.

God’s cursing of the land is the second of such occurrences; the first happened after Adam’s transgression (Gen 3:17-19). However, Adam’s curse was universal. It began to take effect following his transgression, and it did not reach its zenith until the birth of Noah. At this point, the effects of the curse must have been particularly acute, since Lamech, Noah’s father, makes the first mention of it since Adam: *“He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed”* (Gen 5:29).

Unlike Adam’s curse, Cain’s curse was specific to him. It seems as though God pronounced a double curse on the earth, in so much as it concerned Cain. Therefore, he not only experienced the *general* curse felt by all as a result of Adam’s curse, but his toil, *specifically*, was so difficult, that it had the effect of driving him from the ground.

As a result, Cain was forced to abandon his vocation as a farmer and instead had to find other means to feed himself and his family. Thus, in time, as he wandered in the land of Nod, he naturally began hunting and gathering. This transformed Cain from a farmer into the first hunter-gatherer — but not for long.

Although Cain wandered for a time, he eventually gave up a nomadic life and built the first permanent settlement or city, which he named after his firstborn son, Enoch (v. 17). Why did Cain settle down? Why did he not continue existing as a nomad? Perhaps he was not that particularly successful at hunting and gathering — after all, his skills were farming, not hunting and foraging. Or, perhaps the temptation to lay down roots was just too strong.

Another possibility is that he feared an avenger. As we shall see, Cain understood that murder creates in others a desire for revenge, and it is therefore possible that Cain, even though he lived in the land of Nod, feared that one day, someone would come to avenge Abel. In an effort to protect himself, Cain may have settled down and “*built a city*” (Gen 4:17). The word for city in this verse is *‘yr*, meaning city, town, a place of waking/guarded. The last part of this is significant — “*guarded*” — because it suggests that the settlement Cain built was somewhat fortified. But fortified against whom? — the unknown but inevitable avenger.

This possibility certainly paints a vivid picture of Cain in his latter years: we can envision him as an old man, surrounded by high-walls, staring out from his fortifications, ever watchful, ever fearful of the day when a stranger or someone he knew would approach his town and enter it with the purpose of seeking revenge for Abel’s murder.

The mark of Cain

Cain’s exile was complicated by another factor: revenge. He might have been ignorant of God and spiritual wisdom, but he understood, whether by instinct or by reasoning, that as a murderer, he was prone to vengeance. For he says, “*I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me*” (Gen 4:14).

Ever since sin entered the world, there has existed a causal relationship between murder and revenge, but it was not revealed until Cain killed Abel. This relationship is well illustrated in Joshua:

“Then the LORD said to Joshua: ‘Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses so that anyone who kills a person accidentally or unintentionally may flee there and find protection from the avenger of blood’ ” (Josh 20:1-3).

This decree suggests that when someone has been killed, an avenger of blood will almost certainly arise. It demonstrates that murder, whether accidental or intentional, has the effect of creating in others a desire for revenge. Cain understood this, which is why he says: “*My punishment is more than I can bear! ...Whoever finds me will kill me*” (Gen 4:13-14).

God, however, placed a “mark” on Cain so that “*no one who found him would kill him*” (*ibid.*, 15). This might seem odd, for why should God care about preserving

the life of a murderer? But recall that exile was a demonstration of God's mercy,⁶ and it allowed the opportunity — should Cain choose it — for repentance and forgiveness.

Furthermore, the mark was an attempt by God to deter others from seeking vengeance for the murder of Abel. By doing so, God was trying to prevent the cycle of vengeance from beginning. For the LORD knows that, once set in motion, the cycle of vengeance is near-impossible to stop (humanely speaking, of course), and, moreover, it has the power to engulf the whole world in violence, as was the case in the antediluvian age and which led to God's decision to destroy that age in a flood (Gen 6:11).

However, it's important to note that the mark — whatever it was — only had the power to deter, *not stop*, vengeance from occurring. For as a deterrence, it gave people the ability to choose either vengeance or forgiveness, thereby maintaining *free will*. Had the mark been able to prevent all acts of vengeance from occurring — somehow miraculously — it would have negated free will, and thus undermined our uniqueness as humans amongst the instinct-driven creatures in God's creation.

Physical or symbolic?

The “mark” has always been somewhat of an enigma. Was it a physical mark, such as a scar, a disease,⁷ or was it something else, perhaps symbolic? Moreover, how did the mark actually protect Cain in its function as a deterrence?

The Hebrew word here is *owth* or “mark” is defined as a sign, warning, omen, token, miracle, banner, distinguishing mark [which may or may not be physical], or a remembrance” (Young's Literal Translation). As a “distinguishing mark,” *owth* is used once in the Old Testament, and only in regards to Cain. All other 78 uses in the Old Testament refer to something abstract. Thus, it seems very probable that the nature of his “distinguishing mark” was not physical.

In Ezek 9:3-6, God placed a mark⁸ on the righteous in order to distinguish them from those who were set apart for destruction:

“Then the LORD called to the man clothed in linen who had the writing kit at his side and said to him, ‘Go throughout the city of Jerusalem and put a mark on the foreheads of those who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it.’ As I listened, he said to the others, ‘Follow him through the city and kill, without showing pity or compassion. Slaughter old men, young men and maidens, women and children, but do not touch anyone who has the mark’ ” (Ezek 9:3-6).

The individuals marked by the man clothed in linen could not actually see their mark, nor was it literally inscribed upon their foreheads. Ezekiel's vision was a metaphorical description of God's selection of the righteous from the unrighteous. These men and women would be a sign of the following: His mercy; His recognition of their righteousness; and His action of setting them apart from the wicked. Although they received the mark on their foreheads, which represents the knowledge centre of the body (the brain) and, as such, indicates understand-

ing in relation to the things of God, they were inseparable from the mark itself, since this part of the body (the forehead or brain) is inseparable from the rest, a feature that is established in 1Cor 12:25: “...*there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.*” In other words, they in effect *became* the mark or sign.

In regards to Cain’s mark, Genesis is silent. No specific part of his body (such as the forehead, for example) is noted. Therefore, we can surmise that Cain, *in his entirety*, was marked or he, as a whole, represented the mark (again, based on the principle in 1Cor 12:25).

It is also important to note that while God is the agent (via an angel) doing the symbolic marking in Ezek 9:3-6, and in Gen 4 (whether or not via an angel), it is really the actions of the individuals that marks them. For example, the righteous men and women in Ezekiel were marked because they were those “*who grieve and lament over all the detestable things that are done in it*” (Ezek 9:4). Likewise, although God placed a mark on Cain, it was Cain who distinguished himself as a murderer through his violent action.

Thus, since many instances of the mark in the Bible concerns something abstract, Cain’s mark could therefore have been an abstract one. Moreover, since no specific part of his body was noted by Genesis, the mark was non-specific. Just as the mark symbolically received by the righteous in Ezekiel — but brought about by their righteous actions transformed them into a mark or a sign that distinguished them from the wicked — Cain’s mark (or his violent actions) also transformed him into a mark or sign, but of a very different kind: *murder in relation to vengeance.*

One final thought: while I have reasoned that Cain’s mark was not physical — and it wasn’t — if there was anything at all physical about the mark, it was the murderer’s outward expression of *fear* in being avenged, which was surely visible in his eyes, on his face, or in his general demeanor.

The mark of Cain: a complex sign

The mark of Cain is basically a cause and effect relationship. To understand it, one needs to know that Cain had committed murder. This is the *cause* part of the equation. The *effect* part of the equation is understanding that the mark creates in others a desire for revenge. Moreover, vengeance turns an avenger into a murder (vengeance is just murder by another name), which creates in others a desire for revenge and creates a seemingly endless cycle of violence. God acknowledges this cause and effect relationship when He responds to Cain by saying, “*If anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over*” (Gen 4:15). In other words, God says that a murderer will himself be murdered by an avenger, and so forth.

God hoped that a person comprehending killing Cain in order to avenge Abel would look upon Cain (or consider him in their mind’s eye) and understand this cause and effect relationship. That revenge turns an avenger into a murderer and makes the avenger susceptible to vengeance was supposed to deter would-be avengers, and thus prevent the cycle of violence — the inevitable outcome of vengeance — from occurring. It would also place the act of avenging into the rightful hands

of the Lord, for vengeance is God's prerogative: "O LORD God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, show thyself" (Psa 94:1, KJV).

Vengeance is endless

"If anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance **seven times over**" (Gen 4:15). As noted, vengeance creates a cycle of violence transforming avengers into murderers and creating in others a desire for revenge, and so forth. Thus vengeance appears to have an endless or *eternal* quality; a truth God expresses in Gen 4:15 through the use of the number seven.

The number seven is usually associated with God,⁹ and as such is wed to the idea of *eternity*, since this is His nature. Thus, its use in relation to murder and revenge suggests that vengeance has an eternal or endless quality.¹⁰

Mark of Cain: conclusion

By murdering Abel, Cain introduced the concept of vengeance into the world (just as Adam and Eve's transgression introduced the idea of sin). Cain's mark was not a magical talisman that somehow protected him from vengeance. Rather, as a murderer, he represented various aspects of murder in relation to vengeance for the purpose of instructing others in righteousness. Of course, for it to be an effective deterrent, this required understanding on the part of would-be-avengers. And considering how violent the antediluvian world became, it is apparent that Cain's mark was little understood and much ignored.

Wandering star

The first born of women, the eldest son of Adam, and a man blessed with the name of the Lord,¹¹ Cain had the potential to be a bright star — a burning luminary among the first of God's creation. Certainly his brother Abel was, as evidenced by repeated references concerning his righteousness throughout the New Testament.¹¹ Instead, "because his own actions were evil" (1John 3:12), Cain became a star, but of a very different kind: "a wandering star, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever" (Jude 13). The apostle's poetic description of death is the fate that awaited Cain, as long as he continued to believe that, whilst wandering in Nod, he was "hidden from the presence of the LORD" (Gen 4:14); a phrase suggesting, among other things, that he believed he could not be forgiven for murdering Abel.

In the Bible, "wandering" is usually associated with ruin and destruction:

"The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the desert forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone" (Num 32:13).

"A discerning man keeps wisdom in view, but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the earth" (Prov 17:24).

As has been shown, Cain was a "fool" because he disdained Godly wisdom. And yet, in spite of this, he did not, as Proverbs suggest, physically wander "to the ends of the earth" (*ibid.*). Instead, he travelled eastward¹³ from Eden, accompanied by one of his sisters, which he took when he left or had already taken as his wife

before murdering Abel. In Nod, he hunted and gathered for a time. Eventually, he built the first permanent settlement or city — a fortified place — naming it Enoch after his son (Gen 4:17). There he spent the rest of his days, ever fearful that he may be killed by Abel’s avenger.

A journey eastward into exile

What of Cain’s eastward journey into exile? Where was Nod in relation to Eden, and, for that matter, where was Eden and the Garden of Eden located on the earth? For some, these questions are immaterial. For others, the lack of detail in Genesis merely confirms beliefs that the story of Cain is a myth. Yet, material from recent non-Biblical sources describes scientific discoveries related to the story of Cain. The following brief examination of the Garden of Eden, Eden, and Nod will help establish that Cain and the events associated with him are historical.

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Notes:

1. All References are from the NIV
2. “Listen!” could also be linked to the following sentence, where God, essentially, tells Cain that he can hear Abel’s blood crying out from the ground. Both interpretations of the usage of “Listen!” have merit, although I like to think that God was tired of being ignored by Cain and that He now demanded his attention.
3. Unlike his brother, Cain had ignored his parent’s instruction regarding sacrifices and presented to God an unacceptable offering (Gen 4:3,5); he had ignored God when he said “If you do what is right, will it [your offering] not be accepted?” (v. 7); and he had ignored God when he warned him to “master” his emotions” (v. 7).
4. In the ground and not up in heaven!
5. In all likelihood, Cain never asked for forgiveness. He was probably convinced that forgiveness was not possible as long as he was exiled (“hidden”) from the “presence” of the cherubim (Gen 4:14).
6. He first demonstrated His mercy by providing a sacrifice of a covering (clothing made out of skin) for Adam and Eve in the wake of their transgression.
7. Some have suggested leprosy.
8. ‘He was even, astonishingly, protected by God from primitive vendetta, The “mark of Cain” was no cursed brand as in popular proverb but a mark of amazing and unmerited divine mercy. Even the sentence to be a vagabond was later mitigated, for Cain built a “city” or “fortified hamlet” (Gehmann and Davis). Yet the ungrateful Cain still complained that he was being punished more than he deserved, and that he would be deprived of direct communication with the Almighty (“from Thy face shall I be hid”). (Alan Eyre)
9. There are too many instances of God being associated with the number seven in the Bible to go into depth here. Suffice to say, God is numerically expressed by the number seven and this is abundantly evident, everywhere, in Scripture.
10. The number seven also had a practical application. It foretold the generation in which Cain would be avenged. As will be shown, Cain’s ancestor, Lamech, tried to avenge Cain by killing Enoch in the seventh generation. For more details, see *Article () Cain: The Legacy*.
11. See *Article (1) Cain: The Messiah (The Tidings, Sept 2013)*
12. Matt 23:35; Luke 11:51; Heb 11:4; Heb 12:24; 1John 3:12
13. “So Cain went out from the Lord’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden” (Gen 4:16).

Youth Speaks

Jonathan the Faithful Prince: (8) Looking a Bit Deeper

In the last article (*The Tidings*, November 2013), we discussed Saul's fall. We saw how he had gone from being a leader who could lead the people to life, to a leader who sought to even bring death to his own son! How the mighty had fallen — and fallen because of pride and envy!

In this article, we hope to develop this theme a bit, and also move beyond just the narrative of the battle against the Philistines. We want to go a little bit deeper into the meaning beneath the story. We've been able to paint a picture of what happened, but we want to try to look further into the record and see more of the types and examples hidden within. In doing so, may we be reminded of the depth of Scripture and the value of true humility.

Connections to Joshua

First, as we attempt to look deeper into Saul's character, one of the things we see is that Saul likely had an additional "hero" to Gideon. Not only did Saul seek to be like that man of faith, but it also seems as though he wanted to be like Joshua — another man who had led the people of God to victory. Just consider these connections:

When Joshua went to fight against the city of Jericho, he put a curse upon the city and told the people that they were forbidden to take any of the spoil.

"And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all that are therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it" (Josh 6:17-18).

Saul then followed Joshua's example — while he specifically said that he initiated the curse upon food so that he might be avenged upon his enemies (1Sam 14:24), perhaps this was also one of his motivations. Just as Joshua's attack upon Jericho involved a curse and he forbade the people from partaking in the spoil, so did Saul's attack upon the Philistines. He put a curse upon the people which forbade them from eating of the spoil (1Sam14:30) until the evening.

When Joshua fought to save the Gibeonites, he was near the Valley of Ajalon. There, he prayed that both the sun and the moon would stand still — allowing him to continue his battle through the night.

"Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon" (Josh 10:12)

Standing near the same location as Joshua (1Sam14:31), Saul tried to do the same thing. He tried to push his men through the night and have them fight just as Joshua's men did.

After Joshua went to attack Ai, God was not with him because someone had broken the curse and Israel had brought a curse upon themselves.

“Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff” (Josh 7:11).

By stealing from the spoil of Jericho, Israel took of the accursed things and separated themselves from God's intervention. The same thing happened during Saul's assault on the Philistines — Jonathan broke the curse by eating the honey and in turn separated Saul from receiving instruction from God. Saul's mind was perhaps on the situation that had happened with Joshua, because immediately after God's silence, Saul *knew* that God had refrained from working with Israel because of an unresolved sin in the camp (1Sam14:38).

In finding out who had broken the curse upon Jericho, Joshua was told to bring out the people by tribe, then by family, then by household, and then by individual. God would sort through those people until only the one who had broken the curse remained:

“In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes: and it shall be, that the tribe which the LORD taketh shall come according to the families thereof; and the family which the LORD shall take shall come by households; and the household which the LORD shall take shall come man by man” (Josh 7:14).

When Saul sought to find the one who had sinned, he followed a similar method. Just like Joshua, he sought to have God direct him to the man. Saul's method, just like Joshua's, involved separating the people into groups until the individual was found.

Joshua was told to kill the one who had broken the curse:

“And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he hath transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel” (Josh 7:15).

Just as Joshua was told to kill the one who had broken the curse, Saul stated that he would kill the man who had broken his curse. Quite possibly, Saul's envy had blinded him to the fact that these were clearly two different situations, and he used the example of Joshua to justify his attempt to kill Jonathan.

The troubler of Israel

Thus, in a number of ways, it would appear as though Saul sought to be like Joshua. Nevertheless, the tragic part about Saul's heroes is that he never quite became like them. Just as with his attempts to be like Gideon, he didn't understand the key to

Gideon's success — his humility and his faith. It was the same with his efforts to be like Joshua. Saul didn't understand that Joshua's humility and faith were what made him a pliable vessel with which Yahweh could work; because of this, Saul never became like Joshua. Though he tried to be like Joshua in bringing a curse upon the people during the battle, his curse was entirely misplaced. It was all about his own honor, whereas Joshua's was so that the spoils of Jericho could be devoted to God; it was about God's honor! When Joshua prayed that the sun might stand still so that they could fight through the night, it against wasn't for his own glory. It was for the glory of Israel and their God (Josh 10:13) — so that *they* could be avenged of their enemies. When Joshua had Achan stoned, it wasn't because he thought that Achan was some sort of challenge to his authority. It was because Achan had purposefully flouted God's commands. Yet all of Saul's actions were founded upon his own selfish ambition and his own conceit. Because of this, he was nothing like either Gideon or Joshua. Instead, he tragically became more like Achan. When Achan was stoned by Joshua and all of the people, Joshua condemned him as the one who had "troubled" Israel:

"And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the LORD shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones" (Josh 7:25).

Achan had been the troubler of Israel — and sadly, so was Saul:

*"Then said Jonathan, **My father hath troubled the land:** see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey?" (1Sam 14:29).*

Through his curse, Saul had troubled Israel. Though he sought to be like Joshua, he had become more like Achan.

Nevertheless, all together, Saul had done a number of things throughout this account that connected him with Joshua — demonstrating that Joshua, just like Gideon, was another of Saul's heroes. Saul was a man who was in the house of believers and who gave himself positive role models — the men whom he wanted to follow were men of faith and men who had delivered Israel from their enemies.

This is what makes the picture of Saul such a powerful image. It isn't a picture of a man who was always sinful and who never had any inclination towards following God. Saul was a man who understood Scripture — well enough to even have two Biblical role models and follow their example in a number of the details in his life — and not only so, but he also had times where he recognized and acknowledged God's power. Yet nevertheless, despite this understanding and despite this faith which he had at times, he became overtaken by his pride and his desire to be praised by men — even to the point of justifying that he could kill his own son for something which he had done in innocence and which could be covered under the law.

The lesson from this story should have quite an impact. It isn't simply about gaining knowledge — because if we don't have the right attitude when we approach Scripture, we can be just like Saul. We can gain a strong knowledge of events and

characters in the Biblical record, but we can still become blinded by our own desire for honor and our own thirst for praise. This is something to which all of us are susceptible — Saul was part of the household of faith and at times had very faithful actions. Just as he did, we too — despite the knowledge that we may have — can fall into the trap of wanting to follow God for our own glory and wanting to compete with other believers, even wishing bad things upon them so that we might look good. It is this attitude which led to Saul almost killing his own son; and though it is highly unlikely that we will reach that point, it was also this attitude which led to the rejection of Saul from being king and which effectively thrust him from the favor of God. If we are not careful and if we do not examine our own motives and attitudes, the same type of thinking can easily come into our own minds.

By no means is this meant to say that we should not seek after knowledge. Scripture is clear that God wants us to *know* Him, and that knowledge will lead to grace and peace (2Pet 1:2). Knowledge is foundation which we *must* have. Without it, we are lost. Yet even with it, we must continue to do what we can to strive against our own pride and our own envy. Knowledge can certainly help us in this battle, but that knowledge must change our attitude, our perceptions, and our faith.

The type of Christ — and of the Jews

Such is one of the major lessons that comes out of the story of Jonathan and his father fighting the garrison of the Philistines — but there is another. This second lesson is one which should develop within us that essential humility which Saul lacked and should put us in awe of our God — because hundreds of years before His son was born, there were pictures and glimpses of his life all throughout Scripture. This story is one of them.

First, notice the connections between Saul's story here and the story of the Jews at the time of Christ:

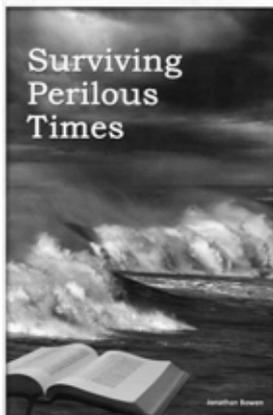
- Saul's worship of God was almost entirely focused on the praise and honor of men. The same was said of the Jews at the time of Christ (Matt 23:5; John 12:42-43).
- Saul had a great knowledge of many incidents in Scripture — even honoring faithful men of old, but he was stuck in ritualism. So it was with the Jews (Mark 7:5-7; John 8:53)
- Because of his adherence to self-serving worship and rituals, Saul had the kingdom taken from him and given to someone who was more worthy. The same happened with the Jews (Matt 21:43).
- All throughout the battle, Saul could not deliver the people. He helplessly sought to bring salvation, but never did anything. It was the same with the Jews — their efforts could not save them (Rom 9:31-33)
- Saul's vain tradition had brought him to a point where he was actually willing to kill a righteous man who had "violated" it. Thus did the Jews to the Lord (John 5:18).
- One of Saul's greatest motives for wanting to kill Jonathan was likely envy. The same was true for the Jews and the Lord Jesus (Matt 27:18).

So many of the events of the chapter symbolically point to Saul representing the Jews at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ. Combining this with the details that are shown about Jonathan, a beautiful picture of the Lord appears:

- Jonathan was a man of humility — and just like Christ, though he could have exalted himself as the king's son, he made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant, fighting the battle against the enemy (Phil 2:5-9).
- Through his faith, Jonathan delivered his people from certain death — and through his faith, the Lord did the same for his people (Gal 1:4).
- Jonathan truly was innocent — he had only broken the “commandments of men” and not the doctrine of God. He was blameless — like the Lord (John 8:46).
- Just as the Master, Jonathan willingly submitted to the death which was brought upon him (John 10:18).
- Yet, showing a picture of the Lord Jesus, he was rescued from seeing corruption (Acts 2:31).

The stories of Saul and Jonathan perfectly converge to foreshadow and show a type of the story of the Lord Jesus Christ — because ultimately, it is his story that is the story of Scripture. The Word of God revolves around the man who is the Word made Flesh. May we recognize this, and as we live our everyday lives, may we seek to align our lives in the same way. Just as God's book focuses upon the one who has been given all power in heaven and in earth, may we seek to change our lives so that they do the same — so that they focus upon the one who is the living and powerful Son of God. In doing so, may we search through our minds, scouring our thoughts for any self-serving worship and thoughts like those of Saul, and may we follow the example set down by the Lord Jesus Christ — giving our lives in service to the Father and humbly submitting to His will so that He might be glorified in all things.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)



“Surviving Perilous Times”, by Brother Jonathan Bowen

105 pages with scriptural index. Cost \$5.00 plus shipping.

Surviving Perilous Times was written to examine how we as saints “should behave ourselves in the household of God” during times of controversy. The goal was to look at the scriptural directives we are given which must be taken into account when facing times of trial in the our personal lives, family lives, ecclesial lives or inter-ecclesial relationships.

Available by contacting: Jonathan Bowen, 206 Memorial Drive, Brantford, ON, N3R 5S8

Telephone: 519-751-9486, Email: yoni@me.com

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Music — (3) Teaching Teens to Evaluate What They Hear and See

The Philippians 4:8 challenge

Do you look at your ear-budded teenagers and fear for what they are listening to on their MP3 players or smart phones? Do you suspect that you are struggling against worldly forces that have a greater influence on them than your all-too-brief Sunday school lesson? If so, here is something you can do about it! Teach them to use Bible truths to examine the moral quagmire they wallow in at school, in the movie theater, when they watch television or are on the Web — and when the ear buds are plugged in.

You have to help them understand that music can be a very wonderful or a truly dangerous form of communication. It can put the listener in an accepting mood that is valuable for worship and preaching, but it can also insidiously pervert the thinking. Music is a very important part of human expression. When words fail us, we often use music to express our ideas more effectively. Music is designed to affect our emotions and to be appreciated on a sub-intellectual level as well as an intellectual level.

I am not saying that all media are evil. But as I watch and listen, in order to discuss this with my students, I find a lot that is objectionable in the media on the basis of scriptural values. Here is my short list:

- Lack of respect for fellow humans;
- Frequent description of sexual acts in a wrong context, outside marriage;
- Obscene language;
- Avocation of injurious sexual practices;
- Avocation of homosexuality;
- Description and acceptance of the abuse of women;
- Sexually evocative dress, even for little children;
- Avocation of suicide or murder,
- Materialism.

Rather than hit your students over the head with this horrifying list, a more successful approach is to inspire them with the ideals of the Bible. As you teach them, remember that teen idealism is not yet tempered by reality. Also remember that our reality is rapidly changing. Teens today face challenges to their faith that older generations did not experience. Teach your teens the importance of everyday practices such as good listening habits, and teach them to evaluate what they hear and see on the basis of godly principles.

An evaluation strategy

The following is a short unit of study that equips your teens to evaluate media, including the music they listen to, in terms of Bible truths. It starts with an all-important theme verse:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things” (Phil 4:8).

Week 1

Start off with a word study of Phil 4:8. Divide your class into teams. Assign each team (or individual if your class is small) the task of studying one of the adjectives used in the verse. Ask each team to find other verses that describe or exemplify the particular qualities of the adjective. You will want to have a concordance and a good English dictionary on hand for your students to use. They should also be encouraged to use the cross-references in their Bibles. Have each team arrive at a definition of the adjective and write it down on a large piece of paper with Bible references. For example:

Pure = undefiled (James 1:27; 3:17; 1John 3:3; Matt 5:8)

Post their papers in your class area. You may also want to provide magazines and have each group create a montage that illustrates their definition. Discuss their findings.

At the end of the class, discuss with your students what musical genres they enjoy. In recent discussions with my teen students, I have found a surprising variety of styles that they like. Have them identify specific songs and artists that are currently popular, and ask them to bring in the words of their favorite song for the next class. They can either write down the words by listening, or get them from the Web by searching “lyrics” and the title of the song.

Week 2

Just in case your students forget to bring in the words, search the Web to find a video or MP3 of a currently popular song. Key off the songs and artists that your students identified in Week 1. You can legally get MP3s of the songs on iTunes for minimal cost. There are also videos of some songs on the web that have the lyrics scrolling across the screen. If the images aren't objectionable, this may be useful in Week 2.

If your students bring in songs, have them evaluate the words with the following rebus. Otherwise you can surprise them with the fact that you've found their music on the Web, and have class members evaluate the words you brought in. *Do not state your opinion of the song!* Let your students reach their own conclusions. The form follows at the end of this article.

After your students have completed their forms, gather them for discussion. Here are some questions you might ask them:

- How did your selection stack up against the Philippians 4:8 challenge? Why?
- What effect does listening to this music and / or seeing these images have on the way you think, act, or feel?
- Have you changed your mind about this music? Why?

Allow the students to draw their own conclusions about their selections. You are planting seeds for future evaluations; don't discourage their efforts. Help them learn to make Bible standards the foundation of their life.

Carol Linsenmeier (Cleveland, OH)

THE PHILIPPIANS 4:8 CHALLENGE							
Do the words and images of this song reflect ideas that are:							
	No		Neutral			Yes	
True?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Noble?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Right?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pure?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lovely?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Admirable?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Excellent?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Praiseworthy?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Circle the number you feel is correct for each quality.

Modern Music and the Mind of Christ

This cannot happen unless we put the right things into our mind. Jesus would not have listened to improper music and neither should we. Let's each pray for what is right and for strength to do right. Then use the switch. Turn off that which will not help our minds grow.

"Finally brothers, fill your minds with everything that is true, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honor, and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise, think on these things" (Phil 4:8 J.B.)

"Sing the words and tunes of the psalms and hymns when you are together, and go on singing and chanting to the Lord in your heart, so that always and everywhere you are giving thanks to God who is our Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Follow Paul's sound advice and your mind will be renewed and changed for his glory.

Russell E. Patterson (The Tidings, May 1981, p 6)

History

Death of Robert Roberts (2)

Introduction

In the previous article on this subject (*The Tidings*, November 2013, p. 498), we covered the sad events of that day, September 23 1898, when the journey in faith of Robert Roberts suddenly and tragically came to an end. We dealt with the discovery of the body by Bro. Cheetham, and the events immediately prior to his death. We concluded that article with the detailed account, written by Bro. Cheetham, of the events surrounding the demise of Bro. Roberts. We pick up the account, therefore, with the subsequent events.

The Sunday Memorial

Bro. Sidney Walker also commented on the San Francisco Sunday Morning meeting that followed Bro. Robert's death:

“The following Sunday witnessed a mournful gathering of brethren at our little hall. It was Bro. Clarke's turn to lecture (he and Bro. B. [Bingley] spoke alternately), and before treating on his subject, I think “Mortality of Man,”



Bro. William Clark

he read a letter he had drafted out to send to the *Christadelphian Advocate*, for our approval, and commented on Bro. Roberts' devotion to the work of the Truth, as reported. There is a strange omission on Bro. Cheetham's part, in his failing to state that after the lecture Bro. Bingley presided at the breaking of bread, and alluded to those “early days when they were bosom companions in Birmingham, and could testify to Bro. Roberts' great zeal and love for what he deemed was truth. A brilliant writer, none have excelled him. Many rich thoughts, arising from a highly spiritual mind, are fortunately preserved in print. Those personally acquainted with him knew what a warm and sympathetic nature he possessed, and generous to a fault. Great men had appeared in the history of the Truth,

and in our day and generation who can forget our beloved Bro. Thomas, the honored instrument of the Deity in exhuming the gospel of the Kingdom from the mass of rubbish: and who will forget Bro. Roberts, who though dead yet speaketh, especially in that admirable treatise, “Christendom

Astray,” and his “Seasons of Comfort.” He always was delighted to hear his Sunday morning addresses, and told him at the time (thirty-three years ago) that they were too good to be lost, and urged their appearance in his paper. He had his faults, they were but few, let us write them in water, his good deeds in brass. Pray who are without theirs, excepting one who had appeared on earth, who was without sin — and who accomplished the great work of the Atonement we are now remembering. We shall hope to see Bro. Roberts again in the presence of him he loved in his lifetime. May we all be found worthy to eat and drink with His Glorious Majesty at His table in His Kingdom,” etc., etc. We then dispersed, all anxiously waiting for the return telegrams. Of what subsequently transpired little has been stated, and if known would surprise and, I may say, shock the brotherhood generally. Trusting you will insert this communication in the fraternal Visitor as soon as possible.”

As Brother Walker noted in his letter to the *Fraternal Visitor* magazine, Bro. William Clark, a cousin of Bro. Roberts, sent a letter to the *Christadelphian Advocate* magazine detailing Bro. Roberts visit and death. The editor of the *Advocate* wrote in the October 1898 issue: “Early Sunday morning we telegraphed brother Clark, of Oakland, Cal., who is a relative of brother Roberts, to “mail particulars of death and disposition of body.” At this time we thought brother Roberts would be with Brother Clark or some of the brethren at San Francisco. Papers and letters came repeating the announcement, but not till Wednesday did we receive more definite information, as follows: September 30th the following letter from Brother Clark came to hand:

Oakland, Sept. 25, 1898.

“Dear Brother Williams : — In answer to your telegram of to-day, who could have predicted that brother Roberts would have come here to die. He arrived here Wednesday, the 21st inst., and had a meeting in brother Cheetham’s house, where there were assembled a good many brethren. I understand they had a discussion on the inspiration question, brother Roberts and brother Bingley being the principal contestants, and they had quite a spirited and prolonged combat, which was ultimately broken up on account of brother Roberts being in need of rest after his voyage.

“Next evening, Thursday, there was a meeting at brother Clark’s house, 1515 5th street [now a vacant field], Oakland, where brother Roberts was requested by



The gravestone of Brother Roberts

brother Clark to give a delineation of the Truth from its conception down to the final, and to set aside all discussion, as brother Roberts required quiet and rest without excitement. He was to sail next morning at 10 a. m. Brother Roberts was much pleased with the arrangement. This was his last lecture in this life. He gave a very comprehensive delineation, touching on all the points, from the temptation in Eden, taking in the developments of God's plans as they were unfolded in his dealings with Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Israel as a nation, and down the line, Jesus and the apostles until the blessing of all nations by Abraham's seed, the Christ, had become a fact. The meeting was peaceful and soothing to all, and brother Roberts returned to San Francisco at 10:15 p.m.

"Next morning I was completely shocked at 10 a. m. that brother Roberts was dead, which was telephoned to me by sister McCarl. Brother Cheetham called at his hotel at 8:30, and intended to see him onto the steamer; found him on his back on the floor, with his valise open with medicines in sight. The doctor pronounced him dead from heart disease. The body was taken to the morgue, and in the afternoon to the undertakers.

"Mr. Cockroft, a friend of the family and ticket agent of the steamer line, immediately sent telegrams to England and Australia for instructions how to dispose of the remains, but for some reason we have received no answer yet. I presume they will embalm and send the remains either to Australia or to England. I hope that word will come here before tomorrow, as we do not know what to do until we get information. It is very sad news for his family, only it is not death in its absolute form, but sleep until he hear the voice of the Son of Man, and come forth. Love to all, in hope of life, W. A. Clark."¹

Bro. Clark was incorrect in assuming Bro. Roberts' body would be sent back to Australia or even to England. Much more appropriately, he was shipped to New York to be buried beside the man he so admired: Brother John Thomas.

Other voices on the death of Bro. Roberts

William Clark was not the only one who was moved to send a letter about Bro. Robert Roberts' death to the *Advocate* Magazine, which at that time, prior to the spread of the Resurrectional Responsibility division, was the main Christadelphian magazine in North America. A letter written by Bro. Pym from Oakland, gives insight into the agonized feelings of the brethren in the bay area:

"Dear Brother Williams; With mingled feelings of sorrow and of joy I write you concerning the death of our beloved brother Roberts this forenoon, at San Francisco, of which you will doubtless have heard ere this reaches you. For the moment we are all cast down; "bathed in sorrow, bathed in tears." Our brother arrived here from Australia on Wednesday, September 21, in perfect health and cheerful spirit. It was arranged for him to stay at the house of brother McCarl, in Oakland, but as he was to leave here on Friday (this) morning, he chose a room in San Francisco, at an hotel. Last night we had a meeting in Oakland, at which brother Roberts spoke for

about an hour, with that earnestness, richness of thought, and impressive manner so characteristic of the man, and in which I, nearly twenty years ago, delighted so much, at Birmingham, England. I had not seen him since till yesterday. Our brother held us spell-bound while he dilated so beautifully on the purpose of God with the earth, and finished with an earnest exhortation to all of us to be up and doing our part, as the end was drawing rapidly near. He answered a few questions afterwards, and the last words I remember falling from his lips were, "There is no doubt the coming of the Lord is very near." The next I heard was that he was dead. Dear brother Williams, I can write no more at present; my emotions overcome me."

For Bro. Roberts' family in Australia, on the other side of the world from San Francisco, the shock and grief would have been even greater. The editor of the *Advocate Magazine*, Bro. Williams, attempted to convey this feeling to the readers of his magazine as he wrote after Bro. Pym's letter:

"Truly the coming of the Lord was very near to brother Roberts then, in a way he did not expect; and we never know how it is with us. This sad event should be a special warning to us all...And poor sister Roberts! Her declining days have been fraught with grievous disappointments and heart-breaking occurrences, under a sky of saddening, sickening gloom; and now she must bear the fearful shock of this sad and sudden tragic end of a loved and loving companion upon whom her tender hands bestowed untiring care, comfort and solace. Away in a foreign land she is left to weep and mourn, far beyond the reach of those whose life-long acquaintance had fitted them, as it had no others, to render what little comfort may be possible in the thick darkness of this darkest hour. Many hearts will throb for her and streams of burning tears will dim their eyes; and all who know her will pray from the depths of their inmost souls that our Father in heaven will hide her in the pavilion of His love, and help her to realize that, though storms and tempests rage around, her feet may be fixed upon the rock of eternal ages.²

Bro. Hadley, editor of the *Fraternal Visitor Magazine*, though an adversary to Bro. Roberts in the Partial Inspiration controversy, held him in high esteem as shown by his editorial in the October 1898 edition of his magazine.

"Bro. Roberts had removed with his wife and daughter to Melbourne, but was on his way to re-visit England, and was making a short stay with the brethren at San Francisco. We learn from a letter addressed by Bro. Cheetham, of San Francisco, to Bro. J. Genders, that Bro. Roberts arrived from Sydney at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, September 21st. He was met by Bro. Cheetham and Bro. R. C. Bingley, who assisted to get his luggage through the Custom House, and accompanied him to the Post Office to receive letters which were awaiting him. and thence to the Cosmopolitan Hotel, where he put up. Bro. Roberts "seemed to be in good health, only, of course, a little fatigued and upset, as anyone would be after three weeks at sea." Bro. Roberts spent most of the day in correspondence.

“The wide difference of judgment between us and Bro. Roberts upon matters of grave importance in nowise prevents us sharing the sorrow of those most nearly affected by our brother’s death, nor does it prevent us paying honour to his memory in respect of those things for which honour is due. The elder brethren, at least, will, we believe without exception, acknowledge a debt which cannot be forgotten so long as life lasts. Bro. Roberts was in his sixtieth year. He was a native of Aberdeen, and at an early age was convinced of the Scriptural truth of the doctrines taught by the late Dr. Thomas. With enthusiasm and perseverance he set himself to advocate the Truth he had so learnt, and to translate the teachings of the Doctor into a more simple and direct form than that in which he himself conveyed them. While at Huddersfield, in the winter of 1861-62, he delivered “Twelve Lectures on the Teaching of the Bible in relation to the Faiths of Christendom.” Bro. Roberts was at that time about twenty-four years of age (he was in his sixtieth year at the time of his death), but the lectures were a very clear and able statement of the case. They at once commanded a large sale, several editions being published in succession, and they became a standard work, more widely circulated than any other book in our Christadelphian literature. [this book is now titled “Christendom Astray”] The Twelve Lectures, together with “A Defense “ of them, in reply to criticisms of the Rev. J. P. Barnett, combined with exceptional skill as a debater, formed the foundation of Brother Roberts’s pre-eminent position as public exponent of the Christadelphian contention for the Truth. Bro. Roberts removed from Huddersfield to Birmingham early in 1864, and became a member of the reporting staff of the Birmingham Daily Post. He found in Birmingham a small group of earnest brethren and sisters, who were delighted to receive him as teacher, and as their mouthpiece to the public. In June of the same year he started the publication of a small monthly magazine, called “The Ambassador of the Coming Age,” continued in later years as The Christadelphian.” Bro. Roberts was not long at the Daily Post, an appointment as shorthand writer to the Court of Bankruptcy affording him greater leisure and more personal liberty. He then became able to undertake lecturing engagements upon week-days as well as Sundays, and to make personal visits to distant places. How effective was his advocacy is testified to by the large number now living who acknowledge the persuasion that came to them through his voice and writings. Under such circumstances as these — with abilities more marked, with unflagging zeal and consistency, and with leisure more abundant than any of the other brethren who at that time were preaching the Truth could command — it was natural that Bro. Roberts should come to occupy an unique position in our community — a position of influence considerably greater than that of Dr. Thomas, who gladly accepted him as the exponent of his views, and who discontinued his own monthly magazine in his favour. We say this was natural, indeed it was practically inevitable. There were not wanting those who were jealous of Bro. Roberts’s position of leadership, but we were never of their number.”

San Francisco Call newspaper

Christadelphian magazines were not the only media that published information about Bro. Roberts' death. In an article about him in the San Francisco Call newspaper there was some question about who actually discovered the body of Bro. Roberts.

“Robert Roberts, editor of the Christadelphian at Birmingham, England, arrived in this city on the Alameda last Wednesday from Australia and died suddenly yesterday morning in his room at the Cosmopolitan Hotel.

“Mr. Roberts had purchased a ticket for New York by the Canadian Pacific Railway and a steamship ticket from New York to Liverpool and was to have started for Victoria yesterday morning. He had taken a bath and went to his room to dress.

“Shortly after 8 o'clock one of the servants went to his room to inform him that a visitor [brother Cheetham] was inquiring for him and found his dead body on the floor in front of the bureau. The remains were taken to the Morgue and a superficial examination led to the belief that death was caused by heart disease.

“The dead man had more than a local reputation as a writer and lecturer on religious subjects and was on a lecturing tour around the globe. His itinerary found among his papers shows that he had intended to stop at various places along the route to deliver lectures. This would prolong his journey until December 20 of this year, on which date he intended to deliver his last lecture of the tour.

“The discovery of the death was indirectly made by James Cheetham, a salesman for M. Friedman, the Post-street Furniture dealer. Mr Cheetham promised to see Roberts off and called on that mission, when he was informed of the sad occurrence. Cheetham said he left Roberts last evening apparently in the best of health.

“Roberts had written several works, among which are “Christendom Astray,” “The Trial” and “Did Christ Rise?”

“An examination of his effects disclosed a number of medicines used as remedies for heart troubles.

“He leaves a widow and two daughters in Melbourne and a son in London. The sad news has been wired to them and the remains lie in Porter's undertaking establishment awaiting their orders.”³

Perhaps there was a mistake made by the writer or perhaps the worker did discover Bro. Roberts first and left the door unlocked which allowed Bro. Cheetham entrance into the room.

Robert Roberts death was reported by a number of newspapers across the Atlantic in England as well. James Cheetham's brother in law (his sister Lillie's husband), wrote a reply to James' letter detailing Bro. Robert's death. In the letter, dated

December 25, 1898, he noted that they had learned of the death from their local paper, showing how well known Bro. Roberts was in England:

“Dear Lizzie and Jim, Greeting in the name of Jesus Christ. It is really too bad of me keeping you so long without a letter in reply to the one received from Jim in October, and certainly the details of the sudden death of Bro. Roberts. It would indeed be a shock to you as it was to all of us in Birmingham. I had been out on the Saturday afternoon to Whitacre, a country place in the direction of Tamereth. When I arrived home, Lillie told us of the sad event which they had learnt from that night’s paper. No details were of course given and as the Telegram had come from the shipping agent [Mr. Cockroft] it was supposed by many that Bro. R. had died either before landing or before getting in touch with the brethren; if he had landed. Jim’s letter to me was the first one which arrived in Birmingham giving details though Bro. Challim [?] had received one from Bro. Hardaker in which he repeated the information which I presume you had posted to him. Unfortunately I was rather late in starting to the meeting that morning and was not able to convey the details of Jim’s letter to the Temperance Hall before going to our own meeting. You will probably know by this time that Lillie and myself are now meeting with the Brethren at the Masonic Hall. The letter was read at our meeting and I afterwards went to the Temperance Hall and lent it to Bro. Shuttleworth who no doubt found it useful as he was lecturing on the death of Bro. Roberts that evening and was therefore able to give the details. I afterwards sent it on to Bro. Roberts’ son in London. You would notice that the letter was printed almost in its entirety in the Fraternal Visitor for October, two copies of which were posted to you...”

The Temperance Hall ecclesia that James’ brother-in-law mentioned in his letter would later become the Central ecclesia, hence the name Central Fellowship. The Masonic Hall, on the other hand, was the meeting place of the Fraternal Visitor Fellowship, which later developed into the Suffolk Street Fellowship. It was nearly sixty years after Bro. Roberts’ death before there was reunion between the Suffolk Street Fellowship and the Central Fellowship in 1956 through the efforts of the *Christadelphian Magazine* editor at the time, Bro. John Carter.

The stop in San Francisco by the magazine’s editor in 1898 appeared to have ended in tragedy for the brotherhood, but the visit actually did have the effect that Bro. Roberts hoped it would. One reason for his short stop in San Francisco had been to look into reports that the ecclesia there was unsound in its understanding on the inspiration question. His visit, and perhaps even more his death, seems to have brought the issue into focus for the San Francisco ecclesia. Within a couple of years one group of Brothers and Sisters in San Francisco leaned toward the Fraternal Visitor point of view and the other in Oakland toward that of the *Christadelphian* magazine. While Bro. Cheetham may have been a bit hesitant to speak up about the controversy when Bro. Roberts was in his home, he later took a very strong stand in regards to what he believed to be the correct understanding about the inspiration of the scriptures. Sadly all of this ended in a split between the ecclesias

which, when compounded with the Resurrectional Responsibility issue, lasted over one-hundred years.

Gordon Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

Notes:

1. *Christadelphian Advocate Magazine*, October, 1898
2. *Christadelphian Advocate Magazine*, October, 1898
3. San Francisco Call Newspaper, September 24, 1898, as quoted in the *Christadelphian Magazine*, 2010

DEATH OF AN ENGLISH EDITOR.

Rev. Robert Roberts Suddenly Stricken With Heart Disease.

ROBERT ROBERTS, editor of the *Christadelphian* at Birmingham, England, arrived in this city on the Alameda last Wednesday from Australia and died suddenly yesterday morning in his room at the Cosmopolitan Hotel.

Mr. Roberts had purchased a ticket for New York by the Canadian Pacific Railway and a steamship ticket from New York to Liverpool and was to have started for Victoria yesterday morning. He had taken a bath and went to his room to dress.

Shortly after 8 o'clock one of the servants went to his room to inform him that a visitor was inquiring for him and found his dead body on the floor in front of the bureau. The remains were taken to the Morgue and a superficial examination led to the belief that death was caused by heart disease.

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The San Francisco Call, Sept 28 1898 p. 9

Reflections

Scriptural Discipline (1) The Call to Holiness

Scriptural discipline is often a difficult topic for brothers and sisters to discuss. It brings to mind painful interactions and often strains at the very fabric of our ecclesial lives. However, as we examine Scriptural standards for ecclesial life and the real principles for discipline, it offers to significantly increase our faith and strengthen the bonds of fellowship. Following Scriptural discipline nurtures us as a holy people in a world progressively more hostile to holiness. We will strive to examine the fundamental principles of the Body of Christ and the interactions and culture of the first century disciples. We trust that you will find these foundations to be challenging and potentially exciting.

Often discipline is examined by brothers and sisters in the heat of the conflict. We may find ourselves facing a difficult issue within our ecclesia, wrapped up with sensitive family concerns and often extenuating circumstances that can make proper application of principles difficult. Further, our review of Scriptural discipline often fails to take a more holistic look at how the ecclesia is divinely intended to operate cooperatively against sin. Scriptural discipline is best viewed in light of a complete understanding of how we are to strive for holiness today, how the ecclesia is to be a practical and powerful protection against the darts of the wicked, and how the Lord works in the lives of all erring brothers and sisters. The Lord has not left us as orphans, and the call to holiness engages individuals and members of the Body in one of the most intimate and powerful aspects of our fellowship. We may not have fully captured this power in our lives. As the darkness of these Last Days closes in, we must capture this spirit and engage all the armor of God in our ecclesias.

Sadly, most ecclesias today are scarred by the influence of Humanism, the intrusion of carnal thinking and practices into the lives of our members. It is a noxious, invisible gas (2Pet 2:20) that has progressively penetrated into our view of ecclesial and individual interactions, as well as the standards we must be committed to. In my travels, I always see nods of the heads of brothers and sisters when this is discussed. It has invaded the lives of our dearest and most intimate family members, as well as our beloved brothers and sisters. It feels as if it is an unavoidable cloud that is descending on us — the surfeiting and drowsiness of the Last days.

But it need not be so! The Lord has provided his disciples with all the weapons needed in this warfare. His presence today is as strong as in any age to those who eschew evil and pursue righteousness. So, let's take a closer look at how to use this armor and be bright shining lights in a world that desperately needs this witness.

Why a review of Scriptural discipline?

A few introductory points may be helpful.

- Most would agree that discipline in the ecclesia is often misunderstood and too often misapplied
- We often hear fleshly evaluations of what is appropriate discipline, and not from the pages of Truth
- We usually consider discipline reactively, in heat of a volatile issue, rather than from a systematic Scriptural study
- Discipline is often discussed without context, without an understanding how it fits into the role and very fabric of the ecclesia
- We think of discipline as being for the weak, not the strong — discipline is for the unstable
- At times we fail to apply Scriptural guidelines for restoration — often because we don't believe they will work!
- Our ecclesias have never been under greater threat and we must have this right if we are to survive!

In a survey¹ conducted by the Barna Group in 2006, a series of questions were asked about perceptions of holiness.

- Do you think holiness is possible today?
- Do you know someone you consider to be holy?
- Do you consider yourself holy?

Interestingly, there was very little difference between the “born again” survey group and the general North American population. About three-quarters believed that holiness WAS possible in the day we live in. However, only about half felt that they knew others that were holy today. Still more surprising was the response to “do you consider yourself to be holy?” Less than 30% felt that they were holy today.

Perhaps the results of such a survey would be skewed differently if it was given within our own community. Maybe not. What this survey demonstrated was that holiness for many is an “abstract” concept. It may be clear what righteous behaviors are required by our God, but we see the flaws in one another and certainly we are even more aware of our own failings. Could a person with imperfect faith like me be holy? Most would say “no.”

Holiness

We need to clarify our view of holiness. It is not restricted to those who are completely without sin! It is also not an abstract, unattainable concept, where we can only hope for the Kingdom when we will truly be holy people unto our God. Certainly this is the ultimate vision. When finally freed from the impulses and weakness of the flesh, we hunger for a life that is freed from sin and its effects. But, the expectation of our God is for us to be a holy people TODAY.

“Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy” (Lev 19:2).

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwell-

eth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1Cor 3:16-17).

“Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ‘Make level paths for your feet,’ so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:12-14 NIV).

Just as Israel was to be a holy nation and thereby be witnesses to the Gentiles, we now are expected to be a holy temple — a place where righteous acts are demonstrated and holiness is the source of our thinking. It is not just a recommendation — it is a requirement!

Often the words righteousness and holiness are used interchangeably in our communications. Indeed, even Scripture uses these words in the same passages describing the life of believers. Bro. Dennis Gillett in *The Genius of Discipleship* wrote:

“The essential ingredient of righteousness and holiness is the same, that is rightness, but the difference lies in the sphere of operation. Here is an attempt at a definition: righteousness is rightness of conduct; holiness is rightness of character.”

Rightness, once called “rightwiseness” therefore is the expression of our conduct. It is what is expressed from a person who has a holy character. Of course, it is possible that righteous acts can be done by those who do not have their hearts right with God. The Scribes and Pharisees are the example of our Lord to illustrate this. Righteousness is not to be “exuded” in a mechanical way, but rather as an expression of what is inside of us.

Here’s what Paul wrote about the pursuit of holiness.

“I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness (dikaiosune) leading to holiness (hagiasmos)” (Rom 6:19 NIV).

This is most helpful in understanding holiness. How do we achieve holiness in our lives today? It is through being fully committed to a life that is conducted in righteousness. Righteous conduct (though perhaps forced at times) reinforces and builds holiness inside. When we are fully committed to doing righteousness, it builds inside us a new way of thinking. That new thinking creates new behaviors. That leads to holiness. It is Divinely intended to be a self-sustaining process.

The spiritual mind

Of course, this is the battle we all face. We have minds that are naturally disposed to fleshly thinking and behaviors. Transformation and renovation must occur if we are to have the mind of Christ. This is what Paul speaks of in Romans 8 when he states that the carnal mind CANNOT please God. Therefore, we are in pursuit of the spiritual mind. It is the spiritual mind which we might equate to holiness. The spiritual mind does not produce the works of the flesh, but rather the beautiful fruit of the spirit.

So, why is it that we all experience so many misfires in this this transformation? As life marches on, we see progress, but we all yearn to be more like our Lord, to have our “religion” feel more natural and less “forced.” Well, Scripture is not silent on this either.

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;” (1Pet 2:11).

Peter uses a very strong word here to describe what happens when we participate in fleshly lusts. It begins a “war” in the minds of a believer. We activate an army that is circled, encamped around us, waiting to attack. The battle is for our thinking. If we participate in the lusts of the flesh, it is a self-inflicted wound against the transformational process our Lord has begun in us. This is contrasted to a spiritual mind, where it is the LORD who encamps around those that fear Him.

Now, how does this actually work? I suppose we already all know. When we are involved in fleshly lusts, we find our faith weakened. Spiritual discernment is dulled. Our love for our brothers and sisters may be diminished. It is harder to be the person we all want to be.

If you consider your own computer for a moment, perhaps this will help to illustrate the point. When we all get the dreaded “blue screen” warning that our computer has been infected with a virus, it is something we must pay attention to. Even though we thought we had the appropriate anti-virus software, somehow this virus got in. Maybe it was something that happened innocently, maybe not? But nevertheless we have the virus and it is active. If it is not dealt with and removed, our computer slows. It affects the ability to process information. Existing files become corrupted. Eventually, our computer may become so infected, so sluggish that it is just about useless. In the end, it may crash and all is lost!

That may be similar to what the Apostle Peter had in mind when he spoke of this “war against the soul.” We activate this virus. It prevents the proper operation of a spiritual mind. Until we remove the participation in the lust from our life, we will not experience holiness.

Just a few preliminary points we’d like to stress here in our review of the foundations of Scriptural discipline...

- When we are ensnared by sin, we have great difficulty discerning righteousness and holiness
- Our minds CANNOT operate spiritually as intended and continued engagement robs us of life as it is intended
- When we are freed from sin, healing takes place and our minds are gradually restored to health
- Minds freed from sin are capable of doing, seeing and being what our Lord intends for us

Therefore, the purpose of Scriptural discipline is to help each other have healthy minds, where the Lord can grow and operate. It is not punitive. It is corrective. It is not an expression of anger or insensitivity, but is the outworking of a body of believers that will not have any to be lost.

We'd like to close this first article by appealing for all to embrace a renewed commitment to holiness. Indeed, our lives are not to be lived as if we are on spiritual desert islands! We should NOT feel we must take on our weaknesses and the challenges to our faith all by ourselves. Since we are committed as a community to holiness and the expression of righteousness, your problems are my problems and mine yours. We are to operate as an intimate community, sharing the real challenges of our lives together, praying for one another and being willing to either encourage or pull one another out of the fire. This is the topic of our next article.

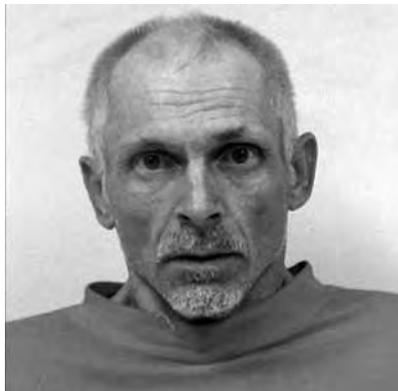
David Jennings (Pomona, CA)

Notes:

1. <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/162-the-concept-of-holiness-baffles-most-americans#.UkGdGjbD-Uk>

In Memory of William Casivant

“Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me” (Matt 25:36)



After a long battle with a rare bullous lung disease Bro. William Casivant passed away on Sunday, July 21, 2013 at the John M. Reed Nursing Home in Limestone, Tennessee. He now sleeps in the Lord.

He first wrote to us in 2004 after finding a *Bible Basics* in the County Jail in Mountain City, Tennessee. Sis. Marilyn Seago was his tutor. He was one of our first prison baptisms. He always believed in One God and so he did not get attached to other churches. Instead when he was first in prison he was associated with the Sunni

Muslims, studied and did become an imam and had a group of men under him. Then it bothered him that he may be leading men away from Jesus, so when he found the Christadelphians and learned what we believed, he was very happy. He quit being an Imam. Then he took the *Exploring the Bible* course and then read *What the Bible Teaches*. He also received various pamphlets from us. Bro. Wes Booker visited him and heard his confession of faith. On September 30, 2004 the chaplain of the County Jail walked with William across the street from the Jail to a nearby church where he immersed William in the Lord. William was allowed to walk across the street to the church just as a civilian would have, without any handcuffs. This surprised him. He was trusted by the chaplain. He served his time in the Brushy Mountain Prison, which has now been closed because it is obsolete. William liked to preach the Word to others while he was in prison. He was released in 2006 to begin his life over. It was rough beginning again and he made a few mistakes, but did find work as a carpenter. He had a degree in welding and was a journeyman carpenter and millwright.

Bro. William was born on December 3, 1962 in Connecticut. He was raised in Florida, lived in Michigan, South Carolina and Tennessee. Bro. William developed a rare bullous lung disease as a young man. In his 20s he went to the Vanderbilt Hospital where he had half of his lungs removed in hopes it would stop the disease, but it didn't. His mother died of this disease at 59 and so did another relative. He had a rough life.

Bro. William kept working as a carpenter fixing roofs, decks and interiors of mobile homes. He cut up huge trees that fell over in storms in the area all the while trying to deal with his breathing problem. Sometime before 2004 he said that a doctor gave him five years to live and he lived beyond that. Sis. Marilyn told him that was because God wanted you to learn the Truth.

He hated to go to the hospital when his lungs got worse, because the doctors where he lived at the time (Johnson City, TN) didn't understand his disease. They treated him like an alien with all kinds of tests. His condition grew worse. He and his wife, Dianne, moved from Johnson City to Bulls Gap and lived in a mobile home in the country. Here William was able to get hospice care. In the beginning they sent over a chaplain to introduce himself to William and that was all. William asked him if he had anything else he had to do and the Chaplain said 'No', so William invited him to stay a bit. They talked for two hours and the Chaplain said he hadn't run across anyone as educated as he was in a while. He even asked William if he could come back and visit with him again. He never saw anyone so calm and understanding about how his life was going. This made William feel good. He loved to talk about God.

Eventually hospice was not giving William and Dianne enough care. They needed more assistance so hospice made arrangements for them both to be approved to go to a nursing home. William was always looking out for Dianne and wanted her cared for when he passed away. He knew the time was near.

Bro. William appreciated all the help and support our ecclesia gave to him. He wanted so much to come and meet our ecclesia and thank everyone personally, but that wasn't meant to be, although the ecclesia was always in his prayers. He told me once that this was the family he was always seeking to find. He now sleeps awaiting the call of Jesus upon his return to set up God's Kingdom.

*Submitted by Ted Sleeper
(San Francisco Peninsula, CA)*

Bro. William Casivant was referred through the internet. He did the Bible Basics course and it completely changed his life. Bro. William is in a prison in Tennessee. He wrote that he didn't care about his life before, doing careless and stupid things to get into trouble. When he was in prison, he studied the Quran and became a teacher of it. However, he had the feeling he was leading inmates away from God and it scared him. When he read Bible Basics, he found it all made better sense to him. He said his life mattered now, and he wanted to get baptized.

(The Tidings, Dec 2006, p519)

Letters

Strong's Concordance

Strong's concordance is one of many tools available to the serious student. (See the editorial, *The Tidings*, Oct 2013.) It records the various translations of the word from the original language, but not the actual meaning. The translators used immediate context and their own personal, sometimes biased, understanding to determine a meaning. The most obvious is the use of the capitalized 'Spirit' (only slightly better than 'Ghost') where no such emphasis is made in the original text. The RSV, from the 1950's is a better work, but it is no longer widely available. The new ESV, which I prefer because of the clarity of the language, is even more markedly slanted toward the Trinitarian view, so caution is needed in its use. There is an ESV version available with Strong's numbers, but as with the KJV, caution is needed.

Young's concordance is slightly better as a tool, but it seems to lack support amongst scholars. Personally I lean towards using on-line study aids, and Young's is not very well supported.

There are numerous tools available on-line to help with understanding the languages of the scriptures. Since they are man-made, however, they need to be used prayerfully and carefully.

When we look at Bible study, in my humble opinion, we need to observe the following:

- 1) Prayer
- 2) Context in:
 - a) The chapter
 - b) The particular book
 - c) Historical context,
 - d) Relation to the mystery revealed in Christ
- 3) Be prepared to have your opinion changed
- 4) Be brutally honest with yourself.

This last one simply means not to read into a text your own personal opinions and biases.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5 ESV).

*Dave Green
(Mt Hebron Sussex, NB)*



Bible Mission News

May Pen, Jamaica Miss Beverly Gibbs — Now a Sister-in-Christ.



**Baptism of Sis. Beverly Gibbs
in Salt River.**

**Bro. Patrick Johnson in the left and Bro.
Melvin Gordon on right.**

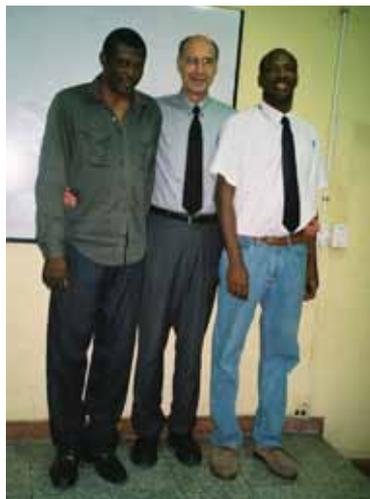
was conducted by the Recording Brother. On the 7th of July 2013, Sister Beverly gave a true confession of her faith in Christ Jesus through the waters of baptism. Thank God, Sister Beverly is now a member of God's family, which includes believers in the past, present and future.

We rejoice in the Lord as we walk hand in hand towards the coming kingdom!

*May Pen Ecclesia, Jamaica
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Jamaica — Preaching, Health and Welfare

We were blessed with another opportunity to spend time with the ecclesias in Jamaica during the month of September 2013. Special Bible Classes and Breaking of Bread services were held, a Preaching Campaign took place in Spanish Town and a number of pastoral visits were made — all on behalf of the CBMJ.



Left to right: Brothers Terrol Henry, Don Luff and Keith Kinlocke after lecture in Spanish Town.

Bible Classes were held with the Kingston and the May Pen ecclesias on the theme of “He hath done all things well” taken from Mark 7:37. A quarterly CBMJ meeting took place on Saturday, September 28th when among many items on the agenda, the proposed Calendar of Events for 2014 was reviewed. Most plans were confirmed until August of next year. Advanced planning for the approximately 14 annual events regarding locations, reservations, study topics and speaker selections are important.

Four advertised public lectures were held in Spanish Town with disappointing attendance results. Two talks were given on Friday, September 27 and the other two on Sunday, September 29 with only one new visitor the second evening. There are many churches in Jamaica (and more new ones all the time) with entertaining bands and emotionally charged music to draw people, plus the constant appeal for money (tithing) — misleading individuals

with the false hope of material blessings if they give to the ‘pastor’. This influence may have impacted visits to our lectures as there were two large conventions closeby hosted by these churches. However members’ children and young people were present, to listen to the important doctrines expounded, and this is part of the process in preparing them for baptism (see accompanying photo of three brothers who supported the lectures).

Visits were made to the home of an elderly sister of the May Pen Ecclesia who has been shut-in due to poor health for years, and to a hospital — spending time with a brother due for surgery (which was successful). We also visited a teenager of a family in the Port Maria Ecclesia who because of a tragic circumstance was left disabled — it is hoped that future medical care will help to improve his condition. The last visit was to a happy 11-year-old boy who was born with cerebral palsy. He cannot speak, walk or take care of himself. The CBMC recently released funding for the purchase of a wheelchair to help — now he can be moved around his home more easily and taken to a nearby school for association with other children.

The CBMC is also continuing to work through the CBMJ to provide funding to assist in the purchase of educational supplies for some children and youth of

Christadelphian families in Jamaica. We believe this support is important for their secular education and will hopefully provide greater employment opportunities in the future. Children who receive an adequate education will also benefit their ecclesia in the future, by being able to serve more effectively.

Another project that started in the month of September was that of two small additions to the May Pen Ecclesial Hall. The ecclesia has met in a renovated house for many years, with several additions being added to it over that time period, but only one washroom has been available for all. A second washroom for the females has been added (the original now for males), along with another small room which will serve mainly as a classroom (see accompanying photos).

We thank our Heavenly Father for His on-going blessings as we work together in anticipation of our Lord's Return.

*Article written by CBMC linkman,
Don Luff.
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



Small Classroom addition looking at front of May Pen Hall. Left hand corner addition.



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 Jonathan Farrar, 140 Whitwell Way, Binbrook, ON, L0R 1C0, 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 522 Book Road East, Ancaster, ON, Canada, L9G 3L1.

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.)

ORLANDO, FL

Our long time friend TIM BONVECHIO was baptized into the household of our Lord on September 15, 2013. Bro. Randy Davenport officiated. Sis. Connie Bonvechio, Tim's mother, and Sis. Lynne Spozarsky from the Treasure Coast Florida Ecclesia attended. The baptism took place at the home of Bro. Daniel and Sis. Dawn Garan. Everyone enjoyed a luncheon after the service. It was a joyful day, and we wish our new brother a blessed walk toward the Kingdom of God. Bro. Tim lives with his wife Kim, and daughters Hannah and Lily in Blackshear, Georgia.

We welcome Bro. Aaron and Sis. Ronda Markwith to the table of our Lord. Their children, Shiloh and Gabriel, have also joined our Sunday School. The Markwiths reside in Orlando, and we are blessed to have them join us in fellowship.

The following brothers and sisters attended our meeting over the last few months: Stephen and Betty Lou Lewis (Largo, FL); Julie Sanfilippo (Oviedo, FL); Tim and Kim Bonvechio and Hannah and Lily (Blackshear, GA); Dave and Lynn, James and Natasha Wilkers (UK); and Bruce Gurd (Adelaide, Aust.). Many thanks go out to those brothers who exhorted.

Randy Davenport

OTTAWA, ON

We are delighted to welcome Bro. Larry and Sis Vinca Goodridge as new members, by transfer from the Denver, CO Ecclesia. Since their move, they have been blessed with a new son, Wesley.

Over the past year the Ottawa, ON Ecclesia has enjoyed fellowship with brothers and sisters from various Ontario ecclesias, Montreal, Ohio, Washington DC, and the UK. In particular we thank those visiting brothers who have exhorted and given Bible classes.

Charles Archard

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA, CA

The San Francisco Peninsula, CA Ecclesia has been richly blessed these last few years as we have sought to establish ourselves in our ecclesial hall in Redwood City after having been in Belmont for over 30 years. Through the generosity of many we have been able to make improvements to our hall, which have enabled us to better accommodate our Sunday school children but also host a week-long VBS for the past 3 summers. This past summer nearly 50 children attended with more than half from the local community. Sadly none have followed up as part of our Sunday school.

We have rejoiced in baptisms over the last 2 years. The first was DALE EDGETT, baptized Sept. 11, 2011. Bro. Dale came to us from one of our Learn to Read the Bible Effectively seminars, followed by more than 2 years of weekly Bible classes. He has been a wonderful addition to our ecclesial family. On December 2, 2011, SARAH DONDERO-ESPOSITO, youngest of Bro. Marco and Sis. Joan Dondero's children,

was baptized in the Pacific Ocean near Pescadero beach. It was a beautiful setting. Then ANGEL PALMA, husband of our Sis. Angeles, was baptized August 25, 2013. He has been having Bible classes with us for more than 2 years. It has been our special joy to watch his faith blossom and grow.

Our Bro. Jesse Warner and his wife, Randa, welcomed their sweet daughter, Selah Grace into the world August 18, 2013. She is a lovely baby and a great joy to both her parents and both sets of grandparents. She is currently our only baby.

Two brothers from Taiwan have joined our ecclesia. Last year we were joined by Abraham Wang and this year by River Wu. We are delighted to have them both. We have gained, by transfer from Sacramento, CA, Bro. Ben Gallagher, who along with Bro. James Robinson add youth to our mid-week Bible class at the hall. Sis. Sierra Gaston, from the Mendocino, CA Ecclesia has been with us nearly 2 years while she is completing her Bachelor's degree at a nearby university. Recently, Sis. Sharon Bell, sister to Sis. Dana Davidson and daughter of Sis. Mary Ann Brinkerhoff, transferred from San Francisco, CA Ecclesia to our ecclesia.

Our Bro. Jim Stinehoff continues to reside in a board and care home but thankfully is brought by ambulance transport most Sundays to meeting. Bro. Richard Naylor, due to his worsening rheumatoid arthritis is home bound. We pray that he might be able to move to a board and care home where his needs could be better addressed. Our Sis. Wendy Kistosurian is also home bound due mostly to disabling headaches. Our Sis. Lorraine Opitz was attending the Sacramento, CA Ecclesia but is no longer able to do that as she lives too far and there is no one to transport her. We very occasionally get to see her when someone is able to collect her and return her home again.

In April 2010, our dear Sis. Ina Gravlee fell asleep in the Lord. Our sympathies went out to all the family. She was one of the last of the matriarchs of our ecclesia. She was buried on the New Mexico Bible school grounds, across the road from where she grew up. We miss her quiet presence and down to earth ways. Her daughter, Sis. Jan Riley and husband, Bro. Ray, continue to be faithful attendees despite the 75 miles each way they have to travel every Sunday and the fact that they both are in their 70s. They are a wonderful example to us.

Much to the grief and shock of our ecclesia, the entire Brett Wickham family decided to leave the Christadelphian community. The loss of their 9 children cut our Sunday school in half. We sorely miss them and pray that one day they will return.

Over the last 3 years we have welcomed many visiting brethren and have benefitted from their ministrations. We welcome visitors passing through the area. We are located right between the San Francisco and San Jose airports so if you are in the area for business or pleasure please be sure to look us up.

Dolores Sleeper

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

We had several visits this year from our new transfers: Sis.' Annette DeHoog and Tammy Haringa, both transferred from the Pomona, CA Ecclesia. Both live in isolation, one an hour and a half away in Bakersfield, CA and one sixteen hours away in Prosser, WA. Our Bro. Syd Wattles continues to suffer with his back and diabetes; please keep him in your prayers.

Our Sis. Jeanne Smith is now staying temporarily with the Crouse's, while she waits for senior housing in the area to become available. Please continue your prayers for

her. We have been greatly encouraged by the loving response of brothers and sisters across the States, and the generous support from a number of ecclesias. Sis. Jeanne suffered the loss of her husband from rejection of a double-lung transplant in 2012, and earlier this year suffered the loss of all her possessions in a house fire. We are also so thankful for the love of the sisters who sent blankets to console her through these difficult times. Sis. Jeanne is a great-granddaughter of Sis. Lizzie Cheetham, her grandmother being Rosamond Cheetham Wade, recently written about in the Tidings by her cousin Bro. G. Hensley. Some of the items Jeanne lost in the house fire were postcards of San Francisco and items inherited from her grandmother.

Thanks also to our brethren in the San Francisco Peninsula who continue to send us speakers with their encouraging talks. It is much appreciated. We have enjoyed talks by Bre: Dwayne Tunnell (Wichita TX) in February; John Pople, Jim Seago, Marco Dondero, James Robinson (San Francisco Peninsula, CA); and recently, Max Wickham (San Diego, CA).

Roger Crouse

VANCOUVER, BC

We are sorry to lose by transfer Sis. Shonna Malczewski who has moved to Kelowna, BC to be near her mother and joined the Vernon, BC Ecclesia. We also lose by transfer Sis. Leanne Fidan who has moved to Ontario. She has joined the Brampton, ON Ecclesia. We commend our sisters in love to the care of their new ecclesias.

Bro. Nathan Badger (Cambridge, ON) spoke at our annual fraternal gathering on the weekend of October 12, 2013. We thank him for his stimulating messages from the letters of Peter.

Terry Fearn

Wednesday, July 15th.—The [Ship] Charmer arrived a Vancouver at 8 p.m. There was opportunity to visit the city, most picturesquely situate on rising ground, overlooking extensive waters enclosed by high hills on all sides, except on the sea-ward side. It is a city of very recent growth, and owes its existence to the construction of the Canadian-Pacific Line. Prior to that event, it was silent bush. Now, it is a busy, active, extensive place, with solid streets, large public buildings, electric trams, and electric lighting. It flourished with great rapidity for some years: but like most other places, it has had a set-back for some years, owing to the collapse of inflated values, which has depressed business of all kinds. That it will recover before the coming of the Lord, we do not know. With that event, it will doubtless be involved with the whole world in the terrible upheavals that will mark the prolonged transition from the present miserable dispensation to the glorious one beyond—"a time of trouble such as never was." From that time of trouble it will emerge, after years of humiliation, into the calm sunshine of the Lord, when men will no longer have the management of their own affairs: which they are not fit to manage, for even when prosperity comes, they run it to death, and kick each other into the ditch. [Robert Roberts]

The Christadelphian, 1897 p 273.

Minute Meditation

What's in a name?

We call ourselves Christadelphians. When someone unfamiliar with us first hears about us, they often say, "That's a funny name." We respond by asking, "Do you think that the word Philadelphia is a funny word?" No one has ever said that they did. Then we explain that the word Philadelphia is simply two Greek words put together; the Greek word for love is *phileo* and the Greek word for brother is *adelphia*, so Philadelphia actually means "love-brother." The city of Philadelphia is known as the city of brotherly love because that is the meaning of its name in Greek.

We explain that our name combines the word Christ and the Greek word for brother, so it means "Christ-brother," or brethren of Christ. So our name is not funny at all; it simply states that we are brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is it presumptuous to call ourselves brethren of Christ? We read in Hebrews, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Christ is the captain of our salvation, and he chooses to call those for whom he died his brethren. We humbly and thankfully take the name, Christadelphians, Christ's brethren.

No one is born a Christadelphian. Some of us may have parents, grandparents and great grandparents all who are or were Christadelphians, but no one is born one. Each Christadelphian has made a personal decision to accept the Lord Christ Jesus as their savior and to serve him with all their heart. Part of that decision requires obedience to the command to be baptized, and since baptism is conditional on belief, each candidate for baptism is interviewed to ensure that there is an understanding of the importance of the commitment and a basis of belief.

Being related to Christ conveys privileges and responsibilities. We become eligible to receive the benefits of the promise that God made to Abraham; the apostle Paul tells us, "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." The promise includes blessings in our lifetime as well as in the life to come. The responsibilities Jesus has told us about twice in the Gospel of John, "If ye love me, keep my commandments," and "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." The apostle John assures us "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."

Carrying the name, brethren of Christ, is a privilege we should not take lightly. Twice Solomon tells us of the value of a good name: in Proverbs he says, "A good

name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold,” and then in Ecclesiastes he explains, “A good name is better than precious ointment.”

Each of us should be conscious of the good name we have taken on and work to uphold it. Our lives should reflect the one whose name we have assumed. When Christ wrote to the ecclesia in Sardis, he told them, “These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.” They had a name for not doing the work of the Lord. May it never be said of us that we are dead in our service to our Lord.

If we truly are Christ’s brethren and sisters then we must try to live in accordance with his commandments, leading godly lives where we put his service and the needs of others before our own. Paul tells us, “We then who are strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’” In the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ submitted to his Father’s will with the words, “Not my will but thine be done.” We must strive to do the same.

We all long to have our personal name written in the book of life. Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians, “And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help ... my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.” At the judgment the book of life will be opened to see if our name is there, as we read in Revelations, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

All of us should feel thankful to be called a Christadelphian, and we must strive to live up to that name. May we be truly Christ’s brethren, emulating our Lord, and at that last day may we find our name written in the book of life. We are promised, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

Robert J. Lloyd

*“Is it lawful for a Christian to bear arms?” This was the title of a letter in the Feb. 1860 Herald, and Dr. Thomas replied “our conviction is that Christians should leave the devil to fight his own battles, and that if he sought to compel them to serve in his ranks, they ought to refuse to do so... (shall) we, **brethren in Christ**, meet in deadly conflict to slay one another in the devil’s interest? Perish the thought!” This is, as far as I know, the first use of the term “brethren in Christ” by Dr. Thomas, in the same context as the one used four years later when he coined the term “Christadelphian.”*

From “John Thomas, his Friends and his faith”, by Peter Hemingray

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

DECEMBER 2013

21-27 Ontario Winter Bible School at The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers and subjects: Bro. Neville Clark (Tea Tree Gully, S. Australia): "Abraham & His Times"; Bro. David Nicholls (Gorseinon, South Wales, UK): "Under whose wings thou art come to Trust", young people "Redemption in Christ"; and Bro. Tim Osborne (Okanagan, BC): "The Epistle of James, Reflections on the Lord's Ministry". More information on our website www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

28-Jan4 Texas Youth Conference at T4C near Freestone, TX. Speaker: Bro. Shane Kirkwood, New South Wales, AUS. His topic is "John the Baptist". Website: www.texasyouthconference.com.

JANUARY 2014

17-19 Rogue Valley, OR Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Wilton Brisbane, AUS). The topic is: "The Sabbath — Its Prophecies, Principles, and Prospects". Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida for further information — yoshida@cpros.com

FEBRUARY 2014

23-28 Palm Springs Bible School. The speakers this year will be Bro. Wilfred Alleyne (Birmingham, UK), and Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). The school offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's word and enjoy fellowship. To register, contact Jeff Gelineau at register@christadelphianbibleschool.org, or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org.

APRIL 2014

18-20 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at T4C. Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON) will lead us in a study entitled "The Ecclesia — A Place of Refuge". For registration contact Bro. Larry Beutel at Lbeutel@alsco.com.

JUNE 2014

28-July 6 Mid-Atlantic Christadelphian Bible School at Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, AUS), Bro. Jay Mayock, Jr. (Hamilton, Book Road, ON) and Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, Swansea, UK). Contact by e-mail Robin Colby macbs@live.com or check our website: <http://www.midatlanticbibleschool.com/>. More information will be forthcoming.

JULY 2014

6-12 Southwest Christadelphian Bible School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The teachers will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Queensland, AUS), Bro. Stephen Palmer (Mumbles, South Wales, UK), and Bro. Leen Ritmeyer (Cardiff, Museum Place, Wales, UK) Information will be posted on the website: www.swcbs.com.

27-Aug 2 Rogue River Bible School. Topics and teachers are: "The Divided Kingdom" by Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK); "The Days of Ahab" by Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON); "The Faithful Kings: Rebuilding the Ecclesia" by Bro. Greg Robinson (Thousand Oaks, CA). Contact Bro. Randy Yoshida for further information — yoshida@cpros.com For registration, contact Sis. Pat Posey — robandpatposey@gmail.com.

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