

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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Children: Extract from chapter on “Having Children” from “Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage” By John Bilello (Tidings Books)

An old adage claimed that children cement a marriage. Indeed, children are a heritage from the Lord (Psa 127:3) and He intended from the very beginning that the family would be the foundation of society. After creating Adam and Eve, He commissioned them: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen 1:28). Before a couple gets married, they absolutely must discuss how they feel about being fruitful and multiplying. Perhaps no other decisions can affect the harmony of a marriage more than whether or not to have children, and if so blessed, how to deal with them at every stage of life. Failing to carefully consider what children would mean to the marriage relationship could find the couple ending up with cement that crumbles rather than binds as the years go by. In ages past, the decision to have children was entirely left up to the natural course of things in a marriage. If blessed with offspring, mother and father dealt with it and raised them to adulthood whatever number came along. My father’s mother, born in the 19th century, had 12 children, giving birth literally every couple of years until she was no longer able.

Editorial

Parenting

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

The Way he (or she) should go

This verse is sometimes used to indicate that it is the fault of parents if the child does not turn out correctly, follows the Truth, is baptized, and raises contented Christian children in his (or her) turn. Many Christadelphian parents are consumed by worry as to whether they will (or have) messed up their children's lives. They are focused on ensuring their children will follow the way laid out in the Proverbs above, the path that, they believe, will surely lead to their own Christian faith and values being successfully transmitted to their offspring, who in turn will become faithful, active members of an ecclesia.

When our children fail (as they inevitably will, if only in not living up to their parent's hopes and expectation), they are truly concerned, because essentially they believe in psychological determinism, that parenting produces the child. How often have we heard “as the twig is bent, so grows the tree” Or “the apple does not fall far from the tree”.

“Train up a child according to his way (RVm) and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov 22:6).

As the margin of the Revised Version puts it, this is not a verse which truly teaches that acceptance of the Truth by a child is the responsibility of the parents. We read *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him” (Ezek 18:20)*. That whole chapter in Ezekiel's prophecy is laying down the clear principle of individual responsibility. Election and calling is surely in the control God, and not with the parents. The parents' responsibility is to “train” the child, to teach him the precepts which, when applied as guiding principles in life, can bring the greatest joy. The lessons of life are the same for everyone, but the approach, emphasis and attitude to them will vary from child to child. When the lessons are learnt, the choice is with the individual son or daughter, whether or not to be a servant in God's household.

The parable

“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots

go into the kingdom of God before you” (Matt 21:28-32).

Jesus used this parable, firstly, to teach of the need for obedience, a lesson we all find hard to learn. However, it also describes in a quite remarkable way his insight into the true nature of man. There is no parent who has more than one child who has not learnt that children are different, and that they require different handling. Just because the first child sleeps through the night at an early age, is obedient to their parents, and is generally trouble free is not necessarily a reflection of the excellent child rearing skills the parents’ possess. Wait for the next one! (And often vice-versa.)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right... And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph 6:1,4).

Child rearing is a two way street. As the old sage goes “grandchildren are your reward for not dispensing with your teenagers”. And I am sure many can agree with the (supposed) saying of Mark Twain “When I was a boy of fourteen, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around. But when I got to be twenty-one, I was astonished at how much he had learned in seven years”. Many teenagers do not appreciate it at the time, but we must still strive to do the best we can, despite the lack of appreciation. There is at least a reasonable possibility that they will come to acknowledge your efforts later!

Parents in the Bible

“And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets:... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us” (Heb 11:32,39-40 NKJV).

Clearly, we experience that some parents are “winners” and some are “losers”. We all know parents, God-loving couples, with a child in trouble or in jail, an agnostic child, children who are, at best, lukewarm in the Truth, with children in turn who have not declared their faith and might never do so.

But some parents who seem incorrigible, lacking faith and seemingly impervious to Christian morality, can produce God-fearing faithful children, well grounded in the Truth and exhibiting it in the way they live their lives. And such is the examples we find in the Bible. The spiritual giants listed in the Hebrews chapter quoted above were many of them deeply flawed parents. Abraham had a child with a maidservant, and then agreed to banish the son. Moses had as a parent a young, pagan, unmarried daughter of Pharaoh. Jephthah was the son of a prostitute, and whatever happened to his daughter was the result of an impetuous vow.

Many more parents from the Bible confound our parenting expectation. Samuel’s sons turned out so poorly that the people insisted on a new ruler. But, on the other hand, Jonathon was the upright, righteous son of murderous King Saul. Josiah, was commended as one who *“like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might”*

(2Kgs 23:25). Yet his father was Amon, who “*did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*” (2Kgs 21:20).

The reality

We must acknowledge that those who are in the Truth are such, not necessarily because of their upbringing, however spiritual it may have been, but because they have been called by God. Such is our privilege to have been foreknown and predestined, to be transformed by God into vessels fit for His glory. This process begins at birth: “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren ... And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*” (Rom 8:29; 9:23).

The notion of a child arriving as a blank slate upon which we can inscribe whatever we desire appears to be part of our culture, instilled in countless parenting books. We are responsible to teach our children to worship and fear our God, “*And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*” (Deut 6:7), in other words, all the time. But we must be clear about our own limits and responsibility. We are not capable of producing perfect followers of Christ, certainly not because of our parenting skills. We will inevitably parent imperfectly, our children will make their own choices, and God will wondrously use it all to advance His children.

Conclusion

Every age has their own problems. In my childhood it was a spirit and time of rebellion against authority in all its forms. In my parenting years it was the beginnings of the Internet, with the unrealized dangers it brought and is still bringing. My parents in their turn were brought up in a time of great hardship. And my grandchildren are being exposed to the enormous influences of social media, to universal smart phones, and to the rapid explosion of technology in all its civilization disrupting forms. And meanwhile, according to the Pew Research Center (see <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>) the percentage of individuals totally unaffiliated with any religion has increased by 6.7% in only the last seven years, mirroring the drop in affiliation with Christianity. We might be able to protect our children from the worst of these influences for a while, but in the end all have to make their own way in our society. All we can do is provide the instruction and the example.

So as parents (and grandparents) we must fulfill our obligations to nurture our offspring in the way of the Truth, but acknowledge that any results for good or evil are not ours alone, but in the hands of our almighty Father. To predict the results is not in our power, but in the hands of our God and His son. So as we wait the return of our Lord to rid the world of all the evil and trouble that beset us, we must strive to inculcate our own faith into the generations to come, recognizing it is not our will, but His, that will be done.

Peter Hemingray

Exhortation

Foundation Principles

The Lord's return

I am sure we realize the signs of the end are being quickly fulfilled, and the time of our Lord's return is at hand! It is with great urgency that I would like to remind ourselves, that now more than ever is the time for us to make our calling and election sure. We have to watch and pray: now is not the time to be distracted! Now is not the time to be sitting around idle! Now is the time that we should be busying ourselves in the Lord's work. We should be about our Father's business. We, like the children of Israel who were about to leave Egypt, are to eat the Passover with haste, with our loins girded, and our shoes on our feet and a staff in our hand. (Exod 12:11). There is no time to waste!

I have come to realize that the fundamental things about the Bible are sometimes missed when we are too busy slicing and dissecting intricate details. There is a lot of benefit in looking at the big picture, like a bird's eye view of things. If we do this we will notice some fundamental principles.

Firstly, there is only one God and besides Him there is no other. When we recognize and understand this fundamental principle we will quickly realize that since there is one God then it means that we have all sinned and are in need of salvation. The intention is that we must then be humble when we understand that we cannot save ourselves, no matter how righteous we think we are. We will then see Jesus as the only way of salvation, and this will bring about the humility that the LORD seeks from us. Pride is abominable in God's sight, as I'm sure we already know. Think about it: God made us out of dirt. Not sure how much lower he could have made us. I suspect the point again is for us to humble ourselves.

We recognize that we desperately need salvation. God has provided for our need by sending His one and only Son to die, to declare His righteousness as the basis on which He will forgive our sins. As we have read and know, the principle is that by the death of a sinless man, God is shown to be righteous, while at the same time He is forgiving of our iniquities, transgressions and sins. By Christ's perfect obedience we can be reconciled to God.

Secondly, God is a savior. What does that mean? God's underlying 'modus operandi' is to save us: that's the strategic objective. Why is this important? It is important because it should be our objective as well, because we are to be about our Father's business. This means that we should approach our preaching efforts with the mindset of saving others as the core objective. This means that we don't say or do things that will chase away people before they even start coming to the meeting. As they say, if we do that, we may have won the battle but lost the war. We are to know time and judgement; there is a time and a place for everything and we have to know when to speak and when to keep silent. It must be seen in our

words and actions that we are children of God. This should be even more obvious now as the world continues to decline morally. Even the United States Supreme Court has already declared that the court is going to make it a matter of applying the constitution to allow same sex marriages. We don't have to look very far to see that our society has hit dirt bottom. We have to watch and pray, for indeed the days are evil. We must not allow ourselves be deceived by what we see. There is the normal opinion that we are an advanced society, and that we are living in modern times, which many say justifies certain evil beliefs and practices. We are not immune: we have to be careful that we do not allow the beliefs and practices of the world to creep into our ecclesia and into our personal lives. We have to watch and pray as we see the day approaching. Who would have thought that topics such as evolution would be a problem or even considered to be true among Christadelphians? We are supposed to be different! We are to be a peculiar people unto our God. We must not try to blend in. It must be even more obvious that we are Christians now more than ever. We should not have to tell anyone that we are Christians: it should be obvious. We must not bring shame to the name of Christ.

God is love. This is telling us that the thing that drives our LORD's actions is love. We may slice and dice Christ's crucifixion and look at all the gruesome details, but we run the risk of missing the key point that is at the center of it all. God's love is shown for all to see in that He sent His only begotten Son to die for us. Also seen is Jesus's willing cooperation with our Father's will in following through with it. The love of the Father and His Son is seen in Christ's sacrifice. Also, it is not just that Jesus died for wretched sinners as we are, it's also the way he died. It was a horrific and painful death; of which none of us are worthy as we already know. Personally, when I see Christ's death it helps me a lot, and gives me hope that no matter how bad my sins are/were and no matter how far I may feel I have fallen, that God still loves me, and that He is more than willing to forgive me. This point cannot be stressed enough: God allowed His Only Son to die the way he did to send a message that God will do what it takes to save us; that He really loves us and that He wants us to live. It is written in Ezekiel the prophet *"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?"* (Ezek 18:23).

Retrospection

It is a good time now more than ever to take stock of our lives. We should look into ourselves especially as we are about to partake of the emblems. It is always good to be introspective. We remember Nehemiah, how he assessed and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. He was facing opposition from Sanballat and Tobias who hindered the work of rebuilding Jerusalem. We will notice that Sanballat and Tobias' tactic was to have the Jews of Nehemiah's time trade with them and intermarry with them. The intention was for the Jews to just cease from being peculiar and special, but to just blend in with them and then eventually disappear. This Nehemiah vigorously opposed:

"In those days also saw I [Nehemiah] Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of

Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves" (Neh 13:23-25).

We can draw valuable lessons from this. The obvious point is that we must be in the world but not of the world. We must not have the same beliefs and practices of those in the world. We must also assess ourselves to see if we are adopting the stance of the world as they oppose that of Christ and of God. We have to pay attention:

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

There was a song I used to hear on the radio back in the 90's that said 'In the end only kindness matters'. So we are to show kindness whenever and wherever we can. We are not Gnostics: knowledge of itself does not save us. It is my understanding that when we study to show ourselves approved, we are actually learning how to think and act the way God wants us to think and act. The intention is that we will begin to do things that are acceptable in God's sight. We will most importantly, develop the right attitude. Attitude is everything. I believe that attitude makes all the difference. We recall Christ's words about the judgement seat and the separation of the sheep from the goats. It would appear that the sheep and the goats were both doing what we may call good works. However, the sheep were accepted and goats were not. The only conclusion there can be is that the goats did not have the right attitude. We have to pray for our Lord to guide us and counsel us in this so that we may by his grace develop the right attitude.

We have to make sure that we have moved beyond the academic knowledge. When we say that we love God, and that we love Jesus, and that we worship and adore our Lord and how awesome he is, it should be from deep within our hearts. It should not be something we say because we are commanded to do so, or that we may be under threat of being cursed or death if we do not. We should thoughtfully do so and mean it. If we look closely, it is evident that God gave us freewill, with the power to choose whether or not we are going to love, obey, worship, adore appreciate Him and His Son for all he has done for us. He could have made us 'pre-programmed' as it were to do all of the things He wants us to do. I can only imagine, since I am not the Almighty, that He desires that we do these things of our own volition and not because we are made to do it or even forced to do them. Love is not real if there isn't the option to not love. Likewise obedience is not real if there isn't the ability to disobey. Similarly praise is not effectual without choice. Again, I can only imagine that making us without choice would probably be like having automatons. I suspect that God wants us to do all of these things not because we have to, but because we want to.

The Lord's supper

Some more thoughts for us to consider as we prepare our minds to partake of the Lord's supper. We all recognize how much we have been forgiven of past sins. We all recognize our need for ongoing forgiveness. We all recognize that we are not good people who sin from time to time, but that we are sinners who are being reckoned as righteous because we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Doing a lot of what we might call 'good works' does not make us righteous, it is our association with Jesus and our belief in his sacrifice that makes us righteous. This is very important because if we begin to believe that we are righteous because of the works that we have done over the years then we have a big problem. Christ's sacrifice loses its efficacy. His death becomes of none effect! People in the world do not understand this point. They believe that if they give away billions to charity that that will of itself make them righteous; but not so with God. He requires that we understand that there is none righteous, no not one. He has provided a means by which He will consider us righteous, which is by belief in His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ and baptism. We are reminded of this fact when we partake of the emblems.

God went to great lengths and at great cost to Himself in providing a means of salvation for us. He has forgiven us of a whole multitude of sins for which we are extremely grateful. When God forgives us He closes the book with regards to the sins that were committed in the past. God is very serious when it comes to forgiveness. In fact, not forgiving others is a sin in which God will reopen the books that were closed and visit His wrath on those who have themselves been forgiven but who refuse to forgive others. I am sure we remember well the parable of the two servants where one was forgiven a debt of ten thousand talents. He straightway went to another servant and demanded 100 pence. When the other servant couldn't pay back the 100 pence he had the other servant thrown into prison. When the Lord of the servants heard of it it made him very angry. We are told *"And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him"* (Matt 18:21-35). The point is clear: if we are not willing to forgive one another of relatively small things then our Lord will not forgive us of our sins. In fact, he will visit the consequences of old sins on us too. To bring this more into focus, we can see the order of magnitude when we compare ten thousand talents with 100 pence. I have heard it said that ten thousand talents adjusted for inflation would be worth many millions of dollars today¹, which would be quite impossible for the unforgiving servant to pay back. While on the other hand 100 pence would be equivalent to about a few months' pay for an average person. The point that is being made is that the unforgiving servant was forgiven a debt that there was no way he could have paid it back. He in turn refused to forgive a debt that could have been paid back relatively easily. We must recognize that what God has done for us through Jesus In forgiving us of our sins, which is a debt that we cannot dream of paying back. We must appreciate this fact and it should encourage us to forgive one another of the relatively little and insignificant things that they may have done to us.

Forgiveness

We may not realize this, but not forgiving others is in fact a sin! Just like being ungrateful; not appreciating all the goodness and the mercy that God has bestowed upon us.

If we purpose in our hearts that we are not going to forgive someone of whatever word or deed that may have done to us, then we might as well stay home and watch the football game or whatever show is on television, because it would be pointless to come to the meeting. It is a very serious thing that the LORD God will not tolerate. That is what our Lord Jesus was saying: *“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses”* (Mark 11:25-26). This point is made in many times and in many ways in Scripture.

We are encouraged to produce fruit in season and out of season. That is to say, when it is convenient and when it is not convenient. We must not make any excuses! This applies on both a group level as well as at a personal level. As an ecclesia, we should always be busy doing our Father’s business. This includes not only preaching but the things that are needful and are consistent with the overall strategy and purpose of saving men and women. We should be looking for creative and innovative ways to reach out to the people who we come in contact with or those with whom we interact, or even to go out into the communities and seek those that are lost. Perhaps God will grant them repentance. We should go out of our way, even when if it means leaving our comfort zone in order to reach out to people in the world that need our help. Our LORD has extended His lovingkindness and His tender mercies to us. And we must reciprocate this love to others.

We should also bear fruit on a personal level as well. We are to display the fruit of the Spirit. We are already familiar with the doings of the Spirit: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law”* (Gal 5:22,23). If we exhibit these good qualities then we will be acceptable in the day of the Lord’s coming. If we are not exhibiting these qualities then there is cause for concern. We have to examine ourselves and pray that our Lord will help us to develop the mind of the Spirit, a Christ-like mind which is precious in God’s sight.

We remember the mercy that was shown to us when our God called us out of the world of darkness and sin, from Egypt as it were, into His marvelous light. It is most definitely not because we are good or anything like that, but because of His love, and His mercy, and for His own name’s sake He has done this. We see and remember the love shown to us in partaking of the emblems, the bread and the wine which are symbols of Christ’s body and his blood.

The bread signifies that we have been made a part of the body of Christ. The wine symbolizes that we are sharing in Christ’s life. With this in mind it should motivate us to walk in a way that is acceptable in God’s sight. We should say and do the things that are pleasing to Our Lord (which by the way includes our activities on Facebook).

We remember Christ's sacrifice once a week. We do show his death until he come. Again we are counselled to watch and pray for the time of the end of the age is upon us. We must make ourselves ready. He is even at the door. May we all hear those wonderful words:

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt 25:34).

Casmon Gordon (Brooklyn, NY)

Notes:

1. Ten thousand talents is around 750,000lbs. With silver at roughly \$15 per ounce today, this is \$180 million.

"Hope" — A Remarkable Bible Idiom

An interesting and helpful illustration of the use of the word "hope" in the Old Testament is the way in which this particular Hebrew idiom has carried over to the New Testament also, even though the normal Greek word for "hope" does not normally have any suggestion of the specialized connotation which the Old Testament seems to insist on.

The moving story of Naomi and her two daughters-in-law makes a suitable introduction to this study. "Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also tonight, and should bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown?" (Ruth 1:12, 13).

It is immediately evident that the word "hope" is used here with the specialized sense: "hope of having children". Can it be that here is a key to unlock the meaning of other passages where this word "hope" is used? Further investigation confirms the impression.

Paul picks up the expression for use in the same sense when writing about Abraham's belief of the promise: "Who against hope (of a son being born) believed in hope" (Rom 4:18).

Peter speaks of "being begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled" (1Pet 1:3).

The Apostle had surely the identical idea in mind in his Pentecost Speech. He quoted David's prophecy of Christ's death and resurrection, including the words: "My flesh also shall rest in hope"; the hope of children — with which compare: "he shall see his seed . . . he shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied" (Isa 53:10-11). Appropriately, then, Peter adds: "God raised him up, having loosed the pains (literally: birth-pangs) of death . . ." (Acts 2:24,26).

From H. A. Whittaker in The Christadelphian, 1959, p253

First Principles

Hope — (7) Hope in Jesus

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Hope in Jesus

Hope is hopeless without Jesus.

About 1750, a slave trading ship captain had experienced enough. For years John Newton had participated in the slave trade, treating African slaves as mere units of cargo. He led ships from England to Africa to pick up slaves, then across the Atlantic to unload his shipment in the New World. The journey was dangerous and deadly, as often 20% of the blacks on board would die on the inhumane voyage. John Newton transported more than a few shiploads of the six million African slaves brought to the Americas in the 18th century. It was a book he found on board — Thomas à Kempis’ Imitation of Christ — which sowed the seeds of his conversion. When a ship nearly sank in a storm, he converted to be a Christian and left sailing to become a minister for the last 43 years of his life. At 82, Newton said, “My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior.” A far greater testimony outlives Newton in the most famous of the hundreds of hymns he wrote. It begins:

*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.*

Jesus Christ was unlike any man who ever lived. He was uniquely Son of Man and Son of God. He was chosen and destined since before the foundation of the world: “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1Pet 1:20). In fact, he was “the lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev 13:8). He was the fulfillment of centuries of prophecies from many different prophets. He was the promised child to Abraham, and the promised King to David. Jesus (Hebrew name Yeshua or Joshua) was central to God’s plan for mankind from the very beginning’

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Heb 1:1-4).

God knew that Jesus would be the savior to the whole world, and He prepared the setting for His Son to conquer the world. God’s plan of salvation for mankind has always been centered on Jesus: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only



begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Without believing in Jesus and his message, all hope is futile.

As the son of a simple carpenter, Jesus’ first words in his ministry were to “*repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*” (Matt 4:17). Jesus taught that the poor, handicapped and hungry of the world are more blessed than all others. He gave hope to those who needed it most. He healed the sick and raised the dead. He literally and spiritually fed his followers. He taught as no man taught before. He touched the untouchables of his day. He loved those who were unloved. He cared for those in need. He showed forgiveness to sinners. He led a sinless life as a perfect example. And ultimately, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for those who believe in him.

Why Jesus?

Religion has known many spiritual leaders who claimed divine inspiration. Many people have proclaimed themselves to be specially chosen, often with supposed powers of providence. Some people have even believed that they are the Second Coming of Christ today! They claimed to declare God’s will and generally benefited from their self-worshipping faith. But Jesus was unique in his humility. He taught about his suffering and sacrifice. He knew that he would be crucified. He had faith that he would rise from the dead. Jesus lived a unique life unlike any other person, through which we have hope:

- Jesus was sinless his entire life (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:22; Heb 7:26). He was one “*who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin*” (Heb 4:15).
- Grace and truth were revealed in Jesus (John 1:17; Titus 3:6-7). Forgiveness was practiced and preached by Him. Those who believe in Jesus will receive forgiveness of sins: “*That through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins*” (Acts 10:43).
- No one needs to fear the Devil today thanks to Jesus, who destroyed the Devil through his death: “*that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil*” (Heb 2:14).
- Jesus was, and is, superior to angels (Heb 1:4).
- All things in heaven and on earth are subject to Jesus: “*For He hath put all things under his feet*” (1Cor 15:27).
- Jesus was a redeemer to his followers. He provided the way of escape from the curse of death in the Hebrew law: “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of*

the law” (Gal 3:13); See also Job 19:25; Titus 2:13-14; Col 1:14).

- Jesus provided the way for people to have peace with God. His death and resurrection gave opportunity for all people to have eternal hope: *“there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Gal 3:28); see also Eph 2:12-13.
- Jesus was the perfect representation of God to the people and reflected God’s character: *“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature”* (Col 1:15); see also 1Tim 3:16.
- Jesus is the only way to the Father. He is the only way leading to life. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6); see also John 10:28; John 17:2.

Who was Jesus?

Jesus has frequently been misunderstood. When he was just a baby, Herod thought that he was a threat and tried to kill him (Matt 2:16). Later, some thought that he was either John the Baptist, Elijah or Jeremiah (Matt 16:14). Others didn’t understand him when he said people needed to eat his flesh and drink his blood (John 6:60-66). Jewish leaders mistakenly thought that he was born of fornication (John 8:41). Some accused him of being a Samaritan with a demon (John 8:48). They also thought that Jesus was a sinner for breaking the Sabbath (John 7:30). Others didn’t know where he was from (John 9:29). Some even thought that Jesus claimed to be God (John 5:18; 10:33).

Believers and non-believers have misunderstood Jesus as well. In 325 AD, the Christian Council of Nicaea voted to teach that Jesus was co-equal and co-eternal with God. The early ‘Apostle’s Creed’ was therefore amended to add what became known as the ‘Nicene Creed’. The Roman-led church officially declared that Jesus was actually the same person as God the Father! Somehow this mystery that Jesus is actually part of God became accepted doctrine to Christians. For the first time, monotheist Christians declared that there is one God in three persons, or a triune God. Why does this matter? Because Jesus said that hope for eternal life is dependent on correctly understanding this relationship. Jesus said: *“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent”* (John 17:3).

It is vital that we understand that Jesus is the Son of God, and not God the Son. Jesus generally called himself “Son of Man” and he was never called “God the Son.” He said that his Father is greater than he and that he (Jesus) was not even ‘good’ (John 14:28; Mark 10:18). Jesus taught that “God is one” (Not three — Mark 12:28-34) as faithful Jews had believed since Abraham. Jesus prayed to God, his Father and was always subservient to his Father (John 8:28). God raised Jesus from the grave and Jesus ascended to his Father (John 20:17). Clearly, Jesus believed that he was one in spirit with his Father, but not as one God. It’s how he could be humble and tempted. It’s how he willingly offered himself as a sacrifice as only a human could (Heb 7:26-28).

Jesus’ followers learned and applied the same belief about God. Paul believed in one God and, separately, that Jesus is His Son (1Tim 2:5; 1Cor 15:24-28; 1Cor 8:6;

1Cor 11:3; Eph 4:4-6). Jesus' brother, James, wrote that God cannot be tempted, and yet Jesus was tempted (James 1:13; Heb 4:15). His most important Apostle, Peter, called Jesus "a man" after his resurrection, which would be offensive if Jesus was really God (Acts 2:22). The Bible says God cannot be seen or die, however Jesus was obviously seen and did die (1Tim 6:16; 1John 1:1).

The Bible says that believing in Jesus, as the Son of God, is required to be saved (Rom 10:9). "*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom 6:23). Thanks be to God for His incredible gift of hope, in Jesus.

"I am a historian, I am not a believer, but I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history."
H. G. Wells, British writer.

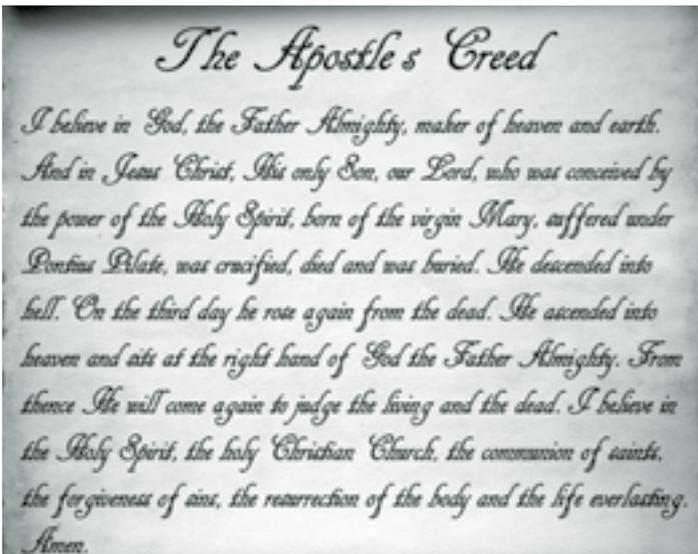
"Life with Christ is an endless hope, without him a hopeless end."
(Anonymous)

"Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him" (Heb 9:28).

The Bible says:

- No one has any hope for eternal life apart from Jesus. Acts 4:12; Acts 2:32-36; Heb 7:25
- Jesus was the only begotten Son of God. Heb 1:1-4; John 3:16
- Jesus was the Son of God, but not God the Son. John 17:3; 1Tim 2:5; 1Cor 8:6; John 14:28

Chicago, Ill Ecclesia



Doctrines to be Rejected— (4) Foundation

The Foundation clause

The opening clause in the Christadelphian statement of Faith is not numbered: it was added in 1885 after a controversy initiated by Robert Ashcroft, who issued a magazine called the *The Biblical Exegetist*.¹ In it, he proposed that the Bible was only partially inspired, in that some parts must be considered the product of erring human beings, and in turn could be in error. The topic of what exactly was meant by inspiration of the Scriptures had not previously troubled the community, so it was not surprising this suggestion was not well received. This resulted in the following two additions to the then-current statement of faith:

- The foundation clause that heads the whole statement.
- An opening clause added to the Doctrines to be Rejected.

The Foundation — That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation.

Doctrines to be Rejected #1: That the Bible is only partly the work of inspiration — or if wholly so, contains errors which inspiration has allowed.

This can be restated in a positive way: **The Bible, in its original text, is altogether the work of inspiration, and that God has been the true author of every part of His Word, thereby constituting it as infallible, error-less document, at least in its original manuscript.**

The addition of this clause recognizes the vital importance of accepting that every word of Scripture is that which proceeded from the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). If we doubt this, we can progress no further in our knowledge of the Truth, for the whole reliability of Scripture is called into question. If it is only partly God's Word, we are not bound to submit to its authority, and may even be at liberty to disagree with some of its teachings. In addition, who would decide which parts of the Bible were truly inspired by God, was inspired and which were not?

Consequences

We can summarize these as follows:

- The Foundation Clause recognizes that over the long period of the Bible's history there may be difficulties created by errors of transcription or translation
- For the Old Testament, at least, we have the guidance of the Lord Jesus and his apostles in their quotation and use to assure us that nothing of substance has been lost or impaired
- Given the meticulous process of copying later developed and the diligent labors of translators who believed that they were handling the Word of God, we may be sure that the LORD has overseen the preservation of the word,

although we must be careful not to ascribe this to any particular Hebrew or Greek manuscript or to any particular Bible Translation.

- We may rest in confidence, therefore, that our faith is based upon solid foundations and that our hope of the Kingdom and eternal life stands upon the Rock of Israel Himself.

Another controversy

Much detail concerning the whole topic and ramification of Biblical Inspiration can be found in the special issue referred to above and its bibliography. It is undoubtedly because the Brotherhood was so well armed against spurious theories of inspiration that problems in this area hardly arose for almost eighty years after the controversy in 1885.

However, neither the Foundation Clause nor the associated Doctrine to be Rejected defines what is meant by “inspiration”, and this gave rise to quite a discussion in the 1960’s, as reflected in the columns of the community’s magazines in the 1960s (although not much in *The Christadelphian*). These bear witness to the fact that the critical views of theological scholarship had again penetrated the Brotherhood. Brethren had lost the careful habit of saying, “The Spirit through John writes...”; speakers and writers were being unconsciously influenced by their wider reading of non-Christadelphian commentators, and had begun to speak without qualification of ‘Paul’s style’ or ‘Hosea’s tenderness’; younger generations had grown up who did not know the answers about the supposed discrepancies or inconsistencies in the Bible, which the apparently learned world took almost for granted; and not a few brethren actually began to flirt openly with the latest theories from the arenas of theology and Biblical studies — ‘latest theories’ that were in many cases little other than old views in new dress.

It might, therefore, be useful to briefly summarize the considerations and conclusions of the articles that dealt with this topic, as reflected in several articles from that period. They amplify and expand on exactly what is, and was, intended by the phrase (converting to the positive) “That the Bible is totally work of inspiration — and does not contain any errors which inspiration has allowed”. Although the controversy of the 1960’s has died down, the topic still crops up from time to time.

So let us briefly consider exactly what “inspiration” entails — and the errors which sometimes happen when you attempt to define too closely exactly what happens between the mind of God and the written word.

Verbal inspiration²

Fundamentally, of course, the doctrine of verbal inspiration builds upon the high confidence in the detailed accuracy of Scripture implied in such words as “*one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished*” (*Matt 5:16*), which in its context includes the prophets as well, and by implication the whole Old Testament; and “*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*” (*Matt 24:35*), in which the Lord makes the same claim for his own words, and by implication for those of his messengers, whom the Spirit was to “*lead into all truth*” (*John 16:13*). It dwells on the detailed use of Scripture’s

niceties such as can be found in the Lord's and Paul's use of the Scripture, and seeks to account for them.

The expression will be used, then, to mean that the original disclosure of everything that truly forms a part of Scripture was verbatim what God intended it to be. That is, the ultimate motivation of Scripture is from above. Whatever the will of man may have been, it was not the real reason why the Scripture came into being, seen with respect to the divine purpose. God's counsel overrides where it is necessary, but steers the course throughout, so that Scripture, when it is formed, is what He intended.

It is important to make this point clear, because the doctrine has often been condemned on the assumption that it made the "authors" of Scripture into mere automata, men who lose their freewill entirely when they write or speak as they are moved by the Holy Spirit.

But large portions of Holy Scripture bear evident marks of the personalities of their writers. We can illustrate this by Jeremiah's account of his own frame of mind when he was obliged to reveal God's promises of woe against a background of bitter persecution (Jer 15:10; 20:7-12); or by Psalm 51, which reveals David's personal penitence after his sin with Uriah's wife; or by Paul's confession of his own feelings of affection for those among whom he labored ("*I thank my God on every remembrance of you*"), and the like. It would be impossible to maintain that any of these men in such circumstances was acting passively under compulsion when in this way he disclosed his heart, and any doctrine which sought to do so would be self-condemned.

The prophets write as the occasion brings forth their inspiration by God, moved from time to time according to His will. But to Jesus, God gives not the Spirit by measure. "*Verily, verily*", means to him that he has God with him in all his utterances. "*I say unto you*" lacks nothing of the force of, "*God says to you through my lips*". As God reveals in the Letter to the Hebrews, He has in the last days spoken to us in His Son.

It is this Son of God who gives such a high evaluation to the Scriptures. We do well to remember when we walk with the Word of God that we tread on holy ground. This will not prevent our searching, nor will it put blinders on our eyes, but it will preserve us from rashness, and help us to show due respect to what God has "*magnified above all His Name*" (Psa 138:2).

*Peter Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI)
and Peter Hemingray (Detroit Royal Oak, MI)*

Notes:

1. Some of the enormous body of Christadelphian literature dealing with this controversy was summarized in *The Tidings*' Special Issue on "Inspiration", August 2015. It will not be repeated here. See also the *Testimony* Special Issue on "Inspiration", July 1982.
2. Some part of this section is based upon an essay by AD Norris in *The Christadelphian*, 1964, p 296.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Ready-to-Use Bible Games

Bible games are a fun way to review and reinforce Bible knowledge. And while friendly competition is often involved, it is important for everyone to keep in mind that winning is determined by what we learn from the word of God, not by beating somebody on the scoreboard.

Here are two ready-to-use, multiple-choice Bible games. They're easy to organize and play. Both games come with several questions that have four answer choices. Any number of teams can play, and each team will need a set of answer cards labeled A, B, C, and D, corresponding with the answer choices. Bible use is always a good option to offer with these games.

The games can be played a couple of different ways. There's an active way: the moderator asks a question, reads the four answer choices, and braces himself! The first team to *run* the correct answer card to the front wins the point. Protective padding is optional!

A more civilized version of the game involves timing. After each question is asked, everybody gets a set amount of time to decide on the answer. Then, on signal, all teams hold up what they think is the correct answer card. Every team with a correct answer gets a point. Since the game could result in a tie, you might want to have a few tie-breaker questions on hand to use at the end.

PowerPoint versions of both games are available on request. They give you the added ability to project questions and answers onto a screen for everyone to see.

1) Bible Facts

A Multiple-Choice Bible Game with 23 Questions and Answers

1 – How many books are in the Bible?
A – 27 B – 39 C – 54 D – 66
2 – How many books are in the Old Testament?
A – 27 B – 39 C – 54 D – 66
3 – How many books are in the New Testament?
A – 27 B – 39 C – 54 D – 66
4 – What is the shortest book of the Bible?
A – Nahum B – Obadiah C – Philemon D – John
5 – What is the longest book of the Bible?
A – Psalms B – Isaiah C – Matthew D – Revelation
6 – What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

A – 3rd John B – Psalm 117 C – Colossians 1 D – Malachi 4	
7 – What is the longest chapter in the Bible?	
A – Genesis 1 B – Numbers 7 C – Psalm 119 D – Revelation 22	
8 – What is the shortest verse in the Bible?	
A – 1 Thessalonians 5:16 B – John 11:35 C – Matthew 1:1 D – Psalm 150:6	
9 – What is the longest verse in the Bible?	
A – Ezra 3:4 B – Esther 8:9 C – Ezekiel 20:21 D – Matthew 26:27	
10 – Which book in the Old Testament is not a book of History?	
A – Deuteronomy B – Judges C – 1 Kings D – Job	
11 – Which book in the Old Testament is not a book of Poetry?	
A – Ruth B – Job C – Psalms D – Song of Solomon	
12 – Which book in the Old Testament is not one of the Major Prophets?	
A – Ezra B – Isaiah C – Jeremiah D – Ezekiel	
13 – Which book in the Old Testament is not one of the Minor Prophets?	
A – Nehemiah B – Joel C – Jonah D – Malachi	
14 – Which book in the New Testament is not one of the four Gospels?	
A – Matthew B – Mark C – Luke D – 1 st John	
15 – Which book in the New Testament is a book of Church History?	
A – Acts B – Romans C – Hebrews D – Revelation	
16 – Which book in the New Testament is not a Letter written by the Apostle Paul?	
A – Romans B – Galatians C – Ephesians D – Jude	
17 – Which book in the New Testament is a book of Prophecy?	
A – John B – Acts C – Hebrews D – Revelation	
18 – What is the Greek translation of the Old Testament called?	
A – Pentateuch B – Torah C – Septuagint D – Vulgate	
19 – What version is the earliest translation of the entire Bible into English?	
A – The King James C – The Tyndale Bible	B – The Wycliffe Bible D – The Revised Version
20 – In what language was most of the Old Testament originally written?	
A – Aramaic B – Hebrew C – Greek D – Latin	
21 – In what language was the New Testament originally written?	
A – Aramaic B – Hebrew C – Greek D – Latin	
22 – When was the Old Testament written?	

A – 15th-5th centuries B.C.	B – 1st-3rd centuries B.C.
C – 1st century A.D.	D – 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.
23 – When was the New Testament written?	
A – 15th-5th centuries B.C.	B – 1st-3rd centuries B.C.
C – 1st century A.D.	D – 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.

Answer Key:

1 (D), 2 (B), 3 (A), 4 (D), 5 (A), 6 (B), 7 (C), 8 (B), 9 (B), 10 (D), 11 (A), 12 (A), 13 (A), 14 (D), 15 (A), 16 (D), 17 (D), 18 (C) 19 (B), 20 (B), 21 (C), 22 (A), 23 (C)

2) Where in the Word?

A Multiple-Choice Bible Game with 40 Questions and Answers

1 – Sin and Death enter the World
A – Genesis 1 B – Genesis 2 C – Genesis 3 D – Genesis 4
2 – God Destroys the World by the Flood
A – Genesis 6-9 B – Genesis 10-11 C – Genesis 12-13 D – Genesis 19
3 – The Tower of Babel
A – Genesis 6 B – Genesis 10 C – Genesis 11 D – Genesis 19
4 – God’s Promises to Abraham
A – Genesis 10 B – Genesis 12 C – Genesis 24 D – Genesis 28
5 – The Faith Chapter
A – Romans 6 B – 1 Corinthians 13 C – 1 Corinthians 15 D – Hebrews 11
6 – The Ten Commandments
A – Genesis 49 B – Exodus 20 C – Leviticus 23 D – Numbers 14
7 – Twelve Spies spy out the Promised Land
A – Exodus 40 B – Leviticus 13 C – Numbers 13 D – Joshua 2
8 – The Walls of Jericho Fall Down
A – Joshua 6 B – Joshua 10 C – Judges 1 D – Judges 6-7
9 – David and Goliath
A – 1 Samuel 17 B – 2 Samuel 5 C – 1 Kings 20 D – 1 Chronicles 16
10 – God’s Promise to King David
A – 1 Samuel 16 B – 2 Samuel 7 C – 1 Kings 8 D – 2 Chronicles 6
11 – Nebuchadnezzar’s Image
A – 2 Kings 24 B – 2 Chronicles 36 C – Jeremiah 25 D – Daniel 2
12 – Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and the Fiery Furnace
A – Daniel 2 B – Daniel 3 C – Daniel 5 D – Daniel 6

13 – The Whole Armor of God
A – Romans 8 B – 1 Corinthians 6 C – Galatians 5 D – Ephesians 6
14 – Daniel in the Lion’s Den
A – Daniel 2 B – Daniel 3 C – Daniel 5 D – Daniel 6
15 – The Birth of Jesus
A – Matthew 1 B – Mark 1 C – Luke 1 D – John 1
16 – The Shepherds visit Jesus in Bethlehem
A – Matthew 2 B – Mark 2 C – Luke 2 D – John 2
17 – The Wise Men bring Gifts to Jesus
A – Matthew 2 B – Mark 2 C – Luke 2 D – John 2
18 – The Baptism of Jesus
A – Matthew 2 B – Matthew 3 C – Luke 1 D – Luke 2
19 – The Baptism of Cornelius: the first Gentiles enter the Church
A – Acts 2 B – Acts 3 C – Acts 10 D – Acts 16
20 – The Baptism Chapter
A – Romans 6 B – 1 Corinthians 13 C – 1 Corinthians 15 D – Hebrews 11
21 – The Temptations of Jesus in the Wilderness
A – Matthew 4 B – Mark 3 C – Luke 2 D – John 1
22 – The Beatitudes of Jesus
A – Matthew 5 B – Mark 3 C – Luke 8 D – John 6
23 – The Fruit of the Spirit
A – Galatians 5 B – Ephesians 4 C – Philippians 2 D – Colossians 4
24 – Seven Parables of Jesus
A – Matthew 5-7 B – Matthew 8-9 C – Matthew 13 D – Matthew 24
25 – The Mount Olivet Prophecy of Jesus
A – Matthew 24-25 B – Mark 12 C – Luke 20 D – John 14-16
26 – The Last Supper
A – Matthew 26 B – Mark 15 C – Luke 23 D – John 18
27 – Jesus Prays in Gethsemane
A – Matthew 27 B – Mark 14 C – Luke 23 D – John 20
28 – The Lord’s Prayer
A – Matthew 5 B – Matthew 6 C – Luke 6 D – Luke 12
29 – The Crucifixion of Christ
A – Matthew 26 B – Mark 14 C – Luke 23 D – John 18
30 – The Resurrection of Christ

A – Matthew 27 B – Mark 15 C – Luke 23 D – John 20
31 – Lazarus is raised from the Dead
A – Luke 7 B – John 11 C – Acts 9 D – Acts 20
32 – The Resurrection Chapter
A – Romans 6 B – 1 Corinthians 13 C – 1 Corinthians 15 D – Hebrews 11
33 – The Ascension of Jesus
A – Matthew 27 B – Mark 15 C – John 21 D – Acts 1
34 – The Day of Pentecost
A – Acts 1 B – Acts 2 C – Acts 6 D – Acts 7
35 – The Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
A – Acts 1 B – Acts 2 C – Acts 9 D – Acts 10
36 – Paul’s Shipwreck on the way to Rome
A – Acts 21 B – Acts 27 C – Romans 1 D – Romans 15
37 – The Jerusalem Conference
A – 1 King 8 B – Ezra 4 C – Acts 15 D – Hebrews 8
38 – The Love Chapter
A – Romans 6 B – 1 Corinthians 13 C – 1 Corinthians 15 D – Hebrews 11
39 – A Prophecy of Israel’s Restoration
A – Leviticus 26 B – Deuteronomy 28 C – 1 Chronicles 29 D – Ezekiel 36-37
40 – A Picture of the Coming Kingdom of God
A – Psalm 72 B – Isaiah 53 C – Hebrews 1 D – Revelation 1-3

Answer Key:

1 (C), 2 (A), 3 (C), 4 (B), 5 (D), 6 (B), 7 (C), 8 (A), 9 (A), 10 (B), 11 (D), 12 (B), 13 (D), 14 (D), 15 (A), 16 (C), 17 (A), 18 (B), 19 (C), 20 (A), 21 (A), 22 (A), 23 (A), 24 (C), 25 (A), 26 (A), 27 (B), 28 (B), 29 (C), 30 (D), 31 (B), 32 (C), 33 (D), 34 (B), 35 (C), 36 (B), 37 (C), 38 (B), 39 (D), 40 (A).

If you would like ready-to-use, printable copies of these Bible games, contact me at the Sunday school email address below. I will send them by reply email. Other ideas for Bible games were published in *The Tidings*, March-April, 2014, pp.127-30. You can also find a few game ideas pinned to the Bible Games board on our Sunday school Pinterest site.

Jim Harper sundayschool@tidings.org
www.pinterest.com/2harps4u/ (Meriden, CT)

Letters to the editor can be sent to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail, and phone. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.

Youth Speaks

About God — (1) The God of the Bible is Fact

Is there a God? The prophetic evidence

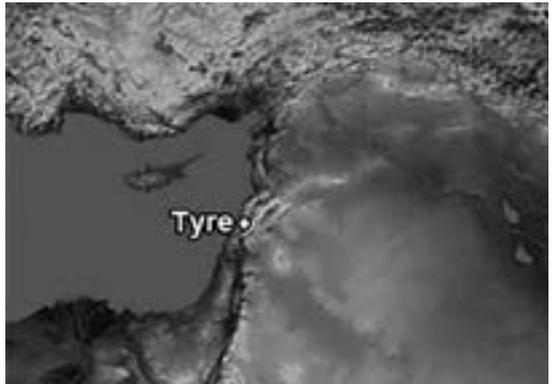
One of the longest debates in history is the disagreement between there being a God or not being one. Curiosities and doubts can arise for anyone trying to answer that question. Is there a God and if so does anyone actually know Him? With enough searching, it is clear that the Bible is an inspired book, and teaches that God does in fact exist. This can be shown through various methods. In this article, the prophetic words of the Bible will be compared to real life events to show the Bible has foreknowledge in a way no man can have. In the following article, Jewish history will be compared to the Bible, and objections from science will be examined to definitively prove that the Bible must be inspired by something greater than man and therefore that the God of the Bible truly does exist.

Tyre

By far, the strongest argument for the Bible being inspired is through the prophetic word being fulfilled. The common arguments against this point are:

- the prophecies were fulfilled through chance,
- they were written after they were fulfilled,
- the symbolism used could be twisted to fit a large amount of situations
- they were likely to happen anyway.

Although these are plausible arguments for a few prophecies, there are plenty of prophecies that defy all of them — one of which is the prophecy of Tyre found in Ezekiel 26. Tyre was a Phoenician city that was on the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. It was extremely wealthy and was in a very strategic location both economically and militarily. It is supposed that the city dated back to approximately 2,700 B.C. and was one of the oldest cities of the time (Butt)¹. While reading through Ezekiel 26, it is bluntly stated that, “*Many nations*” (Ezek 26:3) will fight against Tyre.



Josephus, quoting “the records of the Phoenicians,” says that Nebuchadnezzar “besieged Tyre for thirteen years in the days of Ithobal, their king” (Butt, op cit.). Nebuchadnezzar’s siege was the first attack against Tyre after the prophecy, matching the prophecy when it states, “*For*

thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people” (Ezek 26:7). However, Nebuchadnezzar failed to take the city, which allowed for the prophecy to be fulfilled to its full extent. If Nebuchadnezzar had taken the city, then only one nation would have come against Tyre, not multiple as the prophecy states. Throughout time the city was destroyed, rebuilt, and destroyed again multiple times. This being said, the more persuasive evidence that this prophecy had to be inspired comes out in the later parts of the chapter.

Alexander the Great’s destruction of Tyre show that this prophecy could only have been made by inspiration. Alexander besieged Tyre because they denied him the right to make a personal sacrifice in the city’s temple. Tyre moved from the main land to a small island just off the mainland to avoid



Alexander’s army. After quickly destroying the original Tyre, Alexander made a plan to build a land bridge using debris from the original city to get to the island. After he completed the land bridge with his army, he destroyed the newer Tyre as well killing everyone on the island (Butt). When compared to the Biblical prophecy of Tyre’s destruction, the similarities and details can be shocking. Ezekiel states, “They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water” (Ezek: 26:12) which is exactly how Alexander the Great made it to the island of Tyre. Furthermore the prophecy states:

“When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; When I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God” (Ezek 26:19-21).

In other words, water would cover the city and it would never be inhabited again. One of the strongest counterarguments relies on this point in an attempt to show this prophecy is false, because currently there is a city named Tyre in a relatively close location to the original location of Tyre. The issue with this claim is that the mainland ancient Tyre, which is what Ezekiel was predominantly prophesying about, is in fact currently lost underwater. “In approximately A.D. 1170, a Jewish traveler named Benjamin of Tudela published a diary of his travels” (Butt). In his diary he made the statement, “A man can ascend the walls of New Tyre and see

ancient Tyre, which the sea has now covered, lying at a stone's throw from the new city" (Butt), showing that in fact the original Tyre is underwater, fulfilling Ezekiel's prophecy at all points.

Babylon

Another concrete prophecy that cannot be explained through mere chance is the prophecy of the destruction of Babylon. The part of the prophecy that best shows the Bible's inspiration is:

"Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver; and as for gold, they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb; their eyes shall not spare children. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures" (Isa 13:17-21).



Babylon Today

The two major points in the prophecy are that the Medes would kill many Babylonians, and that Babylon would remain uninhabited. The prophecy, as many prophecies in the Bible, was fulfilled throughout different time periods in history. Around the time of 550 B.C., Babylon was captured by the

Medes. There was no battle that took place, rather, the Medes took the city by surprise and Darius the Mede was made the new leader (Foster). It was through a series of rebellions that the Medes went on killing Babylonians, the first one being in 521 B.C. According to, "An inscription written on a rock cliff in Bisotun, Iran" (Foster)² the Babylonians elected their own king and tried to rebel. The rebellion was quickly defeated with most of the rebels being impaled. Another rebellion occurred in 482 B.C. Xerxes, the Median king of the time, sent an army to recapture the city which resulted in the destruction of all the idols of the Babylonian god. The city declined in power until Alexander the Great wanted to rebuild the city, but he died before he could complete the task. Over time Babylon was deserted little by little until it became entirely abandoned. The president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, attempted to rebuild Babylon, which would have defied the prophecy.

Ironically, during his rebuilding Saddam Hussein was, “Found hiding in a small underground bunker near a farmhouse in ad-Dawr, near Tikrit”.³ This led to his trial and execution on December 30, 2006, making it so he could not rebuild Babylon as he planned, further showing that the prophecies of the Bible are concrete and inspired. Currently Babylon can be visited during times of peace but has remained uninhabited for nearly 2,000 years, truly fulfilling Isaiah’s prophecy.

Probably the most prominent prophecy in today’s time would be the prophecies dealing with Israel’s return. Throughout the Bible, there are multiple prophecies dealing with Israel returning as a nation and the Jews returning to it. A few examples of this are:

“And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land” (Ezek 37:21).

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness” (Zech 8:7-8).

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth” (Isa 11:11-12).

These are just three of many occurrences in which the Bible talks about Israel returning as a nation and as a people. In 1948, Israel did in fact become a state again. A nation coming back to its original location after nearly 2,000 years is unparalleled in history. Not just is it unparalleled, but the Bible predicted it multiple times. These prophecies about Israel are some of the strongest ones that go against any critic’s counterargument because one cannot say that these were written after their fulfillment.

As clearly shown, the prophetic word goes hand in hand with historic events. Throughout time, evidence has shown the Bible to be more and more accurate as humanity learns more about the past. Another major factor which plays into the Bible’s inspiration is the Jewish people. According to the Bible, they play a large role in God’s plan. In next month’s article, Lord willing, Jewish history will be compared with the Bible and a few scientific objections will be discussed in order to thoroughly conclude God truly does exist.

Matthew Tuckson (Norfolk, VA)

Notes:

1. Butt, Kyle. “Tyre in Prophecy.” Apologetics Press. Web. 14 Nov. 2014.
2. Foster, Ryan. “A Prophecy About Babylon Confirms the Accuracy of the Bible.” Beyond Today-Understanding Your Future. Web. 15 Nov. 2014
3. “Saddam Hussein Bibliography.” Bio.com. A&E Networks Television, Web. 18 Nov. 2014.

Bible Study

The New Testament Church (4) The Offices of the Church

Deacons

In the previous article (*The Tidings*, September 2015) we considered the office of the Bishop. Next we come to the deacons¹. Now although we do not have the office of a deacon in our own community, it was clearly an office, and an important office, in New Testament times.

The Epistle to the Philippians opens with these words: “*Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons.*” And in 1st Timothy 3 the office of a deacon is mentioned four times, and the qualifications of a deacon are set down alongside those of the bishop. A bishop must have these specified qualities, and the deacons must similarly be “*men of good repute,*” and their wives also must be sensible, well balanced people, as I would summarize it.

Now the word deacon originally meant a servant, or a minister. It is the same word, in fact, in the New Testament. When we read “*the bishops and deacons*” we could perhaps read the bishops, or elders, and “servants” or “ministers,” although it is clear that the office of a deacon was something special, for which special qualifications were required. Jesus actually used this word of himself when he said: “*The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many*” (*Matt 20:28*).

The word minister is the same as deacon and it carries with it the idea of the more menial tasks, as that of a servant to others. That is what a deacon really was — a servant of the church. In 1st Timothy 3 we have already seen it seems clearly to be an office in the church, with particular qualifications attaching to it. And that takes us back again to Acts 6, when seven men were appointed to look after the day to day running of the ecclesial finances — the “soup kitchen” as we might say — to see that everybody was fed and that the poor were not neglected.

“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business” (*Acts 6:1-3*).

There had been complaints that the Greek converts were being neglected in the “daily ministration,” and these seven deacons, or ministers, were appointed to organize matters. Not that they would physically necessarily ladle out the soup,

if we may use that expression, but that they would superintend the work, and see that these functions were performed. We notice in passing that though they had these jobs to do, ministering to the membership, it did not mean that they did no other jobs as well. For example, Stephen in Acts 6:8-15 and in Acts 8:5 is seen as an “evangelist” and preacher of the Gospel.

So it means that brethren who have speaking appointments, and may therefore be looked upon as having their primary function as ministers of the Word, may still quite properly be seen in the kitchen doing the washing up at a fraternal gathering, or helping with the cleaning of the hall. There is nothing inferior about any of these tasks. The office of a deacon was a very important office in the early church, but the holders performed a multitude of sometimes “menial” tasks.

We read of Phoebe as a “servant” of the church. “*I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchre-ae*” (Rom 16:1 RSV). Here the word is properly rendered deaconess: it is “servant” in the KJV. You will find the Revised Version margin and the Revised Standard Version, and other newer versions, all concur in translating the word as deaconess. That is to say, they take the view that Phoebe was not just a general “servant” but that she had an office in the church. She was one of those deacons who ministered to the well-being of the members of the church of Christ.

It reminds us, just in passing, that women in New Testament times were sometimes allowed some part in the ecclesial affairs and in ecclesial offices. You may remember that Paul refers to “*every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven*” (1Cor 11:5). This would appear to indicate a public office of praying and prophesying on behalf of the church; not praying at a bedside, and certainly not “prophesying” at a bedside. These were elements in the ecclesial worship, and there were sisters of the early church who had this responsibility given to them, just as Phoebe had the office of a deaconess in the church; and it may be that we are losing some excellent service to the ecclesia by our rather rigid and Victorian rule that no woman shall do anything in the ecclesial life except teach the Sunday School and wash up at fraternal gatherings².

What would be the equivalent, do you think, of deacons in our own organization? It is true that we have no such office today, but perhaps we ought to have, for if we claim to be “apostolic Christianity revived” where are our deacons? I suppose the kind of things that deacons would do, if there were such an office in our ecclesia, would be the serving on Sunday morning of the emblems, (and the word “server” is deacon — it is the very same word — a servant, or a server) — so our serving brethren would be deacons; the hall stewards, the doorkeepers, the visitors of the sick, the hall cleaners, the table attendants — all these would be the kind of functions performed by the deacons of the early church; and the office of a deacon therefore, in the 1st century church, should serve to remind us of the importance of all these ministrations in the ecclesia of today.

Let us never think that they are unimportant offices. Resist the temptation to think that they are jobs to give to somebody as a sop because he is unable to get on to

the platform. Let us realize always that these offices of ministration, these servile offices, if you like so to describe them, are in the Apostles' book very important indeed. Linked up with the bishops are the ministers, or deacons, who would perform the kind of functions of which I have spoken.

Other offices

There are other offices mentioned in the New Testament and I would like to take you now to the words of Paul, where he seems to be saying that when Jesus went to heaven, "*when he ascended on high,*" (Eph 4:8): it was for the benefit of the church. Jesus himself said something like this in John's gospel: that if he did not go, "*the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you*" (John 16:7). And what the Apostle is saying here in Ephesians is, (quoting from Psalm 62.18) "*When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.*" Now the "gifts" that he gave unto men, the Apostle says, were these officers of the church. "*And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*" (Eph 4:11).

So Paul sees Christ's ascension into heaven, as it were, releasing these powers that came upon men to enable them to perform these functions in the church, which were Christ's gift to the particular churches. This was so that some churches needed the ministration of the Apostles, some specially the ministration of prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers and so on. All was supplied, therefore, by the grace of Jesus Christ shedding forth this power, and bestowing on men these various functions — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are those specifically mentioned in the context of Ephesians 4 as above.

Speaking with tongues

In 1st Corinthians 12 we have a slightly different list of offices, and Paul there is enumerating them in order of their importance. You will be aware of the situation at Corinth, that there were some of the brethren there who over-emphasized the importance of the gift of tongues. They seem to have had it in their mind that this was something more spectacular than the other powers, and they aspired to be able to "speak with tongues." It became quite a problem in the church, because whatever we may understand by speaking with tongues, it is clear that it was not very edifying, unless there was somebody there who could tell the others what the speaker was saying, and so Paul is endeavoring to get the matter in proper perspective.

Paul, in this epistle, sets out for them what are the important gifts, and what they should most of all aspire to attain. "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues*" (1Cor 12:28). Notice that he puts "diversities of tongues" at the very end of the list of importances! And clearly he has in mind to point out to them which are the more important of the gifts. First apostles, secondarily prophets, then teachers, after that miracles and so on, and tongues right down the bottom. So they got their answer on that particular point.

Apostles. I wonder if we can identify some of these offices here mentioned. Apostles, as I have said, would not appear to me to have any relation at all to our own organization, because these were men specially appointed, usually because of their personal acquaintance with the Lord himself³, but they are linked in the Letter to the Ephesians with the second grade, the prophets. Now the prophets were men who spoke the word of God. That is what prophecy really is. We often get all mixed up about this, and think that prophecy is foretelling the future. But this is only a part of the prophet's work. Primarily, prophecy is the gift of speaking God's word (forth telling and not foretelling). And if a brother in the twentieth century gets up on the platform and speaks God's word he may be thought of as a "prophet" in this sense only. Paul says in the context here that the Apostles and prophets are the foundation of the church, which is "*built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief corner stone,*" (Eph 2:20): and it would seem to me reasonable to suppose that Paul here is thinking not of the Old Testament Prophets, but of the New Testament Prophets. Those who preached the word faithfully were second only to the Apostles in importance.

Then there were **teachers**. I would think teachers would be a more private kind of office; not so much public teachers of the word, but as those like Priscilla and Aquila, who took Apollos home with them and taught him the way of God more perfectly, getting out the Scriptures and discussing it in depth; "apt to teach," as the Apostle would say, and able to communicate their message to individuals in this way.

The miracles and gifts of **healing** do not seem to be manifest among us at all today. But such helpers would probably answer to deacons, that is, those who help the work in a practical way, as Paul, for example, had John Mark as his "minister;" and the word again is deacon. He was a man whose function it was to "help" the Apostle with his task. Timothy similarly, later on, was the young man who went about with Paul on his missions as his helper, his servant, his minister, or deacon. The governments, I suppose, would be the office of the **eldership**, or the arranging brethren as we should say today. Lastly came the **gift of tongues**. If you are ever worried about this, (and I suppose we all are from time to time, when we meet people who say we ought to have tongues, or that they have the gift which we do not possess) it is worth remembering and reminding people, that in the list of importances the gift of tongues, even in New Testament times, was put so low, at the end of the list, that it is regarded by Paul as relatively unimportant.

It would seem to me that the Ephesian and Corinthian passages I have referred to above are surveying the whole ecclesial scene; not thinking of the local ecclesias, but of the body as a whole, although several of the offices would operate at local level. Apostles, prophets and evangelists, however, would be superimposed on the normal church organization. The evangelists, who went about from place to place preaching the gospel, were not to be received of the churches without question, although they were endowed with this particular office of being evangelists, yet it was still a duty of the rank and file members to exercise judgment concerning the words that they preached. There were warned: "*Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God*" (1John 4:1).

It would appear to me from what we have seen already, that the church in New Testament times was not less well organized than we are, but better organized. There was more direction from the leadership at the top. There was more specialization in the work that they performed. In Hebrews 13 there are three distinct references by the Apostle urging the duty on the church of obedience: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account” (Heb 13:17). Now it is true to say that our arranging brethren today, or the office of the Recording Brother with the arranging committee of any ecclesia, are not precisely the same as the eldership and the bishopric of the first century church: but still I would say, let us be aware of this, that even if it is not precisely the same, by and large it is the same office, with a similar responsibility, and depending upon the members of the ecclesia to show loyalty (if we won’t use the word obedience, because we are a democratic society) at least let us say that it is our duty to show loyalty to those who are appointed to the leadership of the ecclesia.

Len Richardson

Notes:

1. [Editor]. It is clear that this term came to take on a strictly Christian term in the early church. Although it was based on the term which meant servant, it took on special connotations when associated with Bishops etc.
2. [Editor]. I recognize there is a wide range of views on this in our community, and do not believe the opinion of Bro. Len is necessarily correct.
3. *The Tidings* Special Issue in 2014 (August) dealt with “All the Apostles in the Bible”.

Apostles

The Greek apostolos is composed of apo, from, or away from; and stolos, an equipment, an expedition, whether by land or sea. It also carries with it the idea that an important message is associated with the sending: as in an ambassador, who is one charged with representing the authority of the person who sends. The word was therefore a very suitable one to apply to men who were given the commission to make in turn disciples of all the nations, to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15). To say an apostle simply means “one who is sent” is incorrect in how the New Testament uses it. The application of the term “apostles” varies in different parts of the New Testament. In the Gospels, it generally refers to the twelve disciples. In the earlier chapters of the Acts it refers to the Twelve who were personally chosen by Jesus of Nazareth to be his special companions, substituting Matthias for Judas Iscariot. They were the leaders of the church during its earliest days. Later, the term was applied to Paul and Barnabas, and, by implication, to James, the Lord’s brother (Gal 1:19). Besides these, the term is applied to Andronicus and Junius, fellow prisoners with Paul, who he says were of note among the apostles (Rom 16:7). In another connection it is applied to certain officers in the early church, being placed before pastors and teachers (1Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).

From The Tidings Special Issue on “Apostles”, August 2014

Reflections

The Most Unusual Wedding Ever

I am going to tell you a sort of parable. As it unfolds, please bear in mind the title (and subject) of this article. What you are about to see will be quite unusual, and perhaps unsettling, frightening and confusing.

Imagine a meeting room, perhaps like the rooms where many of us have our Sunday meetings. This room has been re-organized in anticipation of some special event. There are flowers everywhere, and bright new decorations. People are assembling, dressed more formally than usual. Women are wearing their new dresses. Some of the men feel a little stiff in their new suits. A few women are giving last-minute instructions, checking their lists. Music is playing, but it seems more solemn than usual. Food is arriving; someone is laying out a special cake in the next room. There is an undercurrent of anticipation and a building excitement. Something is about to happen.

The last arriving guests are finding their seats. Now a pause, and a hush. Then music begins again, stirring music, music announcing — something, someone, but what? And whom?

Another pause, followed by familiar music, a march. In the center aisle appears a proud older man with a young woman on his arm, arrayed in a flowing white gown. They begin to walk slowly and with dignity, down the aisle, measuring their steps as they come. She is beautiful, her eyes are sparkling, and her smile is dazzling. Everyone is smiling now; joy is in the air. She is escorted to the front of the room, where she takes her place alongside her companions.

They all wait. Something, or someone, is missing. Everything about the scene suggests that there must be a young man, suitably dressed, waiting for her. But no one has yet come. Everyone is waiting. There are whispers: the one they expected has been known to be late before.

Next comes a great noise, thundering and echoing all around, at a distance and then just outside the building, with confused shouting, excited and fearful, then cries of terror. It is as though a great storm has suddenly blown in, a hurricane perhaps, to engulf the building and the surrounding area. Then, just as suddenly, there is an awful stillness.

Before anyone can react to what they've heard, a new commotion arises in the back of the building. Someone is coming. Those seated near the front can hear a general murmur of surprise and bewilderment. What is going on?

At that moment, he enters. All eyes turn from the young woman at the front and look toward the door, where they see — a man. Yes, it's the man they expected. But his appearance is altogether altered, so they can scarcely recognize him. He is carrying a sharp sword in his hand. Most striking are his clothes; they were once fine and clean, but now they are dripping with blood. He looks like a butcher just

finishing a hard day at the slaughterhouse. He takes one step, and another, and another, making his way down the center aisle, and the assembly is in shock. On this joyous occasion, he has arrived covered in blood, as though he is the last man standing, just arrived from a terrible battlefield. With every step he takes, down the white runner stretched from front to back of the aisle, he leaves bloody footprints. Can this possibly be the bridegroom?

A few brave folks peek out the windows. They see fields and roads in every direction, and even the parking lot, covered with the carnage of battle. The bodies of warriors lay everywhere, fallen like autumn leaves. Already, vultures circle and tear at the corpses, only just now dead. They are enjoying their own unexpected feast.

You may remember that a previous article (*The Tidings*, June 2015) dealt with what I called JOCI: juxtapositions of counterintuitive images. So I have to ask you: what did you expect as I began this short story? What happened, instead? If you were the least bit surprised, then you have experienced one more JOCI — perhaps the most disconcerting of all.

Furthermore, what you've experienced comes straight from the Bible. In the book of Revelation we have, in short order, these three scenes:

The preparation of the Bride and the wedding:

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.... ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’ ” (Rev 19:7-9).

The arrival of the Bridegroom, dripping in blood:

“There before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns.... He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood.... Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: King of kings and Lord of Lords” (Rev 19:11-16).

The carnage of battle:

“I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, ‘Come, gather together for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great’ ” (Rev 19:17,18).

This is the Marriage of the Lamb, which we desire and pray for. Christ is the Bridegroom, covered in blood.

Yes, the wedding will be a lovely, as we all imagine — more beautiful and more wonderful, in fact, than we can ever imagine. But other images and features will accompany it, before and after.

Are you shocked to see the Bridegroom covered in blood? Are you shocked to see the great feast of God — at least one part of that feast — consisting of dead bodies scattered across the earth. Does it surprise you? Should it?

Conclusion

The One who was the silent Lamb led to slaughter, shed his own blood, so that his multitudinous Bride could be redeemed and forgiven in God's sight. That same Lamb has become, in Bible terms, a ravening and roaring Lion, dripping with blood. This time the blood is not his own; it is blood from the slain bodies of his enemies. He was righteous when he shed his own blood, and he will be righteous when he sheds the blood of others — however that might be accomplished (and by no means am I saying I know how it will happen). No matter how this great judgment on the earth is accomplished, the One who brings it about, the lamb turned into a lion, is still the same Lord and Savior who laid down his life.

When Israel looked for a Lion to destroy the Romans, they got instead a Lamb ready to die. Likewise, when we look for the marriage supper of the lovely Lamb of God, we get, instead, a great predator Lion of the tribe of Judah!

Jesus Christ is both. Each week we celebrate with the memorials the Passover Lamb who was slain for us. We know that he is alive forevermore, that he alone has the power of life and death for all humanity. When the time is right, he will use that power, terrifying as it may be.

Are you uncomfortable with this picture? Are you disturbed when you contemplate this final juxtaposition of two events, a lovely wedding and a gruesome slaughter, side by side? It's difficult, isn't it? You know what a wedding is like (from experience). You know what a battle is like (probably from books, photographs and movies). Instinctively you may feel that "never the twain shall meet." But they do meet, here. The bridegroom arrives at his wedding celebration, having come directly from the battlefield.

Beware of putting the Father and His Son into a box that makes you comfortable with them. They are too awe-inspiring and multi-faceted for that. Quite possibly they will continue to surprise you again and again, in the future.

World history is a chronicle of unjust, foolish wars that have often done more harm than good. One man, and one man only, will wage an absolutely righteous war. He can do this because he has already fought the only perfectly righteous war — the internal war against temptation and sin in his own life. As the only person who has conquered temptation and sin in himself, he is uniquely qualified to conquer a city, a nation, and a world.

The Father has given him all power in heaven and earth. No one can question his right to execute judgments upon the earth, in any way he sees fit. Nor can anyone question his right to show mercy on anyone he pleases.

He is the one we remember each week, at our small "marriage supper of the Lamb", which anticipates the great feast that will surely come.

“I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt 26:29).

We cherish that simple promise, as we sing words of welcome to the Bridegroom:

*“The bridegroom is arising, and soon he draweth nigh”¹
“May all our lamps be burning, our loins well girded be:
Each longing heart preparing with joy to welcome thee”²*

Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

Notes:

1. (Laurentius Laurenti, (1660-1722). Printed as Hymn 361 in Christadelphian Hymn Book (Birmingham, UK 2002)
2. James George Deck (1802-1884). Printed as Hymn 265 in Christadelphian Hymn Book (Birmingham, UK 2002)

“Who Are You?”

Many years ago, I was about to retire for the night at a rest house in the tropical rainforest of Guyana. Suddenly from the pitch darkness outside came a voice loud and clear: “Who are you?” I was obviously an intruder, but who was challenging my presence there? Again there came the insistent query: “Who are you?” This was no human voice; it turned out later that it was the typical call of the burrowing owl, busy about his nightly business. But the question had to be answered — who was I? It’s a question we all have to answer sooner or later. Are we who we think we are, or have we perhaps a split personality? The matter is important because it could affect our standing at Christ’s judgment seat. The Lord had some severe words to say about those who thought they were righteous and despised others:

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 18:9-14).

When Moses looked upon the burdens of his fellow Israelites in Egypt and felt moved to correct injustice, one of those same Israelites challenged his authority: “Who made you ruler and judge over us?” (Exod 2:14). As we would put it, “Who do you think you are?” Moses fled to Midian and spent 40 years learning to be a shepherd, after which God did appoint him to be a ruler and judge. This time it was Moses who asked, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” (Exod 3:11), to which God replied, “I will be with you.” It was a humbler Moses who, when confronted with the people’s complaint about lack of food, said: “Who are we, that you should grumble against us?... Who are

we? *You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord*” (Exod 16:7-8). It was God who had brought them out from slavery and it was God who would provide for all their needs in the wilderness. Moses had learnt to trust God, “as seeing the invisible”, and he had no pretensions to greatness.

Later, when Miriam and Aaron criticized him, and accused him of high-handedness, God intervened and justified His servant. Significantly, the record adds, “*Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth*” (Numb 12:1-12).

So the first rule of self-examination is: are we humble? How do we react to criticism? If it is unjust, do we take it personally, or are we sad that others have misunderstood us? And then are we patient enough to explain matters carefully to avoid that same criticism being repeated? If it is a valid comment, then can we take it and do something about it? A great deal of 2nd Corinthians is taken up with Paul’s defense of his Christ-given authority, couched in terms that honor the Lord who called him but also sensitive to the criticism that he was exploiting the Corinthians for his own ends.

We are blessed with more examples in Scripture of those who have examined themselves and committed themselves wholeheartedly to God. Take David, the “*man after God’s own heart*”. After Nathan had revealed to him the wonderful covenant God was promising, David found it hard to believe that this was real. “*Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?*” (2Sam 7:18). He was overwhelmed by God’s grace. He didn’t see this as some kind of reward for his faithfulness but recognized it as part of God’s unfolding purpose: “*For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing...*” (v. 21). He then launched into a great paeon of praise and thanksgiving.

Let us ask ourselves the same question: who are we, that God should have made great and precious promises to us, sinful and erring as we are? Has time blunted the freshness and beauty of those promises? Or, are we still left breathless by God’s grace and rejoicing continuously in His mercy?

Chris Tarry (Walsall, U.K.)

Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library

Bro. Tom Graham who runs the Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library has moved and wishes to give a new address for those who purchase books through the library. The new address is:

*Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library
c/o Tom Graham
1857 Tuscan Grove Pl.
Camarillo, CA 93012*



Bible Mission News

Bolivia — La Paz Convivencia (Ecclesial Bible Camp)

From the 30th April to the 3rd of May we held the annual La Paz Convivencia (Ecclesial Bible Camp) and were fortunate enough to have Bro. Douglas and Sis. Marisol Vanegas from Costa Rica with us, with Bro. Douglas leading a marathon of studies. With 10 studies, daily Bible readings and 15 separate eating times throughout the three days it really was a weekend full of food!



Nineteen people attended throughout the weekend (17 for the whole time), a mix of brothers and sisters, children and long term contacts (and a couple of keen more recent ones!). The subjects had been pre-selected by the brother and sisters of the La Paz ecclesia so it was great to hear their comments at the end of the Convivencia about how much they enjoyed the studies and how uplifting and fortifying they had been.

After an introduction on Thursday evening Bro. Douglas then gave four studies on the times of the Judges followed by the memorial and a variety of selected subjects on Israel, Satan in Job, The great battle in heaven from Revelation 12, and the coming Judgement.

Being able to listen to a native Spanish speaker was obviously a wonderful break for the ears of everyone, rather than the poorly pronounced mumbling of an

Australian! And Bro. Douglas being such a thorough explainer and methodically using the Bible to interpret itself resulted in many comments regarding how clear the message and lessons were.

While the adults were in the study sessions the children had Sunday school sessions, with one activity involving making the kingdom of Solomon entirely out of edible things — the temple, cedars of Lebanon, monkeys, peacocks, ships, the kings throne and Solomon himself. It was then appreciatively pulled apart and devoured by everyone — perhaps not too dissimilar to what sadly happened to the Kingdom after Solomon.



In addition to the studies our Convivencia together had plenty of physical activities. A Bible games night, football, walks to the nearby lake and table soccer competitions, as well as time to sit down and enjoy each other's company. All in all it was a very encouraging weekend together and we thank our God that we are able to have events like these.



Selfie with Bro. Douglas and Sis. Marisol

And a spot of ongoing news regarding La Paz, three interested friends are taking personal 'preparing for baptism' classes so we pray with God's blessing that these will soon form part of the ecclesia in La Paz.

Written by Shimon Spina (La Paz, Bolivia)

Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Jamaica — Tiny Missionaries

When Nathan and I were newly married and venturing into the mission field together (India), we carried with us the romantic notion that one day it would be wonderful to take our as-yet-to-be-realized children with us, to expose them early and often to different cultures and the rigors of travel, and most importantly, to the joys and hard work of missionary life. "When the youngest is five," we told ourselves, our ignorance blissful.



Zinnia and Talia at Bro. Ray's

Our romantic notions were shattered with the arrival of babies and the fog of exhaustion that parenting brings, with the demands of their ever-constant needs and the reordering of our family from a twosome to a foursome. We came to terms with the realities involved in taking little people along on a trip to Somewhere Different, and stayed at home.

But they grew, as babies do, and our desire to be involved in missionary work remained, and whilst Talia's fifth year came and went without a foray into the field, her sixth year rolled round and God gave us the opportunity to

join Bro. Don Luff on a visit to Jamaica. So at the ages of nearly nine and six, we packed up Zinnia and Talia, and took them on their first adventure to the West Indies to see that God's truth is the same everywhere.

How fun it will be, we told them, and just to be sure it was, we filled backpacks with books and colored pencils, and loaded up two iPods with audiobooks and handed them one each.

And how fun it was! We arrived several days earlier than Don, partly to enjoy a few days on the beach, and partly to let the girls acclimatize gently to being Somewhere So Different. And it was different. The turquoise waters of the Caribbean Sea were just a three minute walk away, and lizards ran all over bougainvillea in the guesthouse gardens. The indomitable and fantastic Bro. Ray Arthurs was our very close neighbor, with his big laugh and bigger faith welcoming us to the island. Mangoes fell like great golden raindrops. Ripe breadfruit plummeted from the trees, splattering messily at our feet. Gigantic land crabs scuttled around in the grass, as abundant as the bunny rabbits in Virginia.



Bro. Ray Arthurs

To the girls, it smelled a little funky and the bathrooms were *weird*. The guesthouse rooms didn't look quite like hotels in the States. Menus contained suspicious items like salt fish and callaloo. It was hot, and the air conditioner died. Someone small accidentally locked herself in the bathroom. Mosquitoes consumed our fresh flesh.

So we smoothed the passage a little, and rode a glass-bottomed boat out to a reef, snorkeling with the pretty fish. We ordered BLTs instead of salt fish, banana smoothies instead of beetroot juice, and played in the beautiful water. Without realizing it was happening to them, the girls adjusted and when Bro. Don arrived three days after us, we were ready to work.

In addition to the fun of controlling their own audiobook destiny, the next best thing for them about traveling in Jamaica was the complete lack of seatbelts in the back seat of any vehicle. On Tuesday morning, six of us piled into Brother Ray's pickup to head out to the Harvey River Ecclesia, Don with his long legs in the front, our family of four in the back (it was a 2-seater Toyota 4-wheel drive pickup). When we screeched to a halt to pick up two elderly sisters waiting for us on the roadside, we deferred to our elders and the four of us climbed into the bed of the pick-up. With hair blowing every which way and the sun beating down, the girls snapped headphones over their ears, and settled in for the ride of their little lives along a twisty, bendy road under the lush, towering bamboo, up the mountain to Harvey River.

Harvey River is a rural spot, and home to a small ecclesia of one brother and four sisters. We broke bread with them, reminded of our future hope in the Kingdom. More immediate for the girls was the hope of dabbling their feet in the river which runs right below the hall, and as soon as meeting was over, they took off down the hill, squealing at the prospect of splashing in cool water on a hot day.

For Nathan and me, each place, each ecclesia we visited was an opportunity to encourage our brethren, and to be encouraged in return. For our girls, it was an opportunity to explore somewhere new, to see what lay beyond the bend in the trail or just the over the hill. Anything that inspired excitement in them and developed their desire to both be there and return some day, seemed worth encouraging. Getting stuck in a thunderstorm in the middle of a rainforest on a road to nowhere and having to get out of the pick-up into the pouring rain so it could make it up the hill? This is fun, girls! FUN!

The second half of our trip brought a different kind of adventure. The May Pen Ecclesia has a vibrant Sunday school, and Zinnia happily romped around in the back yard of the ecclesial hall with a gaggle of girls after meeting. Tali, meanwhile, was busy making mischief with little Akilah Johnson, daughter of Brother Patrick and the late Sister Annette. The two of them, sprung from the same zesty bean pod, spent three days chasing bugs and making see-saws from rickety bricks and splintery pieces of wood. Children, regardless of where they grow up, are full of ideas.



At May Pen

Talia asked to stay in Jamaica for three more months, with or without the rest of us!! Zinnia conceded that maybe we could go back there some day, just so long as it was at least five years hence.

There's nothing easy about going anywhere with children, not even to the post office, and the effort involved increases exponentially with each different



Akilah and Zinnia at Mutual Improvement Day

willing, there will be a next time), they'll grow and learn a little more. So will we.

element added. Scorching temperatures and ravenous mosquitoes are not foreign to our little Virginians, but not being able to retreat into air conditioning is. Sitting through meeting once a week? No problem. Four memorial services at different ecclesias, two evening ecclesial Bible Classes, a home Bible Class and a Mutual Improvement Day for all ages (about 90 in attendance) at the Kingston Ecclesial Hall in the course of one week? That's bit more of a stretch. Throw in some hard pews and intense heat, and the discomfort (and vocalization of it) increases.

Was it always fun? By no means. But was it *good*? Oh yes! Our little people stretched and grew, learning so much more than they realize and next time, (and God

Written by Antonia Giordano (Norfolk, VA)

Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity



Spanish Town Ecclesia

Guyana Annual Fraternal Gathering at Eccles Christadelphian Hall

The Fraternal Gathering commenced on the 4th July, 2015 and concluded on the 6th July, 2015. Accompanied by his two sons, Jacob and Samuel, Bro. Mark Carr was the magnificent guest speaker at this year's Fraternal Gathering. There was a daily attendance of approximately 60 members and young people from the Ecclesias around Guyana. The theme for the Fraternal Gathering was "Redeemed

Out of all Distress — A Parable of Redemption and Salvation”, under which a total of six topics were addressed.

Bro. Patrick Joseph, the Recording Brother of the Eccles Ecclesia, presided on the 4th July, 2015, where he began with the welcoming remarks. The first topic delivered by Bro Carr was “Outside the Camp” and the reading was taken from Matthew 1:1-17. This served as an introduction to all the topics that were to follow. Bro Carr pointed out the two main themes that can be found in this chapter — “Redemption” and the act of being “Outside the Camp”. The second topic that he dealt with for that day was “She has been more faithful than I”. The introductory reading was taken from Genesis 38. The main focus of this topic was the relationship between Judah and Tamar, one of the couples mentioned in Matthew 1:1-17. Tamar wanted to be associated with the Kingdom of God so she did everything in her power to get into God’s Kingdom, even if that was to play the harlot with Judah. She was then redeemed and brought back into the Camp.

Bro. Jermaine Porte was the president on the 5th July, 2015, where there was a baptism before the Memorial Service commenced. Our new brother in the Truth, Bro. Shamroy Hope, was baptized by our guest speaker Bro. Mark Carr. After the baptism had concluded the Memorial Service commenced at which Bro. Carr delivered his third topic entitled “She sent them out another way” and the reading was taken from Joshua 2. This topic was based on the relationship between Rahab and Salmon. She was a prostitute and he redeemed her and brought her into the Camp. The topic for the afternoon session was “Under whose wings thou have come to trust” and the introductory reading was taken from Ruth 4. Boaz took over the responsibility for Ruth and redeemed her.

On the final day, 6th July, 2015, Bro. Jerrold Joseph presided and the two topics done were entitled “Assuredly thy son shall reign after me” and the reading was taking from 1 Kings 1:11-31, and “Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife” and the introductory reading was taken from Matthew 1:18-25. The first talk focused on the relationship between Bath-Sheba and David. Bath-Sheba was a Gentile, along with Rahab, Tamar and Ruth and had no right being associated with the Kingdom of God but she did all she could to secure her position. The final talk was based on the love that Joseph and Mary shared. He accepted a woman who was pregnant and protected her from any form of retribution.

All of these women mentioned in Matthew 1:1-17 were protected by scarlet. This scarlet represents the ashes of a red heifer burnt with scarlet and hyssop which was added to water and used to sprinkle on those who were unclean and cleansed them. All the women were sprinkled with this liquid and purified by their husbands.

It was indeed a pleasure to be present at this Fraternal Gathering and hear the word brought by Bro Mark Carr. On behalf of the members of the Eccles Ecclesia we would like to thank all who assisted in the preparation and success of this gathering and Bro Carr for all the work that he has done at the Fraternal Gathering.

Joanna Porte

Guyana Bible School

The 44th annual Guyana Christadelphian Bible school 2015 was held at the Kilcoy Christadelphian hall from Friday April 3rd to Monday April 6th 2015. The Theme considered was *“The Law of God is perfect, converting the soul; the Testimony of God are pure making the simple wise” (Psa 19:7)*. The Bible school was well attended by members of all six ecclesias in Guyana. On average we had about 65 persons for the day including children and youth circlers.



We greatly appreciated the ministrations of our two overseas speakers. Their classes meshed together remarkably well. Bro. Dev Ramcharran dealt with the sub-theme: “Saving the Galatians”; while Bro. Jeff Gelineau focused on the sub-theme: “Strength in Weakness”. The talks were very well delivered and it was clearly understood by even the young ones because of the questions that were asked afterwards.

Sis. Christine Drepaul was able to assist with the Sunday school classes during the Bible school time. This was greatly appreciated by both children and adults. They met under a canopy in front of the hall to shelter them from the intense tropical sun while adult classes were inside the hall.

Rose and Diane N'djelekulu



Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 981781, Austin, TX 78709-1781, www.tidings.org

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, 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

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF) supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Rick Szabo, P.O. Box 1528, West Caldwell, NJ 07007-1528 wcfoundation.org

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

Christadelphian Tape Library. Contact Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923.
Phone: 732-381-4590 Fax: 732-499-8415
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Spanish language literature is available at P.O. Box 947, Monrovia, CA 91017-0947. 626-303-2222, e-mail: jdhunter@gte.net

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

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CBMA earmarked for CICH, c/o Jeff Gelineau, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941, or contact jeffandkellie@gelineau.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

News and 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.**

The ecclesial position primarily in Ontario, and perhaps elsewhere, is at present confused as unity-related matters are being resolved. Intelligence is published for information purposes only without endorsement by the Tidings Committee.

CHICAGO, IL

The lightstand in Chicago was blessed to have two baptisms August 31, 2015. DANIEL RULINDA and BAWILL RUBONEZA were baptized after good confessions of their faith. Both members were born in Congo and fled for their lives about ten years ago. Daniel had actually survived being a victim of a firing squad, and their stories of survival are intense. Their travels took them to South Africa, where their families met up with Bro. Lucas and Leona Scheepers near Pretoria. Bawili's sister, Kiza, was baptized in South Africa and that is how their family became familiar with Christadelphians. Bawili's husband, Oliver, was also baptized in South Africa just over a year ago, before moving to Chicago, and he has been a wonderful addition to our ecclesia. We now have about fifteen total family members from Congo who attend services each week, including the large Emena family which faithfully attends one hundred percent of every service we have. We have many members who have helped with resettling the refugees, and we may be able to assist other ecclesias if requested.

The Chicago Ecclesia recently received notice that two brothers originally from Iran are expected to receive refugee status and arrive in Chicago Sept. 21, 2015. These brothers, Bre. Milad and Masih Bahadorzadeh, had a three page article about their lives by Bro. Ron Hicks in the July 2014 issue of Bible Missionary. Bro. Tim Galbraith has been very involved in their lives, as well as Bro. Karl Baloch, who is originally from Pakistan (in Sri Lanka himself, awaiting refugee status to Canada). Needless to say, Chicago is a major city that seems connected with various refugee charities and we are finding more of our homeless and stateless brethren arriving in our area. We thank our heavenly Father for these new members, and for the amazing experiences each brings to our church. If any would like further information, please contact the undersigned below.

Dan Richard

KITCHENER WATERLOO, ON

We are very pleased to welcome as members of the Kitchener Waterloo Ecclesia, Bro. Michael and Sis. Ruth Buxton-Carr from the Shelburne Ecclesia. We are looking forward to their contribution to working with us as we await the coming of the Lord.

Martin J Webster

WASHINGTON DC

The Washington DC ecclesia has enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters since our last intelligence and wish to thank the following brothers for their words of exhortation: Bill Link and Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD); Noah Bradburn (Northern Virginia); Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON); George Bediako (Richmond

Petersburg, VA); Wilfred Alleyne (Birmingham, Handsworth, UK); Dean Brown (Avon, IN); and Peter Trotter (Dallas, TX).

In February 2015, Sis. Beth DeSouza transferred her membership to the San Francisco Peninsula, CA Ecclesia when her husband Malcom's job was relocated to California. She and her family will be missed. On March 4, 2015, we rejoiced with Bro. Eric and Sis. Dawn Kling on the birth of their fourth child, Jäger Izaak Kling.

In April 2015, we enjoyed fellowship with the members of the Baltimore Ecclesia when we hosted our semi-annual Baltimore/Washington Gathering and Study Day. We would like to thank Bro. Matt Colby (Hamilton Book Road, ON) for his words of exhortation and talk on, "The Burdens of the Messiah and his Forerunner" on Sunday, and his studies on, "Reasons to Believe" on Saturday.

We would also like to thank Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD) who along with Bro. Matt Link have been leading our Learn to Read the Bible seminar since April. We are pleased to say that after five months, we still have five contacts in regular attendance.

On May 31, 2015, we were blessed to witness the baptism of PATRICIA CATHERINE HERDOIZA HERNANDEZ into the saving name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We report that we have removed the names of Sis.'s Heather Locke, and Allana McDaniel and Bro. David Rodriquez from our membership.

In June 2015, we hosted our CYC camping and canoe trip with families from a number of ecclesias attending. We wish to thank Bro. Jeff and Sis. Ruth Jensen (Shenandoah, VA) for all their help in making it a success.

In August 2015, we received a letter from the Sarasota, FL Ecclesia commending Sis. Elaine David to the Washington DC Ecclesia. She was a member of our ecclesia many years ago and it is good to have her back with us.

Our beloved Bro. Alvan Brittle fell asleep in the Lord Sunday, August 16, 2015, at the age of ninety-seven. Bro. Alvan was baptised in the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ on September 21, 1939, and he and Sis. Trynie Brittle transferred their membership from the Echo Lake, NJ Ecclesia to the Washington DC Ecclesia in June 1985. Bro. Alvan had been bed ridden for several months and now rests in peace awaiting the return of our Lord and the resurrection of all those who sleep in Christ Jesus. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. We pray his sleep will be short. A memorial service for family and friends to share stories and memories of our beloved Bro. Alvan's life is planned, God willing, for September 26, 2015, at our ecclesial hall.

We look forward to and invite all to attend a study weekend by Bro. Stephen Whitehouse October 10-11, 2015, on the topic, "Jesus a High Priest After the Order of Melchizedek," and our Family Bible Weekend at Camp Hashawha with Bro. Ryan King on the topic, "Jeremiah and His Friends".

Bob Kling

**FAMILY BIBLE STUDY WEEKEND
CAMP HASHAWHA, WESTMINSTER, MD.**

The Washington, D.C. ecclesia extends a loving invitation for all to attend our family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158.

The weekend is planned, God willing, for November 20-22, 2015. Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) is scheduled to lead teens and adults in classes

entitled "Jeremiah & His Friends". Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.

Bible classes for all ages will be held Saturday and Sunday beginning at 8:45AM. A nursery for those under 4 is available. Sports, daily readings, a Bible discussion group, an evening program and a campfire hymn sing are planned for Saturday. Sunday School, Memorial Service and lunch complete the weekend on Sunday.

Mail registrations will be accepted on a first come, first-served basis and only with a proper deposit. No phone or e-mail reservations will be accepted. No walk-ins please. Day attendees must pre-register. The Camp requires registration numbers to plan for meals so please register early.

Registration deadline is November 3, 2015. Registration fee for those over 4 is \$65.00 (US funds only). A \$30.00 deposit, per person, is required with your registration. Make checks payable to Washington Christadelphian Ecclesia. Confirmation of your registration will be e-mailed or phoned to you. Guardians, for those under 18 attending without their parents, must be staying on site at the camp and must be over 25 years old.

Mail registrations to: Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707. For forms or information, phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Bro. Ken at Hashawha@gmail.com. (Forms should be available from your ecclesia, on our website hopeofthekingdom.com or contact Bro. Green.)

Origin of the Chicago Ecclesia

A man by the name of Saunders, who had come to Chicago from Ohio, finding a few people of like persuasion with himself gathered them together and organized a mission in 1843. The group thus organized held the views of Dr John Thomas who had for some years been associated with the movement led by Alexander Campbell. He had been introduced to Mr. Campbell in the early thirties by some Cincinnati brethren and had been cordially received by him.

In 1834 Dr Thomas projected a publication to be known as The Apostolic Advocate and to be published at Philadelphia. Mr. Campbell heartily approved of this project and in his announcement of it spoke of Dr Thomas as a "talented, devout and zealous disciple of the Messiah," and commended The Apostolic Advocate to the attention of the readers of The Millennial Harbinger. Not long after this, however Dr Thomas began to give publicity to certain very radical views and to advocate doctrines which Mr. Campbell regarded as speculative and divisive. He felt called upon, therefore to answer this and a controversy ensued which lasted a number of years and finally resulted in the withdrawal of Dr Thomas from the Campbell movement.

It was natural, however, since the Thomasites had been affiliated with the Campbell movement and were known Christians, that Disciples coming to Chicago in the years immediately following the organization of the mission should unite with it. However, the two groups were not harmonious so there were frequent debates and some friction, and finally L.C.P. Freer, one of the Thomasites, proposed a separation. Those adhering to the Campbell movement, therefore, withdrew, and in 1849 organized a church with seven charter members.

From "The Disciples of Christ in Chicago..." by Perry James Rice

Minute Meditation

We are members of God's family

An article in the local newspaper tells about a man who died on his 88th birthday leaving his wife he was married to for 68 years, 17 children, 137 grandchildren, and 70 great grandchildren. Almost every day would have been a birthday for someone in his family. If he tried to keep in regular contact with all his family members he would have been a very busy man.

While this man certainly had a large family, it is tiny compared to the family of our Heavenly Father. We are God's children, and He keeps track of all of us. Jesus tells us that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father knowing it, and that we are of more value than many sparrows. The psalmist tells us that our Heavenly Father knows when we sit down and when we stand up and He is acquainted with all our ways. How privileged we are, that the eternal God cares so much for us, and allows us to call Him our Heavenly Father.

Do we live each day of our lives mindful that all we think and say and do is known to Him? When we go to bed at night what grade do we think our Heavenly Father will give us for this day's activities? Have we served our God by what we have done? Have we read the Bible, God's word given to guide us through the perils of this life to salvation? Joshua was told that the key to him prospering was to meditate on the Word of God day and night. At the very least do we do our daily Bible readings? Have we looked for opportunities to share our hope of salvation with those living in darkness in our increasingly troubled world? Paul advises the Thessalonians to pray without ceasing — do we? Do we discuss the details of our life with our Heavenly Father, looking for His blessing and guidance, knowing that our burdens can be light when we share the yoke with Jesus? Have we showed kindness to others, helping them with their burdens? Living a godly life involves making a conscious decision to think about God's ways and to try to live according to His standards as best we can.

We have no secrets in heaven. Each day we live is another day to serve the Lord. When our life appears to have been extended it must mean there is still more God wants us to do. What is our purpose in living, and are we redeeming the time? However young or old we are, there is something we can do today for Him.

James tells us that faith without works is dead. He does not mean that we can earn salvation by our works. Nothing we could ever do would be enough to earn eternal life, but our Heavenly Father wants to give it to us if we will show our love for Him by keeping His commandments to the best of our ability. Jesus tells us that it is his Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

How comforting for us to know that both our Heavenly Father and His son, our Lord Jesus Christ, want us to be in the Kingdom. Jesus has told us that none of us can come to him unless our Heavenly Father has drawn us, so we really are special chosen vessels if we have been given the opportunity to learn the gospel

of salvation. It is up to us to want to be in God's kingdom as much as they want us to be there. If there is anything we want more, then that is a weed choking our growth in godliness. Weeds can be a person, or an obsession for something like money or a career or a sport, or a distraction like a computer or television. We cannot let the weeds threaten our salvation by choking the Word of life in our lives. Most of us do need a job, we need money to live, we may need computers or phones to do our work properly, but we cannot let these things take over our lives. We must remember our priority in life is to seek first the Kingdom of God, and that all these other things are to be cut down in importance, like cutting down weeds, so that they don't distract us from our true purpose in life.

What is it that takes our time and thoughts each day? If we were to keep a log of everything we did and thought about in one 24 hour period, we would probably be surprised and, perhaps, ashamed. How much of the time left over when we are not sleeping or eating do we actually spend in thinking about God, studying His Word, and working in His service? These questions each of us needs to answer, and the answer can lead to life forever, or rejection at the judgment seat of Christ.

Our God cares for us His children more than any natural father cares for his family. He has made it possible for us to inherit eternal life if we are willing to live our lives as His children. Let us be thankful that we have been called, and let us pray that we may be among those who are chosen and faithful

Robert J. Lloyd

God's Family

In God's lovingkindness He was well pleased to treat me in the same way as He did the Ethiopian eunuch returning home from his worship in Jerusalem (Acts 8:26-40). He sent one of His adopted sons in my way who taught me doctrines that I at first would not believe (Isa 53:1). Before this, God had made me prepare the way through the study of the English language. And so God, in His mercy, opened my understanding that I might understand the Scriptures. And He said unto me: "Thus it is written", and so He showed me the wonderful things in His law. He showed me that "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). I had been taught that I already was baptized and a child of God, but now I had personally to face the question of baptism. I had to make my choice myself, to be baptized or not. God's inspired servant Peter had given the answer to the question of baptism. When the Jews asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" he replied: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38). In reality there was no choice for me. I had to be baptized if I was to obey the commandment of God through His inspired disciple.

And so I was adopted as a son of God. I took my place in God's family on earth, and I was the object of love and kindness from older members of the family. May God help us to be His fervent witnesses to this untoward generation. His Kingdom is coming, and those who are ready are to meet it. Shall we see any among them whom we helped to find the way of life?

Helge Myrvang (Norway). The Christadelphian, 1950 p. 78.

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

OCTOBER, 2015

- 3-4 Ontario Fall Gathering** at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Theme: "Through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures we have Hope" (Rom 15:4). Speakers Bre. John Mannell and Scott Wentworth. Contact Bro. Bruce Abel bnb69abel@hotmail.ca. For registration contact Bro. Will Snodgrass OCFGathering@gmail.com.
- 9-11 Atlanta, GA** Fraternal Gathering, speaker Bro. Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA): "Hezekiah: Faith in Desperate Times." For more information: Sis. Carolyn Carter 770-833-8915.
- 9-11 Vancouver, BC** Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Tec Morgan (Castle Bromwich, UK): "God Dwelling with Man". Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca or 604 881 4733 for a program.
- 10-11 Washington, DC** Bible Study weekend at Washington, DC, Ecclesia, 9240 Riggs Rd., Adelphi, MD 20783. Speaker: Bro. Stephen Whitehouse (Birmingham Hall Green, UK). Topic: "Jesus a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek". Saturday, 1pm, classes and dinner. Sunday: Sunday school, Memorial, Lunch and afternoon talk. Contact Bro. Bob Kling by phone: 301-498-5245 or email: LearnToReadTheBible@juno.com.
- 12 Brantford, ON** Thanksgiving Gathering, Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI). Theme "Fruits of the Spirit." To be held at the Copetown Community Centre, registration 12:30pm, dinner provided. For more information contact brantfordchristadelphians@gmail.com.
- 16-18 Women at the Well Retreat**, Desert Hot Springs, CA. Sis. Carol Link (Baltimore, MD) will be leading our classes on "Lord, help me: a women's cry". Register with Sis. Bonnie Sommerville kenandbonnie@simihills.org. For questions contact Sis. Sandy McLeod sandrarmcleod@gmail.com or Sis. Denise Sisco siscofamily@msn.com. Sponsored by Simi Hills, CA Ecclesia.
- 23-25 Lombard, IL (Chicago)** Adult Study Weekend in southern Wisconsin with Bro. Ed Carpenter. Contact Sis. Sherry Johnson at simonsjoy@yahoo.com.

NOVEMBER, 2015

- 7-8 Sarasota, FL** Fall Study Weekend with Bro. Richard Morgan (Hamilton Book Road, ON), speaking on: "Prophecy, Predestination, and the Purpose of God." Contact Bro. James Wilkinson at jameswilkinson@hotmail.com or 941-412-7988.
- 13-15 Austin Leander, TX** Gathering/Study weekend at HEB Camp, Leaky, TX (near Kerrville, TX). Bro. David Jennings (CA) speaking on "Led by the Spirit". Cost \$10 per person; Family cap \$40. Contact Sis. Maritta Terrell for registration by email at mt-ct@swbell.net.
- 14-15 Mississauga West, ON** Study weekend with Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD) on "The Many Facets of Resurrection". Begins Saturday at 10:30am. Classes on Saturday are "Resurrection as History: The Challenge and Value of an Empirical Basis of Faith"; "Resurrection as Worldview: The Bible's Ultimate Statement"; "Resurrection as Basis of Preaching: The Use of Resurrection in the First Century". Sunday begin at 9:30am. Talk titles are "Resurrection as the Basis of Character Development and Spiritual Growth" and "Resurrection the Basis of Exhortation". Contact John Mannell jwmannell@gmail.com.

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)

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14-15 Pittsburgh, PA CYC Study Weekend. Our speaker will be Bro. Kevin Mayock (Moorestown, NJ). His subject will be "Joseph". Travelers' lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00pm. Contact Bro. David Pommer at david.pommer@verizon.net or (724) 224-7363.

20-22 Washington, DC Family Bible Study weekend at Camp Hashawha, 300 John Owings Rd, Westminster, MD 21158. Our speaker will be Bro. Ryan King (Richmond Petersburg, VA) on "Jeremiah & His Friends". Everyone must register. Registration deadline is November 3rd. Forms available on hopeofthekingdom.com or contact Bro. Ken Green, 14006 Barkham Court, Laurel, MD 20707; phone: 443-497-3497 or e-mail Hashawha@gmail.com. **(Please note this is a week earlier than previous years when it was the Thanksgiving weekend.)**

DECEMBER, 2015

26-Jan 1 Ontario Winter Bible School, The Best Western Highland Inn & Conference Center, Midland (ON). Speakers: Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, NZ); Bro. Everett Muniz (Paris Ave, OH); Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) adults; Bro Jesse Adair (Hamilton Book Rd, ON) young people. Registration information and other details are available from our web site www.ontariowinterbibleschool.com.

FEBRUARY, 2016

6 Brantford, ON Annual Junior CYC & Little Disciples Winter Gathering at Camp Trillium. Workbooks will be posted toward the end of the year on www.brantfordchristadelphians.com. For information email Bro. Peter and Sis. Karly Styles at peterandkarly@juno.com..