

The **Christadelphian Tidings** of the Kingdom of God



**Editorial:
A Love Feast**

**Hope in the
Kingdom of God**

**Was Christ Born
with a "Free Life"?**

**Easy-to-Make
Musical Instruments**

**Jonathan
the Faithful Prince:
A Comforter**

**History:
Jewish Life in
Berlin**

**The New Testament
Church: Jews and
Gentiles**

Brother Bob Lloyd

**Watch What
You Say**

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The Lord's Supper

In the beginning

If you were to ask most Christadelphians today what a Christian meeting was like in the days of the apostles, you would probably get different answers. Some would probably answer that it consisted primarily of preaching and singing. Some might reply that it principally centered around the Memorial i.e. partaking of the bread and wine. Of course, both of these responses are partially right. However, a rather dominant part of apostolic worship that few Christians would think of today is that it actually centered around a meal.

That's right — a meal! The early Christians referred to this meal as the agape. Even after the death of the apostles, the pre-Nicene Church continued to practice the agape or love feast. Yet, within a century or so after Constantine's conversion in AD 312, this important part of apostolic worship totally disappeared.

For the origin of the love feast, we need to look no further than the Last Supper. *"As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body' "* (Matt. 26:26). So the very first Memorial was instituted in the context of a meal. A meal continued to be the normal setting in which Christians met together for fellowship and worship. Acts 2:46 tells us: *"Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart."* The expression, "breaking bread," no doubt includes the celebration of the Memorial. However, the phrase, *"they ate their food with gladness"* would also indicate that this was more than a memorial: it was also a meal.

Nowhere is this practice more clearly confirmed than in the well-known passage of 1Cor 11:20-34. Paul begins that passage by saying, *"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk."* Now, this is obviously talking about more than just the Memorial. Nobody gets drunk from the small amount of wine taken in the service, nor is it credible that various persons would receive communion before others because they were hungry. No, Paul is obviously describing a meal — the love feast — that preceded the actual Memorial.

A love feast

Yet, that the Memorial was celebrated at the end of the love feast (or, as part of it) is quite clear from verses 23-30 of the passage from the Corinthians passage. In those verses, Paul expressly mentions Jesus taking bread and saying, *"Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you"* (1Cor. 11:24).

Another place in Scripture that describes eating as an integral part of a New Testament worship service is Acts 20:11, where it mentions: *"When he had come*

up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.” So Paul didn’t just preach; he also ate!

And, then, of course, there is the well-known reference in Jude, where Jude refers to those who are “*spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves*” (Jude 12). Here Jude uses the Greek word *agape* to refer to the “love feast”. It is clear that eating was a significant of what occurred, which was almost certainly what we would call a memorial service.

Jesus said: “*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another*” (John 13:34). But to love was not a new commandment! The whole of the divine law was comprehended in the concept of love for God, and for one’s neighbor. So what was the new commandment? Could it be that he was saying, “Keep the *agape* (the love feast) with one another, for by this, men will know that you are my disciples”? This was the new commandment!

Peter writes that “*love (agape) shall cover a multitude of sins*” (1Pet 4:8). What is it that covers sins? Forgiveness. Because of our love for one another we can forgive another’s wrong; but is not Peter saying, “Be fervent in your love-feast (*agape*), for your love-feast shall cover a multitude of sins”? It is here, at the love-feast, that we have the opportunity to examine ourselves before our Savior, as at no other time. Even though God’s forgiveness is always available to the repentant sinner, it is at the Memorial Table, above all, that we are moved freely to confess these faults and seek the forgiveness that we sorely need. And in the early church this was a community meal as well as a communion.

The disappearance of the love feast

It is noticeable that nearly all Biblical scholars and early Christian writers are agreed on this matter: that New Testament worship consisted of the love feast, followed by preaching and the Memorial. Here is just one sample:

“In the opinion of the great majority of scholars, the *agape* was a meal at which not only bread and wine, but all kinds of viands were used, a meal which had the double purpose of satisfying hunger and thirst and giving expression to the sense of Christian brotherhood. At the end of this feast, bread and wine were taken according to the Lord’s command, and after thanksgiving to God were eaten and drunk in remembrance of Christ, and as a special means of communion with the Lord himself and through him with one another. The *agape* was thus related to the Memorial as Christ’s last Passover [was] to the Christian rite which he grafted upon it. It preceded and led up to the Memorial, and was quite distinct from it.”¹

What happened to the love feast?

If the love feast was such an integral part of apostolic worship, why is it not still around today? The answer is that the apostolic pattern was eventually altered. Even though Jesus and his apostles handed down the model of having a common meal before the Memorial, some churches began changing this after the apostles died. During the second and third centuries, the *agape* was eventually separated

from the Memorial. Churches began celebrating the Memorial in the morning and hosting the love feast in the evening.

Nevertheless, even though the agape and communion went their separate ways, the church continued to practice both of them until sometime after the time of Constantine. Perhaps the love feast would have continued on down to our times if the original apostolic pattern (holding the love feast and the Memorial together) had not been broken.

When we come to Justin Martyr (ca. A.D. 150), we find that in his account of church worship he does not mention the agape at all, but speaks of the Memorial as following a service which consisted of the reading of Scripture, prayers, and exhortation. Tertullian (ca. A.D. 200) testifies to the continued existence of the agape, but shows clearly that in the church of the West, the Memorial was no longer associated with it. In the East, the connection appears to have been longer maintained, but by and by the severance became universal; and though the agape continued for a long time to maintain itself as a social function of the Church, it gradually passed out of existence.

And what of the twentieth century? Since the early days of the gospel, fellowship has found its highest expression in the sharing of a meal — a meal characterized neither by grim austerity nor by convivial jollity, but by religious sincerity, wholesome talk, and cheerful friendliness; and since neither human nature nor the gospel have changed over the years, it would seem that present-day life in Christ can gain much from a similar activity.

And it does! For it can hardly be accident that a feature of Christadelphian fellowship meetings (“Fraternal Gatherings” or more commonly in North America “Study Weekends”) is shared meals. Yet how much more could that meal bring blessing to all if only it had become traditional to consecrate meal-time conversation to the Lord instead of to the gods of health, holidays, shopping, or gossip. But the early church’s Agape was a Love Feast only by virtue of its climax and conclusion — the poignant yet confident remembering of Jesus in Bread and Wine “until he come.” The Love Feast was the Holy Place by which access might be had to the Mercy Seat beyond the veil.

In our day

Looking back, I have experienced what I can, in retrospect, call a “Love Feast”. On a few occasions, I have shared a meal with a few other brethren, spent quite a long time discussing matters of the Truth, and concluded with a Memorial. These were indeed deeply spiritual occasions.

So how much is being lost in these days by the omission of the Love Feast? It is impossible to say. To make it a weekly function would probably be undesirable, even if it were possible. But to convene a meeting on such lines once or twice a year, with the ecclesia forewarned and suitably prepared, could hardly fail to bring a rich spiritual reward. Those who have been members of some small ecclesia where local circumstances have dictated the holding of a simple communal meal between Sunday services will know how much can be gained

from good table-talk about Holy Scripture and the suffering and glory of Christ. From such a practice to the Agape itself is only a short step. In the Love Feast neither time nor place nor form are commanded, only unanimity of spirit. All that is forbidden is unseemliness; and its rules and regulations are summed up in its very name “Love”.

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, vol. 1, p. 66.

Love or Love Feast?

The name of the Love Feast — Greek: Agapē—may conceivably occur in the New Testament more often than has been generally realized, because Agapō is also the ordinary New Testament word for “love”. So it may well be that in a number of passages where reference to the virtue “love” has been understood there was originally an allusion to the church’s Love Feast. These may be worth considering, in the light of the well-established principle of Bible interpretation that where there is a choice between a general or abstract interpretation and one which is particular, concrete or special, the latter is more likely to be the true one.

a. *“When Jesus knew that his hour was come . . . having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end” (John 13:1)*

b. There is now possible a startling and impressive re-interpretation of other familiar words: *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another” (John 13:34-35)*

What is now usually taken as a perfectly general description of Christian living may originally have been applied to its clearest and most characteristic expression, the meal of fellowship. “Love one another” was a commandment of the Old Testament (Lev 19:18). But “Have a meal of fellowship together culminating in remembrance of Me in Bread and Wine” was an altogether new commandment. And it was this practice by which the disciples of Jesus were most readily identifiable, as Pliny’s letters to Trajan clearly show. “Ye do show forth the Lord’s death till he come”, wrote Paul.

c. There is support for the foregoing suggestion in 2John 5-7: *“And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another . . . For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”*

— Harry Whittaker

“Studies in the Breaking of Bread” The Christadelphian 1964

Exhortation

Barnabas: The Apostle

“And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet” (Acts 4:36-37).

Joseph or Barnabas

How many people here today have ever known someone named Barnabas? I have only met one in my lifetime. I think that is such a shame, after took a brief look at this man and what little we are told about his life. In fact, I have never heard an exhortation about him. I guess that is why I chose Barnabas as a person to talk about on this Sunday morning.

Barnabas seem to be one of those kind of people that we don’t notice at first, like a wall flower, and then all the sudden we see him blossom right before our eyes. What I would like to do this morning is to consider the few verses that are recorded about Barnabas and watch how he matures spiritually, and then see if we can find the exhortation God reveals to us through His faithfulness.

The name given to Joseph by the Apostles was “Barnabas”. In relation to things Jewish, when a name was given to anyone, it illustrated precisely who they were. And so Luke states that *“Joses . . . was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation” (R.V., Son of Exhortation)*. Bar means son and Nabas means prophet, so Barnabas means the son of prophecy. But Luke interprets the word as meaning the son of *paraclesis*. The difference is the same as that obtaining in the translation of the word *paraclete*. In John 15:26 the Lord uses the word “Comforter”; the same word *paraclete* is translated “advocate” in 1John 2:1. The meaning of the word *paraclete* is one called to the side of another, either to plead their cause or to bring comfort. Two statements made by the Lord in connection with the coming of the *Paraclete* link up with this two-fold definition: *“I will not leave you comfortless” (John 14:18)*, and *“he shall teach you all things” (John 12:26)*. It is evident from this that both exhortation and consolation were in his mind as he used the word “*Paraclete*”. Here in Acts is the same word, the son of *paraclesis*, the son of exhortation or consolation.

The apostles surnamed him thus because of what he was; a man gifted in speech, apt to teach, able to exhort others, yet at the same time a man who by his words and actions brought comfort to others. His history as revealed by Luke bears out his name, a man who came alongside to aid and comfort his fellows. And it was these qualities that were used by God to further his purposes in relation to Paul.

So here is a man that who was obviously moved by observing the Power of God working in the lives of the Apostles. In fact, he was so moved, that he sold a Field that he owned and laid the money at the feet of the Apostles with

complete confidence that they would use it wisely to help others. Because of this act of generosity the Apostles change his name from Joseph to Barnabas, Son of Encouragement.

In the Bible, when a person's name is changed we should make a note of it. I think that the Apostles changed his name because of some virtue he displayed as well as his overall character. We shall see that he was rightly named "Son of Encouragement"

Paul's friend

We meet Barnabas next when he presents Paul to the Apostles:

"And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem" (Acts 9:26-28).

A study of Paul's life will show that he made many enemies — in the circumstances it was inevitable — but, at the same time, he made many friends. He had, for want of a better term, a genius for friendship, a capacity for making friends who loved him and were loyal and true to him. Among them was a man who played a decisive part in certain crises in the life of the Apostle. It was the divine intention that Paul should be the great apostle to the Gentiles, but it was through human instruments that God worked to achieve that purpose. There was, then, someone associated with the Apostle who by his actions — speaking after the manner of men — made possible the great work that Paul was to perform for the church and the world. Luke introduces him early in his record in the Acts; a sure indication of the important part he had to play in Luke's story. First there is the reference to the Edenic conditions prevailing in the church before sin entered in. Luke speaks of the fellowship one with another, of the breaking of bread and of prayers, and how they had all things in common. At the beginning of Acts 5 he describes the introduction of sin into the church in the falling away of Ananias and Sapphira. But between these two pictures, he refers to the man who in himself revealed the conditions of fellowship spoken of in relation to the church, the man who subsequently was to play an important role in Paul's life. His name was Joseph; he was a Cypriot — a native of Cyprus, a landowner and obviously wealthy. With him there was no keeping back part of the price. He was used to wealth; nevertheless he sold all that he had and gave it to the church, afterwards working with his own hands to provide for himself. Though he was rich, he became poor that others, through his poverty, might become rich; in this he followed his Lord.

We should all be so fortunate to have a brother/friend like Barnabas. I can only imagine how the members of the Jerusalem Ecclesia must have felt. They were scared to Death. This is where Barnabas steps in and lives up to his name. Not

only does he encourage Paul to come to the meeting but he has to encourage the members of the ecclesia to accept him. Barnabas is a true Peace Maker, a Spiritual Dignitary. In the words of Jesus: *“Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God” (Matt 5:9).*

Preaching to the Gentiles

Next we hear about Barnabas traveling to Antioch to Preach to the Gentiles (Acts 11:22-30). He leaves Antioch and Travels to Tarsus looking for Saul and when he finds him they go back to Antioch to Preach there for another year, before leaving to take the Relief Fund money to Judea. Another side note: Paul and Barnabas were actively involved with the ecclesia where the disciples were first called Christians. I get tired just thinking about these two men’s lives. Keep in mind, travel in those days cannot even compare to modern day travel. There were no cruise ship, no aircraft, not even horses for most travelers. Just one’s poor tired feet.

For the sake of time I am going to just mention some of the high points and the verses that relate to Barnabas and Paul working together.

- *“And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark” (Acts 12:25).* So John Mark is introduced to us.
- *“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2)* So Barnabas and Paul were knit together because of the Gospel message.
- *“And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people...” (Acts 14:11-14).* Barnabas and Paul have such a dramatic impact on the people they call them gods. Barnabas they call Jupiter and Paul they call Mecurius. Here Paul and Barnabas are declared to be Apostles: it is actually the only time Barnabas is so designated.

Enter Mark

Then we get to Acts 15. After reviewing the time that Barnabas and Paul had spent together, I imagine that they had worked together in the mission field over 10 years. These two men knew each other quite well and had been able to work through all kinds of problems. Both of these men had dedicated their lives to serving God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They had demonstrated many different Christ like characteristics such as humility, long suffering, patience, esteeming others better than themselves, attending to the needs of others: the list goes on and on.

They also both clearly played a major part at the council of Jerusalem, which endorsed the work that Paul and Barnabas had been doing the past decade in preaching to the Gentiles

“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question” (Acts 15:1-2).

So what happens at the end of Acts 15? This reading always **baffles** me. How could these two brothers work together so long and then all the sudden **split**. Let us consider the passage, try to make some sense out of it, and furthermore draw out our exhortation.

“And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches” (Acts 15: 36-41).

From this reading we can see that Mark (John/Mark) was at the root of the problem. Paul absolutely refused to take Mark with them on this missionary journey, because the first time they took Mark with them he had dropped out. Paul felt that they could not depend on him and that was his final word. The disagreement was so **sharp** that they went separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and went to Cyprus (his home), and Paul took Silas and went to Syria. This situation always disturbs me when I read it. Why? Because of the intensity of the disagreement that appears to be handled quite badly. Do you think that “Iron was sharpening Iron” on this day?

What I have concluded is that Barnabas was in the right. What I mean is that he demonstrated the more Christ like Spirit in this situation. He may have argued with Paul about taking his nephew Mark with them, but he gave in and esteemed his brother (Paul) better than himself. The unfortunate thing about this relationship is that I don't think that Paul and Barnabas ever saw each other again. This is the last recorded information that we have about Barnabas. Some feel that Paul and Barnabas had reconciled before Barnabas fell asleep in Christ. I hope so. I have come to the conclusion that Paul coined the expression at the end of some of his letters “*Greet one another with an Holy Kiss*”, because of what happened between Barnabas and Paul in this situation.

Reconciliation

But this is not the end of the story, is it? Remember, Mark was the one who root of the problem. I think that Paul had to learn a strong **exhortation** about what had just happened here. He too “*learned obedience by the things that he suffered.*” I wonder if because of this situation Paul wrote how important it is to be reconciled one to another.

Even though the Scripture is silent about Barnabas after this point it shares something very **encouraging** about the relationship between Mark and Paul.

“Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry” (2Tim 4:11).

One thing that we can be sure of, Barnabas left an indelible mark on the mind of Paul and Mark. This is the Silver Lining to end of this story.

When I look at the lives of Barnabas, Paul, and Mark, I see something very special. These men all loved God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They all worked in the missionary field together and every one of them brought something different to the Table. One very important Lesson that Barnabas brought to Table is he was called the “Son of Encouragement”. It is hard to focus on encouragement when we focus on the differences. If we continue to focus on our Differences it will divide a community, family, or church. Barnabas like our Lord Jesus Christ, focused on Encouragement, building each other up, not tearing each other down.

The exhortation that I have learned from Barnabas is at the very least two pronged.

- *We need to encourage one another!*
- *Because we have been reconciled to God*

Randy Davenport (Orlando, FL)

Barnabas was a caring man, a giving man, ready to give up all he had in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we see much of this nature displayed as we continue. Bro. W. H. Boulton suggests that Paul and Barnabas might have been students together in Tarsus (Paul the Apostle, PP. 27-28).

First Principles

Hope, (10) The Kingdom of God

“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matt 6:10).

Hope will be fulfilled in God’s Kingdom



There is a place that is so special that grown people become like children. Families sacrifice for months, or years, to save money in order to enjoy their time there. Little children have the time of their lives. Happiness is the simple goal for all involved. People experience things that they can normally only dream about. It’s a pretend world where animals take on human forms, and entertain both young and old. Even superstar football players talk

of going there at the end of the Super bowl. That is — to Disney’s Magic Kingdom, the most visited theme park in the world. This man-made “kingdom” may be a dream world to some people, but mortality limits the amount of enjoyment that anyone can have there. Ironically, Walt Disney, dreamer extraordinaire, died five years before Disney World was complete. He never saw his dream fulfilled as his life ended in 1966, and Walt Disney World opened in 1971.

The Kingdom of God will be different, and vastly superior, to any kingdom ever known. The Bible describes the Kingdom in the past tense as the Kingdom of Israel, which had a literal King (2Chron 13:8; Isa 43:15). It is also described in the present tense, in a limited manner, as applied to the Christian church. Jesus taught that in a small sense *“the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21)*. He told the people of his day that the Kingdom had come near to them. Both of these were mere shadows of the main event yet to come. Jesus spoke about a wonderful, future, worldwide Kingdom when *“the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed” (Dan 2:44)*. His future Kingdom on earth is where Jesus chose to focus (Matt 8:11; 13:44-46; 16:19; 19:23-24).

When Jesus began his ministry, the first thing he did was to proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt 4:17). This shows the priority that Jesus applied to this vital subject of hope. The four gospel writers mentioned the Kingdom 88 times, which confirms that Jesus continued to talk about it often. *“I must*

proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (Luke 4:43). When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, he commanded that they teach about the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:2). Even after his resurrection, Jesus showed himself for forty days to his disciples with a loud-and-clear message about the Kingdom (Acts 1:3). Jesus also spoke about the good news of the Kingdom of Heaven no less than twelve times in parables.

Kingdom of God or Heaven?

Jesus used the term ‘Kingdom of God’ 57 times and ‘Kingdom of Heaven’ 31 times in the four gospels. Nowhere is the term ‘Kingdom **in** Heaven’ used in Scripture. The Kingdom will be heavenly, and of God, but **not** located in heaven. Jesus repeatedly talks about the Kingdom on earth (Matt 5:5; 6:10; Mark 11:10). These two terms are used interchangeably as ‘heaven’ is often used in place of ‘God’ in this connection (Matt 21:25; Luke 15:18; John 3:27). Jesus gave an explicit example when he spoke about a rich young ruler. *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of heaven**. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the **kingdom of God**’” (Matt 19:23-24).* This confirms that Jesus’ message about the Kingdom is perfectly in tune with the promises to Abraham and David. God plans to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel, only this time as a glorified, heavenly Kingdom on earth.

What will Jesus do in his Kingdom?

Jesus will, first of all, raise the dead and judge those whom he chooses (2Tim 4:1; John 5:28-29; Acts 10:42). The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 is but one example where Jesus described the process of how people will be judged by him. This parable is not meant to be taken literally, but does give disciples something serious to think about. The faithful will be given their reward of eternal life and the unfaithful will receive their penalty of punishment and death (Matt 25:23-30; 25:34-46; 11:24). *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2Cor 5:10).* After that the Bible gives many clues regarding what will happen, but without a timeline. We know that Jesus will appoint his followers as judges to help rule the land (Matt 19:28-29; 1Cor 6:2; Dan 7:18-27). Those who are counted as worthy will also act as kings and priests to the remaining mortals in the Kingdom (Exod 19:6; Rev 1:6; 5:10). Eventually every person and every nation will come to recognize Jesus as Messiah and King (Heb 8:8-12; Ezek 39:7). Jesus will judge and teach the nations from Jerusalem. Every nation must worship Jesus as King, or they will suffer plagues and drought (Zech 14:16-18; Isa 66:18-21).

The earth will need to be cleansed and this will be a gradual process. From the final battle of Armageddon, it will take seven months just to bury the dead (Ezek 39:12). It will also take seven years to rid the earth of weapons by fire (Ezek 39:9-10). Somehow Jesus will execute judgment by fire on the earth, in order to burn up the sinful works (Isa 66:15-16; 2Pet 3:7-13). The land of Israel, and the whole earth, will be renewed as the planet will receive a divine face-lift (Rev 21:2, 10).

Eventually a temple will be built in Jerusalem, but unlike any house of God ever seen (Zech 6:12-15). Jesus will be the focal point as God’s perfect representative. *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (Phil 2:9-10).* Jesus will oversee sacrifices in the Kingdom, but not like those in former days. *“Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a **sacrifice of praise** — the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such **sacrifices** God is pleased” (Heb 13:15-16).*

What is the Millennium?



Y2K opened people’s eyes to the impact of a millennial change. In the years prior to the year 2000, computer experts warned of cataclysmal effects due to a subtle flaw that affected all computers. Due to fear of the potential consequences, millions of companies and governments worldwide took action to upgrade systems and prevent any problems. Fortunately, negative effects were minimal and there were no significant problems when January 1, 2000 arrived.

The **Millennium** is different: it is a 1,000-year Kingdom concept that originates in the last book of the Bible. It is understood by many Christians to be a literal time period because the Bible states: *“They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. The*

rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years” (Rev 20:4-6). Combined with Peter’s writings (2Pet 3:8), an explicit case can be made for such a literal Kingdom time period.

In addition, there is significant rationale for a millennial time period in the Bible. There are many examples of events in the Kingdom that require a gradual time period to accommodate changes. Jesus told us that the primary reward for faithful believers is eternal life, yet we also read that people will still die in the Kingdom (Isa 65:20). He said that believers who are given immortality would become like angels and not marry (Matt 22:30), yet we read elsewhere that babies will still be born (Isa 65:23). Though joy and peace are promised on earth (Isa 35:10; Rev 21:4), there will still be war (Ezek 38; Joel 3:9-11) and disputes to settle (Isa 2:4). How do these conflicting statements fit together? Why won't God change everything all at once?

The answer seems to be that the first time period of God's Kingdom will last 1,000 years, or a millennium. It will be a gradual cleansing of the earth and, ultimately, a return of man to God. Mortal people who are alive during the Kingdom age will die and await the second resurrection. Since the fall of Adam, mankind has been separated from God's presence due to our sin (Isa 59:2), but God's intention has always been to reward faithful followers with His eternal glory. Jesus will be king in God's Kingdom, leading his followers back to oneness with his Father. *"Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet" (1Cor 15:24-25).*

The Bible hope is to gain eternal life in God's Kingdom with Jesus as king. It is to return to our Creator and see the face of God (Matt 5:8; Exod 33:18-22). It is to live in a sinless state, in a glorified body (1Cor 15:42-44). It is to live in the presence of God and be with Him always. *"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1John 3:2).*

"God's Kingdom is present in its beginnings, but still future in its fullness" Timothy Keller.

"The doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven, which was the main teaching of Jesus, is certainly one of the most revolutionary doctrines that ever stirred and changed human thought" H. G. Wells.

"They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations" (Psa 145:11-13).

The Bible says:

- Mankind's great hope is to enter the Kingdom of God. Acts 8:12; Matt 6:10; Luke 6:20.
- Jesus will be King in the Kingdom on earth. Matt 25:31-34; Rev 11:15; Matt 19:28-29.
- The Millennium will usher in eternity with God. 1Cor 15:24-26; Rev 21:2-4; 2Pet 3:7-13.

Chicago, IL Ecclesia

Doctrines to Be Rejected, (7) Free Life

Doctrine to Be Rejected # 4: “That Christ was born with a ‘free life’ ”.

Introduction

We now come to the first of the numbered doctrines that was added by Robert Roberts after the first statement, as written sometime before 1871. The Doctrine to be rejected is #4 in the 1883 edition: **That Christ was born with a “free life”**. It is also the first of several statements that are hard to understand in the 21st Century, removed as we are by almost 150 years from the controversy that gave rise to it.

The fact that a definition is not immediately understood is insufficient reason to discard it. If it describes a false belief rejected by those who uphold the truth of the Scriptures it should be included. The doctrine “that Christ was born with a ‘free life’ ” is the counterpart to the essential teaching about the Lord’s nature defined in Clause 8 — that “he also himself likewise took part” of the nature we bear, a nature related to death and producing temptations to sin (Heb 2:14). Had he chosen not to offer himself so that we could have hope of life, death would still have claimed him; his own salvation from death was inextricably bound up with ours. In other words, his life was not “free” from the condemnation placed upon Adam and all his descendants, as has been claimed by those who allege that, unlike us, Jesus received his life direct from God and it was never forfeit.¹

So the Doctrine can be restated in a positive way:

The phrase a “free life” signifies that Christ’s nature was not under Adamic condemnation as is that of all other members of the human race, and that therefore his sacrifice was a substitute for the “lives” of others. It denies that Christ could have been claimed by death, and needed saving from that fate.

Edward Turney

He was the individual most closely associated with the false doctrine of “free life”. In 1873, two years after the death of John Thomas, Edward Turney and Robert Roberts fell out over their understanding of the theological significance of the death of Christ, as Turney held to the “free life” view: Roberts, strongly disagreeing, announced in *The Christadelphian* that he “withdrew fellowship” from Turney and all who held his beliefs. This resulted in a division: only a minority in Birmingham, but the majority of the Nottingham Ecclesia followed Turney. (Nottingham at the time was probably the equal on Birmingham in size, and almost equal in influence.) Turney started a magazine, initially called *The Christadelphian Lamp*, but in 1875 this was changed to “*The Christian Lamp*”. By early 1877, under the effect of illness, he withdrew as editor, and he died a few days before his 44th birthday in 1879. Initially many ecclesias sent in intelligence, including a number from North America, but by the time volume 9 came to a close in 1883, only the Nottingham and Leicester groups appeared to be of any size, although there were a few others scattered about England. (There does not

appear to have been any later issues.) So this controversy dwindled away, only to be revived in the 1950's: some will have come across the Nazarene Fellowship, a tiny group that promotes Turney's views to this day.

Much more could be said about this dispute², but we will focus instead on the doctrinal aspects as related to "free life".

Free life — the doctrines

Renunciationism is defined as follows by Robert Roberts:

"That the body of Jesus did not inherit the curse of Adam, though derived from him through Mary; and was therefore not mortal; that his natural life was 'free'; that in this 'free' natural life, he 'earned eternal life,' and might, if he had so chosen, have avoided death, or even refused to die upon the cross, and entered into eternal life alone; his death being the act of his own free will, and not in any sense necessary for his own salvation; that his sacrifice consisted in the offering up of an unforfeited life, in payment of the penalty incurred by Adam and his posterity, which was eternal death; that his unforfeited life was slain in the room and stead of the forfeited lives of all believers of the races of Adam."³

Thus, essentially if one believed in "free life" applied to Christ it would be equivalent to making him a God (i.e., not sharing our human nature). This is the same as the doctrine of the Trinity voiced in slightly different words. This false doctrine is the counterpart to the essential teaching about the Lord's nature defined in "Truth to be received" # 8:

VIII.—That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him (1Cor 15:45; Heb 2:14-16; Rom 1:3; Heb 5:8-9, 1:9; Rom 5:19-21; Gal 4:4-5; Rom 8:3-4; Heb 2:15; 9:26; Gal 1:4; Heb 7:27; 5:3-7; 2:17; Rom 6:10; 6:9)

It should be noted that this statement was accepted by Edward Turney and his affiliates, but twisted as described by Roberts in the quote above.

The traditional view of Christadelphians is that Christ, like a High Priest, under the Law of Moses, sacrificed first for himself, then for the people — not that he had committed actual sin, but that, being human, he possessed a sin-prone nature — and that Christ died as an example to his followers both of how to follow God's commands, and of what the weaknesses of human nature merited, namely annihilation. "*He also himself likewise took part*" of the nature we bear, a nature related to death and producing temptations to sin (Heb 2:14). Had he chosen not to offer himself so that we could have hope of life, death would still have claimed him; his own salvation from death could not be considered apart from ours. Hence Jesus' life was not "free" from the condemnation placed upon Adam and all his descendants, as has been claimed by those who allege that, unlike us, Jesus received his life direct from God, and it was never possible for him to die as a result of his own sin.

This whole area (i.e., of the precise nature of Christ and his relationship to his own sacrifice) is not a topic to be dealt with lightly. It has caused, and is still causing, controversy within our community, and to go further than the relatively simple statements of the Bible and our pioneer brethren is no an arena to enter without an acknowledgement that the ways of our Heavenly Father are almost, it not totally, beyond our human comprehension.

References to Jesus shared our same nature

“Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom 1:3-4).

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Col 1:21-22).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1Pet 2:24).

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” Job 14:4

“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” (Job 25:4)

A sinless man made subject to the consequence of sin” (Law of Moses, R. Roberts).

“The statement that that he did these things ‘for us’ has blinded many to the fact that he did them ‘for himself’ first — without which he could not have done them for us; for it was by doing them for himself that he did them for us. He did them for us only as we may become part of him, in merging our individualities in him by taking part in his death, and putting on his name and sharing his life afterwards” — Law of Moses, R. Roberts

“It was a sacrifice operative on himself first of all; for he is the beginning of the new creation, the firstfruits of the new harvest, the foundation of the new temple...As such, it was needful that he should himself be subject of the process and the reaper of the results. Hence the testimony (Heb 13:20)...that by his own blood, entering into the holy place he obtained (middle, or self-subjective, state of the verb) eternal redemption (“for us” is interpolated) Heb 9:12. The Father saved him from death for his obedience unto death.” (Law of Moses, R. Roberts).

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

Notes:

1. *The Christadelphian*, 1990 p. 127
- 2 See *The Logos* magazine, Vol 63 – 64, 1996 – 1997 under the title “Nottingham Revisited”
- 3 *The Christadelphian* October 1873: p. 460

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

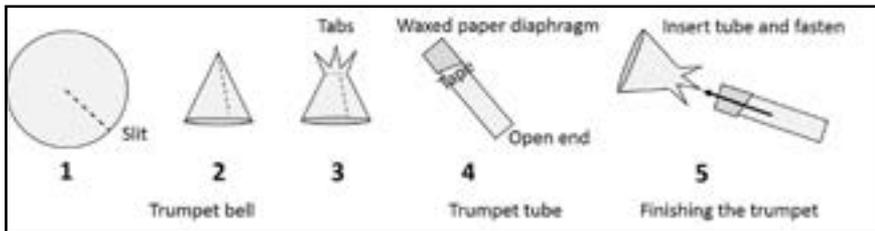
Easy-To-Make Musical Instruments

The angels rejoiced at Creation (Job 38:4-7). They sang again at the birth of Christ (Luke 2:13-14). From earliest Bible times music played an important role in the life of man as well. It is recorded that Jubal, in the eighth generation from Adam, “*was the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe*” (Gen 4:21). Music in Bible times was sometimes joyful and sometimes meditative, but always it was meaningful.

David was an accomplished harpist who wrote many psalms, and four thousand praised the LORD with and for him (1Chron 23:5). As king, he organized the music which would be used in the temple, and designated the leaders: “*David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals*” (1Chron 25:1) In addition to vocalists who sang psalms and dancers who praised God in the dance, there were instrumentalists who played harps, flutes, pipes, drums, and other percussion instruments. The trumpet was also an important instrument that was used on many special occasions.

Here are some musical instruments that your Sunday schoolers will have fun making. Once they are ready to go, the children can use them over and over to act out Bible stories and play their favorite Bible songs.

Kazoo trumpet

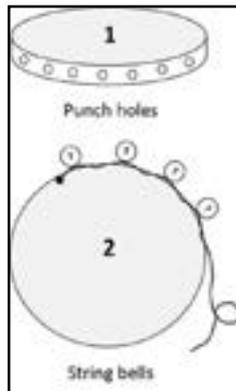


- 1) Cut an eight-inch diameter circle from card stock. Cut a slit to the center.
- 2) Overlap the edges of the slit to form a cone and fasten.
- 3) Place a paper towel tube over the top of the cone and use it to draw a pencil line around the outside of the cone. Cut a few slits from the top of the cone to the pencil line and bend them out to form tabs.
- 4) Tape a piece of waxed paper firmly over one end of the paper towel tube to create a diaphragm.
- 5) Insert the diaphragm end of the tube into the bell and tape down the tabs.
- 6) Decorate the trumpets and start making music. It won't take the children long to master the technique of producing a melody through the vibrating diaphragm.

Jingle bells tambourine

- 1) Punch several holes in the lip of a large plastic lid.
- 2) Use a colorful ribbon to string jingle bells around the outside of the lid. Bells can be purchased by the bag at a craft store.

Decorate the surfaces of the tambourines and the children are ready to add rhythm and joy to their songs and dances.

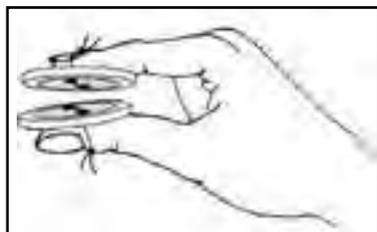


Drum

Coffee cans with lids make good drums. Decorate the cans with spray paint or fabric, and the children have another rhythm instrument to add to the growing collection. A spoon makes a good drumstick, or they may just want to beat the drum with their hands.

Button cymbals

- 1) Two large buttons and two pieces of colorful yarn are all the children need to create this rhythm instrument.
- 2) If using thumb and index finger is hard for the children, tie two or three buttons to fingers on each hand and let them clap the buttons together.



Shakers

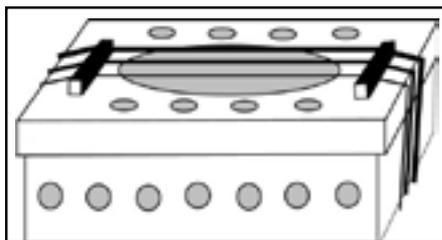
Rectangular spice cans with lids make fun shakers. Decorate the cans, insert a few pebbles, and start keeping time with the rhythm of a Bible song or dance.

Rhythm blocks

Two small pieces of two-by-four are all that is needed to create rhythm blocks. The children can clap them together. For added effect, glue a piece of sandpaper on each block and the children can clap or rub the blocks together.

Harp

A shoe box gets this instrument started. Cut openings in the lid and sides as shown in the picture. Stretch three large rubber bands around the box, elevating them slightly from the lid with two pencils or small pieces of wood. Rubber bands of different thicknesses and tensions produce different pitches. The kids will have fun making these harps twang.



Jonathan the Faithful Prince, (19) A Comforter

In the previous article (*The Tidings*, December 2015), we discussed the lie David told when he was supposed to go attend a feast for the new moon with Saul (1Sam 20). David was clearly struggling. The distress of the last few hours had worn him down, and he didn't know who he could trust or what to do next. He had a plan, and as we saw in the last article, it revolved Jonathan and his willingness to lie for his friend.

And yet at the same time, there was another issue with the plan — or at least, another issue that David perceived: what if he couldn't trust Jonathan?

Mistrust

The statement seems so bizarre that it's difficult to believe. Nevertheless, David's mistrust of his friend is there in the record. Perhaps it was the suddenness of Saul's mood swings, or perhaps it was Jonathan's initial unbelief of the seriousness of David's circumstance — somehow, David even began to question Jonathan's love for him. Thus, after revealing the plan to Jonathan, David added a few remarks which would have cut Jonathan to the heart:

“Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: not withstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?” (1Sam 20:8).

In these two statements, David again showed the depths of his desperation. Grasping for Jonathan's support, David reminded the prince that he was **bound by an oath to God** to treat him well, since the two of them had made a covenant!

And yet, adding to the insult of the first statement, David went even further, saying that regardless of the covenant, if he truly had committed any sin against Saul's family, then Jonathan should simply kill him himself, and save Saul the time!

How these words would have affected Jonathan, immediately striking him with feelings of sadness and confusion! How could David have come to view him this way? Why would he even feel the need to remind Jonathan of the covenant and his vow of love — had not Jonathan been the one who initiated the oath in the first place, specifically because of his great love for David: *“Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul” (1Sam 18:3)?* Yet not only had David thought that he needed to force Jonathan's love for him, but he had even implied that Jonathan might be in league with his father — seeking to kill David himself! Over and over, he constantly used the term “thy father” to refer to Saul, as though he kept emphasizing the connection that the two men had (1Sam 20:1, 3, 6, 8, 10). He did not call Saul “the king” nor did he refer to him as **his father**, though he was Saul's son in law. Those little insinuations

culminated with the accusation: *“if there be in me iniquity, slay m thyself; for why shouldst thou bring me to thy father?”*

With what was likely a sober and gravely serious tone, Jonathan reaffirmed his love for God’s anointed:

“And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?” (1Sam 20:9).

Jonathan could not believe what David had suggested! Never would he kill the one who was called to be king — he loved David, and he had been the one who had spoken on David’s behalf to his father the last time that this had happened! If he had truly known that Saul had planned on breaking his oath, he certainly would have told his dear friend. Nevertheless, David’s response to Jonathan’s remark was still filled with distrust — even if Jonathan went through with their plan, how would he know if Saul answered Jonathan harshly?

“Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?”(1Sam 20:10).

Indeed, there was no way in David’s plan he would find out how Saul responded, except through Jonathan. And perhaps in David’s mind, that was part of the issue: because notice specifically what David asked. He did not ask **how** he would find out, but **who** would tell him. There’s an important distinction there, which helps to show that David’s question was likely not a literal question. Jonathan had **just told David** that he would somehow notify him about Saul’s response, and David’s curt reply was *“who will tell me if you father answers me roughly?” (RSV, ESV)*, almost as though he did not believe that Jonathan truly would.

With this response from David, Jonathan realized how low his friend had really fallen. While he could have argued with him, or while he could simply left because of all of the accusations, Jonathan did something remarkable:

“And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field” (1Sam 20:11).

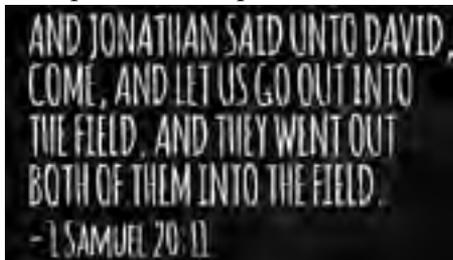
Out in the field: Jonathan’s love and encouragement

While it may not seem all that astonishing, Jonathan’s suggestion here truly displays his compassionate character. Recognizing the depth of David’s hurt, Jonathan suggested that the two of them go out into the field — a place where they could be sure that they were alone and could speak to one another in peace. Often throughout Scripture the field was a place where people would go in order to have some time to meditate or be by themselves (Gen 24:63; 1Kgs 11:29). Such was perhaps Jonathan’s motive — but there was may have been something even deeper. In the midst of David’s distrust, Jonathan brought him to a place that was perhaps familiar. Consider what had happened in “the field” earlier:

“But Jonathan Saul’s son delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee: now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret place,

*and hide thyself; and I will go out and stand beside my father **in the field** where thou art, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, that I will tell thee” (1Sam 19:2-3).*

Perhaps in an attempt to remind David of how he had previously **risked his**



life for him, and how he had stood up to his father **for David’s sake**, Jonathan brought David out into the field — which was likely **the same field** (see also 1Sam 20:19, 35)! Surely this would help to reassure David of Jonathan’s love and faithfulness towards him! But Jonathan knew that David needed more than just

to be in the same place. He needed solid proof that Jonathan’s friendship and loyalty still existed, and he needed to be spiritually lifted up. Thus, since David had seemed to doubt Jonathan’s allegiance to their previous covenant, Jonathan made a new covenant, but this time it was filled with references to David’s promised kingship:

“And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee; the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father” (1Sam 20:12-13).

In the covenant, Jonathan agreed to meet with his father in the hopes of seeing Saul’s disposition towards David. When he learned of his father’s feelings, then he pledged that he would tell his friend. If it was the case that Saul had evil intentions towards David, Jonathan wished him well, and then turned his attention to the future — *“the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.”* It was a powerful reminder of what David had temporarily forgotten. While David was fearing for his life, Jonathan told him that even though Saul may be seeking his life, David had been anointed as king over Israel — and that promise **would be fulfilled regardless of Saul’s intentions**. If Saul’s mind was set on killing David, Jonathan reminded his friend that it did not matter. He would be king — and Jonathan’s prayer was that Yahweh would be with David on that throne, just as He had earlier been with Saul. As Jonathan continued the words of the covenant, he continued to express his firm belief in David’s kingship:

“And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David’s enemies” (1Sam 20:14-16).

As Jonathan went on, the focus of his covenant shifted slightly — surely it was entirely focused upon David’s coming ascent to the throne, but at the same time, it was no longer about what Jonathan would do for David. Instead, it was about what Jonathan wanted David to do for him. With his trust firmly set on the fact that David would be king, Jonathan made David swear to him that he would continue to show steadfast love to both Jonathan and his family. When David had become king over all of the land, Jonathan wanted to be certain that David would not seek to kill off the survivors of the previous dynasty, despite what Saul had sought to do to him.

Just try to imagine what had happened here! David had run to Jonathan, almost certain that he would soon be killed. Even doubting Jonathan’s own loyalty and the covenant which the two of them had made previously, David invited Jonathan to kill him himself. Aware of David’s fragile spiritual state, Jonathan brought David out to the place where he had already pleaded with his father on David’s behalf. In that same field, Jonathan swore another covenant to David, and this time that covenant was focused on the future — all throughout it, Jonathan spoke confidently of David’s kingdom over Israel, as though David was already reigning on the throne! Not only so, but sought to change David’s entire outlook — it was not David who needed to be pleading for his life to Jonathan, but Jonathan needed to be pleading to him, the future king over God’s people!

What an impact these words would have had on the man whose faith was faltering. His spiritual friend took him out of his despair and reminded him that God would protect him — regardless of Saul’s intentions.

What a friend

On top of all of those reassurances, Jonathan sealed the covenant with words which would have assured David of Jonathan’s love and loyalty towards him. If he did not perform what he had sworn to perform, Jonathan stated, *“the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan...”* Often similar words to these were used when people throughout Bible times sought to show the seriousness of what they had just said. Eli said it when he wanted Samuel to tell him everything that God had spoken to him: *“And he said, What is the thing that the LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee”* (1Sam 3:17). Saul even said it when he tried to kill Jonathan, after Jonathan had tased honey in violation of Saul’s command: *“And Saul answered, God do so and more also: for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan”* (1Sam 14:44). Nevertheless, there was only one other time previously in which someone specifically used God’s covenant name, and used these words to seal their vow of loyalty to someone else. This previous incident would have held a powerful significance for David:

“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me” (Ruth 1:16-17).

In Ruth's beautiful vow of faithfulness and loyalty towards Naomi, she demonstrated her sincerity with the words, "*the LORD do so to me, and more also...*" — the only time before Jonathan's oath in which this phrase was used to pledge faithfulness to the life of another. Those lines of devotion and promise would have been lines which were familiar to David, since they were the words which brought Ruth into the Promised Land, for she was his great-grandmother: "*And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David*" (Ruth 4:17). They were a vow of loyalty which she meant and to which she held for the rest of her life. Such was the same message which Jonathan sought to convey to David. Thus, as Jonathan spoke these words in a similar circumstance, it would seem likely that his mind was on the words of Ruth. At the same time, as David heard Jonathan's oath, more than likely he remembered the mighty words which had been spoken by his great-grandmother on the day that she left Moab to live with Naomi.

Truly, Jonathan pledged to David the same type of love — he would do whatever he could for his friend, and he would do everything within his power to raise up David's thoughts and help him to remember God's plan.

What a friend!

If only we could be a friend like this — a friend who focuses on the future, and who sees it as though it has already come to pass! What if we could recite Scripture to one another when we're in desperate circumstances — and really mean what we say!

And perhaps we can — perhaps today, or perhaps this week, we can make a concerted effort to keep Scripture in our mind and to speak it with others. Perhaps we can make a concerted effort to keep that vision strong and real!

And if we do, then indeed, we'll be one step closer to being a friend like Jonathan — a man who truly shows what it means to give of ourselves, expecting nothing in return.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The LORD do so to me,
and more also

Racism and Prejudice: Reflections on 70 Years of Jewish Life in Berlin (2) The future of Jews in Germany?

No doubt the Jewish community is thriving in Berlin and Germany. However, there is an increasing amount of anti-Semitism in Germany in both words and physical violence that is palpably felt by the Jewish community. How much this will affect the future of Jews in Germany is an open question. For now, Berlin remains a popular destination for Jews, especially Israeli and Russian Jews seeking a new life. Nevertheless, Israel as a home and an automatic Israeli passport remains a source of comfort and hope should darker days return.

What does the Scriptures say about racism and prejudice?

I used a bit of “crowdsourcing” for help here. I asked brothers and sisters on Facebook to suggest Scripture passages that discuss this topic, or perhaps incidents in Scripture that are examples of racism and prejudice? I was surprised by the enthusiastic response to discuss this issue and I would like to acknowledge their assistance before proceeding¹. Brother John Bilello also kindly provided an article on racism he had written for the Christadelphian Magazine².

That prejudice, racism and bigotry have no place in the life of a brother or sister of Christ is one of those self-evident truths. I don't feel that I can add anything new here that is not already known, but a review of why prejudice and racism is a denial of our Faith can be helpful.

All have the same wages

As we have seen, prejudice begins with beliefs and attitudes. If we believe we are in anyway superior to those around us, then the cross of Christ should bring us down to reality. I struggled with how to dig down to the basic problem of prejudicial thinking. Brother John Main of Esslingen brought everything into focus for me during his exhortation, which was based on Matthew 20.³ In his discussion of the laborers in the vineyard, no matter how much work each laborer did, at the end of the day they were all paid the same. This seems quite unfair. Why? Our sense of fairness tells us that if we bore the burden of the heat of the day, then we should get a higher wage. Yet, each laborer started work having the same expectations of wages. The fault lay not with the paymaster but with the laborer. The Lord explained: *“So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many shall be called but few chosen”* (Matt 20:16). No matter what the effort, no matter might be achieved in life; the wages remain the same for all. *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom 6:23).

Lowliness of mind

It is the same wage and the same gift. How then is it possible for anyone to feel

a sense of superiority over any person, group or race? This seems such a self-evident statement. Yet, prejudice and bigotry is very subtle and will ignore this truth. Yet it mattered a great deal to the Lord Jesus Christ because it underlined one of the major problems of accepting the Gospel, and for living it for those who did accept the Gospel message. The Apostle Paul addressed this problem to the Philippians:

“Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife of vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Phil 2:2-3).

I must admit I thought I understood this passage, yet in the light of trying to understand prejudice, I saw it more than “just getting along with others in Christ.” For instance, we know slavery and racism against African-Americans was a major problem for the United States. We also know that racism still runs deep there, as we have seen with the recent attack in against African-Americans in Charleston, South Carolina. Thinking of this incident and the problem with anti-Semitism in Germany shined a really clear light for me on what the Apostle was trying to say to the Philippian ecclesia:

“Philippian brother, do you have slaves in your ecclesia or do you own slaves? Do you think having the saving hope of the Gospel makes you a better man than a slave or even those heathens in the marketplace? It is true that the slave is the bottom of the Philippian social ladder, but not amongst the redeemed of the Lord. In Christ, the last shall be first and the first last. In fact, dear brother, Christ put himself on the bottom of the social ladder to save you, and therefore you ought to do the same with others. And just to make this point clear, everyone else is higher on the social ladder than you and you are there to serve them just as Christ serves you.”

Prejudice a sign of weakness and not strength

We are always deeply moved by those who have literally put themselves on the bottom of the social ladder to try to save the oppressed Jews during the darkest days of Holocaust. Oskar Schindler saved over 1,000 Jews in occupied Germany. Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden saved over 100,000 Hungarian Jews. These are people who were “like-minded” with these oppressed people. They literally “*esteemed others better than themselves.*” These examples show in a concrete way both the destructiveness of prejudice and the courage and humility that underlies the “lowliness of mind” that the Apostle described. During the Third Reich, to associate with a Jew or even express sympathy with Jews could result in the same fate as Jews during the Third Reich. The Apostle was not expressing some sort of high ideal but a genuine belief and attitude that in some circumstances could lead to death. Seen in this way, prejudice and racism are very cowardly attitudes. They are signs of personal weakness and not strength.

The Apostle Paul tells the Galatians that no matter what the race, gender, or social status of a brother or sister in Christ, everyone is the same before God — sinners in need of redemption. In fact, sin is the great leveler of all humanity

whether in Christ or not. The Apostle, discussing the advantages the Jews had by being provided with the Law of Moses⁴, reminds the reader that although in Christ the mercies of God abounds, there is no real advantage over the Jew who observed the Law of Moses in all its details. Both Jew and Gentile are all under sin. *“As it is written, there is none righteous, no not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”* Paul concludes, *“Where is boasting then? It is excluded.”*

Prejudice has a long history

Perhaps the first recorded act of prejudice occurred when Cain killed Abel. God accepted Abel’s offering but not his own. Cain thought that God should have accepted his offering because it was good enough. This was the **false belief** that led to hostility towards Abel. Here is a probable sequence of events after the rejection of Cain’s offering. Cain started taunting Abel and saying humiliating jokes (allegation). He then moved his tent to a new area and did not speak to his brother (alienation). He then demanded that his children (if he had any at this point) and family not communicate with Abel (discrimination). No animals could be purchased from Cain. After some time, his wrath seething in him, made an attempt to harm his brother (physical attack) finally succeeding in killing him. Yet he felt no remorse. The belief was so powerful that he ignored a reality — he had eliminated the potential for an entirely new tribe of people, which would have been the Abelites (genocide). He then boasted of his “avenging” as if he was doing a good thing. Prejudice and racism is a deceitfulness of the heart at its worse.

Prejudice seeps up from the pages of Scripture as one group attempts to exclude other groups, such as the “Children of God” were discriminated against in the times before the Flood, or the Egyptians who attempted genocide of the Israelites during the time of Moses.

Even the Israelites could not escape prejudice when Miriam and Aaron complained about Moses’ wife Zipporah. She was a Cushite, who were probably black Ethiopians. Moses’ siblings respected the authority of Moses, but resented a non-Hebrew being so close to the leader of the Hebrews. Bro. John Bilello noted that because Miriam’s racism was against a black woman, God turned Miriam’s skin into a pure but rotten white skin in the form of leprosy. “Do you resent a black woman being part of the camp of Israel Miriam?” God seems to say. “Well, I will turn you into pure white and you will die until you seek forgiveness for your racist beliefs and attitudes towards my chosen mediator and his wife”. Later Yahweh encoded in the Law of Moses a proscription against having one law for the Israelite and one for the non-Israelite⁵. The Israeli was to be completely impartial and this fairness and justice formed the bedrock of the Law of Moses.

When the northern ten tribes split from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, a prejudice against the House of David seems to be a part of their decision. The rebels cried *“What have we to do with the House of David” (1Kgs 12:16)*. Actually they had everything to do with the House of David. It was of God’s choosing not theirs. They had chosen their own king which they believed was “better than” the

line of David. One wonders what jokes they must have made about the Judeans. And so they moved into an exclusive in-group that excluded their own brethren and sisters. True, Rehoboam made some stupid decisions, but the greater sin was by Jeroboam rejecting God's chosen House and setting up as a rival king. In the end, the Jews, as they were to be known, were brought back to the land, while the remaining ten tribes became the mythical "Lost Ten Tribes of Israel"⁶.

We could speak of the discrimination and prejudice the Samaritans faced by the Jews well into the time of Jesus. These were non-Jews who after being forced to live in the unoccupied land of the former northern ten tribes had adopted the "local god" of the Israelites and made some changes to the Law of Moses. By the time of Jesus, they were severely discriminated against. Jesus showed what lowliness of mind means in practice by associating himself with the Samaritans, even asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water. Prejudice had isolated this people amongst God's people, but Jesus showed his disciples how to overcome prejudice by simply reaching out to the "out-groups" in humility.

Peter and the Gentiles

Perhaps the best example in Scripture of the subtlety and dangers of prejudice is the Apostle Peter refusing to eat with the Gentiles when he came to Antioch. (Gal 2:11-16)

To be fair to Peter, it is hard to fault a man who walked with Christ and indeed lived a life of lowliness and humility. He learned a hard lesson about prejudice from the Lord himself when he was given a vision of the clean and unclean animals. In the end Peter "*perceived that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him*" (Acts 10:34-35). And so Peter baptized Gentiles into Christ, which formed the first shift from a Jewish-centered community to a worldwide community of peoples of all nations.

Yet, soon the Jerusalem church of which Peter was a member seemed to have forgotten the lesson of Joppa. The Jewish converts began insisting on a return to elements of the Law of Moses, especially in the matter of circumcision and dietary restrictions. And this had a detrimental effect on Peter.

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal 2:11-14).

Here Paul reprimanded Peter for his fear of the Jewish converts and the resultant discrimination against the Gentile converts. This goes to the root of the problem. Fear is often the beginning of prejudice. It is often fear of the "other", the fear

of an “out-group” that starts a false belief that works itself out in prejudicial attitudes. How often have we heard it said, “These minorities are going to take over our country”; “These people don’t know our ways and customs. They just won’t adopt our ways.” “We need to protect our way of life, our way of doing things. These people are going to come in and change everything.” “Why won’t they dress like we do? They are always wearing black clothes and funny hats. The just won’t fit in.”

And so out of fear of those who held wrong beliefs about Gentiles, Peter himself got carried away with it and separated himself from the gentile converts. This is often what happens. Prejudice is like a virus spreading from person to person and with the numbers it becomes harder and harder to stop. If Peter, a man of incredible faith and a dear friend of the Lord Jesus, succumbed to prejudice, what hope is there for the rest of us!

The challenge of racism

This is the great challenge of prejudice and racism. It is persistent, subtle and can often work at the core of our identity. We naturally categorize everything because we almost have to do so to make sense of the world. Our identity revolves around our home, our family, our country, our language, our ecclesia, and many other elements. It is natural that we categorize the world around us. However, when we begin to develop a hostile attitude towards a person who belongs to a group that we believe has objectionable qualities, we are moving into prejudice and bigotry. It is true the world is full of evil and sin. Most people are ignorant of the Hope of Israel. Yet, this did not stop Jesus from sitting at a well and asking a Samaritan woman for a drink of water.

Jesus indeed esteemed others better than himself. What if we encounter some member of an ecclesia, which may have a simple understanding of the Hope of Israel, and not understand all the details we expect of others? What if we enter an ecclesia that expresses their joy of salvation in unique or uncomfortable ways in which we are not used to? Consider Jesus and his acceptance of the Samaritan woman.

What if we hear someone making tasteless jokes about another race or group of people? What if we see discrimination against a brother or sister simply because of the ecclesia to which they belong? What do we do about prejudice when it occurs in our own community? This is where the challenge made to the Apostle Peter by Paul can help us. We need not “withstand one another to their face” but at least we can start by working on ourselves and see ourselves as Jesus saw others.

If our Lord is too high an achievable example, consider Oscar Schindler, who himself was a great failure for his Nazi connections, but in the end became the only Nazi ever buried on Mount Zion in Jerusalem. He overcame prejudice, bigotry and racism of the worse kind and associated himself with the lowliest people in Europe who were set apart for destruction.

The Apostle Paul concluded his thoughts about humility and lowliness of mind

to the Philippians this way:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil 2:5-8).

We all want a great reputation. Imagine what Oscar Schindler gave up in his Nazi career to save those Jews? Yet, in the end he was given the highest honor the Jews could bestow on anyone. Paul continued,

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:9-11).

We do not compare Schindler to Jesus, of course, but the pattern is clear. Humility, kindness, fairness, graciousness, and lowliness of mind all go together. Prejudice is the exact opposite and is completely hostile to the mind of Christ, which we are all trying to develop. The first shall be last — “pride goeth before a fall” while the last shall be first — “wherefore God hath highly exalted him above every name.”

How then can we overcome prejudice? Paul answers this even before we ask the question:

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil 2:12-13).

We can overcome prejudice, bigotry and racism through the efforts of the God of our salvation because He wants us to share in the Hope of Israel with both the brethren who were lowliest of slaves to the great King David who sat on the Throne of Israel. And what is the connection between those two? They saw others better than themselves. One was a literal servant. The other was a king who saw himself as a servant.

Prejudice is a denial of the Faith and has no place amongst brothers and sister of Christ.

Glenn Lea (Berlin, Germany)

Notes:

1. June 26, 2015, Facebook Christadelphian Group.
2. Racial Prejudice Examined In The Light Of Scripture, *The Christadelphian*, 1969, p. 109.
3. Exhortation given by Bro. John Main, July 19th, 2015, Esslingen, Germany.
4. Rom 3:10-11.
5. Exod 12:49.
6. Not all of the Ten were lost: Anna (Luke 2:26) was of the tribe of Asher, and many of the northern tribes settled in Judah: 2Chron 30:11.

The New Testament Church (7) Jews and Gentiles

Jews and Gentiles

Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, in the synagogue, at Antioch in Pisidia, gives a recital of Israel's history right down to the time of David. The Jews said *"Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak"* (Acts 13:15). So Paul stands up and gives the main outline of their own history that they knew so well, culled from their own Scriptures. And then he leads them on, in the 23rd verse, to the resurrection of Jesus (*"Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus"*); to the word of salvation, (*"Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent"* vs 26); to the crucifixion, of which they had been guilty nationally, (*"And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain"* vs 28); to the resurrection (vs 30-37) and to the forgiveness of sins made possible through this crucified Savior that was foretold. This was always the point of his preaching in the synagogue — the crucified Savior, who had been foretold in their own Scriptures.

However, when we go over to Acts 16 we find Paul and Silas in prison at Philippi presented with an opportunity to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. There the message seems very much simpler. Briefly, this is what happened. There was an earthquake. All prisoners were set free including Paul and Silas and the jailor was afraid that they would escape. Paul said, *"Don't worry they are all here."* The jailor brings them out and he said:

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway" (Acts 16:30-33).

Now that is a remarkable statement. They preached the gospel to him in the middle of the night! We usually take about six months for indoctrination before we have got anybody to be what we call "ready for baptism." They preached to him in the middle of the night the word of the Lord and he accepted it, he believed it, and himself and all his household were baptized "that same hour of the night."

The jailor could not possibly learn all the details of our statement of faith at that time of night in the shocked condition in which he found himself. It would be impossible to take him back and to teach him the history of the kings of Israel, and how it was all developed, how the promises to Abraham will be fulfilled in a certain way, and the background of Old Testament times leading up to the Messiahship of Jesus. All this, I submit, could not be taught in the middle of the night, and the man and all his household be made ready for a Christadelphian

“examination”; but they were ready for baptism, and the message that he preached to them was: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” And they believed; and I submit that it would be a very elementary doctrine that the Philippian jailor would have received in the middle of the night. The simple basic truths. And he was so impressed by the power of God that had been manifested on behalf of these men that his heart was opened to receive it, and he believed and was baptized.

Different emphasis

If we go from Acts over to the epistles of Paul, there is, inferentially, a slight difference between the gospel that Peter and the other apostles preached to the Jews and the gospel which Paul preached to the Gentiles. It comes out particularly in the letter to the Galatians. I am making this point for a reason that you will see in a moment. Now it was not a different gospel; the basic facts were the same, but the emphasis was different. So we read: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ”* (Gal 1:6-7).

Who were these that were troubling the Galatian churches? They were the Judaisers, as is clear from the rest of the Epistle. They were those who said, “It is all very well to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but you have still got to have circumcision and the keeping of the Law.” They wanted to bring the Church back again to the old Mosaic institutions, but Paul would have none of it. He said, this is “another gospel.” This is something that is taking you away from the grace of Christ and bringing you back to the enslavement of the Law. So he says: *“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed”* (Gal 1:8). He stood by this gospel of grace, and for the Gentiles he would have none of their circumcision, none of their law, “I say unto you,” he said, “If any man be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing.” He did not mean, of course, that if any man had been circumcised as a child at the whim of his mother or father he was outside the pale of salvation. He meant that if you start trusting again in circumcision then you are lost to Christ.

Salvation by grace was the gospel preached, and this was not the travesty of the gospel that was being introduced by the Judaising element. We read, *“And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles”* (Gal 2:2) Notice this: *“That gospel which I preach among the Gentiles,”* and then later on: *“But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter; (For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)”* (Gal 2:7-8). You will find this idea running through the Letter to the Galatians. They were not preaching two different gospels, it was a different emphasis.

Go back to Acts 15 which we looked at briefly previously. Here the church was saying that they wanted to not offend the Jewish element among them. There

were those who had certain genuine problems, because they found it extremely difficult to turn their thinking away from the old Jewish customs and prejudices in which they had been brought up. And Paul is always sympathetic to this. In his epistles he says to the new converts from among the Gentiles who felt that “all things are lawful to me,” and had no inhibitions over legal scruples, “Ah, you may not have scruples, but these brethren of Judea do. They have been brought up on the Jewish faith and you must respect their scruples and difficulties of conscience.” (Though he maintained all the time, of course, that for a Gentile convert, for any convert, these things had no bearing. It did not make a man better if he ate meat offered to idols, or worse if he did not eat, the thing had no relevance to salvation.)

In all his preaching we see how he tried, as he himself said, to the Jew to become a Jew, that he might win the Jews; and to the Gentiles to become a Gentile, that he might win the Gentiles; to them that were under the Law as under the Law etc. He “took and circumcised Timothy” so that it should be seen that the report that he was a law-breaker was quite untrue. For the same reason he associated himself with men who were under a Jewish vow, in order to show the Jews that he had respect for the Law, but not as a means of salvation. In this I see a change of emphasis. To the Jews, an understanding of their difficulties; to the Gentiles preaching of salvation by grace, in which Law played no part whatsoever.

Now I think this is important, because it shows a certain flexibility in the preaching of the gospel. It suggests that truth is not a golden casket, immutable and unchanging, but a living organism adaptable to the needs of each generation, or different men in one generation. Not that the basic facts ever change. The simple doctrinal content of the gospel remains immutable, but there may be a change of emphasis, in order that men may be able to see and understand the central core of revealed truth.

“Examining Brethren”

What the church taught as required faith in the first century, in Acts of the Apostles, was quite simple and dogmatic. There is no evidence here of any interrogation of candidates for baptism, or what we call examination. If we go back to the previous study, when we are thinking of the offices and officers of the New Testament church, we never read of “examining brethren.” They did not have examining brethren; and they did not give a Bible knowledge quiz, going back to an understanding of all the kings of Israel before you could be baptized! A simple affirmation of faith in the gospel, which was a simple gospel, was all that was required. *“If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest be baptized,”* Philip said to the Ethiopian eunuch. *“And he said I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and he baptized him”* (Acts 8:37).

The point is, that they went out into the Roman world, confronting the paganism of their times, and they preached to them Jesus as a living being — that “Jesus Christ is alive today.” It is a wonderful message, and we ought to preach it more. They preached repentance for real sins, not for some kind of inherited sin, but for personal sins. They repented, and were converted, and their lives were turned

inside out and upside down; and they started out to be disciples in the very real sense of the word.

This was the content of apostolic preaching, and it was more important than the preaching of the signs of the times, or political prophecy, which we indulge in so much in our own times. We do not read anything in the preaching of the apostles about the signs of the times, though clearly there were signs. Their times were running out, the judgments of AD 70 were on the doorstep, but we do not read of them preaching these things. They were preaching salvation by Jesus Christ; acceptance of his message and his leadership; and the conversion of men's lives to the Christian faith. That is not to say, of course, that we should not preach about Israel or the signs of the times or prophecies of the Old Testament. I am not saying that at all. All I am saying is that it clearly is a different type of preaching in many respects from the preaching of the New Testament preachers.

In the 19th century when our forebears came along, reviving the Truth and preaching the Gospel, this preaching of prophecy had a marked effect. Perhaps it was then a legitimate change of emphasis. Perhaps in a world in which men generally accepted the Bible, generally accepted some form of religion, it was very proper and right that they should direct attention to some aspects of the Bible which men had over-looked or forgotten, or disregarded. Interpretations of prophecy and dogma were the religious coinage of the time, and it was in this context that this kind of preaching developed, in which our own community grew up.

A new emphasis today!

All I am suggesting is that it may need a new emphasis today. Perhaps a return to the more basic Christian message is required for the new paganism of these times, because men are not religious any longer, and they do not know the Bible any longer, and they are pretty well as godless, although perhaps not quite so pagan as the nations to which the Apostles went. How they managed to get their message across to men who were worshipping idols, in idols' temples, I do not know, but they did it. They got their basic Christian faith across to pagans. And they were converted and became Christians, and served the Lord and worshipped him. I suppose to some degree the same kind of thing happens in the mission field, in the Bible Mission of our own community. I have never been abroad on Bible Mission work, but I understand that the message is quite simple, quite positive, constructive, and certain.

Simple dogmatic Christian faith is the message which is taken to simpler souls than our own. I do not suppose many of us today would want to go back to the intensive kind of interviewing of candidates for baptism in detailed Biblical (which usually meant Old Testament) knowledge, that perhaps 50 years ago was the order of the day. Of course we still have "interviews" and discussions — most of us (in the UK) have long since dropped the word "examination." It is not an examination, but a discussion; and the discussion should concern simple basic Christian faith, especially revolving round the desire to serve God, and to follow Christ Jesus. And it may be, that in view of the increasing paganism of

our times, and the increasing lack of knowledge of the Bible and of the things of the Christian faith we should think in terms, not of increasing the multiplicity of clauses in our statement of doctrine, but rather in trying to rediscover the simplicity of the New Testament.

Len Richardson

Letters

Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?

Comment by Bro. Bromet

I was glad to read the spirited discussion that ensued from my entry “Did God Abandon Jesus” article in *The Tidings* of November, 2015. We tend to spend our energies on things we truly care about and this topic holds great value in our search for the truth. My reaction to the brothers that have commented on this topic is this:

We Christadelphians hold great value in doctrinal issues in support of our beliefs as we indeed should. The brothers that responded to my letter have expressed some of these doctrinal points. What they’ve neglected to consider is that our Lord Jesus uttered the statement in question in Aramaic. All one has to do is read the English version of the Gospels and find it clearly made in Aramaic: “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” which carries the meaning of (1)to reserve (2) to keep (3) to spare (4) to forgive. Whether one believes this passage to have been first penned in Aramaic or Greek, it was in Aramaic that Jesus spoke these words, else why was it necessary for the Gospel text to point that out even in our English version. One can argue for one doctrine or against another, but what cannot be argued is the language and the meaning of the words that were uttered. I thoroughly researched these words and indicated the meaning they held. I also pointed out that the root word “sabach” was also uttered by him when he spoke: “Father, forgive [sabach] them, for they do not know what they are doing.” It would be ludicrous to suggest that Jesus meant for God to forsake those for whom he died. Don’t forget that the word “forsaken” in the Psalms uses an entirely different word “azbatani” which unlike “sabachtani” has an exclusive meaning of forsaken.

Kim Bromet (Sacramento, CA)

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.

Brother Bob Lloyd



Our beloved Brother Bob Lloyd fell asleep in Christ on December 14th 2015, just a few days after his 89th birthday. Bro. Bob was a wonderful blessing to all of us throughout his life in many ways. Some of his points and illustrations will stay with us forever. Most of us have had opportunities to hear Bob exhort and lecture and teach Bible classes. He had the unique ability to communicate effectively with everyone in the room, young and old, scholar and student. He was a diligent Bible student and he also worked very hard on learning how to present his messages in ways that everyone could relate to and remember. Who can forget his “Round Tuit” — a wooden disc he handed out with great enthusiasm. The stories we all can tell of his talks!

He shared his love for the Bible with brethren and sisters around the world. And many of them have communicated with the family over the last few days sharing loving memories and loving wishes for the family’s well-being during this difficult time.

Bro. Bob was the editor of *The Tidings* magazine from 1958 until 1988, a period of 30 years. He took over from Bro. Carl Wolfe at that point. The predecessor for *The Tidings* was a publication called “*The Junior Christadelphian*”. Bro. Bob actually wrote his first article for that publication in February 1942 during World War II entitled “Fear and War.” He was around 13 years old.

From 1988 on, Bob wrote a brief article that appeared in the last pages of every magazine (except the special issues) called “Minute Meditations”. He had previously written similar articles as editorials starting with the second issue of his editorship, and they were subsequently collected in a book called “Minute Meditations”, which is now in its tenth edition. We highly recommend it: reading one a day will prove very rewarding. He continued doing this all his life as the editorship was passed forward from Bro. Don Styles, Bro. George Booker and now to Bro. Peter Hemingray. In fact his last article was submitted before his death and appears in this edition. “Minute Meditations” are brief exhortational thoughts for the day that literally take a minute or two to read.

I was Bob's business partner for 40 years as well as his brother in Christ. All of us on Sunday morning are on our best behavior and we are all in what will probably be our spiritual high point for the week. Our guest speakers at Bible Schools know that they are teaching by their words and in their example as they discuss Scriptures with the brethren and sisters during the week. Daily life is a bit different. When you are in business together day in and day out and trying to come to grips with situations that are difficult and do not present clear black or white

alternatives the decisions you take manifest who you are. Bob never drove the car too close to the edge of the cliff. He was upright in all his dealings. Bob always made sure our client knew what wasn't covered as well as what was covered. The underwriting information he submitted to the companies was the whole picture. The Bob you saw on Sunday was the Bob I had the privilege of working with every day.

Bob was only conscious for a few hours after his stroke. We are thankful he did not suffer. His health was never good and over the years he had already experienced the frailties of this mortal existence. His confident belief in the promise of the coming Kingdom always filled him with hope and kept him going. His next conscious moment will be at his resurrection. We pray that he, and all of us, will find grace in that day and be granted immortality.

Ken Sommerville

As mentioned above, Bro. Bob Lloyd was actively involved in the *Tidings* magazine for over 60 years, including being Editor for 30 years. His *Minute Meditations* are timeless exhortations that will make Bro. Bob's wisdom available to us for years to come. At a time like this, Bro. Bob would encourage us to remember these words, "*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope... For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first... Therefore encourage one another with these words.*" Amen, Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

— The Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee



Bible Mission News

St. Lucia Report — A Link Visit 2015

Some wonder what is involved in being a link brother/couple. Bro. Martin (linkman) and Sis. Lois Webster visited St. Lucia at the end of September and into October last year and this describes their activities while there.

Passport expiration is now an issue, whenever traveling out of the US or Canada. Their old passports expired six weeks after their departure date, but the minimum is now three months! We were told by the Air Canada check in agent that had we been allowed to travel on that day we would have been turned away by St. Lucia immigration and Air Canada would have been fined!

At the first memorial service Bro. Eddie presided and Bro. Martin **exhorted** Ezekiel. In the announcements, Bro. Eddie indicated that his mother, sister and cousin were interested in being baptised. This was delightful news. Later Eddie came to the apartment and we **gave** him “Preparing for Baptism” to share with them. We **provided** lunch here at the apartment afterwards for those able to come back.

Almost immediately on our arrival we started to **prepare** contact labels for the “Ten Bible Questions and Ten Bible Answers” leaflets that we brought down. We brought down about 1,200 for distribution here. So far we have **handed out** about half of the quantity we brought. On Monday we, with Bro. Andre visited Bro. George Rock. He keeps going, but as he said, at 83 it is challenging, he cannot see or hear very well! Driving days are over and he has sold his car.

The Bible Enrichment **classes have been presented** with the topic of Jonah and the fascinating points that his story has. God willing the story will be completed on Thursday with consideration of the “forty days”. The 1,200 “Ten Bible Questions and Ten Bible Answers” leaflet have been **handed out** and we pray that there will be some who contact us for discussions.

We met the landlord of our rented hall and were able to **sort out** several issues regarding maintenance etc. It is a fine, bright room on the third story with lovely cross breezes.

Yesterday’s memorial service was started more or less on time, by Caribbean standards! Our interested friend Anthony Maurice came too. All came back to the apartment for some **lunch**. During the afternoon Bro. Benji came by between shifts for readings and **breaking of bread**. The week has been busy! Eddie’s cousin, Jessica came for the first session of **instruction** for baptism. His mother was not able to come, but we are pleased that Jessica came and we hope to continue the discussions this coming week.

We have had some excellent **Bible discussions** with members and friends around the small kitchen table in the apartment. Our friend Julian Jackson was at one of them and we gave him our baptismal instruction sheet. A **lecture** is

planned for this coming Wednesday on the topic of “Resurrection, Judgment and Reward”.

Although this doesn’t cover the whole trip, as you can see by the bolded words being a link brother includes preaching, exhorting, teaching and welfare of the ecclesias including the mundane but important logistics as well as seeing to the member’s needs.

The ecclesia in St. Lucia needs all the bolded resources to be supplemented by more volunteer missionaries. Thus, the St. Lucia link needs volunteers that are “jacks of all the spiritual trades”. Please contact Bro. Phil Snobelen if you can help.

Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMA Publicity

Guadalajara and ‘The Sower’

Over the last decade, there have been about 30 baptisms in the Guadalajara Ecclesia, in Mexico. Some have fallen asleep in the Lord; others have left the meeting due to circumstances in life and some have stopped attending due to personal matters. Nevertheless a core group of brothers and sisters remain faithful to their calling. At this time, we are also pleased to report that a number of members who stopped attending during the last year or so, have recently returned! Brother Victorino (ecclesial secretary) is at the Mission Centre Monday thru Saturday — arriving at about 9:30 am and staying until 6 pm. During the course of the day, people passing by will stop to look at the sidewalk displays and sometimes enter the Centre to talk, or contacts will drop off answered lessons. Other members will be there at different times of the day as well, and daily Bible readings take place in the afternoon at 3 pm.

Over the October 31st/November 1st weekend, I was able to spend six days with the ecclesia in this city, staying at the Mission Centre. The Ecclesia held special activities over a three day period. Attendance varied from seven Friday evening (since many work long days) — to 20 on the Sunday. Members take turns bringing food for the meal on these special weekends, and we were served a delicious display of hot food, with warm tortillas.

The arranging brothers are in the process of working on two main projects — reaching out to members who stopped attending and searching for a better rental location for the Mission Centre. Most of the shops and little restaurants in the area have closed, so pedestrian traffic has decreased, which also encourages vandalism and break-ins. We appeal for your prayers to our Heavenly Father to help the ecclesia grow stronger, so





that the seed sown in good ground will continue to bring forth fruit with patience.

A unique event that happens once a year in Latin America, and is a big event in Mexico, is El Día de Los Muertos (The Day of the Dead), and it took place on Monday, November 2nd. It's a vacation

day for most and is also known as Festival para Los Muertos (Festival for the Dead). The Mexican Day of the Dead celebration is similar to other observances, including the Spanish tradition in which festivals and parades are frequently held, and people often gather at cemeteries and pray for their deceased loved ones at the end of the day. It is a mix of indigenous observance, Spanish Tradition and the Catholic Church. Needless to say it involves false beliefs, food and parties. If you google it, there is lots of information available — and once again, we realize how blessed we are to be in the Truth!

*Written by Donald Luff, CBMA representative
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMA Publicity*



Ecuador – August 2015 Visit

In the end of August, Sister Naomi and I had the wonderful and refreshing opportunity to meet with our brethren, sisters, and young people in Quito, Ecuador. It was hard to believe that about five years had passed since we last lived there, and we had a lot of catching up to do. We were received at the airport by Brother Cesar and Sister Mariana at midnight and spent the next day and night at their home. It was wonderful to catch up with them and see their spiritual growth over the years.

We hit the ground running, spending the first day making calls and sending off emails, filling up our schedule, and preparing for the following day's public Bible study. One of the sisters met us for lunch that first day. From there on, every day was spent enjoying fellowship with members in homes, discussing their questions, holding Bible studies in the hall, and preparing for the following day's activities.



Bro. Cesar and Sis. Mariana



Bro. Luis, Sis. Fanny and Sis. Naomi

On the Thursday, one of the brethren kindly offered to take us to visit Sister Fanny in an old-age home. Those familiar with previous articles about the ecclesia here may remember reading about Bro. Augusto who fell asleep a few years ago. His wife, Fanny, has been placed in the various old-age homes across the sprawling city by her children. Her own children don't visit her often,

so she always appreciates the visits that the brethren and sisters have been able to make. Although she is in her eighties and in pain from severe arthritis, her mind is clear. This was demonstrated to us in her recollection of the members of the ecclesia, the missionaries, and especially her ability to recall verses and passages. We read passages such as Psalm 23, the Beatitudes of Matthew 5, and Isaiah 2 while our sister not only listened, but finished many of the verses before we did, reciting a few chapters from memory. She cried as she told us that she hadn't been able to read her Bible since the time she read it with her husband.

We were able to meet up with all of the brethren and sisters except one. Unfortunately, an erupting volcano was spewing ash across the highway and it made travel south of the city very challenging.

There were lively discussions about the women that followed Jesus in his ministry, the faithful Benaiah who was always ready to serve his master, the principles of service in the ecclesia, and many discussions about the return of Christ and the work of the saints in the Millennium.



One of the evening study groups with Bro. Carlos, Sis. Fabiola, Sis. Lucia, and her daughter Karen.

Our week flew by. We were uplifted by all the time we were able to spend with the members of Christ's body in Ecuador and encouraged by their growth. In our discussions there was one thing that stuck out: often the members told us of the need for more Christadelphians resources in Spanish. It made us realize how blessed we are as a community to have whole libraries of studies prepared by the community over the past 150+ years.

We pray that our God will continue to bless our brethren and sisters all around the world as we grow in knowledge and the fear of God, waiting, and praying for the return of our Lord Jesus Christ to the earth.

*Written by Paul and Naomi Osborn, former Missionary couple
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*



Caribbean Youth Camp — August 2015

The 13th Triennial Christadelphian Caribbean Bible Youth Camp was held at the Cyril Potter College of Education, in Georgetown, Guyana, under the theme: “Youths at the Crossroads”, from the 8th to 15th of August, 2015.

There were approximately 120 attendees from five different territories, namely: Guyana; Trinidad and Tobago; Jamaica; Canada; and the United States of America. The talks were led by Bro. Tyrone Smartt of the USA, and Bro. Ian Macfarlane of Canada. The camp was mostly a fun means of gathering around God’s Word while getting to know other Youth Circlers from various parts of the globe. The Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) is the national institution for training of teachers and is located just outside the capital city of Georgetown.

Each day began with physical exercises which were spearheaded by Eccles youth circler, Phibian Joseph and Bro. David Smartt of New York. This was followed by a session of Bible devotion, breakfast, registration, and then addresses by Bro. Tyrone and Bro. Ian. Classes were divided into seniors and juniors and held simultaneously. Addresses were delivered during the morning period only. Afternoon sessions therefore were designed with activities which stimulated both mind and body, keeping us focused on the things of God.

At the close of day there would be an assessment exercise involving everyone. One of the camp leaders would call out the ‘Question for the Day’ which was selected from the talks given earlier that day. This was followed by the ‘Verse of the Day’ which campers were asked to recite and which was indicated earlier after our morning devotion, thus giving some time to be committed to memory.

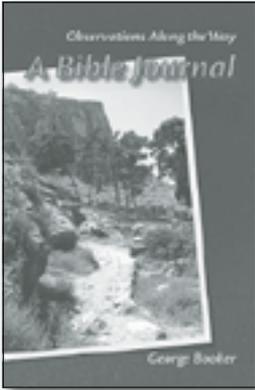
Very importantly, a significant proportion of time was given each day to creating several elaborately designed table-model art works, each depicting the concept of ‘Youth at the Crossroads’, our camp theme. Four such models were beautifully done, again, by way of the friendly competitive team spirit, and presented for open viewing at the end of the camp.

The camp activities were designed to be lively and foster bonds of fellowship among campers. A significant feature of this was the placing of campers into mixed teams that lasted throughout the camp. This meant no groupings according to family, friends, and nationality. All organized games such as cook-outs, barn-yard hunts, scavenger hunts, Bible competitions etc., and even kitchen work and general cleaning duties, were undertaken as per the prescribed teams.

According to feed-back the camp had a very positive effect on the lives of the young unbaptized campers. It helped them to really contemplate their future and eternal salvation. What a joy it was to hear the good news that as a result of this camp there has been so far one baptism from Jamaica, Alvarie Johns, who put on the Saving Name of our Lord on the 7th September, 2015. Thanks to everyone who came and participated and especially to the CBMC for all their support.

*Yours in Christ Jesus, Abigail Semple, Georgetown, Guyana
Submitted by Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Books from *The Christadelphian Tidings*



Observations Along the Way A Bible Journal

by *George Booker*

As the sequel to "On the Way," this book is the album of a spiritual journey, offering encouragement and food for thought to fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. Its pages present in-depth studies and thoughtful exhortations, as well as lighter meditations and musings. The subject matter is wide-ranging: practical issues of life in the Truth, Bible exposition, biographical sketches, reflections on today's world, personal viewpoints, and much more.

\$9.00 US (soft cover, 305 pages, illustrated)

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings, by *George Booker*

Insights, reflections, practical issues, difficult passages, personal observations and more to uplift and encourage all those "on the Way" whether young or old in the Truth. \$9.00 US (309 pages).

The Ecclesia at Ephesus, by Ryan Mutter

Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today's times. \$9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage, by John C. Billelo

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis, by David Levin

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. \$12.00 US (364 pages).

My Journey in Faith, by Ronald Hicks

A brother shares his life experience in the Truth with Christadelphians around the world, and the joy of mission work. Special price: Reduced from \$10.00 to \$5.00 US (372 pages).

Pictures of Redemption, by George Booker

Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

The Whole Armor of God, by Ryan Mutter

This story takes place nearly 3,000 years ago, but the spiritual challenges are familiar to today's young people. \$6.00 US (110 pages).

HOW TO ORDER:

- **Online** – www.tidings.org (Go to 'Books')
- **E-mail** – books@tidings.org
- **Telephone** – Karen Guist, 440-227-0212
- **Mail** – Tidings Books, 11659 Caves Rd., Chesterland, OH 44026

Shipping and handling extra. Make checks payable to *The Christadelphian Tidings*.

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.

COLLINGWOOD, ON

It is with great joy that we announce the formation of a new lampstand in Collingwood, Ontario.

There is a long and storied history of Christadelphians in Collingwood, but it started again in 1997 when the Bible Seminars were held and over 50 people attended the first week. Since then weekly midweek classes and seminars have been held attracting even more interest. From that initial group two women, and eventually their husbands and children, have formed the nucleus of what now is a viable ecclesia. In 2005, we began to have a Memorial Service the last Sunday of each month, and in the summer 2015 a service each Sunday.

The majority of new members have come from the Shelburne and Orangeville Ecclesias. The founding members of the Collingwood Ecclesia are Paul and Cindy Aback; Benjamin and Lydia Abel; Joe and Kate Abel; John and Darla Anderson; Perry and NancyLee Braux; Allan and Jessica Crandlemire; Gerhard and Carolyn Runge; Kurtis Runge; Lauren Runge; Chris and Martha Sales; Silas Sales; Verity Sales; Elaine Sales; and Bob and Heather Venton.

Further information and details can be obtained from Bro. Perry Braux or Sis. NancyLee Braux by phone at: 705-445-8883. Service starts at 10:00 am and is held in the Bistro Restaurant located in the Raglan Retirement Community, 89 Raglan Street, Collingwood, ON.

Collingwood is a popular all season tourist town and we would love to see anyone who is visiting the area at our Sunday or midweek meetings.

Perry Braux

KINGSTON, ON

Please note a change regarding the Recording Brother for our meeting. Replacing Bro. Jim Barton is Bro. Justin Keene, 5426 Battersea Road, Battersea, ON K0H 1H0, email: jackeene@hotmail.com, phone: 613-353-9970.

Jim Barton

KOUTS, IN

In September we enjoyed the fellowship of Bro. Matthew and Sis. Jodi Norton (Gosford NSW, Aust.). They spent a week with us and we are very grateful for the uplifting fellowship. Bro. Matt delivered several talks during the week on "Daniel", and then did a study on "Revelation", for our study day which was very well attended. We thank them for spending this time with us and encouraging us as we wait for our Lord's return.

Our Bro. Matthew Bryan moved to the Detroit area and has transferred his membership to the Detroit Livonia, MI Ecclesia. We commend him to the care of the brothers and sisters of his new ecclesia.

We have received by transfer, Sis. Shirley Tottleben from the Troy, IL Ecclesia. Sis. Shirley's daughter and son-in-law, Sis. Dorothy Asbury and Bro. Jerry Asbury, had transferred to our ecclesia last year. We are very happy to receive them into the Kouts ecclesial family.

Bro. Joe Bennett will now be assuming the duties as our Recording Brother. His email address is: jkb8275@comcast.net.

Paul Wilson

PRINCE GEORGE, BC

We are very thankful for the encouragement we have received over the last few months from a number of visiting families. Bre: Paul Osborn, Jesse Fletcher, Ken Loveridge and Terry Houghton have all visited and exhorted our ecclesia.

We have also had our prayers answered by our heavenly Father with the transfer of two families moving to the Prince George, BC Ecclesia. We welcome Bro. Jason and Sis. Leah Sargent and their son, Ezekiel, from North Battleford, SK, and Bro. Nathanael and Sis. Nicole Massey and their three children, Anna, Isaiah and Lily from Kamloops, BC. This brings the total membership of the Prince George Ecclesia to sixteen.

We would love the ecclesia in Prince George to continue to grow and shine brightly in this world of darkness so our prayers to our Father are never silent with thanksgiving and requests. If anyone is interested in visiting or moving to our area please do not hesitate to contact us by email at: pgchristadelphians@hotmail.com.

Jonathan Lawrence

ROGUE VALLEY, OR

Bro. Matt Hatcher has joined our ecclesia, transferring his membership from the Thousand Oaks, CA Ecclesia. Also, Sis. Donna Metcalfe has transferred here from the New Westminster, BC Ecclesia in Vancouver.

We have been blessed recently with an exhortation by Bro. Graeme Osborn (Vernon Okanagan, BC). And we look forward to a visit by our Bro. Neal Caplan (Reseda, CA) later this month. We still have a joint Memorial Service with our brothers and sisters of the Jackson County, OR Ecclesia once monthly.

For contact with our ecclesia for general matters, please email Bro. Henry Wisniewski, Recording Brother at: henrywisniewski@hotmail.com; for finances please email Bro. John Pursell at: jwpursell@localnet.com.

Henry Wisniewski

False Beginnings in Oregon

In 1874, one L. T. Nichols, moved to McMinnville, Oregon. For a while in the 1870's the pages of *The Christadelphian* were replete with accounts of baptizing at least 70 into the Truth. McMinnville is a little town about 30 miles Southwest of Portland. Nichols left the Christadelphian community in 1880

A Minute Meditation

Watch what you say

“Once a word has been allowed to escape, it cannot be recalled,” the Roman poet Horace observed. The importance of choosing the words we speak very carefully is recognized all over the world. For example, “Words are under your control until you speak them, but you come under their control once you have spoken them” is advice from Ali Ibn Abu Talib “Speak sweetly, so that if ever you have to eat your words they don’t taste bad,” appears on posters that encourage good behavior. Children are told, “We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak,” which is originally a quote from the Greek philosopher Epictetus.

Many think that being furious or under stress makes it all right to say things we know we should not. Not true. We are responsible for every word we speak, and we need to carefully consider what we say before we say it. Words prevented Moses from entering the Promised Land when he spoke inappropriately. We read in the Psalms, “It went ill for Moses because of them; for they provoked his spirit, and he spoke rashly with his lips.” Moses did not sanctify God to the Children of Israel when water was brought from the rock at Meribah. What Moses said and did on that one occasion cost him his lifetime’s dream of leading the Children of Israel into the land of promise.

Job, a man who suddenly lost his children, his property and his health, said, while covered with painful boils, “What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” The Scripture then comments, “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” Job had more reason to be upset and angry than any of us has, and yet, he did not say anything wrong. We are not told if Job had any inappropriate thoughts. When he first heard the terrible news about the deaths of his precious children, the shock and sorrow of that moment could cause many to question God. Pulling them out of the rubble, hoping and praying that someone may have survived, burying them all; we don’t know the details except that, when it was all over, he was overcome with sorrow but did not sin by speaking evil of God.

If we say the wrong thing, we are responsible for it, no matter what the circumstances. Our words can do great damage and cause other men to do evil. Peter tells us about false teachers who “make proud and stupid statements, and use immoral bodily lusts to trap those who are just beginning to escape from among people who live in error.”

James warns about the power of our tongue. He explains, “behold we put bits in the horses mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth a great

things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind; But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.”

The words we use affect our salvation. Jesus cautions us, “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” We are responsible for what we say, and our words are heard even if said in secret. David tells us, “for there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo oh LORD thou knowest it altogether.” Solomon’s advice is, “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

It is so easy to blurt out words that we later regret. To think that every idle word we speak is known by God and that we will be held accountable for each of them is a scary thought. We can be thankful that if we confess our sins the Lord is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The words of popular wisdom, “Speak only when your words are better than your silence,” is good advice, but there are times when we should speak up. We need to look out for those opportunities and choose appropriate words that would please our Heavenly Father.

Paul tells the Thessalonians to comfort the feeble minded, to support the weak and to edify one another. God taught Jesus how to comfort others, as we learn in Isaiah, “The LORD God has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary.” We need to do the same. Paul speaks about how the God of all comfort comforts us, and that he hopes that “we may be able to comfort others in all their suffering, as we ourselves are being comforted by God.”

We are to encourage each other by reviewing the details of the soon return of Jesus. Paul says, “For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.”

We need to share our hope of the return of Christ and the coming Kingdom of God with those we know in the world around us. The apostle Peter tells us, “Be ready always to give an answer to everyone who asks you a reason of the hope in you, with meekness and fear.” Paul tells Timothy, “Preach the word; be

ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

We want our conversation to reflect the godly standards of the Lord. We don't want foul words, unkind comments, angry outbursts or any kind of dirt to come from our lips. Once we have let the wrong type of words escape we can never recall them — only regret them. May we carefully choose good words to say as we strive to serve our God acceptably. Our prayer is the prayer of David, “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

Please send in notices at least two months before the date of the event.
Three months is preferable. Send all submissions to kathytidings@aol.com

JANUARY, 2016

16-17 Tampa Bay, FL Study Weekend at Largo Ecclesia, 12212 104th N Largo, FL 33773. Speaker will be Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, AUS) on “The Quarrel of my Covenant at Gibeah of Saul”. Contact Bro. Stephen Lewis, numbers1421@gmail.com or 727-501-5777.

30-31 San Diego County, CA Annual study weekend. Classes start at 9:30am. Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Sydney, AUS) will be the speaker. “Encounters with the Master — How Jesus Changed Lives.” Contact Bro. Kurt Wickham at kwickham28@gmail.com or 760-728-7807.

FEBRUARY, 2016

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

21-26 Palm Springs Bible School will be held, Lord willing, at the Miracle Springs Resort in Desert Hot Springs, CA. The speakers for 2016 are Bro. Anthony Whitehorn (Maidenhead, UK): “Faith and Doubt” and Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA): “Moving on to Maturity”. The Bible School is held at a natural hot springs resort. The School offers a wonderful environment for the mature adult to study God's word and enjoy the fellowship of other brethren and sisters. To register, please contact Jeff Gelineau at jeffgelineau@gmail.com or visit our website www.californiabibleschool.org for more details.

MARCH, 2016

25-27 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp, Freestone, Tx. Bro. Colin Hollamby (Glenlock, S. Aus): “The pleasant theme of Israel's Psalms”. For information contact Bro. Larry Beutel lbeutel@alsco.com.

APRIL, 2016

2-3 Rogue Valley, OR Study Weekend with Bro. Jim Cowie (Moreton Bay, Brisbane, AUS). His topic will be “The Spirit of Christ in the Psalms”. For information, contact Bro. Henry Wisniewski at 541 956-5829 or henrywisniewski@hotmail.com.

The Christadelphian Tidings of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)

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MAY, 2016

6-7 Vancouver Island Sisters' Weekend in Victoria, BC. Study led by Sis. Maritta Terrel (Austin Leander, Texas). Topic: "Renew Your Mind". Registration Fee: \$50.00. For further information or to register contact Sis. Rosa Bailey, 3-1431 Simon Road, Victoria, BC, V8X 3G9 or rosabailey@shaw.ca.

JULY, 2016

2-10 Mid-Atlantic Bible School, Shippensburg, PA. The speakers are Bro. Frank Abel (Hamilton Book Road, ON): "The God of Peace" (Adults), and "The Answer of a Good Conscience" (Teens); Bro. Dafydd Jenkins (Cardiff – Museum Place, UK): "Prophets and Kings" (Adults) and "Getting to Know My Lord" (Teens); and Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch North, NZ): "Gabriel – Messiah's Evening Angel" (Adults) and "The Spiritual Habits of the Saints of God" (Teens). This information will also be available on the MACBS website: www.MidAtlanticBibleSchool.com.

9-16 Manitoulin Family Bible Camp. Speakers Bro. Andrew Bramhill (Birmingham, Shirley, UK) and Bro. David Billington (Brantford, ON). See the website for details (www.manitoulinfamilycamp.com).

10-16 Southwest Bible School at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The speakers this year are Bro. Roger Lewis: "The Four Faces of Christ in the Gospel" (Adults) and "The Spiritual Habits of the Saints of God" (Teens), Bro. Wilfred Alleyne: "The Book of Beginnings" (both), and Bro. David Jennings: "For Who hath Despised the Day of Small Things" (both). Registration forms will be available on the Bible School website, Lord willing, the beginning of 2016: www.swcbs.com.

16-24 Midwest Bible School held at Trine University, Angola, IN The speakers are Bro. Jesse Adair (CA) and Bro. Matt Norton (AUS), and Bro. Tim Morgan (UK). For registration information, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375, phone: 248-462-5740, email: mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

31-Aug 6 Rogue River Bible School Speakers: Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, AUS) on "The Life of Noah"; Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON) on "Parables in the Gospels"; and Bro. Ken styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) on "Forgiveness". For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at Pat1Posey@gmail.com.