

The
Christadelphian Tidings
of the Kingdom of God

**Thoughts on the Way
Our Wilderness Journey**

**Editorial
Intelligence**

**Exhortation
Humility**

**First Principles
Hope**

**Why I Left the
Catholic Church**

**Jonathan
Farewell**

**Building the
Tombs of the Prophets**

**Doctrines to be Rejected
The Immortal Soul**

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Editorial Notes

Thoughts on The Way

The *Minute Meditations* penned by our Late Bro. Robert J Lloyd are irreplaceable, and I cannot pretend otherwise. It was with deep sadness that I heard of his death, for he had sent me one of his inimitable remarks only a few days before. I had only known him personally for a few years, but the dynamism of his talks had always enthralled me, and the way he could relate to people who were often over sixty years younger than himself amazed. He had exceeded the time allotted to mankind: for *“The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off; and we fly away”* (Psa 90:10).

So we welcome, not a replacement, for that is not possible, but another type of closing thoughts, this to be conducted by our brother, and former editor, George Booker. So turn to the end of this issue, and you will find his first such article, which actually somewhat ties in to my editorial, whether by co-incidence or some other factor I cannot tell.

Publishing delays

Due to circumstances beyond our control, recently the arrival of *The Tidings* has been around one month late, more overseas, and many have not received renewal notices. We are sorry for these delays. The magazine is intended to be published on the 25th of the month for the month following, so the February issue should be available for mailing on January 25.

Electronic copies

We are considering making electronic copies of the magazine available in subsequent years, if the Lord remains away. These would be made available soon after the nominal publishing date. They could be in addition to or in place of the printed and mailed copies, with the various options appropriately priced.

To assess interest, we would like to hear from you. If anyone is interested, please write to editor@tidings.org.

Re-union matters

I have been reluctant to write any account of the many recent developments in this area. As soon as I think to put pen to paper (or rather fire up my word processor), more items come to my attention. However, it is hoped that the path forward might be clearer by the time this comment appears in print.

Peter Hemingray

Intelligence

"I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Rom 16:1-4).

News is useful

At the end of Romans, Paul thought it worthwhile to expend paper and ink (or perhaps papyrus and ink) on personal news and commendations: a pattern that was repeated by Robert Roberts in his first issue of *"The Ambassador"* in 1864. In this Bro. Roberts differed from his mentor, John Thomas, who is rightly regarded as the founder of our community. John Thomas included almost no news of ecclesias in his magazines, so Roberts felt impelled to head the first "Intelligence" he printed with the following comment:

Fellow feeling is a powerful instinct, and in none more so than among the brethren of Christ, who, in the proper development of their relation, love each other much. Hence their mutual fortunes have a powerful mutual interest; and if tempered with the proper "manner of spirit" pertaining to their high calling, the interchange is profitable and encouraging. This is the apology, if apology be needed, for introducing a social column into a periodical more particularly devoted to the demonstration of the truth. Brethren in intercourse do not confine themselves to the doctrinal. The doctrinal is but the basis of their loves and hopes personally developed. So while wielding the broad sword of the spirit, we may be permitted in the intervals of attack, to step aside for a little to taste the enjoyment resulting from a contemplation of the truth in external and socialistic manifestation. Editor. (*The Ambassador*, July 1864 p. 15.)

In this he was, in fact, following the pattern of the first magazine of our community in the UK, because four years before *The Ambassador* in January 1860, the first "*Messenger of the Churches*" was issued by George Dowie, with the title:

The Messenger of the Churches, A Magazine of Scripture exposition, and Medium of Intercommunication on all social and Practical Topics of Importance to the Brotherhood.

It is interesting that, in this magazine, Bro. Roberts is recorded later in 1860 as being the correspondent from Halifax: he had been married in 1859 to Jane Norrie by the same George Dowie. But by 1866 the two had sundered. So from 1864 on,

The Christadelphian has faithfully recorded, month by month, the doing of our community, particularly in the UK. It is almost automatic that any transfer, death, baptism and other items (although not births) are communicated in its pages. A quick scan of recent magazines shows that, in any given year, about 90% of the ecclesias in the UK send in news, and the ones who do not are mostly tiny. And it must be mentioned that the community in the UK is, as in North America, somewhat fractured.

Of course, there are other Christadelphian groups in the UK other than the Central/Amended community, but they are all very small with few having fraternal magazines.

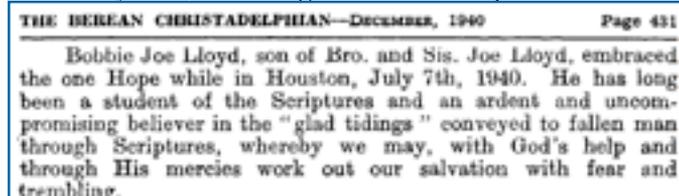
So you can, if you were brought up in the Truth in the UK, look up the date of your baptism, and when you were transferred around the country. Which I personally have taken advantage of. And going back in time, if your forbears were also Christadelphians, it is quite fascinating as well to trace their movements.

There are, and have been, many other “Christadelphian” Fraternal Magazines in the UK, as published by one or other of the various factions, almost all of which reunited in the UK in the 1960’s. I remember being in the Christadelphian Office when the Assistant Editor was scanning the pages of such old magazines, for both Bro. Alfred Nichols and Bro. John Carter, former editors of *The Christadelphian*, were baptized into two groups that were separated at the time from the Central Community, so their early lives in the Truth were not recorded in *The Christadelphian*. Of the Christadelphian magazines that were not “fraternal” magazines, very few have survived for many years. The only one continuously published for decades is *The Testimony Magazine*, published since 1931.

In North America

The situation regarding intelligence has always been less universal than in the UK. It is complicated by the current presence in the USA of two distinct large fellowships, each with their own magazine, and during the period 1923 – 1953 there were three groups. As far as I can tell by scanning three magazines current in the 1920’s, in any given year only about 60% of the USA ecclesias sent in intelligence. (This is deduced by comparing the number of ecclesias who sent in intelligence with the total number of ecclesias recorded in the 1926 USA census. The same comparison is not possible in Canada.)

So, as with the UK, in many cases you have to look at a number of magazines if you are in search of records of an individual. Quite by happenstance, you can find an example of this in the first of what, God willing, will be a new series of “Thoughts on the Way”. In it, Bro. George recounts the baptism of Bro. Bob Lloyd, as recorded



in the *Berean Christadelphian* for 1940.

The current situation is roughly the same for the Central (Amended) community: in any given year 40-50% of ecclesias send in intelligence, with another 10% sending in intelligence only every 2-3 years. Of the ones who have not sent in intelligence for quite a few years, many (but not all) are quite small, so there is some explanation for their absence. In addition, it must be pointed out that ecclesias in the UK routinely send in brief notices of things like transfers, changes in meeting times, brief periods when no meetings are held etc., which is unusual in North America. Still, it is noticeable that many events that I would consider worthy of announcing, like baptisms and the passing away of well-known brethren and sisters, are not recorded.

It is also noticeable that in the Unamended community quite a small proportion of their community currently send in news and notices of any kind. This appears to be quite a recent phenomenon: looking back a few decades, at least the same proportion of ecclesias as in the Amended community seemed to send in communications.

The future

I am of the opinion that presence of news and notices in the magazines of the community does serve several purposes:

- It lets the community know of items of interest to many: births, weddings, and baptisms are of course times of happiness.
- It certainly serves to make members aware of the fact they are part of a wider community, somewhat isolated as many are in this vast continent
- Although e-mail communication typically informs the local area of events such as gatherings, special events, study days, prophecy days etc., often these are of interest to many others outside the geographical area
- If done properly, such intelligence serves as an archive for future generations, if the Lord remains away. As we can see in this issue, news of baptisms can be of interest over many generations.

It is quite possible that paper copies of this magazine will be looked on as archaic in the not too distant future, although I am pleased to note that electronic books are not making printed ones obsolete. In fact, the reverse seems to be true: the growth in printed books sold has actually increased lately, and the rate of growth of eBooks is slowing. But even if this magazine in paper form disappears, it will remain available in electronic fashion, and I hope its legacy of information will prove to be a trove of valuable information for generations to come.

I am only too well aware that *“of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Eccl 12:12)*. If that were true of a time when books were hand written, how much more when electronic publishing makes everyone an author. So as we remember Priscilla and Aquila, and their travels and work in the Truth, as written by Paul, let us hope that the example of the workers of this day will be remembered as examples for the generations to come, or until the Lord returns.

Peter Hemingray

Humility

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

Balloon stomp

There once was a fourth grade class in which the teacher introduced a game called “balloon stomp.” A balloon was tied to every child’s leg, and the object of the game was to pop everyone else’s balloon while protecting one’s own. The last person with an intact balloon would win. The class really got into the game. Balloons were relentlessly targeted and destroyed. A few of the kids tried to stay near the walls, but their balloons all got stomped just the same. The game was over in a matter of seconds, with only one balloon left un-popped. The winner turned out to be the least liked kid in the class, which is not surprising, because you have to be pushy and rude in order to win at balloon stomp.

The interesting part of the story was that a second class was introduced to the same game. Only this time it was a class of mentally handicapped children. They were given the same explanation as the first class. But, this time, the game went very differently. It may have been that the handicapped kids didn’t completely grasp the instructions; but the one idea that got through was that the **balloons were supposed to be popped**. So it was the balloons, not the other players that were viewed as enemies. Instead of fighting each other, they began helping each other pop balloons. One little girl knelt down and held her balloon carefully in place, like a holder for a field goal kicker. A little boy stomped it flat. Then he knelt down and held his balloon for her. It went on like this for several minutes until all the balloons were destroyed, and everybody cheered. Everybody won.

It makes you wonder: who got the game right, and who got it wrong?

In our world, we tend to think of another person’s success as **one less opportunity** for us to succeed ourselves. For example, it’s often the case that if one person gets a job promotion, that reduces the chance of others getting a promotion. I was watching my 12-year old son’s basketball game yesterday. When one team got a basket, half the parents cheered, while the other half sighed or just sat quietly. Then the other team would score and the first group of parents

sighed while others cheered. But, you never have all the parents cheering at the same time (unless one of the kids gets up after being hurt). That's just the nature of competition.

In the Ecclesia

But, in the ecclesia it's different, (or at least it is supposed to be), because we're here to serve Christ, not ourselves. And, the most effective way to do that is by elevating others while humbling ourselves.

My family talked about this one Friday night because it was our Family Home Evening (an idea I got from a Mormon friend of mine); it's something we do one night a week where we're all together as a family and everyone participates. This week's theme was humility, and the parable of the Pharisee and the publican in Luke 18 was our reading:

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14 NET).

The kids thought Jesus was saying it was the **Pharisee** who went home justified.

So, I had to explain that even though the Pharisee praised God, fasted, and gave up 10% of his income, he didn't have God's approval; because the quality God was actually looking for was **humility**.

Humility is a **Christian characteristic**, because it was part of the character of Christ. Jesus said, *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt 11:29).*

What that means is: if we learn to follow Jesus' example — to be gentle and humble in heart — we will find peace. Pride and arrogance throw us into tension and turmoil, but humility gives us peace from that competitive spirit.

"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment. . . Do not be proud. . . Do not be conceited" (Rom 12:3,16).

Consider the ways in which Jesus showed humility.

First of all, his focus was on God's will, not his own. This is the crux of the Christian faith. Whether or not we follow Jesus is determined by whether we are doing our will or God's will. To be a Christian means you are no longer living by your own will, but have surrendered to and are seeking to live out God's will in your life. *"For I [Jesus] have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38).* Facing the cross, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: *"My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matt 26:39).*

And, that's the mind we need to have if we want to belong to Jesus.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing

to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross" (Phil 2:5-8).

Pride and arrogance are destructive to our lives, but humility enables us to surrender to the will of God and experience peace. Jesus humbled himself by surrendering his entire life to God; and, in so doing, he proved what he said in the parable that: *"everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."* Being humble means I understand that I don't know it all, and that I can't do it on my own. Even Jesus said, *"I can of my own self do nothing... my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me"* (John 5:30). Being humble means I give up my pride and surrender to God's will.

The second way in which Jesus demonstrated humility was that his focus was away from himself, not on himself. He came to do his Father's will, not his own. He came to serve, not be served. He came *"to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). Since we're supposed to be like Jesus, the Bible says, *"Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others"* (1Cor 10:24). Proud people are self-focused. They love talking about themselves. They tend not to ask how someone else is doing, or what is going on in others' lives. It is all about them. They are the most important person in their universe.

Consider the argument Jesus disciples were having at the time of the Last Supper. Jesus just got through telling them that one of them would betray him to death; and the very next verse says, *"A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest"* (Luke 22:24). How sad is it that, at a time like that, they were only thinking of themselves!

Jesus had just told them that one of them is going to betray him. He explicitly stated that they would all fall away from him and that Peter would deny him. He warned them to pray so that they would not fall into temptation, but all they could think about was their **status** — about who would sit on Jesus' right and left in the kingdom. It should have been a **time for humility**, not pride and self-righteousness. It's been said that *"Humble people don't think less of themselves. . . they just think about themselves less."*

Humility means that our focus is away from ourselves, not on ourselves. The Scripture says:

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:3-4).

The third thing about the humility of Jesus is: his focus was on serving, not being served. Nowhere do we see the humility and servant-spirit of Christ more than at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples — the very ones who would betray him, deny him and desert him.

“Because Jesus knew that the Father had given everything into his control, that he had come from God, and that he was returning to God, therefore he got up from the table, removed his outer robe, and took a towel and fastened it around his waist. Then he poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel that was tied around his waist” (John 13:3-5).

That was humility. He knew he was sent by God and was about to ascend to God’s very throne in heaven — and what did he do? He performed the task of a slave in front of his own disciples!

“After Jesus washed their feet, he said to them: ‘Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you’” (John 13:12-15).

I am certain Peter was remembering this episode when he wrote: *“In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time” (1Pet 5:5-6).* After all, Jesus had said to Peter at the time, *“You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand” (John 13:7).*

Our example

Bro. Gillet wrote these wise words in his “Genius of Discipleship”:

“Humility is an attitude of subjection out of love for the King’s goodness. How can understanding men and women ever be proud in the presence of the God of eternal time, of unlimited space, of unchangeable character — God infinite in grace and matchless in love? It is the knowledge of God which generates the birth of humility in the soul.”

As we remember the example of the humility of Jesus in his sacrifice of our behalf, how often do we miss the most powerful argument we have for defending our faith — **the example of our lives.**

So we come now to remember the sacrifice of our Lord — the one who said:

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matt 11:29).

As we draw near to the Father and His son, let us do it with humility:

- That focuses on the **Father’s will**, not our own;
- That focuses **away from** ourselves, rather than on ourselves,
- That focuses on **servng** rather than being served.

Dan Garan (Orlando, FL)

First Principles

Hope, (13) What must we do to be saved?

“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Mic 6:8).

Grace: The reason any person will be saved is entirely due to the grace of God. No one can earn eternal life and everyone deserves only death due to sin. The Bible teaches it is only by the grace of God that we have the hope to be saved.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8).

“No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are” (Acts 15:11).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the (free) gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6:23).

Faith: Without the faith of Abraham, no one can please God or be saved. Faith is the foundation for believing and obeying the Word of God. Jesus told one follower: *“Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:50).*



“For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Rom 1:17).

“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved” (Rom 10:10).

“But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved” (Heb 10:39).

“For you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls” (1Pet 1:9).

God our Father: It is essential that we understand and believe that God is one. He chose Abraham and his seed to be His special people. This group includes those who have been baptized into Christ. The Creator of the universe has a plan and a purpose for all creation, including you. He seeks your submission, obedience, praise and worship.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one” (Heb 6:4).

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3).

"I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isa 45:5).

In Jesus: There is no real hope apart from Jesus. He is the Son of God who was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world. Thanks to his offering, all people now have the opportunity to be reconciled to the Father. God raised him from the dead, gave him immortality, granted him all authority on earth and in heaven, and set him as mediator in heaven between God and man.

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

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved" (Rom 10:9-10).

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Confession/Repentance: All people sin and fall short of the glory of God. In order to please God and obtain salvation, we must confess and repent from our sins. Jesus said, *"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (Luke 5:32).

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret" (2Cor 7:10).

"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (1Tim 6:12).

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9).

Baptism: Jesus taught that disciples must be born again of both water and spirit. The word 'baptism' means to dip, or totally immerse (not sprinkle). Jesus was baptized as an adult, and he provided the example that baptism is a necessary symbol of repentance, cleansing, death and resurrection.

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16).

"And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1Pet 3:21).



"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Rom 6:4).

Communion: Fellowship, communion, sharing and breaking of bread are all Biblical terms that describe the symbolic act of eating bread and drinking wine in memory of Jesus. Paul exhorted early disciples to break bread in memory of Jesus' body and blood until he comes again.



“Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day” (John 6:53-55).

“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’”(Matt 26:26-28).

Good Works: Works by themselves can save no one. But good works are an important expression of our faith. Jesus himself performed many good works, and we should follow his example.

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead” (James 2:26).

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (Matt 25:35-36).

“As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work” (John 9:4).

Endurance: The Bible says that believers have been saved, are being saved, and still hope to be saved. Salvation is a process that ultimately depends on believers being faithful until the end. No one is “once-saved, always-saved” because we must run the race until the end to win the prize.

“But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Mark 13:13).

“We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end” (Heb 3:14).

“Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off” (Rom 11:22).

The information above is not meant to be a checklist that leads to salvation. Nor is it a comprehensive list for what the Bible says should be done by disciples of Christ. There are several brief lists in Scripture that emphasize the importance of “first principles” such as the nature of man, source of sin, sacrifice of Christ and Kingdom of God — among others.

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures” (1Cor 15:3-4).

It is our hope that this series of articles will have enriched all in their studies of the Bible. We believe that the Word of God is divinely inspired and able to “*make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*” (2Tim 3:15). Our prayer for everyone is that when Jesus returns to the earth to set up his kingdom, we will hear his precious words, “*Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord*” (Matt 25:21).

Our Creed

We believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Maker of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and buried;
The third day He arose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
from where he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
We believe in the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Chicago, IL Ecclesia

Doctrines to Be Rejected, (10) Immortal Soul

Doctrine to Be Rejected # 7: “That man has an immortal soul”

Introduction

This doctrine to be rejected is closely associated with two others:

8. That man consciously exists in death.
10. That the righteous will ascend to the kingdoms beyond the skies when they die.

It can be restated in a positive way: The soul of man defines his being, his life, his existence; and is related to his attitude and emotions. As such, it ceases to exist when the breath of life departs.

This particular doctrine is interesting, because it is almost always phrased as a negative when we describe our beliefs, as in: “we do not believe in an immortal soul”. In addition, we rarely focus on this aspect of our faith: a quick glance at a sample of accounts of “what Christadelphians believe” from the Internet finds no explicit mention of this doctrine. This is despite the fact that it is one of the aspects of the beliefs, in which we differ sharply from most other Christian denominations.

The immortal soul and the early church

The concept of the soul’s supposed immortality was first taught in ancient Egypt and Babylon. “The belief that the soul continues in existence after the dissolution of the body is . . . speculation . . . nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture . . . The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato, its principal exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended”.¹

Plato, the Greek philosopher who lived 428-348 B.C., as a student of Socrates taught that the body and an “immortal soul” separate at death. One major source comments on ancient Israel’s view of the soul: “... We are influenced always more or less by the Greek, Platonic idea, that the body dies, yet the soul is immortal. Such an idea is utterly contrary to the Israelite consciousness, and it is nowhere found in the [Old Testament]”.²

Similarly early Christianity, after the age of the apostles, was influenced by Greek philosophies even as the gospel of Christ was being preached to the Greek and Roman world. By A.D. 200 the doctrine of the immortality of the soul became a staple of the beliefs of the established church. It is often argued by Christadelphians that these beliefs came in much later, but much of this is based upon ambiguities of language. What is certain is that such beliefs are not to be found in the Bible, neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament.³

Since the Reformation

Although scattered groups held the truth about the immortal soul, it was only with the reformation in the 16th Century that many came to the correct understanding. Of the well-known names, perhaps Isaac Newton and the Anabaptists are the most worthy of mention. By the 19th Century, belief in “soul sleep” or “Conditional Immortality”, two terms for this doctrine, became widespread, and to this day such groups as the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists are strong believers in “sleeping in the dust”.

In addition, many mainstream theologians have come to deny the traditional view on Hell, so the old “hell fire and damnation” form of preaching has almost disappeared. The denial of the immortality of the soul has gone from being a minority view in the 19th century to part of main stream Christianity, at least among the theologians and thinkers of the churches.

John Thomas

John Thomas started off his new-found Christian faith in the USA as a Campbellite, being baptized as such in 1832. His stay in that denomination was not long, for one of the causes of division between himself and the Campbellites was over the doctrine of the immortal soul. He gives in several places the account of the origin of his beliefs, perhaps the most interesting being in *The Herald* for 1859. It is as follows:

We proceed then to remark, that in 1834, while residing in Richmond, VA., we started two questions in this country, which may be presented in the form of the following propositions, namely, that

1. No person destitute of the “One Faith” previous to his immersion is the subject of the “One Baptism.”
2. The animal man is in no sense immortal.

When we started the questions, it was more in the spirit of inquiry than of perfect conviction; and it is also probable that, if we had not been violently opposed, and bitterly persecuted, the matter would have dropped...

The second proposition is self-evident to those who know the truth, and it was not long before we came to be certain of its verity. From 1835 to the present time we have never wavered in our conviction;⁴

So, apart from a prior dispute over exactly who needed to be baptized, the recognition of the falsehood of the doctrine of the immortal soul has been one of the distinguishing hallmarks of the Christadelphian faith, as it was so called in 1864, thirty years later. This statement, or one like it has been consistent, for example:

Man, an immortal ghost, tabernacling in an animal body. (*John Thomas, as perverted by the apostasy, synopsis of the one faith, 1867*).

That the immortality of the soul is a pagan fiction, subversive of the first law of the Deity’s moral government, viz. that the wages of sin is death. (*Robert Roberts’ Statement of 1871*).

“Soul” in the Bible means, primarily, creature; but it is also used of the various aspects in which a living creature - man or beast - can be contemplated, such as person, body, life, breath, mind. It never expresses the idea of immortality. (*Christadelphian Declaration — recent*)

In our preaching

There are a few pamphlets available that offer guidance⁵, and the section in *Wrested Scriptures*⁶ is useful. In addition, the New English Translation (the NET) Bible with its notes is most helpful. For example⁷:

New English Translation (2005)		
Word	Old Testament	New Testament
Hell	Never (NET): (KJV 31)	16 (NET): (KJV 39)
Soul	36 (NET): (KJV 419)	18 (NET): (KJV 39)
Passage	Genesis 2: 7 The Lord God formed the man from the soil of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.	
Footnote		
‘The Hebrew term נֶפֶשׁ (nefesh, “being”) is often translated “soul,” but the word usually refers to the whole person. The phrase נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (nefesh khayyah, “living being”) is used of both animals and human beings (see 1:20, 24, 30; 2:19).’		
Passage	Genesis 35: 18 With her dying breath, she named him Ben-Oni. But his father called him Benjamin instead.	
Footnote		
‘Heb “in the going out of her life, for she was dying.” Rachel named the child with her dying breath.’		
Passage	Deuteronomy 32: 22 For a fire has been kindled by my anger, and it burns to lowest Sheol; it consumes the earth and its produce, and ignites the foundations of the mountains.	
Footnote		
‘tn Or “to the lowest depths of the earth”; cf. NAB “to the depths of the nether world”; NIV “to the realm of death below”; NLT “to the depths of the grave.” sn Sheol refers here not to hell and hell-fire — a much later concept — but to the innermost parts of the earth, as low down as one could get. The parallel with “the foundations of the mountains” makes this clear (cf. Psa 9:17; 16:10; 139:8; Isa 14:9, 15; Amos 9:2).’		

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

Notes:

1. Jewish Encyclopedia, 1941, Vol. VI, “Immortality of the Soul,” pp. 564, 566.
2. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1956, Vol. II, “Death,” p. 812.
3. See “*Sleeping in the Dust*” by Jonathan Burke (A Christadelphian). An older work from the 1950’s, “*The Conditionalist Faith of our Fathers*”, By Leroy Froom, an Adventist, has much information, but some seems to be a little overstated.
4. *Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come*, 1859, p. 66.
5. “After Death What.” (Fred Pearce.) CMPA Publication
6. *Wrested Scriptures* (Ron Abel) July 2011, edited by John Allfree.
7. Derived from “*Sleeping in the dust*”, Op Cit.

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.

Why I Left the Roman Catholic Church (1)

(This article, the first of several, is from a letter written in 1996. Many Christadelphians were formerly Roman Catholic, but few were heavily committed.)

Introduction

To my family, friends, and fellow parishioners at the St. John's Parish and Missions.

I write this letter to inform you that I have decided to leave the Roman Catholic Church. It is not a decision that I take lightly. I have put many months of concentrated thought, prayer, and considerable Bible research into this decision. My greatest desire is to serve and obey God, and to one day, through His Son Jesus Christ, be part of His Kingdom here on earth. The only way to do this is to search through the book that He gave us which contains His Word — the Bible.

In the Catholic Church, I know we do some **very** good works, and that we continue to meet together **sincerely** in “*fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers*” as did the early church (Acts 2:42). However, in the course of my Bible study over the last two years, it has come to light that some of the ways we worship at Mass, and some of the ways in which the Roman Catholic Church is organized, are in direct conflict with what Scripture dictates; in fact, we do not “*continue steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine [teaching]*” (Acts 2:42).

I have enjoyed meeting you, my fellow parishioners, and I have enjoyed being of service to you and our children in the Sunday School program that I developed and teach, and in the Christmas pageant that I organized for the past four years, and I have enjoyed serving two terms on the Parish Council. I know that you also love the Lord Jesus, and that you are earnestly seeking him. As I said, this is not a decision I take lightly. In fact, I wish it were not necessary. It would be much more comfortable for me to remain in the Roman Catholic Church with you, and I am reluctant to leave my Sunday school students and my loving church community. Also, I fear that my decision might drive a wedge between myself and some of my beloved family and between myself and Catholic friends. However, Jesus himself told us:

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me,” (Matt 10: 34-39).

I respect you, so I will not just “disappear” from your midst without a sound explanation. If you will permit me, please let me explain some of what I have found in the Scriptures that has led me to this decision. While this letter is by no means a *full* account of what I have found in Scripture which has led to my

decision to leave the Church, I *have* included the main points/topics that have disturbed me. These topics include information on: The Catholic Tradition, The Trinity, Worship of Images, Marian Piety, Priesthood, Immortality of the Soul, Baptism, and the Pope.

The Catholic “Tradition”:

The Roman Catholic Church calls the Holy Scriptures, the Bible, God’s Word, a “dead letter”, “unless it is interpreted within the living Tradition of the whole Church”¹ It is believed that only priests, bishops, and other Catholic officials can correctly interpret the Bible. In fact, the Catholic Church forbade the reading of Scripture by lay people for many years, and forbade the printing of it in the common language (per Council of Trent, 1546). Indiscriminate reading of the Bible with independent interpretation was forbidden by Pius IV in 1564. For the same reasons, non-Catholic Bible societies, established to spread Bible translations to be interpreted without Church guidance, were reprovved by Pius VII, and severe punishments were imposed on those who did not obey (Wm. Cathcart, in **The Papal System**, 1872).² At the Council of Toulouse in 1229, it was decreed that the Bible in the common tongue was to be listed on the Church’s *Index of Forbidden Books*. In 1199, a Papal decree was issued which stated “desire to read the Scriptures was praiseworthy, but that the practice was dangerous for the simple and unlearned”.³ However, one must note that the Apostles Peter and John were described as “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13), and they read, interpreted, and taught the Scriptures with authority. Peter himself tells us to heed the Scriptures; “*And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed... knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit,*” (2Pet 1: 19-21). If Catholic officials have the only true interpretation, why is there so much conflict between their interpretation and what the Scriptures actually say (read the body of this letter for many examples)? And why would Jesus say, “*It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me,*” (John 6:45)? Is the Catholic Church God?

If Catholic Tradition is correct, then why are **we** (*all* followers of Christ) urged by the Apostle Paul to read Scripture daily, and search for the truth — even though it is at times difficult to understand? Many times in the Bible, we are encouraged to search out the truth and we are warned against false prophets and deceivers. We are told to search the Scriptures **daily** to find out whether what we are told is true or not: “*Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures... These were more noble (fair-minded) than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so,*” (Acts 17:2, 11). Peter reminds us that the prophets searched the Scriptures carefully (1Pet 1: 10), and even though some of the Scriptures are difficult to understand, we should be steadfast in our search for the truth (2Pet 3: 15-18). Paul told us to “*test all things, hold fast what is good,*” (1Thess 5:21) and to reject old wives’ fables (1Tim 4:7).

John warned Christians: *“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world”* (1John 4:1). Paul writes:

*“But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing them from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**”* (2Tim 3: 14-17).

According to the Bible, “tradition”, independent of Scripture is not inspired teaching.

The word tradition is only used thirteen times in most Bibles. All of those occurrences are located in the New Testament and of the total, eleven refer to ‘tradition’ in a negative sense... Eleven of the thirteen references are speaking of Jewish traditions outside of Scripture. Jesus insisted on a definite contrast between ‘tradition’ and the Word of God. In one chapter alone this sharp distinction is made five times in the course of Jesus’ remarks (Mark 7:3-13). In all of Jesus’ statements about tradition he never once came close to equating ‘tradition’ with Scripture. For years the Jews had mistakenly believed that ‘traditions’ were useful, even authoritative, to interpret Scripture. Jesus’ view was that these destroyed the original meaning of God’s message in order to serve man’s interests or beliefs (Matt 15:6). In the other two references to tradition (2Thess 2:15; 3:6), Paul speaks of ‘tradition’ as the **substance** of his and the other Apostle’s preaching.⁴

Ruth Anne Chisholm-Davin (Shelburne, ON)

Notes:

1. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994 p 36-37.
2. Quoted in “How Sure Are the Foundations? An Appeal to Roman Catholics”, P. 20, by Colin Badger. Published by ASK, Weston, Ontario.
3. Quoted in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Herbermann, 1912. p 640.
4. Badger, Op cit, p 63.

Special Invitation

For some years, unity discussions have been taking place with the Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith. In the interest of promoting friendship and mutual understanding, we print the following invitation:

You, your family, and friends are invited to the
41st annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 25-31, 2016.
Bro. Kyle Tucker: “A Study in First-Century Christianity”
Bro. Todd Fazekas: “The Lord Saves”

Bro. David Styles: “The Forgotten Stories: Lessons from the End of Judges”
Contact Bro. Brad Rek at 330-609-6957, or brad.rek@gmail.com.
Visit our website at www.abrahamicfaithgathering.org for more.

The Joy of Sunday Schooling

Ready-to-Use Character Plays (1)

A good play has a message in it. Here's one to try with your Sunday school or CYC. "The Case of Samuel Q. Fence-Sitter" is one of several short plays about developing Christlike character. All the plays in the series are set as a dialog between Dr. Goodword and a patient who comes to his Spiritual Clinic. The afflictions that the good doctor treats are chronic disorders like pride, hypocrisy, and temptation.¹

The play is short and simple. Add a few props and costumes and you are ready to go to work. Encourage the kids to put feeling into it and be sure to have someone behind a video camera. Your cast and crew will enjoy watching the play afterward, and so will the rest of the ecclesia. The message doesn't grow old.

Enter Doctor Goodword and Sam. Sam has a persistent case of Worldly Distraction.



The Case of Samuel Q. Fence-Sitter Characters:

Announcer, Doctor Goodword, Samuel Q. Fence-Sitter, one or more Bible readers.

Props:

The setting is the doctor's office. A desk (card table) and two chairs will do. The doctor has a pencil, pad, and Bible on his desk. Give Doctor Goodword a white coat, spectacles, and a moustache, and you are ready for the camera(s) to roll.

Script:²

Announcer: Patients come and patients go at the Spiritual Clinic of Dr. Goodword, but none more frequently than Samuel Q. Fence-Sitter. Hardly a day passes but what he puts in an appearance at the clinic to register a chronic complaint. And, sure enough, today is no exception, for we find Sam now in the office of the saintly old specialist for another consultation — the third this week! Listen, the Doctor is speaking.

The Play

Doctor: Now, Mr. Fence-Sitter, what can I do for you?

Sam: It's my eyes again, Doctor.

Doctor: Same trouble?

Sam: Yes sir, only worse.

Doctor: What is it this time?

Sam: I'm beginning to see double, sir.

Doctor: I was afraid of that.

Sam: You were?

Doctor: Yes. I've been expecting it sooner or later. You see, it runs in your family. Fence-Sitters have been afflicted this way for centuries.

Sam: It's very annoying, Doctor.

Doctor: Of course, I understand. But can you tell me just how this ailment affects you?

Sam: Well, my greatest trouble is this. I find myself unable to distinguish between God's values and the world's values. They're all a big jumble to me.

Doctor: In other words, your focus is bad?

Sam: That's what it amounts to, I guess. There was a time when I felt close to Christ.

Doctor: But now?

Sam: I still see the Lord Jesus, but he's pretty faint. There are so many other things in the margin of my vision.

Doctor: For instance?

Sam: Well, to be honest with you, Doctor, a lot of worldly pleasures.

Doctor: I suspected as much.

Sam: And they're not only in the margin of my vision, sir. They're crowding Christ to the side and taking over the central place.

Doctor: Worldly pleasure is bound to do that, if we're not careful.

Sam: I still see Christ, you understand, but not as plainly as I did before my eyes started going bad.

Doctor: That's usually the way it is with these double-vision problems.

Sam: And worst of all, Christ just doesn't appear as attractive to me as he once did.

Doctor: Worldly pleasures are really dazzling, aren't they?

Sam: I'll say they are! Sometimes I almost feel that they're all I want. I don't need the Lord Jesus Christ at all. I hate to say it, Doctor, but I'm afraid if worldly pleasures crowd him out of my vision completely, I won't even miss him!

Doctor: You're in a bad state, lad ... *a very bad state!*

Sam: I know it, Doc. That's why I'm here. I can't go on like this any longer.

Sam: (*Working self into frenzy*). Do you hear me? This double vision is killing me! It's killing me, I tell you.

Doctor: Now, now ... take it easy, son. I think we'll be able to help you.

Sam: Either Christ goes, or these worldly things go! I can't have them all in my vision.

Doctor: We're going to see to it that it isn't Christ who's crowded out, my boy. That's the way you want it, isn't it?

Sam: Yes, sir. That's the way I really want it.

Doctor: Fine. That's half the cure!

Sam: But seeing all those other things has made me so confused. Sometimes they look so attractive that I wonder what I ever saw in Christ.

Doctor: That's the way with these double-vision cases. Compromise is a very dangerous practice, Mr. Fence-Sitter. But there's one thing that will straighten you out, I'm sure.

Sam: Do you mean it, Doc! I was afraid there wasn't any hope for me.

Doctor: There is, if you follow my instructions. I'm going to prescribe some exercises for you that will bring your eyes back into proper focus.

Sam: You mean Christ will be back in the center of my vision again?

Doctor: That's right. You remember the old song: "Fix your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, and the things of earth grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace."

Sam: That's what I need, Doctor, more than anything else — to get my eyes focused on him. But how am I going to do it?

Doctor: These exercises will help.

Sam: Tell me, Doc! I promise I'll follow them faithfully.

Doctor: All right. Here they are. First of all, you're going to have to get down off the fence.

Sam: But, Doctor ...

Doctor: No objections now. I must be very firm about this. You'll have to get down off the fence. You'll have to give up all compromise with the world. As long as you try to straddle the fence and belong half to the world and half to Christ you're going to see double. Now, are you willing to do that?

Sam: Isn't there any other way?

Doctor: No other way, son ... *no other way!*

Sam: All right, then. I'll do it. I'll get down off the fence. I'll get down on the Lord's side.

Doctor: Good. You'll be amazed at the difference that'll make.

Sam: Why, I feel better already. My eyes are clearing up, Doctor! My eyes are clearing up!

Doctor: Fine. I knew that would help your focus. Now here's the rest of the prescription. Go home and start doing your daily Bible readings again. Get back into your prayer closet, too. And start serving Christ's brothers and sisters, not just yourself! I guarantee that you won't be troubled with double vision any more. Christ will fill your line of vision so completely that there won't be room for those other things

Sam: Thank you. Doctor. I am going to do everything you've told me to do. And on top of that, I'm going to change my name, too. No more fence sitting for me.

Reader: *"How long will you go limping between two different opinions?" (1Kgs 18:21).*

Reader: *"No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Matt 6:24).*

Reader: *"A double-minded man (is) unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8).*

Reader: *"But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil 3:13-14).*

Curtain.

If you would like printable copies of the plays in the series, just drop me an email. I will send them to you in PDF form.

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

Notes:

1. The plays in this series are quite old. They are not Christadelphian in origin and the source is unknown. Anyone who recognizes the plays and has information about their origin is asked to contact me. I would like to credit the source if possible – Jim Harper.
2. Play scripts have been revised, and in some cases familiar Christadelphian terms like ecclesia, CYC, daily Bible readings, etc. have been introduced.

There were other gods besides Baal in the Canaanite Phoenician pantheon of gods This great prophet [Elijah] put the issue with stark clarity in his confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, asking the people how long they would *"go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him"* (1Kgs 18:21, RSV). In Elijah's view there was no place in Israel for the worship of gods other than Yahweh. The difference between Jezebel and Elijah was crystal clear. Was Yahweh the only god or one among many? The Queen regarded Yahweh as one among many and refused to acknowledge that He alone was God.

The Christadelphian, 1956 p. 248.

Jonathan the Faithful Prince, (22) Farewell

Jonathan had pleaded with Saul and this time, as we saw in our last article, his pleas were unsuccessful. Instead, filled with fury over Saul's slandering of David, Jonathan left the feast. From there, he knew that he had to tell David his father's evil intentions.

The arrows

The next morning began exactly as David and Jonathan had planned together.

“And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?” (1Sam 20:35-37).

Just pause and imagine what this morning would have been like for these two men. Jonathan woke up and the morning was just like any other day, and yet it was about to be tragic. That morning, Jonathan woke up knowing that he had to go out into the field and tell David that it was no longer safe for him to be in Gibeah or even anywhere near Saul. Thus, he went out into the field and brought the little lad with him — shooting the arrows out of his bow, he shot an arrow far out beyond where the lad was standing. *“Is not the arrow beyond thee?”* he shouted — and how he would have strained his voice to remain strong and unbroken as he said those words. They were the very words which were the signal for David to flee from Saul; when he heard them, he was to get up from where he was and run away. There was no more planned meetings — when David heard the words, that was the sign that it was time for him to flee:

“But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away” (1Sam 20:22).

When David heard that the arrows were beyond the lad, he was to pick up and run. That was it. *“Go thy way.”* Unlike what we might typically picture, the two men did not arrange a meeting together afterwards — the entire point of shooting the arrows was to allow David to run away without anyone realizing what had just taken place. As Jonathan said those words, he must have wondered if he would ever see his friend again.

For David, the morning would have likely been filled with anxiety. This was the day which Jonathan had told him that he would shoot the arrows. For three days, David had been hiding out in the field. He was likely dirty, tired, and still slightly overwhelmed — but it was time for him to move out of his hiding place. From his hiding place in the field, he was to go to his former hiding place in the same field, the place where he had been when Jonathan had pleaded with Saul



Jonathan's Token to David Leighton 1868

for David's life (1Sam 20:19). As quickly and as quietly as he could, David went over to the stone "Ezel," or the stone of parting. From there, he waited — until finally he heard the voice of his friend. What a welcome voice it would have been for a fugitive who had been hiding for three days out in a field! As Jonathan began, David heard the first words — "*Behold, the arrows...*" and his breath would have caught. Then he heard his friend finish "*...are beyond thee.*" As a wave of sadness and loneliness passed over him, David knew that it was time to run.

"And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the lad knew not any thing; only

Jonathan and David knew the matter" (1Sam 20:38-39).

In a final message to his friend, Jonathan, with welled-up emotion, shouted out "*make speed, haste, stay not.*" Now was not the time for David to wait around. Saul's hatred had gone beyond anything Jonathan had ever seen before. His father had openly declared that he would stand against God's will, and he had even sought to kill Jonathan for getting in his way. David's quick departure was imperative.

Yet at the same time, out in the field, Jonathan's lad heard the words of his master — and "*the lad knew not any thing.*" As providence would have it, it appears as though the lad assumed that the words were meant for him, and quickly gathering up the arrows, he ran back to Jonathan, ready to "stay not." Perhaps it was at this time that the lad's expectation to leave and Jonathan's desire to see David once more overruled his regard for security. Quickly, Jonathan gave his weaponry to the lad, and told him to take them into the city:

"And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city" (1Sam 20:40).

With the lad expecting to leave, Jonathan realized that the two friends could once more see each other before David disappeared into the wilderness. It would appear as though David had been thinking the same thing — not wanting to leave his final friend and his mentor, David saw the opportunity to be alone one final time with Jonathan, and he seized the moment.

A final goodbye

“And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded [or wept the most]” (1Sam 20:41).

For a brief moment, the two men had thought that they might never see each other again — and now the opportunity had come for a final goodbye. Once David saw the lad depart from Jonathan, it was as though the young man was overcome with emotion, and he rushed out towards his loyal friend and mentor. As he approached Jonathan, he fell down on his face before him — a beautiful act of submission in which David sought to abase himself before the one whom he believed to be greater than himself. Though he was the one who was destined to be king and though Jonathan had consistently acted as though he was David’s servant, the young man sought to show his love and thanks for his mentor by bowing himself down. Words could not express the gratitude which David had for this man — the man who had seen him through his lapse of faith, the man who had pleaded for his life despite the danger that it brought to him, the man who had patiently endured David’s accusation of disloyalty. What more could he do?

Standing up, the two men said goodbye with a parting kiss, and then began to weep — but David wept most of all (see ESV, NASB). As Jonathan held David, his friend convulsed in sobs; truly there was nothing else to do. David had been driven from his wife. He had been chased to the prophet’s house and had narrowly escaped capture there. Now, he was to leave his best friend and mentor. One by one, his friends were taken from him until he was completely alone. There would no longer be anyone to help him when his faith began to break. There would no longer be anyone with whom he could discuss matters of the kingship. There would no longer be anyone with whom he could think upon the Kingdom of God. They were all taken from him. After this last embrace with Jonathan, he would have no likeminded companions.

As he considered his plight, David’s tears would have continued to flow. Where was he going to go now? How was he going to live? Why was God making all of this happen to him?

Go in peace

In this moment of despair, Jonathan once again broke through the anguish of the moment and lifted up the mind of his friend. Through both of their faces were coated with tears, and though David’s tears were still forthcoming, Jonathan again reminded his friend of the promises of the future. Despite the dreariness of the situation around them, the faithful prince could never forget the glories of the future — nor could allow his friend to do so:

“And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed, and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city” (1Sam 20:42).

As Jonathan looked upon David's anguished face, he gave him words of comfort — "go in peace." Yet at first these words may have seemed entirely useless and even insolent in this situation; how could Jonathan tell David to go in peace, he was a fugitive and hunted by the king? Peace would have nothing to do with the next few years of his life! Nevertheless, while the words may have first shocked David, Jonathan backed them up — David wasn't to have peace because his situation was filled with tranquility and solitude, no, instead, he was to have peace because he knew that something better was coming. Jonathan's last words to David were all about the covenant which the two of them had made — the covenant in which Jonathan had caused David to swear that he would protect Jonathan's seed when he became king! Despite the fear and gloominess that surrounded them, Jonathan reminded David of the covenant which they had made just days prior:



David Weeps on Jonathan: Rembrandt

"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).

Just days before, when Jonathan and David had created their plan together, Jonathan had asked David to swear that their covenant would not only be between the two of them, but between their children, and that when David became king, he would look with favor on Jonathan's seed. It was the request of a man who seemed to calmly acknowledge that there was the possibility that he would die before David came to the throne — and he wanted his friend to preserve his posterity and watch over his children. Not only so, it was the request of a man who confidently believed in God's promise of David's kingship. Now, in this final moment before they parted, Jonathan once more lifted David's mind out of the depths of today's sadness and quickly brought it forward, reminding

him of the covenant which they had made between their two seeds — between “*my seed, and thy seed*” — the covenant which revolved around David’s future kingship! No matter the depravity of the situation, no matter how much his friend’s eyes were filled with tears, Jonathan refused to let David forget that God would see him through all of the trials and would place him on the throne. God had promised, and Jonathan firmly believed that He would fulfill.

The greater Kingdom to come

But there was even more to Jonathan’s words. When he spoke of the future, he wasn’t merely referring to the future when David would be king. No, his mind reached that point, but it didn’t stop there. Looking far past the tribulation of the moment, and even past the glories of David’s kingdom, Jonathan set his face to an even greater kingdom. Such was the power of the message in Jonathan’s final words — “*the LORD between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.*” The two of them hadn’t simply made a covenant that would bond the two of them together for the rest of their lives — this was something that was greater. This covenant between them was a promise which was based upon something bigger and more extensive than all of the years in their lives and the years of the lives of their children. It was a covenant which would last forever, a covenant which was based upon an understanding of the hope which was given to Abraham, and which echoed the promise which God made to that patriarch:

“And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee” (Gen 17:7).

The words which God spoke to Abraham laid the foundation for what Jonathan spoke to David! God had made a covenant with Abraham which wouldn’t simply be with him, but it would be made with his entire seed, and it would last forever. Altogether, this covenant with Abraham was focused on the Kingdom of God, which is when it will fully be fulfilled. So it was with the covenant which Jonathan made with David — it wouldn’t merely be between Jonathan and David, but would be between their seeds, and it would last forever. Thus, just as the promises to Abraham were entirely based upon the Kingdom of God, it was the same with this covenant which Jonathan made with David — and Jonathan’s echo back to Genesis was an extra hint which he was giving to his friend in order to help him think about the age to come! Thus, as Jonathan spoke his final words to David, he reminded him that there would be a time when he would king and reign over all Israel, but even more, there would be a time when the two of them, by God’s grace, would never be parted again.

It was a thought which would constantly stay in Jonathan’s mind, and it was a picture which Jonathan would use to continually lift up the thoughts of his friend. May we learn from that example. And so, with that reminder of a glorious time to come, David arose and disappeared into the distance.

Jason Hensley (Simi Hills, CA)

The New Testament Church (10) Charity

Let us do good unto all men

There are those in our community today, and we honor them and respect their point of view, although I cannot share it, who really believe that we ought not, not merely that we need not, to shed our benevolence abroad on any other than Christadelphians or Christadelphian causes. I cannot understand this. They say, "The devil can look after his own. Our job is not to do with helping people outside." But Paul says only that we shall get our priorities right. *"Let us do good unto all men, especially them of the household of faith"* (Gal 6:10).

Charity, though it begins at home, does not end there; and the kind of charity, the love of the New Testament, is not something that can be bounded by walls. We may not say: "We love one another, but we do not love anybody else. Our love extends to the back of our meeting room, but not outside." That is not really love, it is partisanship. John said *"We love because he first loved us"* (1John 4:19 NIV). (You will notice in all the new versions that the word "him" is deleted; in fact, even in the Authorized Version of that passage "him" is italicized indicating that it is not there in the original). What John is saying is, "We love, because he first loved us. We have learned what love is from Jesus Christ. We have learned how good God is to the undeserving and the unworthy. He has been good to us, and therefore we learn from him to love other people. Not a love that is bounded by this or that, or by our fads and fancies, but a love that is all-embracing, as his love has been in embracing us."

"Limitation of sympathy"

It seems to me that the church in the first century was motivated by "other-worldliness" more than by "unworldliness". Now, by this I mean that they were not indifferent to their fellows. We have already seen from the quotations I have made from historians, and from the New Testament quotations as well, that the early Christian church was not indifferent to the needs of others. It was not indifferent to the poor and the weak and the despised. Their policy was certainly one of non-involvement in what Paul calls "the affairs of this life," as he wrote to Timothy, *"No man that warreth, entangleth himself in the affairs of this life"* (2Tim 2:4). I would think almost certainly that they were more indifferent to worldly advancement than we are today; and yet kindness and benevolence characterized the Christian ethic at that time.

We have this rather strange anomaly, as I see it, that we as a community are well off, generally; sometimes very ambitious; many of our brethren do make their mark in all sorts of spheres; they get on, they have university education, they become the bosses, and the heads. We say, of course, that the Christian way of life requires us to be diligent in business; that they are quiet living people, and

they give their minds to their work and are conscientious, so that the boss says, "That is a conscientious man," and he promotes him; and this sort of thing does happen. But making all allowances for this, it seems to me that we tend to be much more interested in advancement in this world, and not as much concerned for its people, as the early church was.

I got the following references to Christadelphians out of a magazine that came to me through the post, and it refers to a book of Bertrand Russell's, "Power — a New Social Analysis", which many of us have heard of only because it mentions our community and puts us in a rather good light — he says, in fact, that:

"Christianity was, in its earliest days, entirely unpolitical. The best representatives of the primitive tradition in our times are the Christadelphians, who believe the end of the world to be imminent and refuse to have any part or lot in secular affairs."

Now that has been quoted in my hearing a good many times, and yours too I dare say, and we are all rather pleased about Bertrand Russell giving us an honorable mention, because we do not usually get a mention at all. Although I do not suppose we would agree with anything he said about any other subject under the sun, we agree with him here that Christadelphians are the nearest of any other group of believers to the primitive Christian tradition.

But I am indebted to whoever wrote this article, because he tells us that Russell also made another reference to Christadelphians in the same book which was not very flattering, and we never hear that mentioned. Do you know what it says?

"But limitations of sympathy are also natural; the cat has no sympathy for the mouse; the Romans had no sympathy for any animals except elephants; the Nazis had none for Jews, where there is a limitation of sympathy there is a corresponding limitation in the conception of the good. The good becomes something to be enjoyed only by the magnanimous man, or only by the superman, or the Arzan, or the Christadelphians."¹

"Christadelphians" he said! He is linking us up with the Nazis now.

My observation of our community and speaking as one who loves it, is that one can be very zealous about what we call the truth, and yet very unkind with it. There is a "limitation of sympathy" very often. You can have a kind of religion that says, when the bombs are raining down on London, you are not to put out the fires, for they are the judgments of God. You are interfering. This was said, not by berserk men, but by sincere Christadelphians who felt that their interpretation of prophecy was such that they would be doing something wrong by helping their neighbors in these distressing conditions.

I do not personally accept this. I think Bertrand Russell is right, that there can be a limitation of sympathy where you hold this rigid closed-door mentality, as doctrinally we do. We say, "They are all wrong; the world is in darkness, so let them stew in their own juice." Now you cannot really do this, and it was not the Christian ethic of the first century. I am convinced it was not. We sometimes

find the same spirit in our own dealings with one another. There is nothing so bitter as two brethren who have fallen out with one another about Adam's nature before the fall, or something like that. They treat one another worse than "the publican and sinner." These kinds of arguments go on, and this kind of writing goes on; and vituperation and bitterness creep in the pamphleteering from one to another, and it is all in the name of Christianity.

This is understandable. We say, "Well, of course, when people feel strongly about things, you know." But we ought to feel strongly about some other things as well. We ought to feel strongly about loving one another, and caring for other people, and being sympathetic, and being kind and gentle; because Jesus was all of these. He was a "strong man," and he stood up and denounced error; but he was always kind, and patient, and gentle to those who needed help. To those who were down the bottom end, whose lamps were burning low, and the wick was flickering. He did not stamp people out — "*the bruised reed shall he not break and the smoking flax he shall not quench*" (Matt 12:20). He never quenched people, he poured in the oil of love, of his spirit, and helped them to burn again. And this is what we have got to learn from Jesus and, I believe, from the New Testament church.

The general picture

Let me now try to summarize our findings. The general picture we have of ecclesial life, in the later part of the first century, is probably not as unlike our own as we might have imagined, persecutions apart. That is interesting is it not? We are the first century church — "apostolic Christianity revived," but we have to admit that we have not heard of any Christadelphian, at least in the UK, thrown to the lions or even put to death. There are people being put to death for their religion, for their Christianity. There are people suffering tortures for their faith. We may say that it is all misguided, and that they do not hold the truth; but I only record, without comment, that there are people who are undergoing tortures, real tortures, in prisons and in solitary confinement in parts of Europe, because they believe in Jesus Christ; while we ourselves have to say, "Well, we are like the first century church, but, of course, we do not have any persecution."

There is as much activity, possibly, in preaching and teaching today as in the New Testament church. There were apostles, and prophets and evangelists at work in the field then, as we today have our Bible Mission workers, and campaigners, and men who do not spare themselves, who go out to preach this gospel as far as they can with great zeal and great devotion and great love. Their organized ecclesial life at local level, as we saw previously, was in a sense similar to our own. It may not have been exactly parallel, but they had comparable structure, with their arranging brethren (or eldership), and serving brethren; their speaking brethren, and so on. Their community activities consisted, as it would appear, mainly of the weekly meeting for the breaking of bread and worship, "*When you come together on the first day of the week*"; "*when the disciples were gathered together for the breaking of bread*", and phrases such as that, indicate that their way of life was in some senses like our own.

The majority of members of the early church were not going off to Gaul to preach

the gospel there, or up and down Italy, or over to Asia Minor. Most of them were getting on with a routine job; they had to, for they worked in households, or they might have been artisans or even slaves; and most of them were going about their daily vocations at various levels of society, though, as I have suggested, probably chiefly from the lower orders. Some were slaves, but some were slave owners — Philemon you remember, was a slave owner, and Onesimus was one of his slaves who had run away and had been converted in Rome. And what did Paul do? He sent him back to his master, and asked Philemon to treat him kindly and to forgive him for any wrong that he had done.

There were artisans and merchants; there was a doctor, and a government official; plenty of poor, but some wealthy, with large houses and estates and servants. The point being that the Christian gospel in New Testament times was for every man. It cut across all the social barriers. Barbarians, Scythians, bond, or free, male or female — it mattered nothing as far as Paul was concerned. This was a faith for living every day. It was a faith that men turned into the stuff of their daily lives. The slave in his service, the master in his business, the artisan making his leather goods, or tents, or whatever. They went about their jobs, and they were to turn their religion into the daily living. They were not, as I suggested earlier, all chiefs and no Indians. They were not all office seekers, nor all important people in the church. The majority of them were the humdrum stuff of the ecclesia, the people on whom the work was being done and for whom it was being carried out. *“We are workers together with him,”* Paul says, *“You are God’s field, you are God’s building”* (1Cor 3:9). We are working on you, and the quality of the work will show in the quality of the lives of the people who belong to the Christian ecclesia at that time, on whom we are working, and the Day of Judgment, he said, will show what kind of workmanship has gone into it.

We do tend to think of ourselves today as all being involved at the top level, whereas, in fact, the importance of the Christian calling is in the daily life, in the kind of people we are becoming, in the way in which the Christian gospel is working itself out. There were those in the Thessalonian Ecclesia, you will remember, who appear to have thought that the day of the Lord was so near that there was no need to work at all, and they seem to have just lived on the largesse of their wealthier brethren. Paul had to point out to them that they could not go on like that:

“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more; and that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing” (1Thess 4:9-12).

Len Richardson

Notes:

1. [Editor]. I have read Russel’s book, and not only cannot I find the reference there, I cannot find it in any of Russel’s writing. Perhaps someone else can.

Building the Tombs for the Prophets

“Woe to you, because you build tombs [‘sepulchres’: KJV] for the prophets, and it was your forefathers who killed them. So you testify that you approve of what your forefathers did; they killed the prophets, and you build their tombs” (Luke 11:47,48 NIV; cp Matt 23:29-31).

Jesus criticized the Pharisees for building the tombs for the prophets. Examples of such tombs dating to before Jesus’ day can still be seen near Jerusalem, and he may well have been pointing to some of them as he spoke. His criticism suggests that the Pharisees showed a great zeal for the reputations of the righteous ones who had gone before them, but that their zeal had produced a decidedly negative result. The parallel passage in Matthew 23 adds a second phrase to “you build the tombs”. There, Jesus also says: “and [you] *decorate* the graves of the righteous” (vs. 29). The word “decorate” (“garnish” in KJV) is from “*kosmeo*”, and it means to arrange, adorn, or set in order, with the strong suggestion of *worship*.

Jesus then adds: “*You testify against yourselves*” (Matt 23:31), thus indicating that those who revered the prophets’ tombs, or the graves of the righteous, were like those who had actually “*murdered the prophets*” (v 31; cp also Luke 11:47,48) and other “*wise men, and teachers*” (Matt 23:34).

Not only were the Pharisees just like those in the past who murdered the prophets: they were in fact their heirs. In other words, these Pharisees were the proper successors of all those previous generations who had disregarded the wise men, and now they would condemn themselves by continuing the sins of their forefathers:

“Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all” (Luke 11:50,51; cp Matt 23:35,36).

So intent were the religious leaders of Christ’s day upon preserving the traditions of their fathers, that they fought tooth and nail against anything and anyone that was different and challenging. This was also what their fathers had done when challenged by the prophets. Such rigidity of thought renders men incapable of hearing the message of God, and witnessing His glory. Being thus blind and deaf, they were unable to examine themselves, and unable to repent. They clung to traditions that had the outward appearance of religion, but never came to grips with the “*more important [‘weightier’: KJV] matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness*” (Matt 23:23).

The same frame of mind which would slavishly revere dead prophets and teachers would just as easily kill contemporary ones.

“The attitude of the scribes to the prophets was paradoxical. They professed a deep admiration for the prophets. But the only prophets they admired were dead; when they met a living one they tried to kill him. They honored the dead prophets with tombs and memorials, but they dishonored the living ones with persecution and death.”

William Barclay, Daily Bible Study Series: Luke

Anthony Oosthuizen paraphrases:

“You have plenty of zeal for the tombs of holy men — but you have more use for them dead than alive! And remember that the men who treated them so vilely were your fathers. You have inherited the same characteristics, only worse. And now you plan to slay a greater prophet than any whom your fathers persecuted!”

Encounters with the Lord

Not just for Christ’s day

These are very hard words, and not just for the devout Jews of Christ’s day. If his words mean anything to us today, as we must assume they do, then they are very hard words indeed for us also. So hard, in fact, that we can scarcely imagine ourselves — “good” Christadelphians that we are — in the picture Jesus describes. And so hard, perhaps, that we may never have taken to heart the Lord’s warning — if one may judge such matters by the apparent dearth of any exposition of this passage in previous Christadelphian writings.

Jesus seems to say that the believer who is prone to overly idealize the memory of prophets, teachers and pioneers is all too quick to “kill” those who protest against such a practice, as well as those who are the same sort of teachers and pioneers in a modern context. Praising long-dead “prophets” is relatively easy and pleasing to human nature. Like those who worship images and relics, those who publicly lavish praise upon our “pioneers” achieve a superficial religiosity — a form of religion which carries the special benefit of being easy, since it requires no sacrifice or pain or even effort to achieve!

Thomson’s observation

W.M. Thomson was an American Protestant minister who lived in Palestine for more than 25 years. He rode a horse the length and breadth of the Holy Land, and kept an extensive journal of his travels, which was published in 1859. The book was entitled *The Land and the Book*, and it contains extraordinary insights into the landscape, buildings, culture and customs of the land and its inhabitants. These insights are so valuable because, for an outsider in his day, Thomson was uniquely familiar with his subjects — both of them: the *Land* and the *Book*!

Citing these verses in Luke 11, Thomson recalled the many instances he had come across, in his travels, of superstitious devotion at shrines supposed to hold the relics of long-dead “saints”. This kind of slavish devotion had infected Christian worshipers as well as Muslim ones.

His words, written with evident distaste, are a helpful exposition for us:

“The greatest sin of Israel... was apostasy from the true God and His worship by idolatry; and the most prevalent mode of this apostasy is sacrilegious reverence for dead men’s tombs and bones... Now, it was for rebuking this and other kinds of idolatry, that “the fathers killed the prophets”, and those who built their tombs would, in like manner, kill anyone who condemned their idolatrous reverence for these very sepulchers. Thus the Pharisees, by the very act of building those tombs of the prophets, and “honoring” them as they did, showed plainly that they were activated by the same spirit that led their fathers to kill them; and, to make this matter self-evident, they very soon proceeded to crucify the Lord... because of his faithful rebukes. Nor has this spirit changed in the least during the subsequent eighteen hundred years.”

W.M. Thomson, The Land and the Book, vol. 2, pp. 493,494

Are we prone to this also?

Why are we, even with far greater knowledge, still prone to a similar veneration of the “pioneers”? Perhaps primarily because we are human, and it is easy! But perhaps also because we intuitively understand that dead “prophets” and dead “pioneers” can be confined to books on shelves, where they can be controlled. By contrast, living “prophets” and “pioneers” cannot be compartmentalized or filed away. They stick their noses into our business, intentionally or otherwise. They disturb our consciences. They prod us out of our comfort zones, and they encourage us to actually *do something* when we would rather do nothing. In other words, maybe we revere deceased teachers so that we don’t have to listen to living teachers who are still with us.

Rules for Bible study

For example, we may devote ourselves to every detail of John Thomas’ prophetic interpretations, almost as if he were inspired. At the same time we may neglect to read Scriptures like Daniel and Revelation with the same open mind that Bro. Thomas himself used when he wrote his commentaries!

Early on in his ministry, Bro. Thomas published guidelines for personal Bible study, including these rules:

Never be afraid of results to which you may be driven by your investigations, as this will inevitably... disqualify you from arriving at ultimate truth.

Investigate everything you believe: if it is the truth, it cannot be injured thereby; if error, the sooner it is corrected the better.

Pursue this course with as much independence as if you were the only one concerned. Rely on no authority less than divine in so momentous an undertaking.

*Herald of the Kingdom and Age to Come, Vol. 9, No. 8
(August 1859), p. 180*

This is quoted by John Thomas, without citation, from a book by the minister and writer Thomas Mitchell, *The Gospel Crown of Life*, published in New York in 1850.

What happens then if we neglect John Thomas' guiding principles of Bible study, *but at the same time instinctively accept every word he wrote*? We congratulate ourselves on revering his memory by "believing" all he wrote, but in doing this, we become much like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, tombs and special decorations and all. We honor John Thomas in principle but not in practice.

Meanwhile, we may compound our shortcomings by also belittling and ostracizing other believers who try, like Bro. Thomas the Bible student, to study their Bibles *with open minds*.

Jesus said to the Pharisees of his day that, when they built the tombs for the prophets whom their fathers killed, they were actually testifying that they approved of what their fathers had done (Luke 11:47,48)! As T.W. Manson paraphrased in his book, *The Sayings of Jesus* (London, 1949, p. 101), Jesus' criticism of the Pharisees could be condensed into this simple slogan: "The only prophet we honor is a *dead prophet!*"

Are not these same words in Luke and Matthew our Lord's criticism of us?: Do we really honor the memory of *dead* pioneers and wise men by refusing to even consider the words and studies of other Bible students in our own day?

What would John Thomas think?

Put it another way: What do we suppose that Bro. Thomas would think of his "disciples" — that is, those who have been most outspoken in their devotion to him — if he knew that they had advanced very little if any beyond the prophetic ideas he developed 150-plus years ago? I think he might say something like this:

Why didn't my professed friends take into account all the geopolitical changes since my day? Why didn't they take into account all the advances in understanding Bible languages and the messages of the prophets in the last two centuries? But especially, if they were my true friends, why didn't they revere and imitate my rules and my attitude toward Bible study? Surely they knew, didn't they, that they show their devotion to the LORD God by carefully studying His Word — but not by carefully studying my words?

And what would Jesus think?

Most importantly, what will our Lord Jesus Christ think of us, when he returns to raise the dead? He will find that we have been given the "one talent" of gospel truth, in part by the labors of wise teachers and preachers who have gone before us. But will he also find that we were content to receive that "one talent" wrapped up neatly and handed to us (Matt 25:18), and then to complacently examine that truth from time to time, but not bother to work at making it grow?

If, as we often say, we stand on the shoulders of giants of faith who went before, shouldn't we be able to see further and more clearly than they did? The great scientist (and Bible student) Isaac Newton summed up his career in these words:

“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants... I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore... whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

Many “giants” have gone before us, in various fields of science, linguistics, textual analysis, history, and archaeology, as well as Bible study. We show proper respect to their memories not by lauding them, but by building on what they have labored to give us, in whatever capacity we might be engaged. We *demonstrate* that respect by following the rules which our own “giant”, John Thomas, has pointed out to us:

- Investigate what you believe.
- Do not be afraid of the results of your investigation.
- Do not rely on any human authority for the last word.
- Keep an open mind.
- Remember that the Word of God must come first, last and always.

The greatest “giant” of faith to go before us — Jesus Christ — showed the greatest reverence for his Father’s Word. We do our Lord the same service by showing real reverence for the Word of God too, in all that we say, think, write and do.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

Let us recover the sense of excitement about prophecy which former generations of Christadelphians had.

Try to be led by the Bible, not by world events — It is easier to seize on a political development and make it ‘fit’ a prophecy; it is better, though harder, to take a prophecy and look for a current situation to which it may correspond.

Study all the prophecies that appear to relate to the latter days, not just one or two — It is a trait of Christadelphians to concentrate solely on passages such as Ezekiel 38 or Zechariah 14, or only to be interested in Revelation: there are important last-day prophecies in Isaiah, Joel, Zephaniah, the epistles of Peter and many other books.

Let us not be afraid to emphasize the simple and straightforward prophecies that are being fulfilled in our own times — The continuing fulfilment of prophecies about, for example, the return of Jews to their land are usually far more compelling to interested friends than speculations about the place and time of the gathering of the saints for judgement.

Let us insist, among ourselves and in our witness, that the exhortation to preparedness is the most important element in prophecy — It is of no merit to be an expert in international affairs, or to have a complete mastery of Bible prophecy, if we have neglected our personal discipleship and involvement in ecclesial life.

“When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).

John Morris. *The Christadelphian*, 199 P. 458.

Bible Mission News

Events at the Bank Hall Ecclesia Barbados (2014 – 2016)

The Bank Hall Ecclesia Barbados have been privileged over the past few years to experienced several wonderful events.



Members of the Bank Hall Ecclesia, Barbados

At the beginning of 2014, the Hall was in urgent need of repairs. Thanks to God, those repairs were done through the kind generosity of the CBMC spearheaded by Bro. Rod Ghent. Also in 2014 we held our first youth camp, with the help of Bro. Clive and Sis. Joanne Walton from England and Bro. Ashraf Ali from the USA. The theme of the camp was “All That Glitters...” Bro. Ashraf was the main speaker, but he was supported by local brethren. He also organized a treasure hunt for the young people and cooked a special meal for our picnic.

In 2015 the annual sponsored CBMC Bible School was held at Easter. The speaker was Bro. Ken Styles from the Royal Oak Ecclesia in Detroit, USA. His theme was “Studies in Nehemiah.” It was a very motivating four days of Bible study. Bro. David and Sis. Sarah Corbin were also with us at that time. Bro. David is originally from Barbados, but he lives in the USA. He was instrumental in helping the ecclesia make some important decisions. We are very thankful to God for his help.

Also in 2015 we tried some new preaching ideas. With Bro. Ashraf’s help once again, we held a Bible Exhibition. Leading up to and following the exhibition Bro. Ashraf gave a series of talks entitled “Introduction to Prophecy.” Bro. Jonathan Hale from the Crewe Ecclesia, was in Barbados at the time of his first talk. The exhibition was on the Saturday. The sisters were on the street directing people to the Hall. At the Hall visitors were taken around to view the exhibits. We had leaflets printed on prophecy and also some explaining what we as

Christadelphians believe and preach. There was a table set up with a computer where short talks on “Why the Bible was reliable” could be watched. The highlight of the exhibition was a miniature of the tabernacle which Bro. Ashraf brought with him. Several Bibles and Bible Basics books were distributed.

In November Bro. Clive and Sis. Christina Drepaul came to help us with our first study weekend. The topic was “The truth of the first beast”. Bro. Clive also did a series of lectures. We had some visitors for the lectures, and the study weekend was very much appreciated by all those who attended.

The annually sponsored CBMC Easter Bible School this year will be held in March from the 25th-28th, God willing. The theme is “Show me thy Glory.” The speaker will be Bro. David Andrews from Guyana. Visitors are welcome to attend.

This year we are planning a family camp in August and a Bible exhibition in September: a date has not been set yet for the study weekend. We would like to thank all those who helped in these ventures. Your efforts are very much appreciated. We welcome the support of visiting brethren in the giving of exhortations, lectures and helping out in our special projects. Should anyone like to help please contact me Bro. Joel Caine Programme Coordinator of the Bank Hall Ecclesia at the email cainney@hotmail.com.

Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity

Jamaica – Fraternalists are like an ‘Oasis’

It’s always a pleasure to attend a fraternal in Jamaica. It’s like an oasis away from the demands of daily life. The hired cars and mini-buses arrive from across the Island loaded with members and children. The February 10, 2016, Ash Wednesday Fraternal at Broughton was attended by brothers and sisters from the Argyle, Harvey River, Kingston, May Pen, Port Maria, Round Hill and Spanish Town Ecclesias.

About 85 received instruction from the Scripture on the theme “Living the Word”. Bro. Don Luff gave the first talk on ‘Man shall not live by bread alone’. The second study on ‘Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it’ was presented by Bro. Keith Kinlocke. The emphasis was on letting the Word teach us to develop our consciences, which in turn will guide our behavior. Hymn 165 — “Teach me thy way O Lord” was sung with enthusiasm setting the tone for the day.

Deuteronomy also urges us to teach our children, or our sons and our sons’ sons. This coupled with the large





numbers of children and teens present, highlighted the importance of Sunday School and C.Y.C. activities. To this end, the young people were encouraged to register for the Annual Easter Weekend Youth Camp at Camp Hope. The 'Book of Ruth' is the study theme for that weekend, and preparatory readings have been assigned so as to encourage the youth to be ready for the studies and the 'Quiz Challenge' during the Camp.

Three discussion groups followed the two talks on the following topics:

- Living the Word – wherever **I** am each day
- Living the Truth – with **my** family
- Living the Truth – with members of **my** ecclesia

The day ended in the afternoon with a Memorial Service and a provided meal. No-one was in a hurry to return home, since everyone lingered after for conversation. Fellowship was enjoyed at this oasis in our time of pilgrimage, as we await our Lord.

*Written by Bro. Don Luff, CBMC Jamaica linkman
Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau, CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

Jamaica — A Special Sunday in Port Maria!

The members in the Port Maria area organized a mini-Fraternal on Sunday, February 14, 2016, at the Forrester's Banquet Complex in this town. The seven active members had been unable to meet on a regular basis, due to the lack of an available meeting room. The whole facility includes several buildings and an undercover outdoor cooking area, plus a large central open space where the young people played soccer and basketball. With funding from the CBMJ, one of the meeting areas was rented for the day — and friends and family members were invited to a public lecture, a hot meal prepared on-site, followed by a Memorial



Those attending the Fraternal. Sis. Enid is in the chair on the left.

Service for members. A Sunday School type lesson took place instead of the lecture, since there were more children and teens present at the beginning than adults — a pleasant circumstance indeed! The exhortation theme — “Where will I be when Jesus returns?” — was of benefit for all. A thought-provoking topic to consider, in light of current world events, while meeting around the Lord’s Table.

It was a worthy effort, for the first attempt in several years, of a combined public witness and fraternal, to which 38 children, adolescents and adults attended. We thank Sis. Sandra Reid for the beforehand organization of the necessary details. Everyone was also thrilled to see 93 year old Sis. Enid Hall present for the day’s activities — she is the only active member left of the ecclesia which used to meet

in their own hall in Port Antonio, over an hour east of Pt. Maria. The CBMJ will continue to do its best to support the efforts of the members in this town, plus provide means of working with the youth as well.

*Don Luff, CBMC
Jamaica linkman*



Children lining up to shoot baskets

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 91781, Austin, TX 78709-1781, www.tidings.org

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

Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC) supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and bequests for similar activity. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make Canadian dollar online donations. Donations by cheque should be sent to Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, V3R 0J7

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

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

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

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

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

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 146, Three Rivers, CA 93271-0146, or 97 Twenty Place Blvd., Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0 or via website www.agapeinaction.com
e-mail: agapeinaction@rogers.com

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

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

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Jonathan Farrar, 140 Whitwell Way, Binbrook, ON L0R 1C0

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

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

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

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

News and Notices

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

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

BOSTON, MA

We are pleased to welcome Bro. Ray and Sis. Elizabeth Calise to the Boston, MA Ecclesia by way of transfer from the Cranston, RI Ecclesia. We look forward to their company on our journey to the kingdom of God.

We would like to thank Bro. Steve Stewart (San Diego, CA) and Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON) for their recent words of exhortation.

Jim Sullivan

COLLINGWOOD, ON

It has now been three months since we started meeting weekly for Sunday services in Collingwood, and our new ecclesia has thrived. The highlight of our first quarter was the Sunday School Entertainment held April 3, 2016. The young people put on a dramatic performance of the Life of the Prophet Elijah, and sang some musical items as well. Ben Aback was King Ahab, Abel was Elijah, Levi was Obadiah/Naboth. Kyla was Queen Jezebel with Beth as Athaliah, and the others had various parts. With scholars ranging in age from five to fourteen, it was a great combined effort and all the parents were pleased with the result. We had three visitors from the Seniors Home we meet in also attend the performance and it was a great way to introduce them to the truth.

Our recent exhortations and adult Sunday school classes have taken on a bit of a theme regarding communication and how we as brothers and sisters in Christ can get to know each other better and therefore be in a better position to help each other out. With this in mind we have started a “mentorship” program where members and young people are paired up with another member and encouraged to meet or contact each other outside of regular ecclesial activities. Each month we will rotate to another pairing. We hope this will enhance the family atmosphere of the ecclesia.

The mid-week Bible class continues with our study in the book of Hebrews, as does a bi-weekly Sister’s class studying the book of Ruth.

We encourage anyone visiting the area to join us for any of our functions. Please keep our new lamp stand in your prayers as we witness to a world in darkness and encourage each other in these last days to be ready and prepared for our Lord’s return; surely he comes quickly!

Perry Braux

HONESDALE, PA

We regret to inform our brethren that our beloved Bro. Alan Decker went to sleep in the Lord on March 2, 2016. Baptized in 1974, he became dedicated to the Lord and

-serving our ecclesia as well as being a loving and supportive husband and father to Sis. Debbie and their three daughters. He put our precepts into practice providing joyous light to all in his daily life and will be greatly missed until Christ returns.

Stephen J. DeMarco

PITTSBURGH, PA

On August 23, 2015, we were blessed to witness the baptism of JOSHUA BUDNEY into the saving name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the son of Bro. Len and Sis. Julie Budney. On December 13, 2015, ANNA FOLKERTS was baptized. She is the daughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Laura Folkerts. On February 28, 2016, ABBY TELLES, the daughter of Bro. Fred Telles and Sis. Jennifer Bekhit, was baptized. We pray that our heavenly Father will watch over and guide them as we await the soon return of His Son.

We thank Bro. Kevin Mayock for his encouraging classes on, “Joseph” for our CYC Study Weekend of November 13-15, 2015. We had wonderful support from many visitors in the US and Canada.

We thank Bre. Peter Wilson, Ian Nibloe, Steve Harper, Roger Snyder, Mike Coy, Michael Davey, Chris Stilwell, and Dan Langston for their very helpful words of exhortation.

David Pommer

SARASOTA, FL

It is with great joy that we announce the baptism of HELEN PRICHETT into the saving name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sis. Helen is the daughter of Bro. Terry and Sis. Jean Cannon of the Castle Bromwich, UK Ecclesia, which will be our new sister’s home ecclesia.

It was the Sarasota ecclesia’s great pleasure to provide the pool for the immersion. Our new sister’s father had the joyous opportunity of immersing her into Christ. Our prayer to the heavenly Father is that He will be with her on her walk to the kingdom.

The members of the Castle Bromwich Ecclesia heard the audio transmission of the baptism. They saw, via “Go To Meeting”, the right hand of fellowship extended to Sis. Helen, which followed the exhortation by her brother in law, Bro. Keith Archer (Studley, UK).

James Wilkinson

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our ecclesial news we have welcomed the following brothers and sisters around the Table of our Lord: Ed Newton Verdugo Hills, CA); Kelly Ellison (Westerly, RI); Rachel Newton (Los Angeles, CA); Bucky and Debi Wilhoit (Detroit Royal Oak, MI); Malinda Beutel (Tulsa Joplin, OK); Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Aust.); Kerri Maier (East Texas); Tyler Cherry and Aron Cherry (West Houston, TX); Ronnie and Kristen Hefner and Brandon Hefner (North Houston, TX); and Peter Trotter, Jacob Matthew, Michele Massip, Antonio and Marcia Howell, (Dallas, TX). We thank Bre. P. Trotter, A. Cherry, B. Wilhoit, A. Howell, E. Newton and J. Cowie for their words of exhortation and special Bible classes.

In November 2015, Bro. Daniel and Sis. Malinda Beutel moved to Tulsa, OK. We certainly miss these fellow laborers and commend them into the loving care of the Tulsa Joplin, OK Ecclesia.

We were pleased to welcome Bro. Colin and Sis. Chris Hollamby (Glenlock, AUS). Bro. Colin gave a series of classes on, “The Altar Offerings, Sin, Burnt and Peace,” and a public address entitled, “The Jews are God’s True Witnesses.” Then at the end of March, Bro. Colin led our annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp on the topic, “The Pleasant Theme of Israel’s Psalms”. We thank him for his very uplifting efforts on our behalf.

John A. Clubb

[Note: these are the first two items of intelligence communicated by Bro. Robert Roberts.]

Halifax,— The brethren here have been distressed with it prevalence of ill health, and the death of four of their number ; yet, as far as they have been able, they have, during the year, occupied themselves—as was their wont—in setting forth the truth before the public,— Heckmondwike, Holmfirth, Huddersfield, and Dewsbury having been centres of action. They express their repugnance to the full declaration of our principles proposed, if that means the making of a creed, or test of union ; recommending rather an abstract of the things confessed by each Church (without individual crotchets or idiosyncrasies) as a ready basis of friendly correspondence one with another, Brother Roberts is now correspondent,.

Messenger of the Churches, 1860, p 120

Halifax – for a good many months past, the brethren in Halifax wore without any understood order system. They met together, broke bread, read the Scriptures, exhorted, etc, quite in a spontaneous manner; no one in particular being appointed to do any of these things. This state of things gave offence to one or two of the brethren, and they brought forward a proposition to have a president — to lead the meetings, and act as guardian and “ruler” of the brethren, both in and out of the meetings. This proposal was strenuously objected to; and, after some discussion at a meeting called for the purpose, a satisfactory compromise was effected. Three elders were appointed to conduct the meetings by turn, and to look after the interests of the brethren generally. This is now the order of things, and it works very well. The brethren have just adopted a plan of cottage preaching, which is expected to be more satisfactory to themselves and profitable to the bearers than street preaching. Weekly meetings (on Wednesday nights) are to be held in all the brethren’s houses by turn, each brother who is able taking his turn in speaking; the audience to consist of the neighbours and friends of the brethren, who are to be invited by them to come and hear the truth proclaimed.

Messenger of the Churches, 1860, p 139

Thoughts on the Way

Our Wilderness Journey

An interesting piece of ecclesial news appeared in *The Berean Christadelphian* for December 1940. It was submitted by the recording brother of the Houston Ecclesia, J.T. Smith. Here is an extract:

Since last writing we have had the pleasure of visits by Bro. and Sis. Joe Lloyd (of Midland, Texas). Sis. Ella Lloyd (mother of Bro. Joe Lloyd), of Celina, Texas, fell asleep in Christ, July 3, 1940. She had continued steadfast in the faith for which she earnestly contended for 51 years. She dearly loved “the Truth”. Her mind remained alert until she closed her eyes in sleep and rest, to know no more until she is awakened by angels and given the glad news that “*the Master hath come and calleth for thee.*” She has fought her fight and we feel sure that she will awaken with joy and gladness in her heart, knowing that there is laid up for her a crown of righteousness by him for whose return she so often and earnestly prayed.

We see such news often in *The Christadelphian Tidings*, as well as *The Christadelphian* from Birmingham. Given the inevitable end of “all flesh” in this age, such reports are to be expected. For the brotherhood as a whole, these announcements mark the final rest of each believer in Christ. For a moment perhaps, whether we were personally acquainted with each believer or not, we pause in our activities to offer our thoughtful respects to the departed one. Many years ago, the English poet John Donne wrote:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main... Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.

A death, and a new life

Bro. Smith also reported another event which happened four short days after the first:

Bobbie Joe Lloyd, son of Bro. and Sis. Joe Lloyd, embraced the one Hope while in Houston, July 7, 1940. He has long been a student of the Scriptures and an ardent and uncompromising believer in the “glad tidings” conveyed to fallen man through Scriptures, whereby we may, with God’s help and through His mercies, work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

“Bobbie Joe Lloyd”, the grandson of Sis. Ella Lloyd and only 13 years old, grew up to become Bro. Bob Lloyd, or — as his name appeared under each “Minute Meditation” in *The Tidings* — Robert J. Lloyd. His life in the One Faith spanned almost 76 years, and along with his grandmother’s life in Faith of 51 years, covered 127 years — all except for four days — between 1889 (the days of

covered wagons and Bro. Robert Roberts) and 2016 (the days of space travel and a worldwide Christadelphian brotherhood).

In 1940 my grandmother Sis. Jessie Hatcher was a member of the Houston Ecclesia when Sis. Ella Lloyd died and Bro. Bob Lloyd was “born” in baptism. Sis. Jessie’s daughter Ruth Hatcher also attended the Houston Ecclesia and eventually became Sis. Ruth Booker — and my mother. I still remember them both referring affectionately to little Bobbie Joe, and telling me what a diligent Bible student he was, especially for such a young man. Partly because of his example, I became a Bible student also.

As time passes in the brotherhood, we mark the arrival and departure of many faithful ones. The arrival of new believers, by baptism, is a time of rejoicing for believers, and angels as well (Luke 15:7,10). On the other hand, the departure of other believers, in death, is a time of sadness. Nevertheless, our sadness is mitigated by the knowledge that one more follower of our Lord Jesus Christ has finished the race and kept the faith, and that a “*crown of righteousness*” could await such a one in the future, when the righteous Judge returns (2Tim 4:7,8).

If we live long enough, we will all experience quite a number of both “arrivals” and “departures”. We might wish for more of the former and less of the latter, but that is not in our hands. We may plant the seed, but we cannot force it to grow in honest hearts, God alone gives the growth: as Paul said “*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase*” (1Cor 3:6). We may mourn the passing of beloved ones and wish they were still with us, but we cannot turn back the clock, and we cannot prolong the inevitable. Life and death alike are in God’s hands:

“*Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?*” (Matt 6:27).

Bro. Bob saw his grandmother laid to rest, and many other loved ones besides, over many years in the Faith. Now he has fallen asleep in Christ, on December 14, 2015, to be mourned by those he left behind.

We all see many loved ones finish their courses. We pause to remember, and to pay our loving respects. Then we continue our journey, through the vast wilderness which is our world, on our way to the Promised Land.

A great exodus

One of the great mass exoduses in human history occurred in the years between the end of the American Civil War and the last years of the 19th century. It was a span of only 30 years. The great western migration of hundreds of thousands of Americans started from states like New York and Ohio and Pennsylvania. These people were bound for Texas and Oklahoma, Colorado and New Mexico, California and Oregon.

But the movement of pioneers across the vast and sometimes brutal mountains and deserts of North America was far from easy, and not without its losses. Attacks by hostile Indians, starvation, accidents, and illnesses took their toll on these pilgrims. Many never reached their destinations. They died along the way, and they died in such numbers that chroniclers of that time and that trek have

noted an extraordinary fact: After the first few years, no markers or guides were needed to show the path westward. The main trails were clearly marked, not by signposts and direction indicators, but by graves. ‘Follow the line of graves westward, keep going, and you will reach your destination.’

We might say the same thing about our travels “on the way” to the Promised Land. Follow the markers set up for you; walk in the ways of those who have gone before. Follow the paths of the sheep who follow the Great Shepherd, and you will not go wrong. Take note of the direction they were traveling even as they breathed their last, and died “along the way”. Our memories of them, their lives and their words, strengthen and encourage us to continue. They remain, even in death, a “*great cloud of witnesses*” (*Heb 12:1*).

Keep their examples before your eyes, and press on, “farther along” that same trail. You are bound for the glorious land and the city which our LORD God has chosen for His people. If you survive to reach that place, then you may rejoice. But if you, like so many others, die short of your final destination, you may rest in peace, with the sure knowledge that you will be there too.

Bro. Bob’s last meditation

In his last “Minute Meditation”, which appeared in the January 2016 issue of *The Tidings*, Bro. Bob quoted 1Thess 4:16-18:

“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” (ESV).

Whether we are alive or dead when the Lord Jesus returns, we have this assurance: that he will come to claim his own. No matter when or where we start our individual journeys, no matter when or where those individual journeys come to an end, we will all — living and dead — stand in his glorious presence. Those elect ones who are alive in that day will be called together to meet him, while at the same time those who have died before his return will rise from their graves, also to stand in his presence.

We are all — living and dead — his special treasure, the sheep who hear his voice. We are all precious to him, as he is to us. And if we do not forget him, he will never forget us. He tells us:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me... I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:1,6).

George Booker

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

MAY, 2016

April 30-May 1 Pittsburgh, PA Annual Spring Gathering. Bro. Phil Prater (Richmond, VA) will have classes on "The Seven Abominations in Proverbs 6". Travelers' lunch will be provided at noon and classes will begin at 1:00pm. Contact Bro. David Pommer at david.pommer@verizon.net or (724)224-7363.

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

7-8 Meriden, CT Spring Study Weekend on, "The Testimony of Archaeology to the Truth of the Bible." Speaker Bro. Jonathan Bowen. Please contact Bro. Steve Harper for details at sharper.rn@me.com.

20-22 Southern California Mens' Weekend at Lake Cachuma, CA. Speaker, Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD): "Becoming a Man Like Jesus." Join us for an uplifting camping weekend in California's beautiful Central Coast. All meals are provided. For questions or travel or accommodation issues, contact Bro. Levi Gelineau leviandjessica@gmail.com.

21-22 Prince George, BC Annual Fraternal. Our speaker is Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA), and his topic is, "The Temple of Zerubbabel." Please contact keith.billington@telus.net to register.

JUNE, 2016

17-19 New York Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat, The Homewood Suites, Lancaster, PA. Speaker is Sis. Cadi Phillips (Moorestown, NJ). Her topic is, "The Importance of Words." For registration, please contact: Sis. Averil Ferguson at 718-877-6616, e-mail adferguson@gmail.com.

30-July 5 Calaveras Family Bible Camp Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Arnold, CA. Contact Bro. Brian McDonald at 626-335-3787 or bmcdonald@mcdonald-printing.com.

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, New Zealand), "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 The speakers are 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 Gospels" (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 are available on the Bible school website, www.swcbs.com.

16-24 Midwest Bible School held at Trine University, Angola, IN. The speakers and their subjects are: Bro. Jesse Adair (Canada), “Judas Iscariot”; Bro. Matt Norton (Australia), “The Tabernacle in the Wilderness”; and Bro. Tim Morgan (UK), “Arise and Build.” For registration information,, contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Dr., Novi, MI 48375, phone: 248-462-5740, e-mail: mike.live@gmail.com, or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com.

23-30 Christadelphian Bible Camp, Manitoulin Island. Theme: “... even so we also should walk in newness of life.” The speakers and topics will be Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD): “The Righteousness of Faith: Paul’s Letter to the Romans” and Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Sydney, Australia): “John the Baptist — The Lord’s Best Man”. More details on www.christadelphianbiblecamp.ca. For registration, contact Bro. Mike Keene at mikesharon.keene@gmail.com or phone 613-353-6599.

23-30 Eastern Bible School **New Location This Year** Franklin Pierce University, Rindge, NH; Theme: “Let Us Consider One Another to Provoke unto Love and Good Works.” Bro. Dennis Bevans (Baltimore, MD): “Jonah and Nahum: Christ’s First and Second Advent” (adults), and “Philippians: Christ Our Everything” (teens); Bro. Allen Laben (Baltimore, MD): “Peter: A Living Hope” (adults and teens); Bro. Jim Styles (Simi Hills, CA): “Family Life Lessons from Genesis” (adults), and “Ecclesiastes: Lasting Happiness Can Only Be Found with God” (teens). For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at 18 Sibley St., Auburn, MA 01501, or cindynevers@verizon.net.

24-30 Western Bible School at Menucha Conference Center in Corbett, OR. The speakers are, Bro. George Booker (Austin Leander, TX): “Freedom and Assurance of Glory”; Bro. Cameron Beeler: “Our Kingdom Lives”; Bro. Jeff Paggi *(Verdugo Hills, CA): “Second Principles of the Bible Guiding Us on the Way.” For more information and registration see the website: www.menchabibleschool.org, or contact Sis. Rachel Launchbury: rachel.launchbury@gmail.com, or 503-702-6138.

31- Aug 6 Idyllwild Bible School at the Idyllwild Pines camp in Idyllwild, CA. The speakers and topics for this year are: Bro. Wilfred Alleyne (Handsworth Birmingham, UK): “Learning from the Lord”; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto Church Street, ON): “Esther: Thou Art Come to the Kingdom for Such a Time as This”; and Bro. Simon O’Grady (Tawa Wellington, New Zealand): “Daniel Narratives.” Idyllwild Pines is a rustic camp in the San Bernardino National Forest in the mountains above Palm Springs. The camp is at 5,200 feet elevation, and is quite dry and dusty. There is a lot of walking required on the campus, with a few hills. The Bible School is considered fairly “casual” due to the camping nature of the school. To register, or for more information, go to www.californiabibleschool.org, or e-mail Bro. Jeff Gelineau at: jeffgelineau@gmail.com.

31-Aug 6 Rogue River Bible School Speakers: Bro. Carl Parry (Salisbury, Australia), “The Life of Noah”; Bro. David Wisniewski (Brant County, ON), “The Honor of Kings — Searching Out the Parables”; and Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI), “Forgiveness.” For registration information, contact Sis. Pat Posey at pat1posey@gmail.com.

AUGUST, 2016

22-27 Lakefield Bible School at Lakefield College School, located east of Toronto near Peterborough, ON, on a beautiful lakeside campus. Full program of fellowship, instruction, and recreation for all ages. For information, please contact Bro. Bruce

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

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and Sis. Barbara Abel br71abel@gmail.com, or call 519-925-5297. Website: www.lakefieldbibleschool.com.

27-28 Victoria, BC Fraternal Gathering will be held one week earlier this year. Bro. Roger Long will be our speaker. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen at victoria@csll.ca.

SEPTEMBER, 2016

24-25 Kouts, IN Fall Study Weekend at Woodland Park Community Center, 2100 Willowcreek Rd., beginning at 10:00 a.m. The speaker will be Bro. Bryan Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI). Theme: "Peter's Conversion." Please contact Bro. Joe Bennett at 219-762-2704, or jkb8275@comcast.net.

OCTOBER, 2016

1-2 Ontario Fall Gathering at Maple High School, Vaughan, ON. Perennial Theme: "For he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb 2: 11). Speaker: Bro. Bill Link (Baltimore, MD). Topic: "Portraits of the Lord". Contact Bro. Bruce Abel at br71abel@gmail.com or 519-925-5297.

8-10 Atlanta, GA. Fraternal gathering. Speaker is Bro. Nigel Small (Echo Lake, NJ). His theme is "Faith, Hope and Love". Registration deadline September 1, 2016. Contact Sis. Carolyn Carter 770-833-8915.

8-9 Vancouver, BC Fraternal Gathering. Speaker Bro. Marc Hunter (Saanich Peninsula, BC). Contact Sis. Pam Snobelen at pamela721@shaw.ca, or 604-881-4733 for a program.