

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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Editor: George Booker; Assistant Editor: Donald H. Styles

Editorial

Loving His Appearing

The Bible refers to two very different sorts of people:

(1) those who love Christ's appearing:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

... and

(2) those who love this present world:

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15).

It is a simple fact that every knowledgeable, responsible adult falls into one of these two categories. For each of us, it is an "either-or" situation: **either** we love Christ and eagerly look for his Second Coming, **or** we love this present evil world.

It is true that one's love for the world may be expressed in various ways: one may go in for the "fast life", while another may be generally sober-minded, hard-working,

and a “good citizen”. And there are a myriad of other variations on the theme “lover of this world” — but they all come down to the same thing in the end. It really does not matter by which of the many available paths a man becomes lost in the “wilderness” — the only thing that does matter is that he has missed the one path that leads to the Kingdom of God.

But the most deceptive of the ways, or “paths”, by which man demonstrates his love for this world is... the pseudo-religious path. To walk in this way, a man may speak highly of Christ and his coming. He may thus fool others (and he may even fool himself) into believing that he loves Christ’s appearing, when what he really loves is talking about it!

How can we tell if we fall into this special subcategory of “lovers of this world”? If we are indeed fooling ourselves, then the time to discover that unpleasant truth is now, while we can still confess our sin, and return to our first love.

The Bible can help us answer this question, by directing our attention to a similar class of people in earlier times. These were Jews who lived many years ago, even before the first coming of Jesus. Like many professing believers today, these Jews attached a great deal of importance to the coming of their Messiah. Their prophets had taught them to look forward to the Messiah’s coming, and this expectation had become a central feature of their religion.

Yet God instructed Amos to write:

“Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD!”

— Why?...

“For what end is it [i.e., will it be] for you? the day of the LORD is [i.e., will be] darkness, and not light” (Amos 5:18).

And Malachi wrote:

“The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?” (Mal. 3:1,2).

Unfolding events justified the stern warnings of the prophets. When God’s Son did appear in Israel, many Jews — including most of the really “religious” Jews — were still unprepared. The circumstances of the Lord’s coming were dramatically different from what they had expected. And the Messiah who appeared was radically different from the “Messiah” they had come to expect. And so they actually hated him and rejected him, bringing condemnation upon themselves.

Why were the people of Israel not prepared? What went wrong? Let Paul explain:

“For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him” (Acts 13:27).

“They knew him not!” They did not recognize the One for whom they and their forefathers had been looking for hundreds of years, despite the fact that they had read the Old Testament Scriptures about him “every Sabbath day”.

They would have read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 time after time, but they gained nothing from their reading. Because their minds were filled with their own ideas about the coming Deliverer, they were not open to receive the truths revealed in those Bible passages. They could not receive the teaching that their Savior would be despised and suffer — they read but they did not understand; and, ironically, they became the very people who despised him and caused him to suffer. And so they fulfilled these scriptures to their own confusion and destruction.

These “religious” Jews read their Bibles as a solemn duty, a ritual performed most regularly and carefully. Probably the mere physical exercise of reading the words made them feel good. But, sadly, it was all a deception and a snare. They did not read to gain instruction: they thought they knew all the answers already. And because they regarded themselves as a holy people, full of wisdom and knowledge, they were altogether unaware of how unreceptive they were. Those truths they did not like, the truths that would have prepared them to receive their Messiah when he appeared, were automatically rejected.

Do we know men like this? Is it just possible that we, today, are shutting our minds to unpleasant or difficult truths when we read our Bibles? We should face the possibility that our mental picture of the coming Christ, and our ideas about the events related to his appearing, may be shaped at least in part by human prejudice. And it is just possible that our acceptance of certain traditions, and our rejection of certain Bible teachings, may be as dangerous to our spiritual wellbeing as the similar prejudices of an earlier generation in Israel were to theirs.

How can we know if this is true of us? The only proper answer is this: Those who truly love Christ’s appearing (as distinct from those who love to talk about it, and those who love to have others think they love it) will always read their Bibles with open minds, and will always be willing to be taught further from its pages, especially as regards its prophecies of the Messiah’s Coming!

How amazing! Some of those who, in other settings, readily approve of the principle that the Bible must be the ultimate authority, seem to forget this very principle also applies to the Bible’s prophecies about the Last Days.

Past Bible students have sounded out similar warnings against a “comfortable”, “traditional” reading of the Bible:

“All writers and speakers must be unceremoniously tried by this [the Word of God]; for, God hath said, that ‘if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.’ It matters not who the sinner may be; pope, cardinal, archbishop, bishop, minister, or their admirers; or, even

*one of the saints of God...; nothing he may say, or write, must be received unless in strict conformity to this word; and of this the people must judge for themselves upon their own responsibility; and in the face of their eternal weal [wellbeing], or rejection from the Kingdom of God. To this Book [the Bible], then, we appeal for light — for information concerning the things which shall be hereafter” (John Thomas, **Elpis Israel**, 1847, p. 170).*

These words, written almost 160 years ago, are powerful reminders of what must be the measure of our prophetic understanding and the direction of our lives: for Christ is coming soon!

George Booker

Bro. John Bilello

We take this opportunity to thank Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, Michigan), who relinquishes his role as Chairman of the Tidings Publishing Committee as of January 1, 2007. Bro. John has played and continues to play a major role in the success of the Tidings. His contributions are numerous:

- He formed the 12-member Tidings Publishing Committee in 1993, and has been the Chairman of the Committee since its inception. As Bro. John intended, the Committee provides a firm foundation for the magazine. It advises and supports the editor, who had previously been solely responsible for the magazine.
- He wisely selected Committee members from around the continent and with diverse backgrounds so it would be representative of the Central Community in North America.
- He helped solidify the financial position of the Tidings and relieved the editor of any personal responsibility for the costs of the magazine.
- As Book Editor, Bro. John has led our efforts to expand into the publication of books. He wrote the first book we published, *Parables*, which was very well received, and which successfully launched our book business — selling out of its first two printings. He used this first book to set up distribution channels throughout the Christadelphian world, which are essential for any book publishing endeavor. In addition to that critical first book, we have published two other of Bro. John's books, *Miracles* and *The Bible and Science*, which have also been successful. He has also overseen our publication of *Legalism and Faith* by Bro. David Levin, *John's Creation: A Model for Understanding the Gospel of John* by Bro. John Pople, and *John Thomas: His Friends and His Faith* by Bro. Peter Hemingray.

- He and his efficient wife, Sis. Mary, have run our book order, book fulfillment, and collections operations. (Incidentally, they are looking for a volunteer to take over this labor of love.
- He has willingly donated his immense talents, by which the Central Community of North America has been richly blessed.
- He will continue as a member of the Committee and as Book Editor.

The Tidings Publishing Committee expresses its gratitude to Bro. John for his many years of faithful service and prays that he will enjoy his retirement from the Chairmanship.

Brother John,

[We] thank [our] God upon every remembrance of you... for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The Tidings Publishing Corporation: Brethren Joe Hill (Chairman), Peter A. Bilello, Steve Cheetham, Ken Curry, Clive Drepaull, Mark Giordano, Tony Isaacs, Ted Sleeper, Phil Snobelen, Ken Sommerville, and Jeff Wallace. George Booker (Editor), and Don Styles (Past Editor).



John & Mary Bilello, and Ellen & Don Styles

Exhortation

“Woe is me if I preach not the gospel”

Greatly concerned for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthian brethren and sisters, Paul makes some very forceful comments. A good example: “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16). Examining Paul’s thoughts in this chapter, we need to note the forcefulness of the word “woe” (Greek “ouai”). According to the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, this word is used as an interjection expressing pain, lament, and especially a threat of exclusion from salvation. It is used in 41 passages in the New Testament. In the Septuagint, it is found mainly in the prophetic writings. Overall, the word has quite an elastic meaning, ranging from indications of potential judgment, often linked to hypocrisy, to a more personal flavor of: ‘It is a misery to me.’ Hence, the range of meaning allows Paul to be speaking of possible judgments against himself if he fails to preach the gospel, continuing on to a personal feeling along the lines of: ‘How miserable I am if I don’t preach the gospel.’

A major issue throughout Paul’s correspondence to this ecclesia is the repeated assertion of his apostolic authority, against the background of antagonists seeking to undermine his standing and teachings: “If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do we not still more?” (1 Cor. 9:11,12). His apostleship allows him certain rights, including being cared for and remunerated by the ecclesia.

No choice

In the context of preaching, Paul declared that those who proclaim the Gospel should be at liberty to obtain a living by the Gospel (1 Cor. 9:14). Paul has ample warrant for this claim, given the Lord’s statement that “the laborer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7), and the Old Testament guide: “You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the corn” (Deut. 25:4). Both are cited in 1 Corinthians 9:9. However, with increasing emphasis, Paul states that not only has he refrained from using this rightful provision, but also that the fact could be looked upon as grounds for boasting.

Preaching is a very different issue: “For if I preach the Gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me” (1 Cor. 9:16). It is impossible for him to boast, even of his apostolic status, as he **must** preach the Gospel. Paul is saying that preaching is no credit to him, as he has no choice on it. (Equally for us, we cannot claim credit for preaching, because we have no option but to preach.) For Paul, remuneration for preaching the gospel was presumably out of the question, as it might appear to compromise his motives in the eyes of his antagonists.

Personal accountability

And so Paul states: “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.” This implies strong personal accountability if the gospel is not preached. Furthermore, to understand the breadth of his words, Paul would be ‘miserable’ if he failed to preach the gospel. Such was the apostle’s devotion to God’s ways.

Following this clear teaching is a rather difficult verse: “For if I do this willingly, I have a reward...” (1 Cor. 9:17). There seems to be two possibilities of understanding this statement: First, if he preaches of his own free will, then a reward will indeed follow. This would indicate that if Paul had voluntarily undertaken to preach he could legitimately have claimed remuneration from the ecclesia. To put it loosely, ‘Seeing that I’ve chosen to preach, I’ll get a reward for it.’

But the second, more appropriate, possibility makes it clear that preaching for him is not a voluntary option. Rather, he preaches not of his own will, but of his Father’s will. He must preach because he is entrusted with a commission to do so. Paul was called, and accordingly stands under constraint. What then is his reward if he does it under compulsion and by his vocation? “Just this: that in my preaching I may make the gospel free of charge, not making full use of my right in the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:18).

Satisfaction in doing God’s will

Paul is saying that, in this obligation to preach, he derives huge satisfaction from making the gospel available without charge to those otherwise in darkness. This is consistent with his comment that he would “endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ” (1 Cor. 9:12). So great was Paul’s will to preach, conforming to the divine commission, that it would be unthinkable for him to hinder the promulgation of God’s message of salvation.

The exhortation at this stage for us is obvious. One needs to preach whether one likes it or not — it’s a divine commission. Preaching is not an option; it’s an imperative. As Sis. Jane Roberts remarked: “Every Christadelphian is a missionary.” Furthermore, we gain immense satisfaction from preaching the gospel, realizing that we are God’s instruments in so doing, offering it to people without price.

Contact with the gospel

We could perhaps ask: Why is preaching so important? One could say: ‘Well, it doesn’t really matter, since God calls people anyway.’ Some have even argued that we should not engage in much preaching as it is presuming on God’s prerogative to call. But God in fact calls people through the instruments **He** has provided, that is, His servants.

There are basically two ways in which people come to the gospel. First, some (but generally only a relatively few) may come from their own reading of Scripture. On occasions, we meet people who have come to the essentials of the gospel from their own Scriptural reading and meditation. But, second, and in most cases, people

come to the gospel because of the instruction given them, ranging from young children at home and at Sunday School to interested friends coming from different backgrounds — work colleague, seminar participant, chance encounter, and so on.

Speaking out for the Lord

We are then expected to be the mouthpiece of the Lord in teaching the gospel: “But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news’” (Rom. 10:14,15).

Preaching, of course, can take many forms, with personal example a key ingredient. Some may have the ability to teach more effectively than others. But the need to open one’s mouth to witness for Him remains crucial; we must be forthcoming with our faith? “Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess” (1 Pet. 3:15).

Looking for the opportunity

Consider the experience of the Ethiopian eunuch: “Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless some one guides me?’... Then Philip opened his mouth and commencing with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus” (Acts 8:30,31,35).

When the opportunity arises, do we open our mouths, explaining the Scriptural message, placing no hindrance upon the extension of God’s word? Or do we remain silent? We remember the words of the Lord in another context which is still very pertinent: “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither enter yourselves, nor allow those who would enter to go in” (Matt. 23:13).

Watchmen’s responsibilities

The responsibilities of faithful watchmen are stated clearly in Ezekiel 3:17,18: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’, and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.” But happily, the converse applies, as he goes on to explain, with rich blessings for the faithful watchmen. Preaching is therefore an imperative in our service for the Lord. Not to preach, in all its different forms, is to hinder the gospel of grace.

The abundant signs we see around us in these last days witness to the imminent return of the Lord. Therefore, let us faithfully “preach the word, be instant in season

and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). As with Peter and John, “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Ron Hicks
(Washington, DC)

“God makes a land barren”

“[The LORD] turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there” (Psa. 107:33,34).

Well over 100 years ago, as he surveyed the wastelands of the Middle East, R.C. Trench wrote: “God makes [a land] barren, and ever less capable of nourishing its inhabitants; but He makes it so through the sloth, the indolence, the selfish shortsightedness, the quarrels among themselves of those that should have dressed and kept it. In the condition of a land may be found the echo, the reflection, the transcript of the moral and spiritual condition of those that should cultivate it: where one [the people] is waste, the other [the land] will be waste also. Under the desolating curse of Mohammedan domination the fairest portions of the earth have gone back from a garden to a wilderness: but only let that people for whom Palestine is yet destined return to it again, and return a righteous nation, and in a little while all the descriptions of its earlier fertility will be more than borne out by its later fertility, and it will easily sustain its millions again.”

So indeed, the Land of Israel has begun — as Isaiah promised — to blossom as the rose (Isa. 35:1). Lands left as swamps by the Arab peoples have been drained and planted. Other lands, barren deserts, have been irrigated and fertilized. In all this, we see the beginnings of the fulfillment of Isaiah’s words (and Trench’s as well). But even now, we know it is only the beginning: that same Land of Promise will blossom yet further, and “the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt” (Amos 9:13), when God’s true — that is, repentant and truly righteous — people will be planted, no more to be uprooted from their Land (v. 15)!

Exposition

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (1) Introduction

(Unless otherwise noted, Bible quotations are from the Revised Version.)

A necessary preliminary to the study of Paul's letter to the Ephesians is a survey of the circumstances in which the ecclesia in Ephesus was established. This in turn will give support to the conviction that the epistle was intended not only for the believers in Ephesus itself, but also for disciples in other towns in the province of Asia. The length of the apostle's sojourn in the city is his longest in any centre where his labors resulted in an ecclesia.

Understandably, the size of the city in which Paul and his associates preached the gospel bore a relationship to the length of the period spent there (see Acts 18:10). While Corinth was a large centre, Ephesus was greater, ranking third in the empire behind Rome and Alexandria. One estimate is that the city had approximately a third of a million inhabitants.¹ It had been Paul's ambition to carry the gospel to Ephesus in the course of the second missionary journey and doubtless to its hinterland, but he was prevented by divine guidance (see Acts 16:6). Even so, at the conclusion of his great work in Corinth, he called in at Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem (Acts 18:19,20).

There is a detail at this point worthy of our attention: though the sojourn was brief, the apostle preached in the synagogue and appears to have aroused interest, for he was asked to stay longer (v. 20). This apparently small detail may well possess special significance, as we hope to demonstrate. Encouraged by the initial response, Paul departed, promising that if it was God's will, he would be back (v. 21).

Another important piece of information is provided in the record of Apollos' ministry in Ephesus. This eloquent Alexandrian Jew, although his knowledge of the Lord's ministry was limited, nevertheless "powerfully confuted the Jews... shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:28).

These preliminary reflections appear to throw light upon the reasons for the early success of Paul's witness in Ephesus, for the synagogue provided a platform for three months (Acts 19:8). This presents a contrast with what occurred at Thessalonica: there, after only three Sabbaths, the synagogue door was closed to Paul and Silas, and the orthodox Jews, incensed by the success of Paul's preaching, organized such opposition to him that he and Silas were reluctantly obliged to leave the city (Acts 17:10). So resolved were the Jews of Thessalonica to frustrate Paul's work that Silas and he were pursued as far as Berea (v. 13).

When we return to consider Paul's witness at Ephesus, it must be evident that in so large a centre the Jews were much more numerous than those in Thessalonica. From the information Luke gives us, it is clear that an element among the orthodox Jews was prepared to give Paul an extended hearing. Presumably, some embraced the offer of eternal life in the Lord Jesus. But this development gave the Jews no joy and in Ephesus, as elsewhere, they organized fierce opposition to Paul. The apostle himself provides eloquent comments on what happened — in his two letters to the Corinthians, both written during his Ephesian ministry. In the first he speaks of fighting with beasts at Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32), which language, whether it be literal or metaphorical, speaks volumes. Then there is the brief but eloquent comment: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries" (1 Cor. 16:9). In like manner, in the second epistle, his language is expressive: his experiences have been such that he despaired of life itself, and his recovery is likened to resurrection (2 Cor. 1:8,9).

All this is confirmed by what he said to the Ephesian elders when he addressed them at Miletus, after he had concluded his work in the Aegean area and was on the way to Jerusalem. He reminded them how he had served the Lord with all lowliness of mind and that he had been subjected to "the plots of the Jews" (Acts 20:19). Towards the end of his discourse, he mentions that he had spent three years in Ephesus (v. 31). Paul may well be speaking here in round terms; even so it is an indication of the considerable time spent in the city.

If we bring together the scattered chronological clues, we find incidental confirmation of Paul's claim. First we take into account the three months spent in the synagogue (Acts 19:8). Jewish opposition constrained him to find a platform elsewhere and this he found in "the school of Tyrannus" (v. 9), where he spent two years (v. 10), but he may not have been able overnight to move from the synagogue to the new venue. Luke now informs us that, as the result of the apostle's witness and the outstanding miracles performed by him, the word of the Lord spread throughout the province of Asia. This is a detail to bear in mind when we come to the subject of the other ecclesias which may have been established at this time.

A remarkable incident concerns the seven sons of a so-called Jewish high priest, who with others had spuriously invoked the name of the Lord Jesus; these Jews suffered complete discomfiture (vs. 13-17). The episode became widely known, serving as it did to demonstrate the total contrast between a true follower of the Lord and the charlatans. In the process, the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified, this being in itself a witness to the unique greatness of the Lord. It is an indication also that Paul, like Peter, had performed the miracles in the name of the Lord Jesus (see Acts 3:6).

The response of some who practiced magical arts was dramatic for they burnt the books, worth a considerable sum, which contained the magical formulas.² Whatever obstacles were being encountered, the work was blessed and Luke

makes one of his “progress reports”: “So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

At this juncture Paul felt his work in Ephesus was drawing to a close and he expresses the intention of visiting Rome (v. 21; see also Rom. 15:25-28). He sends Timothy and Erastus ahead but remains in Ephesus “for a while” (Acts 19:22). This may be imprecise, but we need to add this period to what we have already learnt about the duration of Paul’s sojourn in Ephesus. After we have taken into account all the clues, we begin to find increasing support for Paul’s own figure of three years (see once more Acts 20:31). During the final indeterminate period, alarm increases among the local artisans who owe their living to the cult of Artemis. They have a leader in a certain Demetrius who organizes the opposition to the apostle.

What he said to his fellows has special interest for us in our assessment of what Paul had achieved during his time in Ephesus: “And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying they be no gods, which are made with hands” (v. 26). “Ye see and hear” are words which are surely highly significant. Doubtless the great temple had amongst its most frequent visitors worshippers from the surrounding area; they would bring stories of what was happening in their neighbourhood and thus testify to the widespread diffusion of the gospel.

All this leads to what seems a legitimate conclusion: ecclesias were being established throughout the hinterland. In connection with the first missionary journey, Luke records that while Paul and Barnabas were preaching at Antioch, the word of the Lord was spread throughout the region (see Acts 13:49). Inevitably this must have happened during Paul’s much longer sojourn in Ephesus. Later, there were at least seven churches in Ephesus itself and the surrounding country, for we know their names from Revelation 2 and 3. While we cannot afford to dogmatise and maintain that all seven were founded by Paul and his associates, yet we know from Colossians, written during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome but a few years after he left Ephesus, that the church at Laodicea was in existence, together with one at Hierapolis (see Col. 4:16). The letter to Colosse gives a possible indication how it came into existence: Epaphras is mentioned early (in Col. 1:7) and later Paul mentions approvingly his labour at two ecclesias, neighbours of Colosse: Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col. 4:12,13). Thus, at the time Paul wrote the Colossian letter there is firm evidence of the spread of the gospel to Colosse and its neighbourhood, nearly 100 miles in a straight line from Ephesus.

But where do all these considerations lead us, and what is their relevance to the Ephesian letter? Now it is a significant fact that important early manuscripts of the letter carried originally a blank in the opening salutation.³ This at least suggests the epistle might have been conveyed to other destinations. Tychicus was the bearer of the letter we know as the Ephesian letter (see Eph. 6:21). He was also the one who carried the letter to the Colossians (Col. 4:7,8) and the charming letter to Philemon.

Also from Colossians we learn they were to share the epistle they received with the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16) and the Colossians in their turn were to read “the epistle from Laodicea”. Surely only one sensible conclusion seems possible: the letter from Laodicea must have been intended for a number of ecclesias, and this has to be the one we identify as the epistle to the Ephesians.

When we accept this conclusion, we can appreciate why the two letters have so much in common. We shall discover as we study the epistle to the Ephesians how the great themes treated there appear also in the letter to Colosse.

But something will need to be said about the circumstances in which the three letters delivered by Tychicus came to be composed.

Tom Barling
(Teignmouth, England)

Footnotes:

1. See the article on Ephesus by A. Souter and J. Strahan, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, vol. 1, Edinburgh 1915.
2. See F.F. Bruce: “Many of them also gathered their magical papyri together and made a bonfire of them. A number of such magical scrolls have survived to our day; there are especially famous examples in the London, Paris and Leiden collections. The special connection of Ephesus with magic is reflected in the term ‘Ephesian letters’ for magical scrolls” (*The Book of the Acts*, Revised Edition, Grand Rapids, Michigan, p. 369).
3. J.B. Lightfoot makes some enlightening comments on the manuscript evidence: writing about the salutation “in Ephesus” he states: “In the Codex Sinaiticus {Aleph} [these words] were absent originally, but are supplied by a third hand. In the Codex Vaticanus they have no place in the text, but are supplied in the margin by a later corrector” (*Biblical Essays*, London 1893, p. 380). These two codices are assigned to the fourth century. Thus early, and very important, manuscript evidence supports the conclusion that the Ephesian letter was intended to be delivered to destinations apart from Ephesus itself.

* * * * *

General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him.

Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed. “General,” he said, “I guess you don’t know what he’s been saying about you.” “I know,” answered Lee. “But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!”

Reflections

Famous Last Words: (8) Abraham to Lot

Our last article considered Noah, whose famous last words were a prophecy concerning his sons. We were encouraged to forsake the ways of Ham, and dwell permanently in Shem's tent — a foreshadowing of the status we have in Christ — in whom fellowship with God is made possible.

Abraham and Lot must have developed a close relationship through all their experiences together. We know that Abraham loved and cared for his nephew. However, the only words that we have recorded of Abraham speaking to Lot are in Genesis 13:8: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee... for we be brethren." The problem was they had too much 'stuff', and the arguments between their managers brought strife between them!

As far as we know these were the last words of Abraham that Lot ever heard. Too bad he didn't take them more to heart! Did Lot remember the "brotherhood" he shared with Abraham? It wasn't long before he was calling the men of Sodom "brethren" (Gen. 19:7)!

Lot had "made peace" with the men of Sodom and their deeds. Even though his righteous soul was vexed by their behaviour, and he protested against their planned actions against the angels, Lot had become numb to the evil around him. He really should have returned to the tents of Abraham and dwelt in brotherly peace with him, at the expense of his worldly possessions if necessary!

What an exhortation for us today! How sad that the "things of this world" had brought strife between brethren. Was separation the only solution to this problem? It resulted in the ruin of one of the parties involved, as Lot found himself in "isolation", out of contact with the spiritual guidance of his "brother".

"Let there be no strife" echoes down to us today. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

How did Abraham settle the problem? He let Lot choose the path. Abraham suffered himself to be defrauded (1 Cor. 6:7). Unity and peace were more important to Abraham than getting his own way. Too bad Lot didn't choose to reduce his worldly possessions and stay with his uncle. What personal gain resulted from his choice? He went down to Sodom a very rich man. He left with the clothes on his back, and his two daughters — and nothing else (since his wife never really left the city, but partook of its punishment).

“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one Hope of your calling; one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:1-6).

Unity amongst brethren and sisters is the lesson from Abraham’s “Famous Last Words” to Lot.

(Next: Melchizedek)

*Chris Sales
(Shelburne, ON)*

Jonah and God’s Compassion

The prophecy of Jonah contains over 1,000 words. However there are very few that are truly words of prophecy, that is, words predicting the future: e.g., “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown” (Jon. 3:4). We must conclude, therefore, that the fate of Nineveh is not the primary focus of the Book of Jonah. Instead, its primary focus is the prophet Jonah and his struggle with the character of his God.

Jonah belied his feelings when, speaking to God, he said, “For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil” (Jon. 4:2). This attitude was manifest in ways that were contrasted in the life of Jesus.

Jonah “went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city... till he might see what would become of the city” (Jon. 4:5). In effect, he was waiting (and wishing for?) its destruction — as God had promised. But Jesus, on approaching Jerusalem, “when he was come near... beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41).

Jonah, in response to God’s words, “Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?” (Jon. 4:9), says, “I do well to be angry, even unto death.” This contrasts with Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, when he said, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death” (Matt. 26:38).

So the prophet who was “greater than Jonah” (Matt. 12:41) was moved with compassion for the city of Jerusalem, though he knew that compassion carried with it a great cost. That cost was his own life. His compassion drove him to lay down his life for sinners, whereas Jonah’s lack of compassion drove him to bitterness. Bitterness was in Jonah’s heart even though he was aware of God’s compassion.

Does our knowledge of God cause us to be selective in our preaching? Do our actions show that we feel there are some people to whom we should not preach? We may say that our meetings are open to all, but our hearts tell us what we feel about

the presence in our halls of some who do not meet our standards of dress, lifestyle, or cleanliness.

Are we like Jonah or Jesus?

Peter Forbes
(Glenfield, UK)



Principles from Proverbs: (4) “Simple” Proverbs

It is the function of the Bible not just to tell us what we don't know, and to inspire us to greater heights, but also to ***tell us what we do know*** — to knock on our doors, and if necessary batter them down, until we are forced to pay attention to what we might easily forget, or fail to give proper weight to!

How often do we need to read — and hear, and be reminded of — the simple, practical advice of the Book of Proverbs? The answer is obvious: as often as it takes! As often as it takes to keep the warnings of this simple, “dull”, down-to-earth book in the forefront of our minds. And then once again tomorrow, ***if*** we are in any danger whatsoever of forgetting. In reading, writing, thinking, and speaking about this Book, we must keep in mind: No ‘style points’ will be deducted for repetition!

And where may we find the means to remind ourselves, even again, of its exhortations, its admonitions, and its warnings? The answer: wherever we can! The Lord Jesus found the raw material for his parables in the daily affairs of ordinary life — the fields of the farmer and the shepherd, the household chores of the wife and mother, the marketplace of the buyer and the seller. So wherever we are and whatever we are doing, Solomon's proverbs echo in our ears. Our minds having been instructed by its sayings, once and again, then the little voice just behind our ear may whisper again: “Remember...”

***“Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evil men”
(Prov. 4:14).***

Paul in the New Testament says much the same thing: “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character’” (1 Cor. 15:33). The life of the wicked has far more power to corrupt the righteous than the life of the righteous has to correct the wicked. It is much easier for the healthy to become diseased by contact with the sick than for the sick to be restored by contact with the healthy.

One reason why the company of those who are worldly and indifferent to God will be a great problem is this: If the believer will not forget about his conscience while in their company, then he can expect to be scoffed at, and made fun of.

Another danger is this: In mixing with sinners, he is putting himself into a situation where — sometimes openly and sometimes very subtly — he will be tempted to abandon his principles.

Good men are not usually as concerned to bring their companions to the knowledge and practice of the Bible as bad men are to lead the good astray. Many a person, after having his heart changed with the things belonging to God, has been fatally ruined by mixing with those who viewed his faith with suspicion or contempt, and enjoyed trying to make him forget his God.

Setting a foot on this downward road of the wicked will be like the first venture upon the “slippery slope”; it may be impossible — who can tell? — ever to retrace one’s steps, once that crucial first step is taken.

It is fatal to think we can play around with sin because we think we have a built-in resistance. Our only safe course is complete avoidance. All the more reason, as one Christadelphian puts it, that “the solid warning to enter not into the way of evil men holds within it the [further] meaning, ‘...but if perchance you have entered, go no further.’” For it may yet be still possible — if only barely — to escape that fatally dangerous, downward-tending, slippery slope!

Why is sin so dangerous? Because it is deceitful! “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jer. 17:9). “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Heb. 3:13). “Sin” masquerades as innocent pleasure, or as the silliest little trifle of the passing moment, hardly worth notice at all. It may even seem to be praiseworthy action — “getting the most out of life”. The “devil” doesn’t have horns and hooves; he doesn’t have a long tail and a pitchfork. He wears a business suit; he’s charming, with a pleasant smile and an easy manner. He talks about “guaranteed future returns”, or finding satisfaction in the best entertainment center, or the most expensive car, or living in the very best neighborhood.

Or the “devil” — SHE! — assumes the guise of an attractive young woman who purrs, “So you’re married. So what? There can’t be any harm in one little drink, can there?”

For how else can the “devil”, or “sin”, hope to “deceive” mankind?

And so we should each ask ourselves the question: What — and where — is the *devil* that *I* should be on the guard against?

“The wealth of the wise is their crown, but the folly of fools yields folly”
(Prov. 14:24).

The first line here leaves unanswered the question: ‘But what ARE the riches of the wise? Literal wealth, or spiritual wealth?’

Some writers think that literal wealth is an ornament to those who use it well. They cite examples of wise men who used their riches well: Job, employing his goods to benefit others (Job 29:6-17), and David, assembling the materials for God’s Temple (1 Chr. 29:1-5; 2 Chr. 5:1).

On the other hand, others suggest that the wisdom of the wise, which IS their crown of glory, constitutes their “wealth”, regardless of material prosperity, or the lack thereof.

This last is, in my mind, the most meaningful. Consider, for example, “the price of wisdom is beyond rubies” (Job 28:18), and “Wisdom is more precious than rubies” (Prov. 3:15; 8:11).

But the real point for our purposes is the second half of the verse: *“The folly of fools yields folly!”*

As this line stands in the Hebrew, it is what some commentators call a “tautology” (i.e., a statement that is redundant, or needlessly repetitious). “Redundant” and “repetitious” it may be, but is it really “needlessly” so? That may be a matter of opinion. One of the strengths of Proverbs, so it seems, is its **repetition**: the Book tells us what we **need** to hear, even if — sometimes — it seems (needlessly?) repetitious!

So we ought to ask: do we all know, as we should, that a life of folly produces only folly in the end? And the answer, it seems to me, is: No! We do **not** understand perfectly such a simple truth. If we did, then the world — along with all of us who claim to “know the Truth” — would have long since given up every vestige of folly, and grasped wisdom with both hands, and embraced it with both arms! But this has not happened, and so the plainest cliché — “The folly of fools yields folly” — remains as one more witness, pointing out to us a warning, and by implication **the** “way”!

Some of us may think that a lifetime of folly may be redeemed, in the briefest moment, by one flash of “wisdom” at the end. And of course it might! But... where will that one flash of “wisdom” come from? And who will listen when it comes, if the mind has been drugged by folly all its days? And what presumption there is, in any of us, if we tell ourselves (or others) that “there is always a chance”, but do nothing to develop or promote that “chance” to turn from folly to wisdom, before it is too late!

In fact, we might say that this line emphasizes by its very repetition the barrenness of folly. Folly is its own reproach and its own “reward”. In other words, to paraphrase

Christ, thorns produce only thorns, and brambles produce only brambles (Matt. 7:16) — unless a good seed is planted and nourished!

In the context (of the first line), we might read this second line: “The folly of fools — *even when accompanied by riches* — is still only folly!”

One old Bible commentator tells us: “Folly is oftentimes made more manifest through the ill use [fools] make of their riches; spending them in the gratification of their sinful lusts; and making no use of them for their own improvement in knowledge, or for the good of their fellow creatures” (John Gill).

Decorate folly as you will, dress it up in rich fabrics and set it off with gaudy ornaments — it is still nothing but folly. And the wise and discerning see it for what it is, and more so for its being flaunted conspicuously, so as to attract witnesses.

In *Gone With the Wind*, a newly-rich Scarlett O’Hara — anxious to move into the highest circles of post-war Atlanta society — offers her old slave and nursemaid Mammy a fine new dress. The wise Mammy replies, “Miz Scarlett, you and me can give ourselves airs and get ourselves all slicked up like racehorses, but we are still just mules in horse harness and everybody knows it.”

Adam and Eve had their fig-leaves, Jezebel her special eye makeup, and Scarlett O’Hara her fancy dresses. What do we *hide behind* so as to conceal, even from ourselves, the “folly” of our ways?

“Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed” (Prov. 11:11).

Words may have a great power and influence, for good or for ill. The wicked, the selfish, and the fools have a cursed existence, and a cursed fate — which the Proverbs contrast with the blessed state of the righteous, the liberal, the kind, and the wise.

“Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted.” This expression may refer either (1) to the blessing God gives the upright (which will benefit society), or (2) to the blessing that the upright are to the city, and the community, where they live. The second, I think, fits the parallelism best: cp. Prov. 14:34: “Righteousness exalts [even] a [whole] nation.”

“But by the mouth of the wicked [the city] is destroyed.” What the wicked say has a disastrous effect on society, endangering, weakening, demoralizing, and perverting with malicious and slanderous words. Wicked leaders can bring destruction on a city by their evil counsel.

How might the mouth, or words, of the wicked destroy a city? There are various possibilities. When we think of how this chapter began (“The LORD abhors dishonest scales...”: Prov. 11:1), then it might be something like this:

The picture is of a city under siege. It is a city with a reputation for goodwill and progress because good people live there, and over a period of time the blessings of their way of life become benefits to all who live there.

But then the story gets around that visitors to the city have been cheated by tricky business people; within no time at all the place has a name for double-dealing. No community can afford to allow that sort of thing to happen because, without business, their standard of living is threatened. How quickly the community leaders respond to any threat of this kind because they know the life of the city is at risk.

On the other hand, the Bible is filled with the stories of good men whose presence blesses a city, or a nation:

- a. Joseph, first a slave and then finally a ruler in Egypt, saved many people from famine (Gen. 41:38-57).
- b. Daniel, carried into captivity to Babylon as a young man, set a wonderful example of faithfulness to his God for many, many years — and certainly influenced even some of the leaders of that wicked city.
- c. The righteous Hezekiah, assisted by the great prophet Isaiah, through faith and prayer, saved Jerusalem from destruction by the Assyrians.

In the classic movie *It's a Wonderful Life!* — still aired regularly during the holidays, 60 years after its initial release — there is an extended parable illustrating this proverb.

George Bailey is a young man with great ambitions: he's going to go to college, become an engineer, and then travel the world building great things — bridges, skyscrapers, ocean liners, whatever strikes his fancy; he's going to make his mark for all to see. He's going to shake the dust of his hometown — “this crummy little Bedford Falls,” he calls it — off his feet for good!

But fate intervenes: his father falls ill, and George must take his place in the family business (but “only for a little while!,” he tells himself). George's younger brother goes off to college in his stead; then the great war comes, and all affairs are rearranged; George's father dies; and George falls in love and gets married.

Finally, George wakes up one day, realizing that he is not the young man he once was; that he is not going to college; that he has been left behind, in the little “nowhere” place of Bedford Falls. What was a stop-gap — and a necessity — for a few years has become in fact his life's work: he has become his father, the owner of Bailey Savings and Loan — a little company that will never provide him and his family more than a modest living. His contemporaries — who never had half the energy, the brains, or the potential he had — are getting on wonderfully, in bigger and “better” places. And he is stuck!

At this point a terrible financial crisis arises, entirely by “accident,” to threaten even the little that George Bailey has built up for himself and his family. And poor George stands on the town bridge, staring down into the swirling waters of the river, and

contemplates ending his “meaningless” life. He wishes, he says, that he had never been born — for he has not made a bit of difference to the world. But a kindly angel, Clarence, helps George see what a difference he *has* made — by first of all letting him see what Bedford Falls, and those he loves, would have become had he never existed!

And so we learn, in a “flashback” of sorts, what Bedford Falls (renamed “Pottersville” in George’s nightmare) would have become without him. The pleasant, friendly, little “postcard” town would have been filled with bars, nightclubs, gambling dens, and worse.

Why? George’s savings and loan helped the working-class folks own their own modest homes, and find dignity and hope for themselves and their families. It brought new businesses to the town; it helped to create jobs; it carried the unemployed through their temporary losses until they could get back on their feet again.

All this, it seems, had kept Bedford Falls out of the greedy clutches of Mr. Potter — for young (and then not-so-young) George Bailey had been the only man to stand up to the monopolistic, money-grubbing, hateful threat of this old miser.

And in the final outpouring of love and goodwill that crowns the movie, George Bailey finds that his friends are all there to help him and his family. “Where would we have been without you, Mr. Bailey?” He comes to see that a life made up of *little* kindnesses and charities and good deeds has an effect far beyond what he could ever have imagined, and finally he sees that — in the words of the angel Clarence — “No man is ever really poor who has friends!”

Thus, “through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted.”

How can we ever be “poor”? How can we ever feel sorry for ourselves? We must remember: we have the greatest of friends, in Jesus Christ. “Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:13,14). And even if we do not do *all* that Jesus has commanded (for we know we will fall short), yet *if* we have tried faithfully, then he is still our friend: His life, laid down for us, secures the forgiveness of our sins.

And we have many other friends around us, friends who share our hope, in him and in his God. Friends whom we can help and encourage, and friends who can help and encourage us, toward the Kingdom of God.

We may never do the “great” things that we imagine; but as we follow Christ, we can always do the small things that come our way.

Quietly, and sensibly, encouraged by Proverbs and the other simple and “dull” commands and promises of God’s book, we do what we can with what we have, where we are.

It is enough.

George Booker

Signs of the Times

Global Warming, Commercialism, and Armageddon

Some scientists tell us that global warming is the greatest environmental crisis of our time. By now, we are all aware of the problem and its unpleasant effects. Because the atmosphere and the oceans are getting warmer, weather patterns around the world are changing, leading to bigger and more frequent storms, floods, and droughts.

One of the more frightening signs of global warming is the melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers. The eventual melting of the glaciers and ice in Antarctica or Greenland is predicted to cause a rise in sea levels of 20 feet, inundating much of Florida, low-lying Europe, and several Asian countries. Other consequences of melting glaciers include the drying up of rivers and water supplies for people who depend on them. The Himalayan glaciers, in particular, provide half the drinking water for 40 percent of the world's population, who are even now facing severe water shortages.

Global warming is caused by an increase in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Burning of fossil fuels such as oil and coal is the biggest contributor to the greenhouse effect. An explosion in the world's population and the unprecedented technological revolution of the last 50 years compound the problem.

As the atmosphere thickens from rising carbon dioxide levels, the sun's light rays, reflecting off the earth in the form of infrared rays, become trapped and unable to escape back out to space. The trapped radiation raises the temperature of the atmosphere and the oceans.

All over the world, entire ecosystems (including animal, bird, marine and plant species) are faced with extinction, as they fail to adjust to warmer conditions, loss of habitat and changing cycles in the seasons. Biologists now use terms like "mass extinction crisis" to describe the accelerating loss of species. Algae blooms and red tides in the warmer oceans are suffocating marine life and creating dead zones. Coral reefs, which are important to many ocean species, are dying due to coral bleaching, the result of carbon dioxide absorbed into the sea. Deserts are expanding because of higher air temperatures and loss of water from the soil by evaporation. Mosquitoes and other germ-carrying life forms that used to exist only at lower elevations are now thriving at higher elevations, broadening the areas for diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and E. coli.

Scientists are able to measure historic atmospheric carbon dioxide levels by coring through glaciers and extracting samples of centuries-old ice, which contain encapsulated air bubbles. Carbon dioxide levels prior to the industrial revolution were relatively constant, at about 280 parts per million [ppm]. Since the 1950s, carbon

dioxide (CO₂) levels have been rising steadily and are now at about 380 ppm. By 2050, projected carbon dioxide levels are expected to reach over 600 ppm.

An inconvenient truth

Former U.S. Vice President Al Gore has convincingly portrayed the global warming crisis in a recent documentary film (and also in an illustrated book), entitled *An Inconvenient Truth*. Based on the evidence of environmental damage he has accumulated, and projected CO₂ levels, Mr. Gore gives our planet until about 2050 before its basic infrastructure is destroyed. His message is not universally well received, however. Major nations and industries remain skeptical about the magnitude of the problem, or are unwilling to make substantial changes. The United States is the largest contributor to global warming, but has refused to sign the Kyoto Treaty, an international, largely symbolic agreement to lower atmospheric CO₂ levels. The reason? Some feel the scientific data is flawed, or at least incomplete at this time. Moreover, others suspect that signing the treaty will lead to a reduction in the United States' standard of living.

Man's selfishness the heart of the problem

At heart, the global warming crisis is the product of man's selfishness, at all levels of society. We are all part of the problem really, since we drive automobiles that emit carbon dioxide and live in homes that require cutting down trees (trees absorb carbon dioxide). As Al Gore puts it, to reverse greenhouse gas emissions and prevent more damage to the environment would be — at the very least — an “inconvenience”, since we would have to change the way we live. Furthermore, industries would have to spend millions, if not billions, of dollars adapting to restrictive, environmental standards.

And yet, Mr. Gore believes we can do it. Despite his own grim forecasts, he is optimistic that the world can change direction and overcome the crisis. Of course, since Mr. Gore is [presumably] not a believer in the coming Kingdom of God on earth, this is the only position he can take. Without a believer's hope in that kingdom, he and others have no choice but to put their trust in themselves.

But we know that trust is misplaced, since “the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

The world is unlikely to solve the global warming problem soon, without divine intervention, because it doesn't have the collective will to do so. In fact, by ignoring the clear signs of impending disaster, the world is demonstrating a willingness to sacrifice the lives of its children for its immediate self-interest.

Jesus will resolve the problem

The global warming crisis is another sign of the times that presage the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fortunately, we know that Jesus will return before the earth is destroyed, and he will resolve the problem. He will restore this beautiful planet, in which God has placed His glory, to its former pristine condition. It is unthinkable

that Jesus would allow mankind to continue depleting the earth's limited resources and destroying the environment under his reign. As a result, there seems little future for fossil fuels and other harmful energy sources in the Kingdom. It is much more likely that Jesus will use the natural elements — sun, wind, and water — to fuel the world's economy, and that mankind will return to a simpler society.

Armageddon prompted by threat to commercialism

But we know the nations aren't going to be happy when Christ returns, because their cherished commercial enterprise system and wealth will be threatened, and ultimately destroyed, as part of Christ's restoration of the earth.

“And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth” (Rev. 11:18).

The nations “which destroy the earth” are the ungodly nations that are physically destroying the earth and morally corrupting its people.

The Beast that is destroying the earth

In the Apocalypse, the nations at war with Jesus and the saints at Armageddon are described as being ruled by a powerful, evil beast (Rev. 17:12-14). The multi-headed beast is a figure of the apostasy and false religions, including commercialism. The growth of commercialism parallels the rise in power of the apostate beast and other false religions, which are all enemies of God.

[Editor: This article points to a commercial “beast”. This need not imply there are no other Last Days “beasts” except Mammon or commercialism — but rather that all the “beasts” of the earth (representative of those nations and leaders that know not God: consider the implications of Psa. 49:12,20) will have materialistic and commercial aspects. Consider, as an example, the commercial emphasis in Revelation 18:9-17.]

Mankind has been assaulting the earth and the environment for commercial gain since Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden (the first true ecosystem) and the establishment of cities, nations and empires. Ancient empires such as Egypt and Babylon became rich from exploiting the earth, but also introduced environmental problems, such as deforestation and soil erosion, and pollution of rivers from human and mining waste. As energy and mineral resources were depleted in the areas under their control, empires were forced to venture further afield to find new sources of wealth.

The Roman Empire raised commercial exploitation of the earth to new levels. Rome, Inc. was expert in extracting riches from the furthest corners of its empire. It did so ruthlessly and efficiently, for the benefit of the emperor and its citizens, but at great cost to the environment and the lives of the people it conquered. This tradition was later continued by the European nations in the Middle Ages, through their colonializing of the western hemisphere, and their plunder of gold, minerals and other raw wealth from the New World.

The western nations of today have followed in the footsteps of their Roman and European ancestors. Modern commercialism appears civilized but is really an evil beast. Commercialism produces goods that are desired by many and that help people become rich, but that also require vast quantities of non-renewable energy resources (oil, coal and gas) to produce. Commercialism is a license to plunder and destroy the earth in its self-centered and relentless pursuit of wealth.

The commercial threat to the Truth and the saints

Commercialism is an assault not only on the earth, but also on the Truth and godliness, by the corrupting power of money and materialism. The citizens of the western, capitalist nations are increasingly beguiled into worshipping the commercial “beast”, through the pursuit and accumulation of wealth. They believe that the global economy will bring them freedom and security, and luxuries and material pleasures — and that all this will bring them happiness and spiritual fulfillment.

The saints who live under commercialism also find their faith assaulted by the “beast”. Jesus said, “Ye cannot serve (both) God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24) — but, increasingly, western believers find themselves trying to do just that. Because money and materialism have become ends in themselves, and human success is measured strictly in terms of the bottom line, godly values have become secondary or irrelevant. The apostle Paul said, “The love of money is the root of all [kinds of] evil. . . causing some to err from the faith” (1 Tim. 6:10). The challenge for today’s western saints is to remain strongly grounded in the faith, and to resist the pressure to worship the commercial “beast”.

The Beast destroyed at Armageddon

Fortunately, we know that when the beast and the angry nations of the world attack Israel at Armageddon, they will be met by Jesus and the immortal saints, and will be destroyed.

“And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:19,20).

Only then, it seems, will the earth be able to take a deep breath and begin the process of environmental and spiritual recovery.

“Come out of her, my people”

Al Gore says we all need to do our bit to overcome the global warming crisis, by consuming less and recycling more. And no doubt, as good citizens of the earth, we should heed that admonition. In Revelation we are exhorted to “come out of her (Babylon, the Harlot) . . . that ye be not partakers of her sins” (Rev. 18:4). This means not only resisting the allure of riches and materialism, but respecting the earth and its limited resources.

In the Kingdom age, the nations will have to change, not just in the way they treat the earth and the environment, but in every aspect of their lives, especially their spiritual lives. However, the prospect of a rejuvenated, clean, unpolluted earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness", will surely be worth the inconvenience of those changes.

*Martin Owen
(San Diego County, CA)*

Lake Victoria and the Nile River

"At 27,000 square miles, the size of Ireland, Lake Victoria is the greatest of Africa's Great Lakes -- the biggest freshwater body after Lake Superior. And it has dropped fast, at least six feet in the past three years, and by as much as a half-inch a day this year before November rains stabilized things.

"The outflow through two hydroelectric dams at Jinja [on the shores of Lake Victoria] is part of the problem... half the problem, say environmentalists. But much of what is happening to Victoria and other lakes across the heart of Africa is attributable to years of drought and rising temperatures, conditions that starve the lakes of inflowing water and evaporate more of the water they have.

"In a yet unpublished report obtained by The Associated Press, an international consulting firm advises the Ugandan government that supercomputer models of global-warming scenarios for Lake Victoria 'raise alarming concerns' about its future and that of the Nile River, which begins its 4,100-mile northward journey here at Jinja.

"The report, by U.S.-based Water Resources and Energy Management International, says rising temperatures may evaporate up to half the lake's normal inflow from rainfall and rivers, with 'severe consequences for the lake and its ability to meet the region's water resources needs.'

"A further dramatic drop in Victoria's water levels might even turn off this spigot for the Nile, a lifeline for more than 100 million Egyptians, Sudanese and others.

" 'People talk about the snows of Kilimanjaro [discussed in some detail in Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*],' said Aris P. Georgakakos, the study's chief author, speaking of that African mountain's melting glaciers. 'We have something much bigger to worry about, and that's Lake Victoria.'

(From a report by Charles J. Hanley, AP, December 9, 2006).

Letters

Types of the Father

"It is quite common for men to typify Jesus Christ, but not nearly so common for men to typify the Heavenly Father. What other instances of this can you find in the Bible? We'd be pleased to hear about them" (G.B., Nov., page 469).

Dear Bro. George,

(1) One "type" of the Heavenly Father is Solomon, who writes, "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching; for they are a fair garland for your head, and pendants for your neck. My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent" (Prov. 1: 8-10, RSV). This fatherly advice was surely intended primarily for Jesus.

Throughout the early chapters of Proverbs, the same pattern is apparent: "My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you. Let not loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man" (Prov. 3:1-4). How sadly ironic that the writer who thus portrays the yearnings of the Father eventually rejects the advice conveyed to him both by God and by his own natural father.

(2) Hosea's experience provides a poignant counterpoint to Ezekiel's. The latter felt the anguish of losing one who was faithful and beloved [cf. Ezek. 24:16]; the former was required to restore to himself one who had been habitually unfaithful. "Go again, love a woman who is beloved of a paramour and is an adulteress; even as the LORD loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods" (Hos. 3:1). We have each been unfaithful to the Father... bringing pain to His heart. But still He is willing to restore us to Himself.

Philip Jones

*I'd suggest one minor caveat to the first example: there may be good reasons to suppose that much if not all of the "fatherly advice" in the Proverbs was initially **David's** advice to his son Solomon rather than **Solomon's** advice to his son Rehoboam. (Also, the "man after God's own heart" ought surely to make a better "type of the Father" than would Solomon!)*

This would of course mean that the "father" who gave the advice (David) did not so much reject that same advice, as that the "son" who received the advice (Solomon) rejected it.

But who composed the fatherly advice in the first place is something of which we cannot be certain.

George

Conscientious Objection website

The website mentioned in the last issue — www.christadelphianco.org — has been closed down, unfortunately. (The server has been hit twice by hackers in the past year and wiped out.) Much of the same information that had been posted there is available from the Christadelphian National Service Committee, through Bro. Andrew DeLorenzo (andymart@vermontel.net), or — as mentioned earlier — Bro. Jim Dillingham (bible888@aol.com). Other materials on conscientious objection in general are also available from the Detroit Christadelphian Book Supply (www.christadelphianbooks.com) and Thousand Oaks Christadelphian Library (www.bigbrand.com/library).

The best books?

A brother writes: “What are the best, most profitable Christadelphian books you have ever read? And why?”

Of course, you can’t go wrong with **John Thomas’ *Elpis Israel***, “The Hope of Israel”. Written in 1848, it is well worth the time, on historical grounds alone, for it marks the beginning of the modern “Christadelphian” movement.

***The Protesters and Brethren in Christ* (Alan Eyre)**: The primary reason to read these two books is to marvel at the spiritual strength of the pioneers of our faith (going back much earlier than the 19th century!), and to be motivated, by their examples, to greater efforts in these days of laziness and indifference.

As a young man, the most revolutionary, eye-opening thing I ever read was **Harry Whittaker’s *Exploring the Bible*** (and of course, its sequel, ***Enjoying the Bible***). They changed my life. I still go back and skim through them every several years. It is probably safe to say these two books have helped more readers to become true Bible students than any other writings.

For Bible overview, background, and apologetics, **Alan Hayward’s *God’s Truth*** is a must read.

Almost anything by **Islip Collyer** is worthy of attention. He was the most reasonable, calmest, gentlest, and kindest of writers — but with a profound grasp of the Bible.

Read any of the many exhortations by “Rene” Growcott. You’ll have to find most of these on the internet — just search for “**G.V. Growcott**” and you’ll find them in short order (but be careful of some of the other things you might find along the way). GVG was a polite, courteous, and pleasant man, as well as a dedicated Bible student, but — as a writer — he was a throwback to the sternest and most uncompromising of the old Puritans. So stern, in fact (in print, at least), that his messages are a little frightening. I always like to read a bit of Islip Collyer alongside GVG: they balance one another off quite nicely.

Wrested Scriptures, by **Ron Abel**, is an organized, in-depth analysis of Bible verses regularly misapplied by various denominations to justify their own special false doctrines. It is very useful in preaching work.

For deep insights, and a feeling that God is still working today, read **Robert Roberts' *Ways of Providence*** (Bible-based exhortation of the highest order).

For light reading, try **Len Richardson's *Sixty Years a Christadelphian***, subtitled ***A Worm's Eye View of our Community***.

But for the very best example of Bible study and exposition, you can scarcely do better than **HAW's *Studies in the Gospels***.

“And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of...” — so many other writers. As a community, we are richly blessed: not just in the fundamental doctrines passed along to us, but in the fine brothers and sisters who have labored with pen (and typewriter and computer!) to “open” God’s Holy Book for us.

We would welcome other answers from our readers to the question: “*What are the best, most profitable Christadelphian books you have read? And why?*”

George

A Christadelphian Sampler

John Thomas

“Search the scriptures with the teachableness of a little child, and thy labour will not be in vain. Cast away to the owls and to the bats the traditions of men, and the prejudices indoctrinated into thy mind by their means; make a whole burnt offering of their creeds, confessions, catechisms and articles of religion; and, after the example of the Ephesian disciples, hand over your books of curious theological arts, and burn them before all. These mountains of rubbish have served the purpose of a dark and barbarous age; the Word, the Word of the Living God alone, can meet the necessities of the times” (*Elpis Israel*, pp. 5,6).

“Where is the man among ‘philosophers’ who will stultify, or idiotize himself by saying that the Creator permitted chance to elaborate the terrestrial system? The thing is absurd. The fool says in his heart it is not God. Why does he say so? Because he would make the cause of all things, a mere physical disposition in matter, destitute of all intellectual and moral attributes, in order that he may get rid of all responsibility to such a Being. He hates truth, righteousness, and holiness, and therefore he vainly strives to persuade himself that there is no God of a truthful, righteous, and holy character” (*Elpis Israel*, p. 169).

“Beloved brethren, human nature is always tending to extremes and transcending what is written. As the saying is, it will strain at gnats and swallow camels by the herd. It set up the Inquisition and is incessantly prying into matters beyond its

jurisdiction. It is very fond of playing the judge and of executing its own decrees. It has a zeal but not according to knowledge, and therefore its zeal is intemperate and not the zeal of wisdom or knowledge rightly used. It professes great zeal for the purity of the Church, and would purge out everything that offends its sensitive imagination. But is it not a good thing to have a church without tares, black sheep, or spotted heifer? Yea, verily, it is an excellent thing. But then it is a thing the Holy Spirit has never yet developed, and cannot be developed by any human judiciary in the administration of spiritual affairs. There are certain things that must be left to the Lord's own adjudication when he comes" (*The Ambassador*, 1866, pp. 91,92; reprinted under "Dr. Thomas and Divisions", *The Christadelphian*, Vol. 67, No. 788 — Feb. 1930 — pp. 52,53).

Alan Eyre

"On the evening of this fateful winter Saturday [in 1525], about 20 men gathered in the home of Felix Manz in Zurich. They walked over the situation, and their own needs before God. Let a contemporary account speak of what followed: 'As they were together, anxiety came on them and pressed upon their hearts. So they began to bend their knees before Almighty God in heaven... they prayed that He would grant them to do His divine will, and that He would reveal His mercy to them. For flesh and blood and human frowardness did not drive them, since they well knew what they would have to bear and suffer on account of it... And so they together dedicated themselves in the high fear of God to the Name of the Lord. Each confirmed the other in the service of the gospel and began to teach and hold the faith.'

"They linked themselves into a brotherhood of faith: Bruder in Christo, Brethren in Christ. It was sealed by a solemn but intimate 'breaking of bread', either the same evening or the next day, Sunday.

"To appreciate the spiritual power generated in that hour it is well to pause and consider what manner of men these were who so determined that they would obey God rather than men. Most of them were in the prime of life. Cajokob, Manz, Eberli, Hutzer, and Brotli were all to be burned, drowned, or beheaded within five years of this Zurich meeting, in places hundreds of miles apart. Grebel was to survive little more than eighteen months. They fully realised the peril of the step they took" (*The Protestors*, pp. 28-30).

"'You are the salt of the earth.' Jesus of Nazareth invested the tiny band that he called apart to testify to him and all he stood for with a staggering responsibility. Into all the world they were to go. Not with the hope of converting the world, but with the aim of creating and forming a redemptive society that would be as the savour of salt in a world of corruption. In parable, metaphor and allegory, the Gospels illuminate the Master's teaching as embodying the one element of permanence and true selfhood in a world of doubt, changeableness and transience. To build on it was to build on rock; by it one entered the light and joy of the bridal festivities

while outside was the darkness; to bear witness to it was to be bearing lamps which shone with divine illumination; it was enduring bread and living water. In the wild darkness of the stormy night human guidance was in vain, and all their rowing brought no aid to a boat sinking with water. They were unable to discern any ethical landmarks; in all their doubts and fears they were in jeopardy. It was the voice of the Lord which stilled their storm.

“The world has had — so it is said — an age of gold, an age of faith, an age of reason. Now perhaps we are in the age of uncertainty; which is strange since we know more about things than ever before. Yet we do not know what to give in exchange for our souls. ‘For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits himself?’ That is true enough now, but in the day of reckoning if our self has been compromised and sacrificed to the Moloch of expediency, what will there be left to perpetuate?

“‘You are the salt of the earth.’ Many of the characters in this book, most of them virtually unknown, worked and struggled to season their generation with the savour of sincerity, charity and faith, and they are their own commendation. Many of them wrote, not with the cool pen of the academic theologian, but with the passionate intensity of tested conviction and a love that overflowed from a source which they felt was infinitely more precious than anything that this world affords. There is much we can learn from them” (*The Protestors*, pp. 213,214).

Harry Whittaker

“Every time you learn some new thing — a piece of out-of-the-way information which throws light on an obscure passage of Scripture, a neat explanation of a long-standing difficulty, the name of a book which will supply useful knowledge on a particular subject, a simple association of two Bible passages which illuminate each other — whenever you encounter anything which might conceivably be of value one day, *make a note of it* somewhere. Of course, you have a blotting-paper memory and can carry these details easily, so the note is not necessary. But please accept an emphatic assurance that one day your memory will not be as good as it is now, so it would be well to start the note-taking habit right away” (*Exploring the Bible*, p. 10).

“And so the search for the more exact meaning of Bible phraseology goes on. It is those who soak themselves in the language of Scripture and who pore over its words, trying in a sympathetic, imaginative fashion to think themselves into the minds of the men who wrote — it is they who learn the more precise, inner meaning of what is written. But to this attitude of mind must be added a willingness to persevere in the comparing of Scripture, and to spend long hours with Bible and concordance side by side” (*Enjoying the Bible*, p. 87).

“Hebrew is essentially a picture language. It has astonishingly few abstract terms. Presumably the language grew up this way because the genius of the people naturally expressed itself in illustrations and pictures taken from life and the world they lived in. Consequently even the most matter-of-fact narrative in the Old Testament

is liable to be unselfconsciously helped along with some vivid metaphor, as when Jacob said to Laban: ‘The Lord hath blessed thee since my coming’ (Gen. 30:30). Here the phrase Jacob used is literally ‘at my foot’, giving the picture of prosperity springing up wherever the foot of Jacob trod in the service of his father-in-law. When Joseph’s brethren were scared at finding themselves given special treatment by the unrecognised chief minister of Egypt, they explained the experience thus: ‘We are brought in that he may seek occasion against us’ (Gen. 43:18). But again, literally, the expression is: ‘that he may roll himself upon us’ — and immediately the picture is before the mind of an imperious tyrant crushing defenceless victims beneath his chariot wheels. In countless places in the Hebrew Scriptures this literary phenomenon is observable — and it should always be observed. All the more is this true in the poetic books. There the wealth of imagery has such a variety and splendour as to make these ancient writings a wonderful inheritance for any who appreciate good language put to good use — this, quite apart from the inspiration which is undoubtedly behind it all” (*Enjoying the Bible*, pp. 36,37).

Alan Hayward

“In every walk of life people learn to sense the difference between true and false. Old hands in the teaching profession can glance down an examination room, and pick out the one boy who is trying to crib [cheat]. The customs officer gradually learns to spot which suitcases are worth opening. The experienced magistrate can nearly always tell when a witness is lying. In every walk of life things either ring true, or they ring false.

“But before you can detect the ring of truth with any certainty you need experience. It is therefore significant that *those who know the Bible best trust it the most*.

“A Bible lover once told an anecdote about a pompous colonel at a dinner table. ‘In my opinion,’ he declared, ‘the Koran is vastly superior to the Bible.’

“‘Excuse me, Colonel,’ said a clergyman. ‘Do you mind if I ask you two questions? Have you ever read the Bible from beginning to end?’

“The colonel admitted that he had not, and waited uneasily for the second question.

“‘Have you ever even seen a copy of the Koran?’

“When the colonel again answered that he hadn’t, the clergyman asked him what he thought of himself. ‘You publicly declare that a book you have never seen is vastly superior to a book that you have never read right through!’

“That story rings true. I have met dozens and dozens of people like the colonel, who condemn the Bible vigorously but have never read it. On the other hand I know people whose whole attitude to the Bible changed entirely when once they started to read it. As they read it, they could see that here was a book that rang true” (*God’s Truth*, pp. 69,70).

Islip Collyer

“‘Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up’ (1 Cor. 8:1). [Paul] was not condemning knowledge, but simply stating a truth. Knowledge of the right kind is excellent, but even that may tend to inflate the individual who possesses it. Men may be puffed up even by their knowledge of the Scriptures, especially if their reading has been ill-balanced. Much charity is needed to guard against this evil and to make knowledge lead to edification. There are people who will say that it is only the dangerous ‘little knowledge’ that puffs men up, while those who have studied deeply are truly humble and never boast. This thought has been stated often, but it is not true. Indeed it would be difficult to define the words of such a saying. All the knowledge of mankind is only little. The most ignorant and the most cultured are only separated by a few degrees. It is quite true that intelligent people perceive the ugliness and folly of blatant boasting and so if they boast they do it more skilfully. Or it is possible for a man to feel himself so superior to the common run of humanity that he finds no pleasure in the admiration of the multitude. His detachment is a form of pride, and he may fall into the worst of errors by being puffed up against God” (*Principles and Proverbs*, pp. 128,129).

“To summarize the difference between ancient and modern doubt we may suggest that in olden times men saw superhuman beings in every shadow, and so in time of trial, they supposed that their God was only one of many. In modern times men seek a prosaic and ordinary explanation for everything, and so in times of trial even God is explained away” (*The Guiding Light*, p. 31).

Comments related to the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10):

“The Samaritans were neighbors in the most literal sense, but as for loving them, that seemed impossible. Christ loved them and caused his disciples to marvel at the manner in which he spoke to the woman at Jacob’s well and afterwards to others who came out to hear him. The Jews as a whole almost made it a part of their religion to hate the Samaritans, and if they were able to analyze their own feelings, they would probably have to admit that the hatred was directly traceable to the fact of their being such near neighbors. This is a common weakness of poor human nature. Those who are near but not quite with us arouse more bitterness of feelings than complete strangers. Then when such an evil feeling has once been started, the deceitful heart begins to build up fancies to justify the hatred, thus further traducing those who have been already wronged” (*The Guiding Light*, p. 66).

G.V.Growcott

“The human mind and body are incredibly marvelous creations of wisdom and capability. We do not use one hundredth of our potential. It is probably safe to say we do not use one thousandth of our potential. What the body can be trained to do in the lines of acrobatics and balance would be incredible if it were not proved by the accomplishments of some, as multiple somersaults in the air from a narrow bar,

landing in perfect balance on the bar again. And as to the mind, some have memorized the whole Bible. Men spend a lifetime of effort and practice, and accomplish unbelievable marvels, all for a corruptible crown... What effort are WE making to obtain an incorruptible crown? Do we imagine the riches of the universe will be just handed to us on a platter? Why us, and no one else? What is so special about us? And yet we profess to be in the 'race' for life — 'striving' toward the mark? Earnestly preparing ourselves to the best of our ability for eternity with God. But we tend to just drift through life in ease and comfort, and unprogrammed, day-to-day, meandering self-pleasing? Absurdly assuming that because we happen to be fortunate enough to have 'learned the Truth' in its bare essentials, and have gone through the motions of baptism, and show up at some of the meetings, we thereby are guaranteed eternity, while the 'heathen' world perishes. What do we think we are given seventy years preparation time for? Just to play and accumulate and please ourselves? What unutterable, tragic folly! As we sow, so shall we reap: God is not mocked."

"'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). Be big. Most people are small; small-minded; small-hearted; small-thoughted. The children of God are called on to make the supreme effort to grow up from mankind's natural, infantile, self-centered smallness. Think eternity, not peanuts. Devote your life to giving, not getting. The getting will come in God's good time — eternally: 'heaped up, pressed down, shaken together, running over' — divine good measure. Relax into goodness and largeness of heart. Let the little minds burn themselves out in anxious seeking and fear of being shortchanged. Have no fear that you are going to lose something unless you constantly consider your self-interest and fret about your fair share. You cannot possibly lose if you are in track with God."

Ron Abel

"Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king" (Matt. 2:1).

"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem" (Luke 2:4).

"The Problem: Matthew indicates that Mary and Joseph lived at Bethlehem, but Luke says that they returned to Bethlehem for the census. Therefore, it is argued, there is an apparent discrepancy.

"The Solution:

1. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is no more proof that his parents lived there, than the statement that 'I was born at sea' implies that my parents lived in a ship.
2. A reading of Luke 2:1-7 shows that, while his parents were at Bethlehem for the census, Jesus was born. But Mary had lived at Nazareth in Galilee before the journey to Bethlehem (Luke 1:26,27)."

Robert Roberts

Speaking of the trials of Joseph (Gen. 37), RR writes that Joseph, as type of Jesus, needed to suffer chastisement:

“Joseph was innocent and excellent, but Joseph was young and untried, and God had a great purpose with him that required that he should be matured and perfected in character as men only can be perfected — in the school of adversity. Joseph had to be fitted for exaltation and the exercise of power, and therefore Joseph had to suffer for Joseph’s own good and for the bringing about of a great result to the whole house of Israel. Joseph was allowed to become the object of his brethren’s successful hatred. Therefore, if sympathy sheds a tear, the understanding admires, while Joseph is bound by unfeeling brethren, and in spite of his frantic entreaties, lowered into a pit where death appears inevitable, both in his own estimation and that of his brothers.

“No greater evil short of death could befall a human being than that which thus came to Joseph. A spectator on the spot would have said it was evil in which it was not possible to imagine any good purpose. There was no explanation of it. Joseph was not permitted to know the meaning. He could not have understood if told. It would have frustrated the object for him to know.

“Let us recollect this when in any matter similarly situated. Circumstances may be dark; calamity unmingled; the situation such that enemies may say, ‘There is no help for him in God’; yet God may be at the bottom of all the trouble for purposes of goodness which the future alone will reveal. The only policy is, in all circumstances, to commit ourselves to the keeping of our Creator in faith and well-doing: ‘Commit thy way unto the Lord; and trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday’” (*Ways of Providence*, p. 87).

Len Richardson

“Our preaching efforts in Basingstoke at least made the name Christadelphian known. We cannot always measure the effects of our witness in the number of converts, for there is a wider aspect to our work. ‘Ye are the salt of the earth,’ said our Lord and, as grains of salt in an alien environment, we have the responsibility of trying to influence our little bit of the world with the ideas and ideals of Jesus Christ, which alone can save it from putrefaction.

“So it was a great delight to me on one occasion, when we were holding some lectures in the Town Hall there, to learn that a car-load of supporters from the Reading ecclesia had [started out] without noting the address of the meetings. It was a dark winter’s night and as they entered Basingstoke they realised that they had no idea where to go, so stopped and asked somebody if they could tell them where the Christadelphians were having their meeting.

“The stranger replied, apparently, ‘Oh, you mean Mr. Richardson’s meeting — it’s in the Town Hall.’ It was heartening to know that to a total stranger in the dark ‘Richardson’ and ‘Christadelphian’ were synonymous terms.

“When they told me, I felt a little like Gideon must have felt when he heard the Midianite soldiers talking about him (Judg. 7:13) as he lay on his belly listening outside their tents in the dead of night. ‘And when he heard it, he worshipped,’ the record says. What a simple statement, yet how profound. ‘He worshipped...’ He did not need to be in a place of worship, or a posture of prayer. There he was, with his servant, doing a night time reconnaissance, eavesdropping on the enemy; but what he heard made him so thankful that ‘he worshipped.’ ‘Thank you, Lord, for letting me hear such encouraging news from the very camp of the enemy...’” (*Sixty Years A Christadelphian*, pp. 49,50).

Read the Scriptures daily

"Salvation depends upon the assimilation to the mind of the divine ideas, principles, and affections exhibited in the Scriptures. This process commences with a belief of the gospel, but it is by no means completed thereby; it takes a lifetime for its scope, and untiring diligence for its accomplishment. The mind is naturally alien from God and all His ideas (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14), and cannot be brought at once to the Divine likeness. This is a work of slow development, and can only be achieved by the industrious application of the individual to the means which God has given for the purpose, viz., the expression of His mind in the Scriptures of truth. Spiritual-mindedness, or a state of mind in accordance with the mind of the Spirit as displayed in these writings, can only grow within a man by daily intercourse with that mind, there unfolded. Away from this, the mind will revert to its original emptiness. The infallible advice then to every man and woman anxious about their salvation is -- read the Scriptures daily. It is only in proportion as this is done, that success may be looked for. The man who sows sparingly in this respect will only reap sparingly" (Robert Roberts, *Introduction to the Bible Companion*).



Bible Mission News

Argentina

On November 21, 2006, Dr. Francisco Gilardoni was baptised into Christ in Córdoba, Argentina. Our new brother is now a part of the small ecclesia in Córdoba who witnessed his baptism and received him into fellowship on behalf of their brethren throughout the world.



Bro. Ruben Barbosa, Francisco Gilardoni, and Hugo Petrilli.

Bro. Francisco's baptism is a "*witness*" to the power of God's word to change lives at any stage. At 88 years of age, after a life as a judge in the Argentine judiciary, a teacher of law, and a regular reader of the Bible, he was "*arrested*" by the clarity of the Truth as presented to him through a series of correspondence courses, and he was "*convicted*" by its message with the help of regular classes with Bro. Hugo Petrilli. His public "*testimony*" was frank and firm, leading to the "*sentence*": "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life though Jesus Christ our Lord."

The baptism served as a further witness to the small group of friends in Córdoba who came along to the appropriately named King David Hotel in the city centre to hear talks based on "The Hope of Israel".

Robert Alderson

"Witness", "arrested", "convicted", "testimony", "sentenced"! Powerful, evocative language of the courtroom — echoed more than once in the New Testament.

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. [Or, 'Is it God — the One who declares righteous?']... Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus who died... was raised to life... and intercedes for us [Or, again, 'Is it Christ Jesus — the one who died, was raised, and intercedes... for us?']" (Rom. 8:33,34).

The last two sentences, translated as questions, beg for answers in the negative, and emphasize the passage's main point.

To read the verses this way is to make a wonderful discovery: in the passage that seemingly pictures the judgment as a courtroom scene, the “accused” finds, to his eternal joy, that “there is no condemnation” for those who are truly in Christ (vv. 1,4). Rather, the Ones who might be expected to act as “judge” and “prosecuting attorney” are in fact on his side! Christ is the “Advocate” (1 John 2:1) — the “Counselor”, the one who “stands alongside” him, the defense attorney who has in fact done all that can possibly be done to effect his acquittal and release. And the Father, who might be expected to “condemn” the admitted sinner, is — amazingly — the One who has arranged all things (including the death of His beloved Son) so as to bring about the “not guilty” verdict. “Not guilty”, by reason of the mercy of God Himself, demonstrated in His Son. “If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom. 8:31,32).



The Córdoba Ecclesia with their newest member, Bro. Francisco.

*Though we will all stand before that bench in that courtroom one day, the question must be asked: who **will** “condemn” us? Will there be a “prosecuting attorney” ready to produce evidence to condemn us? No! Instead, Christ, who might have filled that role, will be “interceding” for them. There **is** no prosecuting attorney; look, that seat is empty! And the one who might have sat there has instead taken over the role of defense attorney. Now he is pleading, to a sympathetic Judge (his own Father!) — the mitigating circumstances that negate the sins of the “defendant”. Let’s read the transcript of that trial; here’s his final appeal:*

“Your Honor, whatever these men or women did or did not do that fell short of Your glory, they believed in You through Me. In that faith they cast themselves upon Your mercy, and trusted in Your promises. They followed my example, and they did what they could, given the limitations of the nature they possessed, and the body of weakness in which they lived. Now, Father, they lean upon me for what they could not do. I personally vouch for their love, and their sincerity. They are part of our family too! For my sake, O LORD, and for the glory of Your Holy Name, in Your great mercy and Your everlasting love, declare these — my brothers and sisters — to be, ever and always, Your sons and daughters! And, dear Father, declare them ‘righteous’ for my sake!”

George

Bolivia

The four-member ecclesia in La Paz, Bolivia, was established in February 2006. The two sisters have moved to other countries for various reasons, but do plan on returning to Bolivia. After the departure of the resident missionaries, Bro. Steve and Sis. Sally Jefferies, in August, the two brethren (Martin Mostacedo and Freddie Monrroy) have continued to hold weekly studies and breaking of bread services. They have received study material and exhortations from the Jefferies and Bro. Frank Woodcock (of Canada), on a weekly basis.



**Bre. Victor Hugo Fernandez Montaño, Martin Mostacedo,
and Freddie Monrroy.**

One of the many encouraging features is that about eight friends, who began attending during 2005, continue to support most ecclesial activities, even though there is no missionary presence in Bolivia at this present time. The impact of the Truth on these brothers' lives resulted in the baptism of Victor Hugo Fernandez Montaño on Sunday, November 12. Victor has been preparing for his interview for some time, and he gave a good confession of his faith. All of his family, several close friends, and his brothers in Christ were present to witness his baptism — 16 in total.

During the weekend of the baptism, several special lectures were given which received good support by the regular attendees and a couple of new contacts. The talks were about the hope of Israel, the hope of the Resurrection, and Jerusalem as the burdensome stone. We emphasized that we must be “in Christ” in order to share in God’s promises.

God continues to open “the door of faith unto the Gentiles” in many parts of the world in these last days.

Robert Alderson and Don Luff

Chile

For the third time in 2006, approximately 800 contacts were invited to special lectures in Santiago, Chile. About 25 contacts attended the five talks given on Saturday, November 18, and about 15 attended the two lectures on the Sunday afternoon. The general themes were related to the hope of Israel, the divine solution to the problems in the Middle East, God’s Name, the Spirit of God, and the importance of baptism.

A number of the visitors have been attending these weekend lecture series for a few years and provide a “lively” atmosphere during the course of the day. A few of these visitors have been asking us when we are going to have a meeting place in Santiago, so that they can attend regular studies.



Sis. Gisella Pintado, Bre. Hugo Petrilli, Richard Castillo, Don Luff, and Bernardo Soto. (Gisella's son Jeremy is in front.)

Bre. Robert Alderson (New Zealand) and Don Luff (Canada), with the support of Bro. Hugo Petrilli (Argentina), gave the weekend series of lectures. They also enjoyed a breaking of bread service with Sis. Gisella Pintado and Bre. Bernardo Soto and Richard Castillo.

We pray that God will bless these efforts with the workers and the funding in order to maintain a consistent presence in this capital city of Chile.

Robert Alderson and Don Luff

“www.thisisyourbible.com” is looking for help

The CBM and CBMA preaching website is generating a lot of interest. The site has been “live” for just under a year now and has attracted over 720 students located in many different countries.

We have tutors in 12 countries but are receiving communications from countries where we do not have tutors. We feel it is good for students to have a tutor who lives in the same country, or is of the same nationality as the student. This appeal is for brethren and sisters to sign up as tutors on the site. In particular we are looking for tutors in South Africa.

Potential tutors can register online by visiting the website and clicking on **[tutors]** in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen, or simply by sending an e-mail to Bro. Mike LeDuke at mduke@gto.net or Bro. Peter Forbes at peter@forbes31.freemove.co.uk

These brothers will be able to answer any questions you might have about the website or becoming a tutor.

Bre. Mike LeDuke and Peter Forbes

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

for tax ID numbers please contact the editor

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Caribbean and the Americas, Spanish Truth Corps, Domestic Truth Corps, etc. c/o Charles Brinkerhoff, 15925 La Ronda Cir., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745-4244.

Christadelphian Bible Mission Canada (CBMC) welcomes donations for Bible Mission activity, the *Tidings*, and bequests for similar causes. Box 55541, Unit 119, 15280 101 Ave., Surrey, BC, Canada, V3R 0J7.

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

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Christadelphian Tape Library records and distributes audio/video/DVD's and CD's of various Bible schools and study sessions. Reuben E. Washington, 196 E. Stearns St., Rahway, NJ 07065-4923. Phone: 732-381-4590. Fax: 732-499-8415. christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net.

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

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

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.

Christadelphian Care-Line provides a service for those who need fully confidential help with emotional and spiritual problems as well as family issues. 866-823-1039.

Alcohol Help Line provides a service for those who need fully confidential help overcoming alcohol dependency. 866-823-1039.

Brothers' Weekend: A Time to Heal and a Time to Build

There is no doubt that the pressure and pace of life is greater now than a generation ago. Suddenly in the 1990s, because of the wonders of modern technology, our personal time became our employer's time. It became an age when it was as easy to work at home as in the office. On top of that, for brethren, there were still the family and ecclesial responsibilities. And as if that were not enough, during the past ten years or so, the influence of all media have grown enormously. The "in your face" seductive (and often explicit) messages can so quickly undermine the faith and holiness of any saint, young or old!

On Friday evening, October 27, 2006, forty brethren from as far away as England and the western United States gathered for the first eastern Brothers' Weekend. The occasion began with a welcome and the daily Bible readings. Then on Saturday there were four sessions, each opened by a presentation and followed by group discussions. During the day there was plenty of time for fellowship: the building of friendships, sharing of prayers, and personal discussion were part of this lovely day. Even the very wet, snowy weather did not dampen the enjoyment of the weekend. Sunday included a fifth session, and a breaking of bread.

The entire occasion was one where the pressures of life, as outlined above, were discussed in an atmosphere of godly love and trust.

Based on the life of David, the topics included:

1. Building friendship among brethren (led by Bre. Gary Cousens and Martin Webster)
2. Balancing family, the ecclesia and work (led by Bro. Matthew Trowell)
3. Sexuality and self-control (led by Bro. Don Styles)
4. Competition (led by Bro. Mike LeDuke)
5. Leadership (led by Bro. David Lloyd)
6. Mentoring (the memorial service exhortation, by Bro. Don Styles)

Each of the first five sessions was allocated 75 minutes, for the initial presentation and group discussion. It was no surprise that each session proved to be too short!

Everyone left after lunch on Sunday, feeling a little stronger for the battle. Each greatly appreciated the friendships they had built, and the trust that had grown among brothers. Each gave thanks to our Heavenly Father for the wonder of His grace.

Brothers, do mark in your calendar November 9-11, 2007: the next eastern Brothers' Weekend. Plan to join us for what, God willing, will be a time to heal and a time to build.

Nathan Badger, Gary Cousens, Steve McKay, Joe Sparacino, Martin Webster

News & Notices

DETROIT (LIVONIA), MI

Sis. Audrey Small and Bro. Randy Schultz have transferred their membership from the Detroit (Milford Road) Ecclesia, and Bro. Ken and Sis. Becky Moss from the Ann Arbor Ecclesia. Sis. Christy Michaels, and Bro. Dave and Sis. Shawn Bell have transferred their membership to the Detroit (Milford Road) Ecclesia; and Sis. Cheryl Cseke has transferred her membership to the Ann Arbor ecclesia. We commend these brethren and sisters to the care of their respective new ecclesias.

We rejoiced in the baptism of MICHAEL BELL on May 31, 2006.

Jeffrey P. Adams

DOHA, QATAR

We are pleased to have with us Bro. Ben and Sis. Elissa Brinkerhoff (San Diego, CA). We pray their efforts to work in the mission field where required will bring fruit. We are also happy to have had Bro. Tim Galbraith (Hyderabad, India) visit our ecclesia and give us words of exhortation and Bible study classes.

Steve Hracs

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We are happy to have had the following visitors in the past few weeks: the brethren and sisters of the Union, NJ, Ecclesia; Bro. Marcel and Sis. Dawn Hinds (South Ozone Park, Queens, NY); Bro. Tom and Sis. Sally Davis (Pomona, CA); and Sis. Alisa Markwith (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON).

We regret to announce our sister, Naomi Bahr, sister of Bro. Alvin Brittle and mother of Bro. Jim Bahr, has fallen asleep in Christ. Sis. Naomi has been a steadfast member of the Echo Lake

Ecclesia for some thirty years. She will be missed by all.

Jonathan Link

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ON

We thank the following visiting brethren for their ministrations to us in the gospel in the past months: Colin Badger, John Selway, Ted Hodge, Jr., Bill Mannel, and Dev Ramcharan. We also thank many other brethren and sisters, who have visited recently, for their support and fellowship. We continue to welcome into our midst, on a regular basis, several young brethren and sisters who have been attending university here over the last several months.

We are happy to report that four new members have joined us over the last few months. In July, Bro. Nathan Badger transferred from the Hamilton (MacNab) Ecclesia. In September, Sis. Donna Jennings transferred from the Simi Hills, CA, Ecclesia. Also in September, Bro. Peter and Sis. Dae Ventresca joined our meeting and the Central Fellowship. We pray that our association together with our new brethren and sisters will be edifying to us all as we wait together for our Lord to return.

Unfortunately, we are sad to report that in September Bro. Peter and Sis. Becky Miles left our ecclesia, due to Sis. Becky's health. We understand they will be attending the Hansworth, UK, Ecclesia but pray that conditions will permit them to return to us again soon.

In the spring, our ecclesia was conducting two follow-up classes, but this has been reduced to one this fall. Five interested contacts are attending a class on the Acts. We pray that God will give the increase as we try to convey to them

the impact the Apostles' Doctrine had on the Roman world, and the enthusiasm with which they preached the gospel message. We are trying as much as possible to make the class a reading and discussion class, with no special aids except the Bible before us, so that our contacts get right into the word of God.

We tried something new in proclamation this past summer. Two of our sisters organized a vacation Bible school for children in the neighborhood of our rented hall. Twelve children attended the week-long event, and one has continued to come to our Sunday school from that effort. We thank Sisters Cheryl Pearce and Becky Miles for their substantial effort.

Jim Robinson

LA PAZ, BOLIVIA

We are pleased to report that after a good confession of his faith, VICTOR HUGO FERNANDEZ MONTANO was baptized in La Paz on Sunday, November 12, 2006. He started attending during early 2005 and had been preparing for his interview for some time. His immediate family, several close friends, and his brothers in Christ were present to witness his baptism, 16 in total.

We do also thank Sis. Joanne Hulme and Sis. Judith Norcross (Sale, UK), and Sis. Zoe Norcross (Liverpool, UK) for their visit to the ecclesia in La Paz between November 5-12. Their attendance and support was greatly appreciated by the members and regular attendees.

The young ecclesia is grateful for the fellowship it has experienced from the worldwide brotherhood this year through visits, cards, letters and e-mails.

Don Luff

LARGO, FL

We very much thank our Bro. Matt

Drywood (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON) for his wonderful presentation of "Developments in Apostasy" during our recent study weekend hosted by the Sarasota and Largo ecclesias in November. We appreciate his hard work and enjoyed visiting with him, his sister-wife Stephanie, and their two children, Cassia and Joel. The study was attended by about 80 brethren, friends and young people from the Sarasota, Orlando, and Largo ecclesias. We thank all for their participation and support.

We are delighted to report the baptism of one of our "How to Read the Bible" scholars, JAN REESE, in August 2006. Sis. Jan attended the first seminar and the follow-up seminar, and was a faithful attendee at memorial services and other ecclesial functions prior to answering God's call and requesting baptism. We welcome Sis. Jan and pray she has a most productive walk in the truth. We are also very happy to receive Bro. Bill Rollason by transfer from the Knowle and Dorridge, UK, Ecclesia. He has been a long-time and most helpful visitor to our ecclesia and we welcome his fellowship. We also welcome by transfer Bro. Mark and Sis. Sharon Flannagan from the Canton, OH, Ecclesia. We look forward to loving and rewarding fellowship with all our new members.

We have been blessed with the following visitors since our last reporting: Bro. Jared and Sis. Esther Keyes and their children (Ann Arbor, MI); Bro. George and Sis. Joy Butler (The Villages, FL); and Bro. Troy and Sis. Annette Haltom (Grand Rapids, MI). We also wish to thank Bro. Troy for his excellent exhortation on Esther, explaining how the book relates to our present-day lives in the truth.

Remember to bring your new green hymnal when visiting. Inquiries may be forwarded to Recording Bro. Walt Dodrill at waltdodrill@msn.com — or

you may call at 727-528-1197 or leave a message at 727-410-0896.

Walt Dodrill

MANITOULIN ISLAND, ON

We have been very blessed this past year with all of the visiting brethren and sisters we had at Manitoulin Island, ON.

We would like to thank Bro. Mike LeDuke for speaking to the young people this past March at our Annual Young People's Weekend. His invigorating classes on the epistles of Peter were truly beneficial for the older members as well as the CYC members. We would also like to thank the young people who traveled from Southern Ontario and Michigan to join us. Bro. Ken Styles is scheduled to be the speaker for the March 10-11, 2007, Young People's Weekend.

Bro. Ron Kidd spoke at our Spring Study Day in early May. Bro. Frank Abel presented a special lecture on August 27 on the "Trinity." Bro. Mike Moore led the classes at the Fall Study Day. Bro. Dave Noble is tentatively scheduled to speak at our spring study day on April 28, 2007. The topic is "A Lamb without Blemish".

We appreciate any effort that is put forward to preach to the community on Manitoulin Island, as we are remote from other ecclesias.

Our ecclesia was formed over 100 years ago. We have met in homes, in rented buildings, and at the Bible camp. We are now actively pursuing a meeting hall that has been made available with the closure of a funeral home.

Joe Cooper

NEW WESTMINSTER, BC

Our fraternal gathering, for 2007 only, has been brought forward one week from our usual Easter weekend, and is planned for Saturday, March 31, and

Sunday, April 1, 2007. We look forward to having Bro. Steven Hornhardt, of Australia, to lead the sessions. Further details will be announced.

Art Bull

SUSSEX, NB

Our Sis. Georgina (Jean) McCann fell asleep in March. Sis. Jean was a vibrant sister who lived in isolation in Sydney, NS. She met with us whenever she could. Sis. Jean was baptized in Toronto at the Cosburn Ecclesia in August 1978. We look forward to the day of reuniting at our Lord's return.

In August many of our ecclesia enjoyed participating with the Bedford (Halifax), NS, Campaign. Fellowship was enjoyed with our brethren and sisters there. We pray for God's richest blessing on their continued work in His vineyard.

Bro. Dale Crawford and family of Bedford, NS, visited in September; we thank Bro. Dale for his exhortation.

October brought our annual Thanksgiving Fraternal Gathering. Bro. Peter Edwards (Derby, UK) shared his study of "Philippians — Letter of Joy". In an isolated area, such weekends as these are extremely strengthening. Our visiting brethren and sisters included Dave and Mary Green (Edmonton, AB); George and Ruth Jackson (Toronto East, ON); Jenny Baines (Cambridge ON); Ken Easson, Phil Camplin, Michael and Ruth Carr, and Dale Crawford (Bedford, NS); Jim and Katie Boyko, Andrew and Louise Taberner (Boston, MA); John and Mary Martin, and Tom Newman with his wife, Angela (Cranston, RI). On the Friday of the same weekend, we held our annual CYC Harvest Festival. It was lots of fun, and fellowship was enjoyed by all.

We are currently preparing for an outreach effort in a local community

where interest has been cultivated. We pray for God's richest blessing and direction on our efforts.

Please amend the ecclesial mailing address for the undersigned as follows: P.O. Box 4526, Sussex, NB, E4E 5L6.

Brad Goodwin

VICTORIA, BC

We are very pleased to report the baptisms of MATTHEW NEVILLE on April 16, 2006, DREW RALPH on May 7, 2006, and ANDREW DIXON on November 12, 2006. We pray for our Father's blessing on our three new brethren.

With sadness we report that Sis. Nancy Evans fell asleep in Christ February 8. Her love of God's word, and her quiet, cheerful disposition will be missed and long remembered. Our prayers are with her husband, Bro. John Evans, and his family. Although we will miss our sister, we know that she died in hope and now sleeps until resurrection day.

We have been blessed with the birth of two healthy babies for which we are very thankful: Natalie Robinson, born on March 1 to Bro. Stephen and Sis. Kristy Robinson, and Josiah Lawrence, born on March 17 to Bro. Jonathan and Sis. Beth Lawrence.

By way of transfer we commended Sis. Nyssa Hrac to the Saanich Peninsula Ecclesia.

We are very happy to announce the marriage of Bro. Mark Higgs and Sis. Kayla Bennett on October 14. We pray that they will be richly blessed in their life together.

We thank Bro. Ian Dangerfield (Aberfoyle Park, Aust.) for speaking at our Fraternal Gathering in September; Bro. Richard Morgan (Saanich Peninsula, BC) for speaking at our CYC conference in April; Bro. Wayne Coutu (Orangeville, ON) for speaking at our March study weekend; and Bro. Stephen Snobelen for speaking at our October study weekend.

We also thank the following brethren for their talks: Dan Orsetti, and Phil Snobelen (Vancouver, BC); Peter King (Worcester, UK); and Richard Morgan (Saanich Peninsula, BC).

We are planning a study weekend for March 10-11, 2007. The speaker is due to be Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA), speaking on "Road to Atonement". We are also planning a study weekend with Bro. Stephen Hornhardt on April 14-15, 2007 — the subject for this weekend is undetermined as of this date.

We thank Truth Corps for their assistance with the joint Saanich Peninsula and Victoria Ecclesias' Bible exhibition, special lectures and other programs last summer, which were led by the Saanich Peninsula Ecclesia.

Art Hibbs

WASHINGTON, DC

With great delight we announce the baptism on September 17, 2006, of another of our Sunday school scholars, DEBORAH KELLETT, youngest daughter of the undersigned. Along with her mother, Sis. Millie Danns, we pray our Father's good blessing on Sis. Deborah's journey to His kingdom

We have just completed another "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively" seminar, which yielded two earnest applicants for follow-up classes.

Our Family Weekend at Camp Hasha-wha, November 24-26, 2006, studied

"The Amazing Mirrors of God: Reflections of God Manifestation" as presented by Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX). Mid-November saw Bro. Leen Ritmeyer (Brighton, Aust.) lead our Bible class pictorially through the Temple Mount and its environs. Other visiting brethren and sisters have been: Clive Martin (South Birmingham, UK); Andrew Perry (Sunderland, UK); Derek and Pat Bartle, Mark and Vania Higgs, Becky Higgs, and Stephanie Washington (Toronto East, ON); Tom Colby (Hamilton Ewen Road, ON); Paul and Erin Sparacino, Bill Perry and newlyweds, Jonathan and Katie Perry (Detroit Milford Road, MI); Bob and Sue Jarvela (Ann Arbor, MI); and Erlinda Muscat (Detroit Livonia, MI); Clive and Christine and Gideon Drepaal, Terry Lack-

wood, Cosmon Gordon, Nikki Baynes and Essie Smith (Brooklyn, NY); Marcus Tarrant and D.J. Perry (Manhattan, NY); David and Karen Anderson, Jeff and Ruth Jensen, and Kevin and Julie Fadely (Shenandoah Valley, VA); Jordan Canady (James River, VA); Adam Canady (Petersburg, VA); David and Susan Link (Echo Lake, NJ); Nancy Adams (Moorestown, NJ); Bill, Jr., Carol and Ezra Link, and John Gishel (Baltimore, MD); Millie Danns (Atlanta, GA); as well as Connie Walsh, Audrey Small, Priscilla Kellett and Kristina Kemp.

For their words of exhortation, we thank Bre. Anderson, J. Canady, Gischel, Higgs, Martin and Ritmeyer.

Cornelius Kellett

"To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others... to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom — 'I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord.'"

"We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table — 'Here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all.' But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters.

We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

"Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul"

(F. Craddock)

Minute Meditation

Temptation

Someone once said, “I can resist everything in the world except temptation.”

Why do we give in to temptations when we know it is a mistake? The reason temptations are so difficult to resist is that they are part of our nature and they come from inside us. James writes, “Everyone is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desires.” Giving in to temptation leads to sin, and the final result is death. No wonder that, in the Lord’s prayer, Jesus taught us to ask God not to lead us into temptation!

People have always found ways to be tempted to do wrong, but nowadays there are temptations everywhere around us. Our world is full of media that cater to the carnal mind because people like it. It becomes increasingly more difficult to resist evil when it is commonly accepted as normal in our society. We can feel overwhelmed by the troubles of daily living, dealing with frail, mortal bodies, and living in such a corrupt world that constantly tries to entice us to do evil.

We know that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, and that he had to deal with the same mortal weaknesses we feel. Looking at how he resisted temptation can help us to do so also. When Jesus faced his greatest temptation, he took his disciples off to a quiet place to pray and told them, “Pray that you do not enter into temptation.” Then he prayed earnestly, turning to God in prayer for help because he felt such an overwhelming desire to escape the coming trial.

Sadly, Christ’s disciples fell asleep when he most needed them. Later they forsook him and fled. He would endure the trials, scourging, and crucifixion, his time of greatest need, without his closest friends. Because of his fervent prayers in Gethsemane, he was strengthened by God and accomplished his mission. At times we may feel abandoned by those we rely on for support, but we need to continue to trust in God. God will never leave us or forsake us. When we feel overwhelmed, we need to recall that Paul tells us there is no temptation that has taken hold of us except such as is common to men. But God is faithful, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond that which we are able to bear, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, so that we may be able to bear it.

When we are being tempted, it is wonderful to be able to turn to others who can encourage us, pray with us, and help us resist the temptation. We need to make sure never to leave someone in need, as the disciples left Christ. When Paul was really discouraged, God comforted him — not with a miracle — but

with a fellow worker. Paul explains, “For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn — conflicts on the outside, fears within. But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”

Just as Paul was comforted by the support of Titus, we should turn to our trusted brothers and sisters to help us when we are cast down and discouraged. We need to be conscious of the needs of others, and to encourage them in their time of need. Sometimes just being there is helpful; it is not always necessary to have something to say. Quietly listening to problems, and supplying a comforting touch or thoughtful support by helping with daily tasks, or simply being a companion during a difficult time — these are all ways to help.

How blessed we are to have a worldwide family of believers who care for each other. Paul describes how warmly his brothers and sisters in Galatia received him: “And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.” They did everything they could for Paul when he needed them, and we need to follow their example.

Never give up or give in to temptation. Pray to God for the strength to resist, and He will help us. May the blessing James describes be ours: “Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.”

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

DECEMBER

29-Jan. 1 Cranston, RI New Year's Study Weekend. Bro. Jim Styles (Livonia, MI): CYC class on Friday; Study day on Saturday: “God's Wonderful Plan of Redemption”; Sunday: New Year's Eve dinner and program: “Lessons from Nature in Proverbs”. Monday: outdoor activities. Contact Bro. John A. Martin 401-467-4060 jamsr818@msn.com

JANUARY

27 San Diego County, CA Annual Study Day. Bro. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON): “The Vision Tarrieth Not”. 9:30 am, ecclesial hall. Contact Bro. Kent Ellis ellisk@san.rr.com 858-674-5645

FEBRUARY

3,4 Camp Ladore Young people's gathering. Bro. James DiLiberto: “Spiritual Welfare: Spirit vs. Flesh”. Contact Bro. Ryan Mutter rmutter1@umbc.edu 202-437-0641

17,18 Saanich Peninsula, BC Fraternal gathering. Bro. John Mannell (Toronto West, ON): "Behaviour in the House of God: A Study of 1 Timothy". Contact Bro. Richard Morgan richest@telus.net

MARCH

3 Worcester, MA Sisters' study day: "Women at the Well". Contact Sis. Beth MacAdams 978-870-0492 beth.macadams@gmail.com or Sis. Linda Reding 508-769-9003 lreding@charter.net

10,11 Victoria, BC Study weekend. Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Road to Atonement". Contact Sis. Pat Williamson 250-721-4938 pwilliamson@telus.net

24 Toronto East Ecclesia study day. Saturday 1 to 6 pm. Bro. Jim Styles (Livonia, MI): three talks plus dinner. Contact Bro. David Willoughby 905-427-3756

31-April 1 New Westminster, BC Fraternal gathering. Bro. Steven Hornhardt (Australia). Details to follow.

APRIL

6-8 Wichita Falls, TX Annual Spring Gathering. Texas Christadelphian Camp and Conference Center, Freestone, TX (near Buffalo, TX). Bro. David Jennings (Pomona, CA). Contact Bre. Larry Beutel 940-592-9418 or John Clubb jclubb4081@aol.com

6-9 Kilcoy, Guyana Bible School. Bre. Ted Hodge and Clive Drepaul. The school will incorporate a preaching campaign, extending to April 12. Contact Bro. Ted Sleeper tsleeper@rcn.com

7-14 Florida Bible School, Bradenton, FL. Bre. Jeff Gelineau (Simi Hills, CA), Tec Morgan (UK), John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA). Contact Bro. Norm Luff 579-754-1251 normluff@yahoo.ca. Registration Sis. Diane Jennings 727-528-1886 mikejenn@ffn.com

14,15 Richmond, VA Petersburg Fraternal Gathering, Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON). Contact Bro. Dave Kerr gr8eats@comcast.net 804-360-5299

28 Washington, DC Study Day. Bro. Mark Vincent (Stirling, UK). Contact Bro. Bob Kling rkling@computer.org

29 Washington, DC Baltimore/Washington Gathering. Bro. Mark Vincent (Stirling, UK). Contact Bro. Bob Kling rkling@computer.org

MAY

11-13 Nanaimo, BC Vancouver Island Sisters' Weekend, Beach Acres Resort, Parksville, Vancouver Island, BC. Sis. Yvonne Rosenau (Nanaimo, BC): "My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness". Contact Sis. Beth Dangerfield, 1155 Ranger Place, Victoria, BC V8X 3P5 gdanger@shaw.ca 250-479-8422

26,27 Sussex, NB Study Weekend. Bro. George Jackson (Toronto East, ON): "God's Striking Revelation of His Son: A Study in Hebrews". Contact Bro. Brad Goodwin 506-433-6681 braddeb@nb.sympatico.ca

JUNE

24-30 Rocky Mountain Bible School Glenwood Springs, CO. Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "The Exodus"; Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Forgiveness"; Bro. Mark O'Grady (Wellington Tawa, NZ): "Phanerosis". Registration forms at www.denverchristadelphians.org

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30-July 5 Terra Nova Bible School, Terra Nova Park, NF. Bro. Jeff Johnson (Australia): "Be Ye Transformed"; Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Meditations on the Ministry of Our Lord". Information and registration at terranovabibleschool.com. Contact Bro. Gary Hynes, 32 First Street, Mount Pearl, NF, Canada A1N 1X8 phone 709-747-2750 info@terranovabibleschool.com

30-July 8 Mid-Atlantic Bible School, Shippensburg, PA. Bro. Ron Hicks (Washington, DC): "Exodus — Escape from Bondage" (adults), and "Preparing to Preach" (teens); Bro. Mark O'Grady (Wellington Tawa, NZ): "All the Tithe is Holy" (adults), and "Genesis 1" (teens); Bro. Nigel Patterson (Newquay, UK): "The Letter to the Christadelphians (Studies in Colossians)" (adults), and "Daring to be Different" (teens). Contact Bro. Jeff Livermore, PO Box 135, Novi, MI 48376. Forms at www.christadelphians.net/MACBS. Information from MACBSRegistrar@hotmail.com

JULY

8-14 Southwest Bible School, Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Bro. Tec Morgan (Birmingham, UK): "Romans: The Gospel of Salvation"; Bro. Nigel Patterson (Newquay, UK): "David: From Sheepfold to Palace"; Bro. David Styles (Shelburne, ON): "The Ecclesia of the Living God: The Pillar and Ground of the Truth". Contact Bro. Joe Hill, 11110 South Bay Lane, Austin, TX 78739-1580; joehill@io.com www.planofgod.org

14-22 Eastern Bible School, Ascutney Mountain Resort, Brownsville, VT. Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Wonders of the Kingdom"; Bro. Richard Morgan (Saanich Peninsula, BC): "The Two Sauls"; Bro. Michael Hughes (Hamilton, NZ): "The Message of the Miracles". Contact Bro. Peter Dixon peter@tecbs.org

21-29 Midwest Bible School, Hanover College, IN. Bro. Peter Forbes (UK): "Romans: The Gospel in a Nutshell"; Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "Titus"; Bro. Roger Lewis (NZ): "The Sign of the Prophet Jonah". Contact Bro. Lee Livermore, 7323D Chapel Villas Lane, Indianapolis, IN 46214, 317-271-1568, e-mail llivermore@hotmail.com

AUGUST

11-17 Niagara Falls Bible School, St. Catherines, ON. Bre. John Roberts (UK), Mick Roberts (UK), Mike LeDuke (Ontario). For information please contact Bro. David Brierley 416-236-5295 David.Brierley@sympatico.ca

12-18 Ojai, CA Kids Camp, Camp Arnaz for Christadelphian children ages 9-16. Bre. Jim Cowie (Australia) and David Wisniewski (Ontario, Canada). kidscampcalifornia.com or Bro. Tom Graham tom@bigbrand.com