

THE CRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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Editorial — What I Don't Know (Part 4)	523
Editor's Note — Two Projects for the New Year.....	528
Exhortation — Back to Basics, <i>Will Jackson</i>	529
Exposition — Paul's Letter to the Ephesians:	
(11) The unsearchable riches of Christ, <i>Tom Barling</i>	532
Bible Study — Little Words that Mean a Lot:	
(4) Compassion, <i>John C. Bilello</i>	537
Bible Study — Thoughts from The Letter to the Hebrews:	
(2) "Let us go on...", <i>Colin Edwards</i>	542
Reflections:	
Mary's Dream	545
The Potter's Wheel, <i>Marieke Garner</i>	546
"I would not be here if it were not for you", <i>Ken Sommerville</i>	547
A Correlation, <i>Gideon Drepaal</i>	548
Jesus' Unlikely Conversions:	
(5) The thief on the cross, <i>Wesley Booker</i>	549
Nullifying the Word, <i>Clyde Snobelen</i>	552
Letters — What will happen to "the other fellow"?	554
Bible Mission News — Mexico; South America;	
Thisisyourbible.com	558
News & Notices.....	563
Minute Meditation — Impossible, <i>Robert J. Lloyd</i>	567
Coming Events	569
Index for 2007	570

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

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New Subscriptions

For most subscribers, renewal of subscriptions comes up this month. You should find a renewal notice in this magazine, along with a return envelope. There are also boxes to check if (a) you cannot afford to pay at this time, but would like to continue receiving the magazine, or (b) you would like to contribute additional funds to help provide the magazine to those who cannot afford to pay.

The new rates are listed above. In both the US and Canada there are increases — from \$20 to \$24, and \$28 to \$32, respectively. Part of this increase is due to significant increases in postage rates. Also, it seems, other costs rise inexorably too. Incidentally, this is the first increase in the past six years for both the US and Canada. For those of you who like to do math, that works out to slightly over 3% increase per year for the US, and slightly over 2% increase per year for Canada.

Editorial

What I Don't Know (Part 4)

8. *The things the “Preacher” did not understand:*

The Book of Ecclesiastes is a veritable treasure trove of “things we don’t understand”.

(a) “[God] has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set *eternity* [Hebrew ‘*olam*’] in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end” (Eccl. 3:11, NIV).

Man indeed has the capacity — God gave it to him, of course — to understand and appreciate eternal things in some measure, and to imagine an eternal, never-beginning, never-ending Divine Being. Yet we live in a fixed time, whilst He exists above, outside of, and beyond time. Ultimately, in this life and with these limitations, we cannot really fathom... we cannot really plumb the depths of knowing and scale the heights of understanding Him. So much remains a mystery to us. “Now we see through a glass darkly” (KJV) — “now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror” (NIV) — and a very dull, and unpolished metal mirror at that (1 Cor. 13:12). Other men who have no real knowledge of God and His ways are indeed and truly in the dark, but even those of us who *know*... in actual fact, we know so very little: “What we will become has not yet been made known” (1 John 3:2).

(b) “Consider what God has done: Who can straighten what he has made crooked?” (Eccl. 7:13).

The “crooked” conditions under which we all live (cp. Eccl. 1:15) were brought about by the original transgression and curse of Genesis 3. This “human condition” cannot and will not be altered this side of God’s Kingdom. But even now, in the midst of a world filled with “crooked” people and “crooked” ways, those who love and serve God can choose, insofar as they are able, to walk in “straight” paths (Psa. 125:5; Prov. 2:10-15). They can also choose not to complain or whine or fret about their lot (Eccl. 7:10). They know that their faith, and their steps, even when they falter, will so please their LORD that He will delight in straightening, at last, all things that are “crooked” for them! And how they will sing, and dance, and run, and shout, when the crooked ways are made straight, and the rough places plain and level (Isa. 40:3,4). “And the glory of the LORD will be revealed” in that day (v. 5).

(c) “I said, ‘I am determined to be wise’ — but this was beyond me. What-ever wisdom may be, it is far off and most profound — who can discover it?” (Eccl. 7:23,24).

As the Preacher pursued the use of wisdom in a practical sense, he came to discover the limitations of such wisdom, in at least two ways:

- (1) because the human mind, in its present corrupted state, can stretch only so far (v. 23), and
- (2) because some wisdom is simply inaccessible, even to the very best of human minds — it is kept hidden in the eternal mind (v. 24).

Wisdom is inaccessible, or accessible only at a steep price: it is as though it were buried far beneath the surface of the earth, or hidden in the depths of the sea (Job 28:12,21, etc. in context; Psa. 36:6). Or, alternatively, wisdom is far above the earth — “too lofty for me to attain” (Psa. 139:6). Either way, “the secret things belong to the LORD our God” (Deut. 29:29). Paul confesses his limitations in understanding the deep things of God:

“Oh, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!” (Rom. 11:33; cp. 1 Cor. 1:19-25; Job 11:7).

It has been pointed out that the knowledge of any man or woman (or, for that matter, the accumulated knowledge of all mankind) is like a circle that surrounds us. In this analogy, the perimeter of the circle represents the outer boundary, the limit of what is known; beyond that line there is the unknown. As the circle expands, that is, as more is learned — upon *any* subject, secular or spiritual — it is obvious that the line is still there, and there is still the unknown beyond that line. But now, with the growth of knowledge, and the widening of the circle, the circumference of the circle that encloses our knowledge is growing too. In other words, the more we learn, the more we appreciate how little we know, and how much more there is to learn! Ad infinitum!

Of course, humanly speaking, the best example of this limitation of human knowledge is the ultimate line that our inquiries can never cross. The last line, beyond which is the true unknown, is the line of death. Who can go to explore that dark land and return to reveal all its mysteries? No one.

Man continues to study the workings of the human brain. As time goes by, certain advances have indeed been made — we are told that scientists now understand the fundamental purposes of various parts of the brain itself, and how chemical or electrical stimuli, or a tumor or injury, can disrupt its workings in a particular area, while leaving other functions unimpeded. Even in such instances, scientists are only now beginning to perceive how — even when the work of one functional area of the brain is interrupted — other parts of the brain may go beyond their ordinary functions to take over this other necessary job, as though the human brain is a self-repairing apparatus!

One great hindrance in such study, of course — and it seems to be hinted at in these verses — is this: when we study the human brain, we are using the human brain! And our understanding, such as it is, is limited by the fact that we are studying ourselves, and we simply have no platform higher than ourselves — or separate from ourselves — on which to stand, in order to evaluate objectively what we are and how we work.

(d) *“When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man’s labor*

on earth — his eyes not seeing sleep day or night — then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows [‘think to know it’: KJV], he cannot really comprehend it [‘he shall not be able to find it’: KJV]” (Eccl. 8:16,17).

“We cannot find out the work of God in all its fullness — not even with the Scriptures to guide us. Ecclesiastes teaches us that the world is like this: essentially unfathomable and beyond man — and hence frustrating and vain to him. One cannot read Ecclesiastes and fail to come away with this impression. God has made the world like this deliberately so that we may realize the gulf between ourselves and Him, and so that we might seek after Him in order to understand and to have direction. We can go so far in understanding the world by our observations of it and by our experience, but we must remember that this is only ‘so far’ and not all the way. God’s ways are ultimately inscrutable to human view. There will always be things that we cannot fully understand. And if we claim any different — if we ‘think to know it’ — we shall only be deceiving ourselves. For the Preacher tells us that we ‘shall not be able to find it.’ This is because we are man and not God. We must recognize and bow to His supremacy in all things. We must learn to recognize our finiteness and weakness, the dullness of our minds, and learn to place our trust and confidence evermore in Him” [Mark Vincent, “Ecclesiastes: (5) ‘Yes... But...’”; *Tidings*, May 1999].

(e) *“So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God’s hands, but no man knows whether love or hate awaits him” (Eccl. 9:1).*

Almighty God exercises unquestioned control over all affairs of life, but especially and preeminently He holds the righteous in His hands (Prov. 3:6; Psalms 37:5; Phil. 2:13). It may not be possible for even the wise to understand *why* God allows certain things to happen in their lives (Eccl. 8:17), and sometimes those things are hard and bitter experiences (Heb. 2:8-10; 1 Thes. 3:4; 2 Tim. 3:12). (This would seem to be the “love” and “hate” of this verse: not what the righteous do, but what is done to them, especially as allowed by God.) Nevertheless, the believer has faith that “in all things [whether seemingly good, or seemingly bad] God works for the [ultimate] good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:28).

(f) *“As you do not know the path of the wind [Hebrew ‘ruach’], or how the body is formed in a mother’s womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things” (Eccl. 11:5).*

More literally, this ought to read “As you do not know how the *Spirit* [‘ruach’] enters the body being formed...” The Spirit, or the spirit, of God is the key factor here, as in verses 3 and 4 — where the “wind” or “Spirit” brings clouds of rain and causes trees to fall.

As man does not know exactly how, or exactly when, the fetus is formed in the womb, and the spirit of life enters into it... so man does not know how or when

the seed planted will germinate into a crop. “The seed grows up, he knows not how” (Mark 4:26,27; cp. Isa. 55:8-11; 1 Cor. 3:6,7).

In a spiritual sense, these two “miracles” of creation are blended together — in the conversion and rebirth and renewal of a life in the service of God. This was the theme of Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus:

“*‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ Nicodemus asked. ‘Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’...*” (John 3:4).

But Jesus explained:

“*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit*” (v. 8).

The Preacher reminds us God is “the Maker of all things”. In this he refers to:

- (a) the natural creation of Genesis 1;
- (b) the ongoing renewal and life-sustaining power of God;
- (c) the spiritual, or new, creation — an ongoing development of God’s family in the world today; and
- (d) the final regeneration and renewal of the whole world — including the glorification of the saints — at Christ’s coming.

All these actions — some more or less instantaneous, others covering millennia, some open while others are secret and hidden — all these are above and beyond us, even when they concern us most intimately. These are all part of “what I don’t know”, and even if I may believe in the ultimate outcome of the LORD God’s creative activities, I cannot appreciate *how* He does what He has promised to do. Even when He is working right now, under my very nose, so to speak, *with me...* even then I cannot truly know what He is doing, and how it will turn out. Using Jesus’ analogy, even though I can feel the wind, and see something of what it accomplishes, I cannot *see* the wind. And so it is with God’s Spirit, which after all is called by the same Hebrew word (“ruach”) as the wind!

“No man understands just how the child’s skeleton is formed in its mother’s womb, or how the flesh is covered upon its bony frame, or the eyes and ears are fashioned, or the heart and veins are made. Yet all find their appointed place, and function so perfectly in the newly formed fetus. Qoheleth [the ‘Preacher’] thus reminds us that every birth is a marvelous, fantastic, incredible miracle, performed by Yahweh, exhibiting the wonder of His wisdom, seen also in the starry vaults of heaven, and the wonders of the earth beneath. Creation bears eloquent testimony to the fact that there is nothing too hard for Yahweh, nothing beyond His power to accomplish. Men should, therefore, put their complete trust and confidence in Him, and not worry needlessly, when adverse conditions appear to frustrate their work. Let them preach, sow the seed at all times, and leave the increase to God (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26)” (R. Krygger, *Ecclesiastes: A Devotional Study*).

Like the “Preacher” of Ecclesiastes, even after persistent investigation and study

and reflection, we still come to realize how little we truly know.

So often is this stressed, and so much is this so, that we may well conclude that one of the benchmarks of human wisdom is the recognition of how little one truly knows!

But... *“the man who knows not, and knows that he knows not... that man may be taught.”*

And our LORD will teach us (John 6:45)... both what we need to know, and what we may well get along without knowing, at least for now.

But above all, in His infinite wisdom, He can teach us the wonderful lesson — in our so-very-less-than-perfect understanding:

“We live by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7).

For us, who know so little, there is no other way to live.

It would surely be presumptuous to suggest this **completes** my survey of “what I don’t know”! But perhaps this is a good enough place to stop for now.

I suggest, dear reader, that you always consider (carefully and thankfully) what you **do** know.

At the same time, I suggest that you pause once in a while to consider what you **don’t** know. Paradoxical as it sounds, you may be much the wiser for the exercise.

George Booker

Two books fill a vital place in the scheme of revelation by raising questions to which the full answers are only to be found in Christ. Exploring life fearlessly, they seem to baffle the believer with doubts and difficulties, yet they really pave the way to a deeper faith...

Job leads through the problem of suffering to the wider problem of man’s relation to God. Is it a simple profit-and-loss account, in which well doing is rewarded and wrong doing punished? Obviously it is more than that, since a righteous man can suffer... When the Son of God himself suffers on the cross, then the cross deepens the problem only to solve it, since the way of life is opened up in the risen Christ...

Ecclesiastes probes the problem of man’s relation to his own life. What is it worth when lived as an end in itself?... The field of inquiry is wider than in Job, since it covers the experience of life generally and not only the particular experiences of loss and pain; but in the same way it raises fundamental questions to which only partial answers can be given within the book’s own limits — the final answers are in Christ.

L.G. Sargent

Editor's Note: Two Projects for the New Year

Are you interested in a project for the new year? Or two? Something like a New Year's resolution, and in either case something you might work on a bit every day when you do your Bible readings. Choose one (or both) if you like — and then start a list (or lists). After the end of the year, send me what you have done (or send me periodic updates through the year). I'll compile and collate all the responses and make the results available after the year-end. My email (also on the inside front cover) is editor@tidings.org.

The first project: Difficult words in the King James Version

In the September *Tidings*, page 389, there is a list of about 175 difficult words in the KJV, with their present-day meanings and, in some cases, the appropriate references. However, this list can be expanded considerably.

So, if you'd like to participate in this project, simply keep a notepad handy when you (or your family) are doing the daily readings (or following any reading method), and compile your own list of difficult words in the KJV (omitting the ones already on our first list). If you miss some that should be on the list, don't fret; someone else will surely write that one down. By compiling and collating all our lists after the end of the year, I ought to be able to produce for us a fairly extensive and exhaustive list of such words.

The second project: Unnamed people in the Bible

Another project, or a second project if you wish: As you go through the Bible in 2008, keep a list of all the unnamed people you encounter. (Here, of course, the appropriate Bible reference is most certainly needed.) Same procedure: keep adding to your list until the end of the year, when you send it along to me. Then I will compile and collate all the lists, and make the results available to anyone who is interested.

What do I mean in this case by an "unnamed person"? I mean, an unnamed person whose words are recorded in the Bible, or who does some significant thing. For example, the list should include Job's wife because her words are recorded (Job 2:9), but not his father, who is mentioned once (Job 15:10) but who does and says nothing. The list should include Jephthah's daughter, who comes out to meet him and who speaks (Judg. 11:34-40), but not his mother the prostitute, who is only mentioned in passing (Judg. 11:1). The list should include the tenth leper, the Samaritan who, being healed, returns to thank Jesus and praise God (Luke 17:15-19), but not the other nine, who simply go their own way, never to be heard of again (v. 14).

So there you are. Have fun, and let me hear from you.

George

*"What is right is right even when no one else is doing it.
What is wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it."*

Exhortation

Back to Basics

I've spent the last nine years in wholesale mortgage sales, the first half as a sales rep and the last half as a sales manager. I've been blessed and enjoyed success, so I am frequently asked the secret to success in sales.

I always tell people who ask that success in sales is simple, but not easy. There are really just a few things a person needs to know, and they are not difficult.

The hard part comes in the application. It's not because you have to learn the right things to say — the “tricks” — to get people to buy. In fact, I'm absolutely convinced that such tactics will actually hurt a salesperson much more than they will help. People generally know when they're being tricked, and selling people things they don't need is a sure way to ruin one's reputation and derail one's career.

The bottom line is that a salesperson needs to find clients who have a legitimate need for his product or service. The salesperson needs to convey effectively how his product or service meets those needs. Finally, he needs to follow through and stay in touch with the client. It's really about that simple.

The hard part is doing it. Let's face it, most people are lazy. Most salespeople have good intentions but poor follow-through. They mean to call on new prospects, but instead they let themselves get tied down in paperwork. They mean to get a proposal to a client when they said they would, but something comes up and they are late. They mean to call to check on something, but forget. They mean to call a client back, but they don't until two days later.

It's not complex, but a lot of it is roll-up-your-sleeves work. In my business, there's not a lot of daily oversight by a manager; it's up to the sales rep. He is given a goal, or quota, and then he is accountable at the end of the period for achieving it. If he achieves his goal, or quota, he generally earns good money and receives well-deserved recognition. Then he has the opportunity to do it again the next month. If he doesn't meet his goal, he doesn't make much money, and is probably admonished and put on probation. If he misses his goal several months in a row, he loses his job.

Living the life of a Christadelphian is a lot like this. Having believed and obeyed the gospel in baptism, we are given a goal or a quota. God clearly lays out a goal in His Word, the Bible. He says, “Love your neighbor as yourself”... ‘forgive’... ‘help others’... ‘treat others fairly’, etc. Those are fixed goals. In the corporate world we'd call them objectives. Make the objective, get the reward. Miss it, lose your job.

In the business world we usually work in three timeframes — months, quarters, and years. We receive — or if we're managers, we give — certain goals or objectives for these three time-periods. As Christadelphians we are given time-periods too. The big one, our “year”, is our life. When we stand before Christ at the judgment,

he's going to look at our life and evaluate it to determine if we receive the gift of eternal life. I'm not saying we *earn* that reward by works, as we might in the corporate world. But we do receive the gift, in a sense, because of our intentions and, to some extent, how those intentions are revealed in our lives.

But there are other time periods too — phases in our lives: marriage, parenting, friendship, careers, etc. All these together add up to our lives, in the same way months and quarters add up to years in the business world.

As believers in Christ, we have the same objectives an aspiring salesperson does. The salesperson knows he or she needs to make the calls, find the need, fill the need, follow up, and communicate. As believers, we know what we should be doing. We know we need to call that brother or sister in need and help however we can. We know we need to read our Bibles. We know we need to pray. We know we need to share fellowship, etc.

But like a sales rep working for me in Dallas or Salt Lake City, we don't have constant oversight. We have good intentions, but we don't have Christ giving us constant feedback, unless we're doing our readings and meditating on them in prayer. We don't have Christ saying directly to us, "I know you meant to call your brother in need, but you didn't." So it's easy to let things slip. It's easy to say we'll do them later when we have time and aren't so tired. The problem is, deadlines sneak up on us more quickly than we think — the "month-end", the "quarter-end"... the "year-end"!

"Be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him" (Matt. 24:44).

As a sales manager there are signposts. For that sales rep in Dallas, I can see signposts that tell me whether he's going to be successful:

- Call reports: is he averaging 20 or more meetings per week?
- Account set-ups: is he getting three to five new clients approved to do business with us per month?
- Account drops: is he terminating our relationship with unprofitable customers?
- Communication: is he calling for help or to ask me questions?
- File submissions: are new applications coming in?
- Pull-through ratio: is he following up and closing the applications he brings in?
- Expenses: how many minutes is he using his cell phone per month? How many miles is he driving?

These are all signposts that strongly suggest success or the lack thereof. I tell my new employees about these signposts. I tell them I have found that the sales reps who do these things tend to be successful, and the ones who don't, usually aren't.

Isn't it true that the success of our lives as Christadelphians also leaves markers or signposts? Isn't it true that God's Word tells us the signposts of success for a Christadelphian? Think of almost any verse in Proverbs — there's a signpost!

Jesus said, “A tree is recognized by its fruit” (Matt. 12:33-37). There are outward signs that reveal our hearts and our convictions. This passage concerns our speech. It’s not only how we speak to each other, but the things that we talk about. What we say suggests what is in our hearts and on our minds.

James said, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17). He is not saying we are saved by works. But he is saying that faith and deeds cannot exist independent of each other. He is making a call for faith in action. If you really have faith, you’ll *want* to do things that show that faith.

John makes a similar call for “love in action” (1 John 3:17). Loving your brethren, and helping them in a time of need, cannot exist apart from one another.

Just like I can see the signposts of success in my sales reps, the Father and His Son, and even our brethren, can see the signposts of faith in our lives. We have to let God and Christ speak to us, through the Word, and we have to talk to each other to offer feedback and encouragement.

The call of a Christadelphian is simple; Jesus summarizes it in Matthew 22:37-39:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.”

But doing this can be difficult. Just as Jesus harshly condemns the teachers of the law, the Pharisees, and the hypocrites for focusing on the less important things (Matt. 23:23,24), so he reminds us to focus on the basics of our walk as a believer — justice, mercy, and faithfulness.

As we approach the breaking of bread, we have an opportunity for a fresh start. Let us examine ourselves, confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and recommit ourselves to the basics.

Will Jackson (Austin Leander, TX)

Success

*“Everyone who is successful must have dreamed of something”
(Maricopa Indian proverb).*

*“It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome”
(William James).*

*“Inside the will of God there is no failure.
Outside the will of God there is no success”
(Bernard Edinger).*

Exposition

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians: (11) The unsearchable riches of Christ

At the conclusion of Ephesians 2, Paul developed the concept of a spiritual temple, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the Lord Jesus being the chief cornerstone. The apostle has made it abundantly clear to his Gentile readers that they are on the same footing as Jewish disciples in this great work: there is no difference; they are all one in the Lord Jesus. It is this final thought of the Gentiles' place that prompts what he goes on to say in the opening verses of Ephesians 3. It is as though now he wishes to present his credentials to the Gentile part of his readership.

A prisoner

He begins by mentioning that he is a prisoner, not for some felony he has committed but on "behalf of you Gentiles". Although there were others who preached the gospel in the Gentile world, he, Paul, was pre-eminently their apostle. The full exploration of this claim cannot now detain us, but we can at least remind ourselves of this fact: While the revelation on the Damascus road was primarily to open the way to salvation for a repentant sinner (the common experience of all disciples) — this was associated from the outset with a purpose that was to govern the rest of Paul's life. The bewildered Ananias received this clear message about the former persecutor:

"He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel: for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:15,16).

Digression: "A chosen vessel"

Now there is a remarkable feature of the Damascus episode that appears to have been missed by commentators. This touches upon an important aspect of the early history of the gospel. First, Ananias was told in plain terms that the converted Saul of Tarsus would be a chosen vessel to the **Gentiles**. Presumably the only conclusion Ananias (not to mention all other Jewish believers) could draw was that the Gentiles who responded to the gospel would need to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. Such was probably also Saul's understanding at this stage for, after his conversion, he preached Jesus in the synagogues of Damascus; there is no mention of Gentiles (see Acts 9:20). What was required was the epoch-making revelation to Peter that uncircumcised Gentiles could simply, on the basis of faith, be baptized into the saving name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 10).

Paul himself had to be enlightened on this matter, and it may well be that the period spent in Arabia, after his conversion, was the time when he received this enlightenment (see Gal. 1:17). Despite all the evidence that the law of Moses was now superseded, we know what resistance there was within the Jerusalem

ecclesia to the teaching that circumcision and observance of the Mosaic law were no longer necessary (see Acts 15:1).

This resistance continued, and for many years, wherever Paul took the gospel. The problems in the Lycus valley are witness to this. Paul's First Missionary Journey with Barnabas would not have been possible without the special revelation to Peter and what was revealed to Paul.

When we reflect once more upon the circumstances of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, we must not miss the fact the Lord Jesus was *personally* involved. This gave it a special character, though not unique, for Jesus had likewise chosen the Twelve (see Luke 6:12-16). The consciousness of his special mission was constantly present in Paul's mind (see Acts 22:21; 26:15-19; 1 Tim. 1:11,12). For him, therefore, the grace of God in the Lord embraced not merely his salvation but also his special mission in life. Although Paul concentrated his activities on Ephesus during the Third Missionary Journey (see Acts 19), he was widely known in the province of Asia. Evidence of this can be seen at the end of 1 Corinthians 16:19: "The churches of Asia salute you."

The dispensation of God's grace

Nevertheless, Paul now reminds his readers of what they would certainly have known, that he writes from prison (in Rome), and that was a consequence of his total commitment to his Gentile mission. The "if" of verse 2 does not express a condition, but a confident assumption. Thus, we might say to someone, *'If you knew this, why did you act as you did?'* So Paul refers to the dispensation of God's grace granted to him specifically for the Gentiles. The term in the RV, "dispensation", is accompanied by a footnote that gives "stewardship" as an acceptable alternative. This term "dispensation" has given expositors problems; it is used exclusively by Paul except for its occurrence in Luke 16:2,3,4, where it is consistently rendered "stewardship" in the RV. The interpretation adopted here is that of Armitage Robinson: "Both here and in Colossians 1:25 the 'dispensation' spoken of is a dispensation in which God is the Dispenser, and not the administration, or stewardship, of any human agent. This is made clear by the parallel use of the word in 1:10..."¹

The "mystery" of the Gentiles

Paul then enlarges on the concept of his special mission to the Gentiles. He has already (in Ephesians 2) made clear the equality of Jew and Gentile in the construction of God's spiritual temple. This, he feels, he has done briefly ("in few words"). Now he has much more to say on this subject so near to his heart. The purpose of these additional words is to provide, especially for his Gentile readers, evidence of his insight into "the mystery of Christ" (v. 4). We have already had occasion to consider the word "mystery" and in this connection we note once more what the Lord said to his disciples:

"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven"
(Matt. 13:11).

By this we understand that they were humbly prepared to receive from the Lord

insight into the truths of his teaching on various aspects of the kingdom.

What had not been previously understood, and accepted, as now it had been, was that the Gentiles were:

“...fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the same body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (v. 6).

Before the coming of the Lord Jesus, the world at large had been ignorant of God’s purpose in Christ. Also, there had been amongst Jews no understanding of how Gentiles would acquire parity with themselves. So it was that Paul, in addressing the Areopagus in Athens, spoke of “the times of ignorance” (Acts 17:30). But now, the RV in verse 6, by the studied use of “fellow”, is alerting us once more to Paul’s use of “sun” compounds (the “together” words), and thus to the equality of Jew and Gentile before God. We encountered this in 2:19, which declared that Gentiles “are fellow-citizens with the saints”. In the case of 3:6, the NIV brings this out thus:

*“The Gentiles are heirs **together** with Israel, members **together** of one body, and sharers **together** in the promise in Christ Jesus”.*

Here we see an instance, all too common, where a feature of one language is difficult to reproduce in another. The RV use of “fellow” goes some way to achieving this. However, it breaks down in the case of “sussoma”, literally “together-body” [“sun” here in the Greek becomes “sus” because of the following letter s].² When we consult Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*, we find the only occurrence of the word is in Ephesians 3:6, an interesting fact in itself. It seems the apostle was constrained to coin a new term in order to bring out the important fact that believers, Jews and Gentiles, form one body, and that is the body of the Lord Jesus. We can be one only in him, and that is a truth every follower of the Lord Jesus must embrace and strive to make true in his or her case. No other form of unity is acceptable.

“A servant of this gospel”

Having thus comprehensively affirmed, and demonstrated by his carefully chosen language, the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ Jesus, Paul reverts to the subject of his apostleship:

“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given to me by the working of his power” (v. 7, NIV).

One cannot read Paul’s letters without perceiving the fundamental character of divine grace. Paul felt deeply, in view of his earlier record as a persecutor, that he experienced this in abundant measure. As the result of his call he had become a *servant of the gospel*. The word here used is “diakonos”.³

As he looks back on his life, and its total transformation on the Damascus road, Paul has a sense of awe — for he regarded himself as less than the least of all saints. This was no posture, no affected humility. What made him thus was the consciousness of the greatness of the Lord Jesus and the reality of the forgiveness he had received (see once more 1 Tim. 1:12-16). It is usual in this connection to turn also to 1 Corinthians 15:9, where Paul declares himself to be the least of

the apostles, unworthy even to be called an apostle. Yes, he knew full well that the Twelve had in different ways failed their Lord, but he had been a persecutor, one with blood on his hands. Doubtless this was generally known in Christian circles, and it is possible some of his adversaries exploited the fact. But the Lord Jesus had totally forgiven him, and not only forgiven him but also made him the special apostle to the Gentiles. If this was not grace, what was? The fact of the cross thus possessed for Paul a special meaning: the Lord Jesus lived in Paul, for he had loved him and had given himself for him (see Gal. 2:20).

The unsearchable riches

To return to Ephesians 3:8: we take note how the grace Paul had received was exercised by him: in preaching to the Gentiles “the unsearchable riches of Christ”. We have already met the term “riches”:

- (a) Ephesians 1:7: the “riches” of God’s grace, and
- (b) Ephesians 1:18: the “riches” of God’s glory.

The concept meets us also in Colossians:

- (c) Colossians 1:27: the glorious “riches” of this mystery, and
- (d) Colossians 2:2: the full “riches” of this understanding.

In this last passage, Paul’s hope is that the disciples in the Lycus valley may possess a “complete understanding”, so “that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ” (NIV). How easy it is to have a pitifully inadequate view of the gospel and the rich heritage available in the Lord Jesus. We should take note especially of Colossians 2:9:

“For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

Each should have the consciousness, shared with the apostle, of the riches of Christ. For him, they are unfathomable, yes, and inexhaustible. Here we can discern an anticipation of the great prayer of this chapter (Eph. 3:14-19).

A mystery kept hidden

In thus preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, the apostle has the task of declaring the mystery that hitherto had been concealed in God, who “created all things”. This declaration should especially be noted, and it is confirmed in Hebrews 3:4:

“For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God.”

He is the sole great architect of all things. After the fulfilment of the prophecies relating to the Lord Jesus and the preaching of the gospel as recorded in Acts, the way was opened up for an understanding of so much more of the Old Testament. The first who had to be enlightened were the apostles themselves (see Luke 24:45-48).

Digression: Principalities and powers

But what are we to understand by “the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places”? Whatever their identity, we must take account of the fact that they are enlightened by “the church” (v. 10). In the early days of preaching, Peter and

the others presented the gospel in clear terms to the multitude, and to the Jewish authorities when they were arraigned before them (see Acts 3,4, and 5). As for Paul, he appeared before various Jewish and Roman authorities and, whatever the circumstances, he preached to the great and lowly alike (see Phil. 1:13). When Peter speaks of a “new heavens and a new earth” (in harmony with Isa. 65:17), we know from the details in Isaiah he is looking for a new world government and a regenerated mankind. The burden of the apostolic message, whether ministered by Paul or others, is to make known God’s wisdom in its manifold aspects.

But is it also possible that “the principalities and powers” might refer to the angels? This possibility at least merits some consideration, in view of 1 Peter 1:12:

“Even angels long to look into these things” (NIV).

However, the probability, if not certainty, points primarily to human rulers and authorities.

This is in keeping with the eternal purpose centered in the Lord Jesus (v. 11). God’s redemptive purpose in him was portrayed in the lamb slain to provide a covering for the nakedness of Adam and Eve (a subject explored at an earlier stage in our study of this letter). For those in Christ, who have faith (ever a key word), there is freedom of access to the throne of grace.

“Do not be distressed”

In view of this, adds Paul, you need not grieve about what has happened to me. In varying degrees, many in Asia would be familiar with what happened to Paul in carrying Christ into the heathen world. “Do not be distressed by this”, adds the apostle (in v. 13), “for it is your glory.” This may seem a strange exhortation, but his sufferings are a consequence of his love for his Lord and for them, the readers of his letter. Boasting was foreign to Paul, but we remember how once, reluctantly and to answer his Judaizing critics amongst the Corinthians, he engaged in the foolishness of boasting. None can read 2 Corinthians 11:23-30 without feeling a sense of awe. There is so much to learn from the study of Paul’s letters, and not only from his writings, but also from his example.

In our next study we hope to look at the beautiful prayer the apostle offers for his readers.

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Notes:

1. *St Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians*, London, 1903, p. 76. See also John Carter, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, The Christadelphian, p. 63: “Here, the idea is that, in God’s administration, His purpose now took in the Gentiles.”
2. English has borrowed many words from Greek and in the process the “sun” compounds reflect the variations in the Greek: thus we have “synthesis”, “sympathy”, “symphony”, “system”, etc.
3. Paul, in considering his relationship to the Lord Jesus, sometimes calls himself his “doulos” (slave, bondservant); see, for example, Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1. When he speaks of his work for the Lord, he is a “diakonos” — “one who ministers” (see Col. 1:23).

Bible Study

Little Words that Mean a Lot (4) Compassion

*“The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion;
slow to anger, and of great mercy” (Psa. 145:8).*

The 1950s was a time when radio actually entertained people, instead of just having talk shows all day long. Today radio is a medium that seems to thrive solely on trashing politicians, celebrities, and of course football coaches! During the 1950s there was an ongoing series that served as filler between regular broadcast shows. This series featured Carl Reiner as a reporter interviewing a supposedly 2000-year-old man, played by Mel Brooks. The *shtick* was centered on the 2000-year-old man making comments that were farfetched, but at the same time reflected painfully and accurately on the human condition. One of these vignettes has Reiner asking Brooks, “What did you do for entertainment 2000 years ago? Things must have been very boring.” “Oh no,” replies the 2000 year old man. “We had plenty of good tragedy and comedy.” “Really! Can you give our listeners an example of what you are talking about?” asks Reiner. Brooks replies, “Tragedy is when I cut my finger. Comedy is when you don’t look where you are going and fall in a hole and die.”

Therein lies the tale. We are often insensitive to the pratfalls of others, and they can even be the objects of laughter if not too injurious. This type of humor has made big stars out of many performers. Slapstick comedians such as Charlie Chaplin and the Three Stooges used such routines to milk their audiences for laughs. Why do people laugh at such apparently cruel pratfalls? It is generally thought this makes many people laugh with relief that it isn’t happening to them. It’s the other guy who is looking ridiculous by slipping on a banana peel — thank goodness it isn’t me! (*Personally, I’ve never cared for this type of so-called humor, but to each his own.*)

The moral of this story is that we can often be insensitive to the plight of others, no matter how serious (*falling in the hole and dying*), yet we are keenly sensitive to even the slightest pain or inconvenience that we suffer personally (*cutting our finger*). A person who is insensitive to the pain of others lacks **compassion**, and anyone lacking compassion fails miserably in emulating the character of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us take a closer look at this little word, compassion.

The English word “compassion” is derived from the primary root word “passion”, having a Latin origin. “Passionem” in the Latin originally meant “the suffering of pain”. By adding the prefix “com”, one extends the meaning to include a sense of “together, in combination, in union”. However, even though “compassion” is derived from “passion”, the link between the two has clearly diverged in common

English usage since the 1611 King James Bible. For example, if I told you Mary had a great passion for music you would hardly suppose that she ‘suffered’ through musical programs; in fact, you would think quite the opposite. The meaning of ‘passion’ in modern American English is now understood in the opposite sense from what it originally meant.¹ The word ‘passion’ appears only once in the King James Version of our Bibles (Acts 1:3), and the meaning is unequivocally ‘suffering.’ Both the New King James and the New International Versions concede the divergence from modern English and eliminate the word ‘passion’ in this passage, using instead ‘suffering.’

Remarkably, the word “compassion” has not changed its meaning since 1611. Its primary meaning is still ‘suffering together with another’, i.e., sharing another’s pain.² The word appears 39 times in the KJV and an astonishing 73 times in the NIV; it is a translation for at least six different Hebrew and six different Greek words. The best way to get a deep sense of what the Scriptures mean by “compassion” is carefully to read our Bibles and to appreciate how this concept is put into living action.

Compassion in the Old Testament

The psalmist informs us of the character of the Lord God in dealing with the disobedience of the children of Israel:

“But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath” (Psa. 78:38, NKJV).

In writing this psalm, Asaph perhaps had in mind what had happened to Judah in the days of Pekah, king of Israel (see 2 Chron. 28): As a punishment for the sins of Judah, God allowed the Northern Kingdom to “carry away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought them to Samaria” (2 Chron. 28:8). But the LORD had compassion upon them in spite of their sins, and sent the prophet Oded to remind Israel of their own sins:

“Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?” (v. 10).

What follows is remarkable. Heeding the admonition of the prophet and apparently of their own volition, “certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim” (v. 12) undertook a massive act of compassion:

“Then the men who were designated by name (i.e., in v. 12) rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria” (v. 15, NKJV).

This was an enormous act of compassion on the part of ‘certain of the heads’ of the children of Ephraim. Moreover, they had to stand up to the power of a returning victorious army and deprive them of their spoils in order to carry out this

act of mercy and kindness to their defeated enemies (vv. 13,14). It is an example that seems to have had almost no counterpart in contemporary conflicts in the modern world — genocide seems far more prevalent than even the smallest acts of compassion. We might do well to consider whether our own actions in the ecclesia are as magnanimous in dealing with those who have offended us. Do we offer them compassion — knowing *that we too have sinned*? Or are we instead guilty of attempting to extract measure for measure?

Compassion in the New Testament

We are told “the LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion” (Psa. 111:4). We are also told that the best way, as always, to appreciate fully the character of the Lord God is to see how it was reflected in His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. As Jesus set out to preach his gospel message, he was moved to compassion when he realized how lost the people were, like “sheep having no shepherd”. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few” (Matt. 9:35-38, NKJV). If this was the situation in the first century AD, think how much greater the disparity must be today. Yet do we exhibit the same compassion for this state of things, or are we content to hide our candle under a bushel (Matt. 5:15, Mark 4:21, Luke 11:33)?

How much compassion do we have for the world around us? Do we recognize its need for salvation, or is our attention focused on our little circle of family and our ecclesial clique of comfortable friends? In North America we have spent an inordinate amount of time, energy and expense preaching to each other, instead of cooperating to bring in the harvest in unity (Psa. 133:1). We have been marvelous in seeing the mote in others’ eyes and have usually been oblivious to the beam in our own. If the same amount of resources that has been devoted to unity efforts had been spent in helping small ecclesias grow, in planting new ecclesias where none previously existed, in recovering lost sheep and further strengthening our young so they can withstand the buffeting of a virtually godless world, how much spiritually richer would our community be today?

We here in North America are living amongst the most educated and religiously aware communities in the entire world. We have freedom to preach and practice our faith, a freedom we often take for granted. This freedom is far greater than that of many other nations around the globe — lands where brethren and sisters labor under conditions of poverty, religious intolerance, and political unrest. Yet ironically, even though the population in North America has grown by 300% since 1940, the total number of Christadelphians has hardly changed. As a percent of the total population our numbers have actually declined. We can make excuses for our shortcomings. In the end, however, the Father will hold us accountable, for He will know whether or not we as a community have acted wisely or foolishly in carrying out His will (1 Tim. 2:4).

“Jesus wept” — Why?

John 11:35 is well known as the shortest passage in Scripture. It is also among the most poignant. But why exactly was he weeping? Was it compassion for the

sorrow of his friends Mary and Martha in their loss of their brother Lazarus? Possibly. A careful reading of the text presents us with an alternative. John 11:33 tells us that, upon returning to Bethany, Jesus saw not only Martha and Mary crying, but “the Jews also which came with her.” This caused Jesus to groan and be troubled in spirit. The reason for this groaning had nothing to do with Mary and Martha. The narrative in verse 37 makes it plain that the Jews questioned his authority and power:

“Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?”

We next read that Jesus ‘again’ groaned; this little word ‘again’ connects us back to verse 33, where he groaned the first time. It appears that Jesus’ sorrow was not just a compassionate response to the pain of Mary and Martha, but also most assuredly a deep sorrow because of the unbelief he knew was in the hearts of the Jews who were witnesses to the death of Lazarus. This is made plain by the words of Jesus in verse 41:

“Father, I thank You that You have heard Me” (NKJV).

Jesus could have uttered these thoughts silently in his mind, and they would have been just as effective. But he spoke loudly to the crowd gathered around the tomb of Lazarus, so that none would doubt the immediacy of the answer to his prayer. Jesus had felt the pain of Lazarus’ death, but also sorrow for the unbelief that had infected the accompanying crowd. His compassion for us in times of pain includes the same factors. Our faith in Jesus should suffice to cover both our immediate sorrows and also the tendency to lose our faith when faced with calamity. If we had the faith of Martha who, when faced with the pain of losing her brother, could say: “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day” (v. 24), then the compassion of Jesus would comfort us even now.

The compassion of Jesus

There are so many examples in Scripture of the compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ that one could virtually write a chapter expounding on each instance and still not capture the full measure of the power of his love in sharing our suffering. There was the compassion he had for the widow of Nain, which culminated in the resurrection of her child (Luke 7:11-15), and the healing of the man possessed with demons that were transferred to the herd of swine (Mark 5:1-20) — to name just two instances. We recall the teachings of Jesus concerning the nature of true compassion, as illustrated in the parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. The compassion Jesus had for the multitudes that followed him on two occasions, who “were like sheep not having a shepherd” (Mark 6:34) and who hungered so much for the words of Christ that they had “nothing to eat” for three days (Mark 8:2), also deserves our attention. While the actual miracle of feeding thousands with just a meager number of loaves and a few fish is noteworthy in itself, it may not even be the key element in the account.

What stands out strikingly in all these cases is that compassion was always followed by action. The widow of Nain has her son restored to life. The man possessed with demons is made whole. The father forgives and restores his prodigal son, and the

Good Samaritan succors and carries the injured wayfarer on his own account. Jesus fed the multitudes that followed him into the wilderness both spiritually, with the gospel message, and physically, with an abundance of bread and fish. In this latter example we are treated with the stunning result that even though only a few loaves and fish were originally available, nevertheless — after the loving compassion of Jesus went into action — there were leftovers amounting to 12 baskets of fragments in the first case and seven in the second. When the Lord offers us compassion, he is not stingy in providing for us. Neither should we be hesitant or reluctant in offering compassion to others.

Takers and givers

It has been said that there are only two kinds of people in this world: “takers” and “givers”. Takers are selfish; they are only concerned with their own needs. They are always demanding things of others. Takers often will spend irresponsibly and will let you down at every turn if you depend on them for anything. Takers always want to know, consciously or unconsciously, “What’s in it for me?”

On the other hand, givers are considerate of the needs of others. If someone is in trouble, they will always dig deep to provide emotional, physical and financial support. Givers are usually the first ones to volunteer if a job needs to be done. If they say they will do something, you can bank on it. Givers are willing to sacrifice themselves for others, while takers expect everyone else to make sacrifices for them. In short, givers are compassionate people and takers are not. What sort of people ought we to be?

The greatest compassion

The gospel of John records these words of Jesus:

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

This was the ultimate act of unselfish compassion. We can go one step further and consider the compassion of our heavenly Father:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

By these examples, we know what sort of persons we ought to be if we are to be his disciples. We must be givers, compassionate to the needs of others even when self-sacrifice may be needed.

May the world know by our compassionate actions that we are truly the brethren of Christ.

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Notes:

1. “Passion = A powerful emotion of appetite, such as love, joy, hatred, anger or greed.” (*Not a hint of suffering here!*) Quoted from *The American Heritage Dictionary* (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, MA, 1976).
2. *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Amen House, London (1964 edition).

Bible Study

Thoughts from The Letter to the Hebrews: (2) “Let us go on...”

Two cryptic phrases summarize much of the teaching of the Letter to the Hebrews. They are “Let us” and “Lest we”, as used in the King James, or Authorized, Version of the Bible. The first is one of commitment and determination, an encouragement to *go forward*, whereas the second is a warning against *going away*, declaring danger if one succumbs to that temptation. In the context of the letter, the two phrases are used particularly with reference to the Law of Moses and its requirements. The encouragement was to leave the ritual and to move forward to freedom and life “in Christ”, rather than to return to the old ways of ritual obedience.

This teaching is epitomized in the phrase: “Let us go on, lest we go back.” A detailed review of all these phrases will be helpful to us. (The wording quoted is from the King James Version, but the principle is true for other versions also.)

Let us fear...	4:1
Let us labor to enter...	4:11
Let us hold fast...	4:14
Let us come boldly...	4:16
Let us go on...	6:1
Let us draw near...	10:22
Let us hold fast...	10:23
Let us consider...	10:24
Let us lay aside...	12:1
Let us run the race...	12:1
Let us have grace to serve...	12:28
Let us go forth...	13:13
Let us offer the sacrifice...	13:15

Lest we let them slip	2:1
Lest there be an evil heart	3:12
Lest any of you be hardened	3:13
Let us therefore fear, lest there...	4:1
Lest any man fall...	4:11
Lest ye be wearied and faint...	12:3
Lest... ye be turned out of the way	12:13
Lest any man fail...	12:15
Lest any root of bitterness...	12:15
Lest there be any fornicator	12:16

What an exhortation! All of us, without exception and without distinction, must serve the Lord positively, looking forward to the future age in faith and confidence — rather than looking backward to the past with longing and wistfulness. The best is yet to be. Christ is yet to come and the Kingdom yet to be established. Let us go forward! If we do not, we shall go backwards to death and destruction.

The centerpiece of this exhortation is to be found in the following passage:

*“Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... **Let us** draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... **let us** hold fast the profession of our faith... and **let us** consider one another to good works” (Heb. 10:19-25).*

Because of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus we are able to enter into the presence of God. Or, to be more precise, because of the ascension of Jesus, we have a new relationship with God; therefore we have access into His presence by prayer. We need to consider the significance of the ascension if we are to understand the centrality of its importance in the Letter to the Hebrews. The ascension of Jesus is often ignored in our teaching, yet it is a vital component of our faith; without it the high priesthood of Christ could not begin.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest went into the presence of God by entering into the Most Holy Place on behalf of the whole nation of Israel. He left the nation awaiting his return with mingled hope and fear — hope that their sins would be forgiven, fear that the high priest would not return and the wrath of God would descend upon them.

This is the background of the verse:

“For yet a little while and he that shall come will come and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:36,37).

The passage is an exhortation to faith: while their high priest was absent in the Most Holy Place, they should maintain their faith. This can be transferred directly to ourselves: we who wait for the return of our high priest must maintain our faith in our Master's return.

To return to the teaching about the Ascension, The Most Holy Place was a symbolic representation, although literal, of the Sanctuary in heaven where God dwells and into which Jesus entered upon his ascension. This event is probably described in Daniel:

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all nations should serve him: and his dominion is an everlasting kingdom, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom which shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:13,14).

Other passages which could be considered in this way are Revelation 5:6,7; Psalm 16:10,11; and Psalm 110:1. All of these may refer to aspects of the ascension of Jesus into the presence of God, events foreshadowed by the entry of the high priest into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement.

Now, we return to our thoughts on the Letter to the Hebrews. It is apparent that the exhortation we have identified and quoted above (Heb. 10:19-25) has as its background the entry of the high priest into the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement. For us, that event foreshadowed the entry of Jesus into the presence of God at his ascension, from whence he will return to the earth. The high priest returned to the people after making due representation before God on the Day of Atonement. We wait in faith, just as they did.

“For ye have need of patience... for a yet a little while and he that shall come, will come...” (Heb. 10:37).

The return of the high priest to the nation was a parable of the Second Coming of Jesus. Just as the people had to wait in faith and patience, so do we.

We need to look forward, anticipating the day of our salvation. It is extremely tempting to look backward constantly with wistfulness, as if the past were always better than the present. The Jews were guilty of that mistake: they looked back to the time of ritual and sacrificial laws. I am sure that they thought “people knew what to do in *those* days”, and that they saw Christianity as but another strand of Judaism. Thus, throughout the New Testament, the constant refrain is that “Christ has set us free from the law.” It was epitomized in the phrases, quoted frequently in the Letter to the Hebrews: “Let us go on... lest we go back.”

The Jewish converts to Christianity were preoccupied with making sure that they retained the essential Jewishness of their worship. Although the teaching of Christ was dynamic, the early disciples found it difficult to be “total” converts to Christianity, to “move on” to a new dimension of understanding. Many believers wanted to retain the Law of Moses — seen in terms of circumcision, keeping of the feasts, the wearing of certain clothes, and the slavish acceptance of ritual.

This teaching was challenged by the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews as “going back” to an out-of-date, outmoded manner of life. On the other hand, Christianity was new and progressive, looking forward to the Second Coming of Christ rather than looking back to the Law of Moses.

There is a clear message for believers today. We must be aware of the danger of always looking backward rather than forward. But we must always remember that the best is yet to be, so that we might “go on” to the Kingdom rather than “go back” to sin and perdition.

Colin Edwards (Newbury, UK)

The preacher was wired for sound with a lapel microphone, and as he preached, rather ferociously, he moved briskly about the platform, jerking the mike cord as he went. Then he moved to one side, getting wound up in the cord and nearly tripping before jerking it again.

After several such exercises, a little girl, watching carefully, leaned toward her mother and whispered, “If he gets loose, will he hurt us?”

Reflections

Mary's Dream

I
had a
dream,
Joseph.

I don't under-
stand it, not really,
but I think it was
about a birthday
celebration for our son.

The people had been pre-
paring for about six weeks. They
decorated the house. They'd gone
shopping and bought elaborate gifts.

But the presents weren't for our son.

They wrapped them beautifully with
lovely bows, and put them under a tree.

Yes, a tree, Joseph. The branches were full
of glowing balls and shining ornaments. There
was a figure on the top, something like an angel,
beautiful. Everyone was happy and excited about the
gifts they gave to each other, Joseph, not to our son.

I don't think they knew him since they never mentioned his
name. It seems odd for people to celebrate someone's birthday
and not know him. I had the strongest feeling that, if our son had
gone to this celebration, he would have been intruding. Everything
was so beautiful, Joseph, and everyone so full of cheer, but it made me
want to cry. How sad for Jesus not to be wanted at his own birthday
celebration. I'm glad it was only a dream. How terrible,

Joseph,
if it
had
been real.

The Potter's Wheel

*"Yet, O LORD, You are our Father.
We are the clay, You are the potter;
We are all the work of Your hand"
(Isaiah 64:8).*

I'm only clay on the potter's wheel,
Going 'round and 'round —
Formless... molded with water and clay,
Fashioned from the ground.
With the skill of the Master's Hand
He has turned, on His wheel,
A vessel to suit His needs,
To enable His will.

I'm the vessel He fashioned, and I listen and am still.
He has tempered me thoroughly; He wants me to do His Will.
His promises are plenty; I love to sing them in song,
There are many who yearn, who'd like to sing along.

So I carry His message of patience and delight,
I carry the letters that speak of hope and sight.
He has a purpose for me, and — yes — for you!
To carry His Word of Truth,
To let His love shine through.

Can you be a vessel that bears the Master's light?
You'll travel a narrow road, guided through the night.
You may not have freedom; you may not have riches.
But you'll carry His wisdom; you'll carry His wishes.

Can you be...?

Only clay on the potter's wheel,
Going 'round and 'round,
Molded with water and clay,
Fashioned from the ground.
With the skill of the Master's Hand
He has turned, on His wheel,
A vessel to suit His needs,
To enable His will.

*Marieke Garner
(Hamilton Ewen Road, ON)*

“I would not be here if it were not for you”

If my father had not remained faithful to God after my mother died when I was only three years old, if he had started dating and partying as most young men do, I wonder whom he might have met and what would have happened.

If my Aunt Em had preferred to dedicate herself to pursuing boys and getting married rather than moving in and taking care of me and Dad, I wonder what would have happened.

If my Aunt Mary Styles, my mother's sister, had not accepted my father's proposal and the challenge of a nine-year-old boy, things would have been different.

If Mary had not bribed me into going to Wilbraham when I was 13, by agreeing to pay my way and telling me there were other boys like me who were going, I would not have gone.

If the brethren who ran Wilbraham Bible school had thrown me out, which would have been the reasonable thing to do, I would never have made the close friendships there that became an anchor to my life through the teen years... and are still of my fondest memory. It was my spiritual lifeline.

If my parents had not done the Bible readings every night, and drilled into me the difference between Christadelphian beliefs and all the rest of what passes for Christianity, I would never have become a conscientious objector.

If Bro. Curt Rankin hadn't taken me down to Byberry and introduced me to Mr. Richards, I might not have gotten the job at the mental hospital and the draft board matter might have gone even worse.

If Bro. Alvan Brittle had not recommended me to Bro. Otto Sticht, I never would have gotten that job with Bernzomatic, and I might still be serving hamburgers at Howard Johnson's on the New Jersey Turnpike.

If the brothers and sisters in the Midwest had not been serious in the Truth, and warm and welcoming, it would have been a lot harder to maintain the ties.

If there had been no brotherhood in California and no clear teaching that we should only marry in the faith, how would I have ever met Bonnie? And had four children and eight grandchildren? And met Bro. Bob Lloyd and gone into business?

If it were not for Dr. Thomas and those who went before, how would I have learned the Truth? I would not have searched it out when I was young.

If men had not learned Greek and Hebrew and Latin... and translated the ancient texts, I would have no Bible, and none of the study helps that Young and Strong and others dedicated their lives to produce.

And if there were no ecclesia of God with whom I could meet, where would I be? I didn't get here on my own, and I could not maintain on my own.

I would not be here if it were not for you.

Ken Sommerville (Simi Hills, CA)

A Correlation

Every now and then someone will ask: what can we do to attract our young people? Are our talks catchy enough? Are we providing the right information? What can we do to keep them?

On the one hand, there are some who feel that our kids are spoiled — they can sit for three hours and watch a movie without once getting up, but can't sit still in the meeting for one hour; so it's all a matter of discipline. They should know that 'church' is important and be expected to discipline themselves.

On the other, some feel that kids should be allowed to make their own decisions. If they are not interested in a religious way of life, then maybe one day, when they are older, they will develop an interest. In the meanwhile we should try and keep them entertained — going to all lengths, even if it means relaxing some of the Scriptural principles.

And not only the kids, but also we adults... do we require various forms of entertainment to keep our attention at the meeting, or to bring us to the meeting in the first place, for that matter? I was thinking of possible reasons that would be acceptable to miss a meeting. Some of the 'good' ones are:

'I have to prepare a talk. After all, it's a Bible class I have to prepare — so it is okay if I stay home today and get my talk done.'

Or,

'A cousin is getting married, and she would be very upset if I didn't go to the wedding.'

In some parts of the world, weddings are still performed on Sundays. And so the reasoning is:

'Well, since they are only getting married once (*So they say!*), then I can skip meeting this week.'

Some 'not so good' reasons:

'My non-religious relatives are visiting, and I cannot leave them to go and serve God!'

Or perhaps,

'I just woke up late and simply cannot make it!'

The young people are watching us! They will emulate what they see. This is what I have seen growing up in the truth. When I think about all the families that I have been around, either at the meeting or in their homes, I see a startling correlation between the spiritual dedication of the female leader in the home and the attitude of the children to ecclesial life.

By no means am I attempting to excuse the male. He could be an excellent brother, studying his Bible, giving good talks. He could even be an arranging brother. However, when he does not have the support of a sister to help him to motivate the children in a spiritual direction, we see less and less of the children. In some cases, the young unmarried girls show up one day with their own children! I know we strongly disapprove of this. However, since boys do not get pregnant,

they may be involved in all sorts of improper behavior yet nevertheless escape this particular disapproval.

But back to our mothers. In almost all of the families I have known, where Mom was completely behind the kids, bringing them to the meeting from birth, not distracted by the annual awards event at school, not giving in to the whines about not feeling well today, those who were once little boys and girls are now assisting in nurturing their ecclesias, and are fully supportive of all their activities.

On the other hand, Mom may have been more concerned about whether Sam would get into Harvard, or getting Raj to his extra lessons on Sundays or instead of the mid-week Bible classes, so that he can achieve high marks at his school, or allowing Sandy to miss Sunday school because it's her grand performance at the Majestic Piano Finale... then that is exactly where the kids are today! Not at the meeting but everywhere else.

Of course, there are exceptions to the rule, and by no means am I trying to lay blame solely on the mother. I am simply pointing out my observations over the years. And I cannot help but notice a strong correlation between these two factors.

Perhaps it's because children tend to gravitate toward Mom's feelings more so than toward Dad's. So, since we live in an age where females are becoming more and more influential, may I suggest that — following the advice of Paul in 1 Timothy 5:14 — our mothers take a more active role in bringing and keeping the future brothers and sisters at our meetings:

"I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

Gideon Drepaul (Brooklyn, NY)

Jesus' Unlikely Conversions:

(5) The thief on the cross

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him:

"Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him:

"Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said,

"Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him,

"I tell you the truth today... you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:39-43).

There is something that always touches me when I consider people in Scripture like this wonderful man. I feel the same when I remember Rahab, the harlot who left that lifestyle to join the people of the living God, or Zacchaeus, the small man with large courage and faith who humbled himself to climb the tree to see Jesus and was so greatly rewarded for doing so.

And when I consider the woman taken in adultery (John 8), who was dragged before Jesus and then saved by him from the stones of her accusers, I would very much like to think that she “sinned no more”, became a dedicated follower of her Savior, and will receive eternal life.

Although we won’t know his name until the Kingdom, there are some things we do know about this astonishing man, the thief on the cross. Quite likely he was, along with his partner in crime, a follower of Barabbas (the one the crowd chose to release instead of Jesus). This would mean he was also an insurrectionist and in all likelihood a zealot.

But it’s also possible, too, that he was a lapsed disciple. I would suggest this based on his amazing insight about Jesus (which will be considered shortly). And if this is the case, then we have an answer to the vexing question, ‘How could he be saved, not being baptized?’ For, as a disciple — even a former disciple, so to speak — he would have been baptized either by John the Baptist or Jesus’ apostles.

Even if it turns out that he wasn’t baptized earlier, it is true that he literally died with Christ. Isn’t that what baptism represents?

As to the thief’s beliefs, we can tell the following from his statements to the other thief and to Jesus:

1. Jesus was sinless: “This man has done nothing wrong” (v. 41).
2. He himself was a worthless sinner: “We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve” (v. 41).
3. Jesus was “Lord” (AV), i.e., the Messiah (v. 42).
4. Jesus would rise from the dead. For how else could Jesus eventually remember the thief when he came in his kingdom?
5. Jesus would ascend to heaven — the same reasoning as before, based on Psalm 110:1: “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”
6. Jesus would come again. “Lord, remember me when you *come*.”
7. At his coming Jesus will raise the dead: “Remember me!” Of course, the thief knew that within hours he would be dead!
8. “Remember me” also implies discrimination (judgment) between those accepted and those rejected, so he had to have known Jesus would be the judge.
9. His coming would also establish a kingdom. So here again is his understanding that Jesus will be the king in this glorious kingdom.

A couple of other points: The other thief had just said to Jesus, “If you are the Christ, save yourself *and us!*” This is similar, of course, to what the mockers

were saying — “Come down from the cross.” Also, the unrepentant thief was saying, “*Save us too!*” (v. 39). But, in contrast to the other thief, the righteous thief appeared to know that Jesus needed to die *as a sacrifice for sins*; therefore, he doesn’t endorse what his companion said. Furthermore, in his rebuke to his companion he asks, “Don’t you fear God?” — implying that he (the speaker) *did* fear God. Here was his open confession of faith in God and in His Son. He and his companion may have had the sympathy of the crowd, if it’s true that they were followers of Barabbas (for most Jews would have had much sympathy for anyone who had tried to overthrow the yoke of Rome). But, if so, now he was forfeiting this sympathy, and choosing rather to share the reproach of Jesus.

Isn’t it rather extraordinary that at this point there may have been only three people, *in the world*, who knew for certain that Jesus would rise from the dead, ascend to heaven, and eventually come in glory to establish God’s kingdom? One is this criminal, this nameless thief, and the other two are the soon-to-be despised Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (both hated by their own associates in the Sanhedrin). The apostles and close friends of Jesus would soon understand it all, but for them that came later, on the following Sunday, when he appeared to them.

Paul makes an important point about all these conversions, when he writes to the Corinthians:

“Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him” (1 Cor. 1:26-29).

And in another passage, also from 1 Corinthians, he adds this thought:

“Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a ‘fool’ so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight” (3:18,19).

So it was with Simon of Cyrene, Malchus, the Roman centurion, Joseph, Nicodemus, and the righteous thief. They were from wide and varied backgrounds, but they all had one thing in common. They saw the truth when it presented itself — that the suffering, apparently friendless man whose life was ebbing away *was* the Messiah, the judge of all the earth, Son of David, the future king of the world — and *their* Lord and Savior.

Come what may, they all chose to attach themselves to him — and not let go.

Brothers and sisters, we must do the same.

Wesley Booker (Austin South, TX)

*Acknowledgment: For this article in particular, the author owes much to Bro. Harry Whittaker and his **Studies in the Gospels**.*

Nullifying the Word

I was given great pause for thought during a recent exhortation where the tradition of “Corban” was discussed. The morning reading was from Mark 7.

While the practice is perhaps not fully understood by us today, “Corban” is generally taken to be a policy or formula whereby a man could dedicate his wealth to the temple and thereby circumvent his responsibilities to his parents. A son need only declare that what he had intended to give his father and mother be considered “Corban”, i.e., a gift devoted to God, and then it could no longer be designated or used for the care of his parents.

By devoting the gift to God, a son did not necessarily promise it to the temple nor did he prevent its use for himself. What he did do was to exclude legally his parents from benefiting from it (Mark 7:12). Thus the very purpose for which the commandment regarding parents was given was set aside by the tradition. This is what Jesus meant by “nullifying” the word of God (Mark 7:13).

In the exhortation, the brother certainly broadened the application of this particular practice of the Pharisees. He provided potential examples of our dealings with our failing elders, helping to bring the “Corban” concept into our own time. This is certainly within the context of Mark 7. Any self-respecting Pharisee could “spin” it this way. For example, if your aged parents did not wash properly around your clean and godly house, as the law of Moses prescribed, then this fact trumped the fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12). Cleanliness became the higher ideal, above the command to honour your father and mother, etc. Excluding your parents for this reason could also become “Corban”.

In Mark 7, Jesus clearly contrasts the “commands of God” and the “traditions of men”. While the discussion obviously included the whole subject of cleanliness, it was also directed toward a far more urgent consideration. Following is a useful quote from *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*:

“It is clear that this great body of Jewish tradition had failed to get to the heart of God's commands. It was supposed to fence in the law so that the people would not infringe on it. Actually, however, the tradition distorted or ossified the law. In fact, it had even become a means of getting around God's law” (Vol. 8, p. 678).

At the time of Mark's writing, these “traditions of men” consisted of a great mass of oral tradition that had arisen around the law during the previous three to four hundred years. About 200 AD it was all written down in what became known as the Mishnah, but in Jesus' day it was still in oral form.

The purpose of the oral tradition was to regulate completely every aspect of life. When the law was ambiguous or even silent on a matter, tradition was explicit and vocal. It was promulgated by the leading rabbis, was passed down from one generation to another, and was considered binding. It had the effect of replacing God in the hearts of the people with the more visual and imperative reality of the local religious power elite. Of course, if Biblical and godly principles reigned

within the hearts of the people, then the elite would be to a large extent “out of business”.

The real issue, of course, is that we are all easily tarred with the same brush. It is common for human nature of all ages to trump the commandments of God with the traditions of men. Our own “idols” are very compelling.

As good Bible understanding and exegesis become less common, we all need constantly to re-examine everything we do, say and think. We need to make certain it is in accordance with the will and commandments of God, rather than the more easily applied and often more attractive and tempting traditions of men.

Clyde Snobelen (Victoria, BC)

***“Go... wash in the Pool of Siloam” (John 9:7)...
“the gently flowing waters of Shiloah” (Isaiah 8:6).***

*“Beneath Moriah’s rocky side
A gentle fountain springs,
Silent and soft its waters glide,
Like the peace the Spirit brings.*

“The thirsty Arab stoops to drink
Of the cool and quiet wave,
And the thirsty spirit stops to think
Of him who came to save.*

*“Siloam is the fountain’s name,
It means ‘One sent from God’;
And thus the holy Saviour’s fame
It gently spreads abroad.*

*“O grant that I, like this sweet well,
May Jesus’ image bear,
And spend my life, my all, to tell
How full his mercies are!”*

(R.M. M’Cheyne)

** Probably the Arab is mentioned because this was composed in the early nineteenth century, when very few if any Jews lived in Jerusalem.*

Letters

What will happen to “the other fellow”?

Dear Bro. George,

Your meditations on “what I don’t know” are very thought-provoking. One in particular caught my attention, “What will happen to ‘the other fellow’ ” [*November*, p. 471].

I have often quoted the comment of Jesus to Peter: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me” (John 21:22,23). But my thoughts on this issue are more focused on the people of the world in general. As one who has been to many different countries primarily for Bible mission work, I meditate a lot on the plight of the apparently spiritually “helpless” people I see all around. All too often I hear brethren quote that “God is not willing that any should perish” (2 Pet. 3:9), implying that their salvation is in His hands, that it’s up to God. But as I read the context of Peter’s short epistle, I am not sure we correctly understand his point. He seems to me to be saying, ‘He is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any [*of us*] should perish.’ Two verses further on he says, “Since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought *you* to be?”

In the previous chapter Peter laments those who have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord, yet who are in danger of being entangled again: “It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness...” (2:20,21). Peter sees that, in one sense, it is better for people to remain in ignorance than, having escaped from darkness into light, to be entrapped again by the darkness. They have been called and have responded; it seems it is these of whom God is not willing that any should perish — just as Jesus was not willing that any of his disciples should be lost. (In the end, despite their “little faith” on several occasions, he only lost one, “the son of perdition.”)

True, we can quote the words of Jesus to Peter, telling him to focus on himself and not be concerned about the future of fellow believers. But the larger picture is another issue. It is all very well to dismiss it as something I do not know, but in my experience it will not stay dismissed.

I meditate on God’s standards of judgment especially when I hear brethren say, in effect, ‘Unless you understand the Scriptures just as we do, and act just as we do, you will not be in the Kingdom!’ Are we right to think this way? Or is this something else we should put, at least partly, in the “what I don’t know” basket?

To whom much is given, of him much is expected (Luke 12:48)! Is this a significant principle of judgment? Jesus said it will be “more tolerable” for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment (Matt. 10:15; 11:22), and that the men of Nineveh would “rise up” in the judgment (Matt. 12:41). The Potter’s judgment of the various types of vessels He has made is something we

cannot know. We can see in the history of Israel the cold fact that, for most of the time, they failed in their role as God's witnesses. Did this matter to God, that is, the failure of His people to be a true "witness"?

It is one thing for some to have access to the 'fullness of the knowledge of the Son of God' (Eph 4:13), and then to turn away from this and forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10:25). It is very much a different thing for one to whom little knowledge is given, to embrace what he is given with a willing heart. But having said this, I say at the same time, how to deal with this difference is "what I don't know"!

The question refuses to go away for mission workers — as they scatter the seed and see it germinating in virgin soil in largely pagan lands, and yet have such limited opportunity to tend and water it. There is a brother, the first to be baptized in a remote state of India, who keeps telling me how he is preaching to nearby illiterate tribal peoples. He tells me they believe the fundamental message about Jesus, his Kingdom, the hope of resurrection, etc. He tells me he has "examined" them and they give the "right" answers! "Can I baptize them, Uncle?" he asks. What answer do I give? "I don't know"?

One line of thought sometimes expressed is that, since only eight were saved in the times of Noah, we should expect to see only a small remnant saved today. The small 'splinter groups' of our brotherhood like to quote this. The reasoning on this seems very thin. I cannot accept the reasoning that the world population exploded enormously before the flood. There were only eight generations from Cain and Seth to Noah. Although they lived exceptionally long lives, we have no indication that they were continuously having many, many children. Those who claim they spread out over all the earth are stating something they simply 'don't know'. The building of the ark over a great many years — possibly 100 — must have been a landmark on the earth, and it would be its own testimony to impending doom. Furthermore, we note that Noah is described as "a preacher of righteousness" (2 Pet. 2:5). So the warning to the world was visual and verbal, and there is reason to think that many if not most of those living then would have heard the message. But they did not have ears to hear.

Paul writes, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, *so that they are without excuse*" (Rom. 1:20). "Without excuse", since the days of creation, if they do not believe in God and His power — and what else? The context suggests that the physical evidence of a Creator is part of a wider mix of the "gospel" (vv. 16-19). But Paul does say, "Since the creation... they are without excuse." This invites us to consider the degrees of what we like to call "responsibility", and therefore "knowledge", at the different stages of human history — right up to the six billion-plus in the world today. Once again, we admit "we don't know". But with the admission comes, at least for me, the feeling that I should be careful what conclusions to reach about the nature of the judgment to come.

So 1 Timothy 2:4 tells us God "desires all men to be saved and come to the knowl-

edge of the truth.” In what context does Paul make this statement? It is written against the background of how the believers should behave, the image they should present to the world, and how they should pray “for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we might lead a quiet and peaceful life...” (vv. 1,2). This corresponds to the behavior Peter advised for wives of unbelievers, that by their conduct they might win them to Christ (1 Pet. 3:1). The lives of believers need to be such that all who see us should be encouraged and not hindered, because God desires all to be saved.

We keep coming back to the telling illustration of God as the Potter. “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, ‘Why hast thou made me thus?’ ” (Rom. 9:20). We have to leave it at that, as we ponder the way in which the fields are “white to the harvest”, and our responsibility in all this. We are workers together with God (2 Cor. 6:1). The challenge facing each one of us is to see the ways He is at work.

David Caudery (Dandenong, VIC, Australia)

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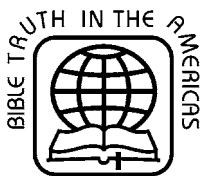
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The Jordan River flows south through the Sea of Galilee, and then continues southward. The Sea of Galilee takes in fresh water, and sends out fresh water. What it receives it gives back. This sea (really a freshwater lake) supports fish and is a good source of water for irrigation. It is living, and life-giving.

The Dead Sea, further to the south, receives the Jordan's fresh water but does not give any away. Nothing flows out. Its salt concentrations are so high that it cannot support any kind of life. All around it is barren and forbidding landscape. It is aptly named the "Dead Sea".

Too often we don't want "living water" — which refreshes us and flows out to others also. We would rather have a cistern, or tank, that is exclusively ours to dip into when we feel like it — we don't want to "share".

The Sea of Galilee or the Dead Sea — which should we be?



Bible Mission News

Mexico

The calm after the storm...

We were unaware of our traveling companion as we flew from Europe to Mexico to support the preaching activities, first in Mérida followed by four weeks in Guadalajara. It was not until we had been safely transported to the home of Bro. Hector and Sis. Linda Farías that we were informed our companion was called “Dean”, and Mérida lay directly in the path of this hurricane — following the route of its predecessors Gilbert, Isidor, Emily, and Wilma. Fortunately for us, “Dean” changed its trajectory. However, the full force of wind and violent water brought economic and personal tragedy some distance south of the city.

This event afforded us a topical opportunity to write about the Gospel in a regional newspaper. The journalist was aware of our arrival due to the recent publicity of several Bible course adverts. On other occasions, this particular newspaper has been keen to print most of what we have submitted, with no extra charge, describing our beliefs and our activities in the region. This visit was no exception. Our free publicity resulted in five people coming to the Sunday evening Bible study.

In Guadalajara, we were generously hosted by Bro. Carl and Sis. Cynthia Paiva. The ecclesia is now blessed with premises centrally located in the city. This new location now lends itself to a variety of innovative preaching efforts. On this occasion the brethren had arranged for us to give a series of special talks throughout the four weeks on “Forgiveness”, “Names and Titles”, “Studies on the Third Day”, and “An Introduction to Nehemiah”. There was also a six-session seminar presentation in which five brothers helped with the speaking. On average, five Bible contacts attended each session.

Another experiment each day was an “open house” at the meeting room, which is on a fairly busy street. Carol and I sat in the room from 1 until 5 pm, inviting people to drop in and ask questions on the Bible. This attracted some interest. Here are just a few of the questions visitors asked:

1. Why was Canaan cursed?
2. Who is the messenger of Satan in 1 Corinthians 12?
3. Why the “contradiction” between Mathew 28:19 and Mark 16:15,16?
4. Can infants be baptized, according to Acts 16:33?
5. What was Jesus’ mission?
6. What is the significance of the repetition of 30 in Judges 10:3-5?

7. Was Jesus crucified on a cross or a stake?
8. What does 'Christadelphian' mean?
9. Why don't you have apostolic authority?

Many of these give a clear indication of the questioner's religious background.

The "calm after the storm" manifested itself in so many ways during our time working alongside our Mexican brothers and sisters. We thank our heavenly Father for the encouragement this has given us in our walk to the Kingdom. On the last Saturday of our visit, we couldn't help but meditate upon these experiences in another land and another language as we witnessed the baptism of Francisco Castillo — see photos accompanying this article. He broke the surface of the still waters of a baptism pool, died, and rose again to a new life in Christ. He, along with the other brothers and sisters in this land, would love to share their faith with you. There is so much opportunity for preaching the Word in Latin America, and the spiritual blessings are many.

Bill and Carol Rawson
Fieldworkers on behalf of the CBMA



**Baptism of Bro. Francisco Castillo
in Guadalajara**



The Guadalajara ecclesia

South American Update: Bolivia, Peru and Chile

After months of planning, we left for South America on October 25, 2007, to visit ecclesias and support preaching activities in La Paz, Bolivia; Lima, Peru; and Santiago, Chile.

Bro. Robert Alderson, of the Waitakere Ecclesia in New Zealand, took care of most of the in-country details, such as hotel accommodation and lecture rooms. Bro. Jim and Sis. Jean Hunter sent out lecture invitations by postal service or email to hundreds of contacts in Lima and Santiago, while invitations to the lectures in La Paz were mailed by the ecclesia in that city.

Miriam and I went to La Paz, Bolivia, first, a city of 1.5 million, where we stayed with Bro. Jacob and Sis. Fiona Styles, resident missionaries in Bolivia. The Styles have settled into life in La Paz, as well as being involved in intensive Spanish language training. Plans are underway for a December 15 wedding of two members of the ecclesia — Bro. Martin Mostacedo and Sis. Laura Avila. They have been friends for many years, but since their baptism into Christ in early 2006, their relationship took on a new meaning. They have asked Jacob to marry them, so this will certainly make the Styles' first six months in La Paz busy! Activities at the ecclesial meeting room were supported by members and friends, with 16 visitors present at the two advertised lectures on Saturday. Sunday, October 27, after the memorial service, we were surprised when a regular attendee, Aleyda Villaroel, told everyone she had made up her mind that she wanted to be baptized. She has been attending with her husband and three children for about two years, and a full review will begin in earnest to prepare her for this commitment to the Lord.

We left for Lima, Peru, a city of eight million on Wednesday, October 31, to

meet Robert, who had arrived a couple of days previously. Lectures were held four evenings in a row, with an average attendance of eight. We had expected more contacts in attendance, but it would appear that the variable delivery of the country's postal system had affected attendance. Those students who did attend the lectures form the core group whom we have seen on a number of previous occasions. Several of the attendees agree with our understanding of the Scriptures and would like us to establish an ecclesia, so that they can attend.

Early Saturday morning, November 3, the three of us departed for Santiago, Chile. This is a very busy city of about six million in a country full of business and agriculture. There are only three members in this city, but we now have a small room rented for them and in order to provide a location for regular visitors to attend. An average of ten contacts attended each of the three special lectures held on both Saturday and Sunday.

The growth in each country is steady, and the overall support for the special lectures was encouraging. We anticipate baptisms in all three countries during the next year, God Willing.

Don Luff
CBMA Latin American Committee



Attendees at the Lima, Peru, lectures.
Bro. Robert Alderson is on back row, the first on the left.

Thisisyourbible.com Website

October continued to be an exciting month for the website. Our featured question last month was "Do Christians need to read and understand the Old Testament?" This resulted in over **1200** downloads of the pamphlet entitled "Christ in the

Old Testament”. There were over **850** Minute Meditation readings, which is even higher than September. Once again, in October we exceeded one million hits in a single month — **1,430,866!**

The best news of all, though, is that we again saw an increase in Bible students (**over 332**), and also another 13 tutors signed up. At this rate we can still use some more tutors.

Comparing this year to last year, the site activity — i.e., number of visits — is up almost **500%**.

Now for the next baptismal story. Sis. JoAnn Cameron first encountered the This Is Your Bible website in September 2006, and her tutor was Sis. Laura Spry. She transferred JoAnn to Bro. Mike LeDuke when it became clear to Laura that she would not be able to mark JoAnn’s lessons as quickly as JoAnn wanted to do them. Prior to that, in December, JoAnn encountered the link on the TIYB website to the Open Bible Forum — www.openbibleforum.org — and Bro. Tim Young directed her to the nearest ecclesia, Toronto East. One Wednesday she walked into the Bible class and said, “Hi! I’m JoAnn. I’m new!” Toronto East quickly took her into their care and nurtured her interest with engrossing Bible study and warm fellowship. After JoAnn completed the course, Mike alerted Bro. Russ and Sis. Muriel Dawes that she should be actively encouraged to begin instruction for baptism.

JoAnn’s instruction began in earnest in April and continued with the Dawes for the next few months. She remained in contact with Bro. Mike, asking questions and sharing her insecurities about the “interview”. With some encouragement and preparation for that event, she was interviewed and did very well indeed. She was baptized at the Toronto East hall on Sunday, October 21, 2007, with her children and grandchildren in attendance. Her son has also now enrolled in the Exploring the Bible course online.

All of us involved in the spiritual journey of this wonderful person are deeply grateful to our Father for using the website to touch such a good and honest heart. As JoAnn herself put it: *“Things fell into place beautifully for me. For every step I took on my own, there was someone who took me by the hand and gently guided me up to the next level. Gently being the operative word. My baptism was the product of a ‘group effort’. That’s how I see it anyway.”*

How many more “JoAnns” are “out there” waiting to hear the gospel message? May it please our heavenly Father to continue to use our website as a means of calling out of the Gentiles a people for His Name in these last days.

Want to help?

- Visit the website and find out what it’s all about (www.thisisyourbible.com)
- Become an on-line tutor; you can see from the statistics above that we need your help!
- Hand out the business cards available in your ecclesia — let us know if you need more
- Advertise the website in your local newspaper or as a link on your ecclesia’s website

News & Notices

BRANTFORD, ON

We have very much enjoyed the fellowship of our Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorna Luke while they were visiting in Ontario. We thank Bro. Brian for leading several studies for us, including our Thanksgiving fraternal gathering.

God willing, our junior CYC and Little Disciples “Apps Mills” gathering is to be held on February 9, 2008, and our senior CYC gathering on February 16, 2008.

Daniel Billington

BROOKLYN, NY

Sis. Joyce King fell asleep in Christ, after being comatose for over two weeks. Her relatives from Brazil, Canada, Florida, New Jersey, and New York — including Sis. Pearl Haywood of South Ozone Park — were all gratified by the support of the ecclesia in their loss.

We were also supportive of Sis. Annie Nabriet who suffered the sudden loss of her husband, Bro. Marvin; and of Bro. Roy Lindo in the loss of his wife, Sis. Mavis.

Across the ocean, north and south, this regretful pattern continued with the sad news of the falling asleep of Sis. Carol Simpson (Birmingham, UK) and Sis. Alice Joseph (Eccles, Guyana). Sis. Carol and Bro. David Simpson labored diligently in Guyana as missionaries, especially in Berbice from 1968 to 1971. Their work was blessed by the growth of the New Amsterdam Ecclesia, and they saw the birth of the annual Bible school at Eccles in 1969. Sis. Alice and Bro. Eric Joseph saw the spiritual birth of grandchildren in the truth. Sis. Alice also served lovingly at the Annual Guyana Youth Camp, which spun off the Triennial Caribbean Camp, first hosted in Tobago in 1979.

The hymn “Hills of the North, Rejoice” was sung with deeper meaning in October: “The sleep of ages break, and rise to liberty.”

Clive Drepaull

DETROIT LIVONIA, MI

We rejoiced in the marriages of Bro. Andrew Amis and Sis. Erin Kemp on May 19, 2007; Bro. Simon Gore and Sis. Hannah Styles on July 7, 2007; Bro. James Styles and Sis. Kristen Jennings on August 11, 2007; and Bro. Paul A. Styles and Sis. Mary Jane Abel on September 15, 2007. We pray for God's blessing on these couples' newly united walks to His Kingdom.

We received by transfer the following brothers and sisters: Bro. Nick and Sis. Jackie Giroux; Sis. Karen Muniz; Sis. Judy Muniz; Bro. Bryan and Sis. Keleigh Styles; and Bro. Roy and Sis. Betty Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI); Sis. Erin Kemp (Washington, DC); Bro. Simon Gore (Enfield, South Aust.); and Bro. Jason Bobis (Kouts, IN).

Bro. Jeff and Sis. Lynda Rolston have transferred their membership to the Milford Road, MI, Ecclesia, and we commend them to the care of the brothers and sisters there.

Jeffrey P. Adams

GEORGETOWN, GUYANA

In the month of September we said goodbye to Sis. Rhoda Andrews, who returned to Canada with her children, and also to Bro. Sydney Enebeli and daughter Serena, who left for St. Lucia to join his wife, Sis. Ruth. Brethren from all the Guyana ecclesias joined to celebrate the life of Sis. Alice Joseph, who fell asleep on September 18; she was laid to rest on September 22. Our prayers are with her husband Bro. Eric and the entire Joseph family.

In October special prayers were said for Sis. Lorraine Mitchell and Sis. Glancy Spence, due to the deteriorating health of their brother, Guy Spence. He has since left for Canada where he is under medical care. We wish to express gratitude at the kind donation of tapes along with Bible concordances and reading glasses that we received from Canada. To encourage reading of books in the library, a book exhibition was held every Sunday for the month of October. We have been encouraged by an improvement in the number of borrowed books.

Anthony Semple

MILFORD ROAD, MI

We are thankful for the many thoughts and prayers for our Bro. Grant Anderson. Our heavenly Father has certainly blessed him after the severe auto accident, through the progress he has made over the past several months. The family is looking forward to his return from the hospital by upgrading their home with wheelchair accessibility. Please continue to pray for Bro. Grant and the Anderson family during this time.

We welcome by transfer Sis. Annette Ammons from the Ann Arbor, MI, Ecclesia. On October 21, we rejoiced in the baptism of our Sunday school scholar, SETH MICHAELS, and we ask God's blessing upon our new brother.

We also thank the many visitors who have visited our ecclesia over the past months. We especially thank Bro. Mark Newth (Detroit Royal Oak, MI), and Bre. Michael Walker and Ron Kidd (London West, ON) for their words of exhortation.

Our new recording brother is Bro. Jeff Livermore. His mail address is 44043 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375. His email address is jlivermore@aol.com.

Paul Sparacino

OAHU, HI

Our tiny three-sister ecclesia has been blessed with a new brother. On October 21, 2007, SHAWN HAYES, Sis. Diana Hayes' husband, was baptized. Bro. Paul Wade (Houston, TX) conducted the interview and the baptism, extended the right hand of fellowship, and exhorted. Truly a busy day for Bro. Paul.

Also in attendance was Sis. Pat Wade and Bro. Graham and Sis. Ruth Travers from Australia. Bro. Graham presided at our little meeting. What a joy it was to have a "live" meeting for our extremely small congregation, as we usually worship with brothers and sisters through DVDs.

The following Sunday, we were blessed with a visit from Bro. Stan and Sis. Eunice Newton (Huntington Beach, CA). We thank God for all the love and attention we receive from our brothers and sisters around the world.

Connie Wiedeman

PETERBOROUGH, ON

We have had a good summer of fellowship, and have been blessed with considerable help from brothers from many ecclesias coming to exhort, for which we thank our heavenly Father. We have been meeting on a bi-weekly program over the summer months, but we hope next year, God willing, to meet weekly over the summer months.

We were saddened last July when our Sis. Jean Gwilliam fell asleep in the Lord. Our sympathies are with Bro. Percy and Sis. Eva and family. Our sympathies are with our Sis. Sally Mogensen, whose husband also died in July.

We pray that our Lord will continue to bless us as we look for help in the coming year, if he still remains away.

Bryan Rose

SANTA BARBARA, CA

With sadness we announce the deaths of two more of our members. Bro. Harry William Farrell passed away on March 11, 2007, at the age of 89 after a number of years battling Alzheimer's disease. He and our Sis. Hazel had been married 12 years. He was a wonderful husband, and a very gentle and humble brother in Christ.

Sis. Janell Walker fell asleep in Christ on May 25, 2007, after a lengthy battle with liver cancer. She leaves her husband Bro. Fred Walker; her daughter Sis. Danielle Burris of Olympia, WA; and her step-daughter Sis. Melody Magness of Sharinwoods, CA, along with one other daughter and two sons. Sis. Janell was a very loving and compassionate sister who loved the truth. Both our brother and sister will be sorely missed.

Our Sis. Beverly Woods continues her fight against lung cancer. May God be with her and comfort her in her time of need. We long for that day when there will be no more sickness or death, when all these things will be swallowed up in victory at the return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ.

After a good confession of his faith, we are pleased to announce the baptism of RICHARD MAXWELL on April 4, 2007. Richard was introduced to the truth, through the seminars in Lompoc by our Bro. Ron Stewart, and studied for many years both in Lompoc and Santa Barbara prior to coming to an understanding of the truth. May Yahweh bless our new brother as he walks with us toward the kingdom.

We welcome by transfer from the Verdugo Hills, CA, Ecclesia our Bro. Matthew Walker, the son of our Bro. Fred Walker.

Once again this year, we had our annual Labor Day picnic at the home of our Bro. John Seagoe, with many brothers, sisters, and friends attending. The activities began with a talk by Bro. Jim Seagoe (San Francisco Peninsula, CA), followed by great food and fellowship around the word.

On October 6, 2007, we celebrated our Bro. Floyd Elsas' ninetieth birthday, with many brothers and sisters and family attending from near and far. All had a wonderful day.

Since last February, we welcomed around the table of the Lord the following brothers and sisters: Bro. Ken Smith (UK); Bro. Dick and Sis. Jean Goodman (AZ); Bro. Tom and Sis. Judie Griffith (UK); Bro. Nigel Fletcher (Aust.); Bro. Brian and Sis. Sherry Walker (Canada); Sis. Danielle Burris (Olympia, WA); Bro. Gareth and Sis. Alyson

Jones (UK); Sis. Pam Vandiver (Rogue Valley, OR); Bro. John Meyer, and Sis. Wendy Johnson (BC); Bro. Larry King, Sis. Carrie Spencer, and Bro. Taylor Spencer (Jackson County, OR); Bro. Alistair and Sis. Jane Henderson (South Africa); and Sis. Amy Cousens (Canada).

We would like to thank the following brothers for ministering to our ecclesia with Bible classes and the word of exhortation: Ken Smith, Dick Goodman, Kim Carrell, Geoff Smith, Ron Stewart, Lou Pokol, Matthew Walker, Nathan Blanchard, Bryan Blanchard, Larry King, Jim Seago, Tom Madson, Alistair Henderson, and Russ Patterson.

It is our prayer that this will be the year of our Lord and Savior's return. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Craig Stickney

SPANISH TOWN, JAMAICA

On August 26, 2007, we welcomed IMOLYN FRANCIS into our family when she was baptized in the Kingston ecclesial hall, just a few days after Hurricane Dean ravaged the island. She is no stranger to the Spanish Town Ecclesia, as she has been visiting for nearly ten years and is the mother of Bro. Leon Walters. Heavy rain with flashes of lightning and echoing thunder accompanied the service; water flowed toward the rear of the hall from a leaking roof, damaged during the hurricane. However, this never dampened the spirits of the brothers and sisters who came to witness this joyous occasion. We pray that our dear sister will continue to walk in that light of life.

We continue to meet each Sunday at the YMCA on Monk Street for our memorial service. Our Bible classes are held on Friday evenings except for the last week of each month, when we have it on Saturday instead. This takes the form of an outing where we visit parks, zoos, historical sites, or homes of brothers and sisters who are able to withstand the "invasion".

Pray for us as we strive to do our duty of serving God and keeping His commandments.

Keith Kinlocke

SUSSEX, NB

We are very grateful for the visitors whose company we enjoyed in this beautiful part of God's vineyard. In September Bro. Peter and Sis. Ruth Edwards (Derby, UK) stayed for ten days. Bro. Peter also gave the word of exhortation. At the same time we also had Bro. Tim Baines (Mississauga West, ON) along with his wife Jane and daughter Lydia. Bro. Peter and Sis. Margaret Stonell visited us briefly, on their return home. We were also pleased to see Bro. Milan Duga from Barrie, ON.

Our Thanksgiving weekend in October was led by Bro. Ken Styles (Detroit Royal Oak, MI) on the theme of "Godly Love". This thoroughly uplifting subject was enjoyed by us all, including visiting brothers and sisters from Boston, MA; Cambridge, ON; and Bedford, NS. We thank Bro. Ken for all his work, and also Sis. Diane and their son David for coming along too. Bro. Brian and Sis. Lorna Luke also came in October for a few days during their North American trip. Bro. Brian led a special Bible class on "Paul the Aged". We thank them for making a detour to come and visit us.

Cliff Baines

VERNON, BC

We are very pleased to announce three baptisms over the past few months. JAMIE CAWSTON, the daughter of our Bro. Ben and Sis. Helen Cawston, was immersed into the saving name of Christ on August 22, 2007, in the waters of Okanagan Lake. Sis. Jamie's baptism was witnessed by many brothers and sisters who, with our new sister, were attending Winfield Bible Camp. It was a wonderful and inspiring addition to our camp! We rejoiced again on September 29, 2007, when TOM and GWEN PALMER were baptized. This was a very joyful occasion as Bro. Tom and Sis. Gwen had been studying for several years with various members of our ecclesia. We pray for our heavenly Father's care upon our new brother and sisters as we walk together on the path to the kingdom.

Two of our elderly members have been facing declining health over the past few months. Both Sis. Hazel Holweg and Bro. Al Green are now in the same long-term care facility, and we ask for your prayers for our brother and sister.

David Zantingh

Minute Meditation

Impossible

It has been said that, if we feed our faith, then our fears will starve to death. Unfortunately, sometimes our fears are better fed than our faith is. Which are we feeding?

Faith is important. Mary McLeod Bethune said, "Without faith, nothing is possible. With it, nothing is impossible." The writer to the Hebrews tells us, "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

So we need faith since, without faith, it is impossible to please God, and pleasing God should be our number one goal in life.

How do we get faith? Do we have enough faith? If it is weak, can we increase it? The apostles made this request to Jesus when they said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." No doubt the apostles realized that there was room for improvement in their faith department, and certainly it could also be true for us.

How do we increase our faith? Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing the word of God. We need to do our Bible readings.

But, we may be afraid that we are too weak, and we wonder if our faith is growing at all. Or perhaps we find it hard to absorb properly the words we read in the Scriptures. That word "impossible" may seem impossibly big, too big for us to overcome, and we may start feeding our fears instead of our faith.

To stop this way of thinking, Jesus explains, "The things which are impossible

with men are possible with God.” The angel Gabriel reassured Mary, “For with God nothing shall be impossible.”

So it is possible, with God’s help, to overcome our fears and grow in faith — but how? Is there more to it than reading the Bible?

The answer is love. When we read the words our God has written for us in the Bible, we must respond with love and thankfulness in our hearts for all the loving kindness God has shown toward us — in giving His Son, and in His wonderful plan of salvation. The way to feed our faith and starve our fear is to love. The apostle John tells us, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

When we love the way God intends for us to love, fear is defeated, we grow in faith, and then, truly, nothing is impossible. What many consider to be the impossible dream, the hope of being with the Son of God in his kingdom, becomes a crown of rejoicing because our faith gives us confidence that God loves us and wants to save us and bring us into His Kingdom.

John counsels us, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.”

We need to be working at developing and increasing our love for God and our brethren by reading the Bible to learn more about the goodness of God towards us, and by showing love to each other. Our faith will grow as we grow in understanding and love for our heavenly Father. John tells us, “God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.” “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”

What a great way to live. Our life needs to be filled with faith and love. To do this, we must fill ourselves with God’s word, for that is the only way we can truly understand the love God has for us. Realizing God’s love for us will help us to develop the kind of faith and the kind of love that is pleasing to God.

Let us ask our heavenly Father to increase our faith, and to increase our love, so that nothing shall be impossible for us when these two virtues consume our very being. Then we will feed our faith and our fear will starve to death, for “perfect love casts out fear.” As John says, “If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”

Robert J. Lloyd

*“Faith is not only a commitment to the **promises** of Christ; faith is also a commitment to the **demands** of Christ” (William Barclay).*

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

DECEMBER

7-9 Worcester, MA CYC Weekend. Bro. James Diliberto (Echo Lake, NJ): "The Tabernacle: Lessons for Young People in the Wilderness of Life". Contact Bro. Aaron MacAdams aaronmacadams@hotmail.com 978-502-9690

25 Hamilton McNab, ON Study day. Millgrove Community Center. Bro. Dave Noble (North Industry, OH): "Zephaniah". Contact Bro. Carl Foster carlfoster@mountaincable.net 905-692-4640

JANUARY 2008

26 San Diego County Ecclesia Annual Study Day. Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI): "Little Words that Mean a Lot". 9:30 am Ecclesial Hall, lunch served. Contact Bro. Kent Ellis ellisk@san.rr.com 858-674-5645

FEBRUARY

3-8 Palm Springs Bible School. Bre. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD) and Michael Owen (Seaton, UK). Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau register@christadelphianbibleschool.org. Or visit website www.californiabibleschool.org

9 Brantford, ON Junior CYC and Little Disciples "Apps Mills" Gathering

16 Brantford, ON Senior CYC Gathering

16,17 Saanich Peninsula, BC Study weekend. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): Subject TBD. Contact Bro. Richard Morgan richie.morgan@gmail.com

MARCH

15,16 Lompoc Valley, CA Annual study weekend. Bre. Don Pearce (Rugby, UK) and Paul Billington (Brantford, ON): "An Up Close Look at Bible Prophecy Being Fulfilled in Our Time". Registration: contact Bro. Ron Stewart ronandshirley777@aol.com or call 805-733-5577. Seating limited; we suggest an early response

29 April 5 Florida Bible School Christian Retreat, Bradenton, FL. Adult / teen classes. Bro. Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON): "Bumps along the Road of Discipleship"; Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "First Principles of Prayer"; Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener-Waterloo, ON): "The Fifteen-Minute Exhortation". Contact Bro. Walt Dodrill 727-528-1197 waltoddrill@msn.com. Registration: Sis. Diane Jennings 727-528-1886 diane@dianej.net

APRIL

5 Boston, MA Study Day. Bro. David Levin (Baltimore, MD): "Becoming a Spiritual Person". 9:00 am, lunch served. Contact Bro. Jeff Wallace jeff@tecbs.org 508-763-2981

JULY

26-August 3 Midwest Bible School Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Malachi: A Question of Innocence"; Bro. Frank Abel (Shelburne, ON): "The Fate of the Dead"; Bro. James Mansfield (AU): "How the Lord Treated People". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375 248-462-5740 mike.live@gmail.com

Index for 2007

Editorials, G. Booker

America the Beautiful.....	263
April 15, the parable of	107
"Decently and in order".....	159
Loving his appearing.....	2
Milk and butter, nose and blood.....	55
Redeemed and redeeming.....	211
What I don't know.....	367,419,471,523
What is real?.....	315

Exhortations

Back to Basics, W. Jackson.....	529
"Crucify him!", D. Caudery.....	423
Dedicated to serving, J. Lawrence	319
Distraction, M. Atkin.....	216
Heating the frog slowly, K. Sommerville.....	372
Jonah, lessons from, A. Booker.....	60
Learning to pray continually, J. Hagler.....	474
Responding to tribulation, C. Drepaul.....	268
"Tohu bohu", G. Booker.....	163
When donkeys talk, K. Sommerville.....	109
"Woe is me if I preach not", R. Hicks.....	7

Series

Apologetics, D. Levin.....	118, 175,220
Ephesians, Paul's letter to, T. Barling.....	11,63, 113,170,225,277,322,376,426,478,532
Famous last words, C. Sales.....	15,135,281, 335,448
Hebrews, C. Edwards.....	89,542
Jesus' unlikely conversions, W. Booker.....	289,336,450,505,549
Little words that mean a lot, J. Bilello.....	384,434,483,537
Rightly dividing the Word, B. Green.....	66,124,180,230,271,327,380

Articles and Bible Study

Broken spirit, C. Edwards.....	274
Careless talk, S. Whitehouse.....	371
Nullifying the Word, C. Snobelen.....	553
Paul in Arabia, E. Archard.....	234
Search for wisdom, the, C. Edwards.....	431
Stones, E. Henthorn.....	183
Visions of the third heaven, J. Dillingham.....	70
"We object...", J. Dillingham.....	332
Women committed to the Lord, P. Bartle.....	491
Youth: Proverbs, G. Booker.....	17

Reflections

Bruce Metzger, G. Booker.....	249
Calming a quarrel, G. Booker.....	447
Compassion, J. Harper.....	245
Correlation, A, G. Drepaul.....	548
"Dear Sprout", R. Mutter.....	242
"Greater lov'd ye cannot be!", G. Booker.....	283
Fruits from the true vine, C. Cooper.....	35
"I'm one of those stars, Sam...", S. Grazda.....	287
"I would not be here...", K. Sommerville.....	547
Jonah and God's compassion, P. Forbes.....	16
Many aspects of love, R. Webb.....	340
Mary's dream.....	545
Minor, Bro. Bill.....	74
"Out of her poverty..."	449
Oyster, the, A. Crouse.....	445
Potter's wheel, the, M. Garner.....	546
Scenes in a country cemetery, G. Booker.....	338
Struggles within ..., D. Andrews.....	503
Virtuous Woman, A.....	344
"We're all babies in God's eyes", S. Grazda.....	244

Signs of the Times and Current Events

Fig tree, parable of the, J. Robinson.....	85
Global warming, M. Owen.....	23
Holocaust archive, new.....	80
News from the Promised Land.....	395

Archaeology

Jerusalem escape tunnel.....	453
Muslim "trash" is Israeli "treasure"!.....	83
Sepphoris and Jesus, G. Booker.....	496

Music in Worship, K/J Curry

CD recordings of hymns.....	79
CD recordings, Sis. Julia Baines.....	444
"Hark, ten thousand thousand voices".....	79
Harp, the, B. Burr.....	77
Instruments in worship, M. LeDuke.....	240
"Lone Mary comes at early morn".....	239
"They'll hang the trumpet...", B. Burr.....	237
Trumpet's "uncertain sound", B. Burr.....	441
"We give Thee but Thine own"	443

Letters

40-year generation?.....	130
America the Beautiful.....	346,347
Best books?.....	29
Bible Companion, RR's preface to.....	190
Book reviews for the newly baptized.....	248
Bruce Metzger.....	348
Christadelphian books.....	191

Conscientious objection.....	29
“Crowned with glory and honor”, <i>J. Hill</i>	92
Dignified farewell.....	131
Distractions.....	291,345
Flash flood in a “wadi”.....	133
Global warming.....	128,189
“Greater lov’d...”.....	393
Johnson family cemetery.....	452
Joseph and his brothers?.....	191
Lake Victoria.....	130
Preaching from a county jail.....	349
Simon and the cross.....	349
“Sprout” is here!.....	292
“This generation”.....	247,291
Types of the Father.....	28
What will happen to “the other fellow”?.....	554

Bible Mission

Argentina.....	38,295
Bolivia.....	39,295,455,560
CBMA/CBMC country listing.....	351
CBMA website.....	138
Chile.....	40,295,560
Costa Rica.....	402
Ecuador.....	193
El Salvador, 2006 Bible school.....	194
Guatemala.....	137,196,293
Latin American activities, 2006.....	91
Mexico.....	136,250,558
Missionaries in the field.....	457
Panama.....	402
Peru.....	295,507,560
Thisisyourbible.com website.....	41,139,299, 353,401,457,508,561
Truth Corps 2007 vacation Bible school....	398
Truth Corps, “My experiences”.....	399

Miscellaneous

Christadelphian sampler, A.....	30
Difficult words in the KJV.....	389
“God makes a land barren”, <i>RC Trench</i>	10
“Two other”, <i>GC Morgan</i>	224

Minute Meditations, RJ Lloyd

An apple a day.....	256
Are we willing?.....	151
Fired with enthusiasm.....	413
Green and growing.....	361
Halftime.....	465
Impossible.....	567
Learning obedience.....	204

Majority is not always right, the.....	308
Temptation.....	49
We must decide.....	100
Your attitude.....	517

News

Austin Leander, TX.....	406
Avon, IN.....	198
Barrie, ON.....	406
Bedford, NS.....	198,301,407,511
Boston, MA.....	198
Bozeman, MT.....	252
Brampton, ON.....	252
Brantford, ON... 142,198,301,407,460,511,563	
Brooklyn, NY.....	460,563
Calgary, AB.....	253,407
Colon, Panama.....	408
Cranston, RI.....	511
Detroit Livonia, MI.....	44,142,563
Detroit Royal Oak, MI.....	253
Doha, Qatar.....	44,199,301
East Texas, TX.....	142
Echo Lake, NJ.....	44,199,301,408
Edmonton, AB.....	302
Elgin, ON.....	355
Guadalajara, Mexico.....	199,511
Guatemala City, Guatemala.....	142
Guyana.....	200
Georgetown, Guyana.....	564
Hamilton Greenaway, ON.....	94,200,408
Honesdale, PA.....	302
Houston North, TX.....	512
Jasonville, IN.....	94
Kamloops, BC.....	94,200
Kitchener-Waterloo, ON.....	44,143
Kouts, IN.....	201
La Paz, Bolivia.....	45
Largo, FL.....	45,253
Lompoc Valley, CA.....	512
London West, ON.....	143,513
Los Angeles Hispanic, CA.....	202
Manitoulin Island, ON.....	46,302
Maple Ridge, BC.....	513
May Pen, Jamaica.....	144
Mendocino, CA.....	461
Meriden, CT.....	461
Milford Road, MI.....	95,564
Mississauga West, ON.....	356
Moorestown, NJ.....	408

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)
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Periodicals Postage Paid at San Dimas, California

Moulton, AL.....	144
Nanaimo, BC.....	144,462,514
New Westminster, BC.....	46,145,254
Oahu, HI.....	145,564
Orlando, FL.....	303,514
Peterborough, ON.....	565
Petersburg, VA.....	304
Portland, OR.....	145
Port Maria, Jamaica.....	409
Prince George, BC.....	95
Saanich Peninsula, BC.....	410
San Diego County, CA.....	254,304
San Francisco Marinwood, CA.....	356
San Salvador, El Salvador.....	514
Santa Barbara, CA.....	146,565
Sarasota, FL.....	202
Seattle, WA.....	146
Shelburne, ON.....	514
Shenandoah Valley, VA.....	515
Simi Hills, CA.....	147,462
Spanish Town, Jamaica.....	566
Springfield, MA.....	305
St. John's, NF.....	356
St. Lucia.....	202
Sussex, NB.....	46,96,357,566
Thousand Oaks, CA.....	147,357
Toledo, OH.....	203
Toronto East, ON.....	148
Toronto West, ON.....	149,357
Treasure Coast, FL.....	411
Tulsa/Joplin, OK.....	357,516
Vancouver, BC.....	358
Vernon, BC.....	203,359,567
Victoria, BC.....	47,411
Washington, DC.....	47,360,516
Wichita Falls, TX.....	255

Worcester, MA.....	96,360,516
--------------------	------------

Announcements and Notices

A.S.K. Atlantic.....	305
Anderson, appeal for Bro. Grant.....	463
Ann Arbor Thanksgiving gathering.....	516
Ballinfad, ON: adult study week.....	96
Bilello, Bro. John.....	5
Brothers' weekend.....	43
Camp Hashawha.....	463
CGAF, special invitation.....	134
Christadelphian Heritage School, CA.....	192
Christadelphian hymns.....	305
Christadelphian Sunday School Union	307
Coy, Sis. Eunice.....	98
Fairhaven Christadelphian Foundation.....	464
"From Eden Lost to Eden Restored".....	306
Galilee Bible School.....	203
India — appeal for Calcutta.....	464
Manitoulin Bible Camp.....	150
Manitoulin Island appeal.....	306
Mid-Atlantic Bible School.....	96
New England Bible study weekend.....	307
North American Sunday School Assoc.....	150
New York Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat.....	97
Pacific Coast Bible School.....	98
Shaw, Sis. Marge.....	308
Simi Hills Preaching Fund.....	98
South Africa Bible tour.....	255
Taipei Ecclesia, Taiwan.....	99
Texas Youth Conference.....	412
Two projects for the new year.....	528
Used books for CBMA, overseas books.....	255
Vancouver Island Bible Camp.....	150
Victoria, BC, holiday unit.....	149
Victoria, BC, senior housing.....	465
Youth leader seminar.....	99