

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

— of the Kingdom of God —

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The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Editor: George Booker

Assistant Editor: Dev Ramcharan

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Wherever there is intolerance, wherever we find conditions of communion among Christians imposed, which Christ hath not clearly enjoined; wherever creeds and modes of worship are enforced by human power, and men made to forfeit any of their civil rights, or are stigmatized on these accounts, there is the spirit which is not of God.

Wherever one Christian, or a number of Christians, assumes the seat of authority and judgment in the Church of Christ, wherever they call for fire to destroy those who dissent from them or only exclude them from their communion and affection, there is a portion of the spirit of Antichrist, which has so long opposed itself to the benign principles of the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace, has been the cause of so many evils to humanity, and the occasion of making the inconsiderate esteem the amiable yet distinct and uncompromising religion of Jesus, as a source of mischief, instead of benevolence.

Alas, how much of this spirit remains amongst us all! How few have learned that "in Christ circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God [is everything]."

John Thomas

Editorial

Caring for Animals

*“A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal,
but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel” (Proverbs 12:10).*

Not too long ago, a court case in the United States attracted a great deal of notoriety. One of the best-known and best-paid professional football players was arrested, indicted, convicted, and sentenced to almost two years in federal prison for running a cruel and inhumane dog-fighting enterprise. Evidence was presented of deliberate torture of animals under his “care”, including savage beatings, stranglings, and electrocutions.

Compassion for animals is an indication of one’s character. Righteous people are kind to *all* of God’s creatures (see, for example, Deut 25:4) — because they recognize how they have enjoyed God’s kindness. If one is kind to the lower animals, he will surely be kind to humans. But even when the wicked are moved to act compassionately, they often show it in a cruel way.

The righteous are kind to all God’s creatures because, in doing so, they come closest to imitating the God who cares not for oxen only, but for all mankind too:

“For it is written in the Law of Moses: ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain’ [Deut 25:4]. Is it [only] about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn’t he?” (1Cor 9:9,10).

Furthermore, God “causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Matt 5:45). This is the God who spreads His caring wings over all His creation, who feeds the cattle and the young ravens when they call (Psa 147:9), who owns every beast in the forest, and the cattle on a thousand hills (Psa 50:10). This is the God who knows every bird that falls to the ground (Matt 10:29; cp Matt 6:26). And the God who, in the midst of impending judgment upon 120,000 Ninevites, takes time to remember and care for all their cattle as well (Jon 4:11).

“A righteous man cares for the needs of his animal”: “Needs” is the Hebrew “nephesh”, often translated “soul” or “life” (as in the KJV). But “nephesh” can also mean “appetite” or “desire”, and seems to be used here in that sense. Essentially, a righteous man feeds his animals when they are hungry.

Consider also Proverbs 27:23-27, which develops the idea of this verse:

“Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations. When the hay is removed and new growth appears and the grass from the hills is gathered in, the lambs will provide you with clothing, and the goats with the price of a field. You will have plenty of goats’ milk to feed you and your family and to nourish your servant girls.”

Kindness toward, and care for, others (even animals) will repay us in many ways, practical and material as well as spiritual.

“But the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel”: “But the tender mercies” — even the most seemingly compassionate actions — “of the wicked are cruel” (KJV).

This can be interpreted in two ways:

- (1) When the wicked exhibit a kind act, they do it in a cruel way, or
- (2) Even the kindest of their acts is cruel by all assessments, such as stuffing animals with food to fatten them for market; in other words, their “kindness” is driven by ulterior motives.

John Forbes has said: “A man who is cruel in the treatment of his animal cannot be a good husband, a kind parent, a humane neighbor, or a gentle and tender friend. Men cannot change their dispositions like they change their clothes; whatever disposition they encourage, it will become habitual and natural. Cruelty to animals makes men sullen, rude, ferocious, wrathful, physically threatening, impatient, argumentative, and prone to every evil work” (*Biblical Illustrator*).

A wicked man cannot be gentle. Men should remember this, and distrust all the “gentleness” that is supposedly shown by men who have no conscience. The tenderness of such men is an investment, a political trick, or bait to catch the unwary. A philosopher once said he would not value any man’s religion whose cat and dog were not the better for his faith. This is the beauty of the Christian religion: like a living stream, it flows throughout the whole life, watering every part of a believer’s existence, carrying along with itself gentleness, sympathy and kindness.

The plain fact is the animal can almost never do anything to hurt the owner, and will one way or another probably be as devoted to the master whether it is hurt or not. (The devotion, or even love, of some horses, and dogs, for their masters has become legend — the stuff of inspiring novels.) So to care for one’s animals — whether it be as a farmer or rancher, or a pet owner — is to demonstrate, to some degree, that we are conscious of a God in heaven, who takes notice of what we do to others.

There may always be some measure of self-interest in our “doing good” to others. Perhaps we invite others to dinner, knowing full well that they will invite us in turn. Perhaps we give to charities, knowing that others will think better of us for doing so. Perhaps we are courteous and “kind”, knowing that little acts like this will oil the wheels of commerce and business, and help us financially. Perhaps we “feel the pain” of others, in some kind of pseudo-sympathy, merely to get on in the world. Perhaps we act friendly merely to pick the pockets of the unsuspecting buyer.

Somewhere in this list of “small kindnesses” there is really cruelty, because we may have stopped caring for others, and are only caring for ourselves. When we seek to advance our interests or make more money, it may be then that our kindest acts are cruel, as the proverb says.

So if you want to know whether a man is really kind — deep-down, honestly kind,

and not just play-acting — pay attention to how he treats dumb animals, or even how he treats people who can't do anything to hurt, or help, him.

Along these lines, Robert Horton wrote: "It is one of the surest tests of a man's character to see how he treats servants; if he is uniformly courteous, considerate, just, and generous in his treatment of them, we may safely infer that he is a noble character. If he is haughty, domineering, revengeful, and malicious to them, we need not attach much importance to his pleasing manners and plausible services to those whom he considers his equals" (*Expositor's Bible*).

Show me a person who treats a stray dog with kindness, or gives a few dollars to the beggar on the street corner, or tips the hardworking waitress a bit more than usual.

That is the man, or woman, whom I will trust.

George Booker

A Sheep, Not a Lamb

*It was a sheep, not a lamb, that strayed away,
In the parable Jesus told:
A grown-up sheep that had gone astray
From the ninety and nine in the fold.*

*Out in the meadows, out in the cold,
'Twas a sheep the good Shepherd sought.
Back to the flock and into the fold,
'Twas a sheep the good Shepherd brought.*

*And why for the sheep should we earnestly long,
And so earnestly hope and pray?
Because there is danger, if they go wrong,
They will lead the young lambs away.*

*For the lambs follow the sheep, you know,
Wherever the sheep may stray.
If the sheep go wrong, it will not be long
Till the lambs are as wrong as they.*

*So with the sheep we earnestly plead
For the sake of the lambs today.
If the lambs are lost, what a terrible cost;
Some sheep may have to pay!*

(Thomas Spurgeon)

Exhortation

On The Road To Gaza (Acts 8)

No matter how you look at it, it was a long way home! This Ethiopian proselyte from the court of Candace the queen travelled over 1,000 miles to Jerusalem and was finally headed home.

A 2,000-mile roundtrip journey by chariot was not an easy undertaking.

What is remarkable about this trip is that he even bothered to take it! Because he was a eunuch, the Law forbids him from even entering the courtyard of the Temple. He could offer no sacrifice, hear no instructions from the teachers inside; he would not receive the High Priestly blessing given to the people. All he could do in Jerusalem was pray somewhere outside the Temple precincts. Surely a 2,000-mile journey was not necessary to pray to God. But he came because God required it!

In the book of Acts, thousands of baptisms are recorded in a single verse. But to this man, an extraordinary Ethiopian believer, God draws our attention. Acts 8 is a wonderful chapter of belief, perseverance and baptism. It shows the great lengths our God goes to in order to save us.

Scripture tells us this Ethiopian man was an alien, a stranger, in bondage and cut off from God. He is found stopped in a wilderness alone. From this hopeless position, we are also told that he took extraordinary steps to worship God, to read God's Word. This powerful man was not above asking the humble Philip to join him in the chariot and explain Isaiah's prophecy.

He could be considered the first Gentile convert into the new ecclesia. It was five or more years earlier than Cornelius' conversion.

This is a chapter of obedience! Describing Philip, Acts says, "*and he arose and went*" (v 27); "*Philip ran thither to him*" (v 30)! There was no hesitation on his part.

All of us have been in the same place as this eunuch, alone in a dry desert place, needing more. This is where all those without God are.

"Who shall declare his generation?"

For this Ethiopian man, it started with the reading of God's Word *and* seeking to understand it. Paul was writing to all of us when he said "*Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed*" (2Tim 2:15).

Study means "diligence", "labor". It's an active tense. Studying doesn't stop with baptism but continues a lifetime. And "studying" is pointless if it's not shared! "Workman" implies sharing, using it with others.

I remember at one ecclesial business meeting we were discussing what type of bread should be used for the emblems. One sister, over 80 years old stood up and said "I've just studied that" and shared her views. She might have been retired from work, but not the Truth! There are many outlets in the brotherhood to share God's Word. Teaching Sunday school, Bible class, CYC, preaching, internet preaching, and writing articles for the Tidings!

"Study to show thyself approved" applies to all of us.

The story of the Ethiopian emphasizes the great lengths he took to be at God's appointed place. Do we have that same urgency to attend our meetings on Sunday or the mid-week Bible class?

With all the activity going on now in Israel, Europe and Russia we should be preparing for Christ's return. Paul bluntly tells us that the first step for 21st-century believers is to be at meeting:

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching" (Heb 10:25).

The sole purpose in that eunuch's journey was to obey God's commands. What about us on Sunday mornings or Wednesday evenings?

Many people in the world view joining a church the same as joining a social club. They jump from one to another based on the 'preacher', the music, the building, activities, after-school programs, etc. This Ethiopian believer would never have gone to Jerusalem if that was all he was looking for! None of these elements of worship were open to him. He was very isolated in Jerusalem. He went because the Father required it. And that's the reason we should be here each Sunday morning.

"The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? (Acts 8:32-34).

This is why we come here. To remember our Lord and all he did for us. To rededicate ourselves each week to be more like him and less like us.

"Behold I am a dry tree"

Imagine this eunuch, a Gentile proselyte, alone, alienated in Jerusalem, hearing words like this:

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:26-29).

Every phrase was full of meaning for him. Philip taught him the Truth on that desert road. It's very likely that Philip read a bit further in Isaiah and started his

lesson with these words:

*“Neither let **the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD**, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: **neither let the eunuch say**, Behold, I am a dry tree. For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and **a name better than of sons and of daughters**: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people” (Isa 56:3-7).*

Everything missing in the eunuch’s life would be given to him.

If you are not baptized, why? What hinders you? (v 36).

Of course the eunuch would be baptized! Philip had made this treasurer of Ethiopia keenly aware of what was lacking in his life.

“Believest?” (v 37). This means to “rely on”, to “commit to one’s trust”. Here was a man whom the Queen of Ethiopia “relied on”. And he realized only God could be truly relied upon. Sometimes we fail to realize that “belief” is not just for those dripping with the waters of baptism but for all believers. Believing in Jesus must be the focal point of our lives and the cause of our actions.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is **the work** of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29). This implies that ‘belief’ is a lifetime duty for “the workman of Christ” (Matt 10:10, 2Tim 2:15).

One thing thou lackest yet

“Believest thou with all thy heart?” And so Philip baptized him. Then perhaps the oddest thing happens: “*The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing*” (v 39). Did you spot it? It wasn’t that Philip was caught away by the Spirit. It wasn’t that the eunuch went on rejoicing. The oddity is that it ended so abruptly and one thing did not occur! The eunuch never broke bread with Philip. And he was headed back to Ethiopia where there were **no** believers. “*For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*” (Matt 18:20).

You can be sure that the first thing on his mind was preaching and turning another from darkness. Only through saving another would he be able to break bread with others! We can only imagine the urgency in his preaching. What about us? How strong is our desire to save others, to preach, to be joined to new believers?

In John 14, we see that Philip had a hard time believing, even when walking with Jesus and witnessing his miracles. Jesus says:

"Yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" (v 9).

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (v 10).

"Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (v 11).

"He that believeth on me..." (v 12).

This lack of belief earlier must have goaded Philip in his preaching. Starting at Isaiah he absolutely convinced the Ethiopian of Jesus and the need for belief in him. The words of the Ethiopian are probably the ones that Philip himself wished he had said to Jesus back in John 14. You can imagine the Ethiopian shouting: *"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!"* (Acts 8:37).

We are like our brother from Ethiopia. We have only seen Jesus through the pages of Scriptures. Is our belief in Jesus as strong? Is our desire to preach so apparent? The book of Acts is full of men and women like this Ethiopian, needing to see the Way, the Truth, and the Light.

With events in the world swirling about us, perhaps our journey will not be as long as that Ethiopian's journey home. But let's be sure it is as fruitful.

Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ)

*"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: **he that believeth shall not make haste**" (Isa 28:16).*

Ours is an age of haste. Shortcuts to learning, professional life without due preparation, fortunes before labor; all this foretells disaster and collapse... The truth of the text appears:

- (1) In the material world: Tremendous forces have operated through ages to bring the earth into its present condition. Geological, chemical, and astronomical science tells of changes slow, silent, but persistent, and therefore permanent;*
- (2) In the intellectual world: The human mind has a physical basis. As grew the material, so grows the mental world. A process here, a progress there. Ideas endure hardness in their battle for recognition... Scripture unfolds slowly, like plants in the field. Intellectual power is secured by labor and persistent effort. Nature reveals her secrets, history discloses the past, revelation makes known her truth, only to the studious and devout; and...*
- (3) In the spiritual world: Scripture calls the Almighty 'the God of all patience' [Rom 15:5]. His works bear evidence of finish and completeness. Why does He deliberate, tarry, and hasten not? Let this God of patience interpret His own plans. With Him millennia are as days. Sudden movements in grace, as in nature, are of the destructive kind. Gentle dews, not crashing storms, make good pasture. A lamb, not the lion, is final conqueror, and the servant who sows and waits, prays and persists, believes and does not make haste, shall have a sure reward.*

Frank Rector

Bible Study

To Speak Well of God: (3) Enter Satan

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them” (Job 1:6).

Satan is a pivotal character in this account of Job’s life, even though he is only included — apparently — in the prologue. The big question is who or what is he? In the majority of analyses of Job, the character is not subject to lengthy interpretation.^{1,2,3,4} He is merely left as the enigmatic figure who seems able to both speak in the presence of God and inflict his evil will upon Job. Understandably these expositors conclude, or by default imply, that Satan is a supernaturally powerful creature — the fairest conclusion given Satan’s apparently superhuman conduct. But if we are to understand the book of Job as an integral part of the canon of Scripture, we are obliged to find answers which are common with other Scriptural teachings, yet without wresting the text of Job.

A difficulty the book of Job presents to us concerning Satan is the implication that a creature other than God has supernatural power. By contrast, the commonly given Hebrew name of God, *El Shaddai*, often translated ‘God Almighty,’ implies omnipotence.

This issue, combined with the fact that the Hebrew word ‘Satan’ is perhaps not best understood as a proper name, provokes us to *interpret* the character of Satan. Unsurprisingly the range of postulated solutions from those who have offered interpretations has, over the years, spanned every possibility. One can find in the published literature Satan interpreted as: God,⁵ a rebellious angel who is also the devil,^{6,7,8,9} an obedient angel,¹⁰ the three friends,¹¹ and anonymous men,^{12,13,14} and in private communications I have also heard Satan postulated to be Job, Job’s wife, Elihu and Balaam.

We will try as much as possible to allow the Bible to interpret itself. The interpretation of Satan at which this path arrives is quite different from the interpretation I was instructed to believe in Sunday school — and to which I willingly adhered for many years — and was therefore quite a surprise to discover. I had been instructed that Satan was a term used to describe an obedient but inquisitive angel of the heavenly host, acting on God’s instructions to visit disaster on Job to demonstrate a truth of which he, Satan, was unaware. I am acutely aware how difficult it is to shed beliefs implanted at an early age, yet, with my own careful Bible study, this was a proposal I became obliged to refute. I am now convinced that Satan represents the rebellious pride of man. In the Joban drama, therefore, anyone behaving proudly occupies the office of the Satan. I believe that primarily this identifies the three friends of Job, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, as the Satan of the tale, precisely because of their

haughty attitude, which rendered them unable to speak that which was right about God. Let me explain how I arrived at this conclusion.

Identifying Satan

Understanding the word “Satan”

Primarily, the Hebrew word translated ‘Satan’ in Job appears as the definite article: i.e., “**the** Satan,” rather than “Satan.”¹⁵ This use of the definite article is harmonious with the notion that it is a characteristic, or a role, not a personal character, which is being referenced, since proper names are not generally referenced with the definite article.

“Satan” (whether a proper name or not) is a Hebrew word meaning “adversary” or “opponent.” As a consequence it is a ‘name’ that can belong to anyone who takes up an opposition role. In its purest form therefore, Satan has no morally pejorative flavor, being purely a relative term. For example, if two men play chess, each is in the role of Satan to the other, simply because they are opponents to each other.

Because the word “satan” is so generic, its use in Scripture spans the full spectrum of beings. It is used to apply to God (cf 2Sam 24:1; 1Chron 21:1), angels (Num 22:22, RSV) and humans (Matt 16:23). “Satan” is not the only word which has this degree of flexibility, although it is perhaps one of few which is commonly assumed to be a proper name. For example the Hebrew “Elohim,” meaning a Mighty One, who stands in power to rule and judge, is used equally broadly in the Scriptures referring to God (Gen 1:1), angels (Psa 8:4, 5, KJV) and men (Exod 21:5, 6).

So the fact that the book of Job contains a character called Satan should give us pause to think that this character could in fact be anyone: from God, to an angel, or a man, or anything.

Collecting the facts from Job

We aren’t given a great deal of facts with which to solve the mystery of the character of Satan, which is doubtless why this question remains much debated. Using the direct expressions given in the prologue we have the following:

1. The Satan presented *is the opponent of God*. This fact seems often overlooked by expositors, who tend to suppose that Satan opposes Job. The text shows opposing dialogue between the Satan and God. Job isn’t even present. In fact the Satan is described as Satan before the subject of Job is even raised. Certainly the Satan does not speak well of Job’s intentions — indeed he even slanders him — but it is God he opposes.
2. The Satan identifies himself as coming from the Earth (Job 1:7).
3. The Satan knows Job well (Job 1:10).
4. The Satan is given authority (by God) to cause calamity to Job. This contains the intriguing implication that the Satan does not appear to possess the power to harm Job — until it is granted him by God (Job 1:12; 2:6, 7).
5. The Satan came to “present himself before the Lord.” We’re told this twice, suggesting that he does this on a regular basis (Job 1:6; 2:1).

Interpreting the facts

Since this is God's Satan, he is necessarily an ungodly entity. This already eliminates the possibility of the Satan being an obedient angel, and we shall see further evidence below to corroborate that elimination. In fact this points in the direction of a human origin for the Satan, since humans are the only elements of creation who have free will to either serve God or rebel against Him as we choose.

This lends a good reason for why the impersonal pronoun (i.e., *the* Satan) is used. As we have seen, Satan can be anything to anyone, provided it is in an opposition role. But when it is God's Satan, it is reasonable to describe the office as THE Satan — THE opponent. Thus, although the word Satan in general does not carry a morally pejorative flavor, THE Satan, God's Satan, must necessarily be ungodly in nature.

God asks the Satan:

"Where have you come from?" (Job 1:6).

An omniscient God does not need to ask this, or indeed any, question. The question is reflective of its precedential ancestor, asked to Adam: "Where are you?" (Gen 3:9). In both cases God is not seeking information which He is unable to obtain. It isn't that God didn't know behind which bush Adam was crouching. Neither was God unaware of exactly where Satan had come from, and what he was up to. So why does God ask these questions, when He doesn't need to? When God speaks, it's for the hearer to learn something. I suggest that in each case He is revealing that those to whom He is speaking *are not in company with Him*. When He says to Adam, after Adam has broken the only rule there was, "Where are you, Adam?" I submit He is essentially saying: "You're not with me anymore, Adam, are you?" And similarly in Job: "Where have you come from, Satan?" translates as: "You're not one of Mine, are you?" This would also explain the literary contrast expressed in Satan's appearing with the 'sons of God.' The sons of God belong to God; the Satan does not.

The questions are posed in order for the contemporary recipient, and later readers, to reflect upon the 'location,' spiritually speaking, of the one whom God is addressing. In the book of Job the question indicates that the Satan is not a member of the heavenly host, who are 'with God' in both physical proximity (Matt 18:10) and, more relevantly, spiritual purpose (Job 38:7).

The second fact instructs us that Satan was 'of the Earth.' This condition too is naturally satisfied with the Satan as human.

The Satan knows who Job is. This is satisfied either by a creature with supernatural powers, or by humans who were within circles of Job's associates.

But the fourth fact is intriguing: the Satan is granted power by God to hurt Job. This fact requires some investigation, even to remain consistent with other quotes within the text of Job!

The Bible makes clear that God has ultimate control over everything, including the power to allow or prevent disaster (Isa 45:5-7). The power to cause fire to fall from heaven, for example (Job 1:16), is beyond the capacity of humans to induce

and must have come from God. Furthermore, the book of Job establishes beyond doubt that God was the one who brought calamity on Job (Job 42:11; also 2:3).

If we consider this fact on its own then the Satan could be an angel, because when God acts, it is commonly described as being performed by an angel, whether it is an act of deliverance (Dan 6:22) or destruction (Psa 78:49,50).

But the teaching of Peter provides a categorical piece of evidence to the contrary:

“Angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not bring slanderous accusations against [righteous men] in the presence of the Lord (2Pet 2:11).

This eliminates the possibility of the Satan in Job being an angel, because it is clear that the Satan slanders Job.

Finally, we explore the phrase “present themselves before the Lord.” Scripture shows that this language is never used for angels, but is commonly used for humans coming before God (Exod 34:1-2; Josh 24:1; Jude 1:24, KJV). By contrast, Scripture speaks of the angels as being permanently in the presence of God (Mt 18:10). So for the book of Job to be consistent with other Scriptures, those who are “presented before the Lord” in Job, including the Satan are of human, rather than immortal, constituency.

This prompts a further question: “Where did this presentation before the Lord occur?” In each case outside the book of Job the place where men are presented “before the Lord” or “in the presence of the Lord” referred to a sanctified place of worship on Earth.

Yet we’re still left with many unanswered questions. If Satan is human, who is he? Does he appear in the text of Job? How does he achieve the affliction of Job? And how then does the conversation between God and Satan actually take place? It’s time to step back and view the bigger picture of interactions in Scripture between God and Satan. By doing this, we will develop a template of how interactions between God and Satan occur and then return to the book of Job with this template in hand to conclude our identification of the Satan.

God and Satan in Scripture

The big picture

Elements of the template trend between God and His Satan in the Bible:

1. God pronounces a truth.
2. Satan opposes God’s truth (“opposes” by definition, since “Satan” means “opponent”) and declares an untruth.
- 2b. Characteristically this untruth forms an accusation against a righteous man.
3. God rebukes Satan for his misbehavior.

This relationship between God and Satan adopts the same characteristic trend which we can summarize in three stages, as shown above. Here are three Biblical cases from which I establish this trend.

Example 1: The serpent in Eden

1. Pronouncement of God's truth: that man would die if he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen 2:16, 17).
2. Satan opposes, speaking untruth: that they would not die, but rather become like God (Gen 3:4, 5).
- 2b. Satan's untruths are revealed as accusations against the righteous:
"And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world — he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, 'Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God' " (Rev 12:9-10, RSV).
3. Satan is rebuked by God (Gen 3:14, 15).

Example 2: Peter contradicting Christ

1. Pronouncement of God's truth: that Jesus must be killed at the hands of wicked men (Matt 16:21).
2. Satan opposes, speaking untruth: that the murder would be prevented (Matt 16:22).
- 2b. No doubt Peter's intention was entirely to encourage, even protect, his Lord. Yet equally surely his statement, which was untrue, forms an accusation against Jesus; for if Jesus has spoken of things which are not, in fact, going to happen, then Jesus has spoken falsely.
3. Satan is rebuked (Matt 16:23).

I believe Jesus used the word 'Satan' to give instruction on this very principle of who Satan really is; not because he was especially angry at Peter, who was loyally, if inappropriately, trying to defend the Master he loved.

Example 3: The enemies of Judah slandering the Jews and Jerusalem as a people and place of wickedness

1. Pronouncement of God's truth: that the God of the Earth would be manifested in Jerusalem and worshiped faithfully there (Ezra 1:1-3).
2. Satan opposes... (Ezra 4:1-4).
- 2b. ...by spreading accusatory untruths against the righteous and naming Jerusalem a place of wickedness (Ezra 4:6-16).
3. Satan is rebuked by God for his slander upon God's people and city, Jerusalem (Zech 3:1-3). (The prophet Zechariah is contemporary to the priest Ezra; their books comment on the same historical events.)

The local picture: God and Satan in Job

Using the template above of the three-point relationship between God and Satan in Scripture, we can now identify who "Satan" is in Job; and find an answer which is on common ground with all the points we have raised so far. We achieve this by looking for the signature characteristics of the behavior of Satan: the spreading of untruths which form accusations against the righteous. We expect to find:

1. A pronouncement of God's truth:

"Then the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil' " (Job 1:8, cf 1:1).

2. Satan opposes God... :

" 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' Satan replied... 'But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face' " (Job 1:9,11).

2b. ...by accusing the righteous with lies:

(a) Eliphaz the Temanite:

"Is not your wickedness great?

Are not your sins endless?

You demanded security from your brothers for no reason;

you stripped men of their clothing, leaving them naked" (Job 22:6).

(b) Bildad the Shuhite:

"The lamp of the wicked is snuffed out;

the flame of his fire stops burning...

He has no offspring or descendants among his people,

no survivor where once he lived" (Job 18:5,19).

[Consider this statement in the context that Job's family had been destroyed (Job 1:18,19).]

(c) Zophar the Naamathite:

"Oh, how I wish that God would speak,

that he would open his lips against you

and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom,

for true wisdom has two sides.

Know this: God has even forgotten some of your sin" (Job 11:5, 6).

Note the parallel between these lies and the original lies recorded in the prologue. In the prologue the Satan accuses Job of worshiping God only because he received blessings from Him and, symmetrically in the main body, the Satan makes accusation that Job must have abandoned his worship of God, on the basis that he ostensibly no longer receives blessings from Him. (These are the two complementary sides of the "doctrine of retribution," which the Satan clings to throughout.)

3. God rebukes Satan:

"After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, 'I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has' " (Job 42:7).

So, by using the Bible to interpret itself, this template identifies the prideful comments of Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite, the three friends of Job, as emulating the Satan in this drama.

But important questions remain:

- If the three friends occupy the office of the Satan, how does the conversation with God happen?

- How could the Satan ever bring about Job's various afflictions?
- If the three friends formed the Satan, why were they sympathetic to Job's pain and suffering?
- If the Satan in Job really is the three friends' pride, why doesn't the prologue simply say so?
- Finally, what consequences does this interpretation have on the remainder of the drama?

Our next article will address all of these points.

John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

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Special Invitation

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

*You, your family and friends are invited to the
34th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 20-26, 2009.*

Main Speakers:

Bro. John Downer — "Knowing the Father and the Son"

Bro. Steve Ross — "Gleaning from the Servants of God"

*Bro. John Bilello — "The Church of the Living God:
the Pillar and Ground of the Truth"*

Contact Bro. Brad Rek 330-609-6957 or lisarek8@cs.com

Bible Study

Joshua's "Long Day"

The long day of Joshua is one of the better known and the most controversial astronomical events in the Bible. Many Christians love to use this passage in order to demonstrate the power and the sovereignty of God over His creation. Atheists and skeptics love to use it to discredit the Bible.

The fiction

Websites and emails like the following have been circulating for some time, and have at times found their way into more scholarly journals. There are a huge number of retellings, but the story goes something like this:

Did you know that the space program is busy proving that what has been called "myth" in the Bible is true? A consultant with the space program relates the following development:

"I think one of the most amazing things that God has done for us today happened recently to our astronauts and space scientists at Maryland. They were checking out where the positions of the sun, moon, and planets would be 100 years and 1,000 years from now. We have to know this so we won't send up a satellite and have it bump into something later on in its orbit.

"We have to lay out the orbits in terms of the life of the satellite and where the planets will be so the whole thing will not bog down. They ran the computer measurement back and forth over the centuries, and it came to a halt. The computer stopped and put up a red signal, which meant that there was something wrong with either the information fed into it or with the results as compared to the standards.

"They called in the service department to check it out, and they said, 'What's wrong?' Well, they found there is a day missing in space in elapsed time. They scratched their heads and tore their hair out. There was no answer.

"Finally a Christian man on the team said, 'You know, one time I was in Sunday school, and they talked about the sun standing still.' While they didn't believe him, they didn't have an answer either, so they said, 'Show us.' He got a Bible and went to the book of Joshua where they found a pretty ridiculous statement for any one with 'common sense'. There they found the LORD saying to Joshua, 'Fear them not, I have delivered them into thy hand; there shall not a man of them stand before Thee.' Joshua was concerned because he was surrounded by the enemy! And if darkness fell, they would overpower them. So Joshua asked the LORD to make the sun stand still! That's right: 'The sun stood still and the moon stayed and lasted not to go down about a whole day!' (Josh 10:12,13).

“The astronauts and scientists said, There is the missing day! They checked the computers going back into the time it was written and found it was close but not close enough. The elapsed time that was missing back in Joshua’s day was 23 hours and 20 minutes, not a whole day. They read the Bible, and there it was about [i.e., approximately] a day. These little words in the Bible are important, but they were still in trouble because if you cannot account for 40 minutes, you’ll still be in trouble 1,000 years from now.

“Forty minutes had to be found because it can be multiplied many times over in orbits. As the Christian employee thought about it, he remembered somewhere in the Bible where it said the sun went backwards.

“The scientists told him he was out of his mind, but they got out the Book and read these words in 2 Kings 20:9-11 that told of the following story: Hezekiah, on his death bed, was visited by the prophet Isaiah who told him that he was not going to die. Hezekiah asked for a sign as proof. Isaiah said ‘Do you want the sun to go ahead 10 degrees?’ Hezekiah said, ‘It is nothing for the sun to go ahead 10 degrees, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.’ Isaiah spoke to the LORD, and the LORD brought the shadow ten degrees backwards! Ten degrees is exactly 40 minutes!

“Twenty-three hours and 20 minutes in Joshua, plus 40 minutes in 2 Kings, make the missing day in the universe! Isn’t it amazing?”

The fact

This would be a great story if it were true and, if it were true, it would convince many people who do not believe the Bible. But this story is an absolute hoax. This event never happened. It is one of those great “urban legends” that even now is still disseminated through the internet.

In 1890, Charles Totten, an instructor in military science at Yale, wrote *Joshua’s Long Day and the Dial of Ahaz*. In his book he claimed that two professors, one at Harvard and another at Yale (himself), discovered a day missing in astronomical calculations. It’s difficult to imagine what sort of observations and/or calculations could come remotely close to ‘proving’ such a thing. This story about a missing day met with well-deserved skepticism at the time, and was presumably dismissed by all intelligent people. But the same story had a rebirth in 1936, when Harry Rimmer wrote a book titled *The Harmony of Science and Scripture*, in which he cited Totten’s book. Again, such a far-fetched story never gained any acceptance in scholarly circles. How could it?

A book by Harold Hill, *How to Live Like a King’s Kid* [Bridge Logos Publications, paperback, 1974], recycled the story yet again — presumably adding the NASA details, which would have been anachronistic in 1936, never mind 1890. The story then made the rounds of church bulletins and newsletters in the 1970s.

The whole story, in all its variations, has been thoroughly refuted many times, notably by an article in the widely-circulated magazine *Christianity Today*, entitled “Missing Day or Missing Data?” (September 11, 1970). For a while it seemed to

have died a well-deserved death, but such is the nature of the internet that recycled and updated versions of the earlier, discredited story have been circulated again and again — always, it seems, finding a few who are ready to believe it without examination.

The event itself

When the five Amorite kings made an alliance to fight against the Gibeonites, the men of Gibeon asked Joshua to help them against their common enemy. In response to this request, Joshua and the whole army of Israel went from Gilgal to fight against the Amorites.

According to the Bible text, Joshua and the army marched all night from Gilgal and took the army of the Amorites by total surprise. In addition, God threw the enemy army into total confusion by casting against them huge stones out of the sky, so that many died. The text says that more people died from the hailstones than the soldiers of Israel killed with the sword.

It was at the height of the battle that Joshua cried out:

“O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.” So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on [or, ‘triumphed over’] its enemies... The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day” (Josh 10:12,13).

The explanation

So what happened? The traditional interpretation is that there was a prolonging of the day so that Joshua and his army could have more light to fight against the enemy. Thus, God stopped the sun and the moon long enough to give Joshua and his army time to defeat the Amorites.

It is true that God could stop the sun and still maintain the solar system in place. But the laws of physics bring serious doubt upon the traditional interpretation of the text. The stopping in place of the sun and the moon would affect the whole solar system. In addition, there are other problems with this interpretation:

- This view reflects a pre-modern view of the solar system, one in which the sun is assumed to rotate around the earth.
- The stopping of the sun in the same place in the sky probably would scorch the land where the light was shining and would freeze the land when there was only darkness.
- If the sun would stop in the middle of the sky, there would still be day and night because day and night are determined by the rotation of the earth on its axis, not by the rotation of the sun.

[See the website www.truthorfiction.com/rumors/j/joshuaday. In fact, many scholars and researchers have debunked the “myth” of the missing day. Also see the “Urban Legends” page at www.snopes.com/religion/lostday.asp.]

Various possibilities exist for explaining the Bible text; they include the following.

Miraculously strengthened soldiers?

In his book *Bible Studies*, Harry Whittaker observes: “What marvel took place on that astonishing day? Did the mighty machinery of the solar system have a spanner [*wrench*] in its works specially so that the Israelites could win a big victory? And if things really happened literally according to what the words say, why did not everything and everybody take off jet-propelled? For it has to be remembered that in the latitude of Palestine the earth’s surface and everything on it is revolving round the earth’s axis at about 800 miles per hour. Then was another mighty miracle performed to keep people and buildings and trees and oceans all in their places when the earth’s rotation stopped? — and yet another when everything started up again? Here, surely, is a miracle which is a hindrance to faith rather than an aid to it... A little careful reading can save us from boggling at this ancient record. This is Holy Scripture and altogether dependable. If there are difficulties, then most likely they are difficulties manufactured by ourselves.”

A bit further along, Bro. Whittaker adds: “Notice those significant words: ‘Is it not written in the Book of Jasher?’ [Josh 10:13]. Exactly nothing is known about this Book of Jasher, except that David’s long and lovely lament over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan was also to be found written there (2Sam 1:18). It requires only a casual reading of that ‘Song of the Bow’ to see that the Book of Jasher was (evidently) a collection of ancient songs and poetry! No one with any literary sense at all takes poetry in a strictly literal sense. For example: ‘They were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions’ [2Sam 1:23]. Or again, ‘The mountains and hills shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands’ [Isa 55:12]. The Bible has many an example of this sort. Is it not likely, then, that this quote in Joshua 10 from the Book of Jasher is poetic language, not to be taken in a strictly literal sense?”

Finally, he concludes: “The only way in which lengthening of the day could be measured would be by the amount of useful work the men of Israel were able to put into it. Consider Josh 10:9,11,15,17,28, etc. Joshua’s army covered 50 miles in one day, fighting all the way, through mountainous terrain” (*Bible Studies*, pp. 72,73).

Bear in mind that, as they traveled, the Israelite warriors had no wristwatches or portable timepieces by which they might measure how much time had passed. How far they traveled, what they managed to achieve, and/or *how far the sun traveled along its course* would give them their only means of telling the time.

Later these seemingly tireless warriors may have thought back upon their exploits, and compared this time to their other battle experiences. It would have seemed to them, in retrospect, that something truly extraordinary had happened — that on this special “day”, it was as though the sun had paused in its relentless course while they carried out their divinely-decreed labor, and did the equivalent of two days of God’s work in one day!

This scenario leads to one very reasonable possibility: God, by His Spirit, strengthened the Israelite warriors so that they accomplished superhuman feats during the course of this one day.

Or miraculously provided light?

A second possibility is that God might have created a greater light, like His “Shekinah Glory” for example, that would “mimic” the sun even during the night, and allow the Israelites to prolong their activities.

There are well-attested and unarguable examples of this in the time of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. There, Yahweh’s “Shekinah [Dwelling, or Presence] Glory” became a pillar of fire that gave the people of Israel light during the night, that separated them from the armies of Egypt, and that led and protected them through the Red Sea and then in the wilderness (e.g., Exod 13:21,22; 14:19-24; Num 9:15-23; 14:14; Deut 1:33; Neh 9:12, 19; Psalms 78:14; 105:39; etc).

This same Shekinah Glory may have been the means by which the sun-dial’s shadow moved backward, as mentioned in the days of Hezekiah (2Kings 20; Isaiah 38). Remember: all that is required to create a shadow that moves opposite to that of the sun’s shadow is to interpose another sufficiently-strong light closer to the sun-dial.

Finally, the Shekinah Glory may also explain the peculiar movements of the “star of Bethlehem” (Matthew 2). Contrary to everything we know about regular stars, this star behaved quite strangely. It seems to have led the wise men, by appearing to travel from place to place (and not necessarily in a straight line), stopping and then starting again, being visible to some while invisible to others, and finally disappearing altogether. Such movements, obviously directed and guided by an Omnipotent Hand, are reminiscent of those of the pillar of fire and cloud in Moses’ day.

Conclusion

Either of these explanations (or both together), and perhaps others besides, might account for the sun “standing still”, or *appearing* to do so, in the days of Joshua. Either of these explanations (or both together) would still admit the Power of God at work to perform a miraculous deliverance.

These explanations also give God the glory, but — unlike the theory that the sun literally stood still for 24 hours — they do not put severe stress on the whole of the universe, the foundation laws by which physical bodies interact, or the intelligence of Bible-believers. Nor do they give undue cause for unbelievers to mock.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

The Measure of a Man

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Reflections

The Locusts of Palestine

Here, on the side of this mountain, above Fuliye [near the Sea of Galilee, two miles south of Tiberias], I had my first introduction, some twenty years ago [about 1837], to the far-famed locusts of the East. Noticing something peculiar on the hillside, I rode up to examine it, when, to my amazement, the whole surface became agitated, and began to roll down the declivity. My horse was so terrified that I was obliged to dismount. The locusts were very young, not yet able even to jump; they had the shape, however, of minute grasshoppers. Their numbers seemed infinite, and in their haste to get out of my way they literally rolled over and over, like semi-fluid mortar an inch or two in thickness. Many years after this I became better acquainted with these extraordinary creatures in Abeih [*a mountain village 15 miles south of Beirut*] on Lebanon.

Early in the spring of 1845, these insects appeared in considerable numbers along the seacoast and on the lower spurs of the mountains. They did no great injury at the time, and, having laid their eggs, immediately disappeared. The people, familiar with their habits, looked with anxiety to the time when these eggs would be hatched, nor were their fears groundless or exaggerated. For several days previous to the first of June we had heard that millions of young locusts were on their march up the valley toward our village, and at length I was told that they had reached the lower part of it. Summoning all the people I could collect, we went to meet and attack them, hoping to stop their progress altogether, or at least to turn aside the line of their march. Never shall I lose the impression produced by the first view of them. I had often passed through clouds of flying locusts, and they always struck my imagination with a sort of vague terror; but these we now confronted were without wings, and about the size of full-grown grasshoppers, which they closely resembled in appearance and behavior. But their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a living deluge. We dug trenches, and kindled fires, and beat, and burned to death "heaps upon heaps," but the effort was utterly useless. Wave after wave rolled up the mountain side, and poured over rocks, walls, ditches, and hedges, those behind covering up and bridging over the masses already killed. After a long and fatiguing contest, I descended the mountain to examine the depth of the column, but I could not see to the end of it. Wearied with my hard walk over this living deluge, I returned, and gave over the vain effort to stop its progress.

By the next morning the head of the column had reached my garden, and, hiring eight or ten people, I resolved to rescue at least my vegetables and flowers. During this day we succeeded, by fire, and by beating them off the walls with brushes and branches, in keeping our little garden tolerably clear of them; but it was perfectly appalling to watch this animated river as it flowed up the road and ascended the hill above my house. At length, worn out with incessant skirmishing, I gave up

the battle. Carrying the pots into the parlor, and covering up what else I could, I surrendered the remainder to the conquerors. For four days they continued to pass on toward the east, and finally only a few stragglers of the mighty hosts were left behind.

In every stage of their existence these locusts give a most impressive view of the power of God to punish a wicked world. Look at the pioneers of the host, those flying squadrons that appear in early spring. Watch the furious impulse for the propagation of their devouring progeny. No power of man can interrupt it; millions upon millions, with most fatal industry, deposit their innumerable eggs in the field, the plain, and the desert. This done, they vanish like morning mist. But in six or eight weeks the very dust seems to waken into life, and, molded into maggots, begins to creep. Soon this animated earth becomes minute grasshoppers, and, creeping and jumping all in the same general direction, they begin their destructive march. After a few days their voracious appetite palls; they become sluggish, and fast, like the silkworms, for a short time. Like the silk worms, too, they repeat this fasting four times before they have completed their transmutations and are accommodated with wings. I do not remember to have seen this fact in their history noticed by any naturalist. In their march they devour every green thing, and with wonderful expedition. A large vineyard and garden adjoining mine was green as a meadow in the morning, but long before night it was naked and bare as a newly-plowed field or dusty road. The noise made in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower on a distant forest.

The references to the habits and behavior of locusts in the Bible are very striking and accurate. Joel says,

"He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white" (Joel 1:7).

These locusts at once strip the vines of every leaf and cluster of grapes, and of every green twig. I also saw many large fig orchards "clean bare," not a leaf remaining; and as the bark of the fig-tree is of a silvery whiteness, the whole orchards, thus rifled of their green veils, spread abroad their branches "made white" in melancholy nakedness to the burning sun.

In view of the utter destruction which they effect, the prophet exclaims,

"Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?" (Joel 1:15,16).

This is most emphatically true. I saw under my own eye not only a large vineyard loaded with young grapes, but whole fields of corn disappear as if by magic, and the hope of the husbandman vanish like smoke.

Again,

"How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate" (Joel 1:18).

This is poetic, but true. A field over which this flood of desolation has rolled shows not a blade for even a goat to nip.

"The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. Before their face the people

shall be much pained... all faces gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war, and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks" (Joel 2:3,6,7).

When the head of the mighty column came in contact with the palace of the Emeer Asaad in Abelh, they did not take the trouble to wheel round the corners, but climbed the wall like men of war, and marched over the top of it; so, when they reached the house of [a friend], in spite of all his efforts to prevent it, a living stream rolled right over the roof.

"They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall; they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief" (Joel 2:9).

Every touch in the picture is true to life. If not carefully watched, they would have devoured the flowers which were carried into the inner rooms in pots.

The prophet Nahum says:

"The locusts camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and the place is not known where they are" (Nah 3:17).

Paxton and others have remarked that there is much difficulty in this passage, but to any one who has attentively watched the habits of the locust, it is not only plain, but very striking. In the evenings, as soon as the air became cool, at Abeih they literally camped in the hedges and loose stone walls, covering them over like a swarm of bees settled on a bush. There they remained until the next day's sun waxed warm, when they again commenced their march. One of the days on which they were passing was quite cool, and the locusts scarcely moved at all from their camps, and multitudes remained actually stationary until the next morning. Those that did march crept along very heavily, as if cramped and stiff; but in a hot day they hurried forward in a very earnest, lively manner. It is an aggravation of the calamity if the weather continues cool, for then they prolong their stay and do far more damage. When the hot sun beats powerfully upon them, they literally flee away, and the place is not known where they are. This is true even in regard to those which have not wings. One wonders where they have all gone. Yesterday the whole earth seemed to be creeping and jumping, today you see not a locust. And the disappearance of the clouds of flying locusts is still more sudden and complete.

David complains that he was tossed up and down as the locusts (Psa 109:23). This reference is to the flying locust. I have had frequent opportunities to notice how these squadrons are tossed up and down, and whirled round and round by the ever-varying currents of the mountain winds.

Solomon says,

"The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands" (Prov 30:27).

Nothing in their habits is more striking than the pertinacity [*persistence*] with which they all pursue the same line of march, like a disciplined army. As they have no king, they must be influenced by some common instinct.

I am not surprised that Pharaoh's servants remonstrated against his folly and madness when they heard the plague of locusts announced. To their proud master they said:

"Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed? And when they came they were very grievous, for they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they ate every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, and there remained not any green thing in the trees, nor in the herbs of the field."

Moses declared:

"They shall cover the face of the earth so that one can not be able to see the ground" (see Exod 10:3-15).

I have this dreadful picture indelibly fixed on my mind. For several nights after they came to Abelh, as soon as I closed my eyes the whole earth seemed to be creeping and jumping, nor could I banish the ugly image from my brain.

The coming of locusts is a sore judgment from God. "If I command the locusts to devour the land," says the LORD to Solomon (2Chr 7:13). Yes, it is the command of God that brings these insects to scourge a land for the wickedness of the inhabitants thereof.

W.M. Thomson
The Land and the Book, pp. 416-419

The Why of Suffering

Beloved brothers and sisters,

Loving greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You're probably thinking the title to this letter sounds presumptuous; so let me rephrase it: I know the "why" of my suffering.

I could never understand the why of the trials and sufferings of others, but I can empathize with them.

You often hear people ask, 'Why did this happen to such a good brother? He was a pillar of his ecclesia. I just don't understand why God would take him from us in his prime?'

The attitude of Job was, 'I've done everything required and then some. Why should I suffer like this? I have served God, and suddenly I've lost everything. And now I've lost my health.'

We've all heard or said, 'She didn't deserve that. That's not fair.'

We all know that Scripture tells us we must suffer for Christ, and life just isn't fair. Our reward will be the Kingdom. No explanation is needed there. We accept this on the intellectual level and move on.

But why me?

God and His Son loved me enough to make me suffer.

I now know (on the experience level) that God loves me and counts me one of His servants worthy of a fellowship of suffering. I hope and pray that this does not sound egotistical, or that I have ascended to some higher and loftier spiritual plane than others. It certainly doesn't mean, 'Once saved, always saved'! It just means that one person's faith has grown.

I now understand what Paul meant when he wrote: "We preach Christ crucified... Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." I understand: "The old man is crucified with him." I understand, now: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." I understand now by experience the suffering and faith of those worthies mentioned in Hebrews 11. The suffering and self-sacrifice of our Lord and the apostles is a reality for me.

The Atonement

When our Lord was crucified, the Atonement was demonstrated. He lived to do his Father's will. He was perfectly obedient, and he crucified the flesh daily. The cross was the crowning demonstration of the Atonement.

For the generations of those who couldn't witness those glorious years of our Lord that culminated in his sacrificial death, God graciously provided us the New Testament.

The Christadelphian community as a whole has strayed from the principle of the Atonement. I'm not saying that there is complete failure, or that there are not individuals who practice the principles of the Atonement. What I am saying is that as a community we have failed.

We have spent endless hours formulating statements of faith, explanations of statements of faith, explanations of the explanations, position statements, and highly detailed expositions and policies. We have had bitter divisions in the body, which did not glorify God, nor did they honor the principles of the Atonement.

Let me say here that a statement of faith is important, that expositions are important, and that agreement on these principles is important. What I am saying is that all sides have been wrong in all of these controversies. Granted, somebody is ultimately 'right', but it is God who should have been shown to be right. When did that ever happen?

This contemporary example should suffice to illustrate what I mean by living the Atonement.

A sister, some years ago, donated a kidney to her brother, whose kidneys had failed. His transplanted kidney began to falter recently and he needed another transplant. This time his son donated his kidney to save his father. This is an example of living the Atonement. The son honored both his natural father and his Heavenly Father. The son was probably not able to give any detailed exposition of the Atonement — but he lived it.

I now know the why of suffering *for me*. He loves me enough to make me suffer,

so that my faith may grow toward the end that I will be in His Kingdom. This has given me a “peace that passes all understanding.”

I can wholeheartedly thank Him for His love and grace toward me. No matter the outcome, I am at peace.

Suffering is about self-sacrifice, “crucifying the flesh”. It is about giving of time, money, talents and personal resources until it becomes a true self-sacrifice.

This isn’t about me. It’s all about God. So, I am at perfect peace with whatever comes.

*With peace, love and grace to you all,
Gary Burns*

[In 2003, after a long and difficult struggle, Bro. Gary Burns died of leukemia. He was 56.]



Letters

Why aren’t dinosaurs mentioned in the Bible?

‘Why is there no mention of dinosaurs in the Bible if this is really telling about the story of the world from creation? We know they existed, so why is there no mention of them?’

I suggest a couple of possibilities:

(1) The dinosaurs could have been part of an earlier “creation” — long before Adam. They might have existed for long ages of time, only to come to an end in some as-yet-undetermined way.

(2) They could have been part of the same “creation” as Adam, i.e., being created at the same time as the other creatures described in Genesis 1 (though I think that is considerably less likely). Yet, even if that were so, the fact they aren’t mentioned means nothing much one way or the other. Many animals have become extinct by our day — not just the dinosaurs, but the dodo, the woolly mammoth, and various kangaroos and wallabies, to mention just a few. Furthermore, many other noteworthy animals besides the dinosaurs aren’t mentioned anywhere in the Bible. Giraffe. Platypus. Kangaroo. Tiger. Zebra. Buffalo. Elephant. And so on.

In all sorts of areas, what the Bible *does* tell us is not nearly so much as what it *doesn’t* tell us. In fact, the Bible represents a very small part of the whole of all knowledge and experience. In the Bible God tells us what is necessary and helpful in understanding His glory, and the point and purpose and need of man’s salvation, and how it is to be accomplished. It isn’t (and wasn’t intended to be) a complete (or nearly complete) encyclopedia of scientific knowledge, or natural history, or even world history.

The following is a brief extract from *Elpis Israel*, Chapter 2, by Bro. John Thomas, that may be generally relevant to this question:

“Let the reader peruse the history of the creation as a revelation to himself as an inhabitant of the earth. It informs him of the order in which the things narrated would have developed themselves to his view, had he been placed on some projecting rock, the spectator of the events detailed. He must remember this. The Mosaic account is not a revelation to the inhabitants of other orbs remote from the earth of the formation of the boundless universe; but to man, as a constituent of the terrestrial system. This will explain why light is said to have been created four days before the sun, moon, and stars. To an observer on the earth, this was the order of their appearance; and in relation to him a primary creation, though absolutely pre-existent for million of ages before the Adamic Era.

“The duration of the earth’s revolutions round the sun previous to the work of the first day is not revealed; but the evidences produced by the strata of our globe show that the period was long continued. There are indeed hints, casually dropped in the Scriptures, which would seem to indicate that our planet was inhabited by a race of beings anterior to [i.e., before] the formation of man.”

Editor

“Christadelphian Standards” and a Young Earth?

On the theory of a young earth

During the last 35 years [written in 1996], there has been a revival of belief that the earth is only about 7,000 years old and that most of the fossils were laid down after Noah’s flood. This was a fundamental teaching of Ellen White (1827-1915), who founded the Seventh Day Adventist Church and claimed to have been given a vision of a seven-day Creation. It was revived by the Adventist George McCready Price in the early decades of this century. Since the publication of *The Genesis Flood*, by Whitcomb and Morris in 1961, it has had a further revival and gained widespread acceptance by “creationists”, especially among American “fundamentalists”.

Biblical literalism (often wrongly called fundamentalism) has been responsible for many errors such as the trinity, personal devil and transubstantiation. It is significant that the Creationist Societies, which advocate a young earth, also insist on the trinity and a personal devil.

A serious problem with the young earth theory is that it removes common ground on which we can debate the vitally important evidence of the fossil record. Worse than that, it is likely to convince earth scientists that Genesis 1 must be mythical, and since Genesis 1-3 are foundation chapters of the Bible, this will undermine the authority of the Bible as a whole.

None can deny God's ability to create the heavens and the earth in six days or six minutes or six seconds or in no time. The question is not what God could do but what He chose to do, and to reveal to us.

(Alan Fowler, *A Drama of Creation*)

Christadelphian traditional standards on the Creation

There is much misunderstanding in the brotherhood as to what constitutes "Christadelphian orthodoxy" on the subject of creation. To set the record straight, here is a brief summary of our community's witness about geology and the age of the earth.

Bro. John Thomas taught that the days of Creation were 24-hour periods, but he argued that they did not refer to the original creation of the earth. He considered that geology proved an immense age for the earth, and that geological strata belonged to an earlier creation, long before Adam. He said explicitly that the sun, moon and stars were "pre-existent for millions of ages before the Adamic Era" (*Elpis Israel*, chapter 2).

Bro. Robert Roberts wrote, "The Bible and geology are sufficiently in agreement to make the acceptance of both possible" (*The Visible Hand of God*, chapter 2). He went on to write at length in chapter 5 of the same book about geology in relation to the Flood. He concluded that the geological evidence, which he repeatedly referred to as "facts", "compelled" (his word) the conclusion that the Flood was local, and not worldwide, "co-extensive only with the Adamically-inhabited portion of the globe", as he put it.

Bro. C.C. Walker, like his predecessors, accepted the facts of geology. But he rejected Bro. Thomas's method of harmonizing Genesis with geology, because, he said, "There does not appear to be any evidence at all that some six thousand years ago an existing cosmos was reduced to such a chaos as is described in Genesis 1:2" (*The Word of God*, chapter 3). Instead, he advocated the view that the days of creation were symbolic days, covering vast periods of time.

Bro. A.D. Norris, when he wrote the book *Believing the Bible* more than thirty years ago [*circa* 1955], invited his readers to choose among the various views of Creation then current in the Brotherhood. These included the views of both Bre. Thomas and Walker, but there was no mention of "Flood geology" or the "young earth" theory. Such notions only began to circulate within the brotherhood about twenty years ago [*circa* 1965].

This book [*i.e.*, Alan Hayward's *Creation and Evolution*] opposes those modern ideas, and urges a return to the view that the earth is very old, not merely because our pioneers taught this, but because the facts point that way.

(Alan Hayward, *Creation and Evolution*:
A preface for Christadelphian readers)

"Nothing but an untrammelled individual knowledge of the Bible will satisfy the earnest curiosity that would know what the truth is" (Robert Roberts).



Bible Mission News

La Paz, Bolivia

We are happy to report the baptism April 27, of ALEYDA VILLARROEL ALVAREZ here in La Paz, Bolivia. Aleyda has been a long-time contact, attending regularly since August, 2005, while Steve and Sally Jeffries were missionaries here. Her sister had received a leaflet in the street for a special effort being held, and after attending the effort began attending the regular weekly classes along with Aleyda. While continuing to attend the classes at the hall, Aleyda also began receiving personal classes with Sally to begin building an understanding of the fundamentals.

Aleyda has been through a lot in her personal life in recent years with her marriage and her husband's conduct. After she expressed a desire to be baptized in late 2007, we have been taking her through preparation. Despite having to make some difficult decisions during this time, she has persisted with her desire to be baptized and her conviction in the Truth.

We were happy to see many people attend the baptism, including several of our regular visitors (her sister Eva included) as well as her staunchly Catholic mother and grandmother.



Baptism of Sis. Aleyda Villarroel Alvarez

It would be wonderful if messages of welcome and encouragement could be sent to Aleyda (she understands English, if necessary), as it will help her to feel the warmth of her worldwide family (her brother is a Jehovah's Witness). Her address is P.O. Box 3-12164, San Miguel, La Paz, Bolivia.

*With love in our Lord,
Jacob and Fiona Styles*



Members of the La Paz Ecclesia

ThisisyourBible.com

The power of printer's ink

We are seeing tremendous results from ecclesias and countries that are advertising ThisisYourBible.com in their city or region. This has become an effective way to create a student “pipeline” in your area for localized preaching work.

When an ad is run locally, we generally see hundreds of registrations for the correspondence course. If your ecclesia takes advantage of the “Ecclesial Manager” function, these registered students will be under your ecclesia’s control and become your contacts. You can manage the tutors that will work with these students. You can communicate directly with the students and invite them to additional local events — all on the ThisisYourBible.com system. This facilitates the involvement of many ecclesial members in your ecclesia’s outreach — a goal many of our ecclesias have.

Bible Mission teams have been employing this for several months now. The results are fascinating, especially given the limited populations of some of these locations. For example, in Barbados, several ads have been run over the past year. Each time an ad is run, hundreds of new sign-ups occur. With a total population of just over 280,000, Barbados has often been the third or fourth country in total visits to the site. They have nearly 800 students now on correspondence courses

on the island. Soon, a Bible seminar will be conducted there, inviting the correspondence students to attend. We'll keep you posted on this one!

Other countries have similar results. Here's a quick picture of the number of correspondence students that have been attracted by advertising locally in the Caribbean:

Bahamas (212)

Jamaica (211)

Trinidad & Tobago (176)

Want to help?

- Visit the website and find out what it's all about (www.thisisyourbible.com)
- Become a tutor — we need your help!
- Hand out the business cards available in your ecclesia — let us know if you need more!
- **Encourage your ecclesia to advertise the website in your local newspaper or as a link on your ecclesia's website — since the contacts in your area will come back to you and can be managed by your ecclesia. Sample ads are available.**
- Continue your CBM financial support either individually or as an ecclesia.
- Contact your CBM website representative for more information:
CBMA/CBMC — Bro. David Jennings djennings@cox.net;
CBM/UK Bro. Peter Forbes peterlforbes@tiscali.co.uk or
ACBM Bro. Keith Pearson pearsonk@iprimus.com.au

Sis. Jan Berneau
CBMA/CBMC Publicity

"I wait for the LORD"

"I wait for the LORD. My soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the LORD more than watchmen for the morning" (Psa 130:5,6, RSV).

At times nothing seems to be happening. So it must be for the bird that sits on her nest. Things are apparently at a standstill. But the bird sits quietly, knowing that in the stillness something vital is going on, and in the proper time it will be shown. It takes faith and patience for the bird, and such faith and patience never seem to waver, day after day, night after night, as she bides the appointed time.

Restless and doubtful, we wonder why we have nothing to show for our efforts, no visible evidence of progress. Let us remember the perfect egg — unchanged in its appearance from the day it is laid. But while the bird waits faithfully, doing the only thing she is required to do throughout those silent weeks, important things are taking place.

Elisabeth Elliott

Agape in Action

One of my earliest memories of Africa is of a blind child running his hand over a new blanket he had just been given. He was no more than six years old and that blanket was his most valued possession. The joy in his face brought tears to my eyes. That night I remember seeing all the children at the blind and handicap center clutching their new blankets tightly as they slept. It was one of those magical moments in life. They always say that “it is in giving that you receive” — it was certainly true that night.

It was over 15 years before I made my way back to Africa. My wife, Deb, and I were in Kenya for several months with the World Health Organization. During that trip we saw many unforgettable sights. The beauty of the Kenyan landscape and game parks teeming with life were breathtaking. However, those sights have long faded in our minds. Those that remain are less beautiful. A hospital filled with sick and dying patients. A young woman with full-blown AIDS, so sickly, so gaunt, that the sight of her stopped us dead in our tracks. A young boy, paralyzed by the attack of an infectious disease, learning that he would never walk again. A child so frail and malnourished she didn’t even have the energy to cry. The needless suffering was something that made us yearn for the Lord’s return. It just seemed so unfair, so wrong, that in one part of the world there was such excess, while in another, people were dying for lack of food. There is a great injustice in the fact that billions of dollars are spent researching nanotechnology and exploring space while millions die from diseases that can be prevented for just a few cents. The reasons are complex, but fundamentally they boil down to “the heart being desperately wicked and deceitful above all things”. This injustice should not come as a surprise. Thankfully, it will not last. Change will come, not by our own efforts, but with the return of the Lord.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth” (Jer 23:5).

We also remember many positive things in Kenya. The incredible spirit of generosity in the face of poverty. Brothers and sisters serving one another. The laughter and happiness of the children.

Deb and I had spent several years in developing countries before we decided it was time to put in place a system that facilitated the enormous desire of brothers and sisters to help the less fortunate among us. With much prayer and consultation, Agape in Action was formally registered as a charity in January 2008. Agape in Action is run by Christadelphian volunteers, supported by the generous contributions of Christadelphians from all over the world and focused on helping Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. The model of Agape in Action is quite simple. We aim to put into practice core Scriptural principles related to giving. We collaborate with the CBM and local ecclesias and work with local brothers and sisters who have already shown a long-term commitment to helping the needy among them. We endeavor to engage all of

our supporters through regular updates, photographs and opportunities to be part of Agape in Action. We pray constantly that God will bless our activities and guide our work.

The name Agape in Action draws on an important theme that runs throughout Scripture, the practical response to the love we have all experienced from God. God has opened His hand wide to us (Psa 145:16), and we can show our appreciation by reciprocating this generosity to others. By compassionate giving we not only show our love, but God's love (1John 3:17); we not only give to those in need, we lend unto the LORD (Prov 19:17). In Scripture, we learn that God loves a cheerful giver (2Cor 9:7), that is it more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), and that those who sow sparingly will also reap sparingly (2Cor 9:6). Putting our love into action is a first principle of our living faith:

"But whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1John 3:17).

It has become increasingly clear that in very poor Christadelphian communities, the physical and spiritual needs of our brothers and sisters cannot be separated. What is extremely encouraging to see is the importance placed on the spiritual needs by our brothers and sisters with very acute physical needs. Time after time, when Agape in Action teams arrived at an ecclesia to provide physical support, the brothers and sisters were seated, patiently waiting for a Bible study. Hymns, readings, prayers and study always came first. Those on the Agape in Action team who went to help went away being thoroughly exhorted.

One of the most exciting things about Agape in Action is that the help flows both ways and everyone benefits. Sponsors support needy Christadelphian children and families physically and spiritually and, in turn, these families enlighten and encourage the sponsors. When we become aware of the faithful struggle of our brothers and sisters living in extremely difficult situations, our perspectives are often changed and we have a renewed appreciation and thankfulness for the blessings once taken for granted.

The activities of Agape in Action are supported by two initiatives, child sponsorship and project sponsorship.

Child sponsorship

Agape in Action's child sponsorship program provides long-term support to lift an entire Christadelphian family out of extreme poverty and provide children with opportunities they could only otherwise dream about. There are approximately 420 children sponsored in Kenya, Uganda and India, and over 150 waiting for sponsorship. Families are identified by local Agape in Action representatives. The criteria for sponsorship are that the family is living in extreme poverty, the parents (guardians) are Christadelphians, or the children have been attending a Christadelphian Sunday school for at least a year. At \$30 per month, child sponsorship supports two children in the family — with one of the children being identified to write to the sponsor on a regular basis. Depending on the number of

children, a family may have more than one sponsor. In every case, all the children in a sponsored family are supported equally and are provided with food, clothing, medical care and an opportunity to go to school. As the children grow older, Agape in Action supports them through high school or learning a trade.



A very typical family supported by the Agape in Action Sponsorship program — a sister caring for her own children plus adopted children

The cornerstone of child sponsorship is engagement. Through correspondence and the sharing of photographs, a relationship is developed and a real connection is made between sponsors and children. I don't think we can ever truly appreciate how incredibly important the letters sent to these children are. A very large number of the children sponsored are orphans and each has a heartbreaking story to tell. They were once considered burdens and outcasts and had no one to show them care or love. They were absolutely alone. To receive a personal letter from someone from across the ocean who cares for them, is a life-changing experience. It makes them feel valued, wanted and important.



Sponsored child receiving letter from sponsor



Child sponsored through Agape in Action



The transformation of these children is just incredible. The difference can literally be seen in a matter of months. This verse is very fitting for these children:

“He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap” (Psa 113:7).

**One of the children waiting
for sponsorship**

Project sponsorship

Agape in Action is supporting some very exciting projects in Kenya, Uganda and India. These projects are either supported by regular sponsorship or one-time donations.

Kamukuywa Lela Children’s Home, Kenya: This home is a partnership between Agape in Action, Christadelphian Meal a Day UK and the Christadelphian Bible Mission. On March 31, 2008, 60 orphaned children, who were being cared for by Bro. Justus and Sis. Annett Mabuka, moved into their new home. These children started coming to the home of the Mabukas over ten years ago and the Mabukas, being unable to turn these destitute children away, were soon caring for a very large family. Lela will provide continued support for these children in a caring and secure environment. Agape in Action is looking for a few more sponsors (\$30/month) to support the ongoing operation of Lela.

Kimbilio Shelter, Kenya: This shelter was built by Agape in Action to house the older children and teenagers who remained at the home of Bro. Justus and Sis. Annett Mabuka after Lela was opened. All these children and young people are currently being sponsored through the Agape in Action child sponsorship program. This “refuge” (which is the meaning of Kimbilio) has just been completed and the rooms are currently being fitted with bunk beds and bedding. This project was generously supported by the Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation and many ecclesias and individuals.

Atashinda Education Fund: More than 20 young people have already benefited from the newly created Atashinda Education Fund. The purpose of this fund is to support sponsored children through high school or a trade such as mechanics, carpentry, tailoring and farming. This fund supplements regular sponsorship and ensures every individual supported by Agape in Action has every opportunity to become self-sufficient and support not only themselves, but also others in their

communities and ecclesias. It is an essential step in helping these young people break out of the cycle of poverty. Donations to this fund are always welcome; God willing, another cohort of young people will be supported at the beginning of next year.



Christadelphian Faith Home, India

Christadelphian Faith Home, India: This children's home was started by Bro. Andrew and Sis. Shuba, who have taken in twelve orphaned children. This home is supported through both child and project sponsorship; each child is provided a full nutrition program, clothing, medical care and a good education.

Bukigai Day Nursery School, Uganda: This school is a joint project with the CBM and is based in the Mt. Elgon ecclesial hall. This school not only provides education, health care and a nutrition program for very needy children, but it also fulfills the requirements of a Ugandan law requiring religious organizations to operate a charitable activity. The school benefits Christadelphian children as well as other children in the community.



Lunch break at Bukigai Nursery School

The Good Samaritan Academy, Kenya: This project is run in the Mwando ecclesial hall and was started because of the long distances children had to go to public school. Some of the Christadelphian children were in a school run by another church, until they started teaching the children to speak in tongues! This school supports needy children so that they get a nutritious meal each day, education, clothing, shoes and a chance to learn about the everlasting hope that we have. There are over 100 children currently attending this school. Agape in Action is



Older children in class at the Good Samaritan Academy in Kenya; desk built by Bro. Mike Carr during an Agape in Action team visit



**Teacher in training!
One of the children at the Good Samaritan Academy**

currently looking for several additional sponsors for this school (\$30/month).

Godo School of Light Nursery, Kenya: This Agape in Action project is run out of the Godo ecclesial hall. It was started because of the long distances children had to walk to school (10 kilometers, over six miles, at nursery school age!). Godo is a very, very poor area where food and water are scarce; going to school is considered an enormous blessing. There are 60 children currently attending this school. Additional sponsors are also being sought for this school.

Hygiene Kits: Children in Christadelphian Sunday schools in areas supported by Agape in Action receive hygiene kits. These consist of a washbowl, face cloth, bag, bathing soap, clothes washing soap, toothbrush and toothpaste. These simple kits go a long way to preventing infectious disease and helping children stay healthy. Studies have shown that improved hygiene and sanitation can reduce diarrheal disease (the fourth biggest killer in the world) by up to 50%.

Medical Needs: Agape in Action supports medical needs for families in the sponsorship program and Sunday school children in the communities where Agape in Action works. Regular check-ups are provided to identify and treat chronic and infectious conditions, catch early signs of malnutrition, and ensure childhood vaccinations are up to date. Some of these children will require follow-up treatment or medication. Emergency medical



Sis. Julia Healy of Australia providing medical checkups for sponsored children in Kenya

care and medicines are also provided when required. Agape in Action has also distributed insecticide-treated mosquito nets in a number of ecclesias where malaria is endemic.

Water: Agape in Action is currently researching long-term solutions to provide a sustainable water supply for Christadelphian families and their communities living in semi-arid regions of Kenya that have been experienced a severe water shortage. The saying ‘Give water, give life’ couldn’t be truer! Recent climatic shifts have seen the short rainy season all but disappear in some parts of Kenya. In the worst affected areas, dehydration and gastrointestinal illnesses are commonplace. Agape in Action is building a fund to be able to support water solutions for our brothers and sisters.

One of the very intentional side effects of Agape in Action is the support of preaching efforts. It has been said that people don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care. While our priority is on addressing the physical and spiritual needs of Christadelphian families, many of the projects also benefit the local community.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal 6:10).

We have been careful not to create any material or physical benefits to encourage people to become Christadelphians. Rather, our aim is to support local ecclesias to succeed in their preaching efforts by helping create an environment that is welcoming and receptive to the gospel message.

It is surprising how much people do notice. When in Kamukuywa, the teacher at a school where many of the sponsored children go said, “When I saw the love shown for these children, I felt I had to do something.” And something he did. He donated land and a fish farm to a brother who was caring for about 100 orphaned children. Even more encouraging, he is now studying the Bible with some local brothers. The love shown from thousands of miles away is a silent witness to the power of the gospel. People are noticing, and responding.

Preaching is also a very direct outcome of the work of Agape in Action. It is our earnest prayer that all of the children supported by Agape in Action will receive a solid foundation in the true gospel message and, if our Lord remains away, commit their lives to Christ through the waters of baptism. Through involvement in the Sunday school, youth activities, and CBM camps, and through correspondence with sponsors and visits by Agape in Action teams, these children are being given something more valuable than opportunity and life. They are being given a hope.

Please pray for the efforts while we wait for the return of our Lord.

Please contact us if you want to know more or get involved. Agape in Action sends out a regular newsletter; please let us know if you would like to be on the emailing list. There are also several short videos (PAL and NTSC) available that outline the activities of Agape in Action. They make great viewing as part of an ecclesial activity. Contact details for Agape in Action are as follows:

Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com

Phone: 519-837-9095

Website: www.agapeinaction.com

Mail:

Agape in Action

39 Manor Park Crescent

Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2

*"My little children, let us not **love** in word, neither in tongue; but in **action** and in truth" (1John 3:18).*

James Flint

Change the life of a
child.

Change your own.



Bro. Nathan Badger of Canada meeting his
sponsored child in Kenya

Addresses for Bequests and Donations

Christadelphian Bible Mission of the Americas (CBMA) supports preaching work throughout the Americas, Domestic Truth Corps, etc. Visit www.cbma.net for an update on current activities as well as to make US dollar online donations. Donations by check should be sent c/o Charles Brinkerhoff, 15925 La Ronda Cir., Hacienda Heights, CA 91745-4244

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

Williamsburg Christadelphian Foundation (WCF) supports pastoral and preaching activities throughout the world. c/o Ray Pratt, P.O. Box 88, Deland, IL 61839-0086. Website: wcfoundation.org

CBMA Overseas Book Service welcomes gifts of used Bibles, reference books, and Christadelphian books. Please contact Jan Berneau, 1221 N. Whitnall Hwy., Burbank, CA 91505-2110.

Phone: 818-842-2868
jberneau@earthlink.net

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Fax: 732-499-8415
christadelphiantapelibrary@verizon.net

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

Agape in Action provides help for Christadelphian families and children living in extreme poverty. Donations may be sent to 39 Manor Park Crescent, Guelph, ON, Canada, N1G 1A2.
Phone: 519-837-9095,
Email: agapeinaction@rogers.com
Website: www.agapeinaction.com

Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas funds projects to support those in need in North and South America and the Caribbean. www.cmadfa.com

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

Christadelphian Indian Children's Homes (CICH) donations in US dollars can be sent to CICH, c/o David & Connie Stiles, 3 Blue Acre Rd., Middletown, CT 06457-5012

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

Fairhaven Christadelphian Charitable Foundation provides assistance to Canadian ecclesias dealing with the health and welfare issues of senior members. Donations can be sent c/o Clive Daniel, 8583 Sansum Park Drive, North Saanich, BC, V8L 4V7, Canada

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

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

News & Notices

(Please send in text-only News and Notices by the 10th of the preceding month, please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.)

AUSTIN LEANDER, TX

We are pleased to report the baptism of ANDREA BANTA on April 5, 2009. She is the daughter of Bro. John Banta and Sis. Kim White.

In November, our ecclesia hosted the Tidings Committee meeting. We welcomed the following visitors: Bre. Charles Archard, John Bilello, Peter Bilello, Steve Cheetham, Ken Curry, Clive Drepaal, Mark Giordano, Tony Isaacs, Brian McDonald, Phil Snobelen, and Jeff Wallace; and Sis. Ethel Archard, Mary Bilello, and Rose Madge.

We would especially like to thank Bro. Phil Snobelen for his class and Bro. Ken Curry for his exhortation.

We also had our Fraternal Gathering in November at the HEB camp. We would like to thank Bro. John Bilello for his classes on Science and the Bible. Lord willing, we will have our next Fraternal Nov. 13-15, 2009.

We have also welcomed the following visitors from other states or countries: Bro. Rob and Sis. Jodee Webb (Hamilton Greenaway, ON); Bro. Dean and Sis. Andrea Bailey (Cambridge, ON); Bro. Matt Walker (Simi Hills, CA); Bro. Jeff, and Bro. Eric Lange (Norfolk, VA); Sis. Danielle Matteson (Cranston, RI); Sis. Alyssa Tuck (Meriden, CT); Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON); Bro. Wayne and Sis. Brenda Osborne (Denver, CO); Sis. Janet MacDonald (Paris Ave., OH); Bro. Pat Sanchez, and Bro. Chris Hall (Reseda, CA); Bro. Tim Carroll (Yagoona Ecclesia, Sydney, Aust.); and Bro. Michael and Sis. Vanessa Floyd (Port Elizabeth, South Africa). We would like to especially thank the following visiting brethren for their words of exhortation: Rob Webb, Dean Bailey, Dev Ramcharan, Michael Floyd, Paul and Mark Wade.

Fred Bearden

BOSTON, MA

It's with deep sorrow we announce the falling asleep of our Bro. Douglas Eagles. He was a loving husband, father and pillar of the Boston Ecclesia for many years. He was 86 years old and had been baptized for 72 years. He is survived by his wife, Sis. Margaret (Peg), his son, Bro. Robert, and daughter, Sis. Marsha Brown. He will be greatly missed.

We're happy to announce the baptism of JOANNE HAMPTON, wife of Bro. Mark Hampton. Their son, Christopher, was baptized last year. Sis. Penny Caddell was able to attend meeting this past Sunday. It's the first time she's been able to since her stroke last year.

We thank Bro. Daniel Styles for delivering an excellent set of classes on, "Jeremiah and Friends — People of the Last Days," at our annual study day.

Jeff Wallace

BRANTFORD, ON

We are happy to report that BEN JENNINGS, son of Bro. Jim and Sis. Shirley Ann,

and LISA BROWN, a long-time family friend, were both baptized into the hope of Israel on March 28, 2009. We were also happy to witness the baptism of ANDY GLEN, friend of Sis. Allison Jennings, on April 4, 2009. All were faithful attendees at our Bible study first principles class.

In February, we again enjoyed a great day at Apps Mill encouraging our children in the truth and playing in the snow! We thank all those who came from near and far to join with us. We very much enjoyed the visit of our Bro. Mark O'Grady (Tawa, NZ) and thank him for his efforts including his studies on "The Life of Elisha". Copies of the classes may be downloaded from our ecclesial web site.

God willing, we are planning to begin a public lecture series in the local village of Burford in May with the possibility of a follow-up seminar. We pray our heavenly Father will bless these efforts.

Daniel Billington

CALGARY, AB

Following discussions with Sis. Glenda Philip, we are pleased to welcome her into our fellowship and pray that she will be happy amongst us as we journey together to God's kingdom.

We transfer Bro. Caleb Coish in love to the Aberfoyle Park Ecclesia in Adelaide, Aust., following his marriage to Sis. Elly.

John Fairhurst

ECHO LAKE, NJ

In March, our ecclesia hosted a very successful study weekend. We enjoyed fellowship with Bro. Jim and Sis. Esther Harper (Meriden, CT) and thank Bro. Jim for his enlightening study entitled, "Search the Scriptures... with your Exhaustive Concordance." We also welcomed many visitors who attended the study and thank them for their support.

We recently enjoyed fellowship with Bro. Jim and Sis. Patty Robinson (Kitchener Waterloo, ON) and thank Bro. Jim for his encouraging words of exhortation.

Effective April, 2009, the undersigned has retired as Recording Brother of Echo Lake. Our new Recording Brother is Bro. Stewart Marsden. He may be contacted by mail at 235 Powderville Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005, by phone at 973-402-4329 or by email at snvmarsden@aol.com.

David Link

LONDON, ON

With great joy on February 21, 2009, we witnessed the marriage of Bro. Ryan Venus and Sis. Hannah Winter, daughter of Bro. David and Sis. Audrey Winter. We pray for these two young people as they begin their walk together as husband and wife by the grace of God.

We welcome as transferred members from Kamloops, BC, Bro. Nathanael and Sis. Nicole Massey. Sis. Nicole was a former member of London and we welcome them in our midst and pray that our walk together may be to the glory of God. Our young adult numbers are swelling and it gives us great encouragement to witness their enthusiasm and dedication to the functions of the ecclesia in these last days before our Lord's return.

Bro. Colin Meaker was diagnosed with stomach cancer and will undergo surgery which will be followed up with treatments. He continues to slowly improve by God's grace. Bro. Colin has resigned his position as recording brother, and we thank him for his loving service in this capacity throughout the years. The undersigned has assumed the position of recording brother. All future correspondence should be addressed to PO Box 25651, London, Ontario, Canada, N6C 6B3 or emailed to dalefinacial@rogers.com.

Dave Birchall

NEW WESTMINSTER, BC

We rejoice in the baptism on March 8, 2009, of Sunday school scholar and CYC member, ESTHER ISOBE, daughter of Bro. Tim and Sis. Karen. We pray that our new sister will grow in grace, continuing to remember her Creator in the days of her youth.

Our thanks to the visiting brethren from near and far who have provided spiritual ministrations; in particular, Bro. Robert Posey, Sr. (Rogue Valley, OR) at our spiritually energizing fraternal on "The Mind of Christ".

Art Bull

SUSSEX, NB

We sorrow with Bro. Hillis and Sis. Marlene Briggs and family in the recent loss of his brother; and with Sis. Mary and Bro. Dave Green and family in the loss of Sis. Mary's mother.

We thank Bro. Mike LeDuke (Kitchener/Waterloo) for his studies in April on, "With Christ in Mind — a study of Colossians".

We had as visitors Bro. Lucas and Sis. Margaret Jones (Vernon, BC); Bro. Steve and Sis. Julie Snobelen and family; and Bro. Dale, Bro. Nathan and Bro. David and Sis. Carol Crawford, and Sis. Sarah Bennett (Bedford, NS). We thank them all for sharing in a weekend of fellowship around the word of God.

We look forward to having the company of Bro. Ted Hodge, Jr., for our Thanksgiving Gathering October 10-11, 2009. If you require accommodation please contact Bro. Cliff and Sis. Julia Baines by phone at 506-433-1728; or by email at christad@nbnet.nb.ca.

Cliff Baines

WASHINGTON, DC

The Washington, DC, Ecclesia has been blessed with many visitors already in 2009. We would like to thank those visiting brethren who gave words of exhortation: on January 4, 2009, Bro. Eric Pride, (Westerly, RI); on January 11, 2009, Bro. Bill Link, Sr. (Baltimore, MD); on March 8, 2009, Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD); on March 22, 2009, Bro. Craig McInturff (Shenandoah, VA); on April 12, 2009, Bro. Jamin Wigzell (Enfield, South Aust.); and on May 10, 2009, Bro. Andy Billelo (Baltimore, MD).

We would like to thank Bro. Mike Robinson (Echo Lake, NJ) for his study "Ezra and Nehemiah: Studies in Ecclesial Dynamics and Problem Solving," that he gave at the Baltimore/Washington Gathering Weekend on April 25-26, 2009. It was a most edifying weekend of study and fellowship around God's Word. We enjoyed the visits of many brothers and sisters from ecclesias both near and far.

We would like to announce the transfer of membership for Bro. Paul Harris into the loving care of the Baltimore Ecclesia. We know the love of our brothers and sisters in Baltimore will be with Bro. Paul there.

We also would like to announce the newest addition to the Washington Ecclesia. Paige Fiorella Lara was born December 30, 2008, to her parents, Bro. Roberto and Sis. Megan Lara. We pray that our heavenly Father will continue to bless our ecclesia with children to teach His gospel message.

At the end of January 2009, we began a “Learn to read the Bible Effectively” seminar. The seminar was attended by ten or more individuals each of the eight weeks. A few have continued on with follow up classes that are still ongoing. We pray that the Lord will continue to bless our efforts to preach His Word.

Cory Crabill

WICHITA FALLS, TX

Since last reporting our ecclesial news, we have welcomed around the table of our absent Lord and Savior the following: Sis. Sandra Maggert, Sis. Cheryl Kitch (Albuquerque, NM); Bro. Aaron and Sis. Loretta Clubb (Macon, GA); Bro. Kim Carrell, Sis. Erin Rakich, and Bro. David Clubb (Simi Hills, CA); Sis. Kerri Maier, Sis. Ruth Maier (East TX); Sis. Claudine Brierly (Toronto West, ON); Sis. Jeanna McLaughlin, Bro. Antonio Howell, Sr., Sis. Michelle Tyre (Dallas, TX); Bro. David Ishman (Austin-Leander, TX); Sis. Judy Muniz (Milford Road, MI); Bro. Joey Marple (North Battleford, SK); Sis. Emily Tunnell (San Diego County, CA); and Sis. Pattie Wolfe and Bro. Levi Wolfe (Abilene, TX). We thank Bre. David Clubb and Antonio Howell, Sr. for their comforting words of exhortation.

In February 2009, Bro. Ben Beutel moved to Michigan. He has since transferred his membership to the Milford Road, MI, Ecclesia. His efforts on behalf of our ecclesia will be missed and we commend our brother into the loving care of the brothers and sisters at Milford Road and the Detroit area.

In April we held our annual Spring Gathering at the T4C Camp in Freestone, TX. Bro. Paul Billington (Brantford, ON) gave classes on the subject, “Israel in the News: Israel in the Bible”. The classes were outstanding, and we thank Bro. Paul for helping us to focus on just how near our Lord’s return is! We were pleased that Sis. Sally was also able to make the trip. We welcomed 139 this year and we are thankful our heavenly Father continues to bless us with these opportunities to gather around His word in these last evil days.

John A. Clubb

Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas

I would like to introduce the work of the Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas, and encourage support for its work in North and South America and the Caribbean.

The Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund (CMaD) was established first in the UK in 1976, raising funds to support those in need outside the Christadelphian community, largely in developing countries in Africa. From those small beginnings the funds has grown steadily in both donations and influence, and now supports some 80 projects annually in many countries in Africa plus Eastern Europe, South America, India, Nepal, and Thailand. Some of these projects are ongoing commitments — to

nurseries, primary schools, orphanages and primary health care in a number of very poor African states.

The CMaD mission statement is, as a practical witness to our faith, to share the blessings we receive from God with those who are in real need in the less developed parts of the world.

We seek to facilitate self-sufficiency and self-worth through sustainable, 'down to earth' local projects which:

- help to overcome the effects of hunger, disease, disability, destitution and homelessness;
- promote agriculture, clean water, basic health care and education;
- encourage sharing, learning and service to others.

To further the work and increase connectivity with the important work of witness through the CBM, we have now established regional CMaD committees in Australia, to support Asia and Pacific regions, and in the USA to develop and support projects in North and South America and the Caribbean. These committees now take responsibility for garnering donations and supporting existing and new projects in their region.

The Christadelphian Meal a Day Fund of the Americas committee currently comprises Bro. Bruce (chairman) and Sis. Joanie Parker (Rockford, IL), Bro. Casey Opitz (treasurer) (Richmond Chapel, VA), Bro. Ed and Sis. Beth Binch (Avon, IN) and Bro. Steve Johnson (Bloomington, IL). Its website is at www.cmdafa.com, through which contacts can be made if desired.

I commend this work to you and ask you to pray for, and support, efforts that respond to Jesus' commands to support our neighbor and those in need.

With love in our Lord
Gordon Dawes (Ware, UK)
Chairman, Christadelphian Meal a Day UK

Sis. Elisabeth Wells

Bro. John Wells (Worcester, MA) writes:

Many of you will know Sis. Elisabeth (Betsy) Wells. She is the granddaughter of Bro. Herb and Sis. Ruth Wilkinson. I met her at a Bible school at the age of 14. We started going steady at 17 and were married at 20; that was 1996. We have had the best marriage anyone could imagine, with God in our household.

We have run our business, Wishing Wells Perennials, since 1997. We waited to have children until we were 30 because we wanted to be in a good financial state before taking that step. We worked together diligently and very well. Of course, things don't always work out like we plan — that's a lesson we all learn.

In 2006 we had our first son, Robert. He was born premature, at eight months. This landed us in the hospital for two weeks, but we came through just fine. Then one year later Elisabeth found a lump in her breast. At first the doctors thought it was a clogged milk duct, since she had been breastfeeding for the previous 11 months. When it didn't "clear up", she had a biopsy, which came back negative for cancer.

However, this proved incorrect, and a second biopsy showed the cancer. It was at this time that we discovered Betsy was pregnant with our second son "Samuel". Most of

the doctors wanted to perform an abortion to treat the cancer, but we would have no part of that. So we had to wait for the second trimester of pregnancy and then start chemotherapy.

Betsy has been through so much. She had a mastectomy while pregnant and then underwent the chemo. It's been up and down for some time. Sam was induced ten weeks before he was due, so that Betsy could have the chemo that would have harmed him.

All seemed to be going well, as she was then going for radiation. But then we discovered the cancer had spread to her lungs. We found a new oncologist and started a very aggressive treatment of chemotherapy. Her lungs cleared, but this was short-lived, as the cancer had spread to her brain. More radiation and more chemo followed; these did nothing. The tumors were changing her personality and causing seizures.

I am fearing the worst, as I have known could very well happen. We thought we would have a miracle, but it doesn't seem that's God's plan right now. Betsy has lost the will to live.

I am writing this to thank the brotherhood for your continued support financially and spiritually. I have found it necessary to devote the last year and a half to Betsy's care and the care of my two sons. Please pray for a second miracle — Sam's being born healthy was our first.

The Worcester Ecclesia has established a benevolent fund for John and Betsy Wells, for anyone wishing to contribute to their financial need. Checks should be made out to:

**Worcester Ecclesia of Christadelphians
Wells Benevolent Fund
218 Greenwood Street
Worcester, MA 01607**

"Follow peace with all men"

A peaceful response is a powerful response. Before you speak, before you act, before you respond, consider a calm and peaceful way to do so.

There is almost always a way to say what you have to say in a peaceful, compelling manner. And when you do, you have a much better chance of being heard and understood. Whatever you have to accomplish, seek a way to get it done peacefully and respectfully. By so doing, you'll pave the way for even greater accomplishments.

When you live and think and act peacefully, you'll find a world of people eager to support your efforts. When your life is filled with peaceful moments, your mind is much more positively focused and your work is much more effective.

Every day you'll come across situations where you can add real value by introducing a calm and peaceful tone. Even a small bit of peacefulness has the power to profoundly change things for the better. Let yourself be strong enough and confident enough to practice peace on a daily basis. You'll quickly make your world a better place.

Ralph Marston

Minute Meditation

One thing you can give and still keep... is your word

In olden days they used to say that a man's word was his bond. Nowadays we have junk bonds, which are supposed to be bonds but are not worth much. Unfortunately, most of the words we hear daily could be called junk words because what those in the world around us have to say is generally worthless. Thankfully as followers of Christ our word should still be our bond, and if we say we will do something, we ought to live up to our promises, at least as much as is humanly possible, given that the future is in God's hands. We know that God's Word is sure and we can depend on what He has promised us. Solomon tells us, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him."

How trustworthy are our words? Can others depend upon us when we give them our word? Our word is one of the few things that we can give and still keep. How dependable are we?

Solomon urges us to be as good as our word. He tells us, "When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed; better not to vow than to vow and not pay. Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?"

Once we have said something, it is out. We need to be careful and think before we speak. We are responsible for what we say, and the Lord knows everything that comes out of our mouths, as David explains, "For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O LORD, You know it altogether."

If only we would put our brain in gear before putting our mouth in motion. Solomon gives us the inspired version of this advice when he says, "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few."

When we were young we had a little chant that went something like this: "Sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me." Words may not break bones but they sure can break hearts. We need to be careful not only to be truthful, but to be kind. When James talks about the tongue, he asks the question, "Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" He observes, "Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so."

David emphasizes how important it is to watch what we say. He says, "I will guard my ways, lest I sin with my tongue; I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle, while the wicked are before me." He asks the Lord to help him, "Set a guard, O LORD, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips."

When the children of Israel provoked Moses, he grew angry and sinned by saying the wrong thing. The Psalmist recounts, "They angered him also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes: because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips." For this mistake Moses was not allowed to lead the children of Israel into the promised land.

We need to take to heart the sobering truth that the Father, who knows everything about us, knows all our words. We don't want our words to prevent us from entering the kingdom of God. Jesus tells us, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." We need to pray as David prayed, Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer. We must guard our mouths, speak only what is clean, and true and kind, and when we give our word, we must be sure to keep it.

Robert J. Lloyd

The ox and the donkey

Rube Foster was the manager of a baseball team in the old Negro Leagues. Once he observed a young player who had ability but didn't seem to be playing with an appropriate amount of effort and energy. Rube called him over to the bench where he was sitting, and told him a story:

An ox and a donkey worked in the fields every day, plowing. The work was hard, and one morning the ox decided he'd had enough. So he decided to rest in his stall and spend the day eating. When the donkey came back to the barn that evening, the ox asked, "Did the farmer say anything about me?" "No," said the donkey, "not a word."

The ox was pleased and slept well that night, and the next morning decided he'd take another day off. So once again he stayed in his stall and rested and ate. That evening, when the tired donkey came in, the ox asked, "Farmer say anything today?" "No, nothing," replied the donkey, "but he did go to see the butcher."

The ox had a restless night, and at dawn he was up and waiting eagerly by the plow. When the farmer saw him, he came over and patted him sadly: "Might as well go back to your stall and rest, ol' fellow. I've already sold you to the butcher. He'll be coming by later."

* * * * *

We go to the Bible to be learners, and learners only. We may not even choose our subject; for we go to the Bible in order to learn this very thing, that is, what are the subjects to which Almighty God would have us direct our attention.

John William Burgon

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

JUNE 2009

6-7 NY Fraternal Weekend Speaker: Bro. Christian Russell. Contact Bro. Ben Drepaal (718) 847-9638 or yerubbaal@yahoo.com

12-14 Echo Lake, NJ Study weekend for CYC. Bro. Ryan Mutter (Baltimore, MD): "Building Godly Relationships." Contact Bro. Dan Jorgensen Dan_jorg@yahoo.com or 201-463-5140

13 Victoria, BC Study weekend. Bro. Anthony Oosthuizen (Durban, SA): "Faithful Hearts and Lives." Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen anthony@csll.ca

13-14 Simi Valley Study day. Bro. John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Beyond the Cross". Three classes starting at 9:00 am. Includes lunch. Sunday school and exhortation on Sunday. Contact Bro. Gordon Hensley threehensleys@sbcglobal.net

21-27 Rocky Mountain Bible School Glenwood Springs, CO. Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK): "Moses in the Fourth Gospel"; Bro. Roger Lewis (Christchurch, NZ): "Philip the Evangelist"; Bro. Jim Livermore (Ann Arbor, MI): "That the Works of God May Be Revealed". Contact www.denverchristadelphians.org

27 - July 3 Terra Nova Bible School Newfoundland, Canada. Bro. Mark Giordano (Norfolk, VA): "Prophetic Images", and Bro. Chris Sales (Shelburne, ON): "King Josiah: the Young Reformer". Online registration and full details at www.terrannotabibleschool.com or call Bro. Gary Hynes 709-747-2750

JULY 2009

3-6 Central Saskatchewan Shekinah Study Weekend. Bro. Jim Cowie (Brisbane, Australia): "The King's Manifesto of Life". For information/registration contact Sis. Laura Jackson, RR#1 Stn. Main, North Battleford, SK, 306-246-4808 or t.jackson@sasktel.net

5-11 Southwest Bible School Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Bre. Frank Abel (Shelburne, ON); Mark Vincent (Boston, MA); Anthony Whitehorn (Maidenhead, UK). Registration information available at www.planofgod.org or contact Bro. Fred Bearden, 2204 Downing Lane, Leander, TX 78641 or 512-259-4631

11-18 Manitoulin Island Family Bible Camp. Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA): "We Would See Jesus", Bro. Jay Mayock (Hamilton Book Road, ON): adults: "Mine Eyes Have Seen the King" and teens: "Challenges For Young People in the Truth." Contact Bro. Rick Sales ersales@explornet.com or by phone at 519-925-6847

15-19 Guyana Campaign New Amsterdam Hall. Five nights of Gospel proclamation on the theme, "The True Gospel Explained". Followed by a weekly "Learn to Read the Bible Effectively Seminar", Wednesdays: July 22, 29, and August 6. Same venue. Please contact Bro. Ted Sleeper tsleeper@astound.net or Joe Badlu jbadlu@aol.com

18-26 Eastern Bible School Connecticut College, New London, CT. Bro. Dev Ramcharan (Toronto West, ON): "My Heart is Inditing a Good Matter (The Lord in the Psalms)", teens: "Galatians", Bro. Peter King (Worcester, UK): "Studies in the Gospel of John", teens: "The

Joy of Bible Study", Bro. Mark Vincent (Boston, MA): "Suffering: Man's Problem/God's Problem", teens: "Marriage and Relationships: God's Way". For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers, cindy.nevers@tecbs.org or registration@tecbs.org.

19-25 Pacific Coast Bible School Idyllwild, CA. Bro. Michael Ashton (Shirley, UK): "John the Baptist"; Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, NSW): "The Life of Lot"; Bro. Gary Cousens (Cambridge, ON): "James". Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau mail@gelineau.org or 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065, or Bro. Gary Patterson garympatterson@hotmail.com, or visit www.californiabibleschool.org

25-31 Manitoulin Island Christadelphian Bible Camp. Theme: "All the Earth Shall Be Filled with His Glory". Speakers: Bro. Michael Ashton (Birmingham, UK): "Turning the World Upside Down: A Study in the Acts of the Apostles", and Bro. Ted Sleeper (San Francisco Peninsula, CA): "Meditations on Creation". Contact Bro. Alex Browning, registrar at jabrowning@rogers.com or 416-284-0290

25 - August 2 Midwest Bible School Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Bro. Matthew Blewett (South Africa): "On the Road with the Ark"; Bro. Bill Link, Jr. (Baltimore, MD): "Job: The Spirit of a Just Man Made Perfect"; Bro. Matt Norton (Australia): "The Return of Christ". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 44943 Yorkshire Drive, Novi, MI 48375 248-462-5740 mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com

AUGUST 2009

8-14 Niagara Falls Bible School Brock University Campus, Ontario. Adult classes: Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Spiritual Finances — Lessons from Scripture about Money"; Bro. David Smith (Sunderland, UK): "The Family in Genesis". Teens: Bro. Lloyd: "Lessons from Daniel"; Bro. Smith: "The Moral Maze — Finding a Way Through". To register and for information see www.nfcbs.com or contact Bro. David Brierley david.brierley@sympatico.ca or 416-236-5295

8-15 Guyana Caribbean Youth Camp. Speakers: Bro. Gideon Drepaal and Bro. Tyrone Smartt. For more info contact Bro. Jerrold Joseph jj_joseph56@yahoo.com or Bro. Ted Sleeper tsleeper@astound.net

29-4 Sept. Vancouver Island Bible Camp. Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake. Adult speakers: Bro. Mark Giordano (USA): "The Kingdom of God Applied", Bro. Erik Sternad (USA): "Elijah — a man like us", Bro. Tecwyn Morgan (UK): "Malachi My Messenger". Teen speakers: Bro. Dave Garnand (USA): "Jesus' Challenge to You and Me", Bro. Giordano: "The Earth Series — Bible Apologetics", Bro. Morgan: "Paul the Preacher — From First to Last". Registrar Sis. Wendy Johnsen, #7-3855-9th Ave, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 4T9, Canada; wendyjohansen@yahoo.ca, 250-724-0501, fax: 250-723-9321

SEPTEMBER 2009

5-6 Victoria, BC Fraternal Gathering. Bro. Tecwyn Morgan. Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen tec@csll.ca

12 Hamilton Greenaway, ON Fraternal Gathering. Wildwood Manor Ranch, Georgetown, ON. Bro. Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON): "Joseph — I Seek My Brethren". 2:00 pm, picnic supper at 5:00 pm.

13-18 Adult Study Week — The Bible School with a Difference! Wildwood Manor Ranch, Ballinafad, ON. Topic of Study: The Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ, Part #1. For information about the workbook or to register please contact Bro. Bob and Sis. Joy Jennings, 6 Stodola Drive, Brantford ON N3R 6J5 (bobnjoy@vif.com) 519-754-

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0902, or Bro. Martin and Sis. Lois Webster, 63 Bradbury Crescent, Paris ON N3L 4E2
(mjwebster@vif.com) 519-442-0544

18-20 Bozeman, MT Fall Fraternal. Bro. Garth Maier (East Texas, TX): "Signs of John's Gospel". Contact Bro. Steve Faver (406) 388-3314, sfaver@unitedagencies.com

19,20 Paris Avenue, OH. Study Weekend. Bro. Frank Abel (Shelburne, ON)

OCTOBER 2009

10-11 Edmonton, AB Edmonton-Calgary Fraternal. Bro. John Bilello (Ann Arbor, MI): "The Bible Vs. Evolution". Children's classes will be offered. Please contact Bro. Jerome or Sis. Coralie Toronchuk at 780-453-1412 or jeromet@telusplanet.net

10-11 Sussex, NB Thanksgiving Gathering. Speaker: Bro. Ted Hodge, Jr. Please contact Bro. Cliff or Sis. Julia Baines at 506-433-1728 or christad@nbnet.nb.ca

17-18 Lompoc Valley, CA 35th Annual Study Weekend. Lompoc Grande Hall, 435 North "G" Street, Lompoc, CA. Study Leaders: Bre. Ron Kidd (ON) and Paul Billington (ON): "Days Of Creation, Confirming Our Faith In God's Word". Please send a \$25 registration fee to Ron Stewart, 275 Oakwood Circle, Lompoc, CA 93436 (805) 733-5577. Limited seating. Please register early.

NOVEMBER 2009

7-8 Victoria, BC Fall study weekend. Bro. Andrew Jackson (North Battleford, SK): "Peter — A Brother Transformed". Contact Bro. Clyde Snobelen andrew@csl.ca

13-15 Brother's Weekend Organized by the Kitchener-Waterloo Ecclesia, ON

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History

John and Elizabeth Reith



John Reith as he looked in 1877, a few years before his baptism into Christ

Few tragedies are as hard to understand as the death of a vibrant young person. But the hand of God can move in our lives in ways we might not expect or even desire, and it has the power to bring salvation through circumstances like sickness and death that to us might seem senseless. Such was the case in the baptisms of John and Elizabeth Reith, early Ventura County Christadelphians who were brought to see God's truth by the death of an enthusiastic 27-year-old brother named John M. Armstrong.

The story actually begins in Scotland where, at age 18, John Armstrong was baptized in Glasgow on October 3, 1875.¹ Eight years later, Bro. Armstrong emigrated to Santa Barbara because, like many before him, he was hoping the warm Southern California climate would have a positive effect on his failing health.² As he left Edinburgh and steamed to America, Bro. Armstrong would already have been well acquainted with several brothers and sisters living in the Santa Barbara area, particularly Robert Strathearn and Helen Shiells. In fact, Sis. Shiells was John Armstrong's aunt.³

The exact details of what happened after John Armstrong reached Santa Barbara have been lost, but his arrival would result in the baptisms of John and Elizabeth Reith in 1884. Apparently young John Armstrong was quite sick when he arrived in America, for he died the following year. Before his death, Sis. Shiells lovingly cared for her ill nephew, as reported by Sis. E.B. Cornwall over 20 years later in the 1908 *Christadelphian* as she spoke of Sis. Shiells' "large-heartedness to all, especially brethren and sisters, and those of her home country, who came here in search of health, she tenderly nursed, among whom was her nephew, our dearly-loved brother John Armstrong..."

Helen Shiells apparently recruited the help of Elizabeth Reith, a resident of nearby Ojai, California, to help her take care of Bro. Armstrong. Why Elizabeth came to be his nurse is a mystery, but as his own life was ending, Bro. Armstrong brought life to her and her husband John. Robert Strathearn had the following to say about this on the occasion of John and Elizabeth Reith's baptisms: "Sis. Reith was one of those who ministered to the comfort of our beloved brother Armstrong during his illness. He, in return, helped them to the possession of the pearl of great price. He greatly desired their salvation, so you see his labour in coming to this far-off land has not been in vain."⁴

It's not surprising Marian connected the preaching effort with bearing fruit because the Stocks were living on a large ranch north of Moorpark at the time, where they grew and sold apricots. Even today, over 100 years later, the beautiful canyon they lived in is still entirely agricultural and filled with orange, lemon, and avocado trees.



Apricot pitters on the Stocks ranch about 1903. Note the early Ventura County Christadelphians in the photo. Future Christadelphians, David and Ruth Stocks (Robert and Marian's children) have been circled.

Marian wrote to the Christadelphian magazine in 1905, mentioning a new preaching effort in Ventura County. "We were able to get a hall, rent free, in Somis, a small village, six miles from our ranch, and Brother Irwin gave three lectures there... As we expected, the attendance of strangers was very meager; but those of us who could attend were much edified. Brother Irwin did not bring the Pomona ecclesia tent outfit this time — it is laid up for the winter — but brought his 'black-board' cloth, which he fastened up outside the one store in Somis, printing dates, subjects, and places in white chalk, and very beautifully he can do it." She also mentioned that their daughter, Ruth, was baptized at age 13. That same year her husband, Bro. Robert Stocks, "gave... a very acceptable and edifying address at the Lord's table" ¹⁴ in Los Angeles.



The store where Bro. J.T. Irwin led a Ventura County Christadelphian preaching effort in Somis, CA, in 1905.