

THE CRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

of the Kingdom of God

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| | |
|--|-----|
| Editorial — The Power of God for Salvation | 107 |
| Editorial Comment — The Key to Romans, <i>Mark Vincent</i> | 112 |
| Announcement: New Editor and a New Editorial Staff Structure, <i>Tidings Publishing Committee</i> | 113 |
| Exhortation — The Dividends of Faith, <i>Steve Cheetham</i> | 114 |
| Bible Study: To Speak Well of God: (11) The Herald of God, <i>John Pople</i> | 117 |
| What the Qur'an Says About... (7) How to Be Saved, <i>Don Styles</i> | 123 |
| History — “Making it clear and giving the meaning”: (2) Speaking the language, <i>David Brown</i> | 128 |
| Review — Why Us?, <i>Kenneth Camplin</i> | 132 |
| Signs of the Times — Reacting to Disasters, <i>Michael Owen</i> | 134 |
| Reflections: Blood, <i>Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey</i> | 137 |
| Not Good to Be Alone, <i>George Booker</i> | 138 |
| The Scarlet Letter, <i>Nathaniel Hawthorne</i> | 139 |
| David and Guile, <i>Anthony Semple</i> | 141 |
| Bible Mission News — El Salvador and Costa Rica Bible Schools | 142 |
| News & Notices | 146 |
| Minute Meditation — The Face in the Mirror, <i>Robert J. Lloyd</i> | 152 |
| Coming Events | 153 |

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God

Editor: George Booker

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In the very last chapter of the Bible we read about the 'healing' of our sick world, and there we meet the joyous, thrilling news: "There shall be no more curse" (Rev 22:3). And so is brought to its grand finale God's plan with man.

As we look out on the present evil state of this godless world, we may not see much in the shape of a plan. But it is the end we must look to. You do not see the noble lines of a stately building while it is in course of being erected. But the man who designed it — the architect — and those who have looked upon his plan can see, with the eye of faith, the finished work. They know that when all the waste and worthless and unwanted materials are cleared away after the task of building is complete, the edifice will be plainly seen by all in its full grandeur and beauty.

God is the Supreme Architect, the Designer of the great plan of the ages. In His written Word He graciously permits us to view the splendid blueprint of His grand redemptive scheme. Don't let men's deeds hide from your mental view this wondrous plan of God. The works of men will pass away; God's purpose will stand. Nothing that men may do can cause that plan to fail. As the poet [Thomas Kelly] has so well put it:

*"What though none on earth assist Him!
God requires not help from man,
What though all the earth resist Him!
God will realize His plan."*

Arthur Wright

Editorial

The Power of God for Salvation

Paul's letter to the Romans is the most comprehensive statement of the gospel of the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. The two verses that follow are both introduction and summary of that letter:

*"I am not ashamed of the gospel,
because it is the power of God
for the salvation of everyone who believes:
first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.
For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed,
A righteousness that is by faith from first to last,
just as it is written:
'The righteous will live by faith' "*
(Romans 1:16,17).

Why was Paul "so eager to preach the gospel" to those at Rome (Rom 1:15)? Because he knew, on the basis of his previous experience in Asia Minor and Greece, that God's power working through him to proclaim the gospel was able to transform lives.

The "good news" of power

The "gospel" was — and still is today — the "good news" of the salvation which God had first promised, in the Law and the Prophets, and then brought to complete realization in the work of His Son Jesus.

It was also the "power" of God, by which those who heard it, and acted upon it, would be strengthened or empowered unto the hoped-for salvation.

The Greek word for "power" ("dynamis") has sometimes drawn the reaction — what might be called a pseudo-exposition — that 'the gospel is dynamite!' This is quite misleading in a way, for the emphasis is not on something explosive and destructive — blowing false doctrines out of the way, or blasting a trail of success for the true faith. Instead, the "dynamis" of the gospel would be more accurately compared to a steady but ongoing power source — like, perhaps, hydroelectric power. Such a power source provides continuing impetus in the right ways, as directed by enlightened faith and reason.

In any case, the emphasis should not be on the way that power operates (for God's Spirit works in a multitude of ways), but on the controlled energy of its operation, and the awesome effect it produces — not necessarily all at once but rather over time. The gospel of God offers something not to be found anywhere else, power not so much to destroy something as to build up something else — power to develop a true and lasting righteousness in individuals.

There is a strong link between power and salvation. Devout Jews were inclined to think of the Law of Moses as power, but this is not affirmed in Scripture. The Law was “holy, just, and good” (Rom 7:12), but it was not powerful to save.

As for salvation, the Old Testament is clear in its teaching. Whether “salvation” is conceived of physically as some immediate deliverance from trouble (Exod 14:13) or spiritually as the ultimate deliverance from sin and death (Psa 51:12), that salvation comes from the LORD. This is maintained in the New Testament as well, and is affirmed in Paul’s statement that the gospel (not the Law) is “the power of God” for salvation.

Paul elsewhere writes of those who profess the name of Christ, but deny the “power” of the gospel (2Tim 3:5) — that is, they reject the Bible’s transforming power to change lives, which it can achieve merely by its message (Col 3:10; 1Cor 1:4; Eph 3:6,7,20).

Everyone can believe

This salvation is for “everyone who believes”. Salvation is a broad concept. It includes the forgiveness of sins, but involves much more, because its basic meaning is soundness or wholeness — fullness of health. It promises the restoration of all that sin has marred or destroyed. It is the general term that unites in itself the particular aspects of truth suggested by other words such as: justification, reconciliation, sanctification and redemption. But its efficacy, or power, depends on man’s willingness to receive the message. Without man’s acceptance, it is nothing but words on paper or breath dissipated in the air.

The gospel was indeed God’s power for the salvation of *everyone* who believed, but it was first offered to the Jews before it would be offered, at least generally, to the Gentiles (Rom 1:16). The gospel came to the Jew first, that is, in point of national precedence and privilege (Rom 3:1,2). God dealt in a special way with the Jews in Old Testament days, and followed this by sending His Son to the lost sheep of Israel (Matt 10:6; 15:24). To them was given the first opportunity to receive the Lord Jesus, both during his three-year ministry (John 1:11) and in the Christian era (Acts 1:8; 3:26). Paul himself followed this pattern, ‘to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile; in his preaching (Acts 13:45,46; 28:25, 28).

The opportunity for salvation came first to the Jew (John 4:22), but tribulation was also to Israel first, because of their rejection of the LORD’s ways (Rom 2:9,10). The people of Israel have turned their back on Him, yet because of the promises He has made to the patriarchs concerning His people, He will never forsake them altogether (1Sam 12:22; Jer 31:37; Hos 14:4). Paul expounds this principle at length in Romans 11.

A righteousness from God

The gospel “is the power of God for salvation” (v 16) because it discloses “a righteousness from God” (v 17). Paul is dependent here on the Old Testament (Isa 46:12,13; 61:10). God’s “righteousness” does not mean simply His sinless character; that is of course true, but it is beside the point here. The fact that God

has a perfectly sinless character would be of no consequence to any of us at all, if He merely remained aloof from man and all his experiences, because such a perfect “righteousness” would have no effect upon us.

In the Hebrew tradition, “righteousness” is not just an attitude of refraining from what is wrong; it is an active seeking to *do* what is right, or righteous. “Righteousness” describes the absolute faithfulness with which the LORD God remembers and maintains His covenants of promise to man. Such an idea was quite foreign to Greek and Roman philosophy, in which the multitude of gods were thought to be remote and austere, and seemingly not especially interested in anything mere mortals did.

Clearly, God’s “righteousness” involves His holy character (Rom 3:26). But just as clearly, the expression “a righteousness from God” must go beyond that character to include God’s activities. The gospel would not be the good news if it simply disclosed the righteous character of God. Such a message would scarcely demand faith. In view of man’s sinful state, it could well create fear.

This verse, Romans 1:17, is a prelude to Romans 3:21-25, where Paul, dealing with the sacrifice of Christ, shows that God’s righteousness is further revealed, or demonstrated, in setting forth or presenting His Son as a covering, or mercy seat, for sins. Thus God may be seen to be at the same time both righteous and merciful:

- righteous in His character and promises, and
- merciful in providing a way for sinful man to find his way back to Him.

In Philippians 3:9, Paul contrasts his pre-conversion condition with his present condition, in Christ. Before his conversion, Paul had had a righteousness (or an *appearance* of righteousness) based on observance of the Law of Moses. By contrast, in Christ, Paul could rest on a righteousness which was absolutely real, because it came from God, and was based on faith, not works.

In summary, God’s righteousness in this context, while it has an implied reference to His own character, stresses more particularly His divine love and provision for man. His “righteousness” is not so much about who He is, as it about what He does — for you and me!

“Out of” faith, “through” faith, and “into” faith

This “righteousness from God... is by faith from first to last” (v 17, NIV). Or, better, as the KJV and the NIV margin put it, it is “from faith to faith”. This righteousness comes “ek pistis” (‘out of faith’), and goes “eis pistis” (‘into, or unto faith’). Faith is powerful in itself, when exercised; it has a reinforcing cyclical effect upon the one who receives it and then works at developing it.

To add one more dimension to this, Paul also says that this righteousness is made available “through faith” (Greek “dia pistis”) in Jesus Christ (i.e., Rom 3:22).

This suggests a three-part progression:

- (a) **“Ek pistis”**: Righteousness arises “out of” (“ek”) faith in the first place (the faith of the individual in what he has heard).

- (b) **“Dia pistis”**: For him, the righteousness is continued and replenished through, or by means of (“dia”), an ongoing faith, a stubborn faith which clings to the Truth of the gospel.
- (c) **“Eis pistis”**: And righteousness has a long-term goal. Its sight is set on the reward of faith, at the return of Christ, and it cannot lose its grasp upon that faith in the meantime, until it ultimately reaches its goal.

Thus is begun, and continued, a life of faith. The initial act of faith, in belief and baptism, is never enough in itself. The faith of the novice must develop by exercising itself, “through” the testing of faith every day, which as time goes by leads “into” an ever-deepening and more enduring faith. As James puts it,

*“You see that his [Abraham’s] faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was **made complete** by what he did” (James 2:22).*

Living by faith

The key affirmation of Paul’s statement here, Romans 1:17, is taken from the prophet Habakkuk. In the last part of Habakkuk 2:4, the prophet states that:

“The righteous will live by his faith.”

There are three key words in this affirmation: “righteous”, “live”, and “faith”. It is interesting that, in the three places where this verse is quoted in the New Testament, each citation puts emphasis on a different word:

- (1) In Romans 1:17, the emphasis is on “righteous”. Paul’s concern in Romans is with the righteousness of God and how people can obtain it.
- (2) In Galatians 3:11, the emphasis is on “faith”. Throughout the letter to the Galatians, Paul highlights the difference between salvation by works alone, and salvation by faith, activated and kept alive through works.
- (3) Finally, in Hebrews 10:38, the emphasis is on “live”. The writer to the Hebrews stressed the importance of faith as a way of life, rather than turning back to Judaism and living by the Law.

This single phrase may be paraphrased, and amplified, as follows: “The righteous (i.e., those who are justified and declared righteous by God, having their sins forgiven) shall live (i.e., *now*, in their daily lives, and in the *future*, in the day of resurrection and glory) by their faith (i.e., by acknowledging their utter dependence upon the LORD).”

The most practical prayer

Once there was a man whose son was very ill; he suffered, apparently, from some form of epilepsy. When the father came into the presence of Christ, he pleaded: “If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” Jesus replied: “If you can? Everything is possible for him who believes [‘pisteuo’: i.e., who has ‘faith’!]”

Immediately the father exclaimed: “I do believe [‘pisteuo’ again: ‘I do have faith’]; help me overcome my unbelief [‘apistia’: lack of faith]” (Mark 9:22-24).

The father’s prayer to Jesus is the most practical prayer we can ever utter, to the Father through the Son. It is the prayer that will always find a positive answer if

asked in faith. It is a prayer that runs no risk of being selfish, as prayers for ‘things’ can sometimes be. It does not pray, ‘Father, give me something of material value in this life.’ Instead, it is a simple prayer that acknowledges the need that we all have, more than anything else in life:

“Father, I have faith in You, and in Your Son. You know I do, or else I would not be here before You. But, O Lord, sometimes my faith falters, and so I ask You, please increase my faith — my faith that all things will work for good to those who love You — my faith that, no matter what trials there are in this life, I will continue to feel Your presence even in the midst of the worst of them — my faith to hold fast to Your precious promises each day and each week and each year, until Your Son returns or I die. Lord, I have faith, but please, before You give me anything else, give me more faith, enough for this day, and enough to sustain me each and every day, until I reach Your kingdom.”

George Booker

“To everyone who believes”

The first step along the way of life, then, is belief of the things that God has promised. This is enjoined by Jesus when he gave his last commission to the apostles: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be condemned” (Mark 16:15,16). “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt 28:18-20). When men are so “taught” by the word of God, they manifest faith in the things He has promised. Without this faith men are not well pleasing to God (Heb 11:6).

In support of their teaching the apostles turn to the Old Testament to find in Abraham an outstanding illustration of the way to secure God’s approval. “Abraham believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:6). The whole of the fourth chapter of Romans is devoted to unfolding the implication of this statement; and at the end of the chapter Paul declares that it was “not written for Abraham’s sake alone, but for us also, to whom righteousness shall be imputed, if we believe on God” (Rom 4:23,24). “The gospel is the power of God unto salvation”, but it is ineffective unless it is believed; so Paul adds “to everyone that believeth” (Rom 1:16).

John Carter, *God’s Way*

The Key to Romans...

...is found in Romans 1:16,17:

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’”

Mark Vincent (Testimony 77:158,159) writes that these verses “are the key, for it is programmatic for the whole book. It sets the stage for the whole action of the letter; it sets the agenda for the business Paul is about to transact. All the key vocabulary of the letter is encapsulated in the one carefully crafted sentence” (as illustrated in the adapted table, which follows):

| The passage... | Key vocabulary appearing elsewhere in the Letter |
|--|--|
| “I am not ashamed... | “Ashamed”: 1:16; 5:5; 8:21; 9:33; 10:11 |
| ...of the gospel... | “Gospel”: 1:1,9,15,16; 2:16; 10:15,16; 11:28; 15:16,19,20,29; 16:25 |
| ...because it is the power of God... | “Power”: 1:4,16,20; 9:17,21,22; 13:1,2,3; 15:13,19; 16:25 |
| ...for the salvation... | “Salvation”: 1:16; 5:9,10; 8:24; 9:27; 10:1,9,10,13; 11:11,14,26; 13:11 |
| ...of everyone who believes... a righteousness... by faith... “The righteous will live by faith.” | “Believes... faith”: 1:5,8,12,16,17; 3:2,3,22,25,27,28,30,31; 4:3,5,9,11,12,13,14,16,17,18,19,20,24; 5:1,2; 6:8; 9:30,32,33; 10:4,6,8,10,11,14,16,17; 11:20; 12:3,6; 13:11; 14:1,2,22,23; 15:13; 16:26 |
| ...first for the Jew, then for the Gentile... | “Jew... Gentile”: 1:5,13,14,16; 2:9,10,14,17,24,28,29; 3:1,9,29; 4:17,18; 9:24,30; 10:12,19; 11:11,12,13,25; 15:9,10,11,12,15,18,27; 16:4,26 |
| For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed... a righteousness... by faith... “The righteous will live by faith.” | “Righteousness... righteous”: 1:17; 2:5,13,26; 3:4,5,8,10,21,22,24,25,26,28,30; 4:5,6,9,11,13,22,23,25; 5:1,7,9,16,17,18,19,21; 6:13,16,18,19,20; 7:12; 8:4,13,30,33; 9:28,30,31; 10:3,4,5,6,10; 14:17 |
| ...just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” | “Live”: Rom 1:17; 2:7; 5:10,17,18,21; 6:2,4,8,10,22,23; 7:1,2,3,10; 8:2,6,10,12,13,38; 9:26; 10:5; 11:3,15; 12:1,18; 14:7,8,9,11; 16:4 |

Announcement: New Editor and a New Editorial Staff Structure

After serving four years as the Editor of the *Tidings* Magazine, and trying to balance that time-consuming role with his income-producing job as a tax CPA, Bro. George Booker is stepping down as Editor. We want to thank Bro. George for his service as Editor. He has had a very positive impact on the *Tidings*. Among other contributions, Bro. George's Reflections and short meditations, some written by himself and some by others, regularly get complimentary comments from our readers. We are pleased that Bro. George has agreed to continue providing these and other studies in his new role as Associate Editor. In this new role Bro. George will also have more time to devote to several book projects, which should be of great interest to the brotherhood.

Bro. Peter Hemingray will be the new Editor of the *Tidings*, starting with the May issue. Bro. Peter has wide and varied experience in the Brotherhood, and his writings are well-known (e.g., his biography of Bro. John Thomas appeared as a series in the *Tidings*, and was published as a book). We are grateful to Bro. Peter for taking on this responsibility.

The *Tidings* is beginning a transition to a new way of working where the editorial work is shared among more people. The editorial staff now includes the following brothers and sisters:

Editor: Peter Hemingray

Associate Editor: George Booker

Section Editors: Ken & Joan Curry (Music & Worship), Tim Young (First Principles), Jason Hensley (Youth Speaks), John Bilello (Letters to the Editor), Jim Harper (Sunday School material & activities), Ryan Mutter (Bible & History), Lori Cusenza (News & Notices), Jan Berneau (Bible Mission), Kathy Hill (Coming Events, Layout)

Contributing Editors: Steve Cheetham, Nathan Badger

Web Master: Peter Bilello

Book Editors: John Bilello, Ethel Archard

Printing & Mailing: Brian McDonald

Subscriptions & Finances: Rose Madge

We thank these brothers and sisters for their willingness to support the work of the *Tidings*. We publish editorial, exhortational, and expository material based on the Scriptures. We also publish News & Notices, Bible Mission, and Coming Events of interest to the Brotherhood primarily in North America and the Caribbean.

Finally we wish to thank all our subscribers and readers for their continued interest and support for the *Tidings*. Your letters, comments, and financial support are greatly appreciated and encourage the many hands needed to produce the magazine on a regular basis. May God continue to bless the work of the *Tidings* in our serving together as we await the coming of our Lord.

The Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee

Exhortation

The Dividends of Faith (Matthew 25:14-30)

The parable of the talents has several obvious lessons; the first is that servants must watch for their master's return. The second is that we need to make our talent(s) grow. Well, maybe the second one is not so obvious.

Is Jesus asking us to increase our abilities in this parable? In other words, If we are an adequate public speaker, does he expect us to be smooth and polished when he returns? If our "talent" is music are we expected to be master musicians when he returns? If our "talent" is simply to welcome visitors to our meeting, are we to double our friendliness?

This parable makes no sense if we understand "talents" to be abilities. The Greek definition for "talent" means a particular sum of money. But how do we interpret the parable? What does the sum of money represent?

What did Jesus leave with me?

What do the talents in Jesus's parable represent? They must represent something which Jesus has left with each of his servants. Many things have been suggested, but perhaps the best way to approach this parable is to ask: 'What is the most valuable thing which Jesus left with me?'

The most valuable thing Jesus left with us, and the one thing which can be increased, is faith!

Jesus left us with the belief, the faith that he will return! Jesus gives us faith that his sacrifice covers our sins. Jesus left us with faith that we will be with him in the Kingdom!

The faith that each of us possesses was uniquely given to us by Jesus, and each of us holds that faith in different quantities:

"For I say to every man that is among you, through the grace given unto me, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Rom 12:3, 21st Century KJV).

Paul plainly tells us that that faith can be increased:

"But having hope that, as your faith groweth, we shall be magnified in you..." (2Cor 10:15, Easy-to-Read Version).

Not only can faith be increased like the talents in the parable, but faith is also described as something of great value like gold:

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that

perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1Pet 1:7).

Faith buried in the earth

The parable says each servant was given a talent according to his ability. That word “ability” is a special word, “dynamis”. It means “with power, miraculous, wonders”. The root of this Greek word is the same word that dynamite is taken from. The point is obvious; putting our talent, our faith, to work must be obvious to everyone around. Those who buried their faith were buried with it! In other words, they died never having put to effective use the wondrous power hidden in their “faith”. As we look at it this way, Luke 18:8 takes on new meaning. In the verse below the word “on” can also mean “in”:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on [or ‘in’] the earth?”

Where will our faith be? Buried in the earth like the foolish servant?

Faith for righteousness

A passage from Thessalonians parallels our parable from Matthew.

“When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ” (2Thes 1:10-12).

Here we see a growing faith, a faith shown with power, the return of the Master, “a counting”, and reward. This is almost a summary of the parable of the talents, especially if we accept that talents equal levels of faith.

In Romans 4, Paul talks about this reckoning of faith for righteousness, in the same way that the talents were exchanged. This makes perfect sense because at the Judgment Seat our faith and hope have been fulfilled. Our fulfilled faith and hope are realized in the presence of our master before us. In Romans 4, faith is exchanged for “righteousness”. Literally that means “good standing, a position before God”. Isn’t that what happens to the faithful servants in our Lord’s parable of the talents?

“Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matt 25:23).

The faithful servants had their faith exchanged for good positions before God. So what are we doing with the “talents” (i.e., faith) given to us? David could not hide his faith in God. He would not conceal the great characteristics of his Master.

“I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness

within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation" (Psa 40:9,10).

Investing your faith with others

A talent is a great sum of money. Do we consider our faith to be priceless? How can we squander it? And here is the mystery of faith. Our natural reaction to possessing precious things is to conceal them, lock them up. But the riches Christ gives to us work just the opposite way.

"Guard the deposit," Paul told Timothy (1Tim 6:20). And the only way you can properly hoard what the Master has given us is to share it with others, to keep it in circulation like the faithful servants who spread around their master's riches, who "invested" it so as to make a profit.

So how do we increase our faith and the faith of others? We have a hymn that sheds light on this. The first verse of Hymn 222 reads:

*"When my love to God grows weak,
when for larger faith I seek,
then in thought I go to thee..."*

Like the faithful servants in the parable, our thoughts need to be focused on our Master and the anticipation of his return. When we are down to our last talent and feeling weak, we can't forget all the simple things we need to practice. Are we praying, reading, and attending meetings and Bible classes? Are we encouraging each other for good? Are we looking for the signs of our Lord's return? Are we talking about the Kingdom to others? Doing these things makes our faith stronger. The writer to the Hebrews sums up very nicely the qualities of faithful servants waiting for their Master's return. They are words we should take to heart in our 'investment strategy' for our faith:

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 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 10:24,25).

Steve Cheetham (Moorestown, NJ)

When is a man educated? When he can look out upon the universe, now lucid and lovely, now dark and terrible, with a sense of his own littleness in the great scheme of things, and yet have faith and courage.

When he can be happy and high-minded amid the drudgeries of life. When he can look into a wayside puddle and see something besides mud, and into the face of the most forlorn mortal and see something divine.

When he knows how to live, how to love, how to hope, how to pray — is glad to live... and has in his heart a bit of a song.

Joseph Newton

Bible Study

To Speak Well of God: (11) The Herald of God

11.1 Evidence in support of Elihu as the herald of God

1. The timing of Elihu's entry is critical in understanding his role.

Job is a blameless man, beloved of God, and he has earnestly desired an audience with the Father. Regardless of what stumbles he may have made in contracting some of the pride of Les Conforteurs Miserables, he is a faithful disciple of the Lord, the Lord who has made this promise:

“See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty
(Mal 3:1).

The Lord promises He will come when His company is urgently sought by those who serve Him. (The initial quote was given to the Israelites at the time of the prophet Malachi precisely because they did not truly seek the Lord at all, but merely performed ritual duties devoid of any true dedication of heart or mind, which is why the Lord was not active in their lives.) In the same prophecy, the Lord also reveals that He does not change (Mal 3:6), which means that His promise is true at all times. To this we add these facts:

- James teaches: “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16, KJV).
- Job is one of the most righteous men who ever lived (see Ezek 14:20).
- Job's prayer is to hear from his God: the ‘Lord whom he is seeking,’ as Malachi phrases it.
- Job's prayer is certainly fervent.

Considering this Scriptural evidence we conclude God will come to Job, albeit not because Job has demanded it, which is what Job believes at the end of the debate, but *because God has promised it*. Further, God explains in the prophecy above that He will first send a messenger to prepare the way before Him.

For God to send a messenger before Him is logical. When God's Son came into the world to present his ministry, God sent ‘Elijah’ to come before him, who was John the Baptist (Luke 7:27). John the Baptist took the role of correcting the deficiencies in the thinking and practices of the local populace, so they could be appropriately washed, even in baptism, to meet the One for whom they had waited so long. In fact when any important speaker is to address an audience, he or she generally has some form of introduction given by another person, to quiet the crowd, and set the stage, so to speak. Therefore, if God's Son is worthy of a messenger to go before him and introduce his ministry, how much more is God

Himself worthy? In fact having said this we conclude it would be quite bizarre for God to present a speech without one preparing the way beforehand. Now we notice Elihu the Buzite appears directly before the speeches of the Almighty, which timing implies that Elihu has been set in the role of God's herald.

2. Elihu uses some of the same language that God Himself will use in His speeches to Job. This is particularly powerful in establishing Elihu as occupying the role of the 'messenger who goes before', because it is a mirror of the dynamic between John the Baptist and Jesus.

John the Baptist first proclaimed the message of repentance (and the same Scripture also establishes him as occupying the role of the one sent to prepare). John said:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him" ' " (Matt 3:2,3, quoting Isa 40:3).

And when Jesus began his ministry he proclaimed:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt 4:17).

John the Baptist and Jesus have used exactly the same phrase. Yet I believe it would be inaccurate to say Jesus is quoting John the Baptist, even though the words are identical and John has spoken them first. Jesus is the greater, John the lesser. I describe what we see here as John *correctly anticipating* the message of Jesus, by reason of him being a man closely attuned to the mission of the Christ. John is essentially quoting the Christ, before Christ has spoken.

I submit we see the same dynamic here in the book of Job between Elihu the Buzite and God. Elihu speaks first, as the one who goes before, and describes certain aspects of the wondrous works of the Maker. God speaks later on the identical subject matter, and some of the phrases are again the same. But it is not, of course, that Yahweh is quoting Elihu. Rather Elihu is correctly anticipating small fragments of the speeches of the Almighty, by reason of being closely attuned to God's thinking.

Example 1: The thunderous voice of God.

Elihu: *"God's voice thunders in marvelous ways;
he does great things beyond our understanding" (Job 37:5).*
GOD: *"Do you have an arm like God's,
and can your voice thunder like his?" (Job 40:9).*

Example 2: Part of God's uncontrollable majesty is seen in His governance of the meteorological elements of snow, clouds and lightning.

Elihu: *"He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth',
and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'
Listen to this, Job;
stop and consider God's wonders.
Do you know how God controls the clouds*

and makes his lightning flash?” (Job 37:6,14,15).

GOD: ***“Have you entered the storehouses of the snow
or seen the storehouses of the hail,
which I reserve for times of trouble,
for days of war and battle?
...Can you raise your voice to the clouds
and cover yourself with a flood of water?
Do you send the lightning bolts on their way?
Do they report to you, ‘Here we are’?” (Job 38:22,23,34,35)***

Example 3: Pride is the threat to man’s eternal salvation

Elihu: ***“He may speak in their ears
and terrify them with warnings,
to turn man from wrongdoing
and keep him from pride,
to preserve his soul from the pit,
his life from perishing by the sword” (Job 33:16-18).***

GOD: ***“Unleash the fury of your wrath,
look at every proud man and bring him low,
look at every proud man and humble him,
crush the wicked where they stand.
Bury them all in the dust together;
shroud their faces in the grave.
Then I myself will admit to you
that your own right hand can save you” (Job 40:11-14).***

It is inconceivable to me that a wicked man could faithfully anticipate the very themes God Himself chooses to use! This point alone is compelling in demonstrating Elihu is indeed God’s messenger.

In fact, by understanding Elihu the Buzite as a type of John the Baptist, this discovery of seeing him use the same words God will use, essentially quoting God before God speaks, is understandable. It makes good sense because it matches a Scriptural template with which we’re already familiar: the dynamic of the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus.

3. Elihu is absent from the epilogue. While this detail itself may seem unhelpful in establishing anything, it is actually surprisingly useful in supporting the notion that Elihu occupies the role of John the Baptist. John himself said, concerning the arrival of the One he heralded:

“A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:27-30, NKJV).

This Scripture teaches it is the nature of the herald to diminish, to fade into the

background and disappear, once his role is completed. This now provides an explanation, perhaps the only reasonable explanation, of why Elihu the Buzite so enigmatically fades away from the drama, seemingly without proper closure to his character or conduct. We have already reasoned that the fact he is not rebuked along with the three friends is evidence that he is not culpable of wrongdoing, as they are. And with his role understood as the herald who is to diminish, so that the One he introduces is appropriately augmented, it makes good sense that he is not rewarded and celebrated as is righteous Job, even though he has spoken appropriately of God in his speeches.

Nor should we think Elihu unjustly under-served. As we have said, it is a central message of the drama of Job to challenge the reader on the whole concept of that which is 'deserved'. Suffice to hear the words of the Master:

*"So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say,
'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty' " (Luke 17:10).*

11.2. The work of Elihu: Clearing the subpoena

The generic role of the 'one who went before' is described by the prophet Isaiah:

*"A voice of one calling:
'In the desert prepare
the way for the LORD;
make straight in the wilderness
a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken' " (Isa 40:3-5).*

So we should anticipate that Elihu will operate in much the same way John the Baptist did: refuting the contemporary false doctrines and practices and urging a road to repentance to meet with God. In short, Elihu the Buzite will 'straighten the way'.

Nor can we ignore the dramatic setting in which Elihu's speeches are couched. A storm is building, both physically and metaphorically. The metaphorical storm has been compounded from the combined anger of all the participants. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite are all frustrated with Job; and Zophar has somehow contrived to feel insulted to boot. Job is angry: angry at his worthless comforters for sure and frankly angry at God too. Added to this comes Elihu the Buzite and, as we learn at the very outset, he too is angry — with everyone! This is a tense and stormy scene indeed.

As if to augment, even exacerbate, this stressful scenario, a physical storm is building. I presume this equates to a rising wind, a lowering sky, a darkening vista and

perhaps already some staccato accentuations of lightning on the horizon. Indeed Elihu may have been partly drawn to reference the meteorological elements in his speech by reason of their visible proximity. I do not mean to undermine the previous argument that Elihu the herald correctly anticipates small parts of God's speech, rather I suggest that God has prepared the storm purposefully to graphically illustrate His oratory and Elihu, being sensitive to this excellent example of God's uncontrollable power, is therefore drawn to reference it.

In Elihu's straightening of the way we find explicit corrections. First, Elihu corrects Job's angry conclusion that God does not listen to the cry of the afflicted.

Job: *"I cry out to you, O God, but you do not answer;
 I stand up, but you merely look at me"* (Job 30:20, also 31:35).

Elihu: *"Why do you complain to him
 that he answers none of man's words?
For God does speak — now one way, now another —
 though man may not perceive it.
In a dream, in a vision of the night,
 when deep sleep falls on men
 as they slumber in their beds,
he may speak in their ears
 and terrify them with warnings,
to turn man from wrongdoing
 and keep him from pride,
to preserve his soul from the pit,
 his life from perishing by the sword"* (Job 33:13-18).

As we noted above, Elihu describes the primary act of salvation as a man being saved from his own pride. Elihu identifies pride as if it is the sole wrongdoing of man; the core of the spectrum of sin; the primary mechanism by which his life is threatened. We will return to this critical theme later and identify Elihu's remark as one of great perspicacity and relevance.

In a second example, Elihu also straightens Job's crooked implications that the Almighty is unjust and that to see the example of righteousness one should look to Job.

Job: *"As surely as God lives, who has denied me justice,
 the Almighty, who has made me taste bitterness of soul,
as long as I have life within me,
 the breath of God in my nostrils,
my lips will not speak wickedness,
 and my tongue will utter no deceit.
I will never admit you are in the right;
 till I die, I will not deny my integrity.
I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it;
 my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live"*
 (Job 27:2-6, see also 32:1).

Elihu: *But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God...
“It is unthinkable that God would do wrong,
that the Almighty would pervert justice”
(Job 32:2, also 34:12),*

The work of Elihu the Buzite is completed. The subpoena that Job has issued, that God must answer him because Job's notion of justice requires it, has been vacated. Atkinson comments similarly on the effect of Elihu: “The Elihu speeches, which came after Job's last stand, prevent us from thinking that God is somehow forced into a reply by Job's persistence in his previous speech”¹ — a surprising conclusion for Atkinson to make, since Atkinson previously concluded the Elihu speeches were an addition to the original text; yet now he finds good reason for them to be there.

Most important, however, is the *effect* of the vacated subpoena. Elihu has spoken for God and enabled Job to perceive that God does not owe him an answer. Job has been released from his own trap and he is free once more to receive communication from the Almighty. Thus we are set to move into the final phase of the drama. During the speeches of Elihu the storm has been building up. It is about to climax. As the lightning cracks, detonating in thunderous explosions the very air through which it passes, as the rain lashes and the wind howls, the culmination of the debate, indeed many debates, is about to be heard. In the center of the storm, the final Speaker is preparing and, as the storm breaks upon them, He speaks.

John Pople (San Francisco Peninsula, CA)

Note:

1. D. Atkinson, “The Message of Job”, 1991, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, UK, 138

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
35th annual Church of God of the Abrahamic Faith Gathering
at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, July 26-August 1, 2010.*

Main Speakers:

Bro. Jared Johnson — “Reading the Bible: Ways of Seeing”

Bro. Dan Styles — “Paul's First Letter to Timothy:

A Guide for Life in the Church”

Bro. Rick Schaen — “A Plan of Acts-ion”

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

Visit our website <http://abrahamicfaithgathering.org>

Bible Study

What the Qur'an Says About... (7) How to Be Saved

As was noted last month (*What the Qur'an says about life after death*), Islam is an exclusive religion promising paradise only to those who believe in Allah and earn his acceptance. Everyone else is consigned to the flames of hell forever:

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good)” (3:85 and throughout).

Further, as logically follows from the rejection of Jesus as the Son of God, the Qur'an denies that a savior is provided by God. Each individual must earn his own salvation:

“He is Allah in the heavens and on earth. He knows what you hide, and what you reveal, and He knows the (recompense) which you earn (by your deeds)” (6:3).

“In fact, as we have seen, those that say: ‘God has begotten a son!’... We make them taste the severest Penalty for their blasphemies” (10:68-70).

As there is no savior or covenant of salvation with which to be associated, there is no equivalent in Islam to baptism. One is considered a Muslim when one accepts Allah and the Qur'an and seeks to live according to its precepts.

Ordinances sound acceptable

At first reading, the way of life prescribed for a Muslim compares favorably with Biblical standards. The believers who will be accepted are:

“Those who humble themselves in their prayers; who avoid vain talk; who are active in deeds of charity; who abstain from sex, except with those joined to them in the marriage bond... those who faithfully observe their trusts and their covenants... these will be the heirs who will inherit Paradise” (23:2-11).

Elsewhere Muslim believers are instructed:

“(Do not) come near to adultery...Nor take life...Come not near to the orphan's property except to improve it...Give full measure when you measure, and weigh with a balance that is straight (17:32-35). Woe to every kind of scandal-monger and backbiter” (104:1).

“The servants of Allah Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility...who, when they spend, are not extravagant and not miserly, but hold a just (balance) between those (extremes)” (25:63,67).

“Never should a believer kill a believer...If a man kills a Believer intention-

ally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (for ever)” (4:92,93).

“O you who believe! Devour not Usury, doubled and multiplied; but fear Allah...Fear the Fire, which is prepared for those who reject Faith” (3:130,131).

Where's the problem?

With these reasonable instructions, why is *sharia* (Muslim) law considered dangerous by many in the West? Why the brutality in some Muslim countries toward Christians?

There are several reasons:

- As noted in the article on *Jihad*, Islam is a religion seeking to conquer the world now. When they have the power, they are urged to seek out and slay those who oppose Islam, especially those who are seeking (like ourselves) to convert Muslims to Christianity (4:89; 9:29,30, etc.).
- The Qur'an incorporates one standard of conduct between fellow Muslims and another standard between Muslims and non-Muslims (e.g. as noted below, treaties and covenants with non-Muslims can be broken). By way of contrast, the law of Moses provided equal treatment for Israelites and “strangers”: “*If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him...thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God*” (Lev 19:33,34).
- In the article on “love”, we noted the absence of sacrificial love in the Qur'an — as a characteristic of God or as a command to Muslims. This makes a great difference as to a person's everyday behavior. With the concept of “love” firmly in his thoughts, the practicing disciple of Christ finds all of his conduct in every situation tempered by this overriding principle.
- Allah has a brutal side to him. The very idea of torturing a rejected person for ever in utter torment is brutal (see article on *punishment of the wicked*). People tend to act like their conception of their god (or create a god in their own image). If the god is brutal, we can expect his worshippers to be brutal.
- There is a surprising undercurrent of compromise in regard to the commands of the Qur'an. As we realize, all we need is a chance to rationalize wrongdoing. What Muhammad may have intended as a gesture to human weakness ends up as a “get out of jail free” card for bad behavior.

This last point is so pervasive in the Qur'an that it needs amplification.

Undercurrent of compromise

Take **dietary laws** as an example. The Qur'an forbids eating of swine, eating blood and eating animals “killed by strangling, a violent blow, or by a headlong fall” or those dedicated to another god than Allah, “unless one *is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience*, nor transgressing due limits — then is he guiltless, for Allah is oft-forgiving, Most Merciful” (2:173; 5:3; 116:115). In other words, if times get too difficult, eat what you have to in order to survive. Muhammad may have come up with this feature by hearing of Jesus's lesson from David eating the

shewbread intended for the priests. But Muhammad has given the exception far broader application than anything found in Scripture.

Regular prayers are encouraged (there is no specific requirement of five times a day), but: “When you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you *if you shorten your prayers, for fear the Unbelievers may attack you*” (4:101). This reflects a spirit of putting pragmatic precautions over faith that God will provide. Contrast this instruction with that to Israel: they could confidently leave their cities unprotected when journeying to a centralized feast: “*Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God thrice in the year*” (Exod 34:24). They left their families and homes exposed to the enemy for weeks, trusting God to protect their possessions and families.

Most surprising is the **permission to deny Allah** if persecution arises: “Any one who, after accepting Faith in Allah, utters Unbelief — *except under compulsion*, his heart remaining firm in Faith... on them is Wrath from Allah, and theirs will be a dreadful Penalty” (16:106). We found this a stunning concession to expediency. Here is a capital offence, worthy of eternal hell — denying Allah — that can be committed with impunity if consequences are too severe. What a contrast this is to the Biblical examples of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, the apostles, and the Lord Jesus.

Parents are to be obeyed and treated with kindness *unless* they insist on behavior “of which you have no knowledge, do not obey them” (29:8; 31:15). This is virtually a blank check for teenagers to ignore their parents. It is a standing joke that most of us are incredulous at how much wiser our parents are when we are 22 than when we were 15. To be told you don’t have to obey them when you don’t understand what they’re talking about must lead to much family strife when children are in their teens.

Treaties can be broken, oaths can be dissolved, covenants can be ignored. The Muslim is told: “If you fear treachery from any group, *throw back (their covenant) to them*, (so as to be) on equal terms” (8:58). “Allah has already ordained for you, (O men), *the dissolution of your oaths* (on some occasions)” (66:2). “There was to be An announcement from Allah and His Messenger, to the people (assembled) on the day of the Great Pilgrimage, — that Allah and His Messenger *dissolve (treaty) obligations* with the Pagans” [that’s us!] (9:3). Set against these allowances are what seem like strict commands to integrity: “Fulfill the Covenant of Allah when you have entered into it, and do not break your oaths after you have confirmed them” (16:91). It’s little wonder business people and foreign secretaries hear one part of the Qur’an and assume a Muslim will keep a business arrangement or national treaty, only to find the Muslim dissolving the oath acting (in the Muslim’s mind) with the total support of alternative teaching in the Qur’an.

Forgiveness is optional. Commendation is extended to “those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves. *The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto*: but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is due from Allah” (42:39,40). Given a choice between vengeance and forgiveness, most humans will seek revenge. Con-

trusted with the Qur'an is the command of Christ that his followers must practice forgiveness in order to be forgiven by our Heavenly Father (Matt 6:12-15).

Drawing attention to charitable giving is allowed but not preferable: "If you disclose (acts of) charity or devotion, even so it is well, but if you conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you" (2:271). In contrast is the command of Christ to "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matt 6:3).

National Sharia laws

The ordinances discussed so far relate to personal or family life. But as Muslims become the majority in geographic areas, they frequently impose Muslim law (*Sharia* law) as the law of the land. We hear of this in the current press in respect to a number of countries in the Middle East and Africa.

What we are seeing is that the ambiguity and contradictory nature of the Qur'an is leading to remarkable discussions in the secular world. For example, in relation to the international banking system, as banks make sure they can do business in Muslim dominated countries, does "usury" mean excessive interest or any interest at all on mortgage, business or credit card loans? (For further information see Wikipedia article on "Islamic Banking: or Governing Under Sharia", by Lauren Vriens, 3/23/09, who cites HSBC, Citigroup and Deutsch Bank as financial institutions developing Islamic banking sectors.)

Furthermore, what is the punishment for various infractions of the law (e.g., stealing)? Should people really have both hands cut off? The Qur'an says that unless a thief repents of his crime, the penalty is: "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example, from Allah, for their crime" (5:38). Such a penalty maims a person in the extreme and contributes to the brutality of a country run under *Sharia* law. Will this become the law of the land in Muslim dominated countries? (For further discussion see Internet under *Sharia* Law.)

There is much room for debate within Islam for, as was noted in the introductory article, the Qur'an is not always consistent on a given topic. For instance, while in several places Muhammad urges harsh treatment of unbelievers, one could cite 45:14 as the essence of toleration: "Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of Allah: it is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each People according to what they have earned."

Contrasted with that ordinance is:

"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad) [i.e., Christadelphian missionaries] and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land; that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter" (5:33).

Conclusion

The more one studies the Bible, the more one is impressed with its consistency, the beauty of its prose (even though translated into another tongue), and the wonder of the lovingkindness of the living God it reveals. Despite having the Bible to use as a model, the Qur'an falls far short in these areas. Furthermore, as we see again in the study just reviewed, the Qur'an has a number of contradictory instructions even though written over a relatively short 30-year period. Thirty years pales beside the 1,500-year period of the writing of the Bible. We are blessed indeed to have in our hands the word of God which offers us, through God's Son, the way, the truth and the life.

Don Styles (Ann Arbor, Michigan)

(Next, God willing, what the Qur'an says about Bible personalities.)

Pain Knocked upon my Door

*Pain knocked upon my door and said
That she had come to stay;
And though I would not welcome her
But bade her go away,
She entered in. Like my own shade
She followed after me,
And from her stabbing, stinging sword
No moment was I free.*

*And then one day another knocked
Most gently at my door.
I cried, "No, Pain is living here.
There is no room for more."
And then I heard his tender voice,
" 'Tis I, be not afraid."
And from the day he entered in —
The difference it made!*

*For though he did not bid her leave —
My strange, unwelcome guest —
He taught me how to live with her.
And I had never guessed
That we could dwell so sweetly here,
My Lord and Pain and I,
Within this fragile house of clay
While years slip slowly by!*

Martha Snell Nicholson

History

“Making it clear and giving the meaning”:

(2) Speaking the language

Most readers of this article will agree that the Christian gospel is up-to-date, relevant and powerful, and that understanding and acting upon it is just about the most important thing any of us can do.

So why does so much of our worship give precisely the opposite impression, by being couched in language that's more than 400 years out of date? In far too many of our Bible readings, hymns, prayers, and even Bible talks, the language of the 16th century — the 'thees' and 'thous' — still persists.

Using the language of the past damages the cause of Christianity in several ways. First, it suggests the Gospel is quaint and outdated. It breaks the connection with the contemporary world, as though Christianity has little in common with the hopes, worries and concerns of people today. Second, it exposes Christianity to ridicule; have you ever noticed how, when comedians try to mock religious belief, they use the antiquated language as part of the mockery? Third, and crucially, it hinders the understanding of the Bible and its message for people who aren't familiar with it — and often for those who are, too. The phrasing and vocabulary are difficult, and numerous words have changed their meaning over the years; how many hours have been wasted explaining what 'soul' or 'ghost' don't mean, or that 'let' and 'prevent' mean the opposite of what the unfortunate listener might think?

Why is the language of the past so persistent?

The main reason, of course, is the King James version (KJV) of the Bible, no longer in regular use among many Christians but unfortunately still popular in a lot of Christadelphian meetings. A mainstay of Christian worship and discipleship for so long, the KJV is now a real handicap — which is ironic, since in large measure the roots of the KJV are in the work of William Tyndale, the brilliant Bible translator driven by the belief that the Word of God should be available in the everyday language of ordinary people. Tyndale's 1525 New Testament, and his partial translation of the Old, underlie several English Bibles, including the KJV in 1611. In fact, King James' men consciously kept to the language of the earlier work of Tyndale and his followers, even though English had changed a lot in almost 100 years since 1525: the 'thou' form, for example, was growing obsolete.

Not that King James' translators were entirely faithful to Tyndale, however: the political and ecclesiastical 'fix' that James was seeking with his translation involved compromises. Ecclesiastical terms that Tyndale had rightly avoided were restored to suit the Church establishment. For instance, Tyndale translated 'ecclesia' as 'congregation', stressing the people and not the building, but the KJV put back 'church'.

There are at least three reasons why some believers make the mistake of holding on to 16th century language. The beauty of Tyndale's translation is certainly one of the reasons that it has been so persistent. The phrasing and tone of the 'Authorized Version,' as it's often (though inaccurately) called, does have an almost musical quality about it. It's memorable, a little like the language of Shakespeare perhaps. And I like my Shakespeare in the original, not put into modern English. But there's a big difference between the Bible and Shakespeare. Shakespeare is entertainment, art: it doesn't have to change you, and it can't help you save your life forever by understanding it. The Bible does, and can. The clarity of the message is all-important, and if some much-loved beauty of phrasing has to be sacrificed in the interests of clarity, so be it.

A second reason is the claim that 16th century language carries with it a sense of reverence absent from modern speech. The bizarre idea that we show reverence for God by speaking to or of Him in the language of nearly 500 years ago relies on a mistaken conception of both the English and the original language involved. In English, to suggest that to address the Almighty as 'Thou' somehow carries more reverence is absurd; the 'Thou' form was the more familiar form of address in earlier English, not the respectful form used to superiors or strangers. Archaic word forms have nothing to do with respect, and reverence is something much deeper than the language one uses. As to the original language, the New Testament was written in the everyday "koine" Greek, the Greek of the streets, not the literary Greek of the classics. That King James' translators did not understand the difference is not their fault — though it meant that the translation was somewhat more 'literary' in tone than the original warranted.

A final reason for archaic language is the claim that the KJV itself is a more accurate translation than any later versions. This too is wrong, but it does deserve considering in more detail. There are two aspects:

- (1) the quality of the manuscript evidence underlying the translation, and
- (2) the approach to the job of translation itself.

The manuscript evidence

On the issue of manuscript evidence, the major deficiency of the KJV is an inevitable consequence of its time. The text available to King James' men was inferior to what's available today, when we have literally thousands of ancient texts to work from. Perhaps the most glaring example of a deficient text is the notorious interpolation in 1 John 5:7 (in the KJV, "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."). That passage was known to be spurious long before 1611. Many have wanted to retain it, and leave it in translations, valuing it as clear Biblical evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity — thinking, correctly, that there's no such evidence anywhere else in the Bible! This puts adherents of the KJV today in an unseemly and unbiblical alliance with the Trinitarian Bible Society.

Apart from that, there are fortunately no major doctrinal issues at stake in those passages where the KJV is deficient on account of an inferior text. That doesn't mean we should be satisfied with an inferior text. Continuing to use the New

King James Version, which just updates the language using the poorer text, is a bad idea.

The approach to translation

The issue of approach to translation is essentially about balance between conveying the sense and meaning of the original, and translating each word of the original text as literally as possible within the constraints of English grammar. The KJV translators adopted an approach closer to word-for-word equivalence than their modern counterparts, but they were quite capable of departing from literal translation when they felt it appropriate. As the 20th century translator J.B. Phillips points out, “Since I know that there are many who imagine that the Authorized Version is a particularly literal and accurate translation of the Greek, it is refreshing to turn to Matthew 27:44 and see that not one single word of the expression ‘cast the same in his teeth’ is in fact in the Greek.” Incidentally, if you do want the closest thing in English to a ‘literal’ word-for-word translation, the New American Standard Bible is the one to use. The KJV is the wrong choice, and an unnecessary choice.

Tyndale today

We’ve seen that the persistence of 16th-century language has a lot to do with William Tyndale. Among all the faithful men and women of the past 2,000 years, Tyndale is one of those to whom we owe most. We acknowledge that not by using his language, but by sharing and working for the same ideals for which he gave his life — ideals he shared with his predecessor Erasmus, the scholar who published the first printed Greek New Testament on which Tyndale’s English version was based. Erasmus wrote:

“I totally disagree with those who are unwilling that the Holy Scriptures, translated into the common tongue, should be read by the unlearned... I wish that the farm worker might sing parts of them at the plow, that the weaver might hum them at the shuttle, and that the traveler might beguile the weariness of the way by reciting them.”

A well-known story relates how Tyndale was disputing with a learned cleric who asserted: “We were better to be without God’s law than the Pope’s.” Echoing Erasmus, Tyndale’s answer was “I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of Scripture than thou dost.”

Tyndale believed passionately that the Bible should be available to the common people in the language of everyday — ordinary, simple street English; the English that would change lives. We should share that passion. Not, perhaps, with the awesome courage and dedication of a Tyndale, but enough to care that the Word of God should speak as clearly and eloquently to today’s equivalent of the plowboy or the weaver, as Tyndale’s New Testament did to their 16th century counterparts. That means the Bibles we read; the talks we give; the prayers we lead; the hymns and songs we sing... all should be in clear, contemporary English.

So when you lead or take part in a service, don't use the language of 'thee' and 'thou'. Let's make less use of hymns and songs that still use that language, or revise the wording; and let's make more use of the wealth of contemporary Christian music. Let's watch our choice of words and phrases in talks and prayers to make sure we don't lapse into outdated speech or into clichés based upon it. Let's put the King James Bible back on the reference shelf, not on the reading stand in our meetings.

And that way, we'll let the Word of God speak as powerfully and clearly today as it ever has.

David Brown
davidbrown2000@hotmail.co.uk
(Knowle & Dorridge, UK)

(Concluded)

"I am glad for your sakes that I was not there"
(John 11:15)

That is a revealing word, and full of strength. The supposition which it makes is that if Jesus had been at Bethany, Lazarus would not have died, for he would have healed him. Because he was not there, he had died, and the Lord said that, for the sake of his disciples, he was glad.

The sequel gives the explanation of his gladness. Death was no stronger in his presence than disease, but these men did not realize this. They would think of death as the unconquerable. It was so to them. With disease men may grapple, and fight, and often overcome. But in the presence of death they are helpless. It is beyond their control. Not so with him, and he was glad that they should have yet another opportunity to see his power.

We say "another", for twice already they had seen him raise the dead, once in the house of Jairus, and once at the city of Nain. How slow we are to believe! And that makes his gladness all the more beautiful, as it reveals his patience. And so we may learn that he often permits us to pass into profounder darkness, and deeper mysteries of pain, in order that we may prove more perfectly his power.

Let the thought abide with us, if our pathway lies in some dark valley where for the moment no light is shining, and no path is known. He knows, and all he permits will only serve to reveal him more perfectly, and so give us a yet stronger confidence.

G. Campbell Morgan

Review

Why Us?

How Science Rediscovered the Mystery of Ourselves,
by James le Fanu, Harper Press, London, 2009

The author, James le Fanu is a medical doctor and rationalist, who has written several books, and published research articles in leading medical publications, magazines and newspapers. In this tome he sets out to explore the power and limits of science in comprehending the deep mysteries of life on earth.

Le Fanu wonders at the pervasive beauty and integrity of the natural world, and draws attention to the work of Isaac Newton: the discoverer of the law of gravity; and Robert Boyle: the father of modern physics. They set out on 'a holy calling' to discover and understand natural laws, which they believed would bring them closer to the Creator of this wondrous universe. The writer emphasizes the fact that such a vital and fundamental force as gravity is non-material, and is entirely mysterious in its operation throughout the universe. He claims that the human mind in essence is non-material, and holds mysteries that are unreachable by scientific research. Plato and others recognized the non-material reality of 'the self' and developed the concept of the soul. In the seventeenth century, the philosopher Descartes distinguished between the physically 'material' brain, and the 'spiritual' mind which is qualitatively different. However, over the last one hundred and fifty years, the ascendancy of materialist evolutionary theories has challenged 'the dualism of physical brain and non-material mind', by propounding the view 'that the human mind is "nothing but" the consequence of the electrical activity of the brain', or advocating similar explanations.

The author confronts head-on the dogmatism and certainty associated with Darwin's *Origin of Species*. What accounts for the attributes that distinguish us from our primate cousins? The obvious differences cannot be explained by genetic information alone. He uses familiar arguments to refute the idea of gradual evolution. For example the human eye is far too complex and interconnected as an item to have evolved gradually. Gaps in the fossil record present serious questions such as 'why did some species appear fully formed, out of nowhere?' and 'how did man come to walk upright in the first place?' 'Where did language come from, since all the major intellectual traits of modern man are associated in one way or another with language?' He claims that Darwinism and the general scientific world view, with its rebuff of the non-material aspects of life, denies freewill, wonder and mystery. Man is an object whose brain can be described objectively, but he can also be portrayed as a subject whose understanding of the world derives from his own experience. The discernible brain is comprised of physical material, but the invisible mind transcends that materiality.

The major progress of the neurosciences, with the development of technology that enabled scientists to peer into the brain, raised expectations regarding the

solving of the mystery of human consciousness. However, the phenomenon of life turned out to be far more complex than matter. The new technological apparatus revealed that the functions of the brain are extremely complex and interrelated. Individuals who have been born with half a brain or have lost portions of their brain through accident or disease can be more or less fully functioning. The phenomenal power of 'neuro-plasticity' means that parts of the brain intended to serve one purpose can be developed for a different function.

Le Fanu points to the development of the 'New Genetics', based on the discovery by Crick and Watson in 1953 of the double helix, the DNA molecule that carries genetic information from one generation to the other. They described their discovery in this way: "This structure has novel features which are of considerable biological interest" — an understatement! It was indeed an advance in the study of how genetic material passes from generation to generation. DNA was in fact the carrier of the genetic code and thus was seen as the key molecule of heredity, developmental biology, and evolution. The completion of the Human Genome Project in 2001 transformed immeasurably our understanding of ourselves. It revealed that the so-called unique human genome is more or less interchangeable with that of a mouse, with a similarity of 98 per cent. But the findings of these genome projects proved perplexing, in failing to reveal the mysterious secrets of genetic inheritance.

This book demonstrates that there are obvious and profound issues and questions which are missing from the general scientific account of the universe. The recent scientific developments, which le Fanu has surveyed, raise serious questions about these omissions. In particular, throughout most of human history it has been recognized that mankind is in essence non-material, and that the real self is an autonomous being born with free will. This work is infused with a sense of the miraculous; the universe is full of the unknown; and concludes that 'life' is immeasurably more complex than 'matter', and is finally inexplicable. This book studiously avoids a theistic perspective; nonetheless it provides a remarkable and refreshing reading exercise.

Kenneth Camplin (Southern Highlands, NSW, Australia)

1. *Man is a religious being. He will worship...*
2. *Man, by worshipping, becomes assimilated to the moral character of the object which he worships...*
3. *Without an exception, the character of every nation and tribe of the human history has been formed and modified, in a great degree, by the character attributed to their gods.*

James B. Walker, The Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, pp. 26-28

"It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only' " (Matt 4:10; Jesus is quoting Deuteronomy 6:13).

Signs of the Times

Reacting to Disasters

Haiti

The destructive earthquake on January 13 that affected the Caribbean island of Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world, has horrified people all round the globe. As a result of Bible Mission preaching, there is a brother in Haiti. He was returning from work when the earthquake struck. His home was destroyed and members of his extended family buried in the rubble. Thankfully they all survived, but they will be affected for a long time during the slow reconstruction of infrastructure and society. The brother's immediate needs have been met, and he is in regular contact with brethren in North America who continue to review the situation. In the midst of the dreadful destruction, we thank God that our brother and his family were spared.

Whenever there is a disaster in the world, we find ourselves both troubled by the suffering and loss of life involved and by the questions asked about why God allows such things to happen.

There are no 'easy' answers, as Job was to discover as he struggled with the catastrophes that overtook him and his family. Of course his friends were convinced that he was being deliberately punished by God. But their understanding was discredited by God Himself, who declared they had "not spoken of me what is right" (Job 42:7).

Many years later, the Lord Jesus Christ was asked about the massacre of Galileans in Jerusalem by Roman soldiers. The case of the Tower of Siloam, also in Jerusalem, was also fresh in their minds. It had collapsed and killed eighteen people. Jesus asks the rhetorical question:

"Do you think that [the people who suffered] were worse sinners than all other men?"

He provides the answer:

"I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5).

"All have sinned"

Both these examples provide clear guidance. We should not make dogmatic statements that God is specifically punishing individuals or groups who are caught up in catastrophes. Of course, we may be aware that many of those affected by the tsunami in 2004 were living godless lives; we may be conscious of the religious superstitions and corruption in a country like Haiti. But do we think that other parts of the world are being spared because they are less corrupt? The heart of man is desperately wicked wherever you look and there is no shortage of godless policies in many parts of the world.

We are told that there will be many natural catastrophes that will characterize the “last days” and that God intends to “shake the earth” in judgment (Matt 24:7; Heb 12:26,27). We also know that all suffering, whether caused by our mortal weakness or by natural disasters, is linked back to sin. Because of man’s first disobedience, God brought a curse on the earth which affects us all. “For there is no difference: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:22,23). In consequence, “the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs”, for it has been “subjected to futility” (Rom 8:20-22).

In such a world, there is no fairness about the way disaster occurs. People *may*, of course, suffer because of their foolish behavior. The corrupt, inept and also godless policies of organizations and government may — and very often do — have catastrophic consequences. We can only say that suffering, death and disaster are part of our world to remind us all that there is something seriously wrong — and we need to face that fact. The toothache tells us we ought to see the dentist. The disaster shouts out to us that “here we have no continuing city”. We need to act to be saved from this world whose wicked works are to be burned up. This was the point that Jesus made: “Unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5).

The love of God in Christ

We can assure people that God’s saving purpose shows that He is not indifferent to the state of the world. God gave His Son “that whoever believes in him should not perish”. The Lord Jesus himself entered into the very arena of human suffering and endured its worst effects, even death on a cross. He suffers when we suffer, and his sympathetic care can be with us in the worst disasters:

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

When we have a relationship with our Heavenly Father through His beloved Son, “in all these things we are more than conquerors” — because He does not forsake us in our troubles and promises to deliver us out of them all (Rom 8:35,37; Psa 34:19).

If God’s love can be experienced in the worst of situations, then we need ourselves to be instruments of that love. We must continue to broadcast in all the world the message that Jesus Christ died “to deliver us from this present evil age” (Gal 1:4); and we must render what practical assistance we can to those who suffer, wherever they may be (Rom 12:17-20).

Michael Owen

*(Reprinted, with kind permission, from
The Christadelphian, February, pp. 69,70)*

Donations may be made for Haiti Relief through the CBMA and the CBMC. These organizations are working together in this effort. The CBMC plans to assist our Bro. Kenson Fortune and his family as soon as possible, and utilize any excess donations for future CBMA and CBMC relief work. Please note on your

check "Haiti Earthquake Fund":

CBMA c/o Charles Brinkerhoff
15925 La Ronda Circle
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

CBMC
Box 55541, Unit 119
15280 101 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R0J7

Online donations may be made at www.cbma.net



Bro. Kenson Fortune and his family

Trouble Happens

Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor, Nobel Prize winner, philosopher, gives his summary of religion:

- *Taoism: Trouble happens.*
- *Confucianism: Confucius says trouble happens.*
- *Buddhism: If trouble happens, it is not really trouble.*
- *Zen Buddhism: What is the sound of trouble happening?*
- *Hinduism: This trouble has happened before.*
- *Islam: If trouble happens, it is the will of Allah.*
- *Protestantism: Let trouble happen to someone else.*
- *Catholicism: If trouble happens, you deserve it.*
- *Judaism: Why does trouble always happen to us?*

May we add one more?

- *The Truth in Christ: God works, even through troubles, for the good of His elect (Rom 8:28).*

Elie Wiesel also wrote: "Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil."

Reflections

Blood

“The life is in the blood.” This is a fundamental teaching of the Law of Moses (Lev 3:17; 7:26,27; 17:11,14; Deut 12:23). What does it mean, to say “the life is in the blood”?:

(1) Blood is the source of life: Its red blood cells supply oxygen and nutrients to every cell in the human body.

On the spiritual plane, Christ’s blood is a “transfusion” of life to us: “Drink my blood” (John 6:53-57; 1Cor 11:25-27; Matt 26:27,28). What was forbidden — i.e., the partaking of natural blood — is commanded of us, on a spiritual level. It is only through Christ and his shed blood that we may have life.

(2) Blood is the agent of cleansing: It removes carbon dioxide and toxins and waste products from every body cell, and transports them to the lungs and kidneys, where they are excreted or expelled.

Likewise, believers are “washed in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev 7:14; 1John 1:7; Heb 9:11-14).

(3) Blood is the agent of overcoming disease: Its white cells attack and neutralize and consume invading bacteria and viruses and “alien” bodies. All immunizations and vaccinations make use of this amazing capacity of the human body to heal itself.

By Christ’s blood understood symbolically, we can overcome all difficulties and trials (Rev 12:11; John 16:33). He is the one who has overcome all things; when we are inoculated with his blood we are provided with the necessary “antibodies” to fight off the “disease” of sin (Heb 2:14-18; 4:15).

What does the blood system do for the human body? In answer, two writers, a physician and a Bible student, give us this fascinating description of how the blood system works:

* * * * *

Imagine an enormous tube snaking southward from Canada through the Amazon delta, plunging into oceans only to surface at every inhabited island, shooting out eastward through every jungle, plain, and desert in Africa, forking near Egypt to join all of Europe and Russia as well as the entire Middle East and Asia — a pipeline so global and pervasive that it links every person worldwide. Inside that tube an endless plenitude of treasures floats along on rafts: mangoes, coconuts, asparagus, and produce from every continent; watches, calculators, and cameras; gems and minerals; 49 brands of cereals; all styles and sizes of clothing; the contents of entire shopping centers. Five billion people have access: at a moment of need or want, they simply reach into the tube and seize whatever product suits them. Somewhere far down the pipeline a replacement is manufactured and inserted.

Such a pipeline exists inside each one of us, servicing not five billion but one hundred trillion cells in the human body. An endless supply of oxygen, amino acids, nitrogen, sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sugars, lipids, cholesterol, and hormones surges past our cells, carried on blood cell rafts or suspended in fluid. Each cell has special withdrawal privileges to gather the resources needed to fuel a tiny engine for its complex chemical reactions.

In addition, that same pipeline ferries away refuse, exhaust gases, and worn-out chemicals. In the interest of economical transport, the body dissolves its vital substances into a liquid (much as coal is shipped more efficiently through a slurry pipeline than by truck and train). Five or six quarts of this all-purpose fluid suffice for the body's hundred trillion cells.

Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, In His Image, page 55

Not Good to Be Alone?

It was (and is) not good for God to be alone.

We often mention that Adam and Eve in the garden are a pattern of Christ and the Bride/church. But before there was Christ and the Church, there was the Father and "Israel", also patterned by Adam and Eve.

So when God revealed that it was not good for Adam to be alone, but that he needed a companion, surely it was a patterned or figurative way of saying, 'It is not good for Me to be alone. I must have a companion.'

And all of God's work from that day to this, especially involving His Son, has been for that express purpose: creating a "companion" (actually, a multitude of companions) for His eternal fellowship. That is what the "new creation" is all about.

Look at it another way:

- (1) If our own observations and experience shows us how unsatisfactory life can be if lived entirely alone, with no regard for or fellowship with others, and how much we need companionship, personal and spiritual and sympathetic and loving; and
 - (2) If we are made in the image and likeness of God,
- then, reasoning backward, it is not good that God Himself be alone either.

I remember some years ago a young sister asking in a Bible class: 'Why does God love me?' The question passed with perfunctory discussion, and I at first dismissed it from my mind as of no great consequence. But then the question came back to me later, and it suddenly seemed to be of enormous import: '**Why** does God love me?' Not just the fact of His love, that we might take for granted in some theoretical way, but the rationale behind it. I finally came to the conclusion that God loves me because He needs someone to love, and He needs someone to love Him, and that somehow even the Omnipotence of the Universe would be incomplete without the love, freely given, of His creation.

Why weren't (aren't) the angels enough? Is it because their devotion is almost preprogrammed, whereas our devotion, our love, arises out of our own wills, freely given? This freely-given love is what God is looking for. This is why He had to create beings like Adam and Eve, who had the potential to choose, and hence the potential to disappoint Him greatly. It was an enormous risk, but it had a far greater upside: though they might disappoint, they could also bring Him the greatest joy, for they had the potential — what a potential it was and is! — to please Him.

Now there's a thought: that our disregard for the Father can truly hurt Him. What a responsibility to consider.

George Booker (Austin Leander, TX)

The Scarlet Letter

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter" (1850), the story is told of a young woman, Hester Prynne, who has an adulterous affair and bears a child out of wedlock. The world in which she lives (Puritan New England) is staunchly and vehemently opposed to such sin, and treats Hester accordingly. Not only is she shunned from proper society, as not fit to be spoken to except in cases of absolute necessity, but by judicial and community decree she is condemned to wear, embroidered on the breast of her garment, a large scarlet letter "A", which presumably denotes her sin, Adultery.

It is fascinating to observe, as the story develops, how Hester deals with her 'punishment', and how the community deals with her sin, and with Hester herself. The quoted extract deals with a time some years after the original sin and punishment, and after Hester has spent quiet years living a life of modesty, uprightness, and devoted service to others less fortunate and in need. Among other things, it has something profound to say about the overcoming of adversities — whether self-inflicted or randomly received, and how each of us, being a sinner, treats others who themselves are sinners.

* * * * *

It was perceived, too, that, while Hester never put forward even the humblest title to share in the world's privileges — farther than to breathe the common air, and earn daily bread for little Pearl [*her daughter*] and herself by the faithful labor of her hands — she was quick to acknowledge her sisterhood with the race of man, whenever benefits were to be conferred. None so ready as she to give of her little substance to every demand of poverty; even when the bitter-hearted pauper threw back a [hurtful comment] in [repayment] of the food brought regularly to his door, or the garments wrought for him by the fingers that could have embroidered a monarch's robe. None so devoted as Hester, when pestilence stalked through the town. In all seasons of calamity, indeed, whether general or of individuals, the outcast of society at once found her place. She came, not as a guest, but as a rightful inmate, into the household that was darkened by trouble;

as if its gloomy twilight were the only medium in which she was entitled to hold intercourse with her fellow-creatures. There glimmered the embroidered letter, with comfort in its unearthly ray. Elsewhere the token of sin, it was the [candle] of the sick-chamber. It had even thrown its gleam, in the sufferer's hard extremity, across the verge of time. It had shown him where to set his foot, while the light of earth was fast becoming dim. In such emergencies, Hester's nature showed itself warm and rich; a wellspring of human tenderness, unfailing to every real demand, and inexhaustible by the largest. Her breast, with its badge of shame, was but the softer pillow for the head that needed one. She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked forward to this result. The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her — so much power to do, and power to sympathize — that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original significance. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength.

It was only the darkened house that could contain her. When sunshine came again, she was not there. Her shadow had faded across the threshold. The helpful inmate had departed, without one backward glance to gather up the [reward] of gratitude, if any were in the hearts of those whom she had served so zealously. Meeting them in the street, she never raised her head to receive their greeting. If they were resolute to approach her, she laid her finger on the scarlet letter, and passed on. This might be pride, but was so like humility, that it produced all the softening influence of the latter quality on the public mind. The public is despotic in its temper; it is capable of denying common justice, when too strenuously demanded as a right; but quite as frequently it awards more than justice, when the appeal is made, as despots love to have it made, entirely to its generosity. Interpreting Hester Prynne's deportment as an appeal of this nature, society was inclined to show its former victim a more benign countenance than she cared to be favored with, or, perchance, than she deserved.

The rulers, and the wise and learned men of the community, took longer in acknowledging the influence of Hester's good qualities than the people. The prejudices which they shared in common with the latter were fortified in themselves by an iron framework of reasoning, that made it a far tougher labor to expel them. Day by day, nevertheless, their sour and rigid wrinkles were relaxing into something which, in the due course of years, might grow to be an expression of almost benevolence. Thus it was with the men of rank, on whom their eminent position imposed the guardianship of the public morals. Individuals in private life, meanwhile, had quite forgiven Hester Prynne for her frailty; nay, more, they had begun to look upon the scarlet letter as the token, not of that one sin, for which she had borne so long and dreary a penance, but of her many good deeds since. "Do you see that woman with the embroidered badge?" they would say to strangers. "It is our Hester — the town's own Hester — who is so kind to the poor, so helpful to the sick, so comforting to the afflicted!"

Then, it is true, the propensity of human nature to tell the very worst of itself, when embodied in the person of another, would constrain them to whisper the

black scandal of bygone years. It was none the less a fact, however, that, in the eyes of the very men who spoke thus, the scarlet letter imparted to the wearer a kind of sacredness, which enabled her to walk securely amid all peril.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter

David and Guile

“Blessed is he who transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile” (Psa 32:1,2).

David seems to use this word, guile, to describe his bitter adversarial experiences with Shimei. The Hebrew word (“ramah”) means to hurl or throw something with great force, hence to shout abuse or insults at someone. This was truly David’s experience at the hands of Shimei:

“When king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David... And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial: The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son: and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man” (2Sam 16:5-8; see also 2Sam19:21; 1Kings 2:8,9).

Guile is used at times in an effort to delude, betray and deceive:

“Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile” (Psa 34:13).

“Destroy, O LORD, and divide their tongues... deceit and guile depart not from her streets” (Psa 55:9-14).

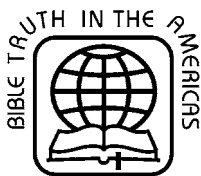
There is a clear distinction between the two words deceit and guile in Psalm 55:11.

However, the word guile is also used in the description of the personality and character of David’s greater son (Matt 22:42), though here it is known by its absence, not presence!

“For even hereunto were ye called: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled (abused verbally), reviled not again (was not abusive in return); when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him (God) that judgeth righteously” (1Pet 2:21-23).

Here is the clear link between the experience of King David and that of his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is the reason he will rule on the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32).

Anthony Semple (Georgetown, Guyana)



Bible Mission News

El Salvador and Costa Rica Bible Schools December, 2009

Both the El Salvador and Costa Rica Ecclesias carried out very successful Bible schools in December.

The Salvadoran school was held as usual over the Christmas weekend at a facility in the pine-covered hills in the north of the country, about a two-hour drive from San Salvador. General organizers were Bro. Manuel Fernández, secretary for El Salvador, and his wife Sis. Silvia. The school lasted 52 hours, including lunch the first and third days, and welcomed 116 people.



The El Salvador Bible School

Bro. David Collister gave the main adult classes on the subject of Paul's letters to Timothy. He gave four general classes, a class to the brethren and the Sunday exhortation. Sis. Mima gave a class for the ladies, Sis. Jean Hunter gave the senior CYC class and Bro. Jeff Hibbs of Victoria agreed once again to come at his own expense to give the younger CYC class. The whole CYC age group numbered nearly 50.

There were also classes for all other age groups, as well as plentiful recreation and some free time for socializing. The different CYC and Sunday school classes gave presentations and there was the annual Bible quiz and a prize-giving for all SS and



Bro. Jeff Hibbs with his class at the El Salvador Bible School

CYC members. The facility had been much improved since we last used it two years ago, and although it is now run by Franciscan nuns, which couldn't help but raise our eyebrows a bit, they were inconspicuous and treated us very well. They appreciated the discipline of our group so well (in comparison to experiences they have had with loud and disorderly Evangelical groups) that they tried to convince Bro. Manuel Fernández to commit on the spot for December 2010.

The only other foreign attendees not mentioned above were two brethren from Guatemala. As far as Jean and I are aware, everyone thought it was a great success.

The Costa Rica Bible School was held the following weekend (New Year's), as usual. This year, instead of just using the ecclesial hall in Santa Barbara, the brethren rented a campground in the hills about a 25-minute drive from the town. By all accounts it was a fine location and the only complaint that reached my ears was that there was too much food! David and Mima Collister spoke at this school as well. David gave some of his classes on Timothy while Bro. Gordon Dangerfield, the CR link brother, gave other adult classes and the exhortation. Sis. Mima gave one class to the ladies and Sis. Adela de Vanegas of El Salvador (who is deaf and 72 years old!) gave another. The El Salvador and Costa Rica young people both presented several skits.

The Costa Rica school lasted three full days, a day longer than the Salvadoran one. Total attendance was 97, being augmented by the 27 Salvadorans, 23 young people and four chaperones, who braved the 22-hour bus trip each way to take in the Costa Rica school shortly after the end of the Salvadoran one. Groups of Costa Rican young people had attended the El Salvador Bible schools in 2007 and 2008 and so it was felt it was time for a return visit.



**The El Salvadoran young people and chaperones
who traveled to Costa Rica for the Bible school**

We are very grateful to the Verdugo Hills and Victoria Ecclesias for helping finance the attendance of the Salvadoran contingent at the Costa Rica school.

Bro. Jim Hunter

Be Thankful

*Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire.
If you did, what would there be to look forward to?
Be thankful when you don't know something,
For it gives you the opportunity to learn.*

*Be thankful for the difficult times.
During those times you grow.
Be thankful for your limitations
Because they give you opportunities for improvement.*

*Be thankful for each new challenge
Because it will build your strength and character.
Be thankful for your mistakes.
They will teach you valuable lessons.*

*Be thankful when you're tired and weary
Because it means you've made a difference.
It is easy to be thankful for the good things.
A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are also
thankful for the setbacks. (Author unknown)*

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

Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee publishes this magazine and other works on the Truth. P.O. Box 530696, Livonia, MI 48153-0696

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

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

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: 519-837-9094,
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 Heritage College
c/o Brantford Ecclesia, 442 Dunsdon St., Brantford, ON, Canada, N3P 2B1

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

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

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

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

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 5th of the preceding month; please include full name of ecclesia and recording brother.)

BALTIMORE, MD

On July 5, 2009, we were privileged to witness two baptisms: LYDIA HEWITSON, daughter of Bro. Mark and Sis. Jane Hewitson, and HADASSAH LINK, daughter of Bro. Bill and Sis. Carol Link. We have watched Sis. Lydia and Sis. Hadassah grow up in the CYC and Sunday school and rejoice that they have chosen the path of faith and obedience to Christ's call.

We welcome as new members Bro. Allen and Sis. Tara Laben from the Norfolk, VA Ecclesia. They bring energy and enthusiasm to the work here in Baltimore and we are thankful for their help.

We are happy to announce the birth of Levi Oliver on July 29, 2009, son of Bro. Ryan and Sis. Julia Mutter. We offer our love and encouragement to them as they raise their child in the way of truth and righteousness.

Our preaching efforts have included a number of relevant public addresses over the course of the year. Topics included "Change You Can Really Believe In", "The Bible and the Economic Crisis", "The Only Solution to the Middle East Crisis", and "The Bible: What, Why and How? Answering the Hard Questions."

This past year, the Baltimore Ecclesia benefited by hosting two study weekends and the Baltimore/Washington Gathering. Our thanks to Bre. Ryan King and Mark Vincent for their encouraging and uplifting studies. In October 2009, our Bro. Bob Schneider presented his work on the history of the Baltimore Ecclesia, a study of interest to us all.

We also appreciate the continued support of the Washington and Petersburg Ecclesias in exchanging speakers.

Andy Bilello

BEDFORD, NS

The Bedford Ecclesia has been blessed with two births, one spiritual and one natural. First, on August 16, 2009, JERUSHA VERITY SNOBELEN, oldest daughter of Bro. Stephen and Sis. Julie, took on the saving name of Jesus in baptism. The baptism took place in the Atlantic Ocean on a very warm day and was witnessed by her ecclesia and visitors from Sussex, NB, Ontario and BC, including her paternal grandparents. We thank all who attended and are grateful to our heavenly Father for this joyful event. Sis. Jerusha's spiritual development was aided greatly by her experiences over the years at Manitoulin Youth Camp. This baptism brings the membership of our growing ecclesia to fifteen. Second, on January 6, 2010, Tzipora Joy was born to Bro. Stephen and Sis. Julie Snobelen; Lord willing, she will be a future addition to our Sunday school.

We thank Bro. Martin Webster (Kitchener/Waterloo, ON) for leading our annual study day on September 26, 2009, and appreciate the support we received from our brothers and sisters in Sussex.

For words of exhortation, we are grateful to all the brothers who have served us since our last report. Bro. Ron Hill has retired as recording brother after two decades of stalwart service, diligently maintaining this lightstand even when at times he was on his own. Bro. Ron came to Halifax with his young family in 1973. He has been a model of faithful attendance, service, and dedication to the truth. We wish to thank him for his example. The undersigned has taken over the position.

Stephen D. Snobelen

CRANSTON, RI

We are very pleased to welcome back to her home area by way of transfer from the Norfolk, VA Ecclesia, Sis. Melanie Bolduc.

We rejoiced in witnessing the marriage of our Sis. Anne Brochu to Bro. Bob Cipriotti (Reseda, CA) which took place at our ecclesial hall on August 7, 2009. We commend our Sis. Anne to the love and care of her family in Christ of the Reseda, CA Ecclesia, where she and Bro. Bob will begin their new life together in Christ.

We thank our visiting brothers who labored with us in our spring and fall public Bible talks including Mark Drake (Westerly, RI); Joseph Badlu (South Ozone Park, NY); Jim Dillingham (Granite State, NH); Peter Dixon (Southern NH); Jim Burns (Westerly, RI); and Jeff Wallace (Boston, MA). Our brothers also brought us the word of exhortation and some led the adult Sunday school class. We always appreciate having the sister-wives accompany their husbands.

By way of transfer, we commend in love our Sis. Nancy Warner to the Boston, MA Ecclesia.

Bro. Frank Abel (Shelburne, ON) kindly led our New Year's Bible study weekend on the theme "Contend Earnestly for the Faith Once Delivered unto the Saints". His labor of love included five classes and the word of exhortation. Our weekend began with a New Year's dinner on Friday evening and concluded with a potluck fellowship luncheon on Sunday following Sunday school. We were strengthened in our fellowship through the Word, and were pleased to have many visiting brothers and sisters join us despite somewhat unfavorable weather conditions.

We have been greatly blessed with the baptisms of two of our Sunday school/CYC students who have responded to the gospel's call by putting on the Saving Name of our Lord Jesus Christ: BRETT HAUGHTON, son of Bro. Bruce and Sis. Debra Haughton; and KAITLYN NEVERS, daughter of Bro. Craig and Sis. Gayle Nevers.

Paul. Haughton

DETROIT LIVONIA, MI

We rejoiced in August when SAM VANREUTER, son of Bro. Lindbergh and Sis. Shirley, was baptized.

In September, we had our joint corn roast with the other three Detroit area ecclesias. In January, we were thrilled when Bro. Simon and Sis. Hannah Gore had a baby girl, Eva.

God has blessed us with three interested visitors still attending our Bible seminars, and one of the families now attends Sunday meeting and Sunday school!

We had visitors from our Detroit area ecclesias, and many other ecclesias in the US and Canada. Brethren Bob Jarvela, Edgar Rodriguez, Jared Keyes, Bucky Wilhoit, Roger Gore, and Richard Morgan delivered the word of exhortation.

Bro. Brian Adams and Sis. Mary Jane Styles have transferred to our ecclesia and we are excited to have them join us, but we will miss Sis. Abi Newth who has transferred to Washington, DC.

Jim Styles

ECHO LAKE, NJ

We sincerely thank our Bro. David Corbin (Brooklyn, NY) for providing the word of exhortation in January.

We will be running a series of weekly Learn to Read the Bible Seminars during April and May at a local library. We pray that our Heavenly Father may reward our endeavors.

We have been pleased and privileged to have the company of a number of visiting brothers and sisters and we have welcomed around the Table of the Lord: Mildred Leake (Torquay, UK); Fiona Hale (Walsall, UK); Caleb Folkerts (Troy, IL); David Corbin (Brooklyn, NY); Edith Machado (Nashua, NH); and Margan Packie, Carolyn Antonaccio, and David and Maryann Jorgensen (Union, NJ).

Stewart Marsden

HONESDALE, PA

COURTNEY FRISBIE, daughter of Bro. Charles and Sis. Karen Frisbie, was baptized in August 2009, into our Lord's Saving Name. May we all rejoice with her and our families.

Also, we wish to thank Bro. Jim Harper for spending a weekend here at Honesdale to exhort and for showing films of his time recently spent in South Africa.

Gerald Frisbie

ORANGEVILLE, ON

It has been some time since we have updated the Tidings magazine on what has been happening in our ecclesia, so I will try to remember all the relevant details. We have had several baptisms over the past year and we welcome our new members into our family, and into the worldwide family of believers. JOSHUA HODGE, ROSIE SPRY, ANGIE PRESTON, and LEAH STYLES were all baptized this past year. We ask for your prayers for our new Sis. Angie and her husband, John, as she continues to battle cancer.

We also recently celebrated with Bro. Jason and Sis. Sylvia Grant as they gave birth to their first, a little boy named Judah David Percival Grant. We welcome back Aaron and Susanna Grant along with their daughter, Azriel. Aaron and family spent the last few years in Australia and we are glad to have them back.

Candace Jackson and David Larson were joined in marriage last summer. Although we have lost Candace to the West Coast we do enjoy our time with her and her new husband, when they come back to visit.

We recently welcomed, by way of transfer, Sis. Melissa Robinson from the Kitchener/Waterloo Ecclesia, and we look forward to sharing fellowship with her as we walk toward the kingdom.

We would also like to thank all of our visiting speakers over the last year. We enjoyed the fellowship we shared with them and their families, while their words of exhortation and encouragement have helped us to face life's challenges as we walk together toward the kingdom of God.

Bro. Nathanael Abel has taken over the duties of Recording Brother and all correspondence should be sent to the following address: Nathanael Abel, 423137 25th, Sideroad, R.R. #1, Shelburne, ON, Canada, L0N 1S5. He may also be reached by email at nabel@uoguelph.ca; or by phone at 519-925-9657.

Nathanael Abel

OTTAWA, ON

Over the past year the Ottawa Ecclesia has benefited from the fellowship of brothers and sisters from across Ontario, parts of the US, and the UK. The ecclesia hosted an Eastern Ontario Study Weekend on May 2, 2009, its first inter-ecclesial event. Bro. Steve Petrou led the study on "Lessons from the Language of the New Testament."

We enjoyed having Bro. Scott Cooper (Manitoulin Island, ON) for a university work term during this past fall. As well, we welcome Sis. Hannah Riddle (Brantford, ON) who has started university here.

We commend Bro. Jason and Sis. Maryanne Deadman and family in love to the Mississauga West, ON Ecclesia, as their new ecclesial home.

A future Sunday school member was born January 27, 2010, Belle Noa Harrison, first child of our Bro. Matt Harrison and Sis. Catherine Sinclair.

Charles Archard

PITTSBURGH, PA

We welcomed our Sunday school scholar, ROBERT POMMER, into the family of our Lord through baptism on December 20, 2009. He is the son of Bro. David and Sis. Lori Pommer, and grandson of Bro. Robert and Sis. Mary Jane Pommer.

Visiting us from the Paris Avenue, OH Ecclesia were Bro. Greg and Sis. Tammy Misko, Bro. Tyler and Bro. Kyle Misko, and Sis. Sarah Telles. We were pleased to have Bro. David Bennett (Salem Heights, IN), and Bro. Kevin and Sis. Melinda Flatley and Sis. Vanessa Flatley (Paris Avenue, OH) visiting us. Bro. Kevin kindly gave us the words of exhortation.

On January 10, 2010, we held our annual Sunday School Program, and Bro. Chris Stilwell (Paris Avenue, OH) encouraged us with his words of exhortation. Sis. Vanessa Flatley also attended.

Lord willing, the subject for our May 1, 2010, Study Day will be "Jacob and Joseph," presented by Bro. Mark Vincent (Boston, MA).

William Folkerts

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA, CA

The San Francisco Peninsula, CA Ecclesia has a new location and a new P.O. Box. We now have our own meeting place in Redwood City, CA. See our website at <http://www.sfchristadelphian.org/> for directions.

Our new address is San Francisco Peninsula Ecclesia, 1536 James Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94062, USA.

Our new mailing address is San Francisco Peninsula Ecclesia, P.O. Box 1300, Redwood City, CA, 94064-1300, USA.

James Seagoe

SARASOTA, FL

With a great deal of sadness we report that two of our members have decided to return to Vermont, where they will be attending their former ecclesia, which is not in the Central Fellowship. Bro.Cal and Sis.Lucille Gelineau have been valued members of this ecclesia for many years.

James Wilkinson

Trinity Debate

There is an upcoming Internet debate between Trinitarian Rob Bowman and Australian Bro. Dave Burke. Anyone interested can read about it at <http://www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/2010/02/the-great-trinity-debate-coming-april-2010/>.

Stephen D Snobelen

In Memory of Bro. William H. Link

On October 19, 2009, our Bro. William H. Link fell asleep in the Lord. Bro. Bill carried himself in a humble yet uniquely dignified manner. He was a man who lived each day influenced by his faith, setting an example for others from the days of his youth through to his last.

Bro. Bill is survived by Sis. Dorothy, his wife of 61 years, and their loving family. The Link family includes daughter Sis. Janet and her husband, Bro. John Ribaudo (Finger Lakes, NY); son Bro. Bill, Jr. and his wife, Sis. Carol Link (Baltimore, MD); and seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Bro. Bill will also be missed by his brothers in both the flesh and the spirit: Bro. John Link and Bro. Charles Link (Moorestown, NJ).

Bro. Bill will be remembered for the manner in which he lived by the practical wisdom of God's word. In fact, less than an hour before he fell asleep he quoted from the Proverbs, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6). To the end he kept God's words close to his heart and in the forefront of his thoughts.

Although our ecclesia grieves his loss, we take comfort in recognizing that Bro. Bill's life story is one that we all hope to follow. He was surrounded by a wonderful family. He had a true partner in life who complemented him perfectly, and he fell asleep in hope of the resurrection.

The retirement of Brother H. Blair Smith from the National Service Committee

After 65 years of diligent and faithful work representing the interests of the Christadelphian community, Bro. H. Blair Smith is retiring from his role as chairman of the National Service Committee. On behalf of the brotherhood at large, we would like to publicly thank him for his years of service and spiritual dedication. Blair has often been quoted as saying, "We aren't religious conscientious objectors to get out of war, but to get *into* the Kingdom."

During World War II, Blair was one of the 127 Christadelphians who were classified as religious conscientious objectors and assigned to work in one of the Civilian Public Service camps in the United States. Following the war's conclusion, Blair began to volunteer at the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO). Since that time, he has served our community by educating our ecclesias and young people about the Biblical case for conscientious objection and the importance of maintaining a lifestyle that is consistent with our claims. Blair has also worked steadfastly to ensure that the Christadelphian community is known to the US Selective Service System along with others in Washington. J.E. McNeil, the Executive Director of the Center for Conscience and War (formerly NISBCO) wrote, "Blair Smith has attended nearly every one of the annual meetings of the Center since I was first on staff. He has come by in between times and called me and my staff. He always has something interesting and insightful to say. H. Blair commented once that I clearly got the Christadelphian position on conscientious objection to war. That pleased me immensely. My explanation is that Christadelphians believe that they are not to engage in earthly government and so refuse to vote, serve on juries, or participate in war. As H. Blair puts it, 'You have to be a conscientious objector *before* you can become a Christadelphian.'"

For generations, the Christadelphian community has joined together to represent our religious conscientious objections to the United States government in a united way. Bro. Harold Thomas will be serving as the new coordinator representing ecclesias labeled as unamended. Bro. Jim Dillingham remains the coordinator representing Central ecclesias. As we await our Lord's return, we will endeavor to work and speak with one voice as we remember the days of old and strive to follow the precedent of those brethren who walked before us.

Steve Davis

Contact Information:

Jim Dillingham, National Coordinator of Central ecclesias
123 Stark Highway South, Dunbarton, NH 03046
Email: bible888@aol.com

Harold Thomas, National Coordinator of Unamended ecclesias
10393 Williamsburg Lane, Bastrop, LA 71220
Email: thomasx@suddenlink.net

Steve Davis,
Chairman of New England Religious Conscientious Objection Committee
22 Old North Trail, Mansfield, MA 02048
Email: sdavis@wcfoundation.org

We are all children by adoption of the land in which we live. The earth is here, and the water and the sunlight and the labor to make it yield. The only thing which can make a land evil is the people who inhabit it.

If we have within ourselves a nobility to share in times of stress and need with those who are destitute, then we can raise our heads with dignity among the princes of the earth.

Then we can say with verity: this is a good land, and the men who live in it have no fear.

Dalton Trumbo

Minute Meditation

The Face in the Mirror

John McKay, a retired football coach, is quoted as having said, “I am a big believer in the ‘mirror test.’ All that matters is if you can look in the mirror and honestly tell the person you see there that you’ve done your best.”

What kind of things can we say to the face we see when we look in a mirror? What kind of person do we see when we look there? Can we honestly tell the person we see that we’ve done our very best to serve our God? So many people think that good enough is good enough. We might just as well be honest with the face we see in the mirror because we really do not have any secrets from the one we see there. We will have no secrets when we stand at the judgment seat before our Lord who can see through us and knows everything we ever did or thought. What can we say about our service when looking ourselves in the eye as we will look our Lord in the eye? They say that the only way folks can truly look themselves in their own eye is by the use of a mirror.

Do we remember whose we are and whom we serve? James tells us that those who forget that they are made in the image of God are likely to forget to obey His word. James says, “Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.”

We live in a world and an age when most people try to do just good enough to get by. It affects their work, their responsibilities, their marriages, and certainly their serving of the Lord. In the world of sports, mediocrity does not produce winners. The coaches of the most successful teams are those most able to motivate their athletes to do their very best, which is often the difference between winning and losing. The athletes who are most successful are those who dedicate themselves to training, and who practice wholeheartedly with intensity every day. Is it less so in our life serving our Lord? Just as we cannot fool ourselves when we look in the mirror, the Lord also knows everything about us and knows if we are giving our all or holding back some.

The importance of honesty and doing our best is not new. Ananias and Sapphira learned that they could not fool God by pretending to give all their income to the service of the gospel while secretly holding back a part. When Jesus went about preaching the good news of his coming kingdom, he made it clear that not everyone would put enough effort into serving God. Luke tells us that “some one said to him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’ And he said to them, ‘Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.’”

Jesus makes a distinction between seeking and striving. Nearly everyone wants to be saved — just ask them. But what are they actually doing in order to receive the Lord's blessing of salvation when he comes?

Jesus went on to say to the one who asked him the question, "When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity!' There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out."

When we look into the mirror, let us ask the face we see there this question, "Which side of the door will you be on when the Lord comes?"

If we do not like the answer we honestly give the face in the mirror there is still time now to change, but there is a time when it will be too late to change it.

Let us strive to enter the kingdom. This goal means giving our all, 100% of our life to the Lord. Nothing less will be acceptable to him.

Look into your mirror and tell the face you see that you want to be in the Kingdom of God more than anything else in all the world. The face you see will hear it. When you go away from the mirror, remember what you said, and then do it with all your might.

Robert J. Lloyd

Coming Events (Lord Willing)

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

MARCH 2010

13-14 Paris Avenue, OH Spring study weekend at the ecclesial hall. Our speaker will be Bro. Bryan Styles (Detroit Livonia, MI)

20-21 Victoria, BC Spring study weekend. Bro. Andrew from West Yorkshire will be leading the weekend on "The Way to the Holiest". Contact Hebrews@csll.ca

27-28 Baltimore, MD Study weekend. Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA): "Second Chances: Lessons From Peter". Saturday, 2 pm, supper served. Sunday 9:45 am, fourth class 11 am, Memorial service, lunch served. Contact Sis. Judy Schneider, 410 609-0336

27 New England Little Disciples Gathering A day at the Barton Center, N. Oxford, MA with classes for children ages 4-12. Pre-work is expected ("Abraham" workbook available shortly). Contact Sis. Tammy Rundle nelittledisciples@hotmail.com 781-829-4410. Fees \$15 per person, \$50 family maximum. Financial aid is available. The website is www.nelittledisciples.com

27 Spring Seminar and General meeting Sponsored by the Christadelphian Caring Network of Canada. Toronto East ecclesial hall on Cosburn Ave. Speaker: Bro. Dan Richard

(IL): "Operation Lost Sheep". Starting at 10 am. Register: Bro. Bill or Sis. Jennifer Lawrence 519-822-8500 lostsheep@caringnetwork.ca, website www.caringnetwork.ca

APRIL 2010

2-4 Toronto Fraternal Gathering Bro. Andrew Bramhill: "Deuteronomy – The Lord's 2nd Law". Friday & Saturday Location: Silverthorn Collegiate, 291 Mill Road, Toronto, ON. Sunday Memorial Location: Etobicoke College, 86 Montgomery, Toronto, ON

2-4 Wichita Falls, TX Annual spring gathering at the Texas Christadelphian Camp and Conference Center (T4C) in Freestone, TX. Bro. David Lloyd (Simi Hills, CA): "Only Forgiveness". Contact: Bro. Larry Beutel Ibeutel@alsco.com or Bro. John Clubb jclubb4081@aol.com

10 Boston, MA 19th Annual spring study day. Boston Ecclesia, 48 Freeman Street, Stoughton, MA. Bro. Mark Carr (Toronto West, ON): "He Whom Thy Brethren Shall Praise — Study on the man Judah and his transformation". Registration and coffee at 9:30am. Classes begin at 10 am, lunch provided. Contact Bro. Jim Sullivan at 781-837-8865 or jimsulliv@aol.com

10-17 Florida Christadelphian Bible School Bradenton, Florida. Bro. William Link, Jr (Baltimore, MD): "Parables of Jesus" and Bro. Stan Isbell (North Houston, TX): "In a Dream, In a Vision of the Night." Contact Bro. Walt Dodrill waltdodrill@msn.com 727-528-1197 or Sis. Diane Jennings diane@dianej.net 727-290-6702 for information

24-25 Baltimore, MD/Washington DC Gathering and study day. Washington ecclesial hall, 9240 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783. Speaker: Bro. Paul Schlicher (Moorestown, NJ): "Pondering Stuff Unmingled". Begins Saturday at 1 pm, and Sunday at 10:30 am. Contact: Bro. Bob Kling 301-498-5245 or rkling@computer.org

24 Brantford, ON Study day. Bro. Roger Lewis: "Philip the Evangelist". Begins at 10:30am. Lunch provided. Afternoon classes for children two to nine

24-25 Sussex, NB Spring study weekend. Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "Meditations on the Ministry of our Lord". Contact Bro. Brad and Sis. Debbie Goodwin 506-433-6681 or email braddeb@nb.sympatico.ca for accommodations or further information

MAY 2010

1-2 Pittsburgh, PA Study Weekend. Bro. Mark Vincent (Stoughton, MA): "Jacob and Joseph". Travelers' lunch at noon Saturday. Talks begin at 1pm. Classes will be available for children 3 to 9. Contact Bro. Bill Folkerts willfol@gmail.com or 724-265-3272

7-9 Vancouver, BC Sister's weekend. Beach Acres Resort, near Parksville, BC. Sis. Eileen Henthorn: "Faithful Worship in Serving". Cost \$180. Deposit no later than March 1. For further information contact Sis. Yvonne Rosenau yvonne2001@shaw.ca

21-23 Men in the Truth Camping Weekend Lake Cachuma, CA. Subject: "Real Men Don't Lie". No charge. You can buddy up with someone if you don't have camping equipment. Contact Bro. David Lloyd davidrlloyd@earthlink.net

21-23 Sussex, NB CYC Spring Camp. Bro. Nathan Badger: "I Know Who You Are — The Holy One of God!". Contact Bro. David Pearce for information dpearce@nb.sympatico.ca

22 Moorestown, NJ Study Day. Classes led by Bro. Stephen Snobelen. Contact Bro. Steve Cheetham stevecheetham@comcast.net.

22-23 Prince George, BC Fraternal gathering. Speaker: Bro. Dev Ramcharan "My heart is inditing a good matter". Contact: Bro. Rod Massey 1masseyrd@gmail.com

JUNE 2010

- 5-6 South Ozone Park, NY** New York Fraternal gathering. Speaker Bro. Phil Hazzard: "Unto Us There is but One God, the Father". Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul for more information yerubbaal@yahoo.com or (718) 847-9638
- 11-13 New York, NY** New York Metropolitan Sisters' Retreat. Pocono Manor, Pocono, PA. Sis. Maritta Terrell (Austin Leander, TX): "Trials, Trouble, Time, Triumph!". For registration information, please contact Sis. Averil Ferguson 718-881-8705 or email averilpsm23@juno.com. Register early since capacity is limited
- 20-25 Bozeman, MT** Bible Camp located at Bro. Paul Bottomley's property. Bro. Stuart Pearce (UK): "New every morning"; Bro. Mark Giordano (VA). Website bozemanbiblecamp.com or contact Bro. Steve Faver sfaver@unitedagencies.com 406-388-3378
- 20-26, California Christadelphian Kids Camp** "The Apostle Paul". Teachers are Bre. Richard Morgan and Nathan Lewis. For children ages 9-16. Registration forms at kidscampcalifornia.com. Information from Bro. Tom Graham tom@bigbrand.com

JULY 2010

- 3-11 Mid-Atlantic Bible School.** Shippensburg, PA Theme: "Fear thou not: for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God" – Isaiah 41:10. Youth theme: "Youth in the Bible." Bro. Michael Ashton (Shirley, UK): "The Tabernacle of David", teens: "David's Mighty Men", Bro. Bob Lloyd (Verdugo Hills, CA): "If God Be For Us", and Bro. Matt Norton (Lismore, AUS): "The Life of Lot". Website: www.christadelphians.net/MACBS
- 11-17 Southwest Bible School** Schreiner University, Kerrville, TX. Speakers Bro. Devon Walker (UK): "God's Places of Refuge, teen class: "Go on, press the reset button"; Bro. Matt Norton (AUS): "The Return of Christ"; Bro. Michael Ashton (UK): "God's Compassion on Jerusalem — Prophecy of Zechariah", teen class: "David's Fugitive Years". Registration information at www.swcbs.org or by contacting Bro. John Clubb (940) 636-0412 jclubb4081@aol.com 1612 Douglas, Iowa Park, TX 76367
- 17-25 Eastern Bible School** Connecticut College, New London CT. Theme: "Heirs According to the Promise". Bro. Michael Owen (Seaton, UK): "Hosea: The Unfailing Love of God" (adults) and "Growing Through Experience: The Letters of Peter" (teens); Bro. Jim Styles (Livonia, MI): "Galatians: Salvation by Grace" (adults) and "God's Wonderful Plan of Redemption" (teens); third class: A series of six one-day study topics. For registration information contact Sis. Cindy Nevers at P.O. Box 296, Auburn, MA 01501 or cindy.nevers@tecbs.org or visit our website www.tecbs.org
- 17-24 South Ozone Park, NY** New York Family camp at Copake Falls. Speaker Bro. David Andrews. Contact Bro. Gideon Drepaul yerubbaal@yahoo.com or (718) 847-9638
- 19-24 Pacific Coast Bible School** Idyllwild, CA. Speakers: Bro. Devon Walker (Shirley, UK): "God's Places of Refuge", Bro. Shane Kirkwood (Lismore, AUS): "Our Lord's last week", and Bro. Ryan Mutter (Cambridge, MD): "The Ecclesia at Ephesus". Contact Bro. Jeff Gelineau 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065 mail@gelineau.org or Bro. Gary Patterson garympatterson@hotmail.com. Website www.californiabibleschool.org
- 24-30 Manitoulin Island Bible Camp** Theme: "Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth." Speakers are Bro. John Lauchbury (Portland, OR): "Living Proverbs" and Bro. Jim Harper (Meriden, CT): "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine". Contact Bro. Alex Browning, registrar jabrowning@rogers.com or 1-416-284-0290

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25-Aug 1 Midwest Bible School. Hanover College, Hanover, IN. Speakers are Bro. Roger J. Long (U.K.): "The Early Ministry of Isaiah", Bro. Dave Noble (OH): "A Lamb without Blemish", Bro. Philip Lawrence (U.K.): "To Live is Christ". Contact Bro. Mike Livermore, 24970 Woodridge Drive, Farmington Hills, MI 48335, 248-462-5740, mike.live@gmail.com or visit www.midwestbibleschool.com

25-31 Western Christadelphian Bible School Held in Corbett, OR. Website at www.menuchabibleschool.org. Contact: Sis Jane Szabo, registrar, szabojj@peak.org

AUGUST 2010

1-7 Rogue River Bible School Crater Lake Oregon. Bro. Skip Bartholomew: "God Manifestation", Bro. Ken Styles: "Latter Day Prophecy", and Bro. David Wisniewski: "Be Ye Holy For I Am Holy". Contact rogueriverbibleschool@gmail.com or Bro. Robert Posey 541-474-6963

7 – 13 Niagara Falls Bible School. St. Catherines, ON. Teachers: Bro. Mick Roberts (UK) and Bro. Steve Davis (Boston, MA). For information contact Bro. David Brierley david.brierley@sympatico.ca 416-236-5295. Website www.nfcbs.com

21-27 Winfield Bible School Theme: "Forgive Me, Lord, for I Have Sinned". Bro. David Lloyd (US): "Only Forgiveness"; Bro. David Billington (Canada): "Who will Ascend the Hill of Yahweh?"; Bro. Roger Lewis (New Zealand): "Lessons from the Pastoral Epistles". Registration: Bro. Don Zantingh 250-545-5988 donzantingh@hotmail.com. Accommodations: Bro. Harold Cawston 250-278-0343 h_jcawston@shaw.ca

28-Sept 3 Vancouver Island Bible Camp Camp Pringle, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island. Bro. Noel Greenwood (UK): "Studies in Isaiah", Bro. John Bilello (US): "The Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth", and Bro. John Mannell (Canada): "Paul's Letter to the Galatians". Registrar: Sis. Wendy Johnsen, #7-3855 9th Ave., Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 4T9, Canada; 250-724-0501 or wendyjohnsen@yahoo.ca

SEPTEMBER 2010

12-17 Hamilton Book Road, ON Adult study week at Wildwood Manor, Ballinafad, ON. Daily interactive Bible studies from the Life of Christ. Contact Bro. Jack and Sis. Shirley Robinson jcrobins@worldchat.com 519-448-1696 or Bro. Peter and Sis. Margaret Stonell thestonells@hotmail.com 905-627-9428

OCTOBER 2010

9-10 Sussex, NB Thanksgiving gathering. Bro. Ken Curry (Toronto East, ON): "Guiding Principles of a Godly Life". Contact Bro. Brad and Sis. Debbie Goodwin 506-433-6681 or braddeb@nb.sympatico.ca for accommodations or further information