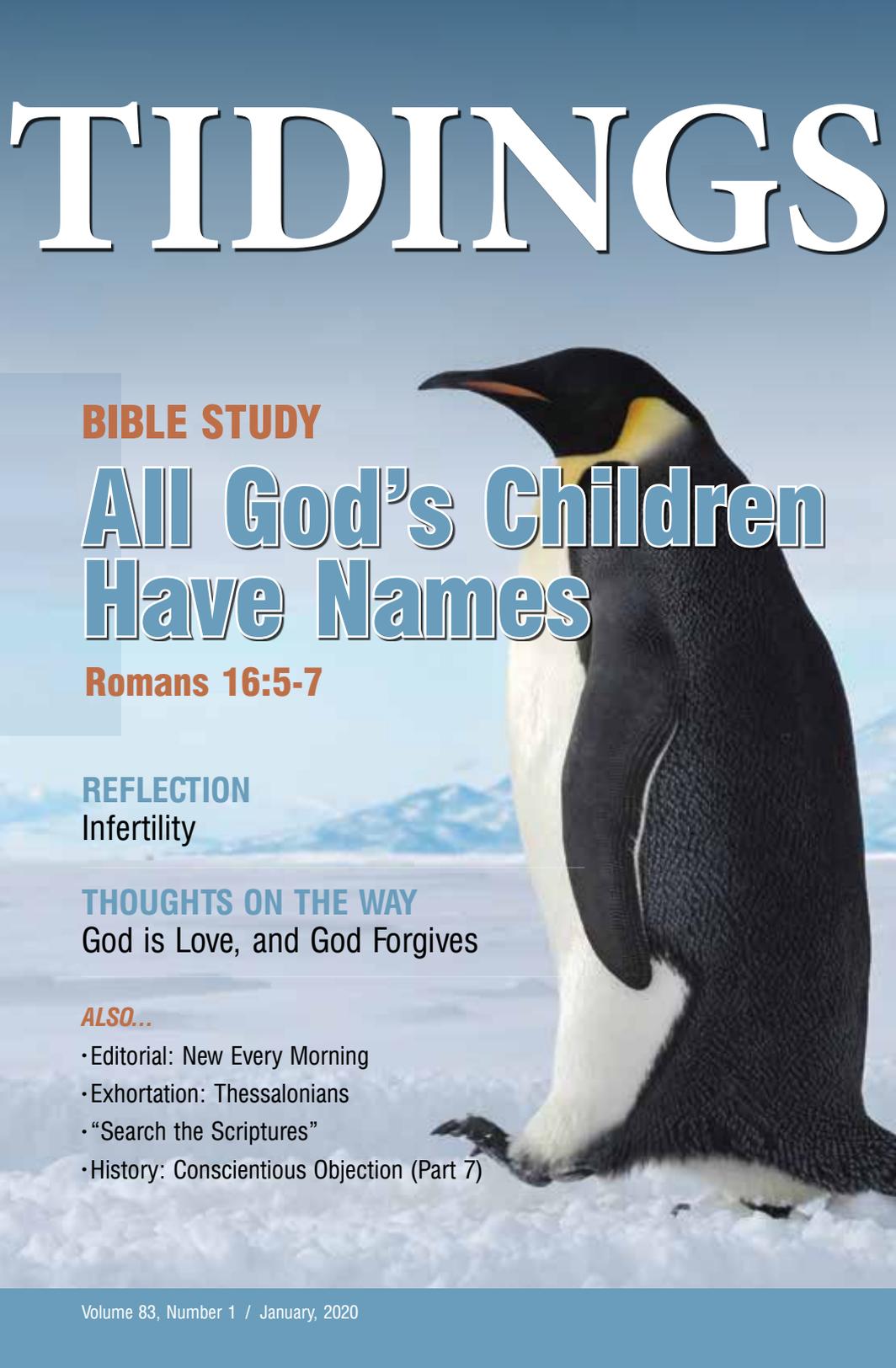


TIDINGS



BIBLE STUDY

All God's Children Have Names

Romans 16:5-7

REFLECTION

Infertility

THOUGHTS ON THE WAY

God is Love, and God Forgives

ALSO...

- Editorial: New Every Morning
- Exhortation: Thessalonians
- "Search the Scriptures"
- History: Conscientious Objection (Part 7)



COVER PHOTOGRAPHY BY:

BRO. BILL LINK (BALTIMORE, MD ECCLESIA)

Location: Antarctica

“In 2018, I spent a month on sea ice five miles off the coast of Antarctica, taking part in a research project on Weddell seals. Emperor Penguins were regular visitors to our camp. The abundance of life in this remote place filled me with awe at the creative majesty of our God.”

The CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS of the Kingdom of God (USPS 107-060)

is published monthly, except bimonthly in July-August, by The Christadelphian Tidings, 567 Astorian Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065-5941. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID at Austin, Texas and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Christadelphian Tidings, 567 Astorian Dr., Simi Valley, CA 93065.

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The Christadelphian Tidings is published on the 25th of the month for the month following. Items for publication must be received by the 5th of the month. Correspondence to the editor: Peter Hemingray, 1244 Pennsylvania Ave, Oakmont, PA 15139, or by e-mail to letters@tidings.org. Publication of articles does not presume editorial endorsement except on matters of fundamental doctrine as set forth in the BASF. Letters to the editor will only be accepted via e-mail to letters@tidings.org. Please include your name, address, e-mail address, and contact phone numbers. Submissions under 300 words are encouraged — the magazine reserves the right to edit all submissions for length and clarity.



TIDINGS

Volume 83, Number 1 / January, 2020

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New Every Morning

*New every morning is the Love
Our waking and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.*

- Hymn 418

Musing

I was, as perhaps others do, musing about this hymn after singing it recently. Sometimes, I must admit, the well-known words and music just tend to wash over me, and I give little thoughts to the words. But this time, I fell to wondering about how the newness of each day is reflected in the mercy and compassion of our God. And my mind turned the contrast between the newness and the faithfulness of God: *“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness”* (Lam 3:22-23). In the words of **Hymn 88:**

*Great is Thy faithfulness, O God
my Father,*

*There is no shadow of turning
with Thee;*

*Thou changest not, Thy
compassions they fail not;*

*As Thou hast been Thou for ever
wilt be:*

So how can God’s love be new every morning, while we know He does not change?

“He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for He is not a human being, that He should change His mind” (1 Sam 15:29).

The God Who Changes

There are a number of Scriptures that speak of God changing His mind and repenting a previous decision. For example, in the days before the great flood, *“it repented the LORD that He had made man on the earth”* (Gen 6:6). In the same chapter where He declared His constancy, God said: *“It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments”* (1 Sam 15:11).

Yet the Scriptures plainly teach that God does not change his mind or repent: *“God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”* (Num 23:19 NIV). There is no contradiction, of course. The words translated “repent” in both Old and New Testaments, are used of actions which indicate outwardly that a “change of mind” has occurred, but



*“...His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning...”*

not inwardly. It is precisely because God does not repent concerning evil, that His actions will change when man truly repents. (This human “repentance” can go either way; changing from good to evil, or vice versa.) So, whether we change for the better or the worse, God will respond accordingly, since He cannot change His own mind toward evil. God is not immutable, in that he had no real involvement with His creation. Change in man will bring a change in God in the immediate, although his ultimate purpose is, indeed, immutable. Thus, He said concerning national repentance: *“If that nation,*

against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them” (Jer 18:8). That is, if the nation truly repents, then God will change His own declared course of action. He seems outwardly to “repent,” specifically because He cannot repent in His inward attitude toward good and evil.

A major consequence of the repentance of God, of his “changing His mind”, is that His plans may be deferred:¹ Hezekiah’s repentance delayed his death by 15 years, and Nineveh’s repentance delayed their destruction by over a century. It is perhaps conceivable that it is

due to the failure of the nation of Israel to repent, that the second coming of Christ, with its rewards, have been for so long delayed.

Repentance

That God repents presents a new way forward for those who repent, so let us now consider how the love of God is “new every morning”.

“So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty. ‘I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,’ says the LORD Almighty” (Mal 3:5-7).

In this passage, it seems at first strange that, in light of all the failings of the Israelites, and the vengeance predicted as a result, “*So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed*”. Despite the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews, the nation was not destroyed: “*Return to me, and I will return to you*”. The one true God does not change in his ultimate purpose, but repentance will bring a response.

His Mercy

How, if God changes not, can His mercy be new every morning? If God changes not, how can the actions of His disciples, His believers, cause Him to repent of His declared actions, to change His mind? This change can be regarded as a new act of mercy: as Micah says “*Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old*” (Mic 7:20), or, as the NIV says “*You will be faithful to Jacob, and show love to Abraham, as you pledged an oath to our ancestors in days long ago*”. If that is set against judgment, a justice that changes not, then each new act of mercy, of abiding love, is easy to understand. Both the Old and New Testaments stress, more than God’s abiding judgment, His mercy, or His love. This is the quality of God which constitutes His glory, revealed, as you

“New” is clearly not true of God. “New” is true from our point of view.

will remember, through Moses and through the prophets. The words of Micah are taken up by Zacharias: “*To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant*” (Luke 1:72). Here, Zacharias sees the beginning of the fulfillment of this mercy, this love, promised to the fathers. “*Be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful*” (Luke 6: 36). This is God’s perfection, and how, then, morning by morning, is it new? Does it get old and need renewing? Does it get tired and need a rest?

“New” is clearly not true of God. “New” is true from our point of view. “New” speaks for the human condition in much the same way that the word “new” does in John’s first Epistle: “*I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning—that ye love one another.*” And yet in the very next verse, “*A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you*” (1 John 2: 7–8). It is the abiding, never-changing will of God which in the experience of every one of us, day by day, becomes new and vital and fresh. And so our sleep is a kind of death in which we cannot praise God, although we lay ourselves down in peace. God slumbers not nor sleeps and our awakening is a kind of resurrection, in which we become aware again of His never-changing mercy.

New Every Morning

So, in some sense, God is ever-changing. Every morning, as we awake, we should be conscious of the fact that God changes in response to our changes. As we rest in the mercy, the love, the kindness of our God, we should give thanks that every day is an opportunity to redeem the time, to repent of our misdeeds, to pray for forgiveness of our many sins. All have sinned, and fallen short of the high example set for us by our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, as we wake every morning, we should give thanks that God never changes in His willingness to look anew at our efforts to renew ourselves, to renew our focus and face new challenges, aware that if we change, so will our Father, by grace, newly acknowledge our repentance and renewed determination to sin no more.

So, as we think of the hymn, let us draw strength from the fact that each day is a new opportunity: if we change for the better, so will God change. His plan for mankind does not change, and we know a time will come when we will stand before the judgement seat: but as we awaken, we have a new opportunity. It is for us to grasp this opportunity: no-one can do it for us, but we can hope that those who walk the path with us will assist us, as we assist them. We ought not to condemn but support one another in our collective walk to the kingdom, when truly all will be new.

*Time and change are busy ever,
Man decays and ages move;
But His mercy waneth never -
God is wisdom, God is love.*

- Hymn 141

Peter Hemingray

Notes:

1. Bro. Joe Hill suggests this in his article “God Repents”, *The Tidings*, August Special Issue 2017.

A photograph of a glass of red wine and a loaf of bread on a wooden surface. The glass is filled with red wine and is positioned behind the bread. The bread is a round loaf, possibly a challah, and is broken in the middle. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the wooden surface and some other items like a wooden handle.

Exhortation.

THESSALONIANS

The Ecclesia

*“Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: **Grace to you and peace.** We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you” (1 Thess 1:1-4 ESV)*

Grace to You and Peace

Undeserved gifts and blessings come from God, and the peace that Jesus said he has given, *“not as the world gives”*. What great reminders of the position we have been blessed within God’s family and the joy, hope and deep peace that brings to our lives. I love how much it means to Paul that his siblings in Christ are doing well, as well the constant place they have in his prayers and how much he encourages them. His introduction

alone is a great exhortation for the encouragement we should be giving each other, and the joy we should get from having siblings in Christ walking the path towards the Kingdom with us.

The Thessalonians were a remarkable ecclesia. We learn from Acts 17:1-10 that Paul probably spent at most a few weeks teaching the gospel in Thessalonica before being chased off by jealous Jews. When the Jews and the mob were riled up that they could

not find Paul, they pulled Jason out of his home, where he was host of the apostles and which was probably the ecclesial meeting place. The new Christians were dragged before the authorities on trumped-up charges by the mob, and forced to put a deposit in place with the government to ensure they would not cause any more trouble. But in spite of the short exposure they had to the gospel and the persecution because of it, the Thessalonians took hold of the faith. Paul says they had *“become an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything”* (1 Thess 1:7-8).

Their reputation preceded them throughout the region. Paul says:

“Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another, for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia...”

(1 Thess 4:9-10).

We are told in Acts 17 that there were some Jews in this ecclesia, but also many Greeks and leading women from the community. They had completely embraced their new life as followers of Jesus, leaving behind their idols and showing God’s love to so many throughout the region where they lived. But persecution had come to these new believers:

“For you, brothers, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea. For you suffered the same things from your own countrymen as they did from the Jews, who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out, and displease God and oppose all mankind” (1 Thess 2:14-15).

We are told by Paul at the end of chapter 4, that those who had paid with their lives for following Christ, would be raised again at the resurrection. Paul tells them they do not have to grieve as those who have no hope. He encourages them that both those who sleep and those who are alive will be united with Jesus forever when he returns.

The Times and Seasons

It is in this context that Paul begins chapter 5 by telling them that they have no need for anything to be written to them about the times and seasons, because they know the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. Verses 1 through 11 are loaded with bible echoes to the teachings of Jesus

- From Matthew 24 and 25 about the Kingdom of God
- From Jesus’ final instruction to the disciples about the times and seasons before being taken to Heaven, as in the letter to the Ephesians
- To Daniel when he interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream about the image

The times and seasons echoes are clear reminders that God is in control of the events of this world and is working with His Son to bring about the return of Jesus to the earth to set up his Kingdom. In Acts the apostles ask Jesus if he will now restore the kingdom of Israel. He says: *“It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority”* (Acts 1:7).

Daniel answers the King’s demand to be about told his dream and its interpretation. He says:

“Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him” (Dan 2:20-21).

Again, we see the emphasis on God’s control of the times and seasons, of the kingdoms of men and the rulers thereof. God knows what is in the darkness of this world, and God is the light.

Paul picks up on the theme of darkness and light as he talks about those who will experience the day of the Lord as *“a thief in the night”*, and how that should be different for those of us who walk in the light. The use of the phrase *“a thief in the night”* draws us back to a series of parables Jesus tells at the end of the Olivet prophecy, in Matthew 24 and continuing in chapter 25, about the

Kingdom of God. In Chapter 24 we see the strong man who would not have slept had he known the thief was coming:

“Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ‘Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes’ ” (Matt 24:42-46).

Jesus’ exhortation is clear. We must watch our character. We must choose each day to stock up on the oil of God’s word and be soft clay in His hands. We must choose to be willing servants of His by serving those around us, choosing to be people He can use to show the world His character and His love. We must be people who declare that God’s way is the right way, that He is Righteous.

Paul echoes the exhortation to stay awake and mindful of who we are choosing to be: *“So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober”* (1 Thess 5:6).

Paul transitions from here to the same point which Jesus makes, that staying awake means immersing ourselves in God and allowing Him

to transform us into reflections of His love. Paul says that we should wear the breastplate of faith and love, that His ways are right, and the Love for God and others that will come from that faith and trust in Him. Having our mind set on the joy before us, wearing the helmet of the hope of salvation. Knowing that our salvation is sure, because He who promised it is faithful and has not destined us for wrath. As the letter to the Romans says: *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* Therefore, because God is on our side and has given us salvation, encourage one another and build one another up.

Being Awake

In the rest of the chapter, Paul lays out what staying awake should look like as we walk together toward God’s Kingdom. He starts off by reminding us how to encourage each other and help each other:

“We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the LORD and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone” (1 Thess 5:12-15).

There is a strong exhortation here to always see positive and loving motives in our Brothers and Sisters

There is a strong exhortation here to always see positive and loving motives in our brothers and sisters. We will need to have tough conversations sometimes, and Paul says if someone loves you enough to have that tough conversation with you, you should esteem them very highly.

Proverbs says “the wounds of a friend are faithful” (Prov 27:6). True siblings in Christ will want us to be with them in the kingdom so badly, they will be willing to say something we need to hear, even though we may not want to hear it. Their love for us will compel them to patiently and peacefully

call us out on behaviors and attitudes that need work in our lives. Our response to them in these moments should be love, recognizing the love it took for them to come to us for an uncomfortable conversation.

I think when Paul says not to repay anyone evil for evil, one interpretation could be, “when you feel someone has done something evil to you, don’t repay with them evil, but seek to do good...” how many times have you found yourself taking something personally, assuming someone meant to do you harm, only to find out that they had your good at heart, hiding under what may have been poor execution? I know I have found myself in that position, wishing I had attributed positive motives to my sibling in Christ.

And even if there was some negative motive behind what someone has done, we still have an opportunity to help them if we respond positively. Most of the time there is some level of both positive and negative motives behind the things people say and do. By choosing to attribute their actions to the positive motives we help them be the best version of themselves. We help them to become more like God and learn the power of being people whose actions are driven by God's love.

Concluding Thoughts

Paul concludes the chapter and the letter with a simple but powerful formula for staying awake:

1. Pray Always
2. Listen to God
3. Practice doing Good
4. Ask for help / Support each other
5. Trust God and His Son

Pray Always

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (1 Thess 5:16-18).

Rejoice and praise God for making us members of His family, talk to Him all the time and remember

with thankfulness that He has always been there for you. This will bring us peace and confidence that God is with us, and will continue to provide what we need on our walk to His Kingdom.

Listen to God

“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies” (1 Thess 5:19-20). Compare with: “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night” (Josh 1:8).

God, through His Spirit, has left His word for us. We must not quench it or despise it. We need to see in it the power to transform us into people who can more perfectly reflect our Father's character.



Practice Doing Good

“... but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thess 5:21-22).

Compare with: *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me — practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:8-9).*

We need to dwell on the good, let it fill our minds. Our thoughts will become actions and it is when we attempt to put God’s word into action that it truly comes alive. We have to practice what we have learned, clinging to times that we get it right and working to build on those moments in our lives.

Ask for Help

“Brothers, pray for us. Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss” (1 Thess 5:25-26).

Even Paul asks for prayers from his siblings in Christ. We need to place a high value on our relationships with each other, taking full advantage of every opportunity to be lifted up by our fellowship, and to lift up those around us.

Trust God and His Son

“Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and

soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it... The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (1 Thess 5:23-24, 28).

And to the Remembrance

When we remember what our Father and His Son gave for us, in order to invite us into the Family of God. We know that we can trust God to sanctify us completely, and to present us blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This bread and wine are reminders to us of the example we have to follow. Jesus knew who he was and why he was here. He believed his Father was right to require him to lay down his whole life as an example for us to follow, and he wore the Helmet of the Hope of Salvation, the joy being set before him. He was patient with those God had given him, losing none of them. He prayed, he listened, he practiced good, He supported those around him and he trusted God. Now he is elevated to the right hand of God, and our hope is to also be immortalized members of God’s family forever. Let us choose to walk in the light, trusting in the power of God to transform us. This mortal life is a short moment in our eternal life in God’s family. Let us not sleep in the darkness of this present age, but choose to be awake. Awake and working to be people who show God’s love to the world, like Jesus did, so that we may be found ready at his return to join him forever.

*Bradley Styles
(Simi Hills, CA)*



Bible Study.

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN HAVE NAMES (#6)

Epenetus, Mary, Andronicus and Junia

Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

- Romans 16:5-7

Greet also the church that meets at their house

Churches normally met in houses at this time (cp v 23, and possibly vv 14,15; see also 1 Cor 16:19; Col 4:15; Phlm 1:2).

One such church met at the house of Aquila and Priscilla (Rom 16:4), and here Paul greets them especially. It is possible that even large ecclesial groups met in private houses at this time. Joseph Lightfoot writes, (in

Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, p. 243):

“There is no clear example of a separate building set apart for Christian worship within the limits of the Roman Empire before the third century, though apartments in private houses might have been specially devoted to this purpose. There may be a very good reason why, in the early centuries of the

Christian faith, a building was not set apart for Christian worship. Such a “church building” would have been advertised and known for what it was, and once its presence was known in a city or community, it would have provided a great temptation for rogues and vandals of every sort, not to mention an easy target for city authorities who were determined to silence the public witness of believers.”

Greet my dear friend Epenetus

His name signifies “praiseworthy”. It is understandable that Paul should speak of him as “my dear friend” (literally, “my beloved”), since this man was the first convert to Christ in connection with the preaching in the province of Asia, of which Ephesus was the leading city. Actually Paul calls him the firstfruits of that area, which hints that many more were expected to follow as the full harvest, and this indeed came to pass. This individual, however, naturally held a special place in the heart of the apostle.

Who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia: “*Who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ*” (KJV). “*Firstfruits*” (KJV, ASV) or “*first convert*” (NET, NEB, RSV, NIV) translates the Greek “*aparche*”, which literally means the first of any crop or flocks or herds offered to God before the rest is used. Paul uses this word in several ways:

- Of Christ the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20,23);

- Of “the household of Stephanas [who were] the first converts in Achaia” (1 Cor 16:15);
- Of “the firstfruits of the Spirit” (Rom 8:23); and
- Of Israel in general, the “firstfruits” of those offered to God (Rom 11:16).

Under the Law of Moses, worshippers offered the firstfruits of their produce to the LORD God (Exod 23:16,19; 34:22,26; Lev 2:12,14; 23:17,20; Deut 18:4; 26:2,10). Paul saw himself and other preachers as “priests” according to the Melchizedek priesthood of Jesus Christ. Symbolically, these priests showed their devotion by accepting and then offering to God the “firstfruits”, that is, the first converts, of a city or region (cp. 1 Cor 15:20,23; James 1:18; Rev 14:4). Paul expressed the same thought in 2 Thess 2:13, but there it is translated differently: “*From the beginning God chose you [the Thessalonians] to be saved.*” There, “*aparche*” is translated by the three words “from the beginning”. In other words, Paul sees the Thessalonian believers as the “firstfruits” of the area which have been offered to God.

The province of Asia

The KJV has “Achaia”. “So many of the oldest manuscripts and versions, however, read ‘Asia’, instead of ‘Achaia’, in this verse, that the great majority of editors have adopted that reading” (Hodge). In the New Testament [Asia] always refers to the Roman province of Asia, made up of about one-third of the west and southwest end of modern Asia Minor. Asia lay

to the west of the region of Phrygia and Galatia. The words “the province of” are supplied to indicate to the modern reader that this does not refer to the continent of Asia.

Greet Mary

Mary (Miriam) is the Hebrew name of several women in the New Testament, although some scholars say it is possible that this refers to a woman with the Latin name Maria, and thus a Roman. The name is common enough in the New Testament that it is impossible to tell if this particular Mary is only mentioned here, or is actually one of the other women called Mary in the Bible. Either way, Paul knew of this Mary, testifying to her hard work for the saints, but without any hint as to the nature of the work. He simply emphasizes her willingness to grow weary in serving them. The Greek words translated “worked very hard” (“*ekopiasen*” and “*polla*”) indicates work sufficiently heavy to produce weariness and fatigue. The word translated “labor” [“worked”: NIV] (“*kopian*”) is a favorite of [Paul’s] for describing Christian service, whether his own or that of others (see Rom 16:6,12; 1 Cor 4:12; 15:10; 16:16; Gal 4:11; Col 1:29; 1 Thess 5:12); its implication of resulting weariness is conveyed in John 4:6, where Jesus at noonday sits down by Jacob’s well because he is “tired” (“*kekopiakos*”) by his journey.

It has been estimated that Paul may have spent as much as 25% of his time as a preacher and missionary in prison.

This is also the same word used by Jesus when he says:

“Come to me, all you who are weary [‘kopiaō’] and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11:28).

For you: The KJV has “us” instead of “you”. Opinion is equally divided as to whether “you” or “us” is correct. The ASV and KJV have “us”, while the NIV, RSV, NEB and NET have “you”. It is more reasonable that Paul would mention Mary’s service to “us” (including Paul and his companions) rather than to “you” (the Romans).

Greet Andronicus and Junia

These are Latin and Greek names respectively. The second name may be either Junias (masculine) or Junia (feminine). Based on the pairing of the two believers, it is most likely that the proper name is Junia, and that she was the wife of Andronicus. There appear to be several husband-wife couples in this chapter (see vv 3,15).

My relatives

The Greek word is “*syggenes*”, literally: “having the same birth, or the same ancestors”. It is sometimes translated “relatives” and sometimes “kinsmen” (cp vv 11,21). It could mean one of three things:

1. very close blood relatives of Paul, i.e., from his same immediate family;
2. members of the same tribe, i.e., Benjamites (Phil 3:5); or

3. simply Jews, since every descendant of Abraham through Isaac and then Jacob might easily think of all other descendants as “relatives”

Who were in prison with me

The term is “*synaichmalotos*”, meaning to share in captivity. When listing his labors in 2 Cor 11:23, Paul says he was “*in prison more frequently... flogged more severely, and... exposed to death again and again.*” Being so often incarcerated, Paul would have had many fellow-prisoners. Elsewhere, Paul calls Aristarchus a fellow prisoner (the same word) in Col 4:10, and Epaphras the same in Phlm 1:23.

It has been estimated that Paul may have spent as much as 25% of his time as a preacher and missionary in prison. We know of his brief lock-up in Philippi (Acts 16:22-40), two years’ imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 24), and at least another two years in Rome (Acts 28:30). Paul says he had been “in prison more frequently” than his critics. To understand Paul, we need to understand where he spent so much time.

Roman imprisonment was preceded by being stripped naked and then flogged. It was a humiliating, painful and bloody ordeal. The bleeding wounds went untreated. Prisoners sat in painful leg or wrist chains. Torn and blood-stained clothing was not replaced,

even in the cold of winter. In his final imprisonment, Paul asked for a cloak, presumably because of the cold (2 Tim 4:13).

Most cells were dark, especially the inner cells of a prison, like the one where Paul and Silas spent some time in Philippi. Unbearable cold, lack of water, cramped quarters, and the sickening stench from toilets made sleeping difficult and waking hours miserable. Male and female prisoners were sometimes locked up together, which could lead to sexual immorality and abuse. Prison food, when available, was scarcely edible. When Paul was in prison in Caesarea, the procurator Felix gave orders to the centurion to “*permit his friends to take care of his needs*” (Acts 24:23).

Because of the miserable conditions, many prisoners begged for a speedy death. Others simply grasped any chance to commit suicide.



Ancient Mamertine Prison, Rome

They are outstanding among the apostles

“Outstanding” is *“episemos”*, which means prominent or well-known; the KJV has “of note”.

What is meant by “the apostles”?

There are two possible answers to this deceptively simple question:

(a) In the Gospels, the Twelve early disciples — who are listed in Matt 10:2-4; Mark 3:14-18; and Luke 6:13-16 — are called “apostles” about nine times. Eleven of the Twelve are also listed in Acts 1:13, minus Judas Iscariot, who had committed suicide. They were meeting together, with other believers, to select a replacement for Judas. Two candidates were put forward, chosen from among those men who had been with the Lord Jesus from the time of John’s baptism to Jesus’ ascension, since they would have been witnesses to his resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). (This requirement would limit the candidates for the position, and thus the number of such apostles.) Of the two put forward, *“the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles”* (Acts 1:26). The only other mention of “twelve apostles” is in Rev 21:14, corresponding to the “twelve foundations” in the wall surrounding the Holy City, Jerusalem (Rev 21:10-13). Finally, Paul seems to have been commissioned by the Lord himself as another very special “apostle”, with a status similar to the Twelve. However, in Paul’s case, he was a special “apostle” sent, not to the Jews especially, but to the Gentiles in particular (Gal 2:8).

(b) Secondly, this very same term “apostles” (literally, “ones who are sent”) is used often in the Letters to describe a whole range of representatives, messengers or missionaries. As time went by, the number of these apostles increased dramatically, to meet the needs of the ecclesias. These “apostles” were sent out (Greek *“apostello”*) as traveling preachers or emissaries of Christ. Examples of this type of apostle would be the 72 (or 70) “others” (Luke 10:1, NIV or KJV) sent out “two by two” (perhaps sometimes as husband and wife?) by Jesus, to prepare people for his arrival.

And so Paul himself speaks of the faithful Epaphroditus, sent by the Philippians as their personal “messenger” (*“apostolos”*) to see to Paul’s needs (Phil 2:25). This seems to be the category of “apostles” with whom Andronicus and Junia (his wife?) were numbered (Rom 16:7).

Among

Since “among” is the Greek *“en”*, this might mean that Andronicus and Junia were notable in (“*en*”) the estimation of the apostles. That is, the apostles held them in great esteem or high opinion. The NET, as an example, renders this phrase: “They are well known to the apostles.” Nevertheless, the most common usage of the Greek *“en”* makes it much more likely that the couple were actually numbered “among” the apostles, as part of that group. But which group, (a) the original, relatively small group or (b) the more general, much larger group?

And they were in Christ before I was

If the couple was held in high repute by the apostles in Jerusalem, or even considered part of a group which included the original apostles, then they may have been among the 70 or 72 disciples sent out by Jesus (Luke 10:1). The fact that Adronicus and Junia were in Christ before Paul also suggests that they would have first known him as Saul of Tarsus, the relentless enemy of the earliest Christians, before they ever knew him as Paul the great apostle. If not personally, they would surely have known him by reputation, and yet they still helped, supported and cared for him during their shared imprisonment.

Surprisingly, this verse, Rom 16:7, has attracted a great deal of attention in scholarly circles, due to the question: Was Junia a woman and an apostle, that is, a woman of equal rank with the original apostles of the Lord? However, in order to make the case that Junia was the wife of Andronicus and thus also a member of the relatively small group — which included Peter, Andrew, James, John, and Paul — one must prove at least three things:

1. that Junia was a woman;
2. that the preposition “en” truly means “among” (as in being one of a group), and does not mean “in” as “in the opinion of” (see note above); and
3. that “apostles” here means only those who had seen the Lord and were explicitly appointed to the

office by him, that is, the Twelve as well as Paul, and perhaps one or two others.

If any of these three propositions is uncertain, then the contention that a woman was a member of the most special apostolic group fails also. How do we evaluate the evidence?

1. Almost certainly, but not definitely, Junia was a woman and the wife of Andronicus.
2. Quite probably, “en” means “among” rather than “in the estimation of”.
3. But it is much less likely that “apostles” here means (a) those with a special and official position which was conferred directly by Christ (a very small and exclusive group — scarcely more than a dozen disciples), instead of (b) those who were messengers, representatives, or preachers of Christ (a much larger group, of perhaps hundreds of disciples).

Putting all the probabilities together, we may conclude:

- that the sister named Junia and her husband Andronicus were almost certainly not apostles in the more exclusive sense (definition (a) above), but also
- that they were almost certainly apostles in the broader sense (definition (b) above).

*George Booker
(Austin Leander, TX)*



Sunday School.

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Ready-to-Use Bible Concordance Activities

Modern technology has changed the way we search the Scriptures. Passages can be turned up instantly on hand-held devices. Any word or combination of words can be found in any version of the Bible at the click of a button or the tap of a screen. Word meanings can be looked up just as fast. Bible study today is easier than ever, and this is good.

Many of our Sunday schoolers have never known otherwise. They are growing up in a generation in which Bible students hold an entire library of study aids in the palm of their hand. They may never have seen an actual concordance or lexicon, let alone used one.

The activities this month and next are designed to bring the King James

concordance out of the unseen binary world and put into students' hands for a few minutes. The activities are intended to be done with Young's and Strong's concordances open in front of them. Afterward, they can go back to their Bible apps with a better appreciation of what the wonderful world of electronics does for them.

Activity 1 – King James Bible Concordances

A few entries are shown on the next page from two time-honored Bible concordances – Young's and Strong's. Both concordances list all the words that are used in the King James Version of the Bible (KJV).

- How are the word lists from these concordances alike?
- How are they different?

- How many times is the word assurance used in the King James Bible?
- Where is the first place it is used?

Notice that both concordances give us the information we want, they just organize it differently. Use the concordance entries to find where the following passages are located:

1. *And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.*
2. *He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in*

righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

3. *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*

Activity 2 – What do Bible concordances tell us?

Look at the word assurance in Young’s Concordance.

- Place an H next to the Hebrew (Old Testament) words that are

YOUNG'S ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE	
AS'-SOS, also called Apollonia, Ἀπολλωνία	
A seaport of Mysia, in Asia Minor, 9 miles from Troas, on the northern shore of the Gulf of Adramyttium.	
Acts 20.13	And we ... sailed unto A., there intending
20.14	when he met with us at A., we took him
ASSUR.	See ASSHUR.
ASSURANCE –	
1. <i>Confidence, trust, πίστις betach.</i>	
Isa. 32.17	the effect of righteousness ... assurance for
2. <i>Faith, trust, conviction, πίστις, πίστις.</i>	
Acts 17.31	he hath given assurance unto all (men)
3. <i>Full conviction, πληροπορία plērōphoria.</i>	
1 Th. 1.5	the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance
ASSURANCE, full –	
<i>Full conviction, πληροπορία plērōphoria.</i>	
Col. 2.2	unto all riches of the full assurance of
Heb. 6.11	shew ... diligence to the full assurance of
10.22	Let us draw near ... in full assurance of
ASSURANCE, to have –	
<i>To hold stedfast, ἵστη ἀμον, 5.</i>	
Deut. 28.66	thou ... shalt have none assurance of ... life
ASSURE, to –	
<i>To persuade, πείθο peithō.</i>	
1 Jo. 3.19	and shall assure our hearts before him
ASSURED –	
<i>Truth, ἠσθη emeth.</i>	
Jer. 14.13	I will give you assured peace in this place
ASSURED, to be –	
<i>To rise up, stand firm, ἑστη ἄμμ.</i>	
Lev. 27.19	he shall add ... and it shall be assured to
ASSURED of, to be –	
<i>To be made steady, μετρώμα πιστομαί.</i>	
2 Ti. 3.14	hast learned and hast been assured of

STRONG'S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE		
Assos (as'-sos)		
Ac 20:13	sailed unto A., there intending to	789
14	he met with us at A	"
assuage		See ASSWAGE.
Assur (as'-sur)		See also ASSHUR.
Ezr 4:2	days of Esar-haddon king of A.	* 804
Ps 83:8	A also is joined with them: they	* "
assurance		
De 28:66	shalt have none a of thy life	539
Isa 32:17	quietness and a for ever.	983
Ac 17:31	he hath given a unto all men,	4102
Col 2:2	of the full a of understanding,	4136
1 Th 1:5	and in much a; as ye know	"
He 6:11	the full a of hope unto the end	* "
10:22	in full a of faith, having our	* "
assure		See also ASSURED.
1 Jo 3:19	and shall a our hearts before him.	3982
assured		
Le 27:19	and it shall be a to him.	6965
Jer 14:13	a peace in this place.	571
2 Ti 3:14	and hast been a of,	4104

translated assurance in the King James Bible. Place a G next to the Greek (New Testament) words that are translated assurance.

- _____ *betach*
- _____ *pistis*
- _____ *plerophoria*
- _____ *aman*

- What does *betach* mean?
- What does *pistis* mean?
- What does *plerophoria* mean?
- What does *aman* mean?

Now look at the word assurance in Strong's Concordance.

- Look at the numbers after each entry for the word assurance? They are called Strong's Numbers.
- How many different numbers are there?
- Which numbers go with the Old Testament passages?
- Which numbers go with the New Testament passages?
- Can you guess what the numbers stand for?

Strong's Concordance has two dictionaries located at the back of the concordance. One is a Dictionary of the Words in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), and the other is a Dictionary of the Greek Testament (New Testament). Every King James word has a Strong's Number and is listed by its number in the appropriate dictionary.

Here are two entries of interest in Strong's Old Testament dictionary:

539. **אָמַן** 'aman, *aw-man*; a prim. root; prop. *to build up or support; to foster* as a parent or nurse; *fig. to render (or be) firm or faithful, to trust or believe, to be permanent or quiet; mor. to be true or certain; once (Isa. 30:21; by interch. for 541) to go to the right hand:* — assurance, believe, bring up, establish, + fail, be faithful (of long continuance, *stedfast*, sure, surely, trusty, verified), nurse, (-ing father), (put), trust, turn to the right.

983. **בֵּטַח** *betach, beh'-takh*; from 982; prop. a place of refuge; *abstr. safety*; both the fact (*security*) and the feeling (*trust*); often (adv. with or without prep.) *safely*: — assurance, boldly, (without) care (-less), confidence, hope, safe (-ly, -ty), secure, surely.

- What Hebrew words do Strong's Numbers 539 and 983 stand for?
- How does Strong define *aman*?
- How does Strong define *betach*?
- The last four lines of entry 539 list all the ways that the Hebrew word *aman* is translated in the King James Bible. In addition to assurance, how is *aman* translated in the KJV Old Testament?
- The last two lines of entry 983 list all the ways that the Hebrew word *betach* is translated in the King James Bible. In addition to assurance, how is *betach* translated in the KJV Old Testament?

Here are two entries of interest in Strong's New Testament dictionary:

- What Greek words do Strong's

4102. **πίστις** *pistis, pis'-tis*; from 3982; *persuasion*, i.e. *credence*; *mor. conviction* (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God or a religious teacher), *espec. reliance* upon Christ for salvation; *abstr. constancy* in such profession; by *extens. the system of religious (Gospel) truth* itself: — assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

4136. **πληροφορία** *plerophoria, play-rof-or-ee'-ah*; from 4135; *entire confidence*: — (full) assurance.

Numbers 4102 and 4136 stand for?

- How does Strong define *pistis*?
- How does Strong define *plerophoria*?
- The last line of entry 4102 lists all the ways that the Greek word *pistis* is translated in the King James Bible. In addition to assurance, how is *pistis* translated in the KJV New Testament?
- How is the word *plerophoria*, Strong's Number 4136, translated in the KJV New Testament?

Activity 3 – Open the concordance

- Find the word assuredly in either concordance.
- How many different Hebrew words are translated into the

English word assuredly?

- How many different Greek words are translated into the English word assuredly?
- Is Bible translation simply a matter of substituting a different English word for every Hebrew or Greek word? Why doesn't it work this way?

Find the following passages in the King James Bible and answer the questions.

1. *Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*
2. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

- Where is each passage found?
- What is each passage about? Look at the larger contexts to answer this question.
- What does the word **assuredly** mean in each passage? How does Young's Concordance help with this question? How does Strong's concordance help?

Jim Harper
2harps4u@gmail.com
(Meriden, CT)



The Joy of Sunday Schooling is now available from *The Tidings* in e-book form and can be downloaded by going to www.joyofss.org.

It is designed to work on computers, tablets, and phones. The book has hundreds of active links and everything is printable. Cost is \$10.



Reflection.

INFERTILITY

PART 2

In Part 1, Sis. Corina dealt with the effects, the scriptures, and some suggestions for dealing with this most difficult subject. Only those couples who have struggled with this most delicate, and troublesome subject personally will be able to appreciate her wise advice, which is concluded here.

Cautions for friends and family

When someone is enduring this trial, try to avoid these common mistakes.

Please don't tell the couple to relax or 'stop trying'.

This is like telling a hungry person that you will feed them as soon as they're not hungry anymore. "just relaxing" your way to pregnancy is a *myth* based on a few, too-often-repeated stories that don't acknowledge the mass of couples who "stopped trying" and never got pregnant. The couple might have a medical reason for infertility that is

not overcome by "relaxing." You do not know their full story.

Please don't give advice, unless specifically asked.

What's so harmful about advice? The information may be harmless, but the implications are harmful:

- a. The couple has been thinking about this for far longer than you, so they already know what their options are. By giving advice, you're suggesting that they are not informed, or not motivated.

- b. Your suggestions might force the couple to defend their choice of action or inaction, something that is rather unpleasant regarding such a sensitive topic.
- c. Advice implies that you would cope with this trial better or you would live their life better. This implication is not fair, potentially insulting, and even painful for someone who is already suffering.

In particular, **don't give advice about medical interventions.** The success rates are lower than you think and the costs are quite high.

In particular, **don't give advice about adoption.** People often say that they know of someone who adopted a child and then, as if by magic, got pregnant a few months later. They seem to be suggesting that infertile couples should adopt in order to become pregnant. This is not fair to the adoptive child, and research shows that only 1/2

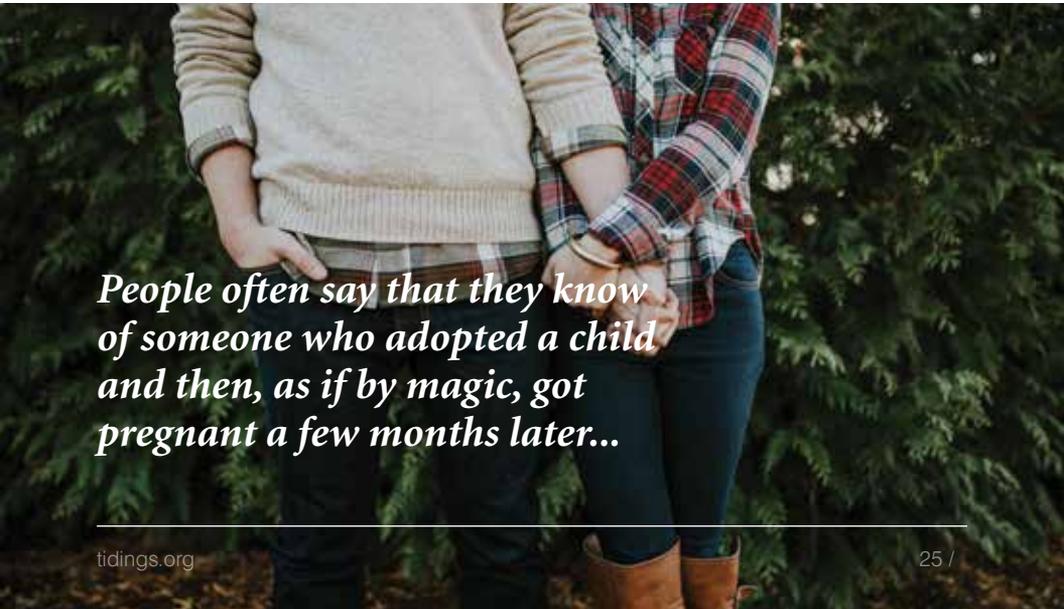
of adoptive couples conceive after adoption (www.resolve.com). Adoption is a wonderful way to create a family, but don't offer it as a quick, uncomplicated fix.

Please don't offer success stories, unless asked.

What's wrong with sharing success stories? They give the illusion of control when the couple is experiencing a complete lack of control. Unsolicited success stories suggest that the couple is doing something wrong, and if they were more intelligent or more skilled or more faithful or more informed -- like these other people -- they, too, would get pregnant.

Please don't talk about your ability to conceive.

It is very common for people to say things like 'we decided to have 3 children,' or 'we knew we wanted a spring baby' or 'we waited 2 years



People often say that they know of someone who adopted a child and then, as if by magic, got pregnant a few months later...

between siblings'. On one level, these comments may be true, but they omit the huge fact that God is the only one able to supply the breath of life. The glory of creating all new babies belongs to Him alone.

Don't suggest reasons for their infertility, especially spiritual reasons.

"Maybe you can't have children", because it might sound like a harmless intellectual supposition, but it's painful for the listener. And don't suggest that the couple needs to learn a certain spiritual lesson before they can conceive. Have all other pregnant women worldwide learned this lesson before conception?

And, finally, don't ask childless couples when they're going to have children and don't ask parents when they're going to have another child.

The whole issue is far too private and potentially painful for casual conversation.

Suggestions for friends and family

There are ways to help people through this trial.

Pray for them.

Pray for them to have children, yes, but pray fervently that they may find peace in the goodness of our gracious God. Pray that they will draw closer to Him, and not further away. And tell them that you are praying for them. It will be a tremendous relief to envision a tag-team of believers petitioning God on their behalf; this truly lightens the load.

Listen, if they want to talk.

The pain is intense and the trial is very personal, so the couple may or may not choose to share their experiences with you. If they are comfortable talking with you, just listen, try to understand what they are going through, and keep their comments confidential. Sometimes it helps just to speak fears and disappointments out loud to someone who cares.

Be patient with them.

They might withdraw a bit or avoid social gatherings for a while. They might not seem like themselves, and you might begin to miss them. Just be patient with them.

Acknowledge the difficulty of the trial.

Scripture confirms that barrenness is not an average, everyday sort of struggle. You can tell them that you're thinking about them, especially around difficult times, and ask if there's anything you can do to help.

Remain faithful.

Deal with your own trials faithfully. Trust in the Lord during your own struggles in order to give the couple an example of encouragement and hope. Focus on God and His word and become a source of strength and inspiration for others who are suffering.

Learn more.

Check out the resolve website (www.resolve.org), especially the link written for family and friends.

Universal lessons

There seems to be two types of knowing: one refers to an academic knowledge while the other refers to a conviction born of experience. Academically, we can quote verses and describe events that support certain truths. We know, for example, that God is good and that He loves us. His will is perfect so we can trust Him. The joy derived from His very existence gives us daily strength.

But life's trials reveal the fault line in our faith. We can find ourselves alone in a dry desert face to face with doubts that used to be comfortably

God really is completely good. We have words for all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present. Now we need a word for all-good. God is good, all the time, in all circumstances, even when we begin to doubt His character. We don't know all of the reasons for our trials, but we can choose to completely trust that God, in His goodness, always acts justly with love and compassion. We can trust God completely because Jesus, who knew Him best, was willing to trust Him completely and even endure preplanned suffering. I want the faith of Jesus, who believed in God's goodness even as he suffered.

There seems to be two types of knowing: one refers to an academic knowledge while the other refers to a conviction born of experience.

hidden away in the backs of our minds. Trials force the issue of faith and ask if we really believe what we claim to know. Out of context, the doubts sound trite, but when you're in any trial, these questions are very real. And, out of context, the answers sound academic, but when you're in the trial, renewing your convictions can help the heartache and change everything.

These are some of the conclusions that I came to as I wrestled with the flesh and endured our childless years. You may find them helpful right now, and you may not. As you go through this trial you might find yourself thinking about some of these same things.

“How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow in the sight

of men on those who take refuge in you” (Psa 31:19).

“He is good; his love endures forever.” (The Levitical singers when the ark is brought into the temple in 2 Chron 5:13).

“You are good and do good.” (The Psalmist in Psa 119:68). God really does love us, even when we feel forgotten or left behind. I want the faith of Jesus, who knew and understood God's love and His kindness.

“This is what the LORD says, ‘Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts

boast of this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' declares the LORD" (Jer 9:23, 24).

"But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me." (Psa 13:5-6).

"Be at rest once more. O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you" (Psa 116:7).

Submission to God's will is good. His will for our lives is really better than our own will for our own lives. I want the faith of Jesus and David who trusted God and willingly submitted to His will.

"Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" (Jesus to Peter in John 18: 11)

"Abba! Father,' he said, 'everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.' "
(Jesus to God in Mark 14:36)

"He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes." (Eli in 1 Sam 3:18 after hearing God's judgment on his household)

"Take the ark of God into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him." (David fleeing Jerusalem when Absalom rebels in 2Sam 15:25-26)

"But I trust in you, O LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands" (Psa 31:14-15).

God is the only one who can create life. Parents often talk about 'planning' their children as if they actually created them. This is a myth that perpetuates an illusion of control. I want the faith of Eve and Hannah who both knew that only God has control over life and death.

"With the help of the LORD, I have brought forth a man" (Gen 4:1).

*"But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me."*

~ Psalm 13:5-6



“The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.” (Hannah in 1 Sam 2: 6).

God owes us nothing. We are completely humbled before him. I want the faith of Job who understood that his oxen, his donkeys, his servants, his sheep, his camels, and his children did not belong to him.

“Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised” (Job 1: 21).

Life is full of suffering. Even though we experience goodness and joy and hope and love, this is still a dry and weary land where there is no water. I want the faith of Jacob who remained faithful, yet spoke honestly about the trials in his life.

“The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult” (Jacob to Pharaoh in Gen 47:9)

“My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word.” (Psa 119: 28).

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life” (Prov 13:12).

God gives us more than we can bear by ourselves. But he does not give us more than we can bear while relying on him. I want the faith of Paul, who trusted in God.

“We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the

province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead” (2 Cor 1:8-9).

One day sorrow and sighing will flee away and every tear will be wiped from every weary eye. This promise, this hope, and the very existence of our gracious God changes the way we see our current sufferings. I want the faith of Jesus, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.

I want the faith of Jacob who remained faithful, yet spoke honestly about the trials in his life.

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor 4:16,18).

God changes our hearts. His grace is sufficient; He provides peace; He lifts us up; He turns our weeping into joy. I want the heart of Naomi, who remained faithful to God and let go of her bitterness.



Infertility is difficult. Its effects are far-reaching. Dealing with it is complicated.

“Many are asking, ‘Who can show us any good?’ Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound” (Psa 4:6,7).

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:9,10).

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil 4:5-7).

“When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul” (Psa 94:19).

“I waited patiently for the LORD; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit,

out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the LORD” (Psa 40:1-3).

“You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy” (Psa 30:11).

“Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you” (Psa 116:7).

“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted” (Matt 5:4).

We can still serve God even while we are heartsick. He might even find us more useful to Him like this. I want the faith of Jesus who understood sorrows and grief and humility and sacrifice.

“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. A righteous man may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all” (Psa 34:18).

“For this is what the high and lofty One says – he who lives forever,

whose name is holy: 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite' ” (Isa 57:15).

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise” (Psa 51:17).

We can hope that our trials will help others. Maybe Elizabeth had to wait years so that John the Baptist would be Jesus’ peer. Or maybe she waited so that the miracle of her conception could help the angel Gabriel bolster Mary’s faith. Mary’s response to Gabriel’s news was, “How can this be?” But after he told her that Elizabeth had conceived, she realized that nothing is impossible with God.

“Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.” (Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:37)

May the work of God be displayed in our lives. Like the blind man in the gospels, may the work of God

be displayed in our lives, regardless of our specific circumstances, or, perhaps, because of our specific circumstances.

Conclusion

Infertility is difficult. Its effects are far-reaching. Dealing with it is complicated. Scripture lights the way or at least explain the path. In the end, the goal is to somehow accept the circumstances of your life, instead of railing against them. This is the goal for everyone, really, regardless of the trial. Even if we cannot come to terms with the trial while we are in the maelstrom, hopefully we can eventually turn around and accept it. We might call it retrospective submission, where you see your life in hindsight, accepting the detour, and saying with Jesus, “Not my will but thine be done.” If you can get to this point, you will have made something beautiful. You can turn and offer it to God as a sacrifice of thanksgiving.

May the Lord hold you close and help you with this endeavor.

*Corina Midgett
(Arlington, VA)*



Conscientious Objection in North America

In part 7 Bro. Peter talks about World War I in Canada.

Introduction

The outbreak of war in Europe was a surprise. When Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, Canada was a dominion of Great Britain, so its foreign policy was in their hands, and Canada followed suit in declaring war. For several years, however, no conscription was introduced, but a volunteer Canadian Expeditionary Unit fought in Europe. About 620,000 were involved, and they had a casualty rates (killed and wounded) of almost 40%. This is not the place to discuss the sometimes-violent objections the French-Canadians in Quebec had towards fighting for the British, but “the

conscription crisis” of 1917 caused a long-lasting rift in the country.

However, the casualty rate forced the introduction of conscription in 1917, against much opposition. It only raised 120,000 soldiers, of which only 47,000 went overseas. There were at least technically two or three Christadelphians among this number, but it was only under imprisonment that they went. How they, and the other Canadian Christadelphians, endured conscription is a story of compulsion, imprisonment, and sacrifice. There is much surviving information about this, from both Christadelphian and other sources, and we must be grateful for the

almost universal objection of those conscripted to joining the armed forces under any circumstances. Along with similar resistance by other denominations, this resulted in a completely difference situation in the next world war.

I should note there are many sources for the Canadian Conscientious Objection experience in WW1, although few individual accounts have been handed down. My extracts are all based on the sources which are included at the end of this article.

Conscription

The Canadian Military Service Act of October 12, 1917, introducing conscription said, in part:

“That if he (the conscript) conscientiously objects to the undertaking of Combatant Service, and is prohibited from so doing by the tenets and articles of faith, In effect on the 6th day of July, 1917, of any organized religious denomination existing and well recognized in Canada at such date, and to which he in good faith belongs; ‘And if any of the grounds of such applicant be established, a certificate of exemption shall be granted to such man.’

“A certificate may be conditional as to time or otherwise, and if granted solely on conscientious grounds, shall state that such exemption is from combatant service only.”

Thus, there were three hurdles for Christadelphians:

- 1.They were required, even if exempted, to perform non-combatant service in uniform, which almost all refused.
- 2.They were required to be part of a “well-recognized religious denomination”, and Christadelphians were not so recognized until late in the war.
- 3.They were required to be “members”, which meant being baptized as of July 7, 1917.

Christadelphian Committee

As with the United States, there were two groups of Christadelphians in Canada, the Amended and Unamended. There were no Canadian magazines: the Amended had *The Christadelphian*, out of England, and the Unamended, *The Advocate*, published in this period out of Chicago, and edited by John Owler in England and associate editor James Leask in the United States.

The two groups joined to form one committee which was very active, especially after the military service act was passed. Until the Armistice, on Nov 11, 1918, the Christadelphians sent delegations to anyone they thought could help their campaign for exemption. Their petitions showed an awareness of parliamentary language and procedure. They also found a well-placed and sympathetic ear in Lieutenant-Colonel H.A.C. Machin, the director of the Military Service Branch of the Department of Justice:

“The real friend of the genuine conscientious objector was Lt.-Col. H.A.C. Machin. He spoke

firmly in his opinion as to what ought to be done on their behalf, and deplored the tardiness which had arisen in bringing about necessary provisions for alternative works of national importance.” Machin helped the standing committee by impressing upon it the amount of work the government faced and advising it that unless it pressed its case at Ottawa, it would be “snowed under and forgotten.” His sympathy was neither unique nor overly controversial. In one of the only House of Commons debates about the conscientious objection clause in the Military Service Bill, members discussed who would be included. Solicitor General Arthur Meighen and Minister of Justice C.J. Doherty explained the intentions of this exemption clause to the MPs. In response to a query about whether the local tribunals would be adequately versed in the theology of the various sects to determine legitimate exemption, the following exchange took place:

“Mr. Meighen: It is not a question of theology, but merely of the existence of the denomination and its recognition in the community. It is a question of fact which the local tribunals will decide in the first instance.

“Mr. Marcil: My understanding is that this relates to the Mennonites, the Doukhobors, and the Quakers.

“Sir George Foster: And the Christadelphians.”

That the Christadelphians were mentioned by name, and by a Cabinet member, Sir George Foster, anticipated their success at gaining recognition where other denominations failed.

There were at least fifteen separate attempts by the committee to achieve total exemption. They did, on January 1st 1918, succeed in achieving recognition from Justice Duff of their status as an “organized religious denomination” under the provision of the Military Service Act of July 17, 1917. The Christadelphian Standing Committee intervened on numerous occasions concerning individual members, and they finally succeeded in obtaining on July 29, 1918 the following declaration:

Status of Christadelphians under the Military Service Act.

“... I have the honor to inform you that in view of the fact that the Central Appeal Judge has decided that the Christadelphian sect is one which can be considered as coming within Section 11 1-f of the Military Service Act, providing for exemption from combatant service, a Routine Order has been published authorizing the release of bona fide Christadelphians who produce satisfactory proof that they are such, and that they belonged to that sect prior to the issue of the proclamation calling out Class 1.”

As a result, several members were struck off the ranks and released, as noted above. And they also achieved their desired recognition of total

exemption, but as this was achieved just as the war ended on November 11, 1918, it was never officially proclaimed.

Effect on Christadelphians

Many of those conscripted (13 out of 28) were not even eligible for the exemption, as they had been baptized after the cut-off date of July 6, 1917. Even if they were granted exemption, this simply meant that they were required to take part in the army in a non-combatant role. As such, refusing such service meant, in most cases, both a court-martial and then a military prison, or a civilian prison if they refused to sign the enlistment papers (which several did.) Accounts of four members are noted below. Although most had their physical examinations around Nov 10, 1917, actual enlistment for military service did not begin until February 1918.

Louis Cotton

He was one of the two¹ sent to England under imprisonment, where he was court-martialed. Like John Evans as we shall see later, his defense is recorded in his court records at Seaford Camp in Sussex UK. And like John Evans, he was baptized after the last date for exemption of July 6, 1917, on Nov 8, 1917. He, like John Evans, stressed his membership in the sect and added a statement of his personal views:

“I have the honor to inform you that in view of the fact that the Central Appeal Judge has decided that the Christadelphian sect is one which can be considered as coming within Section 11 1-f of the Military Service Act, providing for exemption from combatant service”

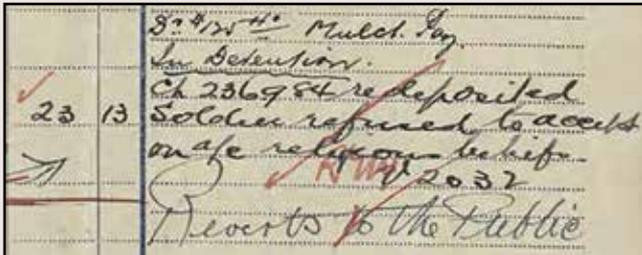
“I am a member of the Christadelphian Church of Canada, whose religion forbids me to join in any form of military service. By doing so I greatly endanger my future welfare and my rights to everlasting life. Therefore I must refuse to take any part in military service.”

The Christadelphian intelligence from Lethbridge ecclesia from 1919 has a sad tale:

“I am pleased to announce that brother Louis A. Cotton (Rossland) was released on March 24th (1919), after suffering much for the name of Christ. He was arrested on May 30th, 1918, at Rossland, and kept in jail until June 17th, when he was taken to Vancouver, and put in the guard room at the barracks, then taken to Hastings Park Camp, where he was sentenced to 12 days’ detention; he was next sent to Petawawa Camp, Ontario, sentenced to 14 days’ detention; then to Aldershot Camp, Nova Scotia, from which he was sent to Sydney, Cape Breton Island, and put aboard H.M.S. Atreus, sentenced to 14 days’ confinement while on board, landed in London, England, sent to Bourley Camp, Aldershot, sentenced to 28 days,

which he served in Wandsworth Prison, London; after which he was released, but refused to join the colours, and was again sent to Seaforth Camp, Sussex, and was sentenced to six months' detention, and sent to Wandsworth till Armistice day, when he was sent to Seaford, en

(Louis') brother, Thomas Percy Cotton, was arrested on October 25th, 1918, while working in the mine, and was sent by train to Vancouver. His clothes were wet through, and he took sick on the train, and was taken to Fairmont Military Hospital, where he died on November 5th."



Louis Cotton refuses Discharge Pay: Reverts to the Public!

Again, the service records give more sad details: he apparently signed his enlistment papers on October 22, but was arrested while still at work on the 25th. The medical diagnosis

route to Canada. On arrival in Canada was sent to the police cells at Queen's Park, New Westminster; was next taken to Victoria, and placed in guard room, after which he was sent to Work Point Detention Prison, and was finally discharged on March 24th, 1919. SIDNEY T. BATSFORD."²

was Spanish Flu, but he was very ill before being admitted to the hospital.

Walter Crawford

This brother is somewhat infamous from being featured in a letter of complaint from the warden of the jail in Lethbridge, Alberta. It reads:

"July 6th, 1918: The Deputy Minister, Department of Justice, Ottawa, Ont., Dear Sir,-

All these particulars are confirmed by his war records, which also show he refused the small amount of pay he was due upon demobilization in 1919. He does appear later in *The Christadelphian*, and he died in 1973, so his wartime travails do not appear to have impacted his health or his faith.

Thomas Cotton

The above intelligence from Lethbridge of 1919 sadly continues:

"I am sorry to have to add that his

"The Military Authorities at Calgary have sentenced eleven men to this Institution to serve Two Years less one day in each case, because as Conscientious Objectors they refused to obey some Military command... Another is a Christadelphian, who does not believe in war, and will not don the Khaki because he does not want to kill anybody.

"Now, what I want to know is what is the attitude of your Department towards these men,

and what treatment do you expect us to give them here. Do you desire us to pay attention to their various conscientious whims?

“In the past we have had only one rule – Everybody sentenced to hard labour worked every day in the week except Sunday - if he is physically fit. We said where and when they are to work - one rule for all and a square deal for every man.

“Do you wish us to continue this course or shall we begin to accede to the conscientious whims of those apparently pro-German prisoners.

“I am sorry these men are being sent here. I think they should be sent to the front and made to take their share in the defense of the country or as an alternative sent to Detention Camps and herded with kindred sprits there.

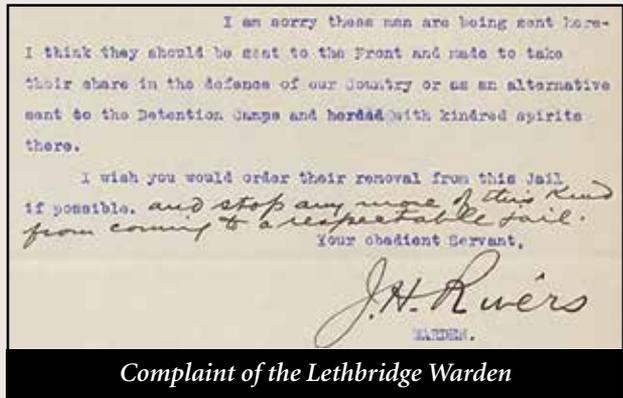
“I wish you would order their removal from this jail if possible, and stop any more of this kind from coming to a respectable jail. Your obedient servant: JH Rivers, Warden.”

Clearly, the attitude of the warden was not very sympathetic!

Brother Crawford was conscripted March 28, 1918, refused to sign, and refused to wear a uniform. He

was jailed almost immediately, and remained there until released on April 4, 1919. Apparently, the warden, or a subsequent one, changed his attitude, for we read on his release:

“LETHBRIDGE (Alberta) — It is gratifying to report that Brother Walter Crawford (Onoway, Alberta), who was sentenced to serve two years in jail by the military authorities, has now been released after 11 months. Our brother received many privileges, for which we join with him in giving God thanks. The



Complaint of the Lethbridge Warden

brethren and sisters here visited him when the opportunity permitted. — J. ROPER, Rec. Bro.

He is recorded in *The Berean* as dying in 1938, at age 48. Whether his time in jail affected his health is not recorded.

John Evans

His account is recounted at length in *Test Case for Canada*, written by his son, Edwin R. Evans, which is readily available. He was drafted and

soon after sent to England, to be transferred to the front in France.

He was conscripted on Feb 19, 1918, among the first such among Christadelphians, and released on Jan 12, 1919. Others endured longer



John and Margretta Evans in 1917

imprisonment, but probably none a harsher one. Despite the title of the book, it does not seem his experience, any more than that of others, influenced the subsequent treatment of conscripted Christadelphians. He was baptized at the age of almost 23, on Oct 28, 1917, well after the cut-off day in the Military service Act of July 6, 1917. He was also married at the time of conscription. His situation is noted by Frank Jannaway, the main English brother on Military affairs there. He visited John in prison in England, and some comments about his visit are as follows:³

“... a brother immersed after the passing of the Canadian Military Service Act, the son of a Christadelphian, and who had been connected with the

“Truth” since nine years of age. His claim for exemption had been refused by the Canadian Tribunals, and he was forced into khaki and transported to Europe with one of the Canadian regiments, although he had never drilled or handled a rifle... Careful investigation, however, made it evident that the case was not of the same character as those of our young British Christadelphians. These latter had all been continuously under Christadelphian instruction, either at Sunday School or at home, until old enough to be immersed, and had then been granted exemption on reaching military age. But in the case of the Canadian brother, although connected with the Truth since the age of nine, he did not embrace and obey it until after the passing of the Canadian Military Service Act, and not until a year or more after conscription had been discussed or threatened; and, moreover, he was a married man when baptized.

In view of these facts elicited at the interview, no one can charge the Canadian Authorities with unreasonable treatment in the case.”

Evans was court-martialed in England on August 6, 1918 for “disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer in the execution of his office” — refusing to fall in on parade upon being ordered to do so. His statement in defense was fairly terse:

“I declare that I am a Christadelphian and a conscientious objector of good standing. My society is purely religious and non-political and I am willing to take up work of national importance in a civil council and serve the government.”

It was a well-rehearsed statement. Evans did not try to explain his personal views, choosing instead to emphasize his membership in a religious group, in conformity with the legal provisions of the Military Service Act, which had been extended to include the Christadelphians as above. Nevertheless, he was found guilty and sentenced to twelve months at hard labor.

John Evans reported being “beaten up, pushed down a flight of stairs, and flogged with a rope” for refusing to obey orders while in England. He described one of the beatings that took place when, in Wandsworth prison after his court martial, he refused to obey a sergeant’s order to parade:

“Infuriated by my refusal, he began to curse and commence a violent physical attack. He struck both sides of my head simultaneously with his hands, attempting to produce pain by suddenly increasing the pressure on my eardrums. Then he banged my head against the brick wall, struck me in the stomach with his fist and continued battering me around the cell until he was exhausted.

His object was to try and make me fight. If I had retaliated he could have either accused me of being a traitor to my cause, or otherwise, depending upon his disposition, he could have called for reinforcements which may have cost me my life.”

Evans offered no resistance, although, in a humanizing moment, he admitted that “my actual urge to kill him was very great.” There were other beatings, one with a rope that left “my back as green as grass. I looked like I had gangrene.” He was transferred to Wandsworth prison, where he was housed with “common criminals.” Evans recalls that he was kept in a cell measuring twelve by seven feet and endured seven weeks on a starvation diet of bread and water. He could not write to let his wife and family know where he was, and in August 1918 he was told he was being sent to France. He managed to write to the Christadelphian Standing Committee in London; it may have been due to their intervention that the order drafting him to France was cancelled at the last minute. He was then transferred to Pentonville prison, where he suffered poor conditions similar to those at Wandsworth. Eventually, he was returned to Canada and released.

So as recorded in *The Advocate*: “We rejoice to welcome our Brother John Evans among us again after having nobly endured the sufferings and trials of ten months in military camps and prisons both here and in England”. He died in 1971, a

well-respected member of the Christadelphians for all his baptized life.

Arthur Hill

Arthur Hill was unusual for the celebrity that his case attracted. As summarized in *Crisis of Conscience*, his case was the subject to considerable correspondence in the local Toronto papers at the time. On Nov 14, 1918, three days after the war ended, Hill was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment for refusing to put on a uniform. The judgment itself is not extant, but he was refused exemption apparently because "the company of which Arthur Hill's father, Edwin Hill, is the President, was one of the largest contractors in Canada with the Imperial Munitions Board for the manufacture of certain shell parts." (Edwin was the main representative for the Canadian Christadelphian Standing Committee.) The appeal court judge deemed that Hill did not meet the proper individual criteria for conscientious objection, even though he had been baptized in 1914. This prompted a brief mention in the "Notes and Comments" section of the Toronto Globe editorial page: "Are the 'conscientious objectors' worse than the 'defaulters?' Why should a fine type of a citizen like Arthur Hill go to penitentiary for ten years, a prisoner for conscience sake, while thousands of men who sneaked out of military service are free to return home immune from punishment?"

Another letter defending Hill appeared a couple of days later, signed by S.J. Rutherford, President of the Toronto Plate Glass Importing Co. Ltd (of which Edwin was a

manager). He said "Arthur Hill was never at any time engaged in or connected with our munitions department, but, on the contrary, at his own request, was left in the glass department, although at a monetary loss to himself." Although Rutherford did not "profess to understand the mind of the conscientious objector," he defended Hill's personal bravery by citing two incidents in which he saved women or children from drowning. Apocryphal or not, these accounts were deemed necessary to prove that Hill's objection did not spring from cowardice.

It does not appear this correspondence had much effect, although he was among the first of those imprisoned to be released, which occurred on Feb 10th, 1919.

Summary

Although the efforts of the committee, as noted above, never resulted in total exemption from service, other efforts resulted in members being discharged from service.

To quote from the summary report on the Christadelphians, issued after the war:

"There were 73 Brethren who came under the operation of the Military Service Act; 49 of these were exempted from combatant service — some because of religious belief, some because their occupations were considered of importance to the State, others being medically unfit; 2 renounced their faith to join the army, 2 permitted themselves to be persuaded to join non-combatant corps,

and lost their place among the faithful; 19 brethren suffered imprisonment, being refused (by the Tribunals) exemption from combatant service—two of these were ruthlessly shipped overseas, suffering many and varied punishments and imprisonment, two confined for several months in cells at Hamilton jail, three were sentenced to serve, In Kingston Penitentiary, for long terms; one contracted influenza of the severe type prevalent at the time and died in the Military Hospital, and one was removed to an asylum and died there.”

Conclusion

It is clear that a much higher fraction of the Christadelphians in Canada were imprisoned, court martialed, and otherwise mistreated, than in any other country. The vast majority stood up for what they believed, and their efforts and sincerity were, in the end, acknowledged by the government. We have to thank the members who are conscripted and refused to serve in any capacity, and the brethren who fought on their behalf, for this result.

*Peter Hemingray
(Pittsburgh, PA)*

Sources

- The summary of the work of the Christadelphian Standing Committee, published 1919.
- *The Christadelphian* published intelligence, which gave some additional details of the events. *The Advocate* also published some intelligence, but not their comprehensive accounts of the situation in the USA.
- Amy Shaw has recently written a book *Crisis of Conscience* on Conscientious objection in Canada in WW1. This book was most useful, and is often quoted or extracted above: it covers the Christadelphian experience extensively.
- Complete and extensive army records of most Canadians who were drafted for service are available on the Internet: of the 28 Christadelphians noted as being conscripted, I found the records for all but three.

All these sources are relatively easy to access.

Notes:

1. Actually, Fred Hiley of Winnipeg was also sent overseas under duress, but apparently joined up, and was disfellowshipped.
2. *The Christadelphian*, 1919, p. 334.
3. From “Christadelphians and Military Service”, P. 91.



Community.

BIBLE MISSION

News from the CBMA and the CBMC Baptizing Individuals. Building Ecclesias.

APPEAL FOR JAMAICA

Bro. David and Sis. Cassie Giordano have been full-time field workers on the island since January 2018, and will be heading home in March 2020. To continue building on their work in 2020 and beyond, we hope to sponsor more fieldworkers as soon as possible. This service could be for a month or several months; however, at this time we are seeking a two year commitment with ongoing communication and support of the CBMC link-couple during the duration of the stay in Jamaica. In cooperation with the CBMJ and the CBMC, the role will include pastoral support of members. There are about 100 brothers and sisters in Jamaica, with six active ecclesias and a number

of members in isolation. The burden on the few “platform active” brothers to minister the Word in their own ecclesias is large, and allows very little opportunity for supporting other ecclesias or members in isolation. Demands of daily life, health issues and members emigrating overseas all have their effects on ecclesial life. Field workers are able to provide immense support to both individuals and ecclesias, building up the youth and encouraging the more mature members.

Field workers will travel, visit members of active ecclesias and those in isolation in Port Maria, Port Antonio and Argyle Mountain, and support the small ecclesia at Harvey River. The role also involves helping

to organize the annual Easter Youth Camp and other CBMJ-sponsored fraternal gatherings held throughout the year. There will be plenty of opportunities to get to know all the believers on the island, from those who meet in the busy capital city of Kingston, to the lively ecclesia in the beautiful farming community of Round Hill.



Prayers for God's blessing on this initiative are paramount. The most urgent need is for a full-time, financially supported missionary presence in Jamaica. Accommodation and living expenses are covered, and a vehicle is provided. Could you do this work?

To be a field worker, all you need is a desire to serve God through service to your brothers and sisters, and the willingness to dedicate some time to it. An adventurous spirit will probably come in handy as well!

If you are interested in more information regarding any aspect of support for the Jamaican Brotherhood, and especially missionary service, please contact Bro Phil Snobelen. Thank you for your continued support!

Bro. Phil Snobelen, Chairman
philsnobelen@shaw.ca

1-604-881-4733

CBM Canada
22966 71A Ave.
Langley, BC V2Y 2K1
CANADA

JAMAICA

Bro. Nathan and I visited Jamaica in October, to spend some time with the believers on the island, and to refuel resident missionaries, Bro. Dave and Sis. Cassie Giordano, with coffee and chocolate. We jumped right into Broughton CYC with them, where a younger crowd came out for a fun class and Christmas play practice, and an older group of teens, who came for some good Bible study a little later in the evening.

We then had a down day to recover from travel, and didn't waste any time diving into the clear blue waters of the Caribbean. One of the highlights of any visit to Jamaica is time spent at Bro. Ray Arthur's Golden Sunset Villas, right across the street from the beautiful beach in Negril.

We divided and conquered on Sunday, and along with Bro. Matt and Sis. Cilla Tuckson, Dave and I headed to the tiny Harvey River ecclesia up in the hills. The few sisters and one brother love having visitors and on that hot, sunny morning, we doubled their congregation. This ecclesia won't be here forever. The community is remote, and our brethren are elderly, but while they still meet faithfully

each Sunday, the lampstand is shining brightly in Harvey River, and their praise rises to heaven. Being with them was exceptionally moving, and it was wonderful to see them again on the following day at the Heroes Day Fraternal held in Broughton.

Also, a small ecclesia, the Broughton hall was filled to overflowing with believers who had traveled from all over Jamaica to spend the day with each other and to be encouraged and exhorted by Bro. Matt's classes on the Jerusalem Council.

It was then our turn to start traveling across the island. We made our way first to Round Hill and spent a couple of days visiting with the lovely community of believers. They meet several times during the week, and their closeness as brothers and sisters is evident. At Cottage Class, they take the opportunity to build up and encourage one member each week and we were able to witness their love and appreciation for Marlon, a brother, who works so hard for his ecclesia.

From there, we went on to the north side of the island, where a few sisters live in isolation, strung like precious jewels in a series of towns along the

coast. Gathering them up for some fellowship, we made a visit to Sis. Enid Hall in Port Antonio. This town will soon be known to the world as the location for the next James Bond movie, but it's already known to God because of the light of our Sis. Enid. Sustained by her great faith through the trials of old age, she's an amazing example of the joy to be found in the hope we share.

Finally, we headed down south. Our second Sunday was spent with the Spanish Town ecclesia, in a quiet, thoughtful service where we remembered our Lord... or we tried to! The Pentecostals in the church next door made it a little difficult, making so much noise in a service that was well under way when we arrived and still in full swing when we left a couple of hours later.

Life in Jamaica presents many challenges, but the believers are a delight and it's such a pleasure to get to know them.

*Written by Sis. Antonia Giordano,
who along with Bro. Nathan
are the Link Couple for Jamaica*

*Submitted by Sis. Jan Berneau,
CBMA/CBMC Publicity*

*The
Round
Hill
Ecclesia*





Community.

NEWS & UPDATES

PITTSBURGH, PA

We commend, with our love, Sis. Abigail Telles to the Norfolk, VA ecclesia where she is going to university. We are pleased to have Sis. Laura De caussin (Verdugo Hills, CA), attending our ecclesia while going to university here and Bro. Nathaniel Thomas (Baltimore, MD) meeting with us while working in the area and attending graduate school.

We were happy to have Bro. Ben Link (Cranston, RI) present classes on, “Fulfilling the Great Commission”, for our CYC Fall gathering. We thank him for encouraging us to fulfill Christ’s command to preach the Gospel.

We thank Bre. Jonathan Bowen (Brantford, ON), Roger Snyder (Paris Avenue, OH) and Art Hibbs (Victoria, BC) for their words of comfort and exhortation.

David Pommer

HAMILTON GREENAWAY, ON

The Greenaway Ecclesia has enjoyed visits from several of our brothers and sisters throughout our community over the 2019 year. The Greenaway Ecclesia would like to thank all of our guests and visitors and our brothers that encouraged us with words of exhortation. Our guests included the following brothers and sisters: Tom and Vivian Thorp, Mark and Terry Williams, Jonathan and Naomi Selway, with Sis. Kate Selway, and Nicholas and Joshua, Neil Buxton-Carr, Graham and Sarah Baldock, and Lynda Perks (Mississauga West, ON); Bruce and Barbara Abel and Grant Abel (Barrie, ON); Brian and Celia Thomas, Martin and Lois Webster, and Andrew and Donna Webb (Kitchener Waterloo, ON); Peter and Maggie Stonell (North Bay, ON); Ian and Carol McPhee (Guelph, ON); Bill Perks (Toronto Church Street, ON).

The Greenaway Ecclesia was also blessed in June to have the addition of a family of 6 to our ecclesia. The Mall family was living as refugees in Sri Lanka for 10 years. While there, they were able to learn the truth, become baptized and by the grace of our heavenly Father they found their way to our little hall at Greenaway. We are blessed to have Bro. Farhan and Sis. Huma, Bro. Sosheel, Bro. Shameer, Bro. Joshua and little 6-year-old Honan. Thank you to all our brothers and sisters who helped the Mall's out with gifts of furniture and prayers to help them settle in their new country and home.

We always enjoy guests at Greenaway so feel free to come by. Sunday school starts at 9:30 am, Memorial service at 11am, and Wednesday night readings and discussion at 7:30 pm. Parking is on the street. Please call Bro. Mark Jennings at: 905-578-1038 if you plan on coming to the readings. If too many are away, we will sometimes have to cancel the class. All things are subject to the will of our heavenly Father.

Mark Jennings

CRANSTON, RI

On behalf of the New England Christadelphian Fraternal Gathering Committee, the Eighty-eighth Annual New England Christadelphian Fraternal Gathering was held. The gathering took place on Sunday, October 20, 2019. The theme was "Looking unto Jesus-the Author and Finisher of Our Faith", and the speaker was Bro. Steve Smith. The New England Dinner and Praise Night Food Drive was held on Saturday, December 7, 2019. Guests were asked to bring a donation item to benefit the CCAP Food Bank in Cranston.

Jeff Wallace

VERDUGO HILLS, CA

Sis. Becky Mullin's home suffered both fire and water damage, and asbestos has been located inside as well, from the Porter Ranch fire.

On October 26, 2019, we hosted a Sunday school picnic with lovely food, games, and fellowship.

Bryan and Harmonie Blanchard and family have transferred their membership to the Simi Hills Ecclesia. We wish them Godspeed and thank them for their fellowship and love over the many years they were with us.

We are overjoyed to announce that one of our Sunday school students, ISABEL RAMIREZ, daughter of Bro. Jeff and Sis. Sara Ramirez, gave a good confession of her faith and was baptized on, December 8, 2019.

We gladly welcome Sis. Elise Stickney, transferring from San Diego. We look forward to getting to know her better and also walking with her toward the kingdom.

Jeff Ramirez

POMONA, CA

The Pomona Ecclesia was blessed to welcome the following brothers and sisters around the table of our Lord: Valerie Ifill (Ann Arbor, MI); and Ken and Susan Pitt.

Our Sis. Cindy LaFavor will be moving to Oregon. We celebrated many years with her as a member of the Pomona Ecclesia and will miss her dearly. We are grateful to announce that Sis. Dolores Fisher just celebrated her ninetieth birthday.

JERRY HETZEL, husband of Sis. Jamie Hetzel and son-in-law to Bro. Scott and Sis. Gail VanEngen, after giving a good confession of his faith, was baptized Saturday evening and we extended him



Isabel Ramirez and her father Jeff

the right hand of fellowship during Sunday service. Welcome, dear brother, to the fellowship of Christ.

We sorrow to hear that Keiran Land, son of Shaun Land and grandson of Bro. Jim and Sis. Marilyn Land (Los Angeles, CA), has died. Let us keep the Land family in our prayers at this time of loss.

Bro. Reuben Westley (Nottingham South, UK) and Sis. Rebecca Jackson (Mississauga West, ON) joined us around the table of the Lord.

Jonathan Cooper

JACKSON COUNTY, OR

We were blessed with the fellowship of brothers and sisters: Tom and Becky Nagel (San Diego County, CA); Jason Robinson, Seth Robinson, Caleb Newth, Mike and Rose Hatcher, and Kaitlynn Pursell (Thousand Oaks, CA); and Jonathan Newth (Seattle, WA). We were happy to share fellowship with all.

Sadly, Sis. Pauline Land suffered a major stroke and passed away. Sis. Pauline lived all of her life in the Pomona area and was a member of the Pomona Ecclesia. Tim, her son, moved her up to Jacksonville, OR, into a home near him. She was ninety-nine years old and would have been 100 on, December 11, 2019. She was a faithful mother in Israel for many years. She was buried in California, with a graveside service there. Bro. Bud Davis (Portland, OR) fell asleep in Christ last week. Please keep Sis. Judy in your prayers.

After a good confession of his faith, MIKE OLTHOFF was immersed into the saving name of Jesus Christ on Sunday. The angels are rejoicing as another new life begins.

Tom Muniz

Please send in news and notices by the 5th of the preceding month and include full name of ecclesia and recording brother. Word files or e-mail in text-only format are preferred. The ecclesial position primarily in Ontario, and perhaps elsewhere, is at present confused as unity-related matters are being resolved. Intelligence is published for information purposes only, without endorsement by The Christadelphian Tidings Committee.



Community.

FOR THE CALENDAR

JANUARY, 2020

24-26 **Orlando, FL Orlando Winter Study Day.**

Bro. David Styles, Shelburne, ON. Subject: “Who Is My Neighbor?” For Registration and Hotel information go to website at: www.bit/studyday2020 or for questions email orlandochristadelphians@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY, 2020

23-28 **Desert Hot Springs, CA Palm Springs Bible School.** Join Bro. Stephen Whitehouse, Hall Green UK and Bro. Duncan Kenzie, Saanich, BC at the Miracle Springs Resort for an uplifting and encouraging week of relaxation, fellowship and Bible study. Register online at: www.californiabibleschool.org or email register@californiabibleschool.org.

APRIL, 2020

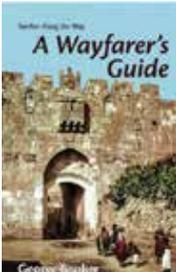
11-18 **Australian Conference** will be held at the Westminster School, Marion, SA, AUS. Theme: “Looking Up, Looking Out, Looking Forward”. Our inspiring theme will focus on how we look up in faith to the Father, the Son, and the things of the Spirit, how we look out for each other

and reach into our communities with love, and how we look forward to the ongoing journey of discipleship and the hope of a better world. Speakers: Bro. John Launchbury (Portland, USA), Bro. Craig Blewett (Westfield, South Africa) and Bro. Matt Norton (Gosford, Australia). Venue: Westminster School, Marion, SA, Australia Enquiries: Website: www.adelaide2020.com.au. Email: secretary@adelaide2020.com.au. Post: The Secretary, PO Box 559, Brighton, SA, 5048.

JULY, 2020

5-11 **Southwest Christadelphian Bible School** will be held, God Willing, at Schreiner University in Kerrville, TX. The scheduled speakers are: Bro. Mark Giordano, Norfolk, VA -Until Messiah the Prince and the Restoration of Jerusalem; Bro. Stephen Mansfield, Golden Grove, South Australia - Barnabas The Encourager; and Bro. Dev Ramcharan, Toronto, ON - Quicken thou me according to thy word, a Study of Psalm 119. Further information and registration online at swcbs.org. Contact: Dwayne Tunnell - Email: mdt1504@sbcglobal.net

Books by *The Tidings*



Farther Along the Way: A Wayfarer's Guide by *George Booker*

A resource for fellow travelers on the Way of Life: word studies, insights into details of Scripture, perspectives on difficult questions, and analogies that relate to the spiritual life. Published: Jan 2018 - 301 pages. \$9.00 USD (plus S&H)

Little Words by *John C. Bilello*

Explore the meanings of key Bible words, their subtleties of meaning and their applications to our walk in Christ. Published: May 2017 \$8.00 US (278 pages).

CAIN — His Life and Legacy by *Matt Harrison*

Probes the lessons of Cain and his time before the Flood and explores questions Bible students have long asked. \$5.00 US (106 pages).

On the Way: Bible Studies, Exhortations, Meditations and Musings by *George Booker*

Insights, reflections, practical issues, difficult passages, personal observations and more to uplift and encourage all those "on the Way". \$9.00 US (309 pages).

Observations along the Way, A Bible Journal by *George Booker*

A sequel to "on the Way". An album of a spiritual journey, offering encouragement and food for thought to fellow travelers along the Way to the Kingdom. \$9.00 US (305 pages).

The Ecclesia at Ephesus by *Ryan Mutter*

Studying the Ecclesia at Ephesus provides powerful lessons in spiritual growth relevant in today's times. \$9.00 US (soft cover, 264 pages, with color maps).

Bible Guidelines for a Happy Marriage by *John C. Bilello*

Sound, proactive, Biblical advice on how to build and maintain a happy marriage. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 127 pages).

The Creation Text: Studies in Early Genesis by *David Levin*

Forty-nine studies offer fresh insights into early Genesis by examining the text and structure of the first five chapters. \$12.00 US (364 pages).

Pictures of Redemption by *George Booker*

Explores parables, analogies, and figures of speech used in Scripture to illustrate the many facets of redemption. \$6.00 US (soft cover, 192 pages).

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Thoughts on the Way

God is Love, and God Forgives

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:7-11).

“God is love.” As far as Bible principles go, this one is as short and simple as can be. Quite often, however, it is met with a caveat: “Yes, but...!” — as though we just can’t bear to let those three little words stand alone, even for a moment. Instead, we push aside this wonderful truth before we can even begin to feel its comfort and assurance. Then we move quickly to outline the conditions for showing love to others — as though God needs our help to interpret His own statement.

Yes, I know. We have beliefs that are very important to us, beliefs that constitute the true gospel. I am not calling any of these fundamentals into question. But time after time, we have

divided (and remained divided) from others who believe the same truths which we believe. And we have based our separation, not on first principles, but on minor procedural differences, prophetic interpretations, and what Robert Roberts called “uncertain details”.

Maybe now is a good time to renew our focus on some of the most important Bible teachings: “God is love” and “God forgives”.

When Jesus healed a man born blind (John 9), the Pharisees found fault with his act of love. Their “Yes, but” involved accusing the healed man of being “born in sin” (v 34, KJV), and then calling Jesus “a sinner” for not “keeping the Sabbath” (v 16).

In the 1 John passage, the apostle paired “God is love” with a related fundamental: “God forgives sins”: “*God loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice [‘propitiation’: KJV; a means of forgiveness] for our sins” (v 10; cp John 3:16).* And the Son committed himself absolutely to his Father’s mission: “*Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).*”

To God and to His Son, true “love” was not just an emotion — it was an action, in fact, a host of actions: Paul tells us

that love is patient and kind... that love protects, trusts, and hopes. That love does not envy... is not proud... keeps no record of wrongs. And that love never fails (1 Corinthians 13). The love demonstrated by the Son of God opened the avenue by which we might approach our heavenly Father and find forgiveness.

Since God loves us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11). We must build upon Christ's love for us by showing our love for others through the same kind of actions — patience, trust and hope. These are actions which, by the way, encourage unity with, not separation from, those who believe as we do.

And we should reflect God's forgiveness provided through His Son, by our willingness to forgive others:

"In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:17-18).

More and more, as we follow Christ, we are made "complete" (mature, grown-up) in God's love. And more and more, we learn to drive out "fear" (of guilt by association?), as well as doubt (distrust? impatience?). Thus, we learn not to judge others: *"Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat... Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another" (Rom 14:10,13).*

This brings us, sadly, to the next "Yes, but!" ... "Yes, God can forgive...but we can't!" And then, for good measure: "I

would love to forgive him, but he hasn't apologized!"

"We can't forgive"? Really? What about our Lord's comment on his own prayer? *"For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (Matt 6:14,15; cp Luke 11:4).* So we conclude that, according to Christ, there must be a way we can forgive others. If we haven't yet figured out how we can forgive others, then maybe we should work a little harder on the concept.

Some were eager to punish the woman caught in adultery (John 8). But Jesus said, *"If any of you is without sin, let him cast the first stone."* A reluctance to punish could be the first step toward forgiveness. If Jesus does not judge, why should we?

When the prodigal son returned, his older brother felt that he wasn't getting enough credit for the work he had done, while his spendthrift brother was enjoying a hero's welcome (Luke 15). Refusing to compare ourselves to others may be another step toward forgiveness. If the father took one son back, why should the other complain?

- God is love, and so we should love one another.
- God forgives us, and so we should forgive one another.

Maybe we need less investigating and reporting of others' "sins". And maybe more patience, kindness, trust and hope (1 Corinthians 13). In short, more love and more forgiveness. It's not too late. If we keep love and forgiveness in our minds, God will yet smile, Christ will say, "Well done", and the angels will sing.

George Booker

TIDINGS

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

Periodicals postage paid at Austin, Texas and at additional mailing offices.

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