

The Berean

A Christadelphian Magazine devoted to the exposition and defense of the Faith once for all delivered to the Saints; and opposed to the dogmas of the Papal and Protestant Churches!

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding – Prov. 23:23.

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...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

CHRIST IS COMING SOON AND WILL REIGN ON EARTH

HYE TEXAS FRATERNAL GATHERING, 2022

Sunday, July 24 - Sunday, July 31

Loving Greetings to all our Brethren and Sisters,

God willing, another fraternal gathering will be held this year at the Christadelphian campgrounds near Hye, Texas. The following information will be needed for those planning to attend.

WEBSITE: See <http://info.christadelphian.com/hye/> for the speaking schedule, directions, and other information as it becomes available.

EDITORIAL

The nations of the world are continuing their march towards economic disaster, the unclean spirits like frogs having intentionally created hardships for the world's population. President Joe Biden's Director of Economics, Brian Deese, made that point clear at the end of June, when questioned about the high price of fuel, and the growing national inflation costs.

CNN Reporter asked: "What do you say to those families that say, 'listen, we can't afford to pay \$4.85 a gallon for months, if not years?'"

BIDEN ADVISOR BRIAN DEESE: "This is about the future of the Liberal World Order and we have to stand firm."

The "Liberal World Order" requires the collapsing of the American Constitution which, ratified in 1790, gave the Earth-witness its rebirth. It is viewed by the Liberal World Order, as a list of negative liberties. It spells out what the elites cannot do to the population—once complained former President Barack Obama. That is exactly right. It explains the victory that the earth had over the tyrannical Beast.

This statement by Mr. Deese makes it clear that these socialist elites do not care that the population is struggling. What is important to them is that their socialist goals are met. It is quite easy now to see the meaning of the words of Revelations 16:

Rev. 16:13-14 "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, *which* go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."

The frog spirits, or that spirit which brought about the end of Catholic control of the nations in the late 18th century was of course the three spirits which motivated the French Revolution of 1789. The battle cry of the French

rebellion against the Catholic Church was “liberty, fraternity, equality.” These principles, as motivational principles are all divine principles. But in the hand of Karl Marx and the socialist movement he defined and encouraged, these principles are being used to enslave the world’s population, no different than the tyrants he purported to be replacing.

The Beast of Revelations, having been defeated by the principles of liberty, fraternity and equality, reinvented itself to embrace—in an unclean way—these principles. They had done it before. When the pagan beast fell to Catholicism in 312 AD during the reign of Constantine the Great, paganism simply adapted itself to pseudo-Christian principles which allowed it to take over the church. Now, again having been defeated, the Beast has changed to pretend to embrace principles of freedom, while working instead to enslave the masses. Therefore, we now today clearly see these unclean spirits coming out of the mouth of the Russian Dragon, the European Beast, and the papal False Prophet.

Freedom is the natural enemy of Revelation’s Beast. Therefore in opposition to the Beast, God created two witnesses, the Earth-witness and the Woman-witness. The two have very little in common, except for one over riding principle. Both hate the Beast. The Earth-witness is the militant, political and pseudo-religious enemy of the Beast, while the Woman-witness is true religious enemy of the Beast.

These both existed for a thousand, two hundred and three score days, or 1,260 years from 312 AD till the witness was defeated by the Beast, crowned with defeat during St. Bartholomew’s massacre, 1572.

Rev 11:3 And I will give *power* unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

Pitiful and destroyed, the witnesses were finally extinguished by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, a document which had granted the witnesses certain freedom. But the witness was not to remain dead.

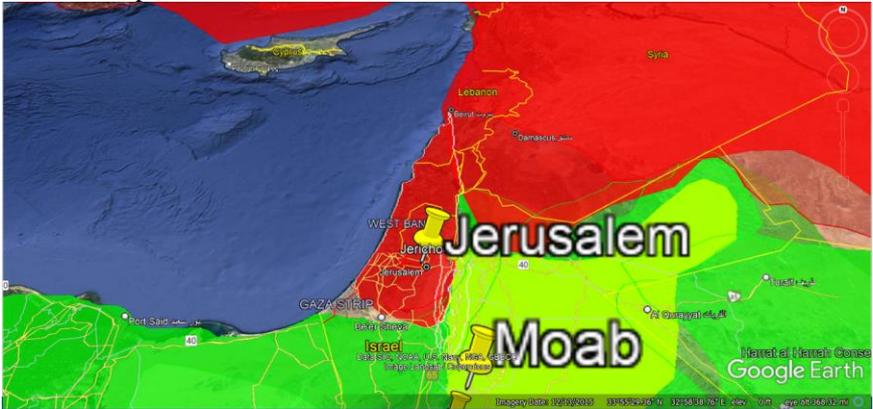
Rev 11:11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them [the witnesses], and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

The witness days are religious days, lunar days of 30 years, Three and a half lunar days was 105 years, and in 1789-1790, the great revolutions in France and America brought the Earth-witness back to life. And this allowed for the woman-witness’s rebirth, of which bro. John Thomas played such a significant role.

The Fall of the King of the South

At the end of the last installment, we saw that the King of the North, a confederation of European and northern Islamic nations led by Russia, had defeated Israel's defenders, the King of the South, or Tarshish, her young lions, and Sheba and Dedan upon the mountains of Israel, and had taken all of Israel. The Southern King had been driven out of Israel into "Edom, Moab and the children of Ammon, or Jordan, east of Israel. Obviously, the South also still maintained their position in Egypt, the typical home of the King of the South.

The landscape of the Middle East at this time would look like this.



We have several questions to consider. What happened that the King of the South, the mightiest of nations was brought low by a nation whose incompetence is on full display in Ukraine? And Ukraine is not unique. The ineptness of the Russian military is its history. Its victories over the ages have lain in its stubborn insistence to achieve its tasks in spite of losses most nations would deem unacceptable. What played out in Chechnya from August 1999 through April 2009, a terrible period of ten years for the Chechnyan people, is playing out today in Ukraine.

We have seen that the prophecies of Ezekiel 38 requires a "turning back" of Russia's first attack. The same is seen in Daniel 11, when in the first battle between the Seleucus family of the North, and the Ptolomy family of the South, the northern king was totally destroyed.

Now some question whether the term "turn thee back" is correct, or should it be "turn around," a term which may not mean a defeat for the northern king. All the literal word for word versions have "turn you back," or "turn thee back," so there really shouldn't be any such question. But further, as regards context, all versions have the Northern hosts having hooks put into their jaws following this turning back or around, and then coming forth onto the land of

Israel. So regardless of translation, the text shows the northern host retreating from the land, till God places hooks into its jaws bringing him back into the land.

But that brings us back to our principal question. How does a nation with a military as mighty as the United States, fall to a nation which has shown the incompetence of Russia? We suggest it is quite easy, particularly in view of the Ukraine war, to see how easy it would be for the Tarshish power to “turn back” Russia when she advances into the land. And why Russia would have to have hooks in its jaws to draw them back into such a difficult battle. So, what happens?

We may think this is a difficult question, but 150 years ago, when Christadelphians were emphasizing what these prophecies said, the situation was no different. Here is an article from the *Christadelphian*, 1886, demonstrating the tremendous advantage that Britain had in the world, and how unthinkable it was that Russia could contend with the great Tarshish power of that day for supremacy in the Middle East.

The *Christadelphian*, 1886, pg. 309 “The Ships of Tarshish.—The extraordinary extent and ascendancy of the maritime power of Britain are illustrated in an unusually impressive way by a book just published (at Lloyd’s) setting forth a list of the ships of the world. The book consists of a series of tables giving particulars of every sea-going vessel of a hundred tons and upwards; a list of ship owners, with the names and tonnage of their ships; particulars of the warships of all nations; the names of all British shipbuilders and of the ships they have built; accounts of dry docks, floating docks, shipways, pontoons, and other appliances in all the ports of the world, &c., &c. From these particulars it appears that there are in the whole world, 9,642 steamers (wood, iron, and steel), of which 5,020 belong to Britain. The United States has only 388; France, 508; Germany, 559. Out of 1,966 iron and 65 steel sailing ships in the whole world, Britain possesses 1,607 of the former and 60 of the latter. Then the steamers that fall to Britain are larger than those belonging to other nations. ‘Our mercantile navy,’ says the *Daily News*, ‘consequently not only holds its unrivalled and unquestioned supremacy, but is further distancing every rival (as appears by the returns of ships being built). More than half the total tonnage of the world and a third of its ships belong to the British Empire, while the United States follow with a third of our ships, though of far inferior construction, and a fifth of our tonnage. Norway comes close behind, then Germany, and then France. The United States has only two iron steamers of more than 1,500 tons, while France has 99, and Germany 76. We have 1,590 of these larger steamers. Of steel steamers of this heavy burden, Germany has one, and neither France nor the United States have any. We possess 158.’ The total number of sailing vessels in the world over 100 tons, is 25,766;

of these, only 5,114 belong to Britain. Her superiority is in the large and steam propelled vessels in which the strength of the sea now consists.”

So how did the brethren think this problem would be resolved, that the great power of the 19th Century would fall to what was clearly an inferior power, Russia? They believed the answer was in the prophesy of the 48th Psalm.

Psa. 48:7 “Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.”

There was no unreasonable expectation as to the military might and force or capability of Russia. The prophesy is clear. Russia overwhelms the Southern Powers and conquers all of Israel, driving the mighty southern forces into retreat in neighboring states. But Russia would not do this. God would do this. How God will do this is not clear. Bro. Thomas expected it to be by hurricane. Bro. Thomas wrote:

“The reader will perceive, then, that contemporarily with the sole exaltation of the Lord, “the day of Jehovah is upon all the ships of Tarshish.” This is explained in the forty-eighth Psalm, which is prophetic of the time when Zion, the City of the Great King, shall be the joy of the whole earth. But before this comes to pass, it foretells the assembling of the kings against her; that is, the kings of Gog’s confederacy: and their flight with precipitation and terror, which seizes upon them as the pains of a parturient woman. It is then added as a contemporary event, ‘Thou breakest the ships of Tarshish with an east wind.’ This implies that the ships broken and scattered are a fleet in the Mediterranean, which would be exposed to a hurricane from the east. This will, doubtless, be the British Mediterranean fleet co-operating with the land forces against the Russian armies in the Holy Land. The pride of Britain, and *probably* of America, in maritime alliance with her against the common enemy of constitutional government and liberty, will be laid low by the wreck of the most powerful fleet that ever floated upon the Sea of Tarshish.”

When we look back to Daniel 11, as we noted last month, following the second turning back of the northern king (Antiochus the Great) the southern king is said not to have been strengthened by his victory.

Dan 11:12 *And* when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up; and he shall cast down *many* ten thousands: but he shall not be strengthened *by it*.

We might ask, why was Ptolomy Philopater not strengthened by his victory of Antiochus the Great at Rephina, in southern Israel? And we find the answer in history, as paraphrased by bro. Thomas:

“And when he, the king of the south [Ptolomy Philopater], hath taken away the multitude by a signal defeat of Antiochus, his heart shall be lifted up, for he will desire to enter the most holy place of the temple. But while he was preparing to enter, he was stricken, and carried off for

dead. In his victory over Antiochus he shall cast down ten thousands, even 10,000 foot and 300 horse. But, not following up his advantages, Philopater shall not be strengthened by his victory.”

God intervened and being insulted by the arrogance of the southern king, removed him from the throne placing an inept and juvenile son, Ptolomy



Epiphanes on the throne, who soon showed himself incapable of competing with the Northern King. Antiochus then conquered and held onto all of Palestine. So, God intervened, weakening the arrogant south, and allowing the North to prosper for a while.

So, we see, the northern king cannot, of themselves, gain enough power to overcome the south. It is the south's own arrogance and confidence, and probably some betrayal of Israel which will bring God's vengeance on the South, allowing the north to succeed.

As we said, bro. Thomas thought the east wind would be a hurricane. But there is another force which has already devastated Tarshish and played a major role in Israel's history. The original sea going sons of Greece, or sons of Javin, Tarshish as we have seen the Scriptures call them, are historically known as the Minoans. The Minoans were a mighty and wealthy sea going people who dominated islands of the Aegean sea around Greece, and in fact most of the Eastern Mediterranean Ocean. This gray colored areas of this map shows their range.

Their capital was an island in the Mediterranean, called Thera by the ancients, and shown on the map as such, though it is called Santorini today. Thera was such a splendid and magnificent place that many modern archeologists think that this was Herodotus' Island of Atlantis.

But ancient archeology tells us that this society was destroyed by natural means, and that destruction came almost overnight. For Thera was more than simply an island. It was a giant volcano. When that volcano went off, the largest volcano in man's known history, it completely destroyed the Minoan society with the force of the blast, the mighty winds, and the Tsunamis which followed.

We can see on the map below the eastern half of the volcanic cone for Thera, now called Santorini. This is a part of the ring of the old island, all that is left of the volcano's cone. The western half is obliterated.



To get an idea of how large this volcanic blast was, it is thought to have put 60 cubic miles of dust into the sky. The largest volcano of recorded history was Krakatoa, which put 17 cubic miles of dirt into the sky. Mt. St. Helens, which many of us will remember, put three cubic miles of dust into the air. Thera, by the way, occurred at the same time that the children of Israel were in Egypt, and the dust in the sky may very well have lowered the earth's temperature, causing the seven years of famine. But

who knows?

What we do know is that the Minoan civilization came to an end at that time, and Tarshish had to ally itself with the Phoenicians of Tyre and Sidon to continue its sea going traditions. So likewise, might the Tarshish powers be destroyed and carried out of their protective role over Israel.

This is why Tyre, the queen city of the ancient world is called both the daughter of Tarshish, and the daughter of Sidon.

Isa. 23:10 "Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: *there is no more strength.*"

Isa. 23:12 "And he said, Thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over to Chittim; there also shalt thou have no rest."

The Minoans moved to Tyre and intermingled with the sea going Phoenicians, as recorded in these two verses.

Now we might consider, for a minute, why this terrible destruction will come upon Tarshish. We have already considered the promise from God that He

will bless them that bless Israel, and curse them which curse Israel. So how can America be destroyed by God, in spite of the great blessings the Americans have bestowed upon Israel? And the answer is in the conclusion of a verse we have already considered. Remember the blessings God recounted that He had bestowed upon the King of Tyre. He was the anointed Cherub. He was in the Garden of Eden. Etc. Well those verses end this way:

Eze. 28:15-18 “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, **till iniquity was found in thee.** By the multitude of thy merchandise, they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.”

In other words, something will happen during the time of the peace treaty (which we discussed last month, June 2022) in the so that America’s support for Israel becomes halfhearted, or worse, that America may ultimately work against Israel. And also, the moral fiber of America may become such that it has no redeeming feature to it at all but is only iniquitous. At such a time, God will withdraw His blessings on America, and the end will be the same as that of ancient Tyre. And to further speculate on the role volcanos may play on the destruction of America’s forces, note that the prophet says that God will bring a fire upon her, to devour her, and leave her ashes upon the earth.

We can see the roots of these things happening today. Let’s take the recent murder of a Saudi Arabian journalist in the Saudi Arabian embassy in Turkey. President Trump had made it clear that he was not going to put sanctions on Saudi Arabia, because the alliance is too important to United States, and of course, it is that relationship prophesied between Sheba, Dedan, and the ships of Tarshish. But a lot of criticism came against him, criticism insisting that he punish Saudi Arabia. And this criticism came from individuals who sponsored and were responsible for the Iranian Nuclear Deal. For Iran and Saudi Arabia are the most bitter of enemies for a number of reasons, racial, religious, and social.

This criticism came from the socialist arms of the American government. This is where the alliance with Iran comes from, as Iran is dedicated to the destruction of Israel. The elite fighting forces of Iran are called the Al Kuds, which is the Arab name for Jerusalem. Socialism is the doctrine that man can

rule himself. The Jews are the testimony to man, that God is in control. God Himself testified of the Jews:

Isa. 43:10-13 “Ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He: before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside Me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand: I will work, and who shall let it?”

This is why all socialists must eventually be anti-Semitic, even Jewish socialists. As the United States denies more and more that she was founded to be a Christian nation, an arm of God’s witness in the earth, as she embraces more and more European socialism, she moves closer and closer to the time where she will rebel from her appointed role as the cherub that covers, iniquity will be found in her, and devastation will follow. This is why the Tarshish Navy will be destroyed.

Come With Me, My Sister-Bride!

BY BROTHER G. V. GROWCOTT

"Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister-Bride: thou hast overcome me with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

SONG OF SOLOMON CHAPTER FOUR This chapter is about Love and Beauty. In fact, this is the subject of the whole Song. These are the qualities that are eternal. Love and Beauty are inseparable and are essential to each other. There cannot be Love without Beauty. There can of course be love in the sense of kindness and compassion and desire to help, but not in the sense of affection and communion and unity of heart.

There can be no true mutual Love without spiritual Beauty on both sides. We speak of course of spiritual Love. All that is natural and animal will fade and wither and pass away. That which is spiritual will endure forever: Love and Beauty: Affection and Perfection.

The Song of Songs is unique in Scripture. It portrays Christ's intense, overflowing love for the Ecclesia (and her's for him) expressed intimately in the first person. It is so different from Psalms, which are largely Christ's feelings toward God: his struggles, his overcomings. Some Psalms come close, like Psalm 45, but with far less detail and intimacy— and expressed more distantly in the third person.

The Song expresses Christ's need for the Ecclesia: the motivation that his great love for her gives him. Does Christ have need? Does God have need? Are they not perfectly satisfied and self-sufficient? God is love, and the fulness of love requires an object worthy of it.

This is what God is creating, in infinite divine patience, through the travail of the ages. God loves all His creation. Not a sparrow falls unnoticed by Him Who lovingly oversees immensity and eternity. Ninety-nine percent of all the beauty of Creation — even on earth, let alone the vast universe — is for Him alone, and is never seen by human eye. Snowflakes fell in untold myriads of trillions for thousands of years before the microscope revealed to man that each one is a glorious treasure of delicate, intricate beauty. And a snowflake is but for a moment.

But the pure and holy perfection of the Redeemed will be the crowning beauty of all the words of God. The multitudinous Christ will be the most beautiful of all the beauties of the universe: the richest of eternal beauties, formed out of common clay.

This Song is the Song of Songs: the Supreme Song: the Song of Moses and the Lamb: the Song of the 144,000 on Mt. Zion. Song — the out bursting and overflowing of rejoicing — is the inevitable product of Beauty and Love. The more we develop these spiritual qualities, the more irresistibly will our hearts be filled with rejoicing and song. This is a marvelous contrivance of Divine Wisdom.

This Song is for teaching and/or for comfort. It is to teach us that these two spiritual qualities are what we must devote our lives to developing:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Bride hath MADE HERSELF READY" (Rev. 19:7).

The true Bride will have made herself ready. She will conform to the Beauty and Love herein portrayed. There will be a ready and prepared Bride, perfect in beauty, without spot or blemish, waiting to welcome her Lord. We see her in this Song being greeted and praised and embraced by the Bridegroom and invited to be with him forever.

If we fit into the picture; if we are in full harmony and compliance; if this is where all our heart and interest and labors and efforts center, then this Song is for our joy and comfort.

If, however, this is not so, and our minds and time and interests and activities are turned elsewhere, then this Song is for warning and instruction, and not for comfort at all. There is no comfort to be taken unless we are faithfully laboring to the utmost of our ability.

There will be a Bride of perfect Beauty and Love. Whether, in that great Day, we are part of that Bride, or part of the vast multitude turned weeping away, depends entirely upon what we devote our life to.

The two characters of this Song are Solomon, the Peace-Giver, and Shulamith, the Peace-Receiver. Both names are related to Peace. Peace is of one fabric with Love and Beauty. He is the Prince of Peace: that "Peace of God" transcending comprehension (Phil. 4:7); the "Great Peace" that they alone enjoy who manifest in all their lives that they "love His law" (Psa. 119:165); the Peace that none can take from the Peace with God": life's ultimate consummation (Rom.5:1).

The purpose of this Song is to develop the mind of the Spirit. This will not come naturally, however long we are just "in the Truth." It requires intense effort and study and meditation and practice—just like anything worthwhile does. What time and labor and trouble and care people will so eagerly put into getting the things of this life! —and then expect the infinitely greatest thing of all to be handed to them without effort. What blind and pitiful folly!

This Song is to show what God requires of us: what the true Bride is, and must be, like. It is, like all Scripture, given —

"That the man of God may be perfect; thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2Tim. 3:17).

If we feel we have already reached that point, then perhaps we can afford to give it less than our supreme effort and attention. Chapter 4 is Christ's description of the Bride. All who fit this picture are of the Bride. All who do not, are not. This is how he will meet her at the judgment seat —

"Come, ye blessed of my Father!" (Matt. 25:34)

As we examine this chapter, we are impressed with the intense minuteness of the inspection. For the Redeemed, it is a loving inspection that lauds every aspect of beauty, but for the rejected and unworthy it will be very much otherwise.

The Bride is multitudinous. We must bear this in mind. It is addressed to each, individually — but only insofar as they recognize themselves as small parts of a great whole. We must be a unity: a harmonious, loving unity. Any lack of love, any petty-minded tendency to carping criticism of our brethren destroys the Beauty and Love, as far as the critic himself is concerned. There will still be the Bride, but those who criticize habitually and by nature, write themselves off from participation in her beauty. Truly there must be faithful rebuke, when faithful rebuke is called for; but it must be by divine method and motive. The fleshly critic is outside of both.

"Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair!" (v. 1)

Repetition: for surety, and emphasis, and importance. "Fair" is archaic English for beautiful. "Love" is *rayah*: fellow, companion, associate, friend — emphasizing unity of mind and purpose and character, for this is absolutely essential in Bride and Bridegroom.

The Bridegroom goes on to praise seven features of the Perfect Bride: eyes, hair, teeth, lips, temples, neck, and breasts.

"Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks."

This comes first. Eyes are light and understanding, discernment, perception. The dove is the symbol of the Spirit (John 1:32), of purity, gentleness, harmlessness. It was the only sacrificial bird. Here is clarity of spiritual insight; discerning of the Truth; seeing with gentleness and understanding, and sympathetic desire to help and not destroy.

It would appear that "locks" (*tzammah*: 'something fastened on') should be "veil": submission and modesty, the opposite of boldness. The Redeemed are represented as a woman, the wife and helpmeet of Christ the Head, because the ideal female characteristics are more suitable to the Redeemed than those of the male.

"Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Mt. Gilead."

As specifically distinguished from the sheep, the goat is waywardness. But of itself, it was a clean and sacrificial animal. Here a flock of glossy, long-haired goats seen descending a hillside, is a symbol of beauty and animation, as hair ripples and shines in the light as the head is moved. Long — not short—hair is the glory of the female (1 Cor. 11).

Hair, like the veil, is covering and submission: but it is much more. It is personal beauty; it is glory; it is multitudinous unity with the Head. In Samson, it was strength. In the Nazarite, it was separateness and dedication. In the two women who ministered to Christ (Luke 7:28; John 11:2) it was loving, humble devotion and service.

"*Gilead*" connotes fruitfulness and health. The name means "heap of witness" (Gen. 31:47). It was a place associated with balm and physicians: healing and ministrations (Jer. 8:22).

"Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing" (v. 2).

Teeth have both great beauty and great usefulness. They are the aspect of eating the spiritual food that develops the spiritual mind: mastication,

assimilation, rumination. Beautiful teeth indicate health, care, wise diet, and cleanliness.

The word "shorn" (kahtzav) does not seem exactly correct. It is never so translated elsewhere and is not the normal word for shorn. A fully shorn sheep does not give the impression of beauty. This word means "formed or cut to uniform shape and size." Its close variant is translated "of one size" as applied to the Cherubim in the Most Holy, and the Temple lavers (1 Kings 6:25; 7:37). The idea is uniformity and balance.

The beauty of the Bride is in the balanced evenness of her eating of the Word, and of the balanced result in her character and conduct. How hard it is to keep a proper balance in our studies, in our judgments, in our treatment of others! How rare is balance: how rare is intense zeal without hypercriticism: how rare is gentle kindness without weakness and compromise! But how important to the Bride's beauty in the eyes of her Lord. It can only come by balanced assimilation of the Word, day in and day out, eschewing crotchets.

The "washing" is quite self-explanatory: washing in the blood of the Lamb, washing by the Word. Cleanliness in every aspect of mind and body is one of the primary and fundamental lessons of the law of God. "Be ye holy even as I am holy" is the urgent, constant theme.

"Whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them."

The sense seems rather to be —

"Whereof every one is twinned, and none bereaved."

This word for "twin" (tah-am) is rendered "coupled together" of the boards of the Tabernacle (Exod. 26:24); and "barren" (shakkoot) is always elsewhere translated "bereaved" or "robbed" (Jer. 18:21; Hos. 13:8; etc.).

It seems to further emphasize the balanced completeness of the full, even set of teeth: none missing: all perfect pairs. Gaps in the teeth destroy the beauty and unity, and impair the chewing process — denoting wasted time, insufficient attention, and unbalanced, crotchety study.

"Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely" (v. 3).

Here certainly is speech, a very vital aspect of the Beauty — or otherwise — of those who would be the Bride. "Thread" may seem too thin a conception for full, rounded lips of beauty; but the thought seems to be rather the delicate outline of form and shape.

"Scarlet," like the lips themselves, can be used in two very different ways. Scarlet is sin (Isa. 1:18); but throughout the sacrificial ordinances, scarlet is rather salvation from sin by the shedding of blood. Scarlet wool was used in

the cleansing of the leper, and in the preparation of the red heifer water of purification (Lev. 14:4, 9; Num. 19:6). And we remember Rahab's "scarlet thread" of salvation (James 2:18).

The mouth is both the primary source of sin, and the means of escape from it:

"With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:10).

"The lips of the righteous feed many" (Prov. 10:21).

"By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37).

The beautiful mouth of the Bride gives forth only "the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26), for she is the Virtuous Woman, the Ideal Wife. Criticism is a very easy habit, and it is usually indulged in by those who do little, speaking about those who do much. It is a miserable device to obscure our own shortcomings. But the beautiful Bride's speech is "comely," both in content and in manner, for she knows that "every idle word" will be called to account at the last great Day, as Christ warns (Matt. 12:36). What a dreadful Day of reckoning we may be preparing for ourselves!

"Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks (veil)"

The temple is the seat of thought, judgment, character, and resolution. God said He would make Ezekiel's forehead strong against his adversaries (Ezek. 3:8). The forehead is where the sealing of God's servants must occur (Rev. 7:3; 22:4) — the transforming of the mind, and the stamping of it with the indelible impress of that which is pure and holy and divine.

The veiled temple is modesty: not bold or brazen. Again, it may be the beauty of the Spirit beneath the veil of the flesh.

Pomegranate is fruit, and it is a very special fruit in the divine imagery: the essence of all fruit. It was on the border of the High Priest's robe (Exodus. 39:24), with the golden bells of salvation and praise. And four hundred brazen pomegranates capped the two great pillars of Stability and Strength — Jachin and Boaz—at the entrance of the Temple (1 Kings 7:42).

Cut through transversely, the pomegranate has twelve sections, arranged around the center like the camps of the twelve Tribes around the Tabernacle. It is full of white, pearl-like seeds in a red fluid, and seems to represent a multitudinous unity purified in the blood of the Lamb.

The eastern pomegranate is light golden brown with a tinge of pink and would not unfittingly represent the temple of the Bride. But the word "piece" (pelakh), which implies "to break, pierce or cut," points rather to the interior of the fruit. At first consideration, it may not seem appropriate to compare the temple to an opened pomegranate, with its bright red and white; but the

thought is not a direct comparison of appearance, but rather the impression of the beauty of the brilliant, jewel-like shining freshness that is revealed within when the pomegranate is opened up.

This is especially fitting in that the temple represents the mind within. Again, reverting to the veil (of the flesh), the pure white forehead showing through the heavy meshes of a red veil could have the striking appearance of a freshly opened pomegranate.

"Thy neck like the tower of David, builded for an armory"(v. 4).

The idea is grace and stateliness and firmness and strength: labor and steadfastness in the Truth's warfare: honor, freedom, and joy. The neck is used in various symbols. A stiff neck is obstinacy; a stretched-forth neck is wantonness; a bowed neck is servitude. To put the neck to the work is zeal and faithful labor, and that is part of the picture here. An erect neck is freedom and joy; and chains about the neck are glory and honor, again parts of this picture. The neck connects the Head to the Body, therefore above all things it must be firm and strong like the tower of David.

The word for "armory" (talpeeyoth) appears only here and is given many interpretations. It seems to mean "tall and slender."

"Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men."

It was customary to hang rows of brilliantly polished shields on the central defence tower of a city: often trophies of victory from conquered enemies. From a distance they would appear as chains of gold about a neck. Here is the aspect of both spiritual and actual warfare. Victory is the hallmark of the Bride: it marks her past and her future—

"To him that overcometh [that is, overcometh himself, sin, the flesh] will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2:26). The victor shall have the victory.

"Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, that feed among the lilies" (v. 5).

The breast is the seat of the emotions. It also represents sustenance and fruitfulness, and nurture and care of the young and helpless. Perhaps maturity, and gentle, concerned, loving consideration and provision for others, are the principal indications here. And motherhood: the New Jerusalem, mother-city of the Millennium, nurturing all the earth in the law of the Lord. Isaiah's glorious closing picture is —

"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem...that ye may suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations" (Isa. 66:10-11).

The two-fold aspect irresistibly points to Jewish and Gentile components of the Bride. In fact, the whole natural body is almost entirely two-fold and

symmetrical: though its fundamental unity is emphasized by its most vital elements—the mind and heart — being single. There must be just one mind and heart in the multitudinous Body.

Lilies are the Temple flowers, the divine flowers, as pomegranates are the corresponding fruit. Lilies appear to have been purple. The name (shohshahn) means “shine,’ or “to rejoice”.

"Roe" is tzvee. This same word is usually translated “glory” or “beauty.” The animal is apparently so named because of its striking beauty of appearance and motion. It indicates speed and grace and surefootedness in high places: the army of the Redeemed who will "tread down the wicked" under their hooves, or "straight feet" (Mal. 4:2-3; Ezek. 1:7). Roes truly are not warlike animals, but neither is a lamb, symbol of their Commander. These are clean and peaceful animals, warring to establish righteousness and true, permanent peace.

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense" (v. 6).

Myrrh is red. It means 'bitter.' It is medicinal and purifying. It symbolizes sorrow and sacrifice. It was associated with burial. Frankincense is white and symbolizes prayer and praise.

Christ's custom was to go up at night into a mountain to pray. In its fulness, Calvary and Moriah comprise historically the 'mountain of sacrifice and hill of prayer.' It was a going up from the valley of the flesh to the mountain top of the Mercyseat and Shekinah Glory.

"Thou art all fair, my Love: there is no spot in thee" (v. 7).

Are we part of the Bride ? Is it our utmost and constant effort to be WORTHY to be so, to the exclusion of everything else? If not, why not? Where is wisdom? Where is plain ordinary commonsense? There IS a Bride, and she is ever spotless. She was made white and pure in the blood of the Lamb, and she is kept spotless by dedicated, loving obedience; and striving, and repentance, and prayer. The wise will give their whole lives and energies to becoming and being part of this glorious and joyous community. That is what manifests that they are the wise. All who do not are the foolish.

"He sanctifieth and cleanseth it by the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be HOLY AND WITHOUT BLEMISH" (Eph. 5:26-27).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God... Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you FAULTLESS before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy"(Jude 21-24).

"Come with me from Lebanon, my Bride, with me from Lebanon" (v. 8). Repetition again: sureness and urgency. A new name for the first time in this Song: My Bride. And a wonderful, eternal, intimate invitation: Come with me!

There are two views of interpretation of this verse. Is it "from" Lebanon, as away from something to be abandoned, as the high places of the earth? Or is it, as in the latter part of the verse, "Come look from Lebanon": an ascending to, and viewing of, the inheritance?

It would appear to be the latter. Lebanon was part of the promised inheritance. God says—

"I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon." (Zech. 10:10).

And in two other places in this chapter (vs. 11, 15) Lebanon is spoken of as part of the beauty and the blessing: "the smell of Lebanon," "streams from Lebanon." Lebanon means "white and pure."

"Look from Amana (Truth) and Shenir (Light) and Hermon (the 'Holy Mount')."

Hermon was almost certainly the "holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:18) of the Transfiguration. In Psalm 133 the "dew of Hermon" is associated with "life for evermore" and unity among brethren. These are the new and purified "high places of the earth" to which the Bride is exalted: the New Heavens.

"From the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards,"

These are the former dominions of the evil beast nations, the present Sin-Powers of the world—for ages the ravenous marauders of the earth—but now subdued and pacified under the "straight feet" of the Lamb and the Roes, when the meek inherit the earth. Truly—

Mt. Zion is more glorious than the mountains of prey" (Psa. 76:2-4).

The leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . the lion shall eat straw... they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My HOLY MOUNTAIN, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:6-9).

Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister-Bride" (v. 9).

Literally, "hearted me"—that is, given me heart, or taken away my heart: probably including both thoughts. Strength of heart and oneness of heart are the basic ideas.

Here is overflowing intensity of affection and emotion of Christ for his brethren and sisters. This is the satisfaction of the travail of his soul (Isa.

53:11); the "joy set before him" for which he endured the suffering and the shame (Heb. 12:2).

It is the Bride's beauty that overcomes him. Let us note this well. If there is no beauty, there can be no love. Sympathy, perhaps, and pity, and kindly sorrow for what might have been. But no eternal, spiritual Love. That is only for those who concern themselves above all else to develop the Beauty.

Another new name. "Bride" alone is inadequate. Their relationship is far more wonderful and intimate and joyous than any human relationship. "Sister-Bride" approaches closer, for it combines two of the deepest forms of human love. He is not only the strong and glorious Bridegroom: he is the protective, caring Elder Brother.

And elsewhere the Redeemed are called his "children" (Heb. 2:13), and his "seed" (Isa. 53:10)—drawing into the type the beauty and tenderness of a third deep form of human love: a triple bond, a three-fold cord: Bride, Sister, Daughter. The same family and background and parentage.

"Thou hast overcome me with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck."

In the fullness of their intimacy and mutual understanding and heart-harmony, the slightest loving movement of eye or head is sufficient to arouse overflowing affection. How little is needed to convey the deepest meaning when heart is wholly knit to heart! *The Bride's beauty overcomes Christ*. Are we part of the Bride?—the select few chosen from the ages. Do we realize the effort and devotion required?

"How beautiful is thy love, my Sister-Bride: how much better than wine!" (v. 10).

How infinitely more reviving and gladdening and satisfying is the spiritual than the natural! This is "pleasure for evermore" (Psa. 16:11): no brief, passing, cheating excitement whose tinsel is soon faded and dull, but eternal permanence; well worth waiting for.

"And the smell of thine ointments than all spices!"

Ointment in Proverbs (27:9), is the sweet intimate counsel of soul to soul. "Ointment" here is the common word for "oil"—shemen—the oil of gladness, of light, of praise, worship and thanksgiving: purifying, healing, dedicating, consecrating. Sacrifice, praise, worship, and thanksgiving are the sweet savors unto God.

"Thy lips drop as the honeycomb" (v. 11).

Her lips always overflow with golden sweetness, *because* that is the pure and serene state of the heart within: kindness, encouragement to others, true

spiritual counsel and guidance. We are not appointed judges. We are constantly warned against habitual, unnecessary judging. Truly there are times we must judge, but very humbly and reluctantly—not by steady, thoughtless, unfeeling fleshly habit.

Honey does not just happen effortlessly. It is the precious product of prodigious diligence and labor. A bee travels hundreds and hundreds of miles in its industrious lifetime, just to gather a total of a small spoonful of honey. The bee doesn't *make* the honey. It is the free and gracious gift of God. But the bee has to collect it, and prepare it, and dispense it. It brings no nourishment and sweetness just left in the flower.

"And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."

Aromatic trees abounded in the verdant mountains of Lebanon. God says through Hosea, of these coming, joyful days—

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall blossom as the lily . . . his branches shall spread: his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon" (Hos. 14:5-6).

It is the life-giving dew from God that brings forth the fruition of all His Creation, to His glory:

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

The aromatic garments of the Bride are her "adorning for her husband": righteousness, holiness, kindness, gentleness: worship and obedience and loving service—

"The King's Daughter is all-glorious WITHIN. Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shalt be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework" (Psa. 45:13-14).

"A garden enclosed is my Sister-Bride, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed" (v. 12). A garden is the epitome of organized beauty and productiveness and fruitfulness and new life and is a perfect type of the glorified Bride. An area is carefully selected for site and favorable conditions, separated, marked off and protected with a wall or fence, cleared, leveled, the soil tested, enriched, broken up, worked over, sown, watered, weeded, tended, sprayed, pruned—to bring forth at last to the patient gardener an abundance of beauty of sight and smell and sound (for living creatures are part of a garden), and bountiful provision of food and healing medicines.

The Bride is enclosed, shut up, sealed: not selfishly, but for integrity, and purity, and eventual universal blessing. Safe, guarded, separated, made secure, sealed, and identified as belonging to Christ, and Christ alone.

"Thy plants—SHOOTS, OFFSPRING—are an orchard of pomegranates" (v. 13).

The original for "orchard" is *pardais*: a "paradise of pomegranates." Constant emphasis is on fruitfulness, productiveness, bringing forth bountifully for the sustenance and benefit of others: healing, sustaining, giving nourishment and joy. This is the essence of the Truth, and of those who are truly in it. Are we of the Bride?

"With pleasant fruits, camphire, spikenard, saffron, calamus, cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all chief spices."

These all have their memory-stirring connotations in Scripture and bring many things to mind. Camphire is kopher, the same word that is translated "atonement"—actually meaning "cover" or "cleanse": the golden Ark-cover or Mercy-seat. It is apparently so named because from it was extracted a beautiful golden dye or "covering."

Spikenard takes us to quiet Mary's loving ministration, when the odor filled the house (Jn. 12:3); she alone of all that company seeming to realize the significance and solemnity of the occasion.

Calamus and cinnamon were ingredients of the holy anointing oil, by which kings, priests, and prophets were consecrated to the service of God: consecration and service: divinely bestowed authority and dignity.

Myrrh and aloes were the needed, loving contribution of the once fearful but suddenly bold Nicodemus, in an hour of darkness and sorrow.

"Awake, O north wind; come, thou south wind: blow upon my garden that the spices may flow out" (v. 16).

The north wind may be pleasantly cooling, or it may be bitterly cold. The south wind may be comforting and warming, or it may be burning and scorching. Cold and heat, affliction and comfort, smiting judgment and loving care, all have their place. Plants need the strengthening and variety of extremes of weather—up to a point: to stir up, to activate, to bring to life and fruition. God giveth the increase.

"Let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruit"

So ends the chapter, and so similarly ends the whole Song—

"Make haste, my Beloved!" (8:14) . . .

"Even so come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev. 22:14)

"Let him eat his pleasant fruit"

Will he find fruit? We know he will: but shall we have participated in providing for his joy the "pleasant fruits" described in this chapter? Can we join in this appeal?

Verse 1 of chapter 5 actually belongs at the end of this chapter—

"I am come into my garden, my Sister-Bride. I have gathered my spice. I have eaten my honey. I have drunk my wine. Eat, O friends! Drink abundantly, O Beloved!"

Here is the climax: the consummation: the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. May we all have the wisdom to choose the narrow, lonely, but glorious path that will safely lead us there!

Paul's Reaction to Error—1 Corinthians

All the following is by bro. Roberts

Let There Be No Schisms

It may be observed, brethren and sisters, that 1 Corinthians 12 addresses itself to a state of things which does not exist among us—the administering of the Holy Spirit gifts—and, therefore, to some extent, it may not have special interest for us. Nevertheless, it is profitable for two reasons. It is well we should understand the state of things existing in apostolic days, and it is well we should apply to our circumstances the lessons which Paul here administers to ancient believers in their circumstances. Rules of conduct are the same in all ages. We differ in circumstances from those who received the word at the mouth of the apostles, but we are under the same law. The principal circumstance in which we differ is the fact brought before us in this chapter that there were brethren among the ecclesias in the apostolic age who were endowed with the gifts of the Spirit, who exhibited all those powers that are mentioned in the 8th verse.

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another, faith by the same Spirit; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, discerning of spirits; to another, divers kinds of tongues; to another, the interpretation of tongues."

These powers are not now bestowed, because the purpose for which they were given was served in the confirmation of the testimony of the apostles, who were set forth before men as the personal witnesses of the resurrection of Christ. General belief of their testimony having been produced and made effectual in the development of a people for the name of the Lord, the powers of the Spirit subsided with the death of the apostles. After their decease there were none who had power, by the laying on of hands, to impart the gift. While the apostles were alive, the powers of the Spirit were in full play, and this chapter shows that human nature is the same under all circumstances—that the gifts of the Spirit were as fruitful of division in the early ecclesias as the gifts of nature, as we may call them,

are now; and when I say division, I mean division in the apostolic sense—schism **in a meeting**—not schism in the modern and false sense of one part of a body withdrawing from the fellowship of another part. This may be a righteous and commendable thing. It all depends upon circumstances. In the days of John, the anti-christian element, in particular cases, seceded from those who were true.

“They went out from us,” says he, *“because they were not of us.”*

This was good for the faithful left behind, but a great crime on the part of those seceding. Sometimes, circumstances shaped the other way. The faithful had to *“withdraw”* from those who walked otherwise. This was a thing enjoined by Paul. This was not the division or schism he condemned. The schism he condemned was such schisms as existed among those he was writing to, and exemplified in the 11th chapter of this epistle in the 18th verse, where he says—

*“But first of all, **when ye come together in the ecclesia, I hear that there be divisions** (or schisms) among you.”*

This is what Paul condemns—the existence of a divided state of feeling in a community that ought to be one. He does not condemn that which he on other occasions commanded and exhorted them to do, viz. that where men professing to be the ecclesia of God do not consent to the wholesome words of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were to withdraw from them and not meet with them. This is a duty which is necessary to the preservation of the faith, and its recommendation is the tower of our present strength and our weapon of defence.

If there were no such apostolic recommendation, what answer could we make to the charge of schism this morning? Here we are, an isolated community. We have withdrawn ourselves from the great religious bodies of the country, who, as a matter of words, profess the faith of Christ. They say, “we believe in Jesus Christ, we believe in the gospel,” and if we were bound by verbal profession, we should be bound to identify ourselves with them; but the apostolic exhortation gives us liberty. It commands us to try the spirits, and to hold no fellowship with any spirit that is not of God. By the obedience of this command, we are here assembled, and by the obedience of this command, we are enabled to obey the other command, to have no schism, because by the common exercise of our judgment in the matter, we come to be—

“Perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Indeed, by no other course can we comply with the apostolic requisition to have no schism, than by carrying out the apostolic injunction to withdraw from those who consent not to sound doctrine. The division or schism to be reprobated is a schism, or division, or faction, or party **in the meeting**. This is the subject of Paul’s animadversion; and it would seem that the existence of spiritual gifts tended to this evil. One can easily see how this was, remembering that human nature then was the same as human nature now.

The gifts varied; some were more extraordinary than others, while some of the brethren had no gifts at all. This state of things afforded scope for evil in a carnal-minded community. A brother able to do more wonderful things than the rest,

would be liable to feel himself of more consequence in the ecclesia than another brother, who, perhaps, did nothing at all. A wise man largely gifted would see that what he possessed he had received and was therefore no matter of boast or credit to him, and he would therefore play a modest part; but others in the ecclesia not so wise would think differently and exalt him, and so cause schism, because the exaltation of one would involve the depreciation of another not so highly gifted. This is the schism that Paul says is not to exist. Paul's argument about these diversities of gifts is, that they were all needful in their place—the most humble as much as the highest. He contends that it was quite an unnatural state of things, for any man having a superior gift to look down upon or disregard or think small of one who was less liberally endowed; and that, on the other hand, it was equally unreasonable for a brother possessing a small gift to suppose he was nobody.

He deprecated the idea that a man must be an important member of the body before he can be a consequential part of it. He draws attention to the fact, that the most obscure members of the body are quite as important as those that are more visible and ornamental, and further reminds them that when any single member is exposed to suffering of any kind, all the rest suffer with it. What he advocates is, that robust understanding that can see all things to be equally important in their proper place, and that will therefore observe a cheerful, loving, intelligent modesty, whether the place occupied, or the office fulfilled be high or low. He desired the Corinthians to see that they (that is, all true members of the Christ bride elect) were parts of a social unity of the highest order, and that it was acting unkindly to themselves and in opposition to the spirit of their calling, to make their necessary differences the occasion of disunion of feeling.

Now, although we cannot apply this lesson where Paul has given it, because we are not endowed with the gifts of the spirit, we can apply it with regards to gifts of another sort. We have all diversities of gifts, and they all proceed from God. No one made himself. No one should think highly of himself, because he has a gift that may distinguish him from the rest. He ought rather to think that as he did not make himself, it is no credit to him that he can do certain things which others cannot do. There is lack of reasonable ground for boasting or self-compliment. The feebly gifted should also have it in mind that if they are part of the true body of Christ, they are as truly important as the greatest in that great body. Between the well-gifted and the ill-gifted, there should be no schism. The one should be modest and kind, and the other, contented, cheerful and kind. There should be no schism in the body. Loving cooperation ought to be the rule all round. It is highly necessary to remember these things.

The object of Christ in gospel operations is to provide a community actuated by a common sentiment, not only in doctrine, but in affection, interest, and love. Unity of doctrine is only the beginning of their unity; the end is good brotherhood. Unity of doctrine in the absence of moral and sympathetic unity, is a very poor thing. It is beautiful in its way—good and excellent in these days when so difficult to get at, but a mockery if unaccompanied by that higher unity which comes as the fruit thereof when the soul is not barren. Alone, its beauty is the beauty of a cold day; the sun may shine brightly, but we are chilled to the heart by the cold. We have

other faculties beside the intellect, and into these must the truth penetrate with warming ray. It must permeate and purify the whole man, and fire the heart as well as enlighten the head. The head and the heart are united, and—

“What God hath joined, let no man put asunder.”

It is an ugly rupture of partnership when the head goes one way and the heart another. All must be laid at the feet of Christ, and in such case, there will be true love of the true brethren, for—

“He that loveth him that begat, loveth also him that is begotten,” (1 John 5:1).

But all are not true. The net of the word let into the sea of population, encloses good fishes and bad. For this reason, we must never expect in the present state to realise the ideal of perfect Christian fellowship. The presence of bad fish disturbs the water. Our experience will be a mixture of gratification and endurance, edification, and discipline. By the one class, we shall be refreshed: by the other tried. To the one, our love will go out; to the other, benevolence. There is a great difference between love and benevolence. Love is drawn out of us, whereas benevolence is brewed within. Love is a state of mind engendered by circumstances without and is alike gratifying to the subject and the object. Benevolence, on the other hand, when exerted towards an unlovely object, is an impulse of kindness created by the will in spite of deterrent influences. The exercise of it is a trial, an improvement. Love is the best, but this is not yet the age of love. It is delightful to be in the circle of love. All people wish to be in it, but nearly all miss their way. They don't go in at the door but try and climb up some other way. The secret of entrance is to be lovely, but this means more than is possible with most. Yet the majority of those professing the truth are surely capable of some of the conditions. Be patient; minister to others; do your duty and love is sure to grow. If it does not grow, take higher ground.

Go to the mountain of God, and if you must stand alone—

“Do good unto those that hate you and say all manner of evil things against you;”

“Be kind to the unthankful and the evil.”

A difficult thing, doubtless, for the natural man, but with perseverance, the new man will grow strong enough to get at it. You will then be enabled to endure, to wait patiently, to exert yourself in a firm and tranquil state of mind towards one another. We must cultivate this. It is impossible to get on in this evil world without it; because the world is so evil, that if we wait to be acted upon for good by other people, we shall never be good at all. The best ways are to exercise the apostolic maxim and overcome evil with good. To fail in this, is to come short.

We may pursue a certain straight and steady course of well-doing in the sense of not doing wrong, and yet be deficient in the positive kind of well-doing that overcomes evil with good. Nay, the case may be worse, and the evil in the way may occasionally frighten us off the path. We are tempted into impatience and malevolence, through the offences of others. This were a calamity, for we ought

at least not to allow the victory to be on the side of evil. Let it be at least a drawn battle. Let us not give in to the flesh: do not be overcome, whether in yourself or the conduct of others, by its influence; always pursue a tranquil and unflinching course of duty and kindness, with Christ in full blazing view. As Jesus said concerning a certain exhortation,

“He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”

Let all those who mean to be like Christ, who are for being part and parcel of that glorious community that will survive the existence of flesh and blood on earth, try to put these principles into practice. It is rather a high endeavour for our poor nature, but it is astonishing what a man can do under the power of the truth. The lesson taught in this chapter is part of the power—that those who are feeble, are not always to despair, but to make the most of their abilities, knowing that in the great house of Christ, there will be places for small as well as large. To act otherwise—to do nothing because all cannot be done that we should like—to waste the time in unavailing regret that we are not better than we are, is to miss the little opportunity we have, and secure for us the displeasure of Him who is our judge.

Let us lift up the hands that hang down and strengthen the feeble knees and make straight paths for our feet. On the other hand, those who are better furnished than their fellows have their duty laid down in the chapter. It is the lesson expressed in the remark of Paul that no man should think of himself more highly than he ought to think. What we have, we have not made, but have received. We therefore ought to wear it with condescension. By condescension is not meant patronage. There is a very great difference between patronage and condescension. Patronage means “I am high, and you are very low down, and it is a great act of humility for me to take any notice of you.” Condescension on the other hand expresses itself thus: “I am nothing at all of myself, and therefore I have no right to carry myself haughtily towards you, though you may be different from me; God has made us both; let us try to be happy together.” If those who have it in their power (by privilege of mental endowment or greatness of pocket), would take this part, there would be a great advance towards true community. However, we must never lose heart if we fail to arrive at such a state of things. We shall never in the flesh attain to all we may consider desirable in an ecclesia, because there will always be an ingredient of the old leaven till it is purged out at the judgment.

Our ideal must therefore be stored in the future. We may nurse it in that relation without stint, but nursing it now, we are doomed to failure, and if not prepared for this beforehand by knowing the impracticability of achieving it, we are liable to lose heart, to go into the corner and give up the strife with evil, which will be a mistake. If we will but remember that the ecclesia in the present state is but the workshop in which the stones are being shaped and polished for the great building of God that is to be hereafter erected, we shall be greatly enabled to preserve our souls in patience.

Let every man bend his strength to the saving of himself. Look to no man: lean on none. Fight your way through the darkness; there is light beyond. By and by

our highest aspirations will find their goal in the perfection of the kingdom of God. When God makes up his jewels, our souls will luxuriate in excellence. From all ages, and all ecclesias will those be gathered who please Him and meet His purpose. And we know that in that great body—in the one glorified body of Christ, there will be no schism, no jar, no imperfection. Meanwhile, we must remember that this is a time of imperfection, and we shall never get at what we yearn after; it is a time of trial, a time of patient endurance, a time of evil in which our highest wisdom is to make the best of a bad job. —Robert Roberts

Paul's Letter to the Corinthians Exemplifies Patience

The ecclesia is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 2:15), the sanctuary and the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched and not man (Heb. 8:2). It is God's building (1 Cor. 3:9). He has reared it in the midst of a waste, howling wilderness of unenlightened humanity, in a desert where death holds supreme sway on every side. It is on a journey toward the Promised Land. Its constituent elements are men and women in the flesh, all, more or less, instructed in the truth of God, all, more or less, endeavouring to perform the will of their Father, who has called them out of the surrounding darkness in which they were born, into the glorious light of His salvation, all, more or less, failing, through the infirmity of the sinful nature they have inherited from Adam, to keep the commandments of God. Such is the ecclesia during its wilderness probation, its portable, tabernacle phase. A community of men and women enlightened in the purpose of God, having in their midst faith, hope, and charity, in living manifestation, although there may be associated with them those who are weak or sickly, or even asleep, is a divine institution, ordered and appointed of God—in fact the only organization at present upon the earth with which the Eternal Jehovah is interested. They are His sons and daughters, and He is their Father, and Christ their elder brother and high priest.

To be admitted into such a community is no light matter. No man can of himself enter; he must be called to the membership by God. To turn one's back upon an ecclesia of the living God is a step so grave and momentous that it is not to be taken, unless the case is clear beyond peradventure that all spiritual life has departed from it, that it has openly and in a most flagrant manner time and again repudiated the doctrines and commandments of Christ. An ecclesia may become as corrupt as that of Sardis, which had a name to live only, but was dead, yet, for the "few names" it may contain who "have not defiled their garments," it is to be carefully considered. Jehovah would have spared Sodom, a great city, and with it the cities of the plain, had there been found only ten righteous men in it; how much greater consideration he bestows upon a congregation of men and women who bear His name, even although they offend in many things, as seen in His dealings with Israel—long-suffering, patient, tender, kind—and in those words of Christ to the ecclesia at Sardis.

To understand the almost inexhaustible patience and carefulness one must have for an ecclesia, let him read the epistles of Paul to the ecclesia at Corinth. When he penned these two remarkable letters the condition of affairs among them was so grievous, so full of trouble and bitterness, so antagonistic in many instances to

the precepts of Christ, that many brethren, now-a-day, did such a state of things exist in the ecclesia of which they were members, would consider themselves justified in remaining away from the meetings to commemorate the death of Christ, and would do so having taken personal offence at the matter, or they would withdraw themselves and form a separate meeting.

Paul's attitude to the ecclesia in Corinth is a guide for us. Turbulent and factious as the ecclesia had become, yet Paul writes them, "Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3:9), and in his salutation he sends them "grace and peace from God and from the Lord Jesus Christ," and remembers with thankfulness their good parts and prays for them that they "come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:7, 8).

From Paul's letters we learn that the ecclesia in Corinth was divided into four distinct parties, each one claiming to be right in the name of its chosen head. One claimed Paul, another Apollos, a third Cephas, while a fourth declared themselves to be of Christ, and they, evidently, were the smallest and least influential in the meeting. The apostle expostulates with them in the effort to induce them to act in accordance with the truth. "Now, I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." They had in active operation among them, convulsing the ecclesia daily, "envying, strife, and division" (1 Cor. 3:3). They were proud and arrogant (1 Cor. 4:6, 7, 8), they permitted a notorious act of fornication to pass unrebuked, and even condoned it (1 Cor. 5:1, 2). They wronged one another and went to law one against another and that before the unjust (1 Cor. 6:1, 6-8.) They maintained in some instances an open connection with the idolatry which they had left when they became Christ's (1 Cor. 8:7-10, 14); they turned the Lord's Supper into a season of feasting and debauchery (1 Cor. 11:21, 22); "some among them said there was no resurrection of the dead," even although the resurrection of Jesus was the case in question (1 Cor. 15:12-20.)

Notwithstanding these grievous offences against Christ, Paul, Christ's minister, did not withdraw himself from them. He did not rail against them. On the contrary, his letter, in which he prefers these serious charges, involving both doctrine and walk, is full of anxious, loving care, solicitation, and without presumption. He pleads with them in all wisdom, seeking their reclamation from the errors. He praises them fully whenever he gets the opportunity, and when he learns that his first letter has produced a change in them of a godly sort, he sends them a second in which he declares them his "epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men; forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God."

No comment is required here to make manifest the true way to act when an ecclesia is involved in the question of fellowship. It is the house of God, and where it has only two or three who come together in the name of Christ to commemorate

the great love wherewith he has loved his friends, there Christ has said he would be present, and although anger, strife, envy, and bitterness fill the minds of those who may have also come to keep the feast, yet their feeling and attitude cannot affect those who worship God in spirit and in truth. The “wood, straw, hay and stubble” of an ecclesia lie for the present in intimate relationship and connection with its “gold, silver and precious stones” elements, and the day of Christ alone will make their true characters manifest. So, says Paul, “Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. 4:5).

When Moses raised in the wilderness the tabernacle of the congregation, he placed within the veil the ark of the covenant, on which he put the Mercy Seat, and over it the Cherubim of Glory; and the angel spake these words to him: “And there will I meet with thee, and there will I commune with thee from above the Mercy Seat, and from between the Cherubims” (Exod. 25:22).

Christ is our Mercy Seat, and between the Cherubims of glory he communes with us, when we come to meet with him in our ecclesial capacity, the antitypical tabernacle of the congregation. Our fellowship is with him; we go to meet with him to our accustomed place Sunday after Sunday. We do not go because brother this or brother that is going, and when we go, we should remember that Christ is present, and our minds should be filled with the solemnity of the occasion, and our hearts fit before him whose eyes are as a flame of fire to penetrate their secret depths, and our attitude should be one of devoutness and godly fear. The presence of Christ is a solemn occasion, and into that presence we come when we assemble in one place to commemorate his sacrificial death. “There will I meet with you, and there will I commune with you.”—Thomas Williams

Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians Does Not Justify Fellowshiping Error

Every spiritually minded brother and sister will cordially respond to the definition of the ecclesial institution as a divine tabernacle, pitched “in the midst of a waste howling wilderness of unenlightened humanity;” and all such will cry a hearty “Amen!” at the suggestion of “almost inexhaustible patience and carefulness” in our dealing with such an institution. Yet some balance is needed in the deductions we draw from Paul’s attitude to the Corinthian ecclesia. Some have argued on that attitude in a way to nullify his express directions in other cases, which can never be intended by the writer of the foregoing remarks.

Paul had authority as an apostle which he could use with decisive effect in case of need. It was authority he had received “not for destruction but for edification,” as he said: but still it was authority which he was prepared to use, “since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me” (2 Cor. 13:3). He could say “if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him” (2 Thess. 3:14). We all know that men having authority in any matter to fall back upon, are naturally patient and gentle to a degree not so easy where there is nothing but argument and equal influence to set against the teaching of opposition. This has to be considered in judging of Paul’s tone and attitude towards an ecclesia

in so corrupt a state as the Corinthians. But as to the right attitude towards such corruptions in the abstract, we must gather them where that is the subject in hand.

Paul recognised the original character of the Corinthian ecclesia as “God’s building,” and argued against the various corruptions and doctrine and practice that prevailed at the time of his writing. But he did not mean that these corruptions were to be disregarded in fellowship. On the contrary, in the case of fornication referred to, he said “*Put away from among yourselves that wicked person*” (1 Cor. 5:13). He found fault with them at their indifference, and that they had not “rather mourned that he that hath done this deed *might be taken away from you*” (verse 2). His argument goes powerfully against retaining such: “Know ye not that *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven*” (verse 6).

When he says, “Judge nothing before the time” (1 Cor. 4:5), he is speaking of the brethren’s personal judgment of himself—a thing forbidden concerning all brethren, and a thing that cannot accurately be done. He is not speaking of ecclesial attitude to wrong doing. He does not mean that we are to shut our eyes to manifest disobedience or denial of the truth in our own midst. On the contrary, he makes the enquiry as if to something well understood and notorious:—“Do ye not judge them that are within?” (1 Cor. 5:12), that is, in the cognizance of manifest evildoing, to the extent of refusing to eat with any man called a brother who is a fornicator, &c (verse 11). So, though he argues with some who denied the resurrection, we are not to conclude that he regarded such a denial as compatible with a continuance of fellowship if persisted in. We must judge on this point by expressions directed expressly to the question of how error persisted in is to be dealt with. On this, he does not speak ambiguously. Even to the Corinthians, referring to an approaching third visit, he expresses the fear that he should be found such as they would not like. He only writes in the tenor of apparent toleration, “lest,” says he, “being present, I should use sharpness *according to the power which the Lord hath given me* to edification and not to destruction” (2 Cor. 13:10). “Shall I,” enquires he, “come unto you with a rod, or in love and in the spirit of meekness? (1 Cor. 4:21). “Being absent now, I write to them which heretofore have sinned and to all other, that if I come again, *I will not spare*” (2 Cor. 13:2).

In other epistles, the indications are quite explicit (and it cannot be that he contemplated our ignoring what he says in one epistle because of what he has said in another). To Timothy, he plainly says, “Withdraw thyself” (1 Tim. 6:5) from a class of professors whom he describes as “proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words,” who “consent not to wholesome words even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He also says: “Avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (verse 20). He also advises him to shun certain “babblings” personated by Hymeneus and Philetus, “*who concerning the truth have erred, saying the resurrection is past already.*” To Titus he says, “A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition, reject” (3:10). To the Romans: “Mark them who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine

which ye have learned and *avoid them*” (16:17). John speaks plainly to the same effect: “If any man bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house” (2 John 9–10). And the messages of Jesus to the seven Asian ecclesias are all more or less in the same strain.

It is all according to reason; for if we were at liberty to ignore departure from the faith and practice of the Gospel, it would certainly happen in the long run that both must vanish from our midst. Friendliness would indispose a man to be critical; decay would set in as the result of the indifference. Thus, the ecclesia would prove the reverse of the pillar and ground of the truth. No community can ever hold together that winks at the denial of its own principles. It cannot be that the foregoing article is intended to advocate such a thing, or to inculcate anything opposed to something so obviously scriptural and reasonable as the maintenance of the faith and practice of the Gospel by the refusal of fellowship where they are denied.

What must be intended is the discountenance of individual secession from an ecclesia on insufficient grounds. Against this mistake, the argument is powerful, and will be upheld by every discriminating friend of the truth. We perpetrate a wrong against Christ if we separate ourselves from his brethren on the ground of some personal grievance against one or more in their midst. There is a right remedy for this; and if from any cause, we cannot apply it, let us forbear. In such things, we are to practice the “almost inexhaustible patience and care” spoken of, and even in matters of error, we must be quite sure the wrong is espoused, and give every one an opportunity of repudiating the wrong, before we resort to the extreme and irrevocable remedy of separation, by which we throw the issue entirely on the final judgment of Christ. There may be cases in which we have no alternative, but it is far better if we can settle differences before we meet Him.

Confess Christ

By Frank Darter

The commandments of Christ are vitally important and standing paramount among them is the command to proclaim the Truth ... “confess me before men,” says Christ.

Notwithstanding the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, we must be strong and of good courage and we must remain a separate and holy people. WE know the TRUTH. We must never take it for granted for we are a called-out people, called out from AMONG A WORLD that lies in spiritual darkness, wickedness, and scriptural ignorance. A world that says: “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing;” satisfied like a pig wallowing in the mire.

A portion of that vast multitude in darkness is very religious, but not to their credit, for they fall into an UNFORTUNATE category described by Paul's letter to Timothy: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." This generation's life goals are selfish entertainment, selfish excitement, and selfish pleasure through instant gratification in whatever form it may come.

Through love of money, love of self, or love of sin, or however it may present itself, this generation is living as fast as possible. It's as if the whole world is on steroids, doing whatever is right in their own eyes. It's as if to say: "let us Eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die."

I saw some wording on a seat cover of a random car in the parking lot a few days ago that read: "LIFE is WILD, FREE, and CHAOTIC. A PERFECTLY PUT TOGETHER MESS!" This seems to be describing a society with no morals, a society with no God. A society described by the prophet in Isaiah 5:20-23:

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: Which justify the wicked for reward and take away the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS from him!"

Does not this describe our present world with billions of self-indulgent people, pleasure seeking, antisemitic, atheistic, woke virus minded multitudes, who are saying: "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

It is written "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Brothers and sisters, this is the generation in which we live. This is the generation of today, and this is the generation in which we have been called to CONFESS Christ before men.

Christ said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." In a world full of darkness, we are to fill our spiritual lamps with the oil of scriptural enlightenment. Christ also said, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God."

Why do we need to confess Christ? The apostle Paul gives us the answer in Philippians 2:15. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." There we have it. With our minds enlightened

to the things of the kingdom of God and the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ, we are to proclaim that knowledge. We are to make that knowledge apparent to those that do not have that knowledge and thereby we become as shining lights in this world of scriptural darkness. Thereby, we confess Christ.

Yes, God gave us the ability to enjoy pleasure and to desire it in its proper context amid this crooked and perverse generation. But our joy comes now from confessing Christ. If we love him more than anything else, how can it not, bring us joy!

Picture the apostle Paul in prison, in chains, naked, yet singing. Singing praises to God. The same joy that made Paul sing in prison was set before Christ, and that gave him strength to endure the pain and suffering of the cross. That same joy should also be before us who are his brethren, that we may be able to endure what lies ahead.

Most assuredly we are here for His pleasure and not our own. Rev. 4:11:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for THY PLEASURE they are and were created.”

Let us not be heavy of heart, brethren and sisters, for Christ has said in Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

In the proper order, in the not-too-distant future, there will be joy unspeakable for the body of Christ. We have positive and absolute certainty and assurance without question of this joy in the scriptures. It is written,

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

The pleasure-seeking world is full of tragic, tempting, cheating counterfeits that never satisfy, but at best only stupefy with temporary excitement or sensation or absorption, like a brief drug high. But all lead at last to the same dead end: darkness and death. There is only one true, real, permanent pleasure, unalloyed, unassailable, and everlasting. CONFESS CHRIST.

Ignore the endless number of masks of the empty face of folly and heed the solitary sound of wisdom's imploring invitation to everlasting joy. God guarantees "pleasures for evermore." As we see here in v. 32

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

But for those who deny him we read in v. 2 that there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Do we ever think it can be literally true that everything we say or do now, can be actually brought to our mind, and reproduced on that great day of judgment? The unkind words or the evil deeds can be treasured up, and therefore firmly remain in the resurrected man. Yes, the very tone and word and thought and action, can be reproduced. We know that God is without limits: omnipotent. Of these stones He is able to raise up children unto Abraham. In Ecclesiastes we are told:

“For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

"By thy words thou shalt be condemned." What an awful thought! But there is another side. Let's look at it, for it is written in Galatians 6:10:

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

Here lies a wonderful opportunity to fulfill multiple commandments simultaneously. We are to love the brethren and sisters, to care for one another and help each other on the road Zionward. While helping our brothers and sisters, we demonstrate to the world we love and care for each other AND IN THIS WAY ALSO WE ARE CONFESSING CHRIST! Matt. 12:37:

“For by thy words thou shalt be the justified:”

That kindly word, that little help, that self-sacrifice, that cup of cold water, a comforting hand on a shoulder stooped low in sorrow, and a soft word of consolation, that duty done under difficulties, those surmounted temptations, troubles, trials and tribulations; those endurings of false accusations, that hoping of all things, those prayers for revilers and foes of Deity—all present and vividly reproduced on the stage of judgment; all shown, to have been necessary for the transformation of the mind of the flesh, to the Mind of Christ. That then, "firm remains." "By thy words thou shalt be justified."

What exultation to hear the cheering words from the immortal lips of our elder brother and king of the whole earth, "Well done, thou good and faithful servants." Consider Christ words in Luke 12:8-9:

“Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.”

To confess means to acknowledge strongly; to profess convincingly. To confess Christ, we must walk like Christ walked; we must live like he lived.

Christ did abound in the fruits of the spirit, so must we. We must be a living example of Matthew 5:16:

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Let us abound in the mind of Christ! There’s the account of Christ walking on the Sea of Galilee and Peter wanted to go to him. And he was beckoned to do so. But as Peter briefly walked on the water to go to Christ, we remember he took his eyes off Christ and faltered ! The account reads:

“he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?”

We like Peter are prone to doubt. And what did God tell Israel concerning doubt? “Be strong and of good courage!” Faith cannot flourish when it is built on a foundation of fear, but faith can flourish and prosper when it is built of a foundation of love! Perfect love casteth out fear; so, as we have our eyes on Christ and attempt to walk on the water of life towards him to follow in his footsteps, let us love our Heavenly Father with all our hearts. Let us never fear, while keeping our faith strong and active. Let us be strong and of good courage and keep our eyes on our elder brother and lean on him, for he is our King, our Savior, and our life. There is no water too deep nor temptation to great that he cannot provide for us a pathway to freedom.

We’ve been promised that freedom in the Holy Scriptures, “ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.” And in 1 Corinthians 10:13 it is written:

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

The question may concern us with the thought of when will I get an opportunity to confess Christ? The answer isn’t very far away for every new day is a new opportunity. We can confess him through thoughts, actions, and words in everything we say and do. It’s not standing on an unknown street corner with a microphone and an amplifier preaching at passing cars with their windows rolled up listening to blaring music as they pass through the intersection: but it’s living, breathing, and thinking about Christ and consciously being obedient to his commandments. It’s sharing him with others as the opportunity presents itself. Its living unto Christ rather than self. Verse 35 tells us:

“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;”

Yes, figurative language, but with a clear and obvious meaning. To confess Christ, we must have our "loins girded," we must be awake, alert, and prepared

for immediate action. "Lights burning" means the lamps of knowledge not only filled with the Spirit oil, but in the active state of radiance and illumination, that our lighted candle is not overshadowed by a bushel of selfishness.

For not only must we be able to navigate our own straight and narrow path, but we must be able to attract and guide others also. To confess Christ is to conduct "yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." We are told that the moment of Christ's coming will be sudden and unexpected. Some will be ready, and others not. We are told that much depends on just how that moment catches us—prepared or unprepared, watching, or off-guard. Not because our chance state at any particular moment would be the determining factor—that would be just like a game of chance—but because our state of readiness at that time will be the master-key of revelation to our heart and to our life. Our whole life.

Some will tire and lose interest. Some will be temporarily diverted and relax their efforts. With some, the keen edge of ardent expectation will be dulled by luxury or prosperity or complacency. With some it won't happen to be Sunday morning when the call comes, and therefore their minds will be far away on other things. But those who overcome to the end, those who truly love the Truth, they will be more eager, more alert, more watchful with each passing day going forwards, knowing, and rejoicing that each setting sun brings them one day closer to that joyful time on which their heart is fixed. That great day will not catch THEM with their minds on other things of worldly rubbish.

"That when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him IMMEDIATELY." "Immediately"; that is the vital word there. There must be no hesitation or looking back. No last-minute scurrying to put neglected things in order, or to fill neglected lamps. Jesus' point is that, to please him, there must be a constant looking forward to that moment, a constant, instant readiness to go like a runner on his mark, sharp and alert, ready for the starter's gun.

"Be steadfast and unmovable," says Paul, "always abounding in the work of the Lord." That is the motto, the policy, the spirit, and the principle of the apostolic system.

"Always abounding." It is the great idea animating all who are truly obedient to the gospel. These are not those who get hold of the truth, and put it in their pockets, as it were, as their religion; and then start out to do just as they were doing before. There are numerous striking examples of THAT KIND in the world around us. For instance, there are people making a profession of religion whom, from their ways of life, you would never know to be religious at all. They are entirely devoted to the schemes which recommend themselves to the

natural mind. Those schemes, in their several departments, are what are considered creditable and excellent by the world.

It is considered a very praise-worthy thing for a man to be industrious in the accumulation of money for himself, that his own position may be secure in this world full of evil. It is considered a legitimate object of life for a man to labour diligently to be rich now in this present time, that he may have a fine house to live in and to have an honourable position in society. Men show amazing diligence, actually day and night, often depriving themselves of rest and leisure, in developing business interests. A great deal of genius and a great deal of energy are expended in the promotion of purely temporal concerns. It is a kind of enthusiasm which, if attended with success, encourages the money addicted enthusiast to wider efforts and deeper dedication.

The tendency of the world is to absorb the mind more and more in fleshly things. If a man yields himself to the service of himself in this way, it is like getting into the downward suction of a powerful whirlpool. It is a dangerous thing to put Christ out of account, even for a moment.

The disposition to serve ourselves is intuitive to the animal man. It is one of the primitive instincts implanted for our self-preservation. Regulated by divine law it has its place, but if this instinct is allowed to be the lord of our life, we get into an evil bondage from which it is very difficult to deliver ourselves, and which will assuredly alienate from us the regard of Christ. It is a foolish policy.

The crisis will come at last, and it may come any moment. The slave to fleshly instinct has to eventually give it up. He has to give up everything. He has to lie down and die. He must take the time to do that, though he could spare so little time for Christ. And then where are the wealth and the honour, and all the fine things that he has set his heart upon? All goes. Nothing will be available—absolutely nothing!

He goes to corruption; he descends to the grave without hope. Having laid up no treasure in heaven, he is buried: spiritually bankrupt. For him there is no other prospect but tribulation and wrath and anguish!

It is so very dangerous to put off Christ today, with the idea that we are going to do differently on the morrow! We don't know whether we will even have one more "tomorrow" or not! Procrastination leads to condemnation. God and Christ must be the greatest love of our lives. For it is written:

Matt. 10:37 "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

If one were to ask the question, where do you find time for all that reading, serving God, and worshiping, while helping others, and always abounding in THINGS OF THE TRUTH? The answer is simple. You don't find the time for it. ALWAYS, is the time. Whatever we do is to be done for the honor and glory of God. The TIME FOR CHRIST IS NOW and it's every breath we take, its ALL THE TIC-TOCS WE HAVE LEFT on our probationary clock.

The only time we can rely upon is the present; and that time is not our own at all. If we belong to Christ, we will construct our lives accordingly so as to incorporate this little abbreviation into our daily existence: CCC. Confess Christ Continually. Every day! BUT, if we are but Sunday morning Christadelphians and runabout to things of the world all week long—chasing after selfish reasons as the unlearned and foolish of this world—it would have been better to have never known the way of life, than to treat God with this contempt and be in complete denial of our savior. If we are Christadelphian in name only, it would be better for that soul had he never been born.

How different is the case concerning those who are truly Christ's? They work as hard as the sinner who labors to be rich, but their labour tends to higher ends. The result of their work is not so immediately apparent, but ultimately, it is more real and lasting.

The sinner has not perception sufficient enough to see that although the man of Christ has scattered his seed now, it will return to him a hundred-fold when the sinner's little handful has gone forever. The man of Christ will secure all that the sinner aims to have, and more. The sinner loses life, but Christ's servant will have life without end.

The sinner, even in his healthiest moments, never dreamed of the power that will mantle the glorified saint when he is made incorruptible. The sinner has a yearning for beauty, but will at last, embrace rotteness and corruption, while the saint is resplendent with a comeliness never approached by the fairest of earth's cosmetically enhanced daughters. In fact, the saints will possess everything, because their Captain is the proprietor of the whole earth, and to him it all belongs.

Hints For Bible Markers

Psalm 17:15

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”

We concluded last month with the prayer for the removal of the wicked from off the earth. In this verse the Spirit brings us to the conclusion of the matter. Man, however, has different ideas since the concept of the verse does not fit in with his Platonic beliefs. Consider The Jewish Publication Society of America, translation of this verse: “Then I, justified, will behold Your face; awake, I am filled with the visions of You.” And let us not forget the NIV: “And I – in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.” The question becomes, why would the reverend divines not like the word “with”? The answer is readily understood when one considers their false god whom they worship. Will the righteous awake in the likeness of a three part being? A trinity? This makes no sense. The only way it would make sense is if the righteous will awake, and after judgement be transformed into a spirit being like the immortal angels.

We included the judgement in the previous sentence because among the various groups claiming to be Christadelphians, there are those who believe that the righteous come forth from the grave immortal. The fifteenth verse of this Psalm is one that is used to prove immortal emergence. In doing so they ignore the following testimonies: (2 Corinthians 5:10) *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”*

(2 Timothy 4:1) *“I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;”*

(Romans 2:5-6) *“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:”*

(Romans 2:16) *“In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”*

(Romans 14:12) *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

(1 Corinthians 4:5) *“Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness,*

and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

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

In the same vein, Paul added these words of comfort, saying:

(Romans 6:4-5) “Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:”

The promise of a future life by virtue of a resurrection from the dead, has gladdened the hearts of patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, and it has cheered the sad and weary of like precious faith, for therein lies our hope.

Psalm 18

In our opening remarks on this psalm we, again, choose to ignore the opening statements written by men who do not understand the gospel, the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. We will ignore the following: “To the chief Musician, *A Psalm* of David, the servant of the LORD, who spoke unto the LORD the words of this song in the day *that* the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul: And he said “We should be very clear, although David in Spirit penned this Psalm, the true import is Christ. He is woven throughout every verse, with some so pregnant with meaning that worldly commentators have much difficulty bending them to their will. This Psalm, although majestic and warlike shows the sufferings, vengeance, and kingly glory of the Messiah.

The Psalm in its fullness far transcends the experiences of David. Paul, in Romans 15, applies it to Christ and his work, (15:9) “*And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.*” (Cp. with verse 49.)

Continued next month should the Lord will

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